



OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR NORFOLK

Ten Point Pledge Progress – May 2013

During last year's election campaign for Police & Crime Commissioner, I made a pledge of ten points that I wanted to achieve should I be elected.

This is my second update on progress against the pledge, and it seeks to provide the public with a way of monitoring and judging how well I am doing.

KEEP NORFOLK ONE OF THE LOWEST CRIME COUNTIES IN THE COUNTRY

In recent years, we have seen consecutive annual reductions in crime, and statistics published on 25 April 2013 show Norfolk continues to be one of the safest places in the country with the least crimes per thousand population in England (44 crimes per 1,000 residents).

In order to ensure these trends continue, I have made reducing priority crime, anti-social behaviour and re-offending key objectives in my Police and Crime Plan. Priority crimes are those which cause the greatest harm to our communities and include burglary, robbery, violence and theft of and from vehicles.

One of the most successful measures for reducing crime and re-offending has been an increased focus on the county's most prolific criminals under 180 Degree Norfolk's Integrated Offender Management (IOM) model. The 10% most prolific criminals in Norfolk are responsible for 32% of crime. I have allocated a crime and disorder reduction grant to the multi-agency group behind 180 Degree Norfolk to ensure the valuable work in tackling re-offending can continue.

FIGHT SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME

Crime and criminals don't care much for geography. Serious and organised crime frequently crosses county and national boundaries and, therefore, cannot be tackled by Norfolk police in isolation.

Norfolk and Suffolk constabularies have been working together to share specialist resources for some years now.

More broadly, Norfolk benefits from linking with the Eastern Region Serious and Organised Crime Unit (ERSOU), and the National Crime Agency (NCA) has recently been established to lead the fight against serious and organised crime at a national level.

Phil Gormley will leave his post as Norfolk's Chief Constable in June in order to become the Deputy Director General of the NCA.

SUPPORT VICTIMS OF CRIME, VULNERABLE AND ELDERLY PEOPLE

It is my responsibility to obtain victims' views regarding policing and, in Norfolk, we worked closely with Victim Support to take those views into account in the drafting of my Police and Crime Plan. Supporting people who are victims of crime, or who are vulnerable to becoming a victim, has been included as a key objective in the final version of that Plan.

The first year of the Plan now provides me with the opportunity to better understand the views of victims of crime before I begin to commission services for victims – a duty I will inherit during 2014.

In my meetings with communities and local organisations, I have become aware of the importance of effective support for victims, and in particular victims of domestic abuse. I have made a crime and disorder reduction grant towards the funding of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs), who support survivors of domestic abuse. I will also be recruiting a Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Co-ordinator to further develop the county's approach to this area of work.

In relation to reducing people's vulnerability to becoming a victim of crime, I have supported the launch of the Safer Place Scheme, aimed at giving vulnerable or disabled people a place to go if they find themselves in need of a helping hand while out and about. The Scheme, which was funded by Norfolk Police Authority and is currently running in Dereham and Cromer, is helping to make residents feel safer going about their daily lives.

PROTECT THE FRONTLINE IN THE FACE OF CUTS

One of the key objectives of my Police and Crime Plan relates to protecting the availability of frontline resources by working more closely with partners to prevent crime and reduce the need for service from police. Frontline policing resources include all those police officers and staff who have direct contact with the public, whether by phone, online or in person, along with all those who contribute to the investigation process, such as forensic analysts.

In order to reduce crime and the demand on police, we need our partnerships to tackle the root causes of crime, encourage victims to report at an early stage and make interventions at the earliest opportunity. One example of how partners are working together to achieve these aims is the county's 'Early Help' programme. I am working closely with this programme with a view to ensuring Norfolk's most vulnerable people, families and communities receive the support they need at the earliest opportunity.

PROTECT LOCAL POLICING FROM PRIVATISATION

While some PCCs have indicated that they see privatisation as the solution to reduced government funding, 'collaboration and not privatisation' has been, and will remain, my mantra.

By continuing the programme of collaboration with Suffolk Constabulary, we can make efficiencies that will help us maintain our frontline resources. I met with Tim Passmore, Suffolk's PCC, in April and we have reaffirmed our commitment to working together.

USE TARGETING AND PREVENTION TO REDUCE DEMAND ON POLICE

We will be working closely with partners to achieve this pledge with a particular focus on mental health, where this is known to impact on crime and anti-social behaviour. Few may realise that a significant percentage of those who commit crime suffer from mental health issues.

The Norfolk Police Disability Advisory Forum, made up of volunteers from the local community, is working with us to help us understand the needs of individuals with mental health conditions. The Forum's members have been involved in reviewing the Mental Health training delivered to police officers in Norfolk.

We will also be looking with partners at the impact of alcohol and substance misuse on crime and ASB, and I have awarded a crime and disorder reduction grant to the Norfolk Drugs and Alcohol Partnership for the preventative work it undertakes.

WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TO STAY CLEAR OF CRIME

Norfolk faces particular challenges with regard to young people. We have a high level of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and educational attainment is lower here than is seen nationally. These things, along with the worsening economic situation, mean that young adults are more at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour.

I have awarded crime and disorder reduction grants to Norfolk Youth Offending Team and to Great Yarmouth Positive Futures to support the work they do with young people vulnerable to offending or being involved in ASB.

I am committed to working with young people and welcome their views on crime and policing. As a clear demonstration of that, and to help me engage positively with young people, I have signed up to the Youth Charter for PCCs which was produced by young people around the country, supported by the National Council for Voluntary Youth Service. The Charter sets out the principles of good youth engagement, and I plan to build these principles into my engagement with young people over the coming months.

LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE COMMUNITY, REACHING OUT TO MINORITY COMMUNITIES AND THE DISENGAGED TO ENSURE POLICING IS FAIR AND EQUITABLE

This is arguably my most important pledge, and my Deputy and I dedicated our first months in office to being in 'listening mode'. We moved around the county, holding community catch-ups to talk to residents about their crime and policing concerns, and met with local organisations to find out how they work to support our communities.

Policing has to be relevant and fair for everyone and I am committed to ensuring that all our communities receive a fair and equitable service. Regularly engaging with communities through, for example, community catch-ups provides us with a gauge of public views and concerns, but we are also aware of the need to tailor what we do to enable us to explore the needs of specific groups within Norfolk's communities.

In doing this, I am pleased to be supported by a number of specialist advisory groups – the Independent Advisory Group, the Disability Advisory Forum, the Youth Advisory Forum, and the Norfolk Police Independent Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Advisory Group. All are made up of volunteers drawn from the diverse communities within Norfolk.

REJECT PARTY POLITICS AND WORK WITH OTHER INDEPENDENTS TO PROVIDE A NATIONAL VOICE

Continuing the stance adopted by Norfolk Police Authority, I remain committed to rejecting the influence of competitive party politics in favour of making decisions that are in the best interests of Norfolk people. I intend to be vocal on both local and national issues which I believe will impact on crime and policing, and on our ability to keep Norfolk one of the safest counties in the country.

I publicly expressed my concerns ahead of the benefits reform trial being commenced that Universal Credit and the so-called 'bedroom tax' would have a negative impact on the most vulnerable members of our communities and could potentially have a significant effect on crime levels. I voiced my views to MPs in a public letter, inviting them to respond with their personal views on the issue. The responses I have received to-date are available to view on my website.

I have also contributed to national debate on the compensation culture and how, whilst rightly protecting the welfare of our police officers (albeit accepting that they are expected to put themselves in danger on occasions as is the nature of the role), we must also protect victims of crime from fearing unintentional consequences of calling the police.

My comments on road signs and frequently changing speed limits have received a lot of attention. While I have reviewed and re-considered the way I expressed my views, I maintain my belief that the current imposition of limits is confusing and can be seemingly random. The associated road signage is, I believe, excessive, and I do think it can be distracting and confusing to the average motorist. Feedback from the public has been mixed – some people are in agreement with me, and others believe I am on the wrong track. However, I am pleased that my comments on limits and signs prompted the discussion they did, as this is a debate I feel we should be having.

There have also been some national consultations to which I have provided input, including the consultation on the revised Victims Code and those for the proposed Community Remedy Initiative and police integrity reforms.

USE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE TO ACHIEVE LONG-LASTING SOLUTIONS

I fully support the use of restorative approaches (RA) which have been shown to reduce re-offending and assist victims. RA challenges behaviour, repairing the harm done to relationships and people rather than assigning blame and dispensing punishment.

My Deputy, Jenny McKibben, participates in the County Restorative Approaches Strategic Board which leads Norfolk on its way to becoming a Restorative County.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen Bell".