



Minutes of the PCC Accountability Meeting

Meeting date/time: Tuesday 17 October 2023 at 10am.

Meeting location: Conference Room, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk, Building 7, Wymondham.

1. Attendance and apologies for absence

In attendance:

Giles Orpen-Smellie, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk (OPCCN)

Paul Sanford, Chief Constable (CC), Norfolk Constabulary

Mark Stokes, Chief Executive, OPCCN

Jill Penn, Chief Finance Officer, OPCCN

Simon Megicks, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC), Norfolk Constabulary

Nick Davison, Assistant Chief Constable (ACC), Norfolk Constabulary

Peter Jasper, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO), Norfolk Constabulary

Sharon Lister, Director of Performance and Scrutiny, OPCCN

Ralph Jackman, Director of Local Policing Delivery Unit (DLPDU), Norfolk Constabulary

James Stone, Head of Performance and Scrutiny, OPCCN

Lucy King, Inspector, Norfolk Constabulary

Matthew Steward, Sergeant, Norfolk Constabulary

Kirt Wilkinson, Performance and Scrutiny Manager, OPCCN

Nicola Atter, Communications, Engagement and Standards Lead, Norfolk Constabulary

Laura Bagshaw, Corporate News Manager, Norfolk Constabulary

Sue Starling, Media and Communications Officer, OPCCN

Apologies for absence:

Dr Gavin Thompson, Director of Policy, Commissioning and Communications, OPCCN

Julie Dean, Temporary Assistant Chief Constable, Norfolk Constabulary

1.1 Before addressing the agenda items, the PCC welcomed the attendees and explained this is a hybrid meeting and is being recorded on Teams so it can be uploaded to the OPCN website after the meeting. The PCC detailed the purpose of the meeting which is for the PCC to exercise his statutory responsibility to hold the CC to account for the policing service being provided to Norfolk as the public's elected representative.

2. Declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests

2.1 There were none declared.

3. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 5 July 2023

3.1 The minutes were confirmed with no objections.

3.2 The PCC asked whether the CC would like to give an update on the incident that took place on the A146 on the 5 March 2022. The CC confirmed that there was a misconduct meeting happening at Norfolk Constabulary headquarters on 17 October 2023 involving the police officer who was the front seat passenger at the time of the incident. The CC stipulated that the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) review concerning the matter determined that a misconduct meeting was the appropriate response for the passenger involved. The outcome of the hearing was to be made public once the meeting had concluded. In regard to the driver, the CC confirmed that they are trying to set a date for a misconduct hearing, however they are facing challenges concerning sourcing Legally Qualified Chairs and appropriate barristers given the volume of misconduct hearings nationally. The PCC confirmed he would not ask any further questions on the matter as he would not like to interfere or prejudice the disciplinary processes.

3.3 The PCC asked the CC if he would like to make a statement about the recent data breach that happened involving both Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies, specifically in relation to notifying those whose data was released. The CC clarified that the breach concerned the release of Freedom of Information data that had some personal and sensitive data hidden within some spreadsheets. The CC confirmed that there is no evidence to suggest that anyone accessed this data who should not have and stated that when they publicly announced the issue, the Constabulary undertook to update all victims who may have had their information released by the end of September 2023. The CC stated that the process of informing all victims concerned is now complete, however there were a small number of victims who the Constabulary have been unable to track down due to a multitude of reasons. Having exhausted all avenues to try and contact these victims, the Constabulary has now stopped trying to locate them. The CC stated that the Constabulary honoured their commitment in attempting to contact all victims and hoped that they were provided with all the reassurance in which they needed. The

CC confirmed that the Constabulary complied with all the wishes of the Information Commissioners Office, who they remained in close contact with throughout the process. The PCC asked the CC whether he could put a number to the small cohort who were uncontactable. The CC confirmed that there were just over 1,200 victims involved in the data breach and of this number, 168 victims either did not engage in the process or were uncontactable. The CC reiterated that of these 168 victims, some may have received the information from the Constabulary, however decided not to acknowledge it and if any were to come forward later down the line then they will be notified in the normal way.

4. Norfolk Constabulary Financial Update

- 4.1 The PCC clarified why he had included an agenda item on the Finance Statement, being that money drives many of the operations and resources within the Constabulary, so he thought it important to get an overall update on where the Constabulary are in terms of their finances.
- 4.2 The ACO stipulated that the data concerning this update derives from Pillar 1 of the Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan papers. The ACO confirmed that they outline, as of the end of June 2023, the Constabulary were forecasting an overspend of £1.2 million (0.6% of the Constabulary budget). The ACO highlighted that there have been significant pressures in terms of pay awards given to officers and staff in the previous two years, which had been higher than forecasted due to inflationary pressures. Last year there was a 5% pay award and this year there was a 7% increase for all officers and staff, both of which were partially funded. Due to record levels of inflation sustained over long periods of time, the Constabulary have seen significant pressure on contractual spending particularly around Estates and ICT contracts. The ACO confirmed that the Constabulary have four steps in place to attempt to combat against the £1.2 million overspend. The first is putting restrictions around some of the vacancies. The second is that the Constabulary are looking to control discretionary spending. The third is that the Constabulary have been reviewing the Capital Programme to see if there is anything they can stop or defer to next year. The final step that the Constabulary are taking is to try and maximise income streams that are available to the Constabulary. The ACO then stated that this overspend will have an impact on the next financial year too as some of this will roll over into 2024/25 and will add to the pressures of that financial year. The CC added that the pressures for next year look particularly problematic and there are two aspects as to why this is. Firstly, there's the issue of balancing the budget, and secondly there is the issue of not being able to invest and grow areas where there is increasing demand such as the Contact & Control Room. The Constabulary continues to see yearly increases in 999 calls which need to be answered and officers need to be deployed, so the Constabulary's capacity to answer this growing demand will be an issue. The CC considers the force to be an incredibly lean organisation, however there is a challenge as so much of the Constabulary budget is locked down, mainly with officer pay. The CC stated that he cannot reduce the number of police

officers as he would receive less funding from the Government. Contractual obligations are also another area where the budget is locked down as there are a number of contracts for services in place which have been ongoing for a number of years that the Constabulary cannot back out of. These locked down costs leave limited room for the Constabulary to make the savings it requires; however, this is not unique to Norfolk Constabulary as it is being felt by all forces nationally. The CC stated that it will not be until early in the next calendar year that the Constabulary know what all their allocations are going to be, therefore there is quite a bit of uncertainty and a significant financial challenge.

4.3 The PCC asked the ACO how much of the overspend will roll over into the next financial year. The ACO confirmed that it is difficult to give a precise figure as inflationary pressures will still be significant, especially where contracts are coming up for renewal, particularly around ICT contracts. The ACO stipulated that currently, forecasting is suggesting that around £1.2 million will roll over to the next financial year, however the Constabulary is hopeful that some of the income streams that they can tap into will help mitigate that figure. The PCC identified the whole of the overspend cannot be mitigated, the ACO confirmed that due to the locked in costs such as officer pay, which accounts for 88% of the Constabulary budget, and contractual costs which are critical to help support those on the front line, it would be difficult to do so alongside inflationary pressures.

4.4 The PCC asked the CC what operational penalties there would be if the Constabulary did put restrictions on vacancies as a means of mitigation. The CC confirmed that there would be operational penalties, but such would depend on where the posts fall. Where posts are absolutely operationally critical, the force is going straight out to market for them. The CC stated most of the posts are a result of staff entering retirement or going onto new jobs, they are therefore spread around the organisation which avoids one particular department facing a disproportionate impact. The CC confirmed that if the posts were no longer required then they would simply remove the posts. The CC noted how management of vacancies is an unsophisticated approach, however it is an effective one where savings can be made. The CC stated that the Constabulary prioritise core services such as answering the phones, getting to jobs quickly and keeping victims up to date and these are areas he wishes to grow. The PCC noted that in terms of visibility, this is more of an internal issue rather than a public facing one. The CC agreed, and reiterated the point that he cannot reduce the number of police officers that the Constabulary have, so as soon as an officer leaves, the force brings in a new recruit and the number of officers is as high as it ever has been, but they are most productive with a support team in the back office. The CC added that the Constabulary is performing well when it comes to crime reduction, crime detection, satisfaction and confidence, so all of that is being maintained whilst managing budgetary pressures.

5. Public Questions

5.1 The PCC stated that he received and accepted four questions from the public. The first public question was in two parts, the first of which was passed onto the Constabulary for action as this concerned pavement parking in a specified part of Norwich. The second part of the question asked why there is no definition of obstructive pavement parking and no standardised reporting format for obstructive pavement parking for Norfolk Police as is common elsewhere in England, therefore, if reported, would Norfolk Police take action against such obstructions. The CC confirmed that most forces in the country have moved onto a website called Single Online Home which provides commonality between all services. Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies are some of the last forces to merge onto this website, due to contractual reasons associated with the current website provider. However, the CC confirmed that Norfolk Constabulary are moving onto the Single Online Home at the start of November. This will mean there will be a standardised national approach in reporting nuisance parking and abandoned vehicles which will see Norfolk Constabulary adopt the national agreed content for advice and reporting. The CC apologised that the Constabulary had not been using the standardised national content, however this is now being remedied through merging onto the Single Online Home. In regard to what the Constabulary would do if obstructive parking was reported, the CC explained how in 2011 the law changed to place responsibility for general enforcement of parking offences onto local councils and that the Constabulary no longer have powers under the Highway Act or Road Traffic Act to deal with vehicles of that nature. However, the CC confirmed that the force does have some powers to deal with vehicles that are causing a hazard or wilful obstruction of the highway. The CC is particularly concerned in areas that are densely populated and have narrow roads, such as Norwich, especially for those using pavements who are in wheelchairs or pushing along pushchairs. The CC confirmed that through the new website, these instances can be reported or alternatively they can be reported to an officer in person or through an email to the Local Safer Neighbourhood Teams. When these are reported to the Constabulary they are assessed on the individual circumstances of each case and what resources the force has available according to what else is going on at the time, however if the CC can deploy an officer to such instances he will. The CC stated that he is aware that one City councillor, Councillor Calvert, has been involved in discussions with the Local Policing Inspectors concerning obstructive parking and has been out inspecting some of the streets in the Wensum Ward area where it is particularly problematic. The CC has been told that over the weekend of 14 October 2023, the Safer Neighbourhood Team were out providing letter drops in areas to encourage more responsible parking and await to see the impact of that. The CC stated that they do have some enforcement powers and when appropriate they will seek to use those powers.

- 5.2 The second public question put forward to the CC by the PCC was under the heading of crime prevention and detection, which asked why there is no facility for members of the public to give confidential and/or sensitive information to the police. The CC confirmed that if someone were to ring into Norfolk Constabulary's Control Room, they are encouraged to leave their contact details, but they are not obliged to. So, if someone wanted to speak to a call handler without leaving their name, they could. The CC also confirmed that there is a live chat facility where confidential and/or sensitive information can be provided. Furthermore, the CC stated that the Constabulary promote Crimestoppers which is a great means of providing anonymous information on crime and incidents. The CC confirmed that in the near future Crimestoppers is going to be rolling out an additional telephone number where the behaviours of police officers can be reported anonymously.
- 5.3 The third public question asked whether there could be a review of stop and search policy and furthermore the questioner would like to see a clear policy on the use of body cams as they believe police officers should be obligated to switch on their body cams whenever they are dealing with the public. They added that there should be sanctions taken against officers for failing to comply with these requirements. Subsequently, the PCC asked the CC to describe the regulation process and scrutiny that is currently in place. The CC confirmed that the force does have a policy on stop and search which has been reviewed as recently as April 2023. This policy is based upon the College of Policing's Approved Professional Practice, and it is rigorously inspected by the Inspectorate of Constabulary. The CC confirmed that they also conduct their own internal audits of stop search compliance and they are now seeing high levels of compliance with that Approved Professional Practice. The CC stated there is a link with stop and search and the use of body worn cameras as the Constabulary review the body worn video of stop and search encounters to make sure that it's not only the policy that is correct, but that the stop and search is carried out in the appropriate manner. The CC confirmed that there is an external stop and search scrutiny group who review the body worn video, and the force ensures that the composition of that group is made up of a diverse range of local residents. So, from a stop and search perspective, the CC confirmed that the Constabulary is compliant. With regard to body worn cameras, the CC confirmed that the Constabulary has a policy in place, the most recent version was published in September 2022 and is built upon the College of Policing's Approved Professional Practice. The CC confirmed that the policy contains details of when a police officer should be turning on their body worn video and also implies details of how that footage should then be retained, depending on the circumstances. The CC stated that the policy is clear on when an officer searches an individual, or a vehicle, their body worn video should be on and if officers fail to follow the policy, then they may be subject to disciplinary action or managerial intervention to make sure that they do in future. The PCC confirmed that the reports he has received from the scrutiny panel via the Independent Advisory Group have been positive since its launch.

5.4 The final question received from the public asked how Norfolk Constabulary is tackling scams in all their various forms as the questioner had been victim of a cryptocurrency scam which is now being investigated, however their initial submission to Action Fraud was not processed. The CC stated that according to the British Crime Survey, scamming and fraud is the most prevalent crime type in the UK. The CC confirmed that it is challenging for police forces as the volume is high and the perpetrators often do not live in the UK, with some of these other countries being hard to work with to secure criminal outcomes. The CC confirmed that there is a real difficulty and therefore the Constabulary's response needs to be multifaceted as they have to be realistic as to how much of that overseas criminality they can stop. Furthermore, there is significant focus with the Constabulary's partners on prevention. The Constabulary is a member of the Norfolk Against Scams Partnership which is a partnership led by Norfolk Trading Standards that works with the Constabulary and other partners to protect individuals and businesses from scams, doorstep crime and fraud by raising awareness through delivering prevention messages. The CC confirmed that the Constabulary's Corporate Communications Team is regularly publishing scam prevention messages through their social media channels and Beat Managers are reinforcing those messages. The CC stated that the target group of victims for scams are often the elderly and vulnerable, and for that reason the Constabulary have established a process whereby individuals who make a fraud report to Action Fraud, are assessed for vulnerability and are given bespoke crime prevention advice. At a national level the police's response to fraud is coordinated by the City of London Police and they run a number of campaigns targeting particular types of fraud, particularly for courier and romance fraud. The CC stated that earlier this year the Government published a new Fraud Strategy, which puts particular emphasis on regulators, industry, charities and law enforcement working together to pursue fraudsters and empower people. The strategy highlights that there were an estimated 3.7 million incidents of fraud in England and Wales in 2022 and declared a review of Action Fraud to try and make it more effective. The CC stated that the Constabulary do have their own joint force Cyber Investigations Team who pick up the most complex frauds which are cyber dependent. In addition to this, the CC stated that the force is looking to implement a Fraud Assessment Unit with fraud specialists, however this is dependent upon the financial figures. The PCC commented that the review of Action Fraud would be particularly helpful as there are visibility deficiencies with how Action Fraud investigate fraud. The CC agreed that victims are not seeing enough of the activity that goes on behind the scenes to investigate these crime types.

6. Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan 2022-24: Pillar 2 - Visible and Trusted Policing

6.1 The PCC explained that he would be doing a deep dive into Visible and Trusted Policing first as this is one of his main elements in terms of scrutiny.

6.2 The PCC asked the CC to define what is meant by visible policing from a Constabulary perspective. The CC believes that visible policing takes many forms, the most obvious being police officers out on the streets where members of the public can see them. However, the CC confirmed that his definition is not limited to physical policing and extends to the public having the opportunity to see what the Constabulary is doing, so visibility of their actions. The CC stated that reassurance can come from receiving some form of communication to tell members of the public what the police have done in their village or local area in the last 24 hours. The CC confirmed that this is particularly the case now as so much of police activity happens behind closed doors, such as investigations into cyber crime as by necessity an investigator needs to be sat behind a computer in a station. It is important that the force is visible and clear to the public as to what they have been doing so that they know the value they're getting for their contribution to policing. The CC stated that visible policing is about improving their communications, messaging, feedback and updating the community so they are clear as to what the force has been doing. The PCC asked whether that is achievable in the more rural areas of the county. The CC stated that it is more of a challenge as Norfolk is the fifth largest county in the country and there are many parts of the county which the CC would like to deploy more officers for street presence. Challenges are also seen in the Control Room where demand continues to increase, and a lot of this demand does not relate to crime which takes away from the Constabulary's core mission. The CC confirmed that the force has plans in January 2024 to commence the 'Right Care, Right Person' initiative which will mean the Constabulary will take a different approach to mental health demand. The CC hopes that this initiative will free up officer hours to help reinvest into visible policing. The CC stated that later this month the force anticipates the Home Office will announce the findings from their review of productivity in policing, which will make a number of observations such as how changing crime recording rules and changes to disclosure rules could free up thousands of officer hours.

6.3 The PCC asked the CC what other barriers and obstacles the Constabulary face in terms of delivering high levels of visible policing and are the force maintaining the numbers of officers on the ground that they would like to. The CC stated that in addition to growing demand in calls for mental health crisis, the impact of regulation and statutory requirements on policing is challenging. The impact this has relates to training and how long it takes to carry out certain tasks. The CC confirmed that all police officers are now joining the force under the Police Education and Qualifications Framework (PEQF) and the impact is that officers are spending more time in the classroom, which is a benefit as this leads to more well-trained investigative staff, however there is a consequence on visibility as they are not deployable as quickly. The CC stated that Norfolk Constabulary was allowed to grow its police officer numbers by 224 as result of the Government's Police Uplift Plan, and of these, 70-80 officers would be accounted for by training. The CC also stated that anytime something goes significantly wrong in policing, measures are

put in place to stop these happening again and one of the solutions is ordinarily more training. So, in the last two years, the Constabulary has seen an increase in the amount of time that police officers have to undertake personal safety training and taser training alongside the Firearms Curriculum growing each year leading to more hours of firearms training. Furthermore, First Aid training has increased in terms of number of hours. The CC stipulated that he of course wants a professional, highly skilled workforce, however his frustration is that each time one of these recommendations is made, it is not costed in terms of visibility and finance. The CC also noted that this is not just affecting uniformed officers, the Forensic Science Regulator for example set out a very detailed Code of Compliance that the force now has to adhere to. The consequence of this is that the Constabulary's Forensics Teams are effectively working in laboratories, so the number of scenes the team can go to now in a day has significantly lowered since the start of the CC's service, probably to about half the capacity, but again all for good reason. However, there is a cumulative impact of the regulations of compliance, which is impacting visible policing, which needs to be better understood when these regulations are made. The PCC noted that there is a tension between visible policing and producing the perfect standard of officer that always gets it right. The CC stated that upon reflection, and as a consequence of the savings that the force had to make over the last ten years, the county has cut back too hard in the training and development of officers so the increase in regulation is necessary, especially as the world of policing is becoming more complex. The PCC asked whether the force has reached the total aggregate number of officers in the Constabulary it had in 2010. The DLPDU stated that due to reinvestment through a previous precept and the Police Uplift Programme, the aggregate figures are ahead of those figures seen in 2010. The CC noted, however, that if you were to base it on per head of population, then the figure would not be as positive.

6.4 The PCC asked the CC how the Police Uplift Programme contributed towards effective visible policing within Norfolk and what the Constabulary's plan going forward is with regard to retention of officers. The CC stated that he believes that the Constabulary is performing incredibly well and each month the Constabulary is jockeying with Cheshire Constabulary to be the force detecting the most crimes in the country, and this number is increasing each month. On the 19 October 2023 the Office of National Statistics is to publish the most recent quarterly crime performance data and the force is anticipating that the data will show a 5-6% reduction in police recorded crime. The CC stated that there are certain crime types such as shoplifting which have been reported nationally. The CC turned to public confidence in relation to the most recent Crime Survey for England and Wales, which he found incredibly encouraging as the Constabulary were ranked best in the country when it came to confidence when the public were asked to assess how good a job the force is doing, and that is set against a trend of reductions elsewhere in the country given some of the negative headlines policing has received nationally. The CC stated that the operational side of the Constabulary is where he is most content,

it's more the organisational finances which are causing particular challenges. In relation to retention, the CC confirmed that the force is seeing decent retention rates when it comes to new police officers, and the most recent pay increase has been helpful. The CC stated that the Constabulary are still in the early days of the Police Uplift Programme, so many of the student officers who have joined the force are midway through their study elements of their journey within policing, and at the end of it they will come out with a degree in policing. The CC will therefore look closely into how those officers use their qualification once obtained. The CC stated that sometimes officers do leave the profession and that is the right thing to do as sensible discussions are had with new officers to determine if it's the right career for them. The CC confirmed they have good retention but are not complacent. In order to prevent further losses, the CC stated that having a strong wellbeing service in place to support officers dealing with difficult things and investing in them to make sure that their training is good is crucial. The CC confirmed that the Constabulary has changed the ratios of supervision, as the force has a younger workforce now, which helps officers feel more supported. The CC stated that he thinks visible, effective leadership is key in this area to ensure individuals are supported and standards are high. Also, that they continue to invest in their officers and staff by making sure that they have fit for purpose office locations, the right kit and equipment, along with the right behaviours to be able to perform well.

6.5 The PCC asked the CC about the officers that are not available to go out on the frontline and whether he is able to quantify that number and how these individuals are employed behind the scenes to release other officers that are available to be deployed. The CC confirmed that the Constabulary have a number of officers on restricted duties for a variety of reasons who are part of a banding structure based on their specific restrictions. The CC informed the PCC that they have a team called Operation Solve who predominately carry out desk-based investigations and the majority of staff who work on the team are restricted officers, so the public are getting full value from them and the officers themselves feel like they are still making contributions. The Home Office productivity review will also likely make recommendations to police forces that they make better use of the officers that are on restricted duties. The CC is convinced that the Constabulary is making full use of restricted officers and there is not a restricted officer in the force which they are not clear of and who is not being fully deployed as appropriate.

6.6 The PCC asked the CC about business engagement as the papers suggest there has not been any, however it is the PCC's impression through speaking with businesses that there has been significant engagement about retail crime. The CC confirmed that there is significant engagement in this area and the Constabulary's Beat Managers will frequently visit businesses as part of their regular engagement activities. In the city centres the force has bespoke Retail Beat Managers who are engaged with the retail communities. The CC also confirmed that the forces Rural Beat Managers frequently engage with farmers and agricultural engineers, and the

Licensing Team engage with businesses in the night-time economy across the county. The CC stated that the Constabulary have a capability called Project Servator which operates in Norwich city centre and is frequently deployed into locations such as shopping malls, supporting businesses to deter crime. Furthermore, the CC stated that the force has a joint Cyber Crime Unit with security advisers who spend their time advising businesses how they can protect themselves from cyber criminals. The CC stipulated that the reason engagement activity is not included within the papers is due to a recording issue. On the app where engagement activity is recorded, there is an optional tag that an officer can click for businesses which is not being used as it should. The CC confirmed that he would look into this, but reassured the PCC that appropriate business engagement is taking place.

- 6.7 The PCC asked the CC what could be done to improve visibility in policing. The CC stated that a lot of improvements could be made through further resource, which is not attainable without additional funding. The CC suggested that once the new officers have concluded their training, the public will see greater visibility as they are integrated into the force. The CC also confirmed that they have invested in some of the technologies that can liberate police officers from police stations, thus enhancing visibility further. In the last month, the Constabulary has gone live with a new Digital Asset Management product which makes the collection and assessment of CCTV much more streamlined. The CC confirmed that the force's crime recording system is being upgraded in January 2024 to make case files more efficient, however further capital funds to invest in technology would help considerably.

The meeting had a short break and reconvened at 11:15.

7. Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan 2022-24: Pillar 1 - Sustain Norfolk Constabulary

- 7.1 The PCC confirmed that all questions had been raised and answered under item 4 of the agenda, so no further questions were put forward by the PCC in relation to Pillar 1 of the Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan.

8. Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan 2022-24: Pillar 3 - Tackling Crime

- 8.1 The PCC asked the CC what has contributed to the increase in solved rates and charged rates for rape and serious sexual offences compared to the previous twelve months and the long-term average. The ACC stated that it is pleasing to see a slow and steady rise in respect to the solved rate, however, 9% is higher than the national average, but the force must strive to do better going forward. The ACC highlighted the positive work conducted by Operation Engage which is a dedicated support team of police officers and staff who engage with victims of rape and serious sexual offences to help them through their journey in the investigation process and

criminal judicial system. The PCC asked the ACC if the court backlog is having an impact on victim disengagement. The ACC confirmed that all agencies involved in the investigation and criminal justice process are experiencing challenges, however if the victims received quicker decisions and court dates, then this would be of great benefit to them and the Constabulary as it is more likely to keep the victim engaged in the process. The ACC suggested that the digital investment made in this area has contributed towards the increases in solved and charged rates as the Constabulary has specialist investigators who help to achieve the evidential basis of such crime types more quickly. Furthermore, these investigators are helping with the national issue of being able to return phones to victims of rape and serious sexual offences more quickly too. The ACC confirmed that the Constabulary has really improved in this area, and they are downloading phone content and analysing it quicker and only focusing on the issues at hand concerning the perpetrator. The PCC asked whether that digital investment derived from a previous precept. The ACC confirmed that is correct, which is evidence of the public funds helping the victims of these crime types. The ACC stated that the force is working hard with colleagues in respect to management information which means that the force can track cases more closely and better understand the outstanding suspect numbers and the time taken to get the investigations completed. The ACC confirmed that Norfolk Constabulary is adopting principles and best practice from the national operation model Operation Soteria Bluestone, which is led by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

8.2 The PCC asked the CC if he could explain the increase in the cost of agricultural crimes in Norfolk, which derived from national reporting, when local policing data suggests volumes of agricultural crime in Norfolk has decreased from the previous 12 months and the long-term average. The ACC clarified that the national reporting in question, which stipulated that agricultural crime costs in Norfolk had increased by 52% in 2022, was NFU Mutual's Rural Crime Report 2023. The ACC explained how the NFU Mutual report based their costs on insurance claims which can be somewhat inflated, furthermore their report includes theft types which are not included in police classification for farm machinery. The ACC stated that the cost of some farm machinery such as GPS units have become more expensive, so any incident of a theft increases the cost of agricultural crime quite significantly. The ACC added that Norfolk has a really good response to agricultural crimes such as hare coursing as part of Operation Galileo, and what contributes towards this strong approach is good regional coordination across the 7 Forces which allows the sharing of best practice, intelligence and information. Furthermore, the ACC stated that the Constabulary have a strong enforcement approach and one of the differentiating factors between Norfolk and other regions is that Norfolk seizes dogs, which has found to be a strong deterrent. In relation to Livestock Worrying, the ACC confirmed that the figures in Norfolk are relatively low, however the ACC commented that during the COVID-19 pandemic many individuals were getting dogs who were perhaps not familiar with the rural environment and rules around sheep worrying, so Norfolk did see a spike in relation to Livestock Worrying. The ACC confirmed that

through the Constabulary's Rural Crime Officers, Operation Randall team, and going out to particular 'hotspots', the force has been able to provide some educational pieces to those that need it. In addition, the Constabulary prosecutes and investigates where necessary. The ACC stated, that in relation to farm machinery theft, there is a significant Eastern European/Russian market, as Russia is isolated by virtue of international sanctions meaning they cannot get these types of products, however they still need to farm themselves so Organised Crime Groups across the country are stealing GPS units as there is a lucrative market for these items. The ACC added that this is mainly a preventative area, so the Constabulary works closely with the industry and farmers to try and give them advice on their daily practices concerning their machinery to minimise theft opportunities. The PCC asked the ACC if there is anything that can be done to address the difference between perception and reality, as farmers do not feel as though agricultural crime is reducing. The ACC confirmed that he would take this away to see if there is anything that could be done within Operation Randall's newsletter to address this.

9. Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan 2022-24: Pillar 4 - Prevent Offending

- 9.1 The PCC asked if the DCC could discuss the Constabularies approach to Out of Court Disposals and the Joint Justice Service. The DCC explained that an Out of Court Disposal is a way of concluding an investigation into a crime without formal court proceedings. The DCC stated that it is a way to secure swift justice for the victim where appropriate, especially in a time where there are significant court backlogs. The DCC clarified that this is not an approach to purposefully avoid the courts, as the Constabulary will proceed with court proceedings where necessary, but instead is a way of making the journey easier and quicker for the victim. When issuing an Out of Court Disposal, the Constabulary will look at the perpetrator and usually they are issued to low-level crimes, that do not have an impact on the wider community and often in cases where the perpetrator is a first-time offender. The DCC explained that Out of Court Disposals can take various forms, such as letters of apology or payment for damages, and they are packaged within penalty notices, simple cautions and cannabis warnings. The DCC added that these fall within two categories: Community Resolutions and Conditional Cautions. A Conditional Caution adds an action on the back of the admission of guilt, which if breached will result in the perpetrator going back into the formal court process. The PCC noted that Ministers had commented on the possibility of not sending perpetrators to prison if their sentence is under one year, as there is a greater risk of those with shorter sentences reoffending. The PCC noted therefore, that there is probably some work to be done with this cohort of offenders in conjunction with Probation Services as it would be unfair on them to tackle this singlehandedly. The DCC confirmed that the Constabulary work in partnership alongside other agencies in this area, particularly through the Criminal Justice Board to ensure other agencies have both the capacity and focus. The DCC agreed with the PCC insofar that the Constabulary have a part to play in this area,

however the police are the gateway into the criminal justice system and when things go wrong it is perceived to be the police's fault, so before the Constabulary get too involved the DCC wants to ensure that those agencies who are designated to lead in this are discharging their responsibilities as well as they can. The CC added that the Constabulary are establishing a Gold Command structure locally in terms of managing prisons, however following some recent announcements nationally, it is incumbent that agencies take a look to see whether they need to be recalibrated. The CC stated that this should include Inspectorates as well, as when they come to inspect the Constabulary, the one outcome they focus on is the charged figures and they have less interest in the number of people receiving Out of Court Disposals, so it appears that the inspection methodology may be out of kilter with new and emerging policy. Furthermore, the CC noted that it is important not to put unnecessary strain on a criminal justice system already under pressure. The CC stated that it is important the Constabulary continue to use the outcome that is in the best interest of the victim in order to obtain justice.

- 9.2 The DCC explained that the Offender Diversion Team was a pilot scheme set up to ensure that the Constabulary has auditable standards for conditional cautions and ensures the progress of community resolutions are tracked and managed. The DCC confirmed that this is a scheme designed to ensure consistency in delivering Out of Court Disposals throughout the force. The DCC did note that there may be a cost to visibility, as if an Out of Court Disposal is issued, the public are not seeing this, however the force is ensuring that the victim receives justice, and the perpetrator receives the appropriate sanction.

10. Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan 2022-24: Pillar 5 - Support Victims

- 10.1 The DCC introduced the report and explained that the Constabulary has an Operation Converter Team which is fully established and consists of a team with a particular skillset who approach offenders that have already been convicted, with a view of speaking to them and ensuring that they have the opportunity to tell the team more about their other offending behaviours. This ensures that other victims know that the perpetrator of their crime has been identified and is already in prison or under a particular sanction. The Op Converter Team have gone out and spoken with a number of offenders and over 300 possible outcomes have come back which effectively gives the Constabulary the opportunity to go back to nearly 300 victims of crime to reassure them that their perpetrator has been identified and are servicing some sanction. The DCC commented how court trials continue to be delayed or rescheduled on short notice, and in the longer term there continues to be a recirculation of work into the Constabulary, particularly into the Witness Care Team. The DCC commented how challenging this situation is as victims are not always receiving swift justice and the Witness Care Team are having to re-engage with these victims.

- 10.2 The PCCasked how morale within the Witness Care Team is holding up as the court backlogs seem to be a long-term issue. The DCCconfirmed that the team are aware of this and know the value they bring; furthermore, they are aware of the positives their work brings when they successfully re-engage with victims and support them on their journey through proceedings. The PCCcommented that he had explored with His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Services whether they would assist with funding in this area, however their response was negative as they have their own pressures to deal with.
- 10.3 The PCCasked the DCCabout the impact the Victims Code of Practice Dashboard has had since its implementation. The DCCconfirmed that it is a key metric in force performance as part of the Constabulary's core delivery services to victims. The dashboard ensures that the codes are being adhered to and that police officers are doing the right thing relative to the victim. The DCCstated that it has given the force confidence as they have seen positive compliance increases across the priority areas.

11. Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan 2022-24: Pillar 6 - Safer and Stronger Communities

- 11.1 The DLPDUintroduced the papers and highlighted how there had been a slight decrease in the amount of Killed or Seriously Injured Collisions compared to the previous twelve months. The DLPDUalso highlighted that the Commercial Vehicle Unit has stopped 329 vehicles with 333 offences being detected, so this unit has had a productive start using their specialist knowledge. In addition to this, Operation Tramline ran for one week which stopped 112 Heavy Goods Vehicles with 124 offences being detected. The DLPDUmentioned that there has been significant effort around the fatal four enforcement and noted reductions in anti-social behaviour across all types. Furthermore, burglaries have reduced whilst solved rates have increased over the last twelve months. Hate crimes have reduced compared to the previous twelve months which, under the current circumstances, is being monitored closely on a daily basis. The DLPDUconfirmed that Section 136 detentions have reduced significantly compared to the previous twelve months, alongside the 'Right Care, Right Person' initiative improving waiting times for assessments whilst in custody. The DLPDUconfirmed that the force now has a Strategic Delivery Group coordinating the partnership around making the night-time economy as safe to visit as possible. To conclude, the DLPDUthanked all the volunteers contributing to policing efforts with Community Speed Watch Members issuing nearly 8,000 warning letters to motorists in the last six months.
- 11.2 The PCCasked the DLPDUto comment on the impacts and effects of the newly revised Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan. The DLPDUexplained that since 2010 Operational Partnership Teams were formed alongside the one County Community Safety Partnership which gives the Constabulary a source of governance and operational structure to highlight any changes around anti-social behaviour. Hotspot policing and immediate justice are going to be new forms of interventions

available to agencies around the zero-tolerance approach which the Constabulary will feed in through the Community Safety Partnership and Neighbourhood Improvement Board. Norfolk is attempting to identify visibility hotspots, Safer Streets hotspots and anti-social behaviour hotspots, and the Community Policing Team has recently conducted a great piece of work around tackling anti-social behaviour within Norwich city centre. The PCC asked if anti-social behaviour is an urban issue only. The DLPDU confirmed that all seven authority areas have an Operational Partnership Team, however Norwich was the recipient of the additional resource of a Community Policing Team. Furthermore all 49 neighbourhoods have allocated Beat Managers who work to identify what the neighbourhood priorities are, and anti-social behaviour will be featuring in those with local problem solving available to all.

12. Emerging Operational/Organisational Risks

- 12.1 The CC noted that the Constabulary are monitoring the local impact of events in the Middle East. The CC confirmed there were pro-Palestinian protests in Norwich city centre and the Constabulary anticipates further protests. The CC identified that there is concern amongst the Norfolk Jewish community, so the force is seeking to engage with them as appropriate. The CC stated that it is a very sensitive and difficult time, and the force is following national guidance that is being set by the NPCC, however it is too early to predict what the impact will be in Norfolk. The PCC asked whether pro-Hamas protests would be illegal. The CC confirmed that would be the case.

13. Any Other Business

- 13.1 The PCC confirmed that the PCC Accountability Meeting scheduled for March 2024 will now be cancelled in light of PCC elections and the force's preparation ahead of the HMICFRS PEEL Inspection of Norfolk Constabulary.

14. Date of Next Meeting

- 14.1 The next PCC Accountability Meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 30 January 2024 at 10:00am in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Conference Room, Building 7, Falconers Chase, Wymondham.



Giles Orpen-Smellie
Police and Crime Commissioner



Paul Sanford
Chief Constable