

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING – 19.2.2016

DATE: 19 February 2016

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

PRESENT: Police & Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne (KB)
Chief Finance Officer Carl Rushbridge (CR)
Deputy Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney (OP)
Assistant Chief of Staff Jane Harwood (JH)
Performance & Information Manager Graham Kane – minutes
Executive Assistant Gina Wheatley

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

A. What have been the recent operational challenges for Sussex Police?

B. How have you reflected on these?

OP emphasised that it had been another busy month for Sussex Police since the last PAM and provided a summary of operational challenges as follows:

On 14 January 2016, Mr Andy Payne, 53, was left for dead after being thrown into the air by a speeding hit-and-run driver in Kempton, Brighton. A 31-year-old man from Brighton was arrested at the end of January and detained on suspicion of dangerous driving causing serious injury, attempting to pervert the course of justice and aggravated vehicle taking. A 56-year-old woman, also from Brighton, was arrested on suspicion of attempting to pervert the course of justice. Both have been bailed until 3 April 2016. CCTV footage of the incident has been circulated and viewed almost three million times. Sussex Police is continuing to appeal for witnesses, and anyone with information is asked to call them on 101, quoting Operation Northdown.

On 29 January, Mr Colin Gale, 39, appeared at Lewes Crown Court charged with the murder of Mr Mark Manning, 54. Mr Manning was last seen on 19 April 2014 before his family reported him missing on 22 April 2014. Mr Gale indicated a plea of not guilty and was remanded in custody. A trial date has been set for 4 July 2016.

Sussex Police are treating the deaths of an elderly couple, Mr Dennis Jefferson, 76, and Mrs Shelia Jefferson, 73, as a murder investigation after their bodies were found at a bungalow in Chidham, near Chichester, following a fire on 6 February 2016. The man being treated as a suspect in the murder of the couple, Mr Norman Williams, 70, died in hospital last week. The Force is continuing to follow several lines of enquiry.

On 10 February, a 48-year-old man and a 28-year-old woman were arrested in Exeter, Devon, on suspicion of conspiracy to murder following a nationwide investigation. Mr Karl Bunster, 37, has not been seen since 17 December 2015.

NON-EMERGENCY CALL HANDLING TIMES

73% of non-emergency calls have been answered within 60 seconds across 2015/2016 to date which is 2% under the Force target of 75%. More worryingly, the Force has now not exceeded the target for an individual month since June 2015 and December 2015 was the lowest monthly performance since August 2014 at 60%. This remains a concern to me.

- A. Can you provide me with an update regarding performance in this area?**
B. What assurances can you provide that a remedial plan is in place to return to the previous strong performance?

JH recognised that Force performance in December 2015 was the lowest monthly performance since August 2014. This was attributed to two factors: increased sickness levels and impact of the Resolution Centre.

- **Increased sickness levels** – *Across the month of December sickness levels in the Contact and Command Centre increased against a previous reducing trend. This had a direct impact on the ability of the staff present to answer the non-emergency calls within the Sussex Police target. Proactive monitoring of sickness levels through a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) system and closer scrutiny of short-term absences are two interventions which the Force has made to improve performance in this area. It was also highlighted that the current number of sickness days lost for the Contact and Command Centre was an average of 10.44 days per person between the rolling year period 22 February 2015 to 21 February 2016. A benchmarking exercise against other public and private call handling centres has confirmed that the level of performance being demonstrated in Sussex is better than the "industry standard".*
- **Impact of Resolution Centre** – *The introduction of the Resolution Centre (RC) in Sussex on 26 October 2015, to deal with non-time critical (grade 3) incidents with no immediate threat, risk or harm, also had an impact on non-emergency call handling performance. This was largely a result of staff abstractions from the department to attend dedicated RC training and coaching sessions.*

It was highlighted that performance in this area has improved since December but it was also acknowledged that the number of non-emergency calls answered within 60 seconds across 2015/2016 still remains 2% under the Force target. However, it was emphasised that there has been no evidence of increased numbers of complaints received across this period.

JH confirmed that the Contact and Command Centre remains under establishment and that recruitment is underway to reduce this variance, including 10 contact handlers recently recruited and currently undergoing training. Further recruitment will continue throughout 2016/2017 as part of a phased approach.

New technology will also be introduced in April 2016 which will enable Contact and Command Centre staff to flex between two computer systems to answer both non-emergency and emergency calls. This will improve the ability and resilience of the department to respond to demand more effectively.

JH concluded by reiterating that 92% of emergency calls are answered within 10 seconds against a Force target of 90%. KB confirmed that she would continue to monitor this area closely because it remains a concern.

ACTION: JH to confirm what the "industry standard" performance is for public and private call handling centres in terms of staff sickness levels.

ACTION: JH to confirm whether or not the seasonal sickness absences in the Contact and Command Centre relate to the same people each year.

ACTION: JH to confirm what benefits the new technology will introduce when it is introduced in the Contact and Command Centre in April 2016.

HOMELESSNESS, BEGGING AND THE STREET COMMUNITY

The Argus recently reported that Sussex Police has been using plain clothes officers to gather evidence against people begging in Brighton & Hove. In total, 62 individuals were arrested for begging in 2015.

A. Can you provide some local context regarding homelessness, begging and the street community in Brighton & Hove?

B. What specific powers do Sussex Police have to deal with begging?

C. What is the reason for using plain clothes officers as a tactic to target beggars?

D. How are the pop-up hubs contributing towards a multi-agency and partnership based approach to support the homeless and street community?

OP stated that it is important to differentiate between the homeless, street community and those who are begging to fund alcohol and drug addictions.

A dedicated Street Community Team exists in Brighton & Hove to protect a small and vulnerable group of individuals with many underlying and complicated issues. In particular, it was emphasised that these individuals are 13 times more likely to be a victim of crime, have an increased likelihood to commit a crime and have a significantly reduced life expectancy.

OP confirmed that it is only a small cohort of these individuals who are targeted by the Force through proactive enforcement activity. Individuals who do not engage with the support services made available to them and are involved in either criminality or persistent anti-social behaviour are processed through the criminal justice system. Sussex Police has a number of legislative powers available to them to deal with begging including the Vagrancy Act (1824), Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act (2014) and the Public Order Act (1986).

Sussex Police use plain clothes officers to target beggars and not "undercover officers" as misrepresented in the media previously. This tactic is used to safeguard the welfare of individuals as much as it is used to initiate engagement with them.

It was also confirmed that a partnership-based approach to support the homeless and street community is now well-established in Sussex. The three pop-up hubs in Sussex (Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Bognor Regis) facilitate multi-agency intervention to provide these vulnerable individuals with access to a number of support services and providers. There are 32 agencies involved in these early assessment centres including local authorities, health, addiction, dentistry and financial services. This represents a more compassionate, supportive and sustainable approach.

ACTION: OP to provide KB with a list of the legislation available to Sussex Police to deal with begging.

ACTION: OP to confirm what the outcomes were for the 62 individuals arrested for begging in 2015.

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR ANIMAL WELFARE – TRAIL OF LIES

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) recently published a “Trail of Lies” report which concluded that artificial trail hunting is generally and frequently used as a false alibi for illegal hunting to avoid prosecution for illegal hunting. I acknowledge that the policing of artificially laid trails remains a difficult balancing act for the police between managing the rights of the hunting community to hunt with the rights of those against hunting to protest.

A. What is your overall reaction to the findings of the report?

B. I have again received much correspondence from local residents outlining their concerns around the enforcement of legislation in this area. Can you outline the key challenges for Sussex Police in terms of maintaining this difficult balance?

OP confirmed that the findings in the IFAW report will not change the approach taken by Sussex Police in this area. Sussex Police will continue to engage with both sides to balance the rights of the hunting community to hunt, within the confines of The Hunting Act 2004, with the rights of those against hunting to protest.

KB was reassured to note that where allegations of illegal hunting exist, these will be thoroughly investigated and progressed through the criminal justice system if it is appropriate to do so. It was emphasised that two individuals have been successfully prosecuted for illegal hunting since October 2014 and a further two investigations remain ongoing.

Operation Rush is the joint Surrey and Sussex response to policing the hunts across both counties. Engagement with the hunting community has been improved through the widespread use of dedicated Police Liaison Officers. This tactic has been used to remind all parties of their roles and responsibilities to develop an enhanced mutual understanding, including clarification as to the extent, proportionality and limitations of the powers available to the police.

OP confirmed that Sussex Police will continue to share learning and best practice in this area with other regional and national police force areas.

ACTION: OP to share the aims and objectives of Operation Rush with KB.

INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse will investigate whether public bodies and other non-state institutions have taken seriously their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse in England and Wales. The Inquiry is being led by Lord Justice Goddard.

A. How is Sussex Police responding to the terms of reference set out by the Inquiry?

B. In light of information potentially being held by multiple agencies, how is Sussex Police engaging with partners to ensure no evidence is missed?

C. How is Sussex Police ensuring that relevant evidence is not being destroyed?

OP confirmed that the police service is one of a number of state institutions which have been asked to contribute to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. Surrey and Sussex Police have adopted a joint approach and will respond fully to the Inquiry. Assistant Chief Constable Stuart Cundy, Specialist Crime Command, will chair a Gold Group to oversee this work locally, which contains independent representation from the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in Brighton & Hove.

Both forces are currently looking into all historic information relating to child sexual abuse investigations for the past 20 years, as per the guidance for the Inquiry, to determine whether or not they are good enough by today's policing standards. Any cases of concern or common themes will be referred for further investigation. A dedicated and experienced team has been assembled to assist with data collection for the Inquiry, including a supervisor and four police staff investigators.

Sussex Police has developed constructive relationships with the other statutory partners in this area including the Director of Children's Services at the three upper tier authorities (Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council), LSCBs, Diocese of Chichester and the National Probation Service. The joint-approach adopted by Surrey Police and Sussex Police in response to this Inquiry has been formally explained to each of these partners in writing, including a particular emphasis on the importance of data retention by all agencies.

OP explained that all police force areas are governed by legislation in terms of data retention and destruction. To ensure that no evidence potentially relevant to this Inquiry could be mistakenly destroyed, all document destruction across both force areas has been temporarily suspended whilst a process review is carried out.

It was also emphasised that both Surrey Police and Sussex Police were awarded "core participant status" and, as such, have special rights in the Inquiry process including: receiving disclosure of documentation, being represented and making legal submissions, suggesting questions and receiving advance notice of the Inquiry's report. KB confirmed that the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner had also been awarded this status.

STONEWALL WORKPLACE EQUALITY INDEX

I am very pleased to confirm that following the publication of the 2016 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index last month Sussex Police improved 80 places to 22nd in the list of most inclusive lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) friendly employers in the UK.

A. What do you attribute the improvement in performance to?

B. How will Sussex Police continue to encourage LGBT people to consider working for the Force to ensure that the workforce continues to reflect the communities it serves?

JH confirmed that Sussex Police were delighted with the improvement demonstrated in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. It was highlighted that Sussex Police were positioned 102 in 2015 and improved 80 places to 22 in the list of the most inclusive employers in 2016.

It was explained that Sussex Police is positioned third in the list in terms of police force areas behind Suffolk Constabulary (15) and Leicestershire Police (17), and fourth in the list of top emergency services (13 – Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service).

This improvement in performance was attributed to enhanced engagement with officers, staff and the Gay Police Association – Sussex. A continued commitment from the Command Team to support LGBT activity in Sussex was also recognised.

It was emphasised that 6% of all police officers and staff in Sussex self-declare their sexual orientation as LGBT. A determination exists to ensure that the Sussex Police workforce continues to reflect the communities it serves and this Index and the Stonewall logo will be used as part of future recruitment campaigns to encourage further LGBT people to apply for any vacant positions.

HMIC – PEEL: LEGITIMACY

Last week, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) published their findings for Sussex Police in the “PEEL: Legitimacy” report. I am very pleased to confirm that the inspection report judged the Force to be “good” in respect of how it operates fairly, ethically and within the law.

A. What is your overall reaction to the findings of the report?

OP confirmed that she was delighted with the HMIC inspection report which judged Sussex Police to be “good” in respect of how it operates fairly, ethically and within the law.

HMIC highlighted that “officers and staff treat people fairly and with respect” and considered the Neighbourhood Policing Teams to have “a good understanding of their local communities” through regular and effective consultation and engagement.

Sussex Police was recognised as being compliant with the Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme, including an understanding of the National Decision Model (NDM) for the use of these powers and recording of reasonable grounds. The use of Taser was acknowledged to be “fair and appropriate in Sussex”, and in accordance with the NDM, monitoring and evaluation. HMIC also considered that the College of Policing’s “Code of Ethics” is well embedded in Force culture.

KB commended the performance of Sussex Police in this area and congratulated all police officers and staff for this achievement. OP concluded by explaining that plans are in place to improve performance further in the areas identified.

HMIC – PEEL: EFFECTIVENESS

Yesterday, HMIC published their findings for Sussex Police in the “PEEL: Effectiveness” report. I am also pleased to confirm that the inspection report judged the Force to be “good” in respect of keeping people safe and reducing crime.

A. What is your overall reaction to the findings of the report?

OP was understandably very pleased with the latest HMIC inspection report which judged Sussex Police to be “good” in respect of keeping people safe and reducing crime.

Sussex Police were recognised as one of only ten police force areas to achieve a judgment of either “good” or “outstanding” across all four areas inspected. HMIC also praised Sussex for improvements made to working practices based on observations received in previous inspection reports.

No specific areas for improvement were identified by HMIC although caution was expressed at the phased implementation of the Local Policing Programme (LPP). OP provided assurances that Sussex Police is committed to neighbourhood policing and that this approach would remain at the heart of the LPP throughout the transitional stage.

KB again commended the performance of Sussex Police in this area.

VALUE FOR MONEY

POLICING PRECEPT DECISION

Following a public consultation, I have again been given public support to increase the policing part of the Council Tax for 2016/2017. This will add an extra £5 a year per Band D property, a move which received unanimous support from the Police & Crime Panel. This new money will fund investment in two priority areas: protecting children and vulnerable adults from exploitation and abuse and improving the digital forensic capability to retrieve, analyse and store information held on computers, mobiles and tablets.

A. Can you provide me with a progress update as to how the additional funds raised for serious sexual offending and protecting the most vulnerable victims have been used from last year?

B. How will this latest investment support the delivery of these two priority areas in 2016/2017?

JH explained that Sussex Police were pleased to receive the additional investment in policing for 2016/2017 following increases to the policing element of the council tax.

It was confirmed that the additional funding in 2015/2016 had been used to strengthen the Force’s safeguarding capacity and capability. In particular, 36 officers have been recruited in the Public Protection Unit, which includes 14 Sexual Offences Liaison Officers (SOLOs) and 22 Specialist Safeguarding Investigations officers to support the Paedophile Online Investigation Team (POLIT) and Child Protection Team.

The additional investment for 2016/2017 will be used to support the delivery of the above mentioned two priority areas. It was emphasised that the level of resources and skills in these areas are being increased to match the increased demand. The Force is also looking at developing designated pathways to bring in “external specialists” in to both safeguarding and digital forensics.