28 October 2026

The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP, Secretary of State for the Home Department,
via email PS.HomeSecretary@homeoffice.gov.uk

Dear Home Secretary,

RE: Police and Crime Commissioners' proposal for a Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary merger

Norfolk Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary have operated the most successful and mature collaborative policing arrangement in England and Wales for more than a decade. Having explored options for police force mergers over the last nine months and contributed to Lord Hogan-Howe's review of police structures, it has become clear that a large regional police force would not provide the policing service our communities need or want. Any proposal along those lines would be strongly resisted by local communities, elected representatives and partner organisations. Such changes risk significant disruption without delivering the more efficient and effective policing service that residents expect and deserve.

Norfolk and Suffolk are suited to being a pathfinder area for police reform. As part of this, we ask to merge constabularies under Section 32 of the Police Act 1996. We have the evidence and political will to achieve this. With your support, we will develop a detailed implementation programme aiming to achieve merger by May 2028.

The evidence we have gathered since our last letter to Lord Hogan-Howe in May this year has only reinforced our conclusion that the best option financially, operationally and for our communities is to merge our two forces. Many of the challenges that traditionally make police force mergers complex and costly have already been addressed through more than a decade of successful collaboration. We have already aligned terms and conditions for our workforce, invested in shared ICT systems, established joint operational and specialist teams, integrated a significant proportion of our support services and developed a strong shared organisational culture.

Our two forces are uniquely placed to support police reform and provide the strongest opportunity for an early police force merger. A combined force would deliver significant improvements in both the efficiency and effectiveness of policing across Norfolk and Suffolk. It would be achievable by 2028 and would offer substantial benefits when compared with a wider regional merger. A merged Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary would strengthen operational capability as well as improve resilience and enhance our

ability to tackle increasingly complex and cross-border crime. It would also provide a more sustainable policing model and strengthen resilience within chief officer leadership teams.

Our collaboration has already delivered annual savings of £57.6m (Medium Term Financial Plan) and an independent assessment has demonstrated that a merged force could achieve a further £22 million in annual efficiencies. This means a merger is both achievable and capable of being delivered more quickly than elsewhere in the country. The benefits would therefore be realised sooner, supporting improved performance at an earlier stage.

A merged force would also maximise the opportunities presented by changes in the wider public service structures, including the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Integrated Care Board, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust and, most significantly, the proposed Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoralty.

A combined constabulary should align with the new Mayoralty boundaries for Norfolk and Suffolk. These could be established in time to support the mayoral arrangements from 2028. This would bring clearer democratic accountability, strengthen local leadership, improve partnership working and support the Government's wider devolution ambitions. It would also create the conditions to unlock partnership working in ways which go to the heart of the Government's reform agenda.

Our priority is, and always will be, securing the best possible policing service for the residents and businesses of Norfolk and Suffolk. Based on the evidence available to us, we are convinced that a single constabulary serving both counties would deliver that outcome.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Sutton



Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner

Tim Passmore



Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner

Copied to:-

The Rt Hon Sarah Jones, Minister for Policing and Crime via email PS.SarahJones@homeoffice.gov.uk