

Suffolk Police and Crime Panel

Annual Report 2015

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Foreword from the Chairman

“Chairing the Police and Crime Panel is both interesting and satisfying as its diverse membership brings differing views on policing and thus a wider perspective of Suffolk’s policing needs. The importance of effective collaboration and good communication have been recurring themes during the past year. Looking forward, the changing nature of policing, particularly the reduced visibility of ‘officers on the beat’, the rapid rise in cybercrime, the public awareness of child sexual exploitation and financial constraints mean the Panel’s role will be paramount in questioning the Police and Crime Commissioner on the areas of change.”

PATRICIA O’BRIEN

Chairman of the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel

Introduction and Background

This is the third 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: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/your-community/working-in-partnership/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. In addition, the Suffolk PCC has held various meetings in public, such as his meetings with the Chief Constable every two months, and a series of public forums in each district / borough across the county. 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 via national Select Committees, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), internal and external auditors and also in the local and national news media.

Who's Who

The membership and political mix of the Panel changed during 2015, following the District and Borough Council local elections in Suffolk.

The members of the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel until May 2015, were:

Cllr Patricia O'Brien	(County Council, Conservative) [Chairman]
Rev. Canon Paul Daltry	(Co-opted) [Vice Chairman]
Mr. Manwar Ali	(Co-opted)
Cllr Alison Cackett	(Waveney District, Conservative)
Cllr Albert Grant	(Ipswich Borough, Labour)
Cllr Peter Gardiner	(County Council, Labour)
Cllr Keith Patience	(County Council, Labour)
Cllr Diana Kearsley	(Mid Suffolk District, Conservative)
Cllr Tim Marks	(St Edmundsbury Borough, Conservative)
Cllr Josh Sayles	(Suffolk Coastal District, Conservative)
Cllr Eddie Stewart	(Forest Heath District, Conservative)
Cllr Rex Thake	(Babergh District, Independent)
Cllr David Wood	(County Council, Liberal Democrat)

The members of the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel after May 2015, were:

Cllr Patricia O'Brien	(County Council, Conservative) [Chairman]
Rev. Canon Paul Daltry	(Co-opted) [Vice Chairman]
Mr. Manwar Ali	(Co-opted)
Cllr Mark Bee	(Waveney District, Conservative)
Cllr Mary Evans	(County Council, Conservative)
Cllr Albert Grant	(Ipswich Borough, Labour)
Cllr Peter Gardiner	(County Council, Labour)
Cllr Brian Harvey	(Forest Heath District, Conservative)
Cllr Colin Hedgeley	(Suffolk Coastal District, Conservative)
Cllr Diana Kearsley	(Mid Suffolk District, Conservative)

Cllr Tim Marks	(St Edmundsbury Borough, Conservative)
Cllr David Rose	(Babergh District, Independent)
Cllr David Wood	(County Council, Liberal Democrat)

[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 2015 is shown further below.

Panel Activities and Achievements in 2015

During 2015 the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel has held four formal Panel meetings, on 30 January, 24 April, 10 July and 9 October. There was the continuing desire to ensure that these public meetings offered county wide opportunity for participation, and as such the July and October meetings were held in Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft, respectively, with the other meetings being held in Ipswich.

Details of the formal meetings and the agendas and papers for them are available online: <http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/index.aspx>. *[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 one or two Panel members as observers at the PCC's two-monthly public meetings with the Chief Constable.

The Panel's work and achievements in 2015 are summarised as follows:

In January 2015:

- The Panel considered the PCC's proposed Policing Precept for 2015/16, and agreed unanimously to approve the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposal to increase the precept by 1.997% in 2015-16. Further detail is in the Panel's formal report, available on the [Suffolk County Council website](#).

- In consideration of the PCC's strategic objective on 'Caring for Victims and Vulnerable People', there was emphasis on victims of Domestic Abuse, and the Panel heard a verbal update on the research that the PCC had commissioned through University Campus Suffolk (UCS). The Panel highlighted the need for properly joined up shared services with senior level commitment, early preventative intervention through the Education system, and more focus on victims of crime other than domestic abuse.

In April 2015:

- In consideration of the PCC's strategic objective on 'Solving Crime', the Panel welcomed the 2% year-on year reduction in recorded crime in Suffolk, but expressed concern at the worsening performance in relation to solving Serious Sexual Offences and Violence with Injury. The Panel resolved to keep this issue on its own agenda and recommended:
 - that the PCC continue to scrutinise the Chief Constable / Constabulary around Serious Sexual Offences solved crime performance, bearing in mind that extra financial resources had been put in by the PCC previously, and again when the precept was increased;
 - In relation to people with mental ill health, and the trialling of the 'triage car' in partnership with the Norfolk & Suffolk Foundation Trust (NSFT), that the PCC also give consideration to the approach adopted in Norfolk whereby a mental health nurse is based in the Contact and Control Room.
- The Panel questioned the PCC about the research into Domestic Abuse in Suffolk that he commissioned from UCS, and the Report published in March 2015. The PCC and Panel members stressed the need for Suffolk agencies involved in the various aspects of domestic abuse to engage with each other and work collectively on addressing the issues in the Report, and subsequent quantitative research, and for strong overall leadership to drive it forward to bring about real change. The Panel resolved:
 - that the Panel Chairman and Vice-Chairman should write a letter to stakeholders encouraging them to support and engage with the PCC in creating and implementing a collective Action Plan to address the findings of the UCS research into Domestic Abuse in Suffolk.
 - to recommend to the Suffolk County Council (SCC) Scrutiny Committee that it undertake scrutiny of the performance, in dealing with domestic abuse, of the various SCC services that are referred to in the UCS report on Domestic Abuse in Suffolk.
- The Panel also asked the PCC some questions about the position of the Chief Constable.

In July 2015:

- The Panel re-elected its chairman and vice-chairman for a further year of office.
- In consideration of the PCC's Strategic Partnership Methodology, the Panel discussed with the PCC the rate of progress on implementing the Transformation Challenge Award, shared call centres and control rooms, balancing evidence with intuition, positive learning from Lowestoft Rising, lack of information about the level of sexual exploitation in Suffolk, the importance of good public communication, partnership engagement in commissioning grants for dealing with domestic abuse, effective working of Safer Neighbourhood Teams, and the need for more willing engagement by some partner organisations. The Panel resolved that it would reiterate its earlier message to key stakeholders regarding timely partnership engagement in addressing the Domestic Abuse issues in Suffolk, and recommended to the PCC that:
 - More information be provided on the proposal to have a successfully working 'single service desk for Suffolk'
 - An update be provided at the October meeting on the successes and lessons learned from the Lowestoft Rising partnership work.
 - More information be provided on how insight is gleaned by the PCC in relation to 'unknown evidence' and the use of intuition by the PCC in establishing priorities and making decisions.
 - More detail be provided on the proposed approach to ensuring that Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) are operating successfully.
 - He seeks to ensure a more strategic approach to dealing with Domestic Abuse in Suffolk.
- The Panel undertook one of its statutory duties and reviewed the Draft Variations to the Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017, which had been anticipated since the start of the year and in relation to which the Panel had previously made suggestions to the PCC regarding its content. The Panel recommended to the PCC, in light of the Panel's previous suggestions and also the ongoing increased terrorism threat, that he include within his Police and Crime Plan more specific information relating to responding to major incidents and civil emergencies in Suffolk. The Panel resolved to suggest to the Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU) and its constituent Suffolk Local Authorities that there should be more elected councillor involvement in joint emergency planning.
- In consideration of the PCC's strategic objective on 'Responding to Emergencies' the Panel recommended to the PCC that, in addition to providing more detail on the proposed approach to ensuring that Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) are operating successfully, there should also be more information about the officer, PCSO and volunteer involvement in SNTs,

and improved communication and feedback about SNTs from the Constabulary to the public.

- The Panel expressed concern at the continued poor performance and national ranking of the Constabulary in solving serious sexual offences, and resolved to plan to scrutinise further the PCC's approach to addressing this subject at its meeting in January 2016.

In October 2015:

- The Panel considered the PCC's strategic objective on 'Preventing - Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour'. The Panel discussion included reference to the activity of the voluntary sector in reducing Anti-Social Behaviour, closer working with mental health agencies, the importance of Safer Neighbourhood Teams, closer working with Community Safety Partnerships, and the changing pattern of crime (more 'hidden' and online). The Panel resolved to set up a small 'Task & Finish' group to look at Community Safety Partnerships and the 'Strong and Safe Communities Group for Suffolk' (of which the PCC is a member), in order to have better clarity of their inter-relationships and funding arrangements. The Panel recommended to the PCC that a full update be provided for the Panel's January 2016 meeting, on the PCC / Constabulary plans for Safer Neighbourhood Teams.
- The Panel reviewed the PCC's Annual Report for 2014/15. The discussion with the PCC included reference to the importance of local intelligence, appropriate use of volunteers, 'stop and search' trends, disappointment at the worsening performance in investigating and solving Serious Sexual Offences (SSO) despite additional funding from raising the council tax precept, police attendance at burglaries, the improvement in Quality of Service and public confidence in the police, the large proportion of Domestic Violence / Abuse grant funding received in the East of the county, and the quality of the grant applications received by the PCC. The Panel recommended to the PCC, in light of the concerns about solving SSO, that a review of the Constabulary's investigative processes should be undertaken as part of a report from the PCC to the Panel in January 2016 on what the PCC is doing in order to improve the constabulary's SSO solved rate performance.
- The Panel received an update on the Lowestoft Rising Partnership work. The discussion with the PCC included mention of the importance of economic development in Lowestoft as an enabler for reduced crime and disorder and the importance of having senior-level buy-in from each of the partner organisations, together with a senior manager with lead responsibility, if the Lowestoft Rising model is to be replicated in other parts of the county. The Panel recommended to the PCC that he liaise with the Chief Constable and with Chief Executives of other Suffolk public organisations, to see how senior lead managers can be assigned, similar to the successful approach in

Lowestoft Rising, to bring professional leadership to partnership initiatives in other parts of the county, such as in Ipswich.

- The Panel received a Financial Savings update, and noted the forecast underspend in the context of the very serious financial pressures, that any future precept increases would be linked to specific deliverables, that there are unknown factors regarding the forthcoming Autumn statement and the national funding formula, the PCC's desire to ensure continued funding for some specific areas (including voluntary sector, rural crime, 'hidden harm', SSO, cybercrime and roads policing), and that closing the future savings gap of £5m required other partner organisations to play their part.

Panel Development

New members of the Panel were welcomed following the local elections in May 2015, 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.

Police and Crime Panel Finances

For 2014/15 the Home Office offered a maximum annual grant of £53,300 for administration costs plus £920 per panel member per year for expenses. The total grant paid to Suffolk in 2014/15 was £50,654 (£41,938 administration costs and £8,715 members' expenses).

Administration costs include: dedicated staff support to the Panel, specialist professional advice and support, meeting management, financial management and administration, management and updating of information about the PCP on the website.

Members' expenses include: Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance, Attendance Allowance for Co-opted Independent Community Members, relevant employers tax and NI contributions, training and development costs for members and related travel and subsistence claims, if any.

For the 2015/16 financial year, the Home Office has approved an annual grant of up to £65,260 to Suffolk County Council as the Host Authority. As part of the terms and conditions of the grant, Police and Crime Panels must publish, as a minimum on their (or the Host Authority's) [website](#), details of all their expenditure and include details of all panel administration costs and individual member claims for expenses and allowances.

Claims to the Home Office are made two times a year: for the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015 and also for the period 1 October 2015 to 31 March 2016.

For the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015, the administration costs were £22,671. In addition member expenses, including employer National Insurance and Pension fund contributions and member training, totalling £4,624 were paid. Claims received for the period are listed below:

- £2,568 in respect of Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance
- £140 and £210 for Independent Community Member attendance allowances

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 member 'Task & Finish' 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).
- Some topics for more specific focus arising from previous Panel meetings, or matters arising in between the formal meetings.
- A quarterly schedule of Status Reviews focused on each of the (four) strategic objectives in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017 (updated July 2015).
- An 'Information Bulletin' containing briefing information of potential interest to the Panel (e.g. A summary of PCC Decisions since the last meeting).

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 2016 (building on the experiences and learning from 2015 and before). Various views were given, as follows:

“In 2016, I see the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel

- focusing their attentions on the changes that are taking place and the effect produced”.*
- robustly challenges the PCC at their quarterly meetings and I feel the PCC’s Action Plan is focusing on the major issues which will contribute to Suffolk continuing to be one of the safest counties; Domestic violence being in the forefront, together with child sexual exploitation, cyber crime and drug trafficking, will form part of the new police programme for Suffolk”.*
- pressing hard in order to maintain and improve policing in the County”.*
- focussing on more specific work such as Community Safety Partnerships through task and finish groups so that our scrutiny can be better informed and more helpful”.*

Contacts and Further Information

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