



Norfolk Police and Crime Panel

Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 April 2023 at 11am at County Hall, Norwich

Panel Members Present:

Cllr William Richmond (Chair)	Norfolk County Council
Air Commodore Kevin Pellatt (Vice-Chair)	Co-opted Independent Member
Cllr Gordon Bambridge	Breckland District Council
Cllr Jonathan Emsell	Broadland District Council
Cllr Donald Tyler	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council
Cllr Cate Oliver	Norwich City Council
Cllr James Easter	South Norfolk Council
Mr Peter Hill	Co-opted Independent Member

Officers Present:

Giles Orpen-Smellie	Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk (PCC)
Sharon Lister	Director of Performance and Scrutiny, OPCCN
Nicola Ledain	Committee Officer, NCC
Jill Penn	Chief Finance Officer, OPCCN
Jo Martin	Scrutiny Support Manager, NCC
Mark Stokes	Chief Executive, OPCCN
Gavin Thompson	Director of Policy and Commissioning, OPCCN

1. To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Graham Carpenter and his substitute Cllr David Bills and Cllr Tim Adams and his substitute Cllr Steve Riley. Apologies had also been received from the Chief Constable, Paul Sanford.

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Members to Declare any Interests

- 3.1 There were no interests declared.

4. To receive any items of business which the Chair decides should be

considered as a matter of urgency

- 4.1 No urgent business was discussed.

5. Public Questions

- 5.1 No public questions were received.

7. Police Crime and Community Safety Plan 2022-24 Performance Monitoring

- 7.1 The Panel received the report which provided the third of the PCC's new style performance reports to the Panel and sets out an overview of progress against all six strategic priorities (pillars) contained within the Plan.
- 7.2 The Chair thanked the PCC for the information provided and asked the PCC to introduce the report.
 - 7.2.1 In introducing the report, the PCC highlighted that as he was two-thirds of the way through his term, it was a timely moment to reflect on progress. The PCC was pleased with the plan, and the way it had been embraced by the Constabulary. However, looking forward the PCC explained that the angle of scrutiny was going to change, and his area of focus was going to be how the Constabulary carried out pillar 2 of the plan; 'Visible and Trusted Policing'. The PCC expressed the view that the voice of the silent majority of Norfolk was that more than anything else they wanted greater visibility of policing and if the police wanted to restore public confidence, then they must be more visible and accessible in all the areas of Norfolk that they served. The PCC clarified that the Constabulary continued to do excellent work, but the nature of modern crime meant that most of the work went on out of the view of the public. There was also the issue of increased public expectation and demand on resources with officers spread evenly which inevitably impacted on routine patrolling. There had also been the consequence of austerity such as station closures and the loss of Police Community Support Officers. This had, all together, led to the expectation gap between what the public expected of visible policing and the police's obligation to tackle crime. The PCC confirmed that considering the mood of the public, there needed to be a new focus on trusted and visible policing and for the rest of his term, the PCC stated that pillar 2 would be the focus of his scrutiny of the Constabulary and would continue into a second term if he was successful in achieving that.
 - 7.2.2 The PCC reported that under pillar 2 'Visible and Trusted Policing', referred to on page 30 of the agenda, the public perception survey showed a slight decline down 1% on the last 12 months to 85%. The PCC felt that this was encouraging especially considering the recent high profile media headlines regarding police officers as well as Baroness Casey's report into the Metropolitan Police. The PCC added that this was a well written, measured, fair and hard-hitting report and although was written about the Metropolitan Police was being considered by the PCC as a report about policing generally. Therefore, the PCC had asked the Constabulary to review the Casey report and prepare an action grid about how Norfolk listened to the debate about policing and how Norfolk would react. The Chief Constable had widened that work to include other reports such as the latest His Majesty's Inspectorate of

Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services' thematic report on vetting. The PCC would use that action grid to support his scrutiny of the Constabulary under the six pillars of his plan.

7.2.3 The PCC continued to reflect on progress under the remaining pillars:

Pillar 1: Sustain Norfolk Constabulary

The PCC reported that as announced by Government yesterday, Norfolk had achieved the recruitment target under the uplift programme which was good news. However, the number of civilian posts was down by approximately 75. Despite what had been suggested on a news programme in the week regarding Norfolk's vetting, the PCC assured the Panel that the state of vetting in Norfolk was satisfactory. There was an unfair comparison between vetting between constabularies, with Norfolk conducting a pre-sift and advising applicants if they would or would not be accepted. Other constabularies would wait until later in the recruitment process.

Pillar 3: Tackling Crime

The PCC reported that there was a new Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) entitled violence against women and girls and as well as fraud. The SPR has increased from 14 to 77 pages with no additional resources to deliver this. The PCC also highlighted that the Home Office was due to review the accounting rules which would mean that it would be difficult to compare current data with historical data as the basis of these figures would be different.

Pillar 4: Prevent Offending

The PCC expressed that it was difficult to measure success in prevention, but there was excellent work going on to address issues and behaviours that created cycles of crime.

Pillar 5: Support Victims

The PCC highlighted that there was excellent work being undertaken but he did particularly highlight the pressures of the Victim and Witness Care Team (VAWS). The pressure reflected issues in the wider criminal justice system, but that team were those that delivered bad news to witnesses and victims and therefore the burden fell on the policing budget.

Pillar 6: Community Safety

The PCC highlighted his concern of the number of fatalities and those seriously injured on the road, and referred to page 47, and reported that the number was increasing. The Constabulary were working to address this with several road campaigns and initiatives being introduced throughout the summer to try and reduce those figures.

The PCC also reported that the National Productivity Review would reflect the Humberside model and the police engagement and mental health issues. Work on that from Norfolk's point of view was proceeding well. The outcome from that review was to identify work that could be returned to their rightful owner, which would in turn generate capacity for the Constabulary and return to its core policing duties.

7.4 The Chair thanked the PCC for his introduction. During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- 7.4.1 Members of the Panel were pleased that the PCC was focusing on pillar 2 and visible policing as the subject was being raised with them by the general public frequently. Panel members raised that they were often being asked by their parish councils why police officers were not attending parish council meetings and it was hoped that a solution could be found to how villages, parishes and parish councils were told what and when was going on in their area and what the police were doing. The PCC reported that this was the leading topic in the recent Public Accountability Meeting and the footage was available online. The PCC explained that he had raised the same concerns, but his part was to scrutinise the Constabulary and to ask why. He explained that the Constabulary had 1800 officers, and this left few officers to be able to attend the 450 parishes that existed in Norfolk whilst also prioritising 999 calls and other high priority tasks, which were currently at the highest level than they had been. Emergency responses had to be a priority over undertaking a routine patrol. The PCC would like to be in the position of reinstating those patrol walks or something like Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) as the public was asking him too. Increasing the number of police officers on the ground to answer the emergency calls considering the limited budget was not an option. Other areas that were being reviewed included the amount of tasking that was being carried out for other agencies. The PCC reported that 20% of the phone calls received were for mental health calls. There was currently national debate by the policing minister and Humberside Constabulary who had decided, after seeking legal advice, that they would step back sensibly from mental health issues. The senior leadership team in Norfolk had considered what Humberside had done and although they had a sound approach, would be approaching it slightly differently and would have a long run up to stepping back. The Norfolk approach would support the mental health service so that when policing did step back, there would be a safety net in the form of mental health cars. It was hoped that the number of these would increase. The PCC also commented that there were other issues aside from mental health which was not core policing business. As such as full review of 999 calls was being carried out to identify what the police were involved in. In answer to the other part of the issues raised by the Panel, the PCC confirmed that he was encouraging members of the Constabulary to not attend parish council meetings as it was too time-consuming travelling, writing a report and attending the meeting. The PCC encouraged parish councils to attend the Safer Action Neighbourhood Panel meetings (SNAP) instead where they would be able to access the beat manager and the area inspector.
- 7.4.2 In response, the Panel member commended the approach of looking at the Humberside model and commended the PCC for considering other areas where the capacity of the police could be increased. He suggested that community support officers were linked to the councils but should not be linked to the police. The PCC replied that whilst it was not the view of some members of the Panel, the majority view of the public was that they would like PCSOs reinstated. He reported that work that was taking place in his office through the Community Safety Partnership and funding that they could have access too was the consideration of a community support officer concept based on the Covid-19 marshal model. There was detail to be discussed regarding what they could do on behalf of the police and how they would link with the police, but it was an idea that would be considered.
- 7.4.3 The Chair referred to Safer Neighbourhood Action Panels (SNAP) on page 30 at point 4.4 of the agenda and noted that a review had commenced with

recommendations focusing on achieving consistent minimum standards in line with the College of Policing Guidelines. The Chair asked if there was anything that the PCC perceived indicated that standards needed to improve and be in line with the College of Policing Standards. The PCC explained that the SNAP meeting should be chaired by a member of the public rather than the police. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, some of them had been suspended and some changed to virtual meetings. They had all returned but in various forms with some being virtual, some hybrid and some in-person. The Chief Constable was looking at best practice nationally and would be applying a consistent approach to SNAP meetings in Norfolk. The PCC was reinforcing this message by encouraging councils to help support them so police assets were not being provided. This would mean that representatives from all communities that the SNAP covered would be present and proper discussions could be held.

- 7.4.4 The Panel asked for the progress of the eleven areas for improvement, as outlined on page 27, point 3.1.3 of the report. The PCC answered that he would like to be able to go through each of those eleven areas and give a detailed response but with the Chief Constable absent he was not able to do that. However, the PCC did explain that before the final report was published, work began on all eleven areas immediately and would continue. The PEEL Inspection approach only gave a short window before the inspector returned after the initial inspection and therefore only gave the Constabulary a short time to consider those areas which had raised concern. The PCC reassured the Panel that the CC had been able to give a detailed report of progress on those areas. The PCC offered to take away the action and provide a written response to the question to append to the minutes.
- 7.4.5 The Panel questioned the PCC about what provisions were being put in place to improve the detection rate and increase the crimes solved from 10% to 20%. Page 49 of the report indicated that only 10% of crimes were solved. The PCC referred the Panel to the Peel report which congratulated the Constabulary on a solve rate that was 2% higher than the national average. At that time the national average was 7%, and Norfolk was achieving 9%. It appeared that this meant that 90% of crime was never solved. The PCC explained that the Home Office were reviewing the Home Office Accounting Rules as currently the Constabulary had to record all charges that occurred from any single incident, if appropriate. However, not all those charges would be taken to court by the Crown Prosecution Service which would indicate that the remaining charges were never solved. It was anticipated that the Constabulary would only have to record the primary offence, and list others charges as additional charges. It was also noted that statistics could be out of date and the PCC informed the Panel that the Office of National Statistics were often three months behind whereas the British Crime Survey were up to date.
- 7.4.6 Regarding pillar 3 of the Police and Crime Plan; Strategic Priority of Tackling Crime, the Panel commended the 63% decrease in the number of active county lines and questioned how that had happened. The PCC explained that the success of county lines was a Norfolk home-grown success and was because of one police officer who identified a new trend of the drugs supply in Norfolk and a new supply model, most of which was cocaine based. The drug initially came from Latin America and would make its way to Liverpool or London. The model which was identified was based on child exploitation. The police officer worked with the Home Office and the experience was rolled out nationally and was now considered best practice and used by most forces in the country. The PCC explained that the

Constabulary had enough evidence to wrap county lines up immediately, however the problem with that was that it would become situation vacant. Gangs could backfill spaces quickly so taking the supplies of the street would not help, the whole model needed to be considered and the supply change from the big cities which they originated from needed to be addressed. The PCC also reported that the specialist countyline team had a crown prosecution lawyer embedded in them, so they were able to get advice at an early stage. The PCC explained that the last time he was briefed the team had a 100% conviction rate. This was due to there being a 100% guilty plea rate.

- 7.4.7 Having seen an article in the local press regarding violence against police officers, the Panel asked the PCC if he was satisfied with the duty of care that the Constabulary provided when they entered dangerous situations. The PCC replied that it was a difficult question because he would wish that no Police Officer would be assaulted. Putting police officers in a situation and wearing appropriate equipment for that/ Public had indicated that they do not like the look of police officers armed with weapons, however officers do not know what situation they would come across and needed to be prepared. Around 40% of officers were assaulted each year and approximately 9% of officers needed hospital treatment each year. The PCC asked rhetorically how many civilians would go to work every day with that amount of risk, and it was high credit to the officers that the Constabulary had that they continued to go to work. The PCC also made the point that every officer who was injured, was one less officer who was not fit for duty as well as the ongoing toll that it took. Nationally there was approximately 20% of officers who were suffering from stress. If society did not support officers, then the retention of officers could suffer. The crown prosecution service needed to take the assault on officers seriously, and there was a plea that magistrates looked carefully at assault on officer's cases taking into consideration the risks that officers encountered daily
- 7.4.8 The Panel asked the PCC how his office were embracing the improvements that the PCC wanted to see with regards to the concerns within the VAWS, mentioned on page 46 at point 7.24. The PCC explained that each case officer had 170 cases to deal with and was an unfair challenge and far too high, the majority of which had arisen from court delays. The magistrate court numbers had risen again after having been addressed from the Covid-19 pandemic. The PCC highlighted that the VAWS were the interface between the Constabulary and the witnesses and were often working late in the process, liaising with the witnesses advising of court changes. There were a variety of reasons why the cases were growing but mostly it was due to resources in the wider criminal justice system, such as transport from Norwich prison to courts around the county. If there were any issues with traffic, it would mean that cases were held late pushing back other cases and this compounded the problem. The precept rise last year had helped to add some temporary staff into the team but the scale of the problem was not subsiding. After conversations between the PCC and CC, it had been suggested that the problems would not ease until 2027. The PCC also highlighted that the role was emotionally demanding and needed to be carried out by vocational people. He added that the CC was very aware of this, and discussions were being held about where the resources would come from. The PCC expressed that he was glad it was raised as it was a real cause for concern.
- 7.4.9 The temporary posts in the VAWS had been created to address the backlog, but it was considered that the extra resources would not be needed in the long term.

The temporary reasoning was now becoming permanent due to issues in the criminal justice system. Some of the temporary posts could be made permanent but this was a tension between balancing the budget as the financial liability would then be taken on.

- 7.5 Having considered the PCC's summary of progress towards delivering the six strategic priorities, the Panel **NOTED** the report and that the PCC would provide further information on progress with the areas for improvement identified by the HMICFRS PEEL inspection

7. Information Bulletin – questions arising to the PCC

- 7.1 The Panel received the report summarising both the decisions taken by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk (PCC) and the range of his activity since the last Panel meeting.
- 7.2 The PCC highlighted that since the report had been written he had started a fortnightly blog on his website. It reflected mostly on conversations that he had held with the wider public so they could be aware that he had noted them.
- 7.3 The Chair asked the PCC if there was anything further that he had challenged the CC on at the last Public Accountability Forum (PAF) on 19th April that hadn't been mentioned in the report or previously at this meeting. The PCC explained that it had primarily focused on visible policing, and it was clear that the Constabulary and the CC knew this was a focus, but it was about prioritisation and balancing resource pressures. There were a lot of initiatives coming from the Home Office and legislation being moved forward which would mean more tasks for policing without extra resources, which also needed to be considered. The Government's anti-social action plan initiative had been released, but only 10 forces out of 43 were being funded for the pilot. However, there was concern that the Government had raised expectations within the public that the Constabulary would be present in every rural village addressing anti-social behaviour, but there was not that resource available. Next year, there had been an indication that £2.2 million would be received specifically to support the anti-social plan. Half of that funding which would be for initiatives to address anti-social behaviour through the Community Safety Partnership with the other half of the funding being used for criminal justice plan to support 'instant justice'. The PCC did express some concern how much impact this funding would have. He added that they would have the benefit of being able to watch the pilots with interest and would be able to apply that experience when the plan went live.
- 7.4 The Panel **NOTED** the report.

8. PCC Complaints Monitoring Report

- 8.1 The Panel received the report reviewing complaints received since the last monitoring report was received on the 27 June 2022.
- 8.2 The Panel **NOTED** the monitoring information.

9. Complaints Policy Sub Panel – Update

- 9.1 The Chair of the Sub Panel highlighted that since the meeting the report from Baroness Casey had been published and encouraged members of the Panel to read it.
- 9.2 The Chair of the Sub Panel asked for endorsement that the meeting frequency of the Sub Panel were reduced to two meetings per year, which he felt would be adequate, particularly as the Police and Crime Panel had moved to a programme of quarterly meetings. Additional meetings could still be arranged should they be required.
- 9.3 The Panel **NOTED** the update from the Complaints Policy Sub Panel and **AGREED** that the Sub Panel's Terms of Reference should be amended to state that it would meet approximately twice per year.

10. Norfolk Police and Crime Panel Annual Report 2022-23

- 10.1 The Panel received the report which set out the Panel's activity during the past year.
- 10.2 The Chair asked the Scrutiny Manager to make sure that a final version was published on the Panel's webpage and circulated to each member of the Panel. The Chair encouraged the Panel Members to share it with their colleagues and update them about the work of the PCP.
- 10.3 The Panel **AGREED** the draft annual report and **APPROVED** publication of the Panel's annual report 2022-23.

11. Work Programme

- 11.1 The Panel received the work programme for the period July 2023 to May 2024.
- 11.2 The Chair highlighted that the scheduled April 2024 meeting would be changed to early March 2024 to allow it to take place outside of the pre-election period ahead of the PCC elections in May 2024.
- 11.3 The Chair suggested that at the March 2024 meeting, the PCC could provide an end of year report. The PCC explained that, although he would be happy to produce a report, as he was hoping to stand again as PCC for a following term, he would include a future action plan summarising what he had achieved and what he hoped to achieve for the future. It was noted that the PCC had only had a three-year term, whereas his predecessor had been in the role for five years due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the delay of the PCC elections.
- 11.4 The Chair noted that the membership of the Panel may change following the imminent local elections, and he thanked those Members on the Panel for their contribution and wished those who were not standing for re-election well for the future.
- 11.5 The Panel **AGREED** the work programme.

Meeting ended at 12.26pm.

**Mr W Richmond, Chair,
Norfolk Police and Crime Panel**



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