

Police and Crime Panel reviews work of Commissioner

THE work of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner came under the spotlight as she presented her annual report to a scrutiny panel.

The Sussex Police and Crime Panel reviewed the work and achievements of Katy Bourne's office over the past year at its meeting on Friday, June 24.

Presenting her 2021/22 report, Mrs Bourne paid tribute to the work of the Panel over the past year which had been a "great critical friend" and supported her work.

The Commissioner said the report covered the "vast breadth of work" carried out by her office and showed how Sussex Police were performing against her Police and Crime Plan.

Highlighting successes, she told the Panel that with the help of additional funding via Council tax precept increases, Sussex Police were on track to deliver 192 more officers by March 2023.

As well as the number of officers increasing, Mrs Bourne said the time taken to respond to calls had improved with callers to the non-emergency 101 number waiting an average of five minutes compared to 14 minutes three years ago.

Mrs Bourne also shared figures showing the disruption of organised crime and spoke about the work Sussex Police had done around knife crime, targeting habitual knife carriers.

Other successes in the report included the increased funding secured for organisations tackling violence against women and girls and the investment in the rural crime team - now the biggest in the south east.

Panel members welcomed the report but asked for additional information to be added to give residents a fuller picture of the force's work, including details of Sussex Police's progress against its net zero ambitions and how it is addressing climate change.

It was also suggested that diversity figures include data for the Sussex population as a whole to give context the achievements of Sussex Police, and that the net change in officer numbers include the number of those leaving the force compared to those being recruited.

Speaking after the meeting, Panel chairman Cllr Christian Mitchell thanked the Commissioner for her report which featured a number of issues that had been raised by the Panel over the past year.

"These are topics that we have discussed regularly at Panel meetings throughout the year, but it is extremely useful to get an overview of the Force's work. It is also helpful, given the increased precept that the Panel endorsed, to have the opportunity to question the Commissioner on achievements funded by the increases.

Also at Friday's meeting, Cllr Christian Mitchell was returned as Chair of the Panel, and Cllr Bob Standley as Vice Chair.

The next meeting of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel will take place on Friday, September 23.

Ends.