

Scrutiny panel quizzes Chief Constable hopeful

A SCRUTINY panel quizzed the proposed new Chief Constable on her plans for Sussex Police at a confirmation hearing today (Friday).

The Sussex Police and Crime Panel were asked to give its recommendation on the appointment of Deputy Chief Constable Jo Shiner as a replacement for current Chief Constable Giles York, who stands down on July 2.

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne selected DCC Shiner, who has held her position since November 2018 after spending four years as Assistant Chief Constable with Kent Police.

Speaking to the panel, DCC Shiner said she was “honoured and privileged” to be the preferred candidate and said she would focus on three key areas; protecting communities, catching criminals and delivering an outstanding service to victims and witnesses.

DCC Shiner, who has 28 years’ experience as a police officer, spoke about the importance of inspiring confidence and trust in policing, working with partners to address issues together and identifying and listening to all communities in Sussex. She told the Panel that she was committed to raising the quality of policing in Sussex to outstanding, as defined by the HMICFRS.

The Commissioner was also asked to report on the impact of Covid-19 on policing across Sussex and the involvement of her office in planning and communication for the response to the crisis. This, she said, including approving the expenditure of £2.1 million to ensure Sussex Police staff were properly protected with the correct PPE.

Despite the stringent restrictions put in place Mrs Bourne told the panel that the work of her early intervention youth programme, REBOOT, and the Sussex Restorative Justice Partnership were able to adapt and continue throughout the pandemic.

Along with PCCs across England Wales, Mrs Bourne said she was working with the Government to have the additional costs incurred by police forces during the pandemic and lockdown reimbursed in full.

However, the commissioner said savings were made by Sussex Police thanks to BP providing free fuel for police cars which amounted to £91,000.

The commissioner also presented her annual report to the panel in which she highlighted areas of investment including recruiting police constables, police community support officers and specialist staff, updating vehicle, improving contact handling and the launch of a tactical enforcement unit.

Speaking after the meeting panel chairman, Cllr Bill Bentley said: “We were delighted to have the opportunity to question the commissioner’s preferred candidate about the areas of policing which have been discussed by the Panel over the years.”

He added: "It was also interesting to hear the response of the force to the Covid-19 crisis which has had a financial impact which could well form part of the discussion as the Commissioner begins to discuss her budget for the new financial year if further funding is not allocated by the Home Office."

The Panel's recommendation on the appointment of a new Chief Constable for Sussex Police will be announced at noon on Tuesday, June 30.

Ends