

Suffolk Police and Crime Panel Outside Body Report – 26 January 2024

Information for inclusion in District and Borough Councils' Outside Bodies reports

Background

The Suffolk Police and Crime Panel is responsible for supporting and challenging the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in the delivery of his functions. It is a joint committee, established under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The Panel has the following statutory functions, as set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011:

- Reviewing the PCC's [Police and Crime Plan](#);
- Reviewing the PCC's [Annual Report](#);
- Carrying out confirmation hearings for certain senior appointments in the PCC's office;
- Carrying out confirmation hearings for the Chief Constable;
- Handling non-criminal complaints about the PCC; and
- Supporting and scrutinising the effective exercise of the functions of the PCC.

The Panel comprises elected members of local authorities across Suffolk working alongside two independent co-opted members. Together the Panel members should reflect the breadth of communities in Suffolk. The Police and Crime Panel has 13 members in total, comprising:

- Four County Councillors;
- Seven representatives from the District and Borough Councils in Suffolk; and
- Two independent co-opted members.

The Panel is politically balanced, with the 11 local authority councillor representatives appointed to achieve political proportionality across Suffolk.

Meetings

The Panel holds 4 formal meetings per year, in January, March, July and October, plus additional meetings as required, for example to consider the appointment of the Chief Constable or to carry out confirmation hearings for senior officers in the PCC's office.

All formal meetings are held in Endeavour House, Ipswich. Members of the Panel also meet online to set the key lines of enquiry for each meeting, and for pre-meetings.

Latest Meeting

At the last Panel meeting on 26 January 2024:

- The Panel supported the PCC's **proposal to increase the policing precept** by £12.96 (4.9%) per annum for a Band D property in 2024/25. Whilst Members understood that people were suffering from the cost-of-living crisis, those in most need would be protected from the increase by council tax reduction schemes. Additionally, any reduction in police resource and subsequent increase in crime levels would be likely to disproportionately affect the more vulnerable sectors of society. Finally, the government's funding settlement for police had assumed full use of the maximum allowable £13 increase in the precept, and not to agree the precept would mean the PCC and the Constabulary would not be in a position to balance the police budget. The Panel's report to the PCC on its consideration of his precept proposals will be published on the [County Council's website](#).
- In a change to the usual format, the **Recent Decisions of the PCC** were presented in a separate report, rather than in the Panel's Information Bulletin. A key responsibility of the Panel is to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, by the PCC in connection with the discharge of his functions. Members questioned the PCC on a number of his recent decisions, with the main focus being on target setting and monitoring of projects which had been awarded grants. The PCC reminded members that his Head of Commissioning and Governance was to brief the Panel shortly on his commissioning responsibilities, and this would be an opportunity for members to ask for further details on how commissioning decisions were made. Other discussion areas included the recruitment of a new Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer for the OPCC, and slippage in the capital programme.
- As PCC elections were due to take place in May 2024, the Panel was required to review its **Panel Arrangements and Rules of Procedure**. One amendment was suggested to the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group, that a requirement be added to the Panel Arrangements that Independent Co-opted Members of the Panel must live or work in Suffolk.