

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

31 January 2020

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. Any responses not available at the time of dispatch will be tabled at the meeting. Written Questions must be received two 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, two questions were received for a response by the Commissioner, together with a third question that was shared by a Panel member on behalf of a Sussex resident in October 2019.

Question	Response
<p>The following is an extract from the Sussex Police & Crime Panel meeting on 6th October 2017 (Written questions) in relation to enforcement of 20mph speed limits. "Sussex Police has confirmed that where drivers exceed 20mph speed limits through wilful offending, there is an expectation that officers enforce the limit and prosecute offenders accordingly.</p> <p>The Commissioner also acknowledges that safer roads and communities can be created by working together and sharing the roads responsibly. Road Safety and 20mph enforcement, in particular, is also a theme that the Commissioner has challenged the Chief Constable."</p>	<p>Thank you for sharing your concerns with me about speeding vehicles in and around Angmering.</p> <p>I understand the importance that the residents of Sussex place on road safety and I know that this continues to remain a priority for the people of Sussex. I remain fully supportive of the work carried out by Sussex Police and the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) to tackle and prevent the main causes of serious injuries and deaths on the roads of Sussex.</p> <p>Sussex Police is able to enforce any legally established speed limit. However, the Force would not routinely expect to enforce 20mph limits because there is an expectation that there would be sufficient traffic calming measures in place, including speed bumps and traffic islands designed to slow traffic, to ensure that average speeds are kept low.</p> <p>As such, the Central Ticket & Summons Unit (CTSU) within Sussex Police has only issued one speeding offence report within a 20mph speed limit in 2016, 2017 and 2018. I can also confirm that none of these offences were recorded in Angmering.</p>

The Angmering Community Speedwatch Team has been requesting police enforcement support for over a year for some areas of Angmering where wilful offending and multiple offences by the same drivers has been evident.

Given the Commissioner's interest in Road Safety and 20mph enforcement, is there any evidence of police enforcement of 20mph zones in Sussex and will the Community Speedwatch Teams be better supported in 2020?

Mr Cross of Angmering Community Speedwatch

The National Police Chiefs' Council guidelines include thresholds for enforcement across all speed limits to underpin a consistent approach. However, it remains at the discretion of local police forces to apply a proportionate approach to the enforcement of 20mph limits based on the risk to individuals, property and the seriousness of any breach. Where drivers are exceeding the 20mph speed limits through wilful offending, there remains an expectation that Sussex Police officers will enforce the limit and prosecute offenders accordingly.

I have made contact with the SSRP to highlight your concerns with them directly. The SSRP have offered to conduct some average speed checks on the roads of Angmering at different times of the day (morning, afternoon and evening) over the next couple of weeks. The SSRP will also carry out an assessment of the area to understand better whether there are any suitable sites for enforcement activity to take place on.

The data from the speed checks and assessments will provide the SSRP with information and average speeds that can be used to target enforcement activity, as appropriate. This data will also enable the Partnership and West Sussex Highways to consider whether any other initiatives, such as 'Slow Down' signage, could be deployed in the area to reinforce the local speed limits.

I have asked the SSRP to make contact with you directly to make these arrangements and I will continue to monitor the situation in Angmering. Please be assured that the Community Speed Watch groups have my continuing support in their work to make the roads of Sussex safer.

I would also like to make you aware of Operation Crackdown. This is a joint initiative run by Sussex Police and the SSRP which provides the communities of Sussex with an opportunity to report specific instances of anti-social driving and enables Sussex Police to develop intelligence regarding repeat offenders, vehicles, times and locations which can then be used to plan, target and deploy police resources.

If you have any specific information about anti-social driving, including speeding, in and around Angmering, please visit the Operation Crackdown website (www.operationcrackdown.org) to report this. Alternatively, you can call 01243 642222 during office hours to speak to an operator.

What is your five-year plan to reduce crime on our streets and protect our vulnerable younger generations falling victim to gang related crimes, such as drug use and violence, which tend to lead to other misbehaviour? Also how do you intend to protect our community from out of town criminals who steal, fly tip, drug deal and insight gang culture amongst other crimes?

Mr Boyd, living and working in Arun and Adur Districts

Thank you for sharing your concerns with me about gang-related crimes in Adur and Arun and the impact these can have on children and young people.

I want local communities to feel safer in Sussex and our county to be a hostile place for criminals. That means there needs to be a balance of visible policing and specialist police officers and staff to support Sussex Police to combine intelligence and prevention with tougher enforcement.

There has been significant investment in frontline policing and by March 2023 Sussex Police will have 250 more police officers, 100 extra Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and 50 additional specialist staff than there were in March 2018 – a total increase of 400 individuals.

Moreover, a further 129 police officers will be made available to Sussex Police through Operation Uplift – the Government’s campaign to recruit 20,000 new police officers over the next three years. This will bring the total number of additional police officers in Sussex to 379 by 2023.

This local and national investment means that the capacity, capability and size of the local policing teams throughout Sussex continue to increase. An improved visible policing presence across the county is helping the Force to prevent and deter criminal activity as well as building public confidence.

This position was further strengthened in November 2019 when a new PCSO model was launched in Sussex, with every community now having at least one named PCSO. You can find out who this individual is for the geographic areas where you live and work by inputting your postcode at: www.police.uk.

I shared your concerns with Chief Inspector Jon Carter, District Commander for Chichester and Arun, because the content specifically relates to operational policing. Chief Inspector Carter was able to provide me with assurances about the Force’s prevention, response and investigation capabilities in respect of the concerns you raise.

Enhancing the visible policing presence available on the frontline in Adur and Arun is helping the Force to gather intelligence on those individuals coming into the districts to commit crime. All information gathered is discussed at fortnightly intelligence meetings to determine the targeted action that is taken against those individuals.

Sussex Police has a range of powers and tactical options available to them to tackle the threat posed by county lines. This includes engaging with and working with children and young people to raise their awareness of county lines and to reducing the risk of drug gangs being able to target young people to assist them in their criminality.

In 2018/19, I secured a total of £891,616 from the Home Office – the 7th highest award in England and Wales – to divert young people away from crime as part of a two-year programme. I used this funding to establish an early intervention programme, called REBOOT, with the aim of engaging positively with those under the age of 18 at risk of committing serious violence, and those who have already come to the attention of the police through anti-social behaviour (ASB) and low-level crime.

REBOOT has made significant inroads into youth offending. Since April 2019, more than 720 young people have been provided with help, support and guidance to divert them away from criminality. Together with a greater use of police powers and enhanced partnership working in this area, REBOOT has contributed to a 7% reduction in ASB throughout Sussex in the past year.

Sussex Police is also now engaging with head teachers in schools and other educational establishments to ensure that a consistent approach exists to tackle crime and ASB that is either carried out by young people or committed against them. This includes the greater use of Prevention Youth Officers, dedicated to working with children and young people, to tackle many of the issues you have raised.

In addition, Sussex Police continue to work with Adur and Worthing Borough Council and Arun District Council to understand better the use of controlled substances, with a view to reducing demand and harm. The effectiveness of the Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) established in both districts are further powers available to the Force to support vulnerable individuals by tackling street drinking, substance misuse and persistent ASB.

I am confident that Sussex Police will relentlessly pursue those causing harm in our communities based on the threat, risk and harm they present. The Force will continue to use all powers available to them to catch more criminals, protect more victims and to prevent and solve more crimes.

It is alleged that the premature closure (by the Police) of investigations into reported incidents is at a very high rate - circa 28% - and that such premature closure of cases is effectively giving a "green light" to perpetrators of crime.

Is the Commissioner aware of the factual statistics relating to case closures in Sussex, and is she satisfied that the Chief Constable / relevant Officers are exercising adequate diligence when investigating reported incidents?

Cllr Philip Lunn, on behalf of a resident

Sussex Police aim to provide a proportionate investigation to all crimes that are reported to them and do not attempt to close any investigations "prematurely".

Without knowing the exact source of the 28% figure referred to in the question, an assumption has been made that this is the percentage of recorded crimes that are finalised by the Force after initial contact, without allocation to a response unit or a secondary investigation team.

I can confirm that in 2019 to date, Sussex Police has finalised 28.22% of all recorded crimes at first contact. This figure has remained fairly consistent over the past four years (2018: 28.52%; 2017: 28.87%; 2016: 26.91%) and is very similar to the rate recorded by other police forces in England and Wales.

Sussex Police can finalise crimes at first contact, when appropriate, in line with the approach taken by all police force areas. This can occur for a number of different reasons, including:

- Many individuals report crime for 'information only' and specifically request that any further investigation is not required;
- Crimes can be successfully managed at first contact. For example, if a stolen car is reported and no clear lines of enquiry exist then, once the details of the vehicle are entered into the Police National Computer and circulated to police officers and staff, no further investigative activity is required until the vehicle is seen or found;
- Some reported crimes have no reasonable likelihood of a successful investigation and can be finalised straight away.

When a report of crime is first made to the Force it is triaged in line with the Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) decision-making model.

THRIVE is used by all of the police force areas in England and Wales to assess the reports of crimes received and to determine the most appropriate level of resources required to respond, as follows:

Threat: What is the overall threat posed by the report, not only to the victim, but to the immediate family, children, community and location?

Harm: What is the impact of the threat? Consider not just the victim or witnesses, but also the community impact.

Risk: What risks are obvious or yet to be determined? What resources and specialist assets are needed to safeguard the victim or community?

Investigation: What is the legality, necessity, proportionality in relation to the offence being reported?

Vulnerability: What are individual or community vulnerabilities? Identify how police and partners best safeguard against harm.

Engagement: What is the safest means of engagement for the victim and what is the most effective means?

Last year, Sussex Police recorded an average of 325 crimes a day. In order to be successful at investigating those crimes, it is vital that the Force makes positive, early decisions about where to direct their resources, using the THRIVE principles.

This approach also seeks to identify those crimes that do not require a secondary investigation once the initial enquires involved in the recording process have been completed. If Sussex Police spend time investigating cases with little or no likelihood of a successful resolution, then the time and resources that could be invested into investigating the crimes that are more likely to yield positive results is reduced. There is nothing premature about exercising judgement in this way.

Further information about the THRIVE principles and the Sussex Police Investigation Framework can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/police-forces/sussex-police/areas/au/about-us/governance-and-processes/investigations-framework/>

No background papers.