

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

27 September 2019

Public Questions to the Commissioner and Panel

Report by the Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel

The table below provides a schedule of the 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 nine questions have been received for a response by the Commissioner.

Question	Response
An operational question about engine and exhaust noise pollution was received. The questioner was advised to forward their question to Sussex Police, as a Freedom of Information enquiry, which they were content to do.	
1. What is the Police Commissioner doing to tackle police corruption in the Worthing area. I am aware and have been a victim of officers abusing their position in a public office and wonder why this is not being tackled as it should be. Mr Williams.	I can confirm that the Professional Standards Department (PSD) with Sussex Police accurately records, evaluates and assesses any allegation of police corruption, as determined by the Home Office guidance. The priority areas of risk and vulnerability in this area relate to: allegations of abuse of authority for sexual gain; inappropriate associations; vulnerable datasets; computer misuse and inappropriate disclosure of information. The Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) within PSD proactively develops intelligence into each of the aforementioned priority areas of risk and vulnerability. The ACU will investigate and manage any perceived threat to public safety, trust and confidence in the police by looking into all reports of police corruption. This includes allegations about improper use and exercise of powers and privileges by any officer in order to achieve a benefit for that officer, another person or that would be detrimental to another person. The ACU also continues to work closely with partnership agencies to encourage referrals from the most vulnerable members of the public that may have compromised these priority areas of risk and vulnerability.

The ACU will refer any allegations that have met the serious corruption threshold test to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) for independent oversight and investigation.

PSD continue to oversee a rolling programme of activity in this area to ensure that the integrity of the workforce is maintained. This includes the provision of 'Break the Silence' – a system that offers all police officers and staff the opportunity to report any integrity, corruption or misconduct-based concerns securely, anonymously and in the strictest of confidence. The system is maintained by the ACU and is recognised both regionally and nationally as 'best practice' in making protected disclosures (whistle-blowing). The integrity of 'Break the Silence' has never been compromised and receives in excess of 300 communications each year.

Other activity carried out by PSD includes: regular vetting checks; reviews of estate security and a random substance testing programme for all police officers, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and police staff. The Force also proactively manages a 'with cause' testing programme which ensures that any perceived threat to public and staff safety is managed in a timely manner.

I would encourage any member of the public with concerns about a police officer, PCSO or member of police staff to report these to Sussex Police. Any reports received by the Force will be managed sensitively and in the strictest of confidence by the ACU. These concerns should be sent by email to: psd.acu@sussex.pnn.police.uk

I would also like to make you aware that I continue to hold the Chief Constable to account for matters relating to governance and integrity at our quarterly meetings.

At the Governance & Integrity meetings, I meet with the Head of PSD and a representative from the Human Resources Department to discuss matters relating to: complaints made against Sussex Police; recording of gifts and hospitality; reporting of business interests; integrity and the use of the 'Break the Silence' scheme and civil claims.

Further information about these accountability arrangements can be viewed on my website through the following link: <https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/transparency/accountabilityexpenditure/>

<p>2. Please can you explain why people in East Grinstead pay exactly the same percentage of their council taxes to the police to people who live in Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and Crawley?</p> <p>East Grinstead is a town not a village</p>	<p>The Local Government Finance Act requires the local tax contribution for policing to be levied as one standard charge across all local authority areas within each police force area in England and Wales. This equated to £189.91 for a Band D property in Sussex in 2019/20.</p> <p>I can confirm that East Grinstead does have its own Public Contact Point and Policing Base within the town. The full address for the police station is: Chequer Mead Arts Centre, De La Warr Road, East Grinstead, RH19 3BS.</p>

<p>so we expect a police station with police based there.</p> <p>We have enough empty shops so you could be based in town.</p> <p>I'm sure you'll either not answer this question or come up with some waffle as to why we don't need police.</p> <p>Ms Newman, East Grinstead.</p>	<p>The front desk is open to members of the public between the hours of 10am and 2pm, Monday to Friday.</p> <p>The local policing team can also be contacted by email to: midsussex@sussex.pnn.police.uk or by telephone to: 01273 404937.</p> <p>I have continued to closely scrutinise the implementation of the Sussex Police Estates Strategy through my Estates Board to ensure that it continues to provide a working environment fit for 21st century policing, remains cost-effective and demonstrates an accessible community footprint.</p> <p>I remain committed to ensure that no police station with a public-facing front counter will be removed unless a suitable local alternative is identified.</p>
<p>3. Having visited a 57-hectare sheep farm in East Guldeford, on the Sussex-Kent border, with Antony Hook MEP on Monday, I was perturbed to hear about a recent spike in rural crime - theft and arson - in geographically isolated locations (often a long way away from local Police hubs).</p> <p>Can you give your commitment please to the creation of a direct-dial rural crime reporting number (other than 101) which will be answered</p>	<p>I remain strongly committed to ensuring that rural crimes are taken as seriously as urban crimes in Sussex.</p> <p>Sussex Police launched a Rural Crime Strategy in September 2018 which outlines how the Force will incorporate rural crime and protecting rural communities into the wider approach to deliver their policing priorities.</p> <p>The Strategy recognises both the specific crime types which can affect rural communities as well as the unique vulnerabilities of those who live and work in rural areas. It is an enhanced understanding of both rural-specific crimes and the scale and impact that these crimes can have that is anticipated to improve for local residents as a direct result of the Strategy. The Strategy can be viewed in full through the following link: https://www.sussex.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/sussex/about-</p>

particularly out of office hours, and Sunday evenings - when it seems most incidents occur; and can galvanise a timely response?

Mr Perry, Hastings.

[us/priorities-and-direction/sussex-police-rural-crime-strategy.pdf](https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/priorities-and-direction/sussex-police-rural-crime-strategy.pdf)

You might be interested to note that I met recently with several members of the National Farmers Union (NFU), including farmers from Chichester, Petworth, Rye and Worthing. Sussex Police Sergeant Tom Carter, the Force lead for rural crime and wildlife policing, was present at the meeting and took some time to explain the development of a new smartphone app to improve the reporting of incidents and intelligence for farming communities.

It was agreed that the NFU would be kept abreast of any developments concerning the app and with any other proposed changes to the rural policing model. I am determined to ensure that farming communities should not feel abandoned when they try to report crime and that they are not marginalised because of the relatively isolated locations in which they live and work.

The farmers at the meeting were pleased to hear that Sussex Police has recently introduced a team of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) dedicated to working on rural issues within their respective districts. I am also pleased to confirm that every new recruit to Sussex Police will now receive a full day's training on rural policing, at a farm, and Sergeant Carter undertook to involve the NFU in the development of this training.

I discussed rural crime with the Chief Constable at our webcast monthly Performance & Accountability Meeting (PAM) on 21 September 2018. This session is archived and, together with the minutes from the meeting, can be viewed on my website through the following link:
www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/webcasting/

I remain committed in my support for rural and isolated communities and will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account for ensuring that these communities receive the best possible support from Sussex Police.

No background papers.