

## Norfolk Police and Crime Panel



### Annual Report 2023-24

#### Introduction & background

This is the fifth annual report of the [Norfolk Police and Crime Panel](#) ("the Panel"), which was established in 2012 in compliance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The report covers the Panel's activities during the past year.

The [Police and Crime Commissioner](#) for Norfolk ("the Commissioner") has responsibility for securing an efficient and effective police force for the area, setting objectives and the budget for Norfolk's police force and holding the Chief Constable to account. In addition, the Commissioner has a duty to bring together Norfolk's community safety and criminal justice partners to make sure local priorities are joined up, provide support services for victims of crime and get communities involved in keeping Norfolk safe. They may also commission services which contribute to the Police and Crime Plan.

The Panel's role is to challenge and support the work of the Commissioner. It also has a role in handling complaints about the Commissioner's conduct and confirming appointments the Commissioner makes to key posts, including the Chief Constable and senior members of staff.

#### Who's who

The Panel comprises ten elected members from local authorities across Norfolk and two co-opted independent members.

Membership during 2023-24 was as follows:

Main Member	Substitute Member	Representing
Cllr Tristan Ashby	Cllr Alison Webb	Breckland District Council
Cllr Sue Catchpole	Vacancy	Broadland District Council
Cllr Jade Martin	Cllr Trevor Wainwright	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Cllr Alexandra Ware	Cllr Deborah Heneghan	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council

Main Member	Substitute Member	Representing
Cllr Brian Long	Cllr Julian Kirk	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Graham Carpenter	Cllr David Bills	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Stuart Dark	Vacancy	Norfolk County Council
Cllr John Toye	Cllr Sarah Butikofer	North Norfolk District Council
Cllr Mike Sands	Cllr Keith Driver	Norwich City Council
Cllr Kieran Murphy	Cllr Stephen Ridley	South Norfolk Council
Air Commodore Kevin Pellatt FCMI RAF	(no substitute member)	Co-opted Independent Member
Mr Peter Hill	(no substitute member)	Co-opted Independent Member

### Panel activity during 2023-24

The Panel met formally five times during 2023-24. Copies of the [agenda and minutes](#) are available to view.

Our public meetings are the occasions on which we carry out our main responsibilities, set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. These are summarised below:

- To consider the Commissioner's proposed police precept (the amount that individuals contribute to the police budget through council tax).

The Panel voted to support the Commissioner's proposed maximum increase in the police precept for 2024/25. To inform our discussion, the Commissioner provided comprehensive information to support his proposal. This included an outline of the budget and financial impact of the 2024/25 precept proposal, his Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2027/28 including the Capital Programme, together with details of the various financial strategies that he is required to publish, as well as the result of his public consultation. A view from the Chief Constable was also included. Having asked the Commissioner questions about the information provided, and examined his proposal alongside public expectations of policing and the pressures facing the force, the Panel voted to support the increase. You can read the [letter from the Panel's Chair](#), formally reporting the Panel's decision, and the PCC's response.

- To monitor delivery of the Commissioner's Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan

The Commissioner must publish a Police and Crime Plan after they take office. This Plan must set out their policing and crime objectives, details of grants made to partners, the resources the Chief Constable will be given and how the Commissioner

will hold them to account. We considered the Commissioner's draft Plan in September 2021 and confirmed our support for it, prior to its implementation on 31 March 2022. Since then we have continued to monitor the progress the Commissioner is making towards meeting the objectives contained within it. For that purpose, the current Commissioner provides a report for each of our meetings, setting out progress against his priorities. Once a year, the Panel also reviews the Commissioner's draft annual report which covers progress against his whole plan. You can read our discussions in the minutes of our meetings.

- To review and scrutinise actions and decisions taken by the Commissioner

The Panel considers an information bulletin at each meeting, which summarises both the decisions taken by the Commissioner and the range of activity he has undertaken in the period between one meeting and the next. This provides an opportunity for the Panel to publicly hold the Commissioner to account for the full extent of his actions in a timely way. You can read the bulletins and the issues discussed by viewing our agendas and minutes.

- To handle PCC conduct complaints

One of the Panel's responsibilities is to deal with complaints about the Commissioner's conduct. Any complaints alleging criminal conduct (or which indicate criminal conduct may have occurred) by the Commissioner must be recorded, and then referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct for investigation. Any other complaints are handled by the Panel, usually through informal resolution, which means encouraging, helping and bringing about the resolution of a complaint without going through legal or formal proceedings. You can find out more about the process [here](#). The Panel receives regular reports, which set out the number and themes of complaints handled during the period, as well as the main themes of Freedom of Information requests received both by the Commissioner's Office and Norfolk County Council in relation to the Panel. This allows the Panel to monitor the issues being raised and to ensure the complaints process is being carried out appropriately.

The Panel continues to take a special interest in Police Integrity Reforms set out in the Policing and Crime Act 2017. This Government policy was introduced to overhaul the police complaints and disciplinary system as a result of a loss of public confidence in policing following several high-profile police investigations. We have a permanent working group of five members, whose role is to maintain a specialist knowledge on complaints matters and advise the Panel accordingly. In addition to maintaining oversight of the Panel's procedure for handling conduct complaints about the Commissioner, it has monitored the development and implementation of the Police Integrity Reforms. Through that work, we have been able to not only improve our own complaints procedure but assist colleagues nationally, through delivering workshops and briefings on the reforms at regional network meetings and national Panel conferences. Regular updates provided by the working group's Chair are included in our agendas.

## **Panel development**

Members appointed to the Panel get together at the beginning of each year, before the Annual General Meeting, for induction training about our role and functions. For

those continuing in their position, this is an opportunity to refresh their knowledge and share their views. Additional briefings have also been provided in advance of specific functions, such as consideration of the Commissioner's precept proposal. This ensures that we were fully prepared to challenge and support the Commissioner at our public meetings. The Panel is also provided with a fortnightly round-up of policing and crime related news to ensure that we are kept up-to-date with national and local matters.

The Panel is a member of an Eastern Region Panel Network, which meets twice a year, and provides a forum for Chairs, Vice-Chairs and support officers to share information, problem solve and collaborate.

A national conference for Panels is convened each year and representatives from Norfolk regularly attend, having found this is another invaluable opportunity to learn about national policy development and challenges across policing, fire and the criminal justice sector. It also enables us to share experiences and good practice with colleagues from across the country. This year the theme was "Collaboration and change – making it work". In response to a variety of matters raised by delegates, it was clear that effective working relationships were the key to the success of Police and Fire and Crime Panels. The need for Panels to support as well as challenge PCCs was emphasised, as well as the importance of regular training and briefing for Panel Members to help them in their role.

## **Public engagement**

The Panel has a Public Question Time at each ordinary meeting, to enable the public to engage with the Panel and pose questions relating to its remit and functions. It is not a platform for the public to put questions to the Commissioner or the Chief Constable, both of whom have separate arrangements for discussion with the public. You can read our [public question time guidance](#).

The Commissioner has regular public meetings to hold the Chief Constable to account for Norfolk's policing service. These are held in public and people are welcome to attend and observe. The Commissioner also holds regular question and answer sessions for members of the public to receive policing updates for their district and put their questions, observations and concerns to him and the Chief Constable. Details are made available on the [Commissioner's website](#).

## **Home Office grant funding**

The Home Office provides a grant of up to £64,340 to Norfolk County Council to maintain a Police and Crime Panel for the police force area. This is to cover the costs of administration (including support staff, specialist advice, recruitment of independent members, subscription to the Eastern Region Panel network) and member expenses (the cost of travel to attend Panel meetings, regional network meetings and the national conference, as well as any delegate fees). The Panel reviews its funding at each AGM and you can read the reports, which include the year-end returns submitted to the Home Office, through the previous link to our agendas and minutes.

While making sure that the Panel is effectively supported and developed, we aim to achieve value for money by minimizing expenditure where possible. For example, public meetings take place at our host authority to keep costs to a minimum and

ensure accessibility requirements are met. Our induction training and briefings are delivered by support officers from the host authority. On the whole, information is circulated electronically and printed copies of agendas are provided only to main Panel members. Attendance at carefully selected external events is agreed at the beginning of each year, and we ensure the whole Panel benefits through formal and informal reports, which keeps everyone updated and signposts them to matters of interest.

The Chair and Vice-Chair regularly meet with the Commissioner and his leadership team. This provides an opportunity to discuss and plan future business, the content of agenda and reports, and keep each other informed of developments which may impact on our work. It allows the Panel to ensure that it is making the best use of everyone's time and the resources available.

### **Forward look**

The Panel reviews and agrees a forward work plan at each meeting. This ensures that we deliver our functions in a timely way and means others know what we will be doing. You can see our latest forward work plan by selecting the most recently published agenda.

PCC elections will take place on 2 May 2024 and the Panel is looking forward to establishing an effective working relationship with a newly elected Commissioner.

### **Further information**

If you would like further information about the Norfolk Police and Crime Panel, please visit our [website](#) or contact Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020 or [committees@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:committees@norfolk.gov.uk)



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