

ONE Haverhill Partnership Board Meeting

Thursday, 16 July 2026 commencing at 10.00am

Attendance Board Members

Henry Wilson, Chair ONE Haverhill and Chief Executive, REACH
Deborah Barton, EEG
Dr David Brandon, Deputy Medical Director, SNEE ICB
Cllr John Burns, Haverhill Town Councillor
Cllr Quinn Cox, Haverhill Town Councillor
Karen Dennis, DWP, Employer Advisor for Haverhill
Rev Max Drinkwater, Priest-in-Charge, Haverhill and Withersfield
Helen Earl, Epicentre
Cllr Pat Hanlon, West Suffolk District Councillor
Cllr Lora Miller-Jones, Haverhill Town Councillor
Dr Simon Prestney, Service Director Unity Healthcare
Cllr David Smith, Haverhill Town Councillor
Warren Smythe, Chief Executive Officer

In attendance

Mr Tim Passmore, Police and Crime Commissioner
Alex Wilson, Deputy Chief Executive, West Suffolk Council
Jon Eaton, Families and Communities, West Suffolk Council
Saffron Carter, Town Centre Manager
Colin Poole, Town Clerk, Haverhill Town Council
Vicky Phillips, Deputy Town Clerk, Haverhill Town Council
Emma Hilson, REACH

Apologies

Alex Till, Vice Chair ONE Haverhill and CEO Menta
Cllr Bruce Davidson, Haverhill Town Councillor
Carol Eagles, CEO, CAB
Ian Gallin, CEO, West Suffolk Council
Donna Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities,
West Suffolk Council
Vicky Hogg, Headteacher, Clements Primary Academy
Cllr J Mason, Suffolk County Council
Julia Nix OBE DL, East Anglia District Manager,
Department for Work and Pensions
Mike Pursehouse, Director, Housing, Communities and Regulatory,
West Suffolk Council

Vanessa Whitcombe, Headteacher, Castle Manor Academy
Louise Unwin, Regional Director for the West, EEG

1. **Welcome**

Henry Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Declarations of Interest and Apologies

There were no declarations of interest.

CP read out the apologies given, noted above.

2. **Minutes of the meeting held Thursday 16th April 2026**

Minutes of the previous meeting held Thursday 16th April 2026 were agreed.

3. **Police and Crime Commissioner**

Mr Tim Passmore, Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk

Tim Passmore outlined the role of the PCC, the challenges facing policing in Suffolk, and his concerns about proposed changes to local governance and policing structures. He also discussed wider issues such as economic growth, transport, and opportunities for young people, arguing that these have a direct impact on crime prevention.

The role of the PCC

- The PCC's role is to hold the Chief Constable to account rather than manage day-to-day policing.
- The office sets priorities, oversees budgets (around £206 million annually), and acts as the link between the public and the police.
- Suffolk's policing needs differ from urban areas because of its large rural geography and challenges around distance, connectivity and funding.

Suffolk policing

- Suffolk has one of the lowest recorded crime rates in England, although the Commissioner acknowledged that recorded crime does not tell the whole story.
- He argued that Suffolk receives an unfair share of national funding despite increasing population and demand.
- Roads policing is under pressure because the A14 is not treated as a motorway, meaning National Highways provides little support.

Preventing crime through opportunity

A major theme was that crime prevention is about more than policing.

Mr Passmore argued for, greater support for young people, better employment opportunities, investment in education and skills and reducing deprivation to tackle crime, addiction and antisocial behaviour. He emphasised that investing in prevention is more cost-effective than imprisonment and highlighted PCC funding for youth projects and victim support services.

Partnerships

The Commissioner stressed the importance of partnership working between, Police, Councils, Charities, voluntary organisations and businesses. He believes collaboration has delivered good value for money in Suffolk and should continue regardless of organisational changes.

Concerns about governance changes

Mr Passmore focused on proposed reforms such as the abolition of PCCs, introduction of a Norfolk & Suffolk Mayor and a wider local government

reorganisation. He expressed concern that governance changes could fragment existing partnerships and weaken accountability if not carefully implemented.

Future Mayoral role

If the Mayoral system proceeds, he believes the Mayor should focus on economic growth, improve transport, develop skills and training, support housing strategy and remain accountable through measurable outcomes.

Mr Passmore indicated his intention to stand for the role if elections proceed.

Transport and infrastructure

Mr Passmore argued that better transport is essential for both economic growth and policing, including and improved rural bus services, better rail links, reopening the Cambridge–Haverhill rail connection and investment in Ely rail junction improvements. He also discussed water infrastructure and planning for long-term resilience.

Opposition to a larger regional police force

The Commissioner strongly opposed merging Suffolk into a six-force Eastern Region police force, arguing that currently Suffolk is financially well managed, and local policing priorities could be lost. Suffolk taxpayers should not subsidise financially weaker forces and that resources would likely be diverted towards larger urban areas.

Mr Passmore was open to closer integration with Norfolk, explaining that existing collaboration already saves around £50 million annually, though he acknowledged Norfolk's financial complications.

Other concerns

Mr Passmore also raised issues including:

- the policing costs associated with asylum accommodation proposals at RAF Barnham;
- prison expansion at Highpoint without corresponding policing funding;
- increasing fraud and cybercrime;
- the importance of maintaining resilience across emergency services.

Overall highlighted there were five recurring themes:

- Protect local policing by keeping decision-making close to Suffolk.
- Invest in prevention, particularly for young people.
- Support economic growth, seeing it as fundamental to reducing crime.
- Improve transport and infrastructure to strengthen communities.
- Maintain strong local accountability as governance arrangements change.

Discussion and Q&A

Councillor John Burns raised concerns that Haverhill's policing resources are not keeping pace with the town's planned population growth. While crime levels have remained relatively stable, he highlighted shortages of neighbourhood officers, increasing workloads, delays to investigations when officers are unavailable, and called for the new Chief Constable to review how policing resources are allocated to growing communities. He also argued that West Suffolk does not receive a fair share of PCC grant funding due to limited local promotion of funding opportunities.

Mr Passmore acknowledged these concerns, confirming that policing resources and public reassurance would be key discussions with the incoming Chief Constable. He encouraged councillors and residents to raise specific cases directly with him, agreed that grant funding could be promoted more effectively, and committed to increasing publicity through local media. He explained that West Suffolk typically receives fewer grants because it submits fewer applications,

rather than because funding is unavailable, and encouraged local organisations to apply.

Dr D Brandon raised concerns about how lower-level but high-impact crimes, particularly domestic abuse and minor drug-related offences linked to antisocial behaviour, affect local communities. While recognising that police resources are limited, he stressed the importance of closer collaboration between policing, health, social care, local authorities and the voluntary sector to better support victims and prevent harm.

Mr Passmore agreed that more could be done, highlighting significant investment in domestic abuse services, including increasing the number of Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) from one to 16/17 and providing long-term funding to local support organisations. He emphasised the need for stronger partnership working, particularly with the NHS and voluntary sector, and reiterated his opposition to nationally commissioned services, arguing that local areas are best placed to determine their own needs.

Jon Eaton and Henry Wilson outlined plans to deliver domestic abuse awareness training in partnership with Lighthouse Women's Aid. Mr Passmore confirmed that support for the initiative and indicating that funding for the relatively modest cost should be achievable.

Councillor David Smith asked about the newly introduced Town Centre Teams.

Tim Passmore explained that the initiative is still in its early stages but is designed to deploy dedicated teams of officers to towns experiencing specific issues such as shoplifting, theft or drug dealing. The teams, each comprising around six officers, make pre-planned visits to identified hotspots to provide targeted enforcement and help tackle persistent problems. Mr Passmore said the effectiveness of the scheme would be evaluated over time, including in Haverhill, with lessons used to improve the approach. He also stressed the importance of communicating police activity more effectively to address public perceptions that little is being done, and emphasised that creating safer town centres requires close partnership working between the police, local authorities and other agencies. He confirmed that the Town Centre Team visits are planned deployments rather than responses to incidents.

Dr Simon Prestney shared lessons from his experience supporting the Wethersfield asylum accommodation site, emphasising the importance of establishing multi-agency meetings early and ensuring close collaboration between the NHS, local authorities and the Home Office. He highlighted health considerations, particularly sewerage capacity, communicable disease management and testing, as key factors in planning such sites, and suggested these issues provide the strongest basis for influencing Home Office decisions. However, he noted that, in his experience, local agencies are often focused on mitigating impacts rather than preventing developments altogether.

Tim Passmore agreed, confirming that West Suffolk Council was leading local efforts and offering his full support. He also raised concerns about the suitability of the proposed site, citing its location on a busy rural road, the lack of nearby community infrastructure, and potential safety risks for residents and the wider

public. He concluded by praising Suffolk's voluntary sector, describing its contribution as invaluable and reaffirming his commitment to supporting its work wherever possible.

Councillor Pat Hanlon raised concerns about the growing problem of electric motorbikes and scooters being illegally ridden at speed along Haverhill's Railway Walk and through the town centre, highlighting the risks to pedestrians, particularly near schools, and the difficulty police face in catching riders who are masked and quickly evade officers.

In response, Tim Passmore said the Constabulary was exploring the use of scramble bikes and other specialist resources to tackle the issue, acknowledging the need for a wider range of policing tactics. He also noted that while many of these vehicles are being used illegally on public roads and pavements, police powers are limited by legislation, making enforcement and the seizure of vehicles more challenging than many people realise.

Councillor Miller-Jones highlighted concerns that police are unable to pursue speeding off-road bikes due to the risk of accidents and liability, making it difficult to apprehend offenders. She suggested that improving CCTV coverage in Haverhill could help track riders when they leave the view of existing cameras.

Tim Passmore acknowledged the point, agreed it was a complex issue, and committed to investigating whether enhanced camera coverage was being considered before providing a written response.

Blue Light Hub:

Alex Wilson provided an update on proposals to explore a Blue Light Hub in Haverhill, which could see the police, fire and ambulance services co-located on a single site. He explained that the initiative has been driven by the emergency services themselves, supported by local politicians, with West Suffolk Council acting in an enabling role through the One Public Estate programme. The proposal aims to replace outdated facilities, particularly the police station, improve emergency response times, especially for the ambulance service, and reduce the long-term costs of maintaining separate buildings. The project is still at a very early stage. The next step is to commission a feasibility study to assess potential town centre sites and consider options for initially co-locating two services before potentially bringing all three together. Mr Wilson stressed that any proposals would require funding, planning approval and public consultation, but noted that the project also aligns with the wider Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan and could create opportunities for the future use of existing public buildings. He said updates would be provided as the work progresses.

4. LGR Update

Mr Alex Wilson, Deputy Chief Executive, West Suffolk Council

Alex Wilson delivered a presentation, supported by a slide presentation, on the Government's proposed Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), which he explained to Board members and confirmed would be circulated following the meeting. He outlined the timetable for implementing the new three-unitary council model for Suffolk, with the new authorities due to come into effect on 1 April 2028. He explained the phased transition process, noting that there are around 400 working days until vesting day and that, while preparations are progressing rapidly,

many key decisions, including governance arrangements and operating models, will be for the shadow authorities elected in 2027. He emphasised that the priority is to ensure a safe and legally compliant transition while maintaining existing council services, with wider service transformation expected to continue beyond 2028.

Mr Wilson highlighted the importance of community engagement throughout the process and praised the ONE Haverhill Partnership as an excellent example of collaborative working, stating that it provides a strong foundation for how the new unitary authority could engage with communities in the future. He encouraged partners to continue building on existing relationships and to begin considering how local organisations, the Town Council and partnerships such as ONE Haverhill can play an increasingly influential role in neighbourhood-level transformation and local service delivery under the new governance arrangements.

The presentation slides will be circulated to Board members for information.

There was a Q&A after the presentation:

Councillor Burns asked how the Local Government Reorganisation would be funded, expressing concern that such a large-scale transformation could encounter difficulties and questioning whether the Government was fully funding the process. In response, Alex Wilson explained that the Government has provided transformation funding to support programme management, including programme directors and backfilling staff involved in the work, but confirmed there is no substantial funding pot to deliver the wider transformation itself. He noted that, as with other public sector organisations such as the NHS and schools, the costs of implementing change will need to be managed and built into the overall business case.

Colin Poole asked how the public, town and parish councils, and other stakeholders would be involved in shaping the new unitary authority, noting that the shadow authority would effectively be starting with a blank slate in terms of policies and procedures.

In response, Alex Wilson said there would be opportunities for engagement, including with town and parish councils and groups such as One Haverhill Partnership, but explained that meaningful influence over service design and transformation was more likely to take place after the new authority is established. He stressed that the immediate priority for the shadow authority would be achieving a safe and legally compliant transition, appointing senior officers, and ensuring services continue to operate effectively from day one. He added that engagement with towns and parishes would begin later in the year but encouraged stakeholders to have realistic expectations about what could be influenced before vesting day.

Dr Brandon suggested that, as plans for the proposed Blue Light Hub and Local Government Reorganisation progress, consideration should be given to co-locating wider public services, particularly community health teams alongside the emergency services. He highlighted opportunities for closer integration between ambulance crews and community health services to improve patient handovers, reduce unnecessary hospital admissions and ease pressure on blue light services.

Alex Wilson welcomed the suggestion, noting that although the current focus is on operational facilities for emergency service crews, the proposals are still at an early stage, and the idea would be added to the list of considerations. Dr Prestney added that patients can sometimes fall between services due to gaps in communication and coordination, and asked how organisations would ensure that health, local government and emergency services work more effectively together during the period of change.

Alex Wilson explained that discussions are already underway between local authorities, the NHS, police and other partners to align organisational structures and service delivery wherever possible. He said the reorganisation presents an opportunity to improve collaboration, build resilience and develop more integrated services across Suffolk and Norfolk, while acknowledging that all organisations are undergoing significant change simultaneously.

5. **Public Speaking**

None.

6. **Haverhill Town Centre Manager**
Saffron Carter, Town Centre Manager

Saffron Carter introduced herself as the new Town Centre Manager, employed by the Town Council, but her role is to engage with local businesses, represent their views independently, and act as a link between businesses, the Council, and wider partners. Having been in post for just over a month, Saffron provided an overview of her initial engagement, key themes emerging from conversations, and her plans for the role.

Saffron has met with 37 businesses across the High Street, market, industrial estate, and Epicentre, as well as key stakeholders including the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Economic Development Team, and Mentor. These discussions have helped identify current challenges, existing support, and opportunities for collaboration.

Key challenges raised by businesses included perceptions of the town centre, declining traditional retail footfall, pressures on the market, and the need to encourage greater local spending. Anti-social behaviour remains a concern, although businesses welcomed the support being provided by PC Jack Oakley and recognised the positive progress being made. Improved communication and networking between businesses was also highlighted as an area for development.

Saffron noted wider challenges around employment, including the availability of longer-term roles, apprenticeships, and pathways into higher-skilled opportunities. While some sectors continue to rely on temporary employment, investment in areas such as science, technology, and manufacturing is creating new opportunities. National pressures, including business rates, rents, and employment costs, were also recognised as ongoing challenges for businesses.

Alongside these challenges, Saffron highlighted a number of positives. The strong community spirit within Haverhill continues to be a key strength, and there are encouraging signs of investment and growth. Developments such as investment at Codis, which is expected to create 20–30 high-skilled jobs, demonstrate the potential for future economic opportunities. The changing High Street offer,

including new businesses, cafés, food venues, and experience-led activities, also provides opportunities to attract more visitors and encourage residents to shop and spend locally.

Saffron outlined her plans to strengthen the business voice within Haverhill through the creation of a business steering group and further networking opportunities across different sectors. She has also launched the “Love Haverhill” social media pages to promote local businesses, community activity, and positive stories about the town. A website is being developed to provide a central hub for business information, including a directory and details of available support. Work is also underway with young people to develop “Love Haverhill Youth”, ensuring the wider community is involved in shaping the town’s future.

The Board welcomed Saffron’s engagement with businesses and recognised the importance of building on Haverhill’s community strengths, investment opportunities, and evolving town centre offer.

Discussion and Q&A

The Board discussed opportunities to better connect new and existing residents with the town. Saffron highlighted plans to work with estate agents and developers to create a Love Haverhill welcome pack, providing information on local businesses, services, schools, employment opportunities, activities, and community facilities. The Board supported the idea and suggested that the pack should also be shared through letting agents to ensure renters moving into the area are included.

The importance of improving awareness of local opportunities was highlighted, particularly around employment and apprenticeships. The Board discussed the need to challenge perceptions that there are limited opportunities in Haverhill and recognised the potential to work with larger employers through their social value programmes to support skills development, youth employment, and pathways into work. Upcoming national initiatives, including youth employment schemes and skills programmes, were identified as opportunities that could benefit local residents if effectively coordinated.

The Board also discussed the importance of creating a more vibrant town centre by promoting Haverhill’s cultural offer, including music, arts, and community events. It was noted that these activities can help attract visitors, provide opportunities for young people, and strengthen residents’ connection with the town. The Arts Centre and existing cultural assets were recognised as opportunities to build on.

The Board welcomed Saffron’s continued involvement and agreed that regular updates would be valuable as the work progresses, alongside the development of a business group or task-and-finish approach to support delivery of these initiatives.

7. Reports from Task Groups

a. Community Safety

The Community Safety Group, already has been mentioned. Jon Eaton reported that there is an ongoing discussion with PC Jack Oakley on street drinking and how to work on that.

b. Kindness

Rev Max Drinkwater reported that they have launched a campaign over the summer, working with Churches to produce some posters. The idea being you find the posters, which have stories about kindness in different venues around town. There are some workshops in the pipeline.

Henry Wilson reported that Donna Higgins is keen to be involved.

c. ICB

Jon Eaton reported there is a meeting on the 7th highlighting conversations about young people's mental health and options to link to providers. There are also an item about inclusion for elderly residents.

d. Science Festival

Colin Poole reported that the Science Festival took place just after the last board meeting, very good engagement with all the schools and were pleased to involve the Church. The Epicentre put on a great programme of things for business, which went very well. We were also able to be part of the National Year of Reading, providing a book to every primary school child in Haverhill.

e. Education, Skills and Enterprise

Jo Eaton reported that he had attended the Unit Schools Trust regarding the Bikeability scheme. There are three sessions, one will be taking place at the Clement's Primary, one at the Burton End and some opportunities for the Zone.

f. Cradle to Career

There was a conversation around E-Consult, but the timeline was too tight, so will open again for the Autumn.

8. a) Election of Chair

Henry Wilson was re-elected as Chair of ONE Haverhill by show of hands.

b) Review of Board Representation

The Board reviewed current representation and considered whether any key sectors or communities were missing. It was agreed that the Suffolk County Council representatives, Councillors Paul Littman and Joe Mason, provide valuable local representation and engagement. The Board discussed the need to strengthen business representation and welcomed Saffron Carter's plans to develop a business group, which may provide opportunities for additional business involvement on the Board. The importance of improving diversity and inclusion was recognised, with a need to ensure the Board better reflects the wider Haverhill community. Potential representation from disability groups, youth organisations, education providers, and skills/training organisations was discussed. Transport was also identified as an area where stronger links may be beneficial.

The Board supported exploring the return of an annual public meeting to improve community engagement, share progress, and gather feedback. The need to improve communication and public perception was also highlighted, with updating the website identified as a priority.

It was agreed by a show of hands that the Board would:

- Welcome Suffolk County Council representation through Councillors Paul Littman and Councillor Joe Mason.
- Saffron Carter to explore opportunities for further business representation through the proposed business group.
- Review options to improve diversity and inclusion across Board membership.

- Consider additional representation from youth, education, skills, disability, and transport sectors.
- Explore reinstating an annual public meeting.
- Prioritise updating the website to improve communication and accessibility.

9. **Any Other Business**
None.

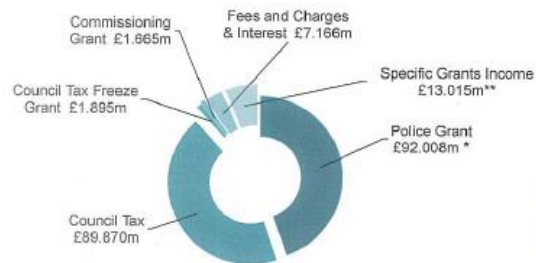
10. **Dates of Next Meetings**
15th October 2025

11. **Close**
12.00pm.

Policing budget 2026/27

The total budget for policing in Suffolk in this financial year is £205.619m.

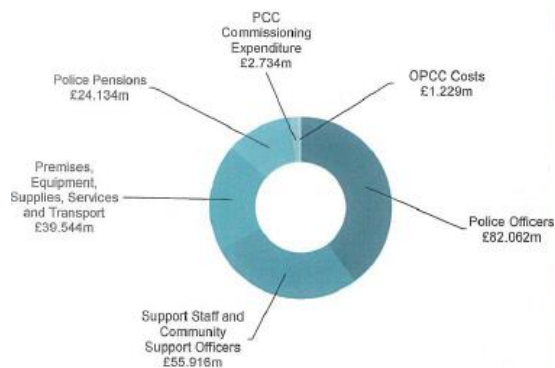
Where the money comes from:



* Includes £29.101m previously funded from DCLG, now funded through the Home Office

** Includes £3.294m Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee

How the money is spent:



Keep up to date

Suffolk Connected is a free service run by the Constabulary. It provides updates via email.

You will be updated on:

- local incidents
- crime prevention
- policing priorities
- appeals
- local events



You will also be able to take part in surveys so we can find out what issues matter most to you. Your views will help shape how we police your area.

To contact the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner:

Email: spcc@suffolk.police.uk

Telephone: 01473 782773

Website: www.suffolk-pcc.gov.uk

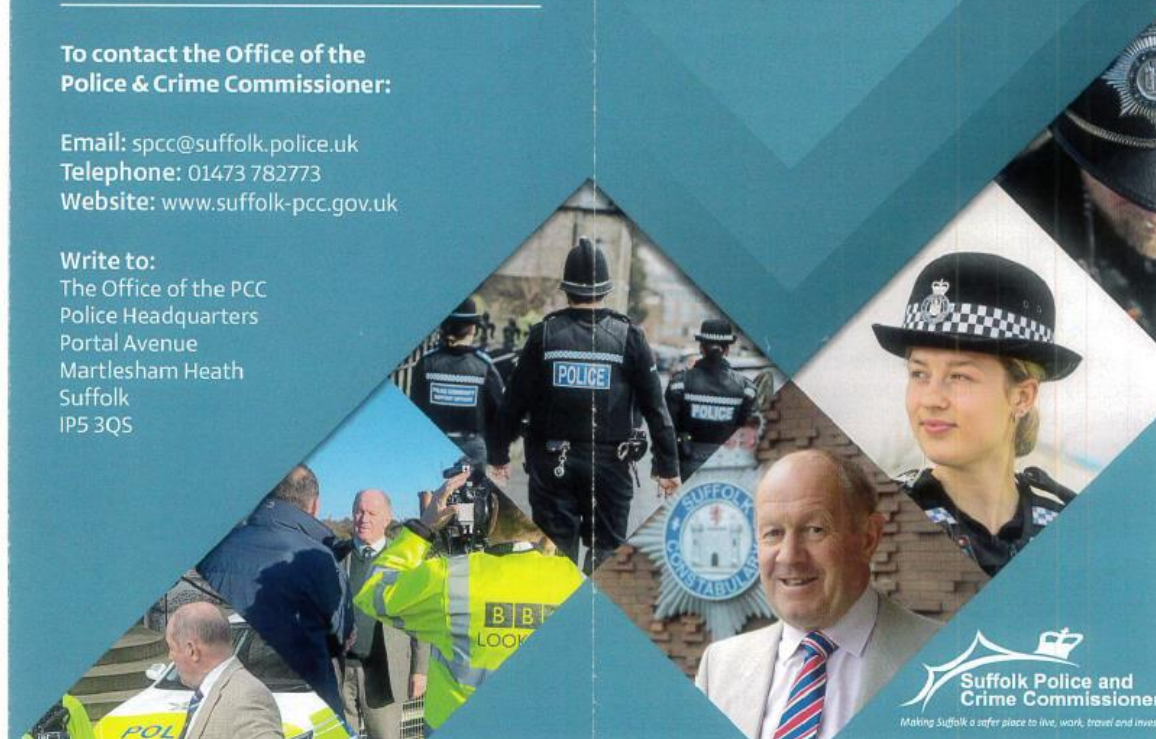
Write to:

The Office of the PCC
Police Headquarters
Portal Avenue
Martlesham Heath
Suffolk
IP5 3QS

SUFFOLK POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Tim Passmore

2026/2027



ONE HAVERHILL PARTNERSHIP

We are very fortunate to live in a safe county and we have a strong Constabulary which works hard to protect us and keep us safe.

Data published at the beginning of this financial year shows Suffolk has the second lowest level of recorded crime per capita nationally, we are financially stable and have a record number of police officers with the establishment now standing at around 1,425.

Punching well above its weight, Suffolk Constabulary does a good job for the residents and businesses in the county. Recorded crime has fallen consistently over the past few years and the successful introduction of Right Care Right Person and a new local policing model has helped improve public confidence and uniformed visibility.

Looking forward, the political and policing landscape may well change dramatically. The potential for imposing major force mergers carries huge risks, especially in rural force areas such as Suffolk. There is uncertainty ahead for every force but exciting challenges on the horizon too.

I am honoured to represent you as your Police and Crime Commissioner. I am democratically elected to be the voice for the people, I represent you and your concerns, ensuring the policing needs of your community are met.

In order to represent your views I need to hear directly from you so I hope you will let me know if you have any thoughts about the policing service you receive, or attend one of our events which are planned throughout the year. The details are on the website, www.suffolk-pcc.gov.uk.



Tim Passmore
Police & Crime Commissioner for Suffolk

Police and Crime Commissioner's Fund

Each year Suffolk's Police and Crime Commissioner awards grants of between £2,500 and £20,000 from his £300k Police and Crime Commissioner's Fund to support organisations which help reduce crime and disorder, or support victims of crime.

Suffolk Community Foundation manages the fund and applications, which are then considered by the PCC Fund Panel on a quarterly basis.

Members of the Panel include the PCC and the Chairs of the county's three Community Safety Partnerships.

If your organisation helps to address and support the key areas in the Police & Crime Plan, you are encouraged to apply to the fund. In your application you will need to demonstrate:

- A collaborative, partnership-working approach
- Projects targeted for hard-to-reach groups
- Gaps in services
- Clear, measurable outcomes.

How to apply

Full details of the Suffolk PCC's Fund and the application process are available on the Suffolk Community Foundation website.

Use the QR code or go to the Police & Crime Commissioner's Fund page at:

www.suffolkcf.org.uk

If you need further information please contact Suffolk Community Foundation's Grants Team on 01473 602602.



Police & Crime Commissioner Tim Passmore



- Elected by the public
- Is the link between the public and the police
- Sets the strategy for policing and crime and disorder reduction outlined in his Police & Crime Plan
- Sets the budget and council tax precept
- Hires the Chief Constable
 - Holds the Chief Constable to account for performance against agreed measures
 - Commissions services for crime and disorder reduction and for victims of crime

Chief Constable Rachel Kearton

- Has operational independence
- Leads the officers and staff of the Constabulary
- Responsible for delivering the Police and Crime Plan
- Accountable to the PCC for the performance of the force
- Advises the PCC on strategy and budget to meet current threats and risk
- Directs and controls the force
- Responsible for the force's purpose and areas of focus
- Is politically independent

