

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 19 May 2017

LOCATION: Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner, Sackville House, Lewes

PRESENT: Police & Crime Commissioner – Katy Bourne (KB)
Chief Executive Officer – Mark Streater (MS)
Chief Constable – Giles York (GY)
Deputy Chief Constable – Bernie O'Reilly (BO'R)
Digital Content Officer – Sammi Carwardine
Administration & Correspondence Officer – Louise Gilbert
Head of Performance – Graham Kane (minutes)

Police Constable – Emma Gee (observing)

STOP AND SEARCH POWERS

Sussex Police used their stop and search powers 6,244 times throughout 2016. Of all the individuals searched, those who identify themselves as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) were 3 times more likely to be stopped, and those who identify themselves as Black were 11 times more likely to be stopped.

- A. What do you attribute this apparent disproportionality to?**
- B. What measures have you put in place to ensure that every stop and search is justified and is likely to have a positive outcome in reducing crime?**
- C. What scrutiny and accountability measures are in place to ensure that the use of stop and search in Sussex is effective and legitimate?**
- D. Stop and search and the other uses of force, are assessed as part of the Legitimacy strand of the inspection into Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy? How is the Force preparing for the 2017 Legitimacy inspection?**

BO'R explained that stop and search is an important tactic to prevent and detect crime. The importance of using these powers appropriately and proportionately, in such a way that they build confidence in the police, instead of exacerbating tension and mistrust in the communities that the police serve and protect, was emphasised.

The number of stop and searches carried out in Sussex has reduced from approximately 24,000 in 2011 to circa 6,200 in 2016. KB challenged the Deputy Chief Constable regarding the reduction in the number of these stops. The decrease was attributed to an improved quality of searches, greater understanding of these powers, and more focussed, targeted and justified use of stop and search. It was also highlighted that police officers are not routinely tasked with making a target number of stops across any period to avoid creating a perverse incentive.

The following was confirmed in respect of each of the stop and searches that the Force carries out: something is found on an individual one-third of the time, an arrest is made one-fifth of the time, and 8 out of 10 times Sussex Police find what they are expecting to find on an individual. This demonstrates that a high percentage of positive outcomes are achieved in Sussex when the powers are used.

The apparent disproportionality was not attributed to any specific reason but BO'R highlighted that any type of disproportionality is taken really seriously by the Force. It was also recognised that the intelligence received by the Force could potentially 'skew' the figures and those individuals targeted and, subsequently, stopped.

A number of scrutiny and accountability measures are in place to ensure that the powers are used fairly and appropriately. This includes overall governance through a Legitimacy Board, improved supervisory responsibility, dip-sampling of all stop and search records to look at compliance against the legislation, monitoring the frequency that individual officers are using this power and the number of times any individual is stopped and searched, and the geographical areas that the searches take place in. Training in respect of the use of stop and search is also provided to all police officers as part of the annual staff safety training.

In addition, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) monitors the use of stop and search as part of the "Legitimacy" strand of its annual inspection into Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL). It was also highlighted that the Force has carried out its own internal audit of the use of this power to support HMIC with their inspection.

A Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme was introduced by the Home Office in November 2014 to increase public confidence, trust and transparency in policing by creating additional layers of accountability. Sussex Police is signed-up to this scheme and in order to maintain this continued status, the Force is expected to continue to adhere to its components, including the provision of a ride-along scheme. Any members of the public that are interested in applying to join this ride-along scheme are encouraged to complete the application form which is available through the following [link](#).

BO'R unequivocally stated that the use of stop and search should be thoroughly scrutinised. It was highlighted that whilst officers currently appear to lack confidence in the use of this power, a very small number of complaints are actually received. Of those complaints relating to the use of stop and search, none of these were upheld last year. BO'R concluded by emphasising the importance that officers must have the confidence to use these powers fairly, effectively and lawfully.

ACTION: KB would like to know how many individuals have taken part in the ride-along scheme delivered as part of the Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme.

OPERATION SCEPTRE – ACTION AGAINST KNIFE CRIME

Last month, the Home Secretary wrote to the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners to encourage Chief Constables and PCCs to support the weeks of targeted action against knife crime under the banner of Operation Sceptre.

- A. What are the key challenges for Sussex Police in respect of knife crime?**
- B. What is the Force doing to proactively reduce the number of weapons available in Sussex and to educate individuals about the possible consequences of carrying weapons?**
- C. How are stop and search powers being used by Sussex Police officers to tackle knife crime?**
- D. I understand that the Force supported Operation Sceptre and the week of action that took place at the beginning of this month. What did this support and targeted police activity look like?**
- E. What plans are in place to support the further week of action planned in July?**

BO'R explained that less than one crime a day in Sussex involves a knife and that this figure has remained stable for the last six years. The importance of ensuring that a proportionate policing response exists to this threat was highlighted.

Three strands are used by the Force to proactively reduce the number of weapons available in Sussex and to educate individuals about the possible consequences of carrying weapons: education, prevention and enforcement.

Sussex Police supported Operation Sceptre by carrying out weapon sweeps of areas where knives were suspected of being carried, targeted stop and searches where there was reasonable suspicion that persons were carrying knives, test purchases of knives from retailers, promotion of the use of amnesty surrender bins, and educational prevention activities with young people in schools.

BO'R reiterated that Sussex Police will proactively target any individual where intelligence exists to suggest that they are routinely carrying a weapon, and shops that are known to be selling them to anyone under the age of 16-years-old. The Force continues to raise awareness of people who have lost their lives to knife crime and support a national initiative to tackle knife crime.

It was highlighted that the week of action that took place at the beginning of this month, as part of Operation Sceptre, was of limited success. This is because the proactive activity to install a temporary 'knife arch' (a walk-through metal detector) at both Brighton and Worthing railway stations, in partnership with British Transport Police, had to be withdrawn at the last minute due to legal issues. However, it was highlighted that the Force is currently developing plans to support the further week of action in July 2017.

ACTION: KB would like to know which schools Sussex Police will be working with as part of Operation Sceptre in July 2017.

BUSINESS CRIME – 2016 COMMERCIAL VICTIMISATION SURVEY

Earlier this month, the Home Office published figures from the '2016 Commercial Victimisation Survey' which highlighted that there were around 3.5m incidents of customer theft against businesses in 2016, up from 3.4m in 2015.

A. What do you see are the key challenges for Sussex Police in terms of tackling crimes committed against businesses?

B. How is the Force working with the business community and existing Business Crime Reduction Partnerships in Sussex to improve confidence, prevent crime and reduce the harm caused to businesses by crime?

C. Funding was secured from the Home Office's 'Police Innovation Fund' to deliver a Retail Crime Partnership project in Sussex. For the benefit of the viewers, what is the RCP and what impact has this had on business crime in Sussex?

GY began by explaining that nearly half of all business crimes reported to Sussex Police relate to retail premises. Supermarkets are affected more than most with the greatest number of reported crimes received from this sector of the industry. The patterns of recorded crime indicate that this is predominantly for high-volume, low value and non-descript items, including alcohol, meat and razor blades.

The Force works closely with the five Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs) to support the seven Shop Watch schemes that currently exist across Sussex. This collaborative approach includes working together, sharing information and providing access to information to tackle this type of criminality. The Force is also engaged with partner agencies and the private sector in respect of the provision of business wardens to complement the new Local Policing Model.

Sussex Police use the Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) decision-making model to assess the level of policing response required and to ensure resources are put where they are needed most.

The aspiration of the Force is to make it easier for businesses to report the crimes that they are subjected to in order to keep them safe. Supermarkets tend to be better-equipped to report these crimes than others in the industry because of the employment of dedicated store detectives. It was, however, acknowledged that the processes for victims need to be streamlined further, including the provision to allow BCRPs to report these offences on behalf of businesses.

GY reiterated that the Retail Crime Partnership (RCP) is a two-year project that aims to create a sustainable and strategic partnership between Sussex Police, Southern Cooperative and existing BCRPs.

Business Wardens (BWs) have been deployed to sites across Arun and Eastbourne districts to help prevent and detect crimes. The BWs are independent of Sussex Police and have the capabilities to provide crime prevention advice, take statements, gather evidence and upload intelligence and CCTV footage directly to Sussex Police on behalf of businesses through Facewatch, a third-party reporting system. GY concluded by thanking Southern Cooperative for their continued support.

PLANNING FOR THE POLICING OF THE GENERAL ELECTION

The General Election will take place on Thursday 8 June 2017.

A. How is the planning progressing for this in terms of a policing response?

GY explained that Sussex Police is very experienced at policing General Elections and has developed some robust processes and well-established relationships, with Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers, to protect the integrity of the election.

It was emphasised that a policing response will be delivered in accordance with the Authorised Professional Practice "Guidance on Policing Elections". This includes plans for supporting armed protection operations from visited protected people, public order contingencies around polling stations and the policing of the General Election, itself, and the subsequent counts.

It was also confirmed that a single plan will be used by both Sussex Police and Surrey Police to ensure that a consistent policing approach is adopted.

OPERATION ROGUE TRADER

Last week, police forces, trading standards and partner agencies across the UK were involved in a week of enforcement activity aimed at disrupting criminals who masquerade as legitimate traders in order to target vulnerable – largely elderly – residents in all communities.

- A. What are the key challenges for the Force in respect of rogue traders in Sussex?**
- B. What did Sussex Police do to support the week-long crime prevention initiative?**
- C. In addition to this week, what are Sussex Police doing to disrupt and enforce against rogue traders and to raise public awareness?**
- D. How is the Force proactively working with partners to tackle rogue traders in Sussex?**

BO'R defined a rogue trader as an individual or business that promises to complete work but either never completes the work, completes the work to a substandard or charges significantly more than what they should for the completion of the work. Operation Rogue Trader is a coordinated week-long crime prevention initiative to disrupt and enforce against rogue traders, raise awareness of this type of criminality, and to give people the confidence to report these crimes.

It was highlighted that Sussex Police work closely with Trading Standards in Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex to share information and intelligence, including the development of an information sharing protocol in line with the Data Protection Act (1998). The Force also carries out significant work with Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs, Department for Work and Pensions, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA), Environment Agency, UK Border Agency and Neighbourhood Watch.

Sussex Police and partners supported the week through the development of a dedicated communications strategy and plan of activity that included: increasing targeted patrols of vulnerable locations and premises, stop checks on trade vehicles to gather intelligence and identify offenders, scam presentations to vulnerable individuals and through the distribution of an awareness raising leaflet. All of this activity was promoted through the use of social media.

It was recognised that rogue traders operate across police force area borders. A national intelligence network has been established by the Police National Intelligence Unit, as part of Operation Liberal, to provide a digital forum for police forces in England and Wales to share intelligence regarding rogue traders and to tackle this type of cross-border criminality. This was highlighted to be an incredibly effective way of disenfranchising rogue traders.

OPERATION EDMOND – ANTI-OIL EXPLORATION PROTESTS

Operation Edmond is the Sussex Police response to any potential protests regarding the planned oil exploration at Broadford Bridge, near Horsham. The new exploratory drilling was scheduled to begin on 2 May 2017 for up to three months.

A. How well prepared do you feel Sussex Police is to respond to any possible protests?

B. Are you aware of any other locations in Sussex where exploratory drilling is planned?

BO'R explained that Sussex Police are really well prepared to respond to any potential protests regarding the planned oil exploration at Broadford Bridge. The Force has proven plans, structures, processes and governance arrangements in place.

It was highlighted that anti-oil exploration drilling is heavily licenced by the Department of Energy & Climate Change. However, the drilling has not yet started and there are no protestors currently at the site. The Force continues to reassess this position on a daily basis.

KB was reassured to note that Sussex Police has plans in place to facilitate peaceful protests, should they arise, allow the drilling site to operate within the guidelines and licence and to manage any crime and disorder effectively, should it occurs.

BO'R concluded by stating that Sussex Police has previous experience of managing anti-oil exploration protests at Balcombe in 2013 and reiterated that the Force has supported other police force areas in the development of similar plans nationally.