SUFFOLK POLICE POWERS PUBLIC SCRUTINY (SPPPS) MINUTES

Date: July 29th 2026

Chair - Sharon Lee

Minutes Taker - Travis Dickerson

Location: ISCRE Hub / Online

Number in attendance: 14

Attended:

Travis Dickerson (TD)
Franstine Jones (FJ)
Simon Furlong (SF)
David Brown (DB)
Kate Fitzsimons (KF)
Chris Hinitt (CH)
Sharon Lee (SL)
Phanuel Mutumburi (PM)
Maureen Laws (ML)
Fraser Cooper (FC)
Liz Pettman (LP)
Julie Baker (JB)
Aleksandra Kasinska (AK)
Elizabeth Casey (EC)

Welcome – All Welcomed by the Chair

Minutes from previous meeting – Minutes from previous meeting signed off.

SPPPS – Former Actions: Fromer actions were reviwed

Review of Forms

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 1: Stop and Search - 375188/120526/035423 - RD218WHT

Grounds for stop/search:

SEE: No observations were madeKNOW: Multiple intelligence reports in relation to drug offences eith the most recent one being from November 2025SUSPECT: Information that the vehicle and people inside the vehicle were linked to multiple investigations involving drug supply.

ISCRE Comments:

- What grounds justified the stop given no suspicious observations and historic intelligence?
- Were there any intelligence updates after November 2025?
- Why was the vehicle stopped at that time and location?
- What linked the vehicle and occupants to suspected drug supply?
- What justified the use of force?
- When was the decision made to use force?
- How was risk assessed without observed offending?
- Was force based solely on intelligence?
- How does "no observations were made" align with the use of force?
- BWV may help clarify the decision-making.

Discussion:

CH: Noted confusion around the person searched, who was initially believed to be male but later confirmed as female.

EC: Stated the vehicle was stopped due to no insurance/MOT, with drug supply intelligence supporting the Section 23 search.

FJ: Queried the increase in "not stated" ethnicity data and how differences between self-defined and officer-defined ethnicity are recorded.

CH: Confirmed disproportionality data uses self-defined ethnicity and said "not stated" figures rose due to officers not consistently asking, training is in place to improve recording of this data.

PM: Queried why November intelligence was recorded when more recent intelligence from March was available.

EC: Confirmed the officer was aware of the March intelligence and the November date was likely an error on the form.

JB: Queried the discrepancy between Class A intelligence and cannabis being recorded on the form, and asked for clarification on the justification for using handcuffs.

EC: Clarified that the search was based on intelligence linking the to drug supply, rather than Class A drugs.

CH: Stated handcuffs were justified to prevent concealment or disposal of drugs but remained on too long. Feedback will reinforce timely reassessment.

SL: Queried the justification for immediate handcuffing when no observations had been made prior to the search.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 1: Stop and Search - 375188/120526/035423 - RD218WHT

Discussion:

CH: Highlighted that reviewing both the stop search and use of force forms would provide clearer rationale. A new process will ensure linked forms are provided together during reviews.

JB: Asked if all occupants were searched and handcuffed or only the individual.

EC: Confirmed this would be checked and feedback provided.

FJ: Asked whether the officer's supervisor would be made aware.

CH: Confirmed and highlighted the need for stronger supervisory reviews, with supervisors made aware and feedback provided to improve scrutiny of stop searches.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 2: Stop and Search - 375002/070526/194516 - RD187BME

Grounds for stop/search:

SEE: Police were called to the location following a report of a large group of youths congregating around an abandoned hospital. On arrival, officers observed a group of youths present at the specified location. A member of the public then approached officers and pointed out a male within the group, stating that he was in possession of a knife. The male matched the description provided by the caller, namely a young male wearing a blue Nike Tech tracksuit and a black balaclava. The male started making his way away from officers but returned when engaged with.KNOW: Prior to the stop, officers were aware of information recorded on CAD SC-07052026-276 from an unknown caller stating that a young male matching the detained male's description was in possession of a knife at the location. In addition when he was ran through the system, very recent intelligence indicated that the male had recently moved into the area and was known to carry knives. SUSPECT: Based on the information received via CAD, the report from a member of the public identifying the male as being in possession of a knife, the male matching the detailed description provided, his presence at the reported location, his attempt to leave when officers arrived, and recent intelligence linking him to knife carrying, I formed reasonable grounds to suspect that the male was carrying a knife.

ISCRE Comments:

- Were there objective grounds to suspect this individual had a knife?
- How reliable was the caller's information?
- Was the information first-hand or hearsay?
- Did the caller report a risk or just possession?
- How specific was the description given?
- Were there other identifying features?
- Were others wearing similar clothing?
- How was the correct person identified?
- Was the individual avoiding police or moving away?
- How did their behaviour change when approached?
- What was the source/date of the intelligence?
- How reliable was the intelligence?
- Was intelligence used appropriately?
- Would the stop have happened without intelligence?
- What facts supported the search?
- Were facts separated from assumptions?
- Did grounds go beyond general suspicion?
- Was the risk enough to justify a search?
- Were grounds clearly recorded?
- Were grounds explained to the individual?
- Was force necessary and proportionate?
- What justified immediate force?
- Was the individual compliant?
- Were alternatives considered?
- Why was the level of force proportionate?

Discussion:

EC: Confirmed the individual matched the description and was linked to recent intelligence involving drugs, gangs, and weapons.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 2: Stop and Search - 375002/070526/194516 - RD187BME

Discussion:

CH: Confirmed the search was appropriate, but officer language would be addressed. Training is ongoing to improve safeguarding compliance for child stop searches.

JB: Asked about the ethnicity of the group and whether the individual was the only Black person.

CH: Stated the group was believed to be predominantly white youths, with the individual identified through clothing as he was wearing a balaclava.

SL: Noted no other minoritised young people were observed and raised concerns about an officer's Section 50 comment.

CH: Explained the Section 50 power and reinforced the importance of clearer explanations and appropriate language when engaging with children.

EC: Confirmed feedback was given to the officer regarding the comment, which was considered inappropriate and flippant.

FJ: Raised concerns about the impact of the officer's language when engaging with young people and the potential to escalate tensions.

JB: Questioned the proportionality of searching the Black child.

CH: Stated the search was based on the knife report and description, not ethnicity.

PM: Noted young people moving areas should not be unfairly targeted and highlighted the importance of professional language to support de-escalation and build trust.

CH: Acknowledged biased reports can impact policing and highlighted the challenge of balancing responses with awareness of prejudice.

PM: Highlighted the importance of respectful interactions, noting that while police may need to act on information received, how the public are treated remains key.

SL: Noted the form was rejected by the supervisor due to concerns that the legal power for the search was not clearly explained on body-worn video.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 3: Stop and Search - 370911/140426/185914 RD68BME

Grounds for stop/search:

SEE: Male seen walking with a suspected knife in his hand, male was described as having dark skin wearing dark clothing with his hood up, having his hands behind his back carrying what looked like an orange stanley knife. Whilst completing an area search near the location the informant reported seeing the male I have spotted the male matching the description provided carrying something orange in his hands behind his back whilst walking down the street. KNOW: No other information / intelligence provided other than the original informants account as per observations box. SUSPECT: Due to the information provided I have formed the believe that this was the male that the informant saw with a knife and a such I have detained him in order to search for said suspected knife.

ISCRE Comments:

- Review BWV to understand the circumstances leading to the stop and search.
- Clarify what the member of public believed they saw and how officers interpreted this.
- Confirm whether a knife was clearly seen or assumed based on the item's appearance.
- Understand how officers assessed the risk of misidentification before acting.
- Identify whether there were opportunities to visually confirm the object before force was used.
- Establish the factors that led officers to believe the item was a knife.
- Confirm the location context and any links to relevant intelligence.
- Understand the specific threat officers believed existed when force was used.
- Clarify whether force was used due to a reported weapon or actual behaviour.
- Note that the item was identified as not being a knife and the outcome was NFA.

How should officers balance urgent action on reported weapons with the risk of misidentification, particularly when force is used and no weapon is ultimately found?

Discussion:

BWV was reviewed by ISCRE

CH: Stated the individual was known to officers, located shortly after a knife report, and handcuffed during the search before being de-escalated when it was identified as a lighter.

EC: Shared that the officers responded quickly to a report of a male carrying a knife matching the description given. The individual was located shortly after and handcuffed due to the reported risk.

CH: Stated officers acted reasonably on the knife report based on the information available. The item was quickly identified as a cigarette lighter, and handcuffs were removed appropriately.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 3: Stop and Search - 370911/140426/185914 RD68BME

JB: Asked whether the officer would be informed that they had not completed the required process.

CH: Explained that identified officers are logged and provided with supportive feedback, reinforcing both the specific issue and key learning points. Repeat concerns are tracked and escalated through informal management and, where necessary, performance management.

CH: Acknowledged issues with use of force recording, noting officers sometimes fail to complete separate forms. Work is underway to improve the system and ensure better recording and supervision. Use of force is reviewed through body-worn video checks, with feedback provided and repeat failures escalated. Forms should be completed before the end of duty.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 4: Use of Force (Taser) - SC-06052026-378

Reason for Use of Force:

Reports were that household had been threatened with a knife. When I arrived on scene I saw a male through a smashed window who was holding a kitchen knife. At the time I was unsure if this was the suspect who had manged to get inside the adress or the victim or what the nature of their involvement was. All I knew was that I was on my own, in the middle of a situation where mustiple weapons were reported. There was a male I saw holding a knife. I used tac coms to get him to put down the knife before answering the door. When he answered the door I got him to show me his waistband whild I had him on red dot in the off aim posistion.

ISCRE Comments:

- Clarify information received prior to arrival, including number of individuals, reported weapons, and reliability of intelligence.
- Understand how officers assessed whether the individual was a suspect or victim and identified the threat.
- Establish whether the individual made any threatening movements with the knife or acknowledged police presence.
- Confirm the commands given via Tac Coms, how many times they were issued, and whether sufficient time was allowed for compliance.
- Explore whether alternative de-escalation options were considered and when communication shifted to enforcement.
- Understand why the officer was acting alone, whether backup was requested, and the expected response time.
- Establish whether working alone influenced the level of force used.
- Clarify why the outcome was NFA and what was identified during the incident.

Discussion:

CH: Explained BWV addressed the concerns raised. The officer responded single crewed to a reported knife incident, used Tac Coms, secured the knife, and de-escalated before establishing the circumstances.

ML: Questioned who answered the door? Who made the call to the police?

CH: Explained the suspect opened the door, but this was unknown to the officer on arrival. The officer assessed the situation, reassessed the threat, and de-escalated. The initial report was from the victim's girlfriend of four individuals attending with knives, baseball bats, and two XL Bullies.

FJ: Queries what happened to the family following the incident, after the individual was de-escalated and the knife was put down.

CH: Shared that officers moved into victim care, calmly establishing what had happened before progressing to a crime report.

PM: Approved of the amount of officers on the scene, while acknowledging higher deployments may be appropriate for serious threats involving weapons, dogs and other dangerous potential.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 4: Use of Force: SC-06052026-378

Discussion:

CH: Explained that officers must balance risk, with immediate action required where there is potential for serious harm inside an address. This case had good reason for the amount of officers.

SL: Acknowledged the challenges officers face when responding to uncertain situations, noting the importance of balancing scrutiny with understanding the risks involved.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 5: Use of Force - sc-10052026-48

Rason for use of force:

Police called by member of public suggesting a physical altercation was taking place between and male and a female in the street.
When police arrived male was sat in his underwear in the passenger seat of vehicle identified by VRM on the CAD. Parties were split up and suggested nothing had happened but male repeatedly refused his details - this concerned me as there didn't seem to be any reasonable explanation why he would not provide these and I did not feel I could provide a full rationale to take no further action and leave parties together without knowing his history and checking for any potential bail conditions and/or preventative orders. Multiple attempts made to gain details including option to show ID or accompany him to home address on the same road; he declined this offer.
Male was detained to prevent a breach of the peace. I used handcuffs as I suspected he was intoxicated and he was of athletic build and I did not wish to either be assaulted or have him run off.

ISCRE Comments:

- What behaviour indicated a risk of violence towards officers?
- Did the individual display threats, aggression, or resistance?
- What evidence supported the belief the individual was intoxicated?
- How did the individual's build justify the use of handcuffs?
- Is physical fitness alone a lawful reason for force?
- Were less intrusive options considered before handcuffing?
- Was the use of handcuffs necessary, proportionate, and in line with policy?
- What lawful power existed to prevent the individual leaving?
- What objective behaviours justified detention and handcuffing beyond refusing details?

Discussion:

EC: Explained the incident followed a report of a domestic altercation. Officers separated both parties and attempted to establish what had happened, but the male refused to provide details. Due to uncertainty around the incident and inability to verify information, officers used breach of the peace powers and handcuffed the male to prevent further issues and confirm identities.

CH: Shared that allowing the male to leave raised concerns due to the reported altercation and the potential risk to the female. Making this a difficult situation for officers to manage.

SL: Questioned the necessity of handcuffing, noting the male appeared cooperative and seated, and felt the rationale provided did not clearly justify the use of handcuffs.

EC: Confirmed that handcuffing was used due to the risk of further issues, the nearby road, and uncertainty around the reported altercation. Once details were confirmed and checks completed, the male was released.

ML: Queried whether officers observed any signs of fear or concern from the female involved.

CH: Expressed that the female had no visible injuries or clear signs of fear observed. Officers remained mindful that victims may minimise or deflect concerns on arrival to a scene.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 5: Use of Force - sc-10052026-48

Discussion:

JB: Raised concerns about whether ethnicity influenced the treatment of the individual. 1:35:10

CH: Unable to answer JB's query

CH: Explained that officers were responding to a reported domestic incident and needed to confirm details before releasing the male. Once checks were completed, he was released.

PM: Raised that this was the same officer discussed at previous meetings and asked whether previous incidents involving Black individuals would be considered as part of the scrutiny and feedback process.

SL: Added that the rationale for describing the male as intoxicated, noting no obvious signs were visible on the BWV. The male was not aggressive or confrontational and only refusing to give his details. Is this justified for UOF?

CH: Confirmed the incidents would be referred to the Professional Standards Department for an independent review.

FJ: Raised concerns about potential bias and the use of police powers, questioning whether the officer's decision-making was influenced by the individual being a Black male. On top of the officer having multiple similar incidents.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 6: Use of Force - 375186/030526/213842

Rason for use of force:

Male was not know to me therefore I treated him as unsperdicitable. Due to the drugs element I used cuffs to safely search the male and prevent any drugs ingestion.

ISCRE Comments:

This rationale raises questions as the grounds given for handcuffing appear quite generic rather than based on specific behaviour or risk presented by the individual.

- What specific behaviour or risk justified the use of handcuffs?
- Why were handcuffs necessary rather than preferable?
- What risk could not be managed without handcuffing?
- Was the male compliant or resisting at the time?
- Is “not known to me” sufficient justification for handcuffing?

Discussion:

CH: Explained the officer encountered a young person with cannabis at a skate park while working alone. Handcuffs were used to manage the situation until additional officers arrived, after which a search was completed and the matter was dealt with appropriately.

EC: Add’s that the officer attended alone following a report of a nearby fight, identified cannabis, used handcuffs, and completed the search after further officers arrived.

SL: Questioned the rationale for handcuffing, after the individual had admitted possession of drugs and was cooperative.

CH: Explained the use of force form did not adequately justify the rationale. The search was appropriate, but the form lacked detail around the officer’s decision-making and should better reflect the threat, risk, and circumstances.

JB: Questioned the age of the induvial.

EC: Confirmed the age of the individual is 23.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

AOB:

PM: Provided an update on ongoing work to increase public engagement with the scrutiny process. This includes joint publicity material with the police and OPCC to highlight the value of public scrutiny, improve understanding, and promote partnership working.

CH: Highlighted ongoing work to improve practice, noting that one poor incident can impact perceptions of wider good work. He explained that frontline officers are receiving further briefings and training, alongside separate work addressing disproportionality in policing powers and the criminal justice system.

JB: Noted that all six cases included good-quality BWV, recognising this as positive progress.

CH: Explained that improvements to BWV compliance have been made through clearer guidance, regular checks, and administrative support.

PM: Advised that future discussions would consider expanding BWV scrutiny and wider involvement to the panel in the review process, subject to agreeing appropriate processes.

Next Meeting:

September Wednesday 30th - Online