

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

29 January 2021 – 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 (joined at 10.37am)	Chichester District Council	Cllr Carolyn Lambert	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	Cllr Rebecca Whippy	Eastbourne Borough Council
Cllr Tricia Youtan	Horsham District Council		

Apologies were received from Cllr Dave Simmons (Adur District Council) and Cllr Brenda Smith (Crawley 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) and Mervin Dadd (Chief
Communications and Insight Officer).

Part I

51. Declarations of Interest

51.1 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 Chair of Heathfield Community Safety Action Group (CSAG)
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	Lead Member of Brighton & Hove Community Safety Partnership
Brian Drayson	Co-Chair Safety Rother Partnership
Paul Barnett	Co-Chair Safety Hastings Partnership

52. Minutes

52.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 September 2020 be approved as a correct record and confirmed electronically by the Chairman following the meeting.

53. Public and Panel questions to the Commissioner

53.1 The Panel noted a published version of written public and Panel questions with answers from the Commissioner (copy appended to the signed minutes). The Panel had one supplementary question in respect of the public questions:

1. Q: In reference to Question 4, concerns were echoed in terms of how representative the precept consultation is of all demographics across the county and not just those with an active interest. Will the Commissioner consider introducing citizen panels or a similar democratically representative forum in the future?

A: The Commissioner reaffirmed her confidence that the year-long consultation was extremely representative and gave her assurance that details of the process will be presented by Mervin Dadd, Chief Communications and Insight Officer, in Item 7.

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

1. Q: A member shared their view that all blue light emergency services staff, including frontline police officers, should be prioritised for vaccination against COVID-19. Does the Commissioner agree and will she write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care urging him for this to be arranged in Sussex? Also, how would the Commissioner characterise staff morale within the Force at present?

A: The Commissioner was in full agreement and confirmed she has personally spoken to the Home Secretary and Minister for Crime and Policing and been vocal in arguing this case along with PCC colleagues. From these conversations, she reassured the Panel that there is a high likelihood that frontline police officers will be vaccinated as part of the second priority group identified by Government. The Commissioner also gave reassurance that the Chief Constable of Sussex Police, Jo Shiner, is very alive to the matter of staff mental health and confirmed it is discussed at her monthly Performance and Accountability Meetings (PAMs). The Force recently held an internal session on mental health and wellbeing and it was well-attended by hundreds of staff and frontline officers. Commissioner Bourne added that the Chief Constable has also introduced access to police wellbeing dogs for staff and officers experiencing high levels of stress.

2. Q: Will the Commissioner look to introduce PCSOs to enforce social distancing at popular beauty spots around the County which draw residents to exercise outdoors?

A: Commissioner Bourne noted the suggestion but clarified that this is an operational matter for the Chief Constable's consideration.

3. Q: A member raised a resident's views following their complaint of alleged poor treatment by Sussex Police officers and their inability to obtain the officers' names or shoulder numbers when looking to report the issue. Therefore, will the

Commissioner consider reviewing the Force's privacy policy in terms of disclosing all officer names and shoulder numbers unless there is a valid safeguarding reason for non-disclosure?

A: The Commissioner is aware of the complaint received by the Professional Standards Department but is unable to comment on an ongoing case. The resident's question was noted.

4. Q: In reference to the 'Make Your Mark' survey carried out by East Sussex Youth Cabinet and its subsequent priority around the issue of domestic violence and the effects on children - will the Commissioner's Office and Sussex Police be interested in engaging with young people on the matter?

A: Commissioner Bourne welcomed engagement with Youth Cabinets across the County and commented that she's familiar with proposed changes to the Domestic Abuse Bill which include young people being named as victims in their own right.

54. Final Report of the Precept and Plan Working Group

54.1 The Panel considered a report by the Chairman of the Precept and Plan Working Group, Mrs Susan Scholefield.

54.2 The Chairman of the Working Group advised the wider Panel of the following key points:

- The Group met remotely twice, once in November 2020 and once in January 2021.
- This year the Group had a wider remit to scrutinise the draft Police & Crime Plan, in addition to the proposed policing precept.
- The Group was pleased to see provision had been made in the Force's reserves for over and above what had initially been identified to mitigate against any unforeseen impacts of COVID-19.
- This year the Group were required to be mindful of the pandemic when considering the impact on Sussex residents if they chose not to endorse the maximum £15 precept increase.
- Some of the Plan's activities were subjective and not measurable. Going forward it should account for unprecedented circumstances such as the pandemic in managing public expectation of its objectives.

54.3 The Panel Chairman invited all members to ask any general questions or offer a commentary under this item. A summary of the main questions and responses were as follows:

1. Q: What impact will the pandemic have on both the Force's recruitment policy and deployment of officers?

A: The Commissioner reminded the Panel that the Force received an

intake of 129 officers as a result of the Government's national Operation Uplift campaign and its own recruitment continues at a fast rate, compared to other police forces, made possible by previous precept uplifts. She went on to credit Surrey and Sussex Police's Head of Human Resources, Adrian Rutherford, in leading on and adapting the Force's recruitment campaign to be more online-based where possible. The Commissioner stated she is delighted with the Force's recruitment campaign which is ahead of target and confirmed that the Force will receive an intake of an additional 127 officers through Operation Uplift in 2021/22.

54.4 Resolved – that the Panel notes the recommendations of the Precept and Plan Working Group.

55. Draft Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2021/24

55.1 The Chairman thanked the Commissioner for developing the Plan and acknowledged the challenge given that the 2020 Police & Crime Commissioner Elections were deferred until 6 May 2021 due to the pandemic.

55.2 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner. The report was introduced by Mark Streater, OSPCC Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer, who thanked the Working Group for their invaluable contribution in steering and shaping the draft Plan. Mr Streater re-capped the purpose of the Plan and invited questions from the Panel.

55.3 Members of the Precept and Plan Working Group, in particular, expressed appreciation in acknowledgement that their feedback has been taken on board, acted upon and incorporated into the draft Plan.

A summary of the Panel's comments and suggestions are as follows:

- It was strongly recommended that quantifiable measures of success be added throughout the Plan for activities under each Public Priority, and that these be linked to the relevant actions set out in the Chief Constable's Operational Delivery Plan.
- It was recommended that greater reference is given within the Plan to the Sussex Police's ongoing work around 'Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion'. This should include an update on the performance of its recruitment campaign in aiming to reduce the male/female gender imbalance and increase officer representation of those from BAME backgrounds, such that the Force better reflects the make-up of the Sussex population. Also, that the Commissioner requests that Sussex Police publish the latest data on its website.

- It was suggested that specific reference is given to 'romance fraud' in recognition of it becoming an emerging form of cyber fraud and that the Force considers running a mid/long-term campaign to improve public awareness.
- It was suggested that specific recognition is given to the growing rate of reported hate crime offences targeting minority groups, such as the transgender community, and offer reassurance by re-affirming the Force's strategy to mitigate the issue and prosecute offenders.

55.4 In summary of the discussion, the Vice Chairman thanked the Commissioner on behalf of the Panel for producing the draft report and the Working Group for their involvement in advance of the draft Plan being considered by the wider Panel.

55.5 Resolved – the Panel agreed to note the draft Plan, taking into account the recommendations set out on page 31 of the agenda.

56. Proposed Precept 2021/22

56.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner. The Commissioner outlined key points regarding the proposed precept and the Panel heard the following points in addition to those detailed in the report:

- This year's policing grant settlement has given PCCs additional ringfenced investment to recruit a further 121 police officers plus six officers for the regional organised crime units.
- 250 police officers have been recruited by the Force as a result of the previous precept requirements of building back-office staffing numbers into frontline services.
- The new intake of PCSOs and specialist staff are having a positive impact by strengthening local policing divisions and there has been a marked increase in public contact.
- The introduction of the new Rural Crime Team unit has been well-received and praised in correspondence received from the public about their work.
- The Force has set up an additional three new Tactical Enforcement Units and recently launched its new Specialist Enforcement Unit.
- Total crime demand was up by 15% in January 2020 from January 2019 following year-on-year rises. Three successive lockdowns have suppressed this slightly, however since the pandemic there has been a notable national increase in online exploitation and digitally-enabled crimes targeting vulnerable people.

56.2 The meeting was adjourned due to technical issues at 12.10pm.

56.3 The Chairman re-convened the meeting at 12.40pm.

56.4 The Panel received a presentation from Mervin Dadd, OSPCC Chief Communications and Insight Officer, on the policing precept consultation's process and its findings. The following points, activities and outcomes were highlighted:

- 64 public consultations were carried out with town and parish councils across Sussex.
- A representative sample of urban, rural and coastal towns and villages which had not been previously consulted were targeted.
- 22 out of 32 councils would support a £15 increase but the public need to see success.
- More than 4,000 people have interacted with the live Safety sentiment feature on the OSPCC's website and shared how they feel.
- Policing Challenge Game designed to appeal to a younger audience.

56.5 The Chairman invited the Panel to ask any questions under this item. A summary of the main questions and responses were as follows:

1. Q: Why was Newhaven and Seaford not consulted as part of this process?

A: Mr Dadd re-iterated that the Commissioner's Office were instead targeting those areas it had not surveyed previously.

2. Q: Can the Commissioner justify why the MTFs has proposed to treble the initial £5 assumption prior to the pandemic, at a time when there is heightened pressure on household income?

A: Iain McCulloch, OSPCC Chief Finance Officer, explained that the Force is operating in a very different economic climate compared to when the budget was set for 2020/21. He highlighted the following factors which contributed to the decision:

- The Force still has to honour contractual costs for its staff despite the public sector pay freeze.
- The additional costs to the Force as a direct result of the pandemic.
- £450,000 (approximately) in lost income due to a reduced tax base.
- Deficits faced after some local authorities were unable to collect council tax.
- The Force was unable to meet some savings targets.
- Unavoidable service growth.
- Additional cost pressures within the system and external IT services.

56.6 Councillor Briscoe proposed a motion to support the proposed precept and this was seconded by Councillor Whippy.

56.7 Resolved - The Panel supported, by a majority of votes, that the proposed precept of £214.91 (on a Band D property), an increase of £15 (equivalent to 7.5%).

57. Quarterly Report of Complaints

57.1 The Panel considered a report from the Clerk to the Panel, providing an update on complaints received in the last quarter.

57.2 Resolved – the Panel noted the report.

58. Date of Next Meeting

58.1 The Panel heard that the meeting on 15 February would not be required and therefore the next meeting of the Panel would take place on 12 March 2021 at 10.30am via Microsoft Teams.

The meeting ended at 2.01pm.

Chairman