

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

24 April 2015

Written Questions

Report by the Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel

The table below provides a schedule of the written questions received prior to this meeting and where possible responses have been included. Responses will be tabled at the meeting that were not available at the time of despatch. Written Questions must be received 2 weeks before a meeting of the Panel and the Commissioner or Panel Chairman is invited to provide a response by noon of the day before the meeting.

Questions that relate to operational matters of Sussex Police will be passed to a relevant officer at Sussex Police for a response and a brief summary of the question will be provided below. For the current meeting three questions have been received for a response by the Commissioner.

Date received	Question	Response
25 February 2015	<p>Trying to contact the police in Worthing is a marathon. According to your leaflet entitled Policing Worthing, Worthing police Station is open seven days a week including bank holidays from 8 to midnight, in fact the station is only open Monday to Saturday from 9 am to 8 pm, it is closed on Sunday all day and all Bank Holidays. For non-emergency calls you are advised to dial 084560 70 999 which asks you to dial one of two extensions neither of which have I ever managed to get an answer on so presumably the offices are unmanned.</p> <p>If you dial 101 you are kept pushing buttons and listening to statements for 1 and a half minutes before being told that you are being put in a queue and being charged 15 pence for the call.</p> <p>I wished to report an obviously confused, elderly man with every symptom of dementia wandering round Montague Street on Sunday morning. I suspected he may have wandered out from home, either his own or a care home, without somebodies knowledge and was possibly being sought.</p>	<p>It is worth clarifying that there are a number of ways to contact Sussex Police and all calls and emails are managed centrally at Sussex Police Headquarters in Lewes.</p> <p>In an emergency you should always dial 999. For non-emergencies dial 101. Calls to this number cost a maximum of 15p for the duration, whether you are calling from a landline or mobile phone.</p> <p>There is an alternative local number of 01273 470101 which circumvents the national 101 switchboard number by diverting directly to the Sussex Police switchboard. These calls are charged at local rates which means that if you're calling from a landline and have an inclusive package, it may be free of charge. The local number is particularly helpful for callers trying to contact Sussex Police from a different part of the country.</p> <p>It is worth emphasising that all calls are risk assessed and resources deployed appropriately against that assessment of risk.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that some members of the public have been</p>

<p>Having been messed about only to be told I was being charged for the call and was to be put in a queue I gave up.</p> <p>It is ridiculous that there is no straightforward way to contact the police in Worthing other than by dialling 999.</p> <p>Questioner – Mr Smewing, Worthing</p> <p>In follow up to the response provided, Mr Smewing submitted the following supplementary point:</p> <p>The mystery is how did the people who called and were answered within 30 seconds get past the push button time which took me 1 minute 26 seconds before being passed on to other departments. The time it took me was logged on my mobile phone so I know exactly how long I was pushing buttons and listening to unnecessary (to me) waffle.</p> <p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>I can confirm that Sussex Police has increased the number of options available through the Switchboard. However, it is important to remember that these are non-emergency calls and the additional options were created to better signpost and manage demand more efficiently and effectively, as follows:</p> <p>Option one gives the caller the option of learning how to report a crime online;</p> <p>Options two and three attempt to reduce queue length for routine type calls. For example, “can I speak to PC Example?” or “will you put me through to Brighton & Hove Custody?”; and</p> <p>Options four and five aim to guide the caller through to the correct operator.</p> <p>It is also worth emphasising that if no option is selected the call is passed through to the Switchboard. Equally, if you are a return caller and know the option you require from a previous</p>	<p>experiencing delays in their calls being answered when phoning the 101 non-emergency number. Sussex Police apologise for any frustration and inconvenience caused by this and remain committed to tackling this issue and to minimise the impact on public service.</p> <p>A summary of the non-emergency calls received by the Switchboard and the Contact and Command Centre and the average answering times for each are detailed below:</p> <p>2012/2013</p> <p>Sussex Police received 866,447 calls to the non-emergency number across the performance plan year 2012/2013. 96% of these calls were answered initially within 30 seconds by the switchboard team, of which 556,084 were transferred to the contact centre. Of those calls transferred, 74% were answered within 60 seconds, with an average wait time of 59 seconds.</p> <p>2013/2014</p> <p>Sussex Police received 753,535 calls to the non-emergency number across the performance plan year 2013/2014. 96% of these calls were answered initially within 30 seconds by the switchboard team, of which 563,297 were transferred to the contact centre. Of those calls transferred, 57% were answered within 60 seconds, with an average wait time of 2 minutes and 15 seconds.</p> <p>2014/2015 (to the end of January 2015)</p> <p>Sussex Police has received 609,406 calls to the non-emergency number across the performance plan year to date. 91% of these calls were answered initially within 30 seconds by the switchboard team, of which 419,300 were transferred to the contact centre. Of those calls transferred, 59%% were answered within 60 seconds, with an average wait time of 2 minutes and 20 seconds.</p>
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	<p>experience, this can be selected early.</p> <p>The time starts when an option is selected. If no option is selected, the time starts when the call is automatically passed through to the Switchboard.</p> <p>Sussex Police do not plan to increase the number of available options but acknowledges that these may be further defined according to need.</p> <p>It is difficult to ascertain whether the introduction of these additional options has directly contributed to the improved performance in the Contact and Command Centre but since they have been introduced non-emergency call handling performance has significantly improved.</p>	
<p>26 March 2015</p>	<p>How has the effectiveness and efficiency of the Sussex Police been improved as the result of the appointment of Ms Bourne as Police & Crime Commissioner?</p> <p>Questioner – Mr Taylor, Lewes</p>	<p>My achievements, in terms of improving the effectiveness and efficiencies of Sussex Police, can be viewed in the “Two Years On” section at the front of my Police & Crime Plan (pages 4-6). These are presented under each of the four priority areas.</p> <p>Achievements have also been presented to the Panel in the Half-Year Monitoring Reports for 2013/2014 (11 October 2013) and 2014/2015 (10 October 2014) and in the Annual Report for 2013/2014 (27 June 2014).</p> <p>The Annual Report for 2014/2015 will be presented to the Panel at the meeting on 3 July 2015.</p> <p>I would also be happy to add you to the distribution list for my weekly newsletter which provides further detail regarding achievements as and when they are realised.</p>
<p>30 March 2015</p>	<p>Although aware of the budgetary pressures we are all under what is the justification for the decision to reduce the number of PCSOs so dramatically - 39% meaning a drop from 347 to 210 - when the original reason for their placement particularly in rural villages, and</p>	<p>In order to facilitate the provision of effective local policing services to the public, within reduced budgets, the Chief Constable has developed the Sussex Local Policing Model.</p> <p>This model is an innovative approach and will enable Sussex Police</p>

	<p>elsewhere, was to give the police a 'face' in the countryside whilst at the same time making a real contribution in reducing the serious fear of crime? This surely cannot be the signal we should be sending out to the public?</p> <p>Questioner – Mr Patten, Hastings</p>	<p>to operate more efficiently in the future by responding to incidents based on threat, risk and harm.</p> <p>I will not comment on the operational detail of the Local Policing Plan. However, it is important to remember what the police are actually here for and to recognise where their physical presence makes a difference.</p> <p>Neighbourhood policing in Sussex has remained broadly the same for the last 15 years and we now need a model that meets the demands of modern-day policing and the policing challenges of the 21st century.</p> <p>Demands on the frontline are changing and policing needs to adapt accordingly. It is not only uniformed police officers on the beat but skilled staff who can investigate complex crimes online, seize criminal assets through financial investigations and solve crimes through high-tech or forensic research. These often unseen areas are a crucial part of our “frontline” and where the Chief Constable and I have sought further investment to strengthen the Force’s capability and capacity.</p> <p>There will be changes that I know some residents may not feel comfortable with straight away. That is why I will be watching closely – and continuing to engage directly with members of the public – to ensure these changes are clearly communicated and understood. This is a long-term, five-year plan. The new Sussex Local Policing Model – and the changes within it – will not be rolled out overnight. I will be asking partners and the public to feedback their comments and concerns to me at every stage.</p> <p>We all recognise that the police funding challenge is not unique. Every part of the public sector is making fundamental changes to the way services are delivered and this, in turn, is driving reform. Police forces are having to improve and change in order to continue to provide an effective service for local people. They have to make better use of their resources, reduce demand by intervening earlier and work in a more efficient way with other services and the public.</p>
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<p>7 April 2015</p>	<p><i>This question has been deemed to be of an operational nature and has been forwarded to Sussex Police for a response. The answer and the full question will appear on the PCP website following this meeting at the address below:</i></p> <p>http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/pcp,</p> <p>I would dearly like to understand the conclusion of the investigation into a recent attempted armed robbery at my local public house, The Ship Inn in Ship Street, East Grinstead. The accused was acquitted in court - does this mean there was insufficient evidence? Or are the police looking for a new suspect?”</p> <p>Questioner – Mr Hughes, East Grinstead</p>	<p>I can confirm the following with regards to the attempted robbery at The Ship Inn on Ship Street, East Grinstead.</p> <p>The police investigation quickly identified the suspect, and the process of evidence gathering and preparing the court case file began.</p> <p>The evidence gathered was compelling and investigating officers and Crown Prosecution Service felt very confident that there was sufficient evidence to secure a successful prosecution.</p> <p>However, the jury did not believe “beyond all reasonable doubt” that the defendant had committed the offence and, as a result, found the defendant not guilty.</p> <p>Reasons cited by the jury for this decision included the witness only being 99% sure of identification from the voice, the BB guns found during the search did not entirely match the description in the victim statement, and the fact that the defendant disputed being there.</p> <p>Sussex Police is not looking for anyone else in connection with this incident.</p> <p>In addition, I have been informed that the landlord (and victim in</p>

		this case) has been complimentary to the officer in charge and appreciates that a strong case was put together by Sussex Police.
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No Background Papers