

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

25 September 2020 – A virtual meeting of the Panel held at 10.30am.

Present:

Cllr Bill Bentley (Chairman)	East Sussex County Council	Cllr Christian Mitchell (Vice-Chairman)	West Sussex County Council
Cllr Paul Mansfield (Substitute)	Adur District Council	Cllr Gill Yeates	Arun District Council
Cllr Roy Briscoe	Chichester District Council	Cllr Pat Rodohan (Substitute)	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Johnny Denis	Lewes District Council	Cllr Norman Webster	Mid Sussex District Council
Cllr Philip Lunn	Wealden District Council	Mrs Susan Scholefield	Independent member
Mr Peter Nightingale	Independent member	Cllr Dee Simson	Brighton & Hove City Council
Cllr Val Turner	Worthing Borough Council	Cllr Jackie O'Quinn	Brighton & Hove City Council
Cllr Paul Barnett	Hastings Borough Council	Cllr Brian Drayson	Rother District Council
Cllr Michael Jones (Substitute)	Crawley Borough Council		

Apologies were received from Cllr Brenda Smith (Crawley Borough Council), Cllr Dave Simmons (Adur District Council), Cllr Tricia Youtan (Horsham District Council) and Cllr Rebecca Whippy (Eastbourne Borough Council).

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

Part I

42. Declarations of Interest

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

Panel Member	Personal Interest
Bill Bentley	Lead Member for Communities and Safety Chairman of East Sussex Safer Communities Board Chairman of East Sussex Civil Military Partnership Board
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 Competition Appeal Tribunal and Competition Service Senior Independent Director of Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Dave Simmons	Chairman of Adur and Worthing Safer Communities Partnership Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Council
Dee Simson	Member of Brighton & Hove Community Safety Partnership Member of Woodingdean Neighbourhood Watch
Brenda Smith	Cabinet Member for Public Protection at Crawley Borough Council Chairman of Safer Crawley Partnership
Val Turner	Member of Safer Communities Partnership, Adur and Worthing
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
Gill Yeates	Chairman of Safer Arun Partnership Member of Joint Arun and Chichester Community Safety Partnership
Tricia Youtan	Member of Horsham Community Safety Partnership Cabinet Member for Community Safety at Horsham District Council
Carolyn Lambert	Vice-Chairman of East Sussex Fire Authority Member of Fire Commission
Phillip Lunn	Member of Safer Wealden Partnership
Jackie O'Quinn	Member of Brighton & Hove Community Safety Partnership
Brian Drayson	Co-Chair Safety Rother Partnership
Paul Barnett	Co-Chair Safety Hastings Partnership
Pat Rodohan	Chairman of the Licensing Committee at Eastbourne Borough Council

43. Minutes

43.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 June 2020 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed electronically by the Chairman following the meeting.

44. Public and Panel questions to the Commissioner

44.1 The Panel noted a published version of written public and Panel questions with answers from the PCC (copy appended to the signed minutes). The Panel had no supplementary questions in respect of the public questions.

44.2 The Chairman invited questions from the Panel to the Commissioner. A summary of the main questions and responses were as follows:

1. Q: Following the Government's recent decision to announce a 22.00pm curfew on licensed pubs, bars and restaurants in order to mitigate the transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19), does the Commissioner believe that Sussex Police has sufficient resource to enforce these restrictions?

A: The PCC has discussed the latest position with the Chief Constable of Sussex Police, Jo Shiner, and since been reassured that the force will continue to apply the four 'E's approach (Engage, Explain, Encourage, Enforce) in policing the matter. The PCC thanked the majority of Sussex residents for complying with the Government's COVID-19 guidance and acknowledged the collective sacrifices made in doing so. The PCC concluded that the force has the required level of resourcing to practice the current approach outlined above.

2. Q: In relation to policing illegal gatherings at local level amid COVID-19, have the Commissioner and Chief Constable discussed ways to support residents in reporting breaches of this nature and offer protection from subsequent tensions in their local communities?

A: The PCC confirmed that this topic was covered at her recent Performance and Accountability Meeting (PAM) and the Chief Constable gave assurances that the force has a structure in place to manage this and the associated changes to the legislation. The PCC stated that appropriate avenues are available to residents to report incidents of this kind and reiterated the importance of the public's cooperation in the four 'E's approach.

3. Q: With regard to the development of the Emergency Services Network (ESN), what are the implications for Sussex in terms of the persistent overrun in timescales and cost and its potential to be obsolete at the time of implementation?

A: The PCC acknowledged that the national programme is behind schedule but offered assurance that the Home Office has plans in place to implement this over the next year or two. Commissioner Bourne revealed that an action group has been formed to report progress for review by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and are working closely with Stephen Webb, Director of Law Enforcement Programmes at the Home Office.

4. Q: Following on from the Prime Minister's latest announcement, what role do you foresee the military being used in Sussex and if it became a necessity – would the request need to be made by yourself or the Chief Constable?

A: The PCC clarified that this would fall within the Chief Constable's remit as an operational decision and be considered on a case-by-case basis. Commissioner Bourne added it is her understanding that the military

would backfill any existing police roles as they have continued to do since COVID-19 came to prominence and national lockdown restrictions were put in place.

5. Q: Surrey Police and Crime Panel has warned about a shortfall in funding due to the impact on council tax as a result of COVID-19 – do you foresee a similar position for Sussex and what mitigation is in place?

A: The PCC admitted that she was not familiar with these recent comments but did confirm that Chief Finance Officers at regional Office of PCCs are involved with looking at precept receipts as part of an ongoing piece of work. She added that the Local Government Association (LGA) are also looking at long-term council tax receipts. Commissioner Bourne revealed that her office is currently working on producing statistics around this, including what any deficit would look like and the potential impact had on Sussex Police's budget.

44.3 The Chairman left the meeting at 10.49am and the Vice-Chairman assumed the role of Chair in his absence.

45. The role of the Commissioner and Sussex Police in response to Rural Crime and Business Crime

45.1 The Panel considered a report by the PCC, who gave an overview. The Panel was informed that the report would be presented in two parts, with Members invited to ask questions at the conclusion of each crime type. The report was introduced by Mark Streater, Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer of OSPCC.

45.2 Rural Crime

The OSPCC Chief Executive highlighted the following;

- Rural Crime is defined as an offence committed in a rural location – considered by the force as settlements with a population of fewer than 10,000 residents.
- The force categorises Rural Crime into four areas; agricultural crime, equine crime, wildlife crime and heritage crime.
- Rural Crime in Sussex has increased by 6% in the last year with offences most prevalent in the summer months.
- Chichester and Wealden districts contributed to 15% of total Rural Crime in Sussex last year.
- Domestic, business and community burglary was the most common form of Rural Crime committed during this period.
- It is widely recognised that Rural Crime continues to remain underreported across the County and is a reason why the PCC felt it warranted developing a specific policing response.

- The Rural Crime Team (RCT) was launched on 1 June 2020 and it is dedicated to tackling instances of crime affecting rural areas and the most isolated of communities.
- The RCT is comprised of eight police constables and six PCSOs – supervised by two police sergeants.
- The Team has two bases, at Midhurst and Heathfield, but works across Sussex.
- The Team has established close links with rural businesses and they are building on the existing Sussex Police Country Watch schemes in how they coordinate and respond to incoming intelligence.
- The force has developed a Rural Crime Strategy in consultation with the National Farmers' Union and Country Land Business Association in order to provide an enhanced understanding of the specific crimes.
- The Force has also established a Rural Crime Network (RCN) to raise awareness of rural crime and 40 points of contact have since been identified across the County.
- The Force actively utilises assistive drone technology to search for offenders in rural areas as well as discarded evidence in the countryside.
- The PCC is a member of the National Rural Crime Network which provides comparative understanding and the opportunity to share learning.

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

1. Q: Does the Commissioner believe that the force has sufficient resource to cover the vast, rural areas of Sussex and has the use of dedicated drones been considered in respect of helping direct the small RCT to offenders?

A: The PCC outlined the structure of the 16-man RCT and assured Members that all officers will receive specialist training, in part based at farms as offered by local farmers. The PCC added that officers who are part of the Rural Crime Network will support the work of the RCT through public liaison. Commissioner Bourne concluded by confirming that the RCT are currently amassing a selection of specialist equipment to enhance their role including infrared cameras and that resourcing a dedicated drone would need to be raised with the Chief Constable as an operational matter.

2. Q: It was suggested that the Commissioner and Chief Constable consider improving the Force's engagement with town and parish councils through targeted communications in an attempt to boost levels of crime reporting.

A: The PCC confirmed that this suggestion is already being explored and revealed that her office has 32 consultations and engagements planned with

parish councils over the next few months, in conjunction with the Sussex Association of Local Councils (SALC). Commissioner Bourne reminded the Panel that the RCN launched under difficult circumstances in June, during COVID-19, and reassured Members that their public engagement is ongoing and will become more visible after the upcoming consultations have taken place.

3. Q: Does the Commissioner have any plans in place to improve the high level of unreported crime in rural areas?

A: The PCC commented that the RCN are proactive in their work, as well as reactive, and that it's hoped residents will have the confidence and trust to share information, concerns and assist with investigations once the Team's growing reputation becomes embedded in rural communities. Commissioner Bourne added that she will continue to monitor for progress made in this area.

4. Q: Can the Commissioner clarify the report's measurement period and whether this pre-dated the outbreak of COVID-19 in the UK?

A: The PCC clarified that the report is representative of the 2019/20 performance year from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

45.4 Members commended the report and praised the PCC and her office with regard to the short-term success achieved by the new initiatives introduced to tackle rural crime.

45.5 Business Crime

The PCC introduced the second part of the report and defined Business Crime as an offence where a business or person is targeted during the course of their employment in relation to their profession.

The OSPCC Chief Executive highlighted the following;

- Business Crime has increased by 8% across Sussex in the last year and most notably the largest rise occurred in Brighton & Hove.
- Theft and handling stolen goods accounted for 47% of Business Crime and proved the most common type of offence.
- Both acts and threats of violence have risen by 20% with incidents mainly reported off-peak in small, retail shops.
- In February 2020, the PCC held a roundtable meeting to discuss the concerns of local businesses with Members, experts and senior representatives from large retailers. The meeting led to the formation of the Safer Sussex Business Partnership (SSBP), chaired by the PCC, which was established to facilitate closer links and draw on the practice and advice from the business community in addition to understand how Sussex Police can be more responsive to those needs.

- The PCC has held three further consultation sessions with the partnership which has in turn provided valuable findings and feedback in terms of the business community's needs and what they require to help solve the problem.
- The Force subsequently formed a Business Crime Working Group to develop these initiatives and set the direction for any issues that arise.
- The Force has also developed a Business Crime Strategy and its tactics are overseen by the Working Group.
- The Force's Instant Resolution Centre now has four dedicated police officers to improve communications with businesses and act as their first point of contact.
- The Chief Constable continues to support the work of business wardens and private security operatives across Sussex by delegating accredited powers to be fully equipped in their roles.
- Disc Crime Management's (cloud-based system) low-level crime reporting capability will play an important role in allowing users to send information, intelligence and images relating to suspects quickly and securely to the force.

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

1. Q: Has the emergence of COVID-19 presented opportunities for the force to address other areas of crime which have been brought to light during the pandemic?

A: The PCC commented that the lockdown period has afforded national police forces the opportunity to focus on and target most-wanted organised criminal networks involved with County Lines drug dealing. She added that Sussex Police has reported significant success as part of its operation during the national County Lines intensification week in mid-September.

2. Q: Does the Commissioner have any concerns that next year's figures will be highly inflated and subsequently offer a misleading impression that incidents are on the rise as a result of your work to improve levels of unreported crime?

A: The PCC referenced domestic abuse and stalking as criminal offences which have been similarly, historically underreported and maintained that the Force urges business owners, retail shops and outlets to report all incidents and highlighted those involving violent acts committed against shop workers as a particular area to crack down on. Commissioner Bourne added that she is a member of the National Retail Crime Steering Group and in support of a new Bill proposed to double the length of sentences

given to offenders convicted of assaulting shopworkers. The PCC concluded that while she appreciated the concern, she would prefer to see an increase in submitted reports in order for the force to use evidence and information received to target their resources more effectively in this area.

3. Q: What are the Commissioner's views on the utilisation of Force officers at Gatwick Airport while it has been largely unpopulated during the lockdown period, given the considerable investment in this resource?

A: The PCC confirmed that police officers based at the airport have been and will continue to be deployed, as required, to assist with roads policing across the County.

4. Q: What is the future sustainability for the initiatives introduced to tackle Rural and Business Crime and the possibility of expanding these if they perform well?

A: The PCC clarified that the RCT is a sustainable solution to hers and the Force's commitment to treating this issue with the upmost seriousness in serving and protecting the County's rural communities. She added that pilot projects in receipt of one-off Government funding for a set period will be reviewed and then it is the Force's responsibility to collaborate with partners to secure long-term funding.

5. Q: Can the Commissioner offer her assurances that equal emphasis will be given to protecting small businesses and the self-employed in both urban and rural areas, in addition to the focus on town centre crime?

A: The PCC referenced that the formation of SSBP was designed to ensure that small, medium and large businesses are given a voice. She also gave her assurance that the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) are involved in any decisions taken in relation to policing of Business Crime as members of the partnership.

6. Q: What are the Commissioner's plans in terms of increasing confidence among small businesses to report crimes, no matter the scale?

A: The PCC took the opportunity to dispel the national myth that a report of theft would be ignored if the value of stolen goods was under £200 – she added that the Chief Constable has assured her this is not the case in Sussex. Commissioner Bourne also commented that businesses should not discourage employees from reporting incidents through fear of reputational damage. She summarised that the resolution is three-fold; instilling belief in businesses that the Force will respond, giving the Force confidence that businesses will report and that the justice system will deliver the appropriate sanctions.

7. Q: Will the Commissioner clarify her understanding that Business Crime is not exclusive to the retail sector and that it can affect all business types?

A: The PCC apologised and clarified her position, speaking from her background experience as a former business owner, she emphasised categorically that businesses of all compositions, sizes and whether they provide a service or sell goods are exposed to Business Crime. She also reiterated the definition of Business Crime outlined in introduction to the report and gave her assurance that the force's Business Crime Working Group reviews all forms of crimes targeting firms and any resulting patterns and trends.

45.7 In summary of the discussion, the Vice-Chairman thanked the Commissioner on behalf of the Panel for answering their questions. He welcomed both elements of the report given Members' long-standing desire for the force to address rural crime in its Police & Crime Plan and introduce a specialist resource to police this area both proactively and reactively.

45.8 Councillor Bentley resumed Chairmanship of the meeting at 11.52am.

46. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) Inspection of Roads Policing

46.1 The Panel considered a report by HMICFRS, of which the PCC gave an overview. The Panel was informed that Sussex Police was not inspected as part of the national report, however the following seven forces were; Devon and Cornwall Police, Dorset Police, Humberside Police, Metropolitan Police, Staffordshire Police, South Wales Police and West Midlands Police.

46.2 The PCC stated that the purpose of the report was to understand the effectiveness of local and national roads policing strategies and whether best practice is identified and shared across all forces nationally. Commissioner Bourne added that the report contains recommendations for Chief Constables to take into account and confirmed Chief Constable Shiner set out what work she is doing to address these at her PAM in July.

46.3 The PCC invited the Panel to ask questions on the report and her correspondence with HM Inspector of Constabulary, Zoe Billingham.

1. Q: What standard of training provision is given to the force's roads policing officers?

A: The PCC referred the Panel to Recommendation 11 within her July PAM minutes in relation to minimum national training standards and certification course for serious collision investigators. It added that all Chief Constables

should ensure that serious collision investigators have been trained to those standards. Commissioner Bourne revealed that the Force's Serious Collision Investigation Unit is currently under review by the newly appointed Detective Inspector under the direction and guidance of the Detective Chief Inspector to ensure that the investigation standard set by the College of Policing is met fully. The PCC confirmed that the Force has invested in the Roads Policing Unit as a result of the precept uplift following taxpayer contributions.

2. Q: In reference to Recommendation 6, does Sussex Police have the capability to collate the data recorded by Speed Indicator Devices in local communities?

A: The PCC explained that data is already recorded by 250 Community Speedwatch groups across 1,800 locations countywide and collated as part of Operation Crackdown, enabling the Force to target its resource accordingly. She added that the data is collated by Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) and is used to inform its campaigns aimed at road users. Fifty thousand offences were reported in 2019/20 involving vehicles speeding at 45mph or above in a 30mph speed limit zone.

3. Q: Are you of the opinion that SSRP should be subject to a review in order to improve its accountability?

A: The PCC outlined the accountability system for each partner and maintained that there is a governance structure in place but acknowledged that there are links between the Partnership's direction and issues surrounding it. Commissioner Bourne urged Panel members who are also county councillors to exercise scrutiny at their local authorities and show collective leadership to influence the Partnership's future direction.

4. Q: In reference to Recommendation 10, what are the Commissioner's views in relation to the strategic road network and how it impacts the SSRP's ability to ensure the safety of the road network?

A: The PCC clarified that the purpose of the strategic road network is designed to target both prolific and one-off offenders, not innocent road users. Commissioner Bourne announced that the force's new Strategic Enforcement Unit will adopt a proactive approach and utilise automatic number plate recognition when launching in January 2021.

46.4 Councillor Barnett left the meeting at 12.12pm.

5. Q: How could the force and relevant planning authorities better cooperate to reduce the risk of this impacting on local road safety?

A: The PCC encouraged the questioner to ensure that their local authority's Planning department is linked in with the Force's dedicated planning officer, so that they can support with securing developer contributions where approved

planning proposals warrant extra policing.

46.5 The Chairman referred the Panel to Agenda Item 6, Appendix A, and proposed a motion to support the Commissioner's objection to Recommendation 3 – *'by 1 April 2021, the Home Office should use the statutory power under section 7(4) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to issue guidance on what should be included within future police and crime plans. The guidance issued should require reference to roads policing in all police and crime plans.'*

The motion was seconded by Councillor Webster.

46.6 Resolved - The Panel considered the Commissioner's objection to Recommendation 3 and it was SUPPORTED, following unanimous agreement, that it should be the responsibility of individual PCCs to determine the priorities for local police force areas in England and Wales.

46.7 The Vice-Chairman thanked the PCC for answering the Panel's questions.

47. Quarterly Report of Complaints

47.1 The Panel considered a report from the Clerk to the Panel which confirmed that no serious complaints were received in the last quarter.

47.2 Under paragraph 2.5.3, Mr. Streater highlighted that a response had been issued by the OSPCC and that the PCC and her office welcomed the findings of the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

47.3 Resolved – that the Panel notes the report.

48. Working Group Appointments

48.1 The PCC proposed the formation of an additional working group to act as a critical friend for the development of the Police & Crime Plan 2021-24.

48.2 Resolved – that the Panel approves arrangement of a single additional meeting under the temporary name of the 'Precept and Plan Working Group'.

48.3 The Chairman called for any volunteers to join the Precept and Plan Working Group in addition to the proposed membership.

48.4 Resolved – that the Panel appoints the following members to the Budget and Precept Working Group:

- Mrs Scholefield (Chairman)
- Councillor O'Quinn

- Councillor Denis
- Councillor Briscoe
- Councillor Simmons
- Councillor Whippy
- Councillor Webster
- Mr Nightingale

49. Reflection on Visit to Chichester Custody Centre

49.1 The Chairman invited Councillor Yeates, Mrs Scholefield and Mr Nightingale to offer a verbal report following their recent COVID-secure visit to Chichester Custody Centre. The guided tour covered; the journey of a detainee, ensuring their welfare and role of a custody sergeant.

The following points were made:

- Members were appreciative of the comprehensive, access all areas tour and felt very well accommodated by the duty custody inspector.
- Members were impressed by the complex's facilities, particularly the CCTV operation and sophisticated holding area for detainees.
- Members raised concerns as to the length of journeys and distance travelled by officers as part of detainee transportation, should a decision be taken to close the centre permanently following its temporary re-opening.

49.2 The PCC asked the Panel to join her in expressing her deepest condolences to the family and friends of Sergeant Matt Ratana, who was shot and killed at Croydon Custody Centre in the early hours of 25 September.

50. Date of Next Meeting

50.1 The next meeting of the Panel would take place on 29 January 2021 at 10.30am at County Hall, Lewes – subject to Government guidance.

The meeting ended at 1.11pm.

Chairman