

Suffolk Police and Crime Panel

Annual Report 2018

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Foreword from the Chairman

“Perhaps the issue that drew most attention for the Panel was the decrease in the numbers of police officers. This was particularly noticeable in the lack of visibility on the streets and in rural areas.

The Commissioner is well aware of public anxiety.

The Panel fully understands the need to inform the public of the changes in policing, and at the same time, the difficulties of ‘getting the message across’. Communication is key going forward, and I believe that it is crucial for the Panel to assist in highlighting the importance of communication within its programme”.

PATRICIA O’BRIEN

Chairman of the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel

Introduction and Background

This is the sixth annual report of the [Suffolk Police and Crime Panel](#) (PCP), which was established in 2012 in compliance with the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Panel’s annual report covers its activities during the past calendar year.

The [Police and Crime Commissioner](#) (PCC) for Suffolk, Tim Passmore, has responsibility for setting the direction, objectives and budget of the Suffolk police force, and for holding the Chief Constable to account. The Police and Crime Panel’s role is to scrutinise and support the performance of the PCC over a range of policy areas, including the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. The Panel also has a role in the handling of complaints against the PCC and the confirmation of key staff posts within the Office of the PCC.

The Panel comprises eleven elected members of local authorities across Suffolk working alongside two independent co-opted members. Together the Panel members reflect the breadth of communities in Suffolk. Further information is available on the Panel’s website at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/police-and-crime-panel.

Other Public Scrutiny of the PCC

Ultimately, the PCCs are held to account by the electorate, with elections every 4 years, the most recent being in May 2016. In addition, the Suffolk PCC holds various meetings in public, such as his '*Accountability and Performance Panel*' meetings with the Chief Constable every two months, and a series of public forums in each district / borough Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) area across the county, several of which were attended by members of the Panel. There is also ad-hoc direct engagement of public, community groups, councillors, etc. with the PCC or the Panel, and there has been public scrutiny on various occasions via national Select Committees, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), internal and external auditors, and also in the local and national news media. During the year the PCC and Chief Constable have taken part in a live telephone call-in with the public on BBC Radio Suffolk and have hosted a live public 'webchat'.

Who's Who

The membership of the Panel changed during 2018, following some changes of representatives in some of the councils, and also a change of one of the Independent Co-opted Members.

Members of the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel during the first part of 2018 were:

Cllr Patricia O'Brien	(County Council, Conservative) [Chairman]
Cllr Diana Kearsley	(MidSuffolk District, Conservative) [Vice Chairman]
Mr. Manwar Ali	(Co-opted)
Cllr Mark Bee	(Waveney District, Conservative)
Cllr Carol Bull	(St Edmundsbury Borough, Conservative)
Cllr Chris Chambers	(County Council, Conservative)
Cllr Peter Gardiner	(Ipswich Borough, Labour)
Cllr Brian Harvey	(Forest Heath District, Conservative)
Cllr Colin Hedgley	(Suffolk Coastal District, Conservative)
Mr. Len Jacklin	(Co-opted)
Cllr Keith Patience	(County Council, Labour)
Cllr David Rose	(Babergh District, Independent)
Cllr David Wood	(County Council, Liberal Democrat)

The members of the Panel during the latter part of 2018 were:

Cllr Patricia O'Brien	(County Council, Conservative) [Chairman]
Cllr Diana Kearsley	(MidSuffolk District, Conservative) [Vice Chairman]
Cllr Mark Bee	(Waveney District, Conservative)
Cllr Mike Chester	(St Edmundsbury Borough, Conservative)
Cllr John Field	(County Council, Liberal Democrat)

Cllr Peter Gardiner	(Ipswich Borough, Labour)
Cllr Brian Harvey	(Forest Heath District, Conservative)
Cllr Colin Hedgley	(Suffolk Coastal District, Conservative)
Mr. Len Jacklin	(Co-opted)
Cllr Graham Newman	(County Council, Conservative)
Mr. Stuart Palmer	(Co-opted)
Cllr Keith Patience	(County Council, Labour)
Cllr David Rose	(Babergh District, Independent)

[Each of the councillor members also has a named substitute member]

Some part-time officer support to the Panel is provided by the host authority, Suffolk County Council, on behalf of all the Suffolk Local Authorities. The additional costs incurred in supporting the Police and Crime Panel are funded from a specific Home Office grant made available for this purpose. A summary of costs incurred by the Panel during 2018 is shown further below.

Panel Activities and Achievements in 2018

During 2018 the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel has held four formal Panel meetings, on 26 January, 16 March, 20 July and 5 October. There was the continuing desire to ensure that these public meetings offered county wide opportunity for participation, and as such the March and July meetings were held in Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft, respectively, with the other meetings being held in Ipswich. The Panel continued in 2018 the practice, introduced in July 2016, of having a Public Participation Session, allowing for any Suffolk resident to speak briefly on a matter relating to the agenda.

Details of the formal meetings and the agendas and papers for them are available online: <https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/>. *[On that web page, select the link to: 'Police and Crime Panel (Joint Committee)']*

In addition to the four formal Panel meetings there was continuation of the regular pattern of holding informal workshops, with available main and substitute members of the Panel, to plan and scope the forthcoming formal meetings.

There have also been several other meetings at various points in the year involving one or more Panel members, such as planning and briefing meetings with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, informal meetings of the Chairman and Vice Chairman with the PCC, Constabulary/PCC briefing events regarding the new local policing model, and occasional attendance by some of the Panel members as observers at the PCC's two-monthly 'Accountability and Performance Panel' public meetings with the Chief Constable.

The Panel's work and achievements in 2018 are summarised as follows:

In January 2018:

- The Panel questioned the PCC about the 'Outcomes and Impact of the Suffolk Local Policing Review', with specific emphasis on the multi-agency focus needed on tackling drug / gang violence. The discussion covered: the involvement of the Voluntary and Community Sector, regional / national collaboration, the good results achieved by the police drug & gang unit, the Public Sector Leadership Group agreement to put funding towards tackling the youth gangs and drugs problem, the linkage between drug usage and increase in 'acquisitive' crime and deprivation, correlation of increased gang crime with decreased youth service provision, the PCC's desire for closer relationships with the Community Safety Partnerships, the importance of using local intelligence, and the flexibility and visibility of police resources in local communities.
- The Panel recommended that there should be a further update to the Panel on youth gangs and drug violence in six months (July), and that Suffolk County Council Scrutiny Committee might wish to look into any correlation between youth gang / drug violence and gaps in provision of Youth Services engaged in preventative work.
- The Panel considered the PCC's proposed Policing Precept for 2018/19, and unanimously supported the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposal to increase the precept by 6.7684% in 2018-19. Further detail is in the Panel's formal report, available on the [Suffolk County Council website](#). The Panel recommended to the PCC that he provide further detailed information regarding the staffing proposals and specific initiatives on which the additional precept money will be spent, and that he ensures that there is robust and timely communication with the public regarding what the additional precept money is being spent on, and the plans for more visibility and engagement with local communities.
- In discussion of an information item about crime rates and trends, the reclassification by the Home Office of the recorded crime categories, and difficulty in making like-for-like comparisons, the Panel recommended to the PCC that he consider having an explanation of this issue at one of his Accountability and Performance Panel meetings.

In March 2018:

- The Panel questioned the PCC about the Serious Sexual Offences (SSO) Solved Rate Performance. The discussion covered, the large increase in demand as more sexual assault and domestic abuse victims have the confidence to report the crimes, the poor levels of government funding, the extra

resources that the PCC has directed towards this area, the good work done by the voluntary and community sector, the Constabulary's focus on a culture where the victim is put first, the need for multi-agency partnership focus on reducing re-offending, the difficulty in recruiting detectives, capacity in the Crown Prosecution Service, and the appropriateness and effectiveness of some criminal justice sentences. The PCC emphasised the high priority of this aspect of crime and the need for people to come forward and report the crimes. The PCC said that he would feed back to the Panel further information about the number of detectives recently recruited by the Constabulary. The Panel recommended to the PCC that the Serious Sexual Offences solved rate performance should be reviewed again in a year's time.

- The Panel questioned the PCC about Police Visibility and Communication. The discussion covered, the limited financial resources despite the precept increase, the increase in 'hidden harm' crime, the need to communicate better to the public the priorities and choices to be made, greater use of technology and the concept of a county-wide CCTV system, that the police are still having to deal with too many issues that should be other agencies' responsibility, public perceptions and the 'fear of crime', improved communication in areas with many rural parishes, increased use of social media and '[Police Connect](#)', and that Suffolk is still one of the safest counties in the country.
- The Panel recommended to the PCC that:
 - The PCC & Constabulary to publicise better their use of social media and other communication channels
 - The PCC should look at a communications plan focused on publicising the partnership working success stories and achievements.
 - The PCC / Constabulary could consider using a 'tagline' with their communications (eg. '*Policing Has Changed*') to emphasise to the public that things are now different.
 - There be a future item in the forward plan looking more broadly at the effectiveness of Partner Agency working.
- The Panel resolved to:
 - Lobby Suffolk Chief Officers and Public Sector Leaders, and subsequently MPs and central government, to support the idea of a county-wide CCTV scheme.
 - Encourage local parishes to have links to the police website & newsletters on their parish websites.
- At the end of the public meeting the Panel held a short private session with the PCC to hear about some of the proposed staffing changes in the Constabulary and some partner agencies, in response to the changing demands, challenges

and the financial situation. This information was to be made more widely available in a few months, after consultation with the affected staff had been completed.

In July 2018:

- Cllr Patricia O'Brien was re-elected as the Panel Chairman and Cllr Diana Kearsley was re-elected as the Panel Vice Chairman, for a further year of office.
- The Panel received an update and questioned the PCC on the county wide programme to tackle youth gangs and drug violence. In preparation for this meeting, some Panel members had attended a local 'site visit' to a mobile police station in Ipswich, to speak with and gain insight from the local police officers. The Panel recommended:
 - That the PCC provide the Panel with further details of how the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group (SPSLG) committed funding is being allocated, including for the project co-ordination role.
 - That the Panel would look again at this topic in six months, and at the outcomes that have been delivered, including the work of the 'Reference Group'
 - That there needs to be a visible, costed Plan of joint working amongst the public sector leaders, showing the planned outcomes
 - That the PCC and the SPSLG should assign high priority, and appropriate resources, to an action to engage in preventative work with primary schools in Suffolk.
- The Panel resolved to:
 - Write to SPSLG about the perceived need for greater visibility, public awareness and leadership of the multi-agency collaborative work to address the youth gangs and drugs issues in Suffolk. *[An email was sent on behalf of the PCP to the SPSLG in August 2018]*
 - Write to Suffolk Public Health to encourage high priority focus and engagement by Public Health on addressing the youth gangs and drugs issues. *[An email was sent on behalf of the PCP to Dir. Public Health & Protection, in August 2018. A response to the PCP Chair gave details of all the work that Public health is leading/involved in in relation to this important matter, and the detailed continued focus and high level engagement by Public Health on this important system wide priority.]*
- The Panel questioned the PCC about 'Police Project Management'. The Panel requested of the PCC that in future there should be earlier engagement with the Panel on major change programmes such as the local policing model. The Panel resolved to use part of a planned informal workshop in August to gather

concerns, based on community views, about the recently published consultation document, 'A local police service for Suffolk's future'.

- The panel questioned the PCC about Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Schemes in rural villages and recommended to the PCC that he should seek to push forward with the deployment of these community ANPR schemes, subject to the final report on the trial currently underway in Spexhall parish, which the Panel would consider again at its meeting in January 2019.

In October 2018:

- The Panel ratified the appointment of a new Independent Co-opted Member (ICM), welcoming Stuart Palmer to the Panel. In accordance with the Panel Arrangements, an open recruitment process was undertaken over the summer involving three Panel members and the Monitoring Officer on the selection panel. The ICM vacancy arose at the end of the extended, almost six-years, term of diligent service to the Suffolk Panel by the previous ICM, Manwar Ali, who had been in one of the two ICM roles since the Panel's inception in 2012.
- The Panel questioned the PCC about the 2018/19 financial position six months on from when the PCC published the increased precept and the financial plan. The Panel heard that the PCC had continued to lobby to secure a better funding deal for Suffolk from the Government and that a case was being prepared to support Suffolk's position, which would be submitted in March 2019. The Panel requested sight of this information when it became available.
- The Panel explored savings through proposed changes to the workforce mix and questioned the PCC about the impact this might have on the public visibility of policing, particularly in light of concerns regarding youth gangs and drugs. The Panel acknowledged the need for clear leadership for the multi-agency work taking place in this arena, and resolved to invite Cllr Paul West as Chairman of Leadership Group for Gangs and County Lines, to attend an informal workshop to consider this in more detail. The Panel heard about joint work taking place to deliver savings across seven forces and requested further information on this topic. The Panel also requested high level clarification of how police pension schemes are funded.
- The Panel questioned the PCC about the Criminal Justice System and the role of the PCC to "bring together community safety and criminal justice partners, to make sure local priorities are joined up". The Panel heard about a range of initiatives taking place to reduce re-offending delivered through the voluntary and community sector and requested further information to demonstrate the effectiveness of this work. The Panel supported the PCC in his efforts to encourage wider public sector engagement with initiatives to provide opportunities for ex-offenders through, for example, work

placements. Following concerns expressed about the appropriateness of sentencing, the Panel resolved to invite a representative of the Magistrates Courts in Suffolk to attend a future informal workshop to understand this subject more fully.

- The Panel reviewed the PCC's Annual Report for 2017/18. The Panel commended the report for its presentation and ease of reading and discussed arrangements for circulation. The Panel formally responded to the PCC with its comments, subsequent to which the PCC replied, addressing the Panel's recommendations regarding circulation and thanking Panel members for their continued encouragement and support.

Panel Development

New members of the Panel were welcomed during 2018 and updated briefing information was circulated summarising the role and work of the Panel. Panel members and substitute members have been apprised regularly about PCC and Panel related developments, including Select Committee and HMIC reports, and the Suffolk PCC's public meetings. Two members of the Panel attended the national conference of Police and Crime Panels held in Coventry in November 2018, organised by Frontline Consulting Associates, and then gave some feedback to the Panel's next informal workshop. During the year the Panel agreed to pay to join the Eastern Region PCP Network, alongside the seven other PCPs in the region; the Chairman and Scrutiny Officer have participated in one meeting of this network, so far.

The Panel's informal workshops are open to both main and substitute Panel members, ensuring that there is a good framework for all members to be kept up to date on recent developments and also have the opportunity to contribute directly to the planning and scoping of the Panel's business.

Police and Crime Panel Finances

Similar to previous years, for 2018/19, a Home Office Grant of up to £65,260 provides finance to Suffolk County Council for the administration of the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel.

For the period 1 October 2017 to 31 March 2018, the total costs submitted to the Home Office for reimbursement were £31,690.

For the period 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018, the total costs submitted to the Home Office for reimbursement were £30,128.

The costs include: staff support to the Panel, specialist professional advice and support, recruitment of a new Independent Co-opted Member, meeting management, financial management and administration and management and updating of information about the PCP on the website, member expenses, Chairman's allowance, independent co-opted member attendance allowance, PCP conference attendance fees, and subscription to the Eastern Region PCP Network.

As part of the Home Office agreement, the Council is asked to submit a report highlighting how value for money (e.g. benefits, savings, efficiencies etc.) is being achieved. The mid year report summary was as follows:

Value for money in respect of the expenditure for the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel has been achieved so far this year in the following ways:

1. The Chairman's Allowance has been held at the 2016/17 rate.
2. The recruitment of a new Co-opted Independent Community Member in September 2018 eliminated advertising in local press and relied instead on web based county wide electronic advert and direct electronic communications to key stakeholders (local voluntary organisations and businesses and minority groups) and social media.
3. Panel meetings which are held outside Ipswich to encourage public participation are held in comparable local authority premises to keep costs to a minimum and the use of pool car and car sharing where possible also helps to keep travel costs to a minimum.
4. Meeting papers are currently sent to all Panel Members and substitute members to ensure that any substitutes at a meeting are fully conversant with the business and able to take an active and informed role. We also welcome substitute members to informal scoping workshops, alongside other members. The costs of doing this are balanced by the efficiency and effectiveness of meetings and continuity of decision making.
5. Members are encouraged to make use of technology for reading agenda's and reports. Reports also routinely include hyperlinks to more detailed information which affords members the opportunity to drill deeper into a topic area and helps keep production costs to a minimum.
6. Professional updating is generally undertaken via the internet and through peer group networking rather than attendance at specific training events. Where members and officers attend paid for training, the value and benefits are considered in advance and are related to the overall value to the Panel.
7. The Panel has recognized the time restraints of public meetings of the Police and Crime Panel and makes use of regular informal workshops as an effective and efficient way of exchanging information between formal meetings and for identifying key areas of questioning to ensure that the evidence presented to formal meetings is tightly scoped and focused.
8. Panel members attend a premeeting in advance of the formal Panel meetings to develop an effective questioning strategy and help with management of the

meeting. The pre-meetings take place on the same day as the Panel meeting to keep costs of attendance to a minimum.

The Suffolk Police and Crime Panel publishes the summary details of the Panel administration costs and member expenses claims on the Host Authority's [website](#).

The Panel's Forward Work Plan

At each formal meeting the Panel considers any updates required to its Forward Work Plan, taking into account that:

- the matter comes within its terms of reference;
- there is a significant level of public interest in the matter;
- it is an issue which has been raised by auditors or other inspection regimes, or is the effect of new government guidance or legislation;
- there is an opportunity to identify and promote good practice, have a positive impact and add value to the work of the PCC.

The Suffolk Panel's forward work plan continues to be focussed around:

- Nominally quarterly formal meetings, with considerable informal preparatory work and stakeholder interactions around these, including via the informal workshops and member 'Task & Finish' (T&F) Groups where appropriate.
- Regular statutory reviews such as the PCC's annual proposed precept (and any formal variation to the PCC's police and crime plan).
- More use of T&F Groups and of meetings focused on major themes (eg. cybercrime, mental health, partnership working, etc.), and also quarterly focus on one of the four objectives in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan.
- Some topics for more specific focus arising from previous Panel meetings, or matters arising in between the formal meetings.
- An 'Information Bulletin' containing briefing information of potential interest to the Panel (e.g. A summary of PCC Decisions since the last meeting).
- Occasional 'ad-hoc' statutory activities that are required, such as holding a Chief Constable Conformation Hearing.

The Panel's Forward View

Panel members were asked to give some short sentences summarising, 'Where they see things going ...', to give an indicative view of what Panel Members feel that the Panel should be focusing its energies on in 2019 (building on the experiences and learning from 2018 and before). Various views were given, as follows:

"In 2019, I see the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel

... Lobbying with whatever means at its disposal, support for the PCC's quest for increased funding to a level comparable with that of Essex and Norfolk".

... Supporting any measures that increase the visibility of the police and encourage the public to have confidence in the Suffolk Police Force"

... Supporting the Suffolk PCC with ongoing negotiations to secure additional funding for the Suffolk Constabulary. The serious problem of 'youth gangs, drugs and violence' in our county are very major problems together with 'road safety' issues - these issues need addressing in 2019 and require extra funding to enable Suffolk to continue to be a safe place to live and work for all our community".

... Will continue to have a very positive relationship with the Suffolk Police & Crime Commissioner and the Police Constabulary. The Panel will continue to support the Commissioner in his attempts to gain fairer funding for the Suffolk Constabulary. The Panel will examine and monitor the fiscal measures the Commissioner has in place. The Panel will continue to encourage the Commissioner on co-operative working with other agencies such as the NHS in particular Mental Health, the PSLG, and the voluntary sector. The Panel will try and ensure the Commissioner maintains his pressure on the constabulary to increase solve rates in burglary SSA, CSA, and Domestic violence. The Panel will encourage the efforts of the Commissioner and Constabulary to find new innovative ways to communicate with the public".

Contacts and Further Information

If you would like further information about the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel please visit the website at www.suffolk.gov.uk/police-and-crime-panel, or contact Suffolk County Council, on Tel. 01473 265119, email: committee.services@suffolk.gov.uk.