

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING – 15.4.2016

DATE: 15 April 2016

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

PRESENT: Police & Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne (KB)
Chief Executive Mark Streater (MS)
Chief Constable Giles York (GY)
Temporary Deputy Chief Constable Robin Smith (RS)
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?

GY provided a summary of several success operational challenges which have contributed to a safer Sussex since the last PAM, as follows:

On 30 March, Mr Carlton Meldrum, 22, was sentenced to 7 years and 3 and a half years (10 and a half years in total) imprisonment (to run concurrently) after he was found guilty of possessing four kilograms of heroin with intent to supply, possession of cocaine and cannabis and possession of a firearm without a certificate.

On 1 April, Mr Ducbac Vuong, 52, was sentenced to 22 years in prison at Lewes Crown Court for two counts of attempted murder after he tried to kill his wife and son by setting fire to their nail bar business, Hollywood Nails, in Hailsham on 4 March 2015.

On 4 April, Mr George Qatramiz, 32, escaped from Brighton Magistrates Court after scaling a 15ft glass panel and fleeing on foot. Mr Qatramiz was later tracked to Eastbourne and recaptured by police after a four hour manhunt. GY thanked members of the public and the media for their assistance in locating Mr Qatramiz.

GY concluded by praising the lifesaving actions of Special Constable Matthew West after he arrived at the scene of a serious road traffic collision involving a motorcyclist and stemmed the flow of an arterial bleed until paramedics arrived.

VIOLENT CRIME

I note that the number of recorded violent crimes increased by 25% across the Performance Plan Year 2015/2016 (1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016), in comparison to the same period a year earlier. Recorded increases were apparent across each of the divisions.

A. Can these continued increases still be attributed to an improvement in the accurate recording of crime, rather than an actual increase in offending?

B. What is the Force doing to tackle violent crime in Sussex?

C. What assurances can you provide that the risk of crime in Sussex has not increased?

GY explained that he was very confident that increases in the number of recorded violent crimes can still be attributed to an improvement in the accurate recording of crime by Sussex Police, rather than an actual increase in offending.

The increase relates to a higher volume of low level "violence with no injury" and "violence with slight injury" crimes being recorded following changes to recording practices as part of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's inspections into crime data integrity and are replicated nationally.

GY provided KB with assurances that the risk of violent crime in Sussex has not increased. In particular, there have been no significant increases in the recorded number of "fatal", "serious" or "threat of injury violence" crimes and the number of telephone calls received by the Contact and Command Centre relating to violent crimes has remained consistent.

Preventing these crimes from taking place continues to remain core business for Sussex Police and the Force has many proactive initiatives in place to tackle public place violent crime. In Brighton & Hove, Operation Marble is the targeted response to prevent incidents of crime and disorder within the night time economy. This is part of a multi-agency approach with the Business Crime Reduction Partnership, security industry and beach patrol. Similar approaches have also been adopted in East Sussex and West Sussex.

GY explained that the impact of changes to recording practices is now expected to have passed and any further increases in the number of violent crimes recorded should be monitored closely. KB agreed to revisit this area again at a future PAM.

ACTION: KB would like to know what proportion of the increase in recorded violent crimes is attributable to "violence with no injury" or "violence with slight injury".

STREET DRINKING

At previous PAMs, I have raised the issue of anti-social behaviour, and those who drink in town centres and public spaces, in particular. With summer, the improving weather and longer evenings approaching there are naturally concerns from residents, communities and businesses regarding the potential for street drinking, and the number of anti-social behaviour crimes and incidents recorded, to be exacerbated.

A. What do the key areas of risk around street drinking look like for Sussex Police and how is the Force responding to these?

B. A number of powers are available to Sussex Police to tackle street drinking, including Designated Public Place Orders. How do you measure the effectiveness of these powers?

C. How is the Force proactively working with partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and street drinking?

RS explained that street drinking is a "wicked problem" for a small number of vulnerable individuals with many underlying and complicated issues.

Temporary policing responses have included moving individuals on, making arrests and issuing Fixed Penalty Notices. However, a more compassionate, supportive and multi-agency approach is required to tackle and prevent street drinking by providing individuals with alternative options and access to a number of support services and providers. This approach is more likely to provide a sustainable solution.

Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs) are one of the more effective powers available to Sussex Police to tackle street drinking. DPPOs provide the police with additional powers to confiscate alcohol in certain public place areas and 7 DPPOs exist in areas across Sussex. DPPOs were repealed by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act (ASBCPA) 2014 and will become subject to Public Space Protection Order legislation in October 2017. All existing DPPOs will need to be reviewed and renewed before then.

Other powers in the ASBCPA available to Sussex Police to tackle street drinking include the power to make individuals leave a public place area for 24 or 48 hours because of alcohol related. RS explained that each of these powers is used extensively by police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) on a daily basis.

Further reassurance was provided to KB that the Force is proactively working with partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and street drinking, including the creation of a shared plan. This multi-agency approach is imperative to achieve success in this area because this is not just a police responsibility.

ACTION: KB would like to know where the seven DPPOs are in Sussex and when they are each set to expire.

SATISFACTION OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Home Office is introducing a new approach to surveying victims of domestic abuse which the Force is working closely with my office to implement.

A. What does the plan look like to introduce this new directive?

B. How will the Force ensure that this work builds on the good practice of multi-agency working to tackle domestic abuse, as cited by HMIC?

RS confirmed that Sussex Police continues to work closely with the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner to implement the new Home Office approach.

A proactive domestic abuse survey is already carried out in Sussex by Independent Domestic Violence Advisors in partnership with local domestic abuse service providers. This is a detailed and sensitive survey which seeks to understand better the levels of service currently provided to victims of domestic abuse and requires the full confidence of the victims taking part. Throughout the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, 256 surveys were completed.

It was emphasised that the proposed Home Office approach to surveying victims of domestic abuse is more police focussed. This is currently a point of contention and technical guidance regarding the survey is still awaited from the Home Office.

In the interim, Sussex Police has made contact with the three police force areas who piloted the survey; Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Durham Constabulary and Leicestershire Police to understand better how the survey has been received by victims of domestic abuse and how an improved and more efficient service can be delivered as a result.

KB was reassured to note that effective governance arrangements are in place within Sussex Police in relation to domestic abuse.

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

REASSURANCE TO SUSSEX COMMUNITIES

Further to the recent terrorist attacks in Brussels last month.

A. What additional security measures are being taken in Sussex?

B. How well prepared do you feel Sussex Police and partner agencies are to respond to such an event in Sussex?

C. Can you set the record straight regarding recent claims in the media of "28 jihadists' intent on terror" in Brighton & Hove?

GY began by stating that his thoughts were with those affected by the terrorist attacks in Brussels last month, including all emergency service colleagues affected by this.

The UK threat from international terrorism was increased to Severe on 29 August 2014 and remains unchanged. The Force is building on an already alert state and has reviewed all tactical options available in Sussex, including increasing the number of high-visibility patrols at Gatwick Airport (both in the terminals and airside). Dedicated briefings have also been delivered to the Sussex and Surrey joint firearms response and through the internal messages sent to all police officers and staff regarding the importance of increased vigilance.

Assurances were provided to the public regarding the capabilities and preparedness of Sussex Police and partner agencies to respond to any such an event in Sussex. The following initiatives were highlighted in particular:

Project Argus – Developed by the National Counter Terrorism Security Office and delivered by Counter Terrorism Security Advisers throughout the UK. This three hour multimedia simulation poses questions and dilemmas for participants working in syndicates and aims to raise awareness of the threat from terrorism, providing practical advice on preventing, handling and recovering from an attack.

Project Griffin – This is another national counter-terrorism initiative which is delivered at Gatwick Airport and aims to engage, encourage and enable members of the community to work in partnership with Sussex Police to deter, detect and counter terrorist activity and crime.

Sussex Resilience Forum – Sussex Police plan, coordinate and run scenario tests locally, regionally and nationally to ensure a sufficient capacity and capability exists. These plans are reviewed, revisited and tested periodically.

GY thanked KB for the opportunity to set the record straight regarding recent claims in the media and read out the following statement:

"We would like to make it clear that there are not '28 city jihadists intent on terror' in Brighton & Hove as has recently been claimed in the media.

"Approximately 18 months ago we had concerns relating to a number of young people in the city who we considered to be at risk of exploitation. This followed the widely reported departure of five young people from the city to Syria.

"The young people were not working together as a 'gang' as stated in some press coverage. They were individuals who not all were known to each other. We wanted to ensure they were kept safe.

"Our concerns were not solely about radicalisation. They were as much about their vulnerability to criminal activity and in some cases sexual exploitation.

"We have worked in established partnerships with local community and religious groups to engage with these young people, hear their grievances and help them turn their lives around in a more positive direction.

"This work has been very successful and as a result we do not consider these young people to be at risk of radicalisation. None of them have gone to Syria.

"Tackling exploitation is a key priority for the city's child protection services. At any given time we are working with a number of young people who are at risk of exploitation. Radicalisation is part of this work.

"We would stress the very positive role the local Muslim community has played and continues to play in combating radicalisation and offering positive role models to young people.

"We would like to underline that the exploitation of young people is a national issue, and that we have no reason to believe that the situation in Brighton is any different to the situation in other cities across the UK."

ACTION: KB to attend a Project Argus simulation.

PCSOs IN CROWBOROUGH

I attended the Crowborough Neighbourhood Watch meeting last month and members of the public communicated their dissatisfaction with the proposed Local Policing Programme (LPP). In particular, a lot of anxiety was expressed about the potential for disconnect between the public and the police which could result in a loss of public confidence.

A. How do you respond to public criticism that the LPP is reactive policing instead of proactive policing and represents a step backwards?

B. How have you continued to involve and engage with the public and other stakeholders in the rollout of the LPP?

C. What assurances can you provide the local residents that a reduced police presence in Crowborough will not result in criminals preying on the area as an easy target?

D. PCSOs are recognised as having a preventative affect in terms of reducing low-level criminality. How confident are you that the removal of PCSOs will not have an adverse affect on crime?

E. Part of the proposed changes under the LPP will see PCSOs booking on at Hailsham, Eastbourne and Lewes police stations. Given the distances involved, will this arrangement present any difficulties for PCSOs in terms of travelling to Crowborough and beyond as part of a policing response?

GY confirmed that the LPP represents a transformational change to the current policing model. This decision was taken by him as the Chief Constable of Sussex Police in response to changes to policing priorities and demands. The LPP will also enable the Force to become more efficient and effective. Assistant Chief Constable Laurence Taylor is leading on the delivery of the LPP, with direct oversight from Temporary Deputy Chief Constable Robin Smith.

It was highlighted that no changes have been made to any police officer, staff or PCSO deployments as of yet. It was also reiterated that a robust neighbourhood policing presence would be retained through the LPP based on threat, risk and harm. RS reiterated that the LPP is not about withdrawing a policing presence or abandoning particular areas of Sussex. Preventative policing will still be delivered, when it is required and according to need. It was also explained that officers, staff and PCSOs recognise the need for the Force to change its approach to policing.

GY emphasised that KB has continued to monitor and challenge the delivery of the LPP, on behalf of the public, to ensure that local concerns are raised and understood.

Three commitments were made to KB in respect of the LPP:

Improved communications plan – The communications plans and engagement programmes for the LPP will be revisited, amended and changed to provide the public with more meaningful information and enhanced assurances.

Development of case studies – It was acknowledges that the existing summary of functional changes is too police focussed. Instead, dedicated and localised case studies will be created for members of the public to demonstrate “what policing in the LPP will look and feel like in their local areas”.

Investment in technology – The use of technology in the LPP will be revisited in relation to remote access. This will include looking at the ability of officers and staff to book on and off from mobile devices. This approach would also remove the necessity for staff to attend a police station in order to carry out this process.

KB challenged GY regarding a perceived lack of a social media presence in respect of the LPP and explained that she expects this to be improved. It was acknowledged that whilst community messaging through this forum could be enhanced the Force is striving to get all internal and external messaging right around the LPP.

GY also confirmed that Sussex Police remain committed to involving and engaging with the public and other stakeholders in the rollout of the LPP. In particular, it was emphasised that the Force has already been represented at a number of meetings to explain further the aims and objectives of the LPP. These meetings have been attended by partner agencies and representatives from district, borough, town and parish councils. It was highlighted that Sussex Police will be represented at the Crowborough Town Council meeting on 20 April 2016 to articulate these messages about the LPP.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Automatic Number Plate Recognition

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) is used to detect, deter and disrupt criminality at a local, force, regional and national level.

A. For the benefit of the viewers, what is the difference between an ANPR camera and a speed camera?

B. Is the use of ANPR technology effective for gathering evidence in the investigation of crime?

C. How is ANPR funded in Sussex?

D. What is the role of the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) in this process?

GY confirmed that ANPR cameras and speed cameras both read vehicle number plates but emphasised that this is the extent of their similarities and explained the purpose and function of each.

Speed cameras record the number plate and the speed that a vehicle is travelling (where this is in excess of the speed limit) and link this to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) system. This approach is focussed on improving road safety and changing driver attitudes and behaviours through enforcement.

ANPR cameras record the number plates of all vehicles which pass them on a large database which is linked to a national intelligence infrastructure. ANPR cameras are used to keep the county safe and locations for the cameras are chosen on roads in Sussex which might be targeted for criminal use, particularly those around the borders. ANPR cameras can also be installed on the dashboards in police vehicles which enable the deployment of an immediate and efficient policing response when marked vehicles of interest are flagged in the vicinity.

The ANPR cameras in Sussex are funded by a combination of Sussex Police and Home Office grants. It was emphasised that a capital programme budget of £1.4m is set aside each year to ensure that the use of this technology is maintained. The SSRP is not involved in this process and does not provide any funding for ANPR.