

Norfolk Force Management Statement 2019

Executive Summary

Norfolk is a high performing force, having recently been graded through HMICFRS PEEL Inspections as 'good' for effectiveness and legitimacy, and 'outstanding' for efficiency. This performance has been achieved against a backdrop of growing pressures which threaten the force's ability to maintain such high levels of service to the communities it serves. FMS 2019 highlights the following key issues facing Norfolk:

Financial uncertainty

The force has a good track record for sound stewardship of taxpayers' money, albeit the current situation of short-term budget settlements only announced 3 months ahead of the start of the financial year, and doubt around the timing of the next comprehensive spending review leads to uncertainty and makes effective planning extremely challenging. Norfolk has been rated as 'outstanding' for efficiency in the latest HMICFRS PEEL Inspections, and its change programme has already saved £34m, however with the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) still showing a significant deficit, identifying further savings is becoming increasingly challenging.

Increasing demand and public expectations

Whilst policing demand has always been volatile and multifaceted, Norfolk Constabulary is seeing significant challenges both in terms of rising volumes of increasingly complex investigations (especially in terms of safeguarding, digital evidence and disclosure) and the shift of demand from other agencies. In the recent PEEL Inspection, HMICFRS said *'Norfolk Constabulary is outstanding at planning for the future. The force understands what demands it will have to meet. It constantly works to better understand what the public expects from it.'* Demand from the public continues to increase. In the summer of 2018, Norfolk was receiving daily CCR call volumes equivalent to those received on New Year's Eve. Whilst understanding and responding to change is an organisational strength, ongoing analysis of demand, public expectations and how local communities and partner agencies are changing will be required in order to develop preventative and response strategies, and maintain public confidence and victim satisfaction.

The Norfolk Constabulary '2020' Change Team coordinates the response to these challenges. Their plans include the development of pioneering Investigation Hubs and the introduction of digital investigators which will provide the capability to respond to modern day criminality. Investments in proactive capability including Neighbourhood Policing Teams and ANPR 'Moonshot' teams seek to reduce demand and prevent crime from occurring.

Investigations

Norfolk Constabulary recognises it needs to improve the standard of some investigations. A programme of improvement activity has commenced, under the direction of a senior officer. Subsequently Norfolk recently received a grading from HMICFRS of 'Requires Improvement' regarding investigations, with a primary focus on the SNT Patrol (Frontline) investigations and supervision. The force has recently invested in front line officer numbers, meaning a greater number with fewer years' service. With such a young workforce the current challenge was in part anticipated and a range of interventions are being planned to bring investigations up to the required level. The same HMICFRS report noted that crimes allocated to specialist departments, such as child abuse, are investigated thoroughly and to a good standard.

Increased regulatory / legislative pressures

The organisation faces increasing and significant requirements around regulation, compliance and accreditation. For example cost and workload will increase with the high number of International Standards Organisation (ISO) standards that the constabulary will need to meet. Not complying with such regulations could curtail or fundamentally undermine organisational activity, and difficult decisions may be required around the level of compliance for certain areas in order to balance priorities and finances. At the same time new legislation (e.g. Data Protection Act 2018, Subject Access Requests, and Civil Orders) is increasing demand significantly in some areas. For example, the change in the Data Protection Act to make Subject Access Requests free led to an increase in demand in the constabulary and at a greater cost with no extra funding provided to cope with this.

Elsewhere, the Government has made a number of Civil Orders available to police forces as a means of addressing emerging crime types. Whilst welcomed, these orders are costly to issue, and administer with no extra funding provided. The constabulary recognises the importance of complying with Crime Data Integrity standards; however this comes at a significant cost. Improvement requires change to organisational infrastructure, at considerable expense, where the benefits often won't be immediately apparent to the public.

Cumulative change

The organisation has responded positively to the need for change over recent years, and this has been fundamental in achieving necessary savings. However, as further savings are sought in areas that have already delivered them, there are increased risks to efficiency, effectiveness and outcomes. This is especially true where change has not been fully embedded and evaluated. The 'back office' has contracted by around 35% in recent years, creating issues in servicing demand with some moderate asset shortfalls. In order to deliver transformational change in the future, the organisation needs to develop its understanding of how change in one area

(investment or savings) can indirectly create demand elsewhere. This FMS finds that the opportunity for further savings from the 'back office' is limited and that without further investment, reductions to front facing functions will be necessary to bridge the funding deficit.

Learning & Development (L&D)

The constabulary is planning for the introduction of the new Police Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF). It recognises the benefits, but the change will have major organisational impacts. Norfolk and Suffolk are investing significantly to increase resources within L&D ahead of PEQF commencing. Additionally, Norfolk has estimated that the extra abstraction of officers caused by PEQF will be equivalent to removing 80 officers from the front line. The above referenced financial uncertainty makes it unclear as to how this abstraction will be mitigated without reductions in service. The impact of PEQF will be felt elsewhere in the organisation, with implications in areas such as vetting, recruitment, Human Resources and Workplace Health.

Aside from the considerable and essential requirements of PEQF, L&D are under increasing pressure to provide the growing number of professional accreditation requirements now mandated across a number of specialist roles. This FMS finds that the ongoing ambition to further professionalise the service will soon, if it isn't already, have an impact of the ability to deliver service.

Technology and information

There is a growing demand and cost in terms of technology (e.g. keeping pace with increasingly complex digital investigations, matching advances in criminal capability, driving efficiencies and complying with greater regulatory requirements) whilst its implementation can create short term inefficiencies as the organisation adapts to change. The ICT department describes reduced capacity, (albeit key work streams are prioritised by the organisation) and pressure on capability which is linked to pay rates and training budgets. There are however many opportunities for digitisation of processes in order to achieve greater efficiencies e.g. a digital workflow solution would reduce the burden on front line officers, keeping them visible in the communities of Norfolk for longer, so resource must be focused on maximising benefits in highest priority areas.

Linked to technology, the information that is collected, held and shared is of fundamental importance to supporting all levels of the organisation and beyond. There remain significant issues in data quality across the organisation, and effective sharing of data between agencies, which can affect understanding of and response to current policing issues. These will need to be resolved through a combination of technological, cultural and collaborative action.

Collaboration

Norfolk Constabulary continues to build on its successful preferred partnership with Suffolk Constabulary, to the point where joint teams are now seamlessly integrated across a wide range of functions and there is a greater financial commitment to the joint space than any one single force. Norfolk and Suffolk are recognised as working in one of the most solid and advanced collaborations in England and Wales. There are great benefits in working collaboratively with other agencies and at regional / national levels (e.g. Seven Force Collaboration and ERSOU) that can bring greater efficiency and effectiveness in managing and preventing demand. However, this brings its own challenges and demand in terms of information sharing and security and the need to accept a compromise of intention in order to build a consensus with partners.

Workforce

The right culture will be crucial in meeting the many challenges faced by the organisation. Norfolk has developed a set of values, based on those set out by the College of Policing, that it will be promoting through a campaign titled 'The SPIRIT of policing', where SPIRIT stands for Supportive, Professional, Integrity, Respect, Impartial, Transparent. A demonstration of how the force has supported its workforce is the investment in wellbeing services, and whilst this has meant excellent progress, there remain clear risks in some areas – staff surveys find that the workforce is working harder than ever before and feeling the pressure.

It will be increasingly important for the constabulary to be an attractive and supportive place to work for existing and prospective staff, in order to support retention and recruitment, and empower individuals to transform the service through challenge and innovation. Norfolk Constabulary has demonstrated that it listens to the concerns of the workforce through provision of TASER to all response officers who wish to carry them. The organisation is also investing in new estate – funded in part by rationalising existing estate and sharing accommodation with partners such as the Fire and Rescue service.

The force is seeking to build a modern, skilled workforce that is fit for the many challenges set out in this report.

UK exit from the European Union

At the time of writing the likely impact of exiting the EU (and the extended journey towards it) is unknown, and this uncertainty creates its own challenges for policing in terms of being able to plan effectively both financially, and operationally (in terms of access to key databases, technology and European Arrest Warrants etc.).