

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

25 June 2021 – At a meeting of the Panel held at 10.30am at County Hall, Lewes.

Present:

Cllr Christian Mitchell (Chairman)	West Sussex County Council	Cllr Bob Standley (Vice Chairman)	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Johnny Denis	Lewes District Council	Cllr Jacky Pendleton	Arun District Council
Cllr Philip Lunn	Wealden District Council	Cllr Norman Webster	Mid Sussex District Council
Cllr Carmen Appich (Substitute)	Brighton & Hove City Council	Mrs Susan Scholefield	Independent Member
Cllr Karen Harman (Substitute)	Worthing Borough Council	Cllr Lizzie Deane	Brighton & Hove City Council
Cllr Judy Rogers	Hastings Borough Council	Cllr Roy Briscoe	Chichester District Council
Cllr Claire Vickers	Horsham District Council	Cllr James Walsh (Observer)	West Sussex County Council
Cllr Colin Swansborough (Substitute)	Eastbourne Borough Council		

Apologies were received from Cllr Kevin Boram (Adur District Council), Cllr Brian Drayson (Rother District Council), Cllr Sean McDonald (Worthing Borough Council), Cllr Jackie O’Quinn (Brighton & Hove City Council), Cllr Rebecca Whippy (Eastbourne Borough Council), Cllr Michael Jones (Crawley Borough Council) and Mr Keith Naphthine (Independent Member).

Present from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OSPPC): Commissioner Katy Bourne (PCC), Mark Streater (Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer), Iain McCulloch (Chief Finance Officer) and Mervin Dadd (Chief Communications and Insight Officer).

Part I

1. Appointment of Independent Members

1.2 Resolved - that the Panel:

1. Confirm the appointment of Mr Keith Naphthine as an Independent Co-Opted Member of the Panel, to take effect immediately.

2. Renew the appointment of Mrs Susan Scholefield, Independent Co-Opted Member, to take effect immediately. Mrs Scholefield will be the proposed candidate for a further five-year term when her current terms expires in summer 2022.

3. Confirm the appointment of Mrs Sarah Peacock as a substitute Independent Co-Opted Member of the Panel, to take effect immediately.

2. Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman

2.1 Councillor Briscoe proposed Councillor Mitchell as Chairman of the Panel for the forthcoming year. The proposal was seconded, and the appointment was agreed by the Panel.

2.2 Resolved – that Councillor Mitchell is elected as Chairman of Sussex Police and Crime Panel for the ensuing year.

2.3 Councillor Lunn proposed Councillor Standley as Vice Chairman of the Panel for the forthcoming year. The proposal was seconded, and the appointment was agreed by the Panel.

2.4 Resolved – that Councillor Standley is elected as Vice Chairman of Sussex Police and Crime Panel for the ensuing year.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 In accordance with the Code of Conduct, members of the Panel declared the personal interests in the table below.

Panel Member	Personal Interest
Jacky Pendleton	Chairman of Safer Arun Partnership
Judy Rogers	Member of Safer Hastings Partnership
Colin Swansborough (Substitute)	Lead Member for Place Services at Eastbourne Borough Council Member of East Sussex County Council
Roy Briscoe	Member of Joint Arun and Chichester Community Safety Partnership

Johnny Denis	Co-Chair of Lewes and Eastbourne Community Safety Partnership Lead Member for Community Safety at Lewes District Council Member of Lewes District Council – Community Safety Partnership – Joint Action Group
Susan Scholefield	A serving Magistrate Chair of the Competition Appeal Tribunal and Competition Service Senior Independent Director of Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Norman Webster	Member of Mid Sussex Community Safety Partnership
Rebecca Whippy	Co-Chair of Lewes and Eastbourne Community Safety Partnership Lead for Community Safety at Eastbourne Borough Council Member of Eastbourne Borough Council Joint Action Group Member of Eastbourne Neighbourhood Watch CEO of Embrace East Sussex Independent SEND Litigator
Philip Lunn	Chair of Safer Wealden Partnership Member of Sussex Safer Communities Board
Brian Drayson	Co-Chair Safer Rother Partnership

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

4.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

5. Urgent Matters

5.1 None were raised by the Panel for the Chairman’s consideration.

6. Annual Review of Membership and Proportionality

6.1 The Panel considered a report by the Clerk to the Sussex Police & Crime Panel which set out the political makeup of the Panel’s constituent authorities.

6.2 Resolved - that the Panel:

- i. Agree that Brighton & Hove City Council be invited to appoint a Labour second representative to the Panel.
- ii. Appoint Councillor Jackie O'Quinn as second representative for Brighton & Hove City Council, to take effect immediately.
- iii. Agree that both East and West Sussex County Councils should each be invited to appoint an additional local authority member, for a one-year period of office; and
- iv. Subject to agreeing recommendations 1 and 2, agree the appointment of a Liberal Democrat councillor from East Sussex County Council and a Liberal Democrat councillor from West Sussex County Council, to take effect immediately.
- v. Councillor James Walsh was welcomed in an observer capacity, prior to his appointment as second representative being formalised by West Sussex County Council.

7. Public Questions to the Commissioner

7.1 The Panel noted a published version of written public questions with answers from the Commissioner and Sussex Police (copy appended to the signed minutes).

8. The Commissioner's Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2020/21

8.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner which was introduced by Katy Bourne, Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner.

8.2 The Commissioner commended the Force's "Four E's" approach (Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and thanked the majority of Sussex residents for their cooperation and compliance.

8.3 Commissioner Bourne informed the Panel that the Chief Constable of Sussex Police, Jo Shiner, is now supported by an all-female command team, one year on following her appointment.

8.4 The Commissioner highlighted the progress made against the previous Police & Crime Plan's (2017/21) policing and crime objectives:

- 1. Strengthen local policing

- The Force recruited 129 police officers in 2020/21 as part of the Government's Operation Uplift campaign, in addition to more staff and PCSOs.
- Improvement in public contact received via the Force's contact centre – non-emergency call handling times have more than halved since 2019/20 to 3 minutes and 25 seconds in 2020/21.
- The Force created a countywide Rural Crime Team (RCT) consisting of 18 officers in June 2020.
- High profile success achieved by the Force's expanded Tactical Enforcement Units, introduced in December 2019, to deliver high profile disruption and enforcement activity across Sussex. A Specialist Enforcement Unit was also launched in January 2021 to target complex issues and serious, organised and violent crime taking place on Sussex roads.

3. Protect our vulnerable and help victims cope and recover from crime and abuse

- Continued commission of high-quality support services for victims of crime and prioritising access for the county's most vulnerable victims.
- A Sussex-wide Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme was rolled out in October 2020, financed by the Home Office and local match-funding.
- Four new remote witness suites for vulnerable victims and witnesses are now in operation with the aim of reducing the need for vulnerable victims and witnesses to travel long distances to give evidence at court.
- The installation of Covid-safe consultation booths in the Force's custody centres have facilitated 1,400 video remand hearings in the last year.

8.5 The Chairman invited the Panel to ask questions. A summary of questions and responses were as follows:

- It was asked how the Force's recruitment drive in 2020/21 compared with staffing levels in 2012. The Commissioner assured the Panel that the Force met its recruitment target for the municipal year (129 new police officers) and placed emphasis on productivity over quantity of personnel. The Commissioner agreed to provide comparative officer numbers, in writing following the meeting, from when she first took office in 2012.
- The effectiveness of the Rural Crime Team (RCT) was questioned, one year after its inception in June 2020. The Commissioner explained that while the RCT leads on tackling rural crime they also serve to proactively link in with local Neighbourhood Watch groups and, for larger scale offences, the regional Organised Crime Unit. Commissioner Bourne referred the Panel to her report for examples of the RCT's notable successes to date.

- A request was made for a breakdown of victims of domestic abuse by; gender, age and ethnic backgrounds, in order to understand which groups of people are most affected in local communities and in turn identify how support services and education can be targeted effectively. The Commissioner agreed to consider on reflection and provide the requested data following the meeting.
- The Panel highlighted the omission of the Force's policy for spending proceeds of crime and the reinvestment of seized valuable assets in the Commissioner's report. It was suggested to include a section about the assets recovered from criminals through the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 in the annual report going forward. The Commissioner welcomed the suggestion and offered to arrange for Panel members to receive a briefing in respect of the legislative scheme for the recovery of criminal assets at a future meeting.
- It was asked whether the Force's investment in mobile data terminals has increased productivity. The Commissioner commented that smartphones' enhanced functionality has enabled police officers to; report sudden deaths and mental health crises, take fingerprints in real-time and issue Covid-19 fixed penalty notices. She added that the Force uses Microsoft Power BI software to develop analytics insights as an example of cross-border agile ways of working.
- It was questioned whether a resolution had been found in terms of agreeing an effective funding mechanism for domestic homicide reviews. The Commissioner clarified that no single body is responsible for funding domestic homicide reviews and disclosed that she is aware of some Community Safety Partnerships using funding (awarded by her for different projects) towards this cause in the last year. She added that conversations on this matter are ongoing between the OSPCC and East Sussex County Council.
- It was asked what actions are being taken to increase the representation of ethnic minorities in the Force. The Commissioner commented that workforce diversification is an ongoing process and a high priority for Sussex Police and national police forces across the country. Commissioner Bourne revealed that 8% detective recruits in the latest intake were from minority ethnicities and this is above the national average (6%). Mr Streater, OSPCC Chief Executive, confirmed that 11.3% of the Force's recruits appointed in the last three years are from a BAME background and is above the previous three-year average (5.9%).
- It was questioned whether there are plans to lower the threshold for investigating low-level crime and anti-social behaviour. The Commissioner clarified that there is no threshold but re-assured Panel members that the Force practices the THRIVE method (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability, Engagement). She added that, last year, the Force recorded 18,500 anti-social behaviour (ASB) offences directly linked to Covid-19 breaches and that ASB was a subject of scrutiny at her recent

Performance and Accountability Meeting (PAM) with the Chief Constable. Commissioner Bourne offered to provide the questioner with a copy of the minutes from her PAM meeting on 18 June for their information.

- It was asked whether the Commissioner has a strategy for policing beaches across the county, in relation to ASB. The Commissioner acknowledged the operational question and confirmed the Force does not uphold a 'beach policy' and advised that this falls under the remit of the relevant District Commander and local policing teams.
- The Panel asked about the Force's strategic approach in response to rising levels of mental health crises at crime scenes, since the pandemic, and whether police officers are fully trained to provide support. The Commissioner acknowledged the growing issue and confirmed that police officers are not trained in mental health, however mental health nurses are deployed in police vehicles to response calls, if required. She reassured the Panel that the Chief Constable works very closely with the Chief Executive of Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.
- It was questioned why third-party payments for policing services provided by the Force have increased from £2.7 million (2019/20) to £10 million in 2020/21. The Commissioner explained that this figure comprises of legal fees and that litigious behaviour means that the costs do fluctuate and are highly variable year-on-year. Commissioner Bourne assured Panel members that she scrutinizes all third-party payments on a quarterly basis at her Governance and Integrity Meetings.
- A concern was raised as to whether the 15% increase in OSPCC operating costs is justified. The Commissioner put this into context and commented that the cost of running her office represents 0.45% of the Force's overall budget (£310 million). She added her belief that the increased spend represents "good value for money" upon referring to the OSPCC's portfolio of work and the extra funding she's able to secure in her role.
- A request was made for a breakdown of categories for BAME and disabled people (in reference to page 65, the section on Workforce Diversity). The Commissioner agreed to address this following the meeting.
- Praise was offered to the positive impact made by the Rural Crime Team and an appeal was made to the Commissioner to ensure its continued strategic development. Commissioner Bourne acknowledged the comment and pledged to oversee its evolution.

8.6 In summary of the discussion, the Chairman thanked the Commissioner, on behalf of the Panel, for answering members' questions and expressed appreciation of the extraordinary challenges faced by her office and Sussex Police over the course of the reporting year.

8.7 Resolved - that the Panel:

i) Noted the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2020/21.

9. Annual Report from the Host Authority

9.1 The Panel considered a report by the Clerk to the Sussex Police and Crime Panel.

9.2 Resolved – that the Panel notes its annual report and budget outturn for 2020/21.

10. Quarterly Report of Complaints

10.1 The Panel considered a report by the Clerk to the Sussex Police and Crime Panel.

10.2 Resolved – that the Panel note the update.

11. Working Group Appointments

11.1 The Chairman called for volunteers to form the ensuing year's Budget and Precept Working Group.

11.2 Resolved – that the following Panel members be appointed to the Budget and Precept Working Group: -

- Mrs Scholefield
- Cllr Denis
- Cllr Webster
- Cllr Briscoe
- Cllr Rogers

And that Ninesh Edwards, Senior Advisor to the Panel, ask Cllr O'Quinn if she would join the group so that it contained representation from Brighton & Hove City Council. (Post Meeting Note: Cllr O'Quinn agreed to join the group).

12. Date of Next Meeting

12.1 The next meeting of the Panel would take place on 24 September 2021 at 10.30am at County Hall, Lewes.

The meeting ended at 11.37am.

Chairman