

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

31 January 2020 – At a meeting of the Panel held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Lewes.

Present:

Cllr Bill Bentley (Chairman)	East Sussex County Council	Cllr Christian Mitchell (Vice-Chairman)	West Sussex County Council
Cllr Dave Simmons	Adur District Council	Cllr Gill Yeates	Arun District Council
Cllr Roy Briscoe	Chichester District Council	Cllr Carolyn Lambert	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Johnny Denis	Lewes District Council	Cllr Norman Webster	Mid Sussex District Council
Cllr Phillip Lunn	Wealden District Council	Cllr Jim Sanson	Horsham District Council (substitute)
Miss Susan Scholefield	Independent member	Mr Peter Nightingale	Independent member
Cllr Val Turner	Worthing Borough Council	Cllr Jackie O'Quinn	Brighton and Hove City Council
Cllr Judy Rogers	Hastings Borough Council (substitute)	Cllr Brian Drayson	Rother District Council (substitute)

Apologies were received from Cllr Tricia Youtan (Horsham District Council), Cllr Colin Fitzgerald (Hastings Borough Council), Cllr Jay Brewerton (Rother District Council), Cllr Rebecca Whippy (Eastbourne Borough Council).

Absent: Cllr Brenda Smith (Crawley Borough Council).

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.

Panel Member	Personal Interest
Bill Bentley	Lead Member for Communities and Safety Chairman East Sussex Safer Communities Board Chairman of the Civil Military Partnership Board
Jay Brewerton	Co-Chair of Safer Hastings and Rother Partnership
Roy Briscoe	Member of Joint Arun and Chichester Community Safety Partnership
Johnny Denis	Co-Chair of Lewes and Eastbourne Community Safety Partnership

Colin Fitzgerald	Employed by Solace Women's Aid Charity Co-Chair of Safer Hastings and Rother Partnership
Susan Scholefield	A serving Magistrate Chair of the Competition Appeal Tribunal and Competition Service Non-Executive 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 of Governors Member of Sussex Crimestoppers
Dee Simson	Member of Brighton and Hove Community Safety Partnership
Brenda Smith	Cabinet Member for Public Protection Chair of Safer Crawley Partnership
Val Turner	Member of Safer Communities Partnership, Adur and Worthing
Norman Webster	Member of Mid Sussex Community Safety Partnership NHS Foundation Trust East Grinstead.
Rebecca Whippy	Co-Chair of Lewes and Eastbourne Community Safety Partnership
Gill Yeates	Member 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 Chair of East Sussex Fire Authority Member of fire commission
Philip Lunn	Member of Safer Wealden Partnership
Judy Rogers	Safeguarding and Ethics Manager for Table Tennis England.

23. Minutes

23.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the last meeting held on 27 September 2019 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

24. Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner

24.1 The Panel considered a tabled version of the written public questions with answers from the Commissioner (copy appended to the signed minutes). The Panel had no supplementary questions in respect of the public questions.

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

1. Q: Following media reports on mental health within the emergency services (locally and nationally), has the Commissioner taken up the issue nationally as part of her role as the Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, and has there been any collaborative work locally between Sussex Police and the fire and rescue services to share resources and expertise?

A: Matthew Scott (Kent Police and Crime Commissioner), is the national lead for mental health issues, and works closely with fire and rescue services and ambulance services at the national level. The government has recently announced funding for mental health support for police officers. Locally, Sussex Police are very engaged in this area. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) have recently taken on Sussex Police's wellbeing agenda, and Sussex Police provide occupational health services to ESFRS.

2. Q: Following a visit to the Cyber Centre at Haywards Heath, it was apparent that only a small number of officers worked to combat online fraud (even taking into account that the team works in partnership with other forces). Given the rapidly growing nature of crime in this area, can the Commissioner update the Panel on what is being done locally?

A: Fraud is the fastest growing crime type nationally. Locally, a particular focus is the older population, who on average lose £20k per victim. Sussex Police has established Operation Signature, whereby older victims receive a personal visit from a police officer or member of police staff to explain, and help them through, the process. This has been well received. In addition, several fraud case workers have been funded by the Commissioner's office from grants to support victims of crime. These staff are specially trained and work alongside Sussex Police to provide additional support to victims.

Follow up Question: Students are increasingly being targeted by online fraud. Are Sussex Police working with young people?

Follow up Response: One challenge historically faced by Sussex Police is the number of agencies working in this area, all using different language and terms, and causing confusion for victims over where to report crimes. The Commissioner is keen for there to be "one front door", which was the original idea behind "Action Fraud". The Police liaise closely with universities on the welfare of young people.

3. Q: The "101 service" call waiting times – members are still hearing though residents associations and community groups of delays in calls being answered. Is the Commissioner still monitoring performance, and is she still pushing for improvement?

A: Sussex Police has put a huge amount of work into this. In the last year, average waiting times are down by 72%, and average waiting time was

now less than 5 minutes. Calls are now free of charge. Work is ongoing. At the same time there has been an increase in the number of people reporting online. The Commissioner was pleased with the progress, due in part to increased investment funded by recent precept rises. Members are encouraged to feed back any reports from residents still experiencing overly lengthy holding times.

Follow up Question: What is the average waiting time for an report made online?

Follow up Response: There is no response to an online report, but the reported information is logged, and an automatic email acknowledgement is generated.

4. Q: Does the Commissioner work closely with local authorities about the lack of support from children's services, in respect of young offenders?

A: The Commissioner raised issues experienced by Sussex Police with the Leader of West Sussex County Council, and was pleased with his response. The REBOOT programme is working well to prevent young people being drawn into crime in the first place.

5. Q: Regarding REBOOT, what can the Commissioner do to maintain funding for this valuable scheme once funding from government comes to an end?

A: Meetings have already been held with partners to consider the sustainability of the programme. The Commissioner has allocated some funding so the scheme could be run for an additional six months. The government had now announced new funding streams, for which agencies could bid. The Commissioner would also be working with the Community Safety Partnerships, recognising that some areas of Sussex derived greater benefit than others.

Follow up Question: The government has funded pilot studies in mental health around our school areas. Has the Commissioner looked into linking into that, considering the links between mental health and youth offending.

Follow up Response: Definitely, the team had looked creatively into what funding streams could be accessed for this purpose.

6. Q: There appears to be public confusion around recruitment numbers of police officers, police community support officers, and other police staff. Has the Commissioner considered producing a "myth buster" to make it clear exactly what plans are, including how those leaving the force are accommodated in the plans.

A: 379 police officers, 100 PCSOs, 50 specialist staff, will be in post by 2023, all above the current establishment levels. Communications were designed to make this as clear as possible.

Follow up Question: How is the community being succinctly informed of the plans?

Follow up Response: There is good coordination between the PCC's office and Sussex Police, to ensure messaging was consistent, and frequent. It

will take time, but the more the public see the additional police, the more they will understand the additional investment which has been made.

7. Q: Will the new officers be a visible policing presence?

A: The Commissioner has been reassured by the Chief Constable that the new officers will be working on the frontline, which is what the public have told her is what they want.

25. Final Report of the Precept Working Group

25.1 The Panel considered a report by the Chairman of the Precept Working Group.

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

- The group met twice, once in December 2019 and once in January 2020.
- The group were shown how previous precept increases had been invested and were pleased to see this in respect of recruitment and training.
- Seeing spending in practice was helpful.
- As there was no settlement announcement prior to either of the working groups, options were considered without this information.
- The question of whether an increase was justified was considered.
- Members of the group were impressed by the expert advice and detail from staff of both the Commissioner's office and Sussex Police.

25.3 Resolved – that the Panel notes the recommendation of the Precept Working Group.

26. Proposed Precept 2020/21

26.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner. The report was introduced by Katy Bourne, the Police and Crime Commissioner who thanked the Working Group for recognising the hard work of her officers. The Commissioner outlined key points regarding the proposed precept and the Panel heard the following points in addition to those detailed in the report:

- In one day, Sussex Police would receive on average over 2500 contacts, 700 of those would be emergency calls, 550 would be digital contacts resulting in 1324 incidents. 307 of those incidents would be non-crimes but with potential of high harm including 122 safety concerns, 37 mental health incidents and 35 missing people. Crime related incidents with a potential of high harm included 39 domestic crimes, 13 residential burglaries and 9 sexual offences. Of 360 total crimes, 123 were violence against a person, 73 theft, 38 criminal damage and 5 rapes.
- The Commissioner sought a 5.3% precept increase (£10 per year on a Band D property). The Chief Constable's investment case would prioritise more enforcements, more investigation and a greater policing presence.
- A snap poll was undertaken to canvass the views of the public on the increase between 23 and 30 January 2020. A total of 6489 responses were received of which 66% supported an increase and 34% did not. To

account for any duplicate responses and random sample was analysed with the result at 69% in support of an increase and 32% against.

26.2 The Chairman requested the Panel note the Commissioners proposed Revenue and Capital budget for 2020/21 in the context of broader investment plans for policing in Sussex. The Chairman invited questions from the Panel, a summary of the key themes and responses include those that follow:

- Members asked if the Commissioner had undertaken an equality impact assessment (EIA) when considering a proposed precept increase. Iain McCulloch, Chief Finance Officer for the Commissioner, advised as a policing body they did not carry out an impact assessment but that the council tax system did support those on a low income such as means tested reduction schemes.
- The Panel asked the Commissioner how she felt operational policing had changed and was purposeful through these maximum precept investments. The Commissioner advised that despite the increases, Sussex remained the 5th lowest policing body in England. She added that in previous years she had returned to the Panel with demonstrable results of the investments, including increased number of officers, the 101 service and call-handling, enforcement, improved solve rates and the compiling of better case files.
- Members noted the Commissioner's emphasis on enforcement and suggested this wasn't supported in terms of the availability of custody suites in the Western area of Sussex, long processing times and what the cost of reopening Chichester custody suite would be. The Commissioner advised that with more officers there were more arrests and subsequently custody suites were filling up. £1.2m was invested in Hastings custody suite, and a review was being undertaken at Chichester with the outcome known about the future of the suite shortly. In addition, the government had allocated £85m into the Crown Prosecution Service and around £100m in prisons in recognition of the increase in enforcement.
- The Panel asked the Commissioner if she planned to continue investing in communication and technology. The Commissioner advised she was and national technology programmes were having a positive impact on the force.
- The Chairman asked if of the number of initiatives put forward by the Commissioner, she had any concerns that some were not deliverable. The Commissioner advised her role was to represent the priorities of the public and was doing so by investment in enforcement and road safety, for example.
- Members noted the value in Whatsapp groups as a source of intelligence for PCSO's, particularly in rural communities. The Commissioner advised Sussex Police were looking to roll out officer involvement and access to social media programmes for intelligence. She added she felt extra investment in this area would give confidence to those in rural communities.
- A member representing the Hastings area advised of disappointment that no EIA was undertaken, citing an increase of people living in working poverty and social deprivation. The Panel heard that people in the Hastings area did not feel they were seeing the 'beat on the street' and highlighted the importance of education and prevention methods before

enforcement became a necessity. The Commissioner advised increased funding had been put into Hastings Community Safety Partnership and that social problems were not the sole responsibility of the police but the local authority as well. The Commissioner added that from the poll results, 66% of respondents from the Hastings area appeared to support an increase in the precept.

26.3 A motion was proposed and seconded to agree the proposed precept. The Panel voted by a majority to accept the motion, with a caveat that policing going forward must be visible.

26.4 Resolved – that the Panel agrees a proposed precept rise of £10 (on a Band D property), equivalent to an increase of 5.3%.

27. Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Estates Strategy

27.1 The Panel considered a report by the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Chairman invited the Panel to consider if they felt the Estates Strategy delivered value for money for Sussex taxpayers and whether it provided any constraints for Sussex Police to meet unforeseen challenges in the future. A summary of the key points raised in discussion and their responses were as follows:

- Members asked if the Commissioner was likely to sell any property no longer in use, such as Crowborough Police House. The Commissioner advised Crowborough Police Station would be moved into the recently purchased town hall as it was in a more central and visible location. Different options would be considered for the existing site.
- The Panel asked the Commissioner how well she felt the Estates Strategy recognised the non-financial benefits of a community policing presence. The Commissioner advised community presence was very important, and that if any stations were to be sold, they would be replaced in the community with the same or a better facility to maintain public confidence.
- The Panel noted it might have been useful to see information in terms of future plans for each property against the asset schedule. The Commissioner advised she had a monthly estates board where each estate was considered and challenged, however this was an internal process and conversation as part of the Commissioner's role.
- Members noted the sharing of accommodation which was positive and hoped it continued.
- The Panel asked the Commissioner what plans she had in the Estate Strategy to adapt it in the context of what has been considered a climate emergency. The Commissioner advised LED lights were being used in stations and that there was an Environmental Committee which worked within the police and estates team, looking at electric cars and other things. Sussex Police had the lowest emissions of any force per m² in the country.

27.2 The Chairman advised the Panel that a visit to Hastings Custody Suite was being organised.

27.3 Resolved – that the Panel considers the Commissioner's Estates Strategy.

28. Quarterly Report of Complaints

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

28.2 Resolved – that the Panel notes the complaints against the Commissioner.

29. Reflection on London Gatwick visits

29.1 The Chairman invited the Panel's reflections on the recent visits to London Gatwick, and noted how the airport and policing services manage a healthcare emergency was particularly interesting in light of recent events. The following points were also made:

- Members were impressed with the organisation of the visit and felt that officers were well supported and had good expertise.
- Members were pleased to see the excellent care of the dogs at the unit and that their welfare was well considered.
- The tour was informative and all questions were answered professionally.

30. Date of Next Meeting

30.1 The Panel heard that the meeting on 17 February would not be required and therefore the next meeting of the Panel would take place on 26 June 2020 at 10.30am at County Hall, Lewes.

The meeting ended at 13.02.

Chairman