

## Sussex Police and Crime Panel

28 January 2022 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Lewes.

Present:

Cllr Christian Mitchell (Chairman)	West Sussex County Council	Cllr Bob Standley (Vice-Chairman)	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Kevin Boram	Adur District Council	Cllr Jacky Pendleton	Arun District Council
Cllr Roy Briscoe	Chichester District Council	Cllr Carolyn Lambert (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 Keith Naphine	Independent member	Cllr Lizzie Deane	Brighton & Hove City Council
Cllr Sean McDonald	Worthing Borough Council	Cllr Jackie O'Quinn	Brighton & Hove City Council
Cllr Cllr James Walsh	West Sussex County Council	Cllr Andrew Mier (substitute)	Rother District Council
Cllr Michael Jones	Crawley Borough Council	Cllr Tricia Youtan	Horsham District Council

Apologies were received from Cllr Brian Drayson, Cllr Steve Murphy, Cllr Judy Rogers and Cllr Rebecca Whippy.

Also in attendance: 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

### 22. Declarations of Interest

22.1 In accordance with the code of conduct, members of the Panel declared the personal interests contained in the table below.

<b>Panel Member</b>	<b>Personal Interest</b>
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 Senior Independent Director of Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Norman Webster	Member of Mid Sussex Community Safety Partnership
Tricia Youtan	Member of Horsham Community Safety Partnership Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Protection
Carolyn Lambert	Vice-Chairman of East Sussex Fire Authority
Phillip Lunn	Member of Safer Wealden Partnership

### 23. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

23.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2021 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

### 24. Action List from the Previous Meeting

24.1 The Panel noted the action list from the previous meeting and their attention was drawn to point 5. An error transposed the numbers relating to the ethnicity for stop and search with 28% having a police outcome and 72% are no further action, and not the other way around as previously reported.

24.2 The Commissioner clarified that the table within this action detailed the ethnicities of those subject to a stop and search of the 72% where there is no further action.

24.3 Resolved – that the Panel note the completed actions from the meeting on 24 September 2021.

## **25. Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner**

25.1 No written questions were received from members of the public.

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

Q1. Has the police apprenticeship scheme been a success in Sussex and has there been an increase in diversity?

A. Since December 2019 there have been 367 students under the apprenticeship scheme, of which 8.58% have resigned, which is a lower than previous schemes averaging a resignation rate of 17%. Across 3 routes of entry, 52.7% of new officers have been female and 10.8% identify as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME). These percentages were above national averages. There were 26 major policing areas in the new curriculum.

Q2. Recent publicity has reported police abusing their power for sexual purposes. Since 2019, 9 personnel within Sussex Police were under such suspicion, what is being done about this, and does the Commissioner support random trawls through police officer phones?

A. Sussex Police has robust measures in place to identify such behaviour, including a whistleblowing policy which staff are encouraged to use. The 9 referred to the watchdog do not necessarily imply guilt however where suspicions are raised the force will do an investigation. Sussex Police would not investigate or trawl a private phone.

Q3. With an increase in fraud related crimes, how can Sussex Police match the desire of residents to see street policing alongside tackling fraud crimes?

A. Approximately 27% of all crime is online fraud and this continues to grow. Officers are required to respond to both physical and digital crimes. A joint economic crime unit, financial investigators team and a collaborated cyber crime unit were in place to handle and investigate cases. Sussex Police developed a banking protocol in which banks contact the police and victims directly and Operation Signature was the force campaign to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud.

25.3 The Chairman thanked the Commissioner on behalf of the Panel for answering their questions.

## **26. Final Report of the Budget and Precept Working Group**

26.1 The Panel considered a report by the Chairman of the Budget and Precept Working Group. The report was introduced by Susan Scholefield, Chairman of the Working Group who thanked the councillors involved, Sussex Police and support staff.

26.2 Members of the working group thanked the Chairman and the Commissioner's team and recommended that other members of the Panel take part in the next Budget and Precept Working Group. The recommendations from this report were discussed under the Proposed Precept item and were agreed at the close of that item.

26.3 Resolved – that the Panel agrees:

1. That it considers Sussex Police's strategy towards recruitment and retention, and the Commissioner's role in developing this, at a future formal meeting.
2. That changes in the nature of crimes (and the associated changes in the demands on policing) are communicated to Sussex's residents.
3. That it writes to the Chairmen of Sussex's Community Safety Partnerships, highlighting the relevant precept consultation finding and recommending they seek to enhance their local visibility.
4. While recognising the significant inflationary pressures on household budgets forecast to arise in 2022/23 (which will impact Sussex's poorest the hardest) the Group supported the £10 increase, noting that for 75% of residents, this would equate to an additional 83p per month or less.

## **27. Proposed Precept 2022/2023**

27.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner. The report was introduced by the Commissioner who presented the precept proposal underpinned by the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which set out the financial context for the revenue budget, capital programme and proposed precept, in addition to estimates for a further three financial years. Public consultation had taken place throughout the year and whilst this had been restricted by the pandemic, digital and virtual platforms had been maximised. The Commissioner outlined her proposal to increase the Band D precept by £10 for 2022/23 from £214.91 to £224.91.

27.2 The Chairman of the Panel invited the Chairman of the Budget and Precept Working Group to outline the recommendations resulting from their deliberations. The Chairman of the Working Group highlighted that under recommendation 1; Sussex Police's strategy in respect of recruitment and retention, the working group saw this as a particular risk and requested it come to a future formal meeting. The Chairman of the Working Group also suggested that the contact details for the Sussex Community Partnerships be added to the website and finally that recommendation 4 outlined the working group's support for the precept increase for 2022/23.

27.3 The Chairman invited questions from Panel members. A summary of these questions and their responses were as follows:

- There were concerns about a reduction of visible policing and it was noted the budget relied on police staff vacancies. The

Commissioner advised it was a tactical decision to hold vacancies and that savings still needed to be found. The Commissioner added there was a high level of unseen crime, tackled via work behind the scenes which the public don't see, but that is still impactful on preventing future harm.

- With an increase in population and housing developments, would an increase of 137 police officers fall behind the required numbers? The Commissioner advised that by the end of March next year there would be 137 more officers in establishment since 2012. After many years of austerity, the Commissioner was pleased to be on an upward trajectory and was keen things didn't go backwards.
- What further plan was there to put more investment into bringing down the carbon footprint of the force, whilst making savings? The Commissioner explained there were a number of environmentally friendly opportunities to capitalise on including electric and hydrogen cars, solar panels and electric vehicle charging points at stations. There were 30 non-response electric cars and an environment and climate committee was working on the target to net zero carbon emissions. In addition, hot desking, a cycle scheme and the use of LEW lights were contributors to reducing the carbon footprint.
- In view of the £5m saving requirement, what was the Commissioner offering up from her own office? The Commissioner advised recruitment could be collaborative, and of the support work provided by her officers on other campaigns. The Chief Finance Officer advised that the Office of the Commissioner represented 0.4% of the overall net revenue budget and their biggest expenditure was staffing, he added there were rising external costs to meet.
- As the Gatwick contract now required fewer Sussex Police officers, will the reduction in that income result in increases being required elsewhere, and were there concerns about maintaining the service at Gatwick post COVID-19? The Commissioner advised the Gatwick contract paid for policing only and no profit was made, the contract had subsequently been renegotiated following the requirement for fewer officers. She added the contract with Gatwick Airport Limited was reviewed annually in order to meet the policing needs of the airport.
- The use and introduction of technology in the force was considered and the Commissioner was asked how this could make the force operate more efficiently. The Commissioner responded that smart phones, laptops, digital roadside breathalyser, drones, body worn video cameras, night and long vision goggles were all currently used and video enabled policing had been adopted through the national police digital service. In the future, the use of Artificial Intelligence for back office work through robotics would speed up work currently undertaken manually. She added there was a new Chief Digital and Information Officer covering Sussex and Surrey.

- The rise in the precept would suggest a larger taxbase, has there been an increase in the reporting of crime and therefore demanded response? The Commissioner advised the cost pressures were the increase in pay, and inflation. Billing authorities make an estimate each year on their collection rates which were reduced following the pandemic, this resulted in a deficit to be paid back by the PCC.
- The increase in the precept would create pressure on those with low incomes, when combined with other increasing bills. Can the Commissioner feed back to Government that uncertain pressures on those with low incomes cannot continue and is not sustainable. The Commissioner advised she was aware of the difficulty the increase would pose with some and that the consultation had engaged a wide and varied demographic. She added council tax reduction schemes administered by local authorities were available to those on low incomes. The Commissioner and colleagues had lobbied Government around a Fairer Funding Formula for policing and it has been agreed and undertaken to look at this.

27.4 The Chairman invited the Panel to propose to support, oppose or veto the proposed precept. Cllr Briscoe proposed to support the Commissioner's precept, and this was seconded by Cllr Standley.

27.5 Resolved – that the Panel unanimously support an increase in the Band D precept by £10 for 2022/23 from £214.91 to £224.91 (equivalent to 4.7%).

## **28. Police and Crime Plan Public Priority 1 - Strengthen local policing, tackle crime and prevent harm**

28.1 The Panel considered a report from the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner. The report was introduced by Mark Streater, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer from the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner who outlined the content and specific areas which were covered within Public Priority 1 of the Police and Crime Plan – strengthen local policing, tackle crime and prevent harm.

28.2 The Chairman invited questions from Panel members. A summary of those questions and their responses were as follows:

- Will the focus on rural crime continue? The Commissioner advised the rural crime team comprised 20 officers, the largest in the South East. Feedback from communities across Sussex have been very positive, and the rural crime team will remain.
- In terms of road safety, what more could be done to improve driver behaviour? The Commissioner referred to the fatal five behaviours which caused accidents. The Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) delivered the education and engineering piece and decisions were made through the SSRP. She added

that the Chief Constable was committed to tackling drink and drug driving.

- The popularity and dangerousness of e-scooters was raised and the apparent lack of enforcement around their use. The Commissioner advised leaflets were given to those stopped, in more formal circumstances the vehicle can be seized followed by a prosecution or report for summons. 3 individuals had been prosecuted in the last 12 months. The Commissioner recognised more proactive work needed to be done in this area.
- The impact of newly recruited officers not being immediately available for deployment was raised. The Commissioner advised policing was complex with different specialisms and training was crucial for new officers. She added it was for sergeants to manage officers locally in terms of demand.
- Changes to the Highway Code and the impact on pedestrians and cyclists was raised. The Commissioner agreed the changes to the Highway Code were significant and education and tolerance of these was important.
- The value and benefit of taxi marshals to vulnerable people was considered and the Commissioner was asked if this could be part funded by the Commissioner again. The Commissioner explained as part of the safer streets fund there would be an allocation to cover taxi marshals and beach patrols.

28.3 Resolved – that the Panel notes the report and does not identify any elements for further scrutiny.

## **29. Quarterly Report of Complaints**

29.1 The Panel noted that no complaints had been made against the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner which fell within the Panel's statutory remit to handle.

29.2 Resolved – that the Panel note the report.

## **30. Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates**

30.1 The next meeting of the Panel would take place on 25 March 2022 at 10.30am, at County Hall, Lewes.

The meeting ended at 13.33pm.

Chairman