

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING – 21.10.2016

DATE: 21 October 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)
Deputy Chief Constable – Bernie O'Reilly (BO'R)
Performance & Information Manager – Graham Kane (minutes)
Communication & Engagement Assistant – Sammi Carwardine
Staff Officer to Chief Constable – Mark O'Brien

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

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

B. How have you reflected on these?

GY highlighted three operational challenges since the last PAM as follows:

On 27 September 2016, two suspected criminals were discovered by a police dog after they were found hiding in a plastic container at a garden centre near Crowborough. A 21-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of burglary, taking a motor vehicle without consent, failing to provide a specimen for analysis and dangerous driving, and a 28-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of burglary, conspiring to take a motor vehicle without consent and dangerous driving. Both men have been bailed until 9 November 2016 pending further enquiries. Special praise was given to police dog Spud, a six-year-old German Shepherd and his handler Police Constable Steph Barrett, of the Surrey and Sussex Police Dog Unit, for their role in detaining these suspects.

On 6 October 2016, Ms Saan Scutt, 28, pleaded guilty to driving with 180mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood in her system at Brighton Magistrates' Court, after crashing into a parked car in Hove on 20 June 2016. Ms Scutt was disqualified from driving for 22 months, fined £120, and ordered to pay costs of £85 and a £30 victim surcharge. Ms Scutt has since made contact with Sussex Police and will now be used by Sussex Police as part of "Operation Dragonfly", the dedicated drink and drug drive campaign in the lead up to the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

On 11 October 2016, a 16-year-old girl who had been missing from Southwick for 15 days was found safe and well in Brighton. Temporary Inspector Roy Hodder, of the Missing Persons Team, made a live video appeal to help find the missing teenager and promoted this via social media. It was emphasised that the video was watched more than 180,000 times and was shared over 4,000 times. GY thanked the media and the public for their support.

CHILDREN IN CUSTODY

The recently published Howard League for Penal Reform report confirmed that 58% fewer child arrests were made across England and Wales between 2010 and 2015. Sussex Police demonstrated a 54% reduction across the same period including: year on year reductions since 2010, and a 17% reduction from 2014 to 2015, compared the national average of 9%.

- A. Are these reductions in the number of child arrests attributable to a reduction in crime committed by children or to a re-definition of offences by children which require police detention and/or different ways of delivering sanctions?**
- B. What more can Sussex Police do to maintain this trend and reduce these numbers further?**
- C. Was there any disproportionality in the number of child arrests in Sussex by ethnicity or gender?**

GY confirmed that Sussex Police were delighted with the 54% reduction in child arrests between 2010 and 2015. The reductions in the number of arrests were not attributed to a reduction in crime committed by children because, owing to an improvement in the accurate recording of crime by Sussex Police, there has been a 5% increase in the number of crimes recorded with a child as the suspect. Instead, these year-on-year reductions in the number of child arrests were attributed to the Force doing all it can to reduce the criminalisation of children and young people. It was also emphasised that an arrest should be the last resort after a range of other practical alternatives are considered first.

Operation Stepping Stone is an initiative in Sussex to raise awareness amongst police officers and staff to recognise better vulnerability in young people. This also builds on the work of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Children to improve the relationship between children and the police, looked after children, children in custody and children subject to stop and search processes.

A wide range of out-of-court disposals are available and working in Sussex to maintain this reducing arrest trend through Community Resolution. This includes personal and community reparation, restorative justice, written and oral apologies, and rehabilitative and diversionary activities. A multi-agency Community Resolution Scrutiny Panel independently assesses and monitors the use of Community Resolution in Sussex to seek assurances regarding the processes, quality and victim satisfaction.

It was highlighted that from 1 April 2015 to date, no children had been taken into Sussex Police custody under s.136 of the Mental Health Act. These reductions are an area that Assistant Chief Constable Laurence Taylor, South East regional lead for Children and Young People, has been working very closely on in partnership with the National Police Chiefs' Council lead. The Sussex Police Children and Young Persons Strategic Board continue to align themselves with this national best practice and build on success in this area.

The difficulties understanding whether there is any disproportionality in the number of child arrests by ethnicity or gender were explained because the population of children in Sussex is unknown, owing to the age brackets used in the data collection. However, between 1 April and 30 September 2016, there was an indication that there may have been some disproportionately in the number of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British children arrested. The percentage breakdown for child arrests over this period were as follows: 73% White British, 7% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, 7% Other ethnic group, 3% Asian/Asian British and 10% undeclared.

GY concluded by stating that Sussex Police would continue to work hard to keep young people out of the criminal justice system in order to maintain this trend and reduce these numbers further.

PLANNING FOR THE POLICING OF THE BONFIRE CELEBRATIONS

The UK's biggest bonfire night celebrations will again take place in Lewes on Saturday 5 November 2016. Operation Peel is the Sussex Police response to supporting the bonfire societies to ensure public safety.

A. How is the planning progressing for this event?

BO'R explained that plans for the policing of next month's bonfire night celebrations are continuing to progress. Minor revisions have been made to well-rehearsed plans to ensure that public safety is prioritised at the event.

An additional number of attendees are anticipated this year because the event takes place on a Saturday. However, it was also emphasised that a rail strike is planned between 4 and 5 November which, if it goes ahead, will have a significant impact on train travel to Lewes.

Although there is no single event organiser, Sussex Police are working closely with the seven bonfire societies, Lewes District Council, East Sussex County Council, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and the South East Coast Ambulance Service. Some of the logistics being managed include: crowd density, routing of the processions, road closures, and parking suspensions. Further information is available through the following link: www.lewes.gov.uk/tourism/22423.asp

BO'R concluded by providing reassurance to those attending that Sussex Police will endeavour to ensure that a consistent and appropriate policing response exists.

VICTIM FOCUS

HMIC – RAPE MONITORING GROUP DIGEST REPORT

Last week, HMIC published their findings for Sussex Police in the "Rape Monitoring Group Digest" report. I am pleased that the number of charges for rapes increased in 2015/16 and that the charge rate for Sussex (68%), as authorised by the Crown Prosecution Service, continues to remain well above the national average of 57%.

A. How have you reflected on the findings of this report?

B. The process from reporting a rape to the conclusion of a trial is often longer than it would be for other crimes which can have a significant detrimental impact on victims and contribute towards increased attrition rates. What constructive changes can Sussex Police make to reduce the delays in the time it takes for cases of rape to be heard at court?

C. What plans are in place to improve solved rates for serious sexual offences in Sussex?

BO'R welcomed the report and the performance that Sussex Police has been able to demonstrate in this area.

Following Operation Yewtree, the police investigation into sexual abuse allegations against Jimmy Savile and others which started in October 2012, there have been significant increases in the number of rapes recorded by Sussex Police between 2013/14 and 2015/16. These relate to both recent and non-current reports.

Adult rapes increased by 64% and child rapes increased by 66% across this period. It was also emphasised that the 65% increase in the combined number of recorded adult and child rapes are in line with the national average. The increases in the number of referrals (+53%), charges (+54%), prosecutions (+36%) and convictions (+35%) made for cases of rape across this period were recognised as an increase in public confidence to report such crimes.

BO'R acknowledged the funding that was generated by KB as a result of an increase to the police precept in 2016/17, and the increase of 45 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts to protect vulnerable people, in particular.

The introduction of four Specialist Investigation Units (SIUs) has provided the Force with a more sophisticated understanding of demand. The SIUs are based locally at Brighton, Crawley, Eastbourne and Littlehampton but are managed centrally. This provides the Force with the capacity and capability to manage and move resources and provide additional support as and when it is required. This approach is also anticipated to reduce the caseloads for rape and serious sexual offences for each investigating officer in the SIU to an average of five cases at any time. KB enquired what the current caseloads are for each investigating officer in the SIU but this information was not available in the meeting.

In addition, a Detective Inspector has been seconded to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to try and maximise the number of cases of rape that are successfully prosecuted through the criminal justice system and reduce the number of "cracked" cases. The learning from the post holder is expected to improve timeliness and reduce the delays in the time it takes for cases of rape to be heard at court.

It was emphasised that Sussex Police was positioned 13 out of 43 police forces in England and Wales in terms of the solved rate for serious sexual offences and top of their Most Similar Group of police forces, for the rolling year period 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016. The availability of the additional and dedicated resources to protect vulnerable people and the learning and best practice anticipated from the Detective Inspector are two of the plans in place to improve the quality of the evidence and cases presented to the CPS, solved rates for rapes and serious sexual offences. This approach will also ensure that service delivery remains victim focussed.

MS asked whether the recent case of Chad Evans, who was found not guilty of rape after a two-week retrial, could generate more work for police forces in terms of re-investigations and retrials. GY provided assurances that this should not have too much of an impact.

ACTION: KB requested to know how many of the reported cases of rape and serious sexual offences are recent and how many relate to non-current offences.

ACTION: KB requested to know what the current caseloads for rape and serious sexual offences are for each investigating officer within the Safeguarding Investigation Units.

LOCAL POLICING PROGRAMME – INVESTIGATIONS FRAMEWORK

A new investigations framework was launched by Sussex Police on 28 September 2016 as part of the Local Policing Programme (LPP).

A. What does the introduction of the investigations framework mean for Sussex Police?

B. How will the impact of these changes be measured?

BO'R confirmed that a new Investigations Framework is now being used across the Force to focus on crimes which cause the most harm. The framework provides a consistent set of principles on which decisions about investigations can be made and has been built around the National Decision Model.

The framework acknowledges that Sussex Police should not investigate all reported crimes which will involve having open and honest discussions with victims of crime. This will include highlighting where crimes are unlikely to be solved.

The framework aims to: improve the quality of decision making, ensure investigations are efficient, increase the proportion of investigations conducted where victims are vulnerable, and to provide police officers and staff with the autonomy to make victim focused decisions. This approach will involve assessing each case individually and prioritising the crimes that cause the greatest harm to victims and communities.

GY provided assurances that all serious crimes and crimes where there is a genuine risk of death, significant harm or loss will still be investigated where it is proportionate and in the public interest. These crimes will also have a mandated supervisory oversight element to them. Where crimes are less serious, Sussex Police will prioritise those where: victims and witnesses are vulnerable, offenders are dangerous or prolific, the crime is part of a series or an identified local problem, and there is a named or readily identifiable suspect.

A post-implementation review of the framework will be completed in January 2017 to evaluate the success of the framework through a qualitative and quantitative based approach. KB asked to receive a copy of the review once this is finalised.

BO'R concluded by confirming that plans are also being developed to provide training to the Contact and Command Centre in respect of the framework, and emphasised that both the College of Policing and HMIC are also looking at the approach taken by Sussex Police in this area.

ACTION: KB asked to receive a copy of the post-implementation review for the Investigations Framework once this is finalised in January 2017.

LOCAL POLICING PROGRAMME – DUTY TO CONSULT

Sussex Police has a statutory duty to “consult with those in that policing area, about the policing of that area” as set out in the Police Act 1996.

A. Following the roll-out of the LPP, how do you intend to measure the impact and assess how well it is working?

B. What data is being collected as part of this consultation process?

GY recapped that the LPP encompasses crime prevention, response and investigation based on threat, risk and harm which will enable Sussex Police to operate more efficiently in the future. The first stage of the LPP was introduced 18 months ago and further stages have been implemented on an incremental basis since then, and will continue to be introduced until 1 April 2017. It was also explained that the impact of these changes has been assessed as each one of them are enacted.

The Resolution Centre and Investigations Framework were the first two initiatives to be rolled out as part of the LPP. The impact of the introduction of the Resolution Centre will be assessed through a post-implementation review which will consider staff workloads, reductions in demand due to appointments saved and feedback received from members of the public through user satisfaction surveys. A similar approach will be adopted for the Investigations Framework.

KB explained that she continues to receive correspondence from district, borough, town and parish councils outlining their concerns about the LPP and the response they have received from Sussex Police. Concerns were also raised that members of the public do not know who to contact and KB encouraged the Force to develop and promote stronger messages around the continued rollout of the LPP.

GY responded by reiterating that he continues to take this very seriously and restated that the changes introduced as part of the LPP have made the Force more resilient. It was reaffirmed that police presence and engagement would be maintained wherever possible either through attendance or written reports to address specific areas of concern. KB agreed to share this correspondence with GY for response.

ACTION: KB to share the correspondence regarding the LPP with GY for response.

INVESTMENT AREAS FOLLOWING PRECEPT INCREASE

Last year, the precept was raised in Sussex to invest in those areas of operational policing which required additional funding, including increased provisions for the protection of children and vulnerable adults from exploitation and abuse, and increased digital forensic capabilities to retrieve, analyse and store information held on computers, mobiles and tablets.

A. Can you provide me with a progress update on how the additional funds have been used and whether the resources being invested are adequate to respond to these threats?

B. What progress has been made to achieve the savings required for 2016/17?

C. With considerations now turning towards the government's grant funding announcement in December and the setting of the policing budget, can you identify where the key priority areas for investment in policing services in Sussex are moving forward?

BO'R provided progress updates in respect of the two areas of operational policing which received additional funding as a result of an increase to the police precept in 2016/17: protecting vulnerable people and digital forensics.

Protecting vulnerable people – the level of resourcing available to deal with the increase in the volume of reported crimes and incidents relating to sexual offences, domestic and other abuse of vulnerable adults and children has increased by 45 FTE. A total of 14 FTE individuals have been recruited to date and Sussex Police are confident that the additional 31 FTE individuals will be in place by 31 March 2017; and

Digital forensics – investments have been made in the digital forensic capabilities available to retrieve, analyse and store information held on computers, mobiles and tablets. In particular, significant improvements have been made to reduce the backlog of evidence waiting to be retrieved from digital sources, including reductions of 79% relating to computers (which equates to 300 fewer retrievals outstanding) and 93% relating to mobiles (which equates to 583 fewer retrievals outstanding). It was also emphasised that certain elements of IT have been purchased and outsourced to speed up processes and support these digital evidence based investigations.

GY identified three key priority areas for investment in policing services in Sussex for 2017/18: local policing, public protection and armed response.

Local policing – plans to improve proactive capabilities were outlined, including the investment in an additional 20 to 24 police officers across Sussex to work closely with local policing teams to respond to priority crimes and target high-impact offenders who have a disproportionate affect on local communities; and

Public protection – the volume and range of reported of crimes and incidents relating to sexual offences, domestic and other abuse are set to continue to increase. Further investment is required to protect our vulnerable and help victims cope and recover from this crime and abuse; and

Armed response – investment is required to increase the number of Armed Response Vehicles and crews of Authorised Firearms Officers by 50% to ensure that the joint Tactical Firearms Unit for Sussex Police and Surrey Police has the capacity to respond to incidents involving firearms or other high-risk situations on a 24/7 basis.

POLICE OFFICER RECRUITMENT

I was pleased to be able open the recruitment process for police officers to increase the resources at your disposal.

A. What will this mean for frontline policing in Sussex?

B. Sussex Police is also keen to encourage applications from those individuals with a protected characteristic; specifically Black and Minority Ethnic (BME). How are you proactively targeting these individuals as part of the recruitment process?

BO'R confirmed that police officer recruitment opened on 10 October and that over 700 applications had been received in the first 10 days. This figure was expected to increase to nearer 1,000 applications before recruitment closes on 23 October 2016. KB requested the final number of applicants from the recruitment process once these are known.

It was highlighted that an additional 72 frontline police officers would be made available in Sussex as a result of this recruitment process and a previous process which took place earlier in the year. A total of 36 officers will start training in November 2016 and a further 36 officers will start training in March 2017.

BO'R explained that Sussex Police has been proactive in their approach to target applications from individuals who describe their ethnicity as BME as part of this recruitment process. In particular, the Force has been revisiting previously unsuccessful applications from BME candidates and encouraging them to reapply with additional support. It was also emphasised that the requirement to hold a valid driving licence prior to making an application had been removed.

ACTION: KB requested the final number of applicants from the recruitment process once these are known.