

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 16 January 2015

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

PRESENT: Police & Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne (KB)
Chief Executive Mark Streater (MS)
Deputy Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney (OP)
Detective Superintendent Nick May (NM)
Performance & Information Manager Graham Kane – minutes
Communications Manager Clarissa Hawthorne
Correspondence & Administration Clerk Sarah Tibbott

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

What have been the recent operational highlights for the Force?

A. Have there been any key Operations or challenges?

B. How have you reflected on these?

OP explained that Sussex Police have had a number of operational challenges across the festive period in December and the first few weeks of January 2015.

These challenges have included a man charged with the murder of another man at a flat in Brighton on Christmas Day, the deaths of a man and a woman at a house in Billingshurst, the deaths of two men swept out to sea in Brighton and six fatalities on the roads across the county..

OP was particularly pleased to report that Sussex Police was part of a co-ordinated partnership response to support an operation that assisted a Virgin Atlantic plane to make an emergency landing at Gatwick Airport. It was emphasised that this response was part of a well-planned emergency procedure that Sussex Police and partners rehearse regularly.

A recent operational highlight for Force included the arrest of five individuals suspected of committing a number of burglaries in the south east of England. These arrests were made following support from the Road Policing Unit, the national police helicopter and the use of a Stop Stick to bring the pursuit to safe conclusion.

OPERATION DRAGONFLY – CHRISTMAS DRINK-DRIVE CAMPAIGN 2014 – RESULTS

As discussed at last month's PAM, "Operation Dragonfly", the dedicated Sussex Police drink-drive campaign in the lead up to the Christmas and New Year celebrations, took place in December 2014.

A. Can you provide me with the total number of drivers that were breathalysed and subsequently arrested for drink-driving offences?

B. What other initiatives does the Force have planned to tackle drink-driving throughout the rest of the calendar year?

OP explained that Operation Dragonfly is part of rolling programme of campaigns that are implemented by the Force to tackle drink and drug driving in Sussex throughout the calendar year.

It was confirmed that between 1 December and 31 December 2014 Sussex Police stopped over 3,100 motorists. 178 of these individuals were arrested and 114 were charged with drink-driving. A further 28 individuals have been bailed for further analysis and 36 individuals do not require any further action to be taken (and have not had their names published).

OP acknowledged that there was a reduction in both the number of tests carried out and those individuals subsequently arrested, in comparison to the same period in 2013. It was noted that Sussex Police carry out targeted enforcement based on intelligence received by the public. The importance of the recorded increases in the number of reports received through Operation Crackdown, Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, Crimestoppers and text was also highlighted.

The overall impact of the recent drink and drug driving campaigns are currently being reviewed by the Force to determine what additional work can be done to better educate drivers and influence their attitudes and long-term behaviour.

It was also emphasised that from 1 April 2015 a new test will be available nationally which will enable officers to test individuals for cannabis and cocaine at the roadside. The test involves taking a mouth swab and is very similar to the indicator that is already used to test for alcohol.

HOMICIDES IN SUSSEX

It was reported last month that the number of recorded homicides reduced nationally across 2014. In particular, the number of recorded homicides in London fell below 100 for the first time in 40 years, according to the Metropolitan Police.

A. Is the same reducing trend apparent in Sussex?

B. How many homicides remain undetected across the county?

NM confirmed that "homicide" is the term used to incorporate all murder and manslaughter offences.

It was emphasised that the trend in the reducing number of recorded homicides nationally is also apparent in Sussex. In particular, there were 12 recorded homicides in 2013 which reduced to 9 across 2014, in comparison to averages of between 20–24 homicides per year that were recorded in the early 2000's. NM also confirmed that circa 50% of homicides relate to domestic abuse.

It was reported that improved medical provisions are contributing towards reductions in these numbers because more individuals are now surviving serious head injuries which are then classified as Actual Bodily Harm and Grievous Bodily Harm instead.

NM highlighted that a significant amount of time and resources are spent investigating homicides, of which Sussex Police successfully detect over 90%. It was also emphasised that despite thorough investigations a number of homicides remain unsolved, including the 2013 murder of Valerie Graves in Bosham, West Sussex (Operation Ensign).

NM explained that mass screenings will be taking place in Bosham throughout January and February and made an appeal for men, aged 17+, to provide Sussex Police with a DNA sample to enable them to be eliminated from the investigation. The profiling will involve taking a swab from the mouth and fingerprints from each individual. It is important to note that the Force will only use the samples obtained to check against this particular crime and the DNA profile will not appear on any database. Legal safeguards also exist to ensure that once the sample is compared, it will be destroyed.

The DNA screening sessions will be held at the Millstream Hotel on Bosham Lane, Bosham, West Sussex, PO18 8HL. These sessions will take place over three weeks between: 21 January and 29 January, 2 February to 7 February and 10 February to 15 February. The times for all sessions are 10:00 to 20:00.

OPERATION RIBBON – UPDATE

“Operation Ribbon” was the dedicated Sussex Police response to reports of domestic abuse over the Christmas and New Year period. The preventative work carried out by the Force (first phase) was highlighted at last month’s PAM and the plans for the deployment of the dedicated response cars on each of the divisions were described (second phase).

A. How effective was the second phase of this Operation?

B. How is the third phase progressing in terms of the Force monitoring and working closely with victims and witnesses of domestic abuse to support them through the criminal justice system process?

OP reiterated that the preventative work carried out by Sussex Police (first phase) had been successful in terms of making visits to high-risk victims and well-known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

It was emphasised that the deployment of dedicated response cars on each of the divisions (second phase) worked well and nearly 2,000 visits to domestic abuse incidents were made between the period 19 December to 31 December 2014. These deployments resulted in the recording of circa 800 crimes and 550 arrests.

It was also highlighted that increased use of body worn video throughout this period ensured that powerful evidence was captured to support the Force in the criminal justice process. In particular, the timely capturing of evidence from domestic abuse scenes ensures that the cases made to the Crown Prosecution Service are significantly improved in terms of quality. This highlights the importance of all officers wearing body worn video, which is held locally at police stations across Sussex, when attending domestic abuse incidents.

Sussex Police are currently working with victims and witnesses of domestic abuse to support them through the criminal justice process. However, OP confirmed that not enough additional court time was made available to ensure swifter justice which resulted in a number of individuals being bailed until February 2015. This has the potential to adversely affect victim confidence in the system and KB was concerned to note exactly how many individuals were bailed during this period.

ACTION: OP to provide KB with the number of individuals bailed until February.

ACTION: KB to discuss the Sussex and Surrey Domestic Abuse Action Plan with ACC Stuart Cundy at a future PAM.

REASSURANCE TO SUSSEX COMMUNITIES

Following the Charlie Hebdo and supermarket terrorist attacks in Paris last week, are there any security implications for Sussex?

A. Has there been a rise in community tensions or additional reports of religious related hate crime?

B. What additional measures, if any, have you put in place?

OP acknowledged that she was proud to join UK colleagues in observing a two minute silence for victims of the Charlie Hebdo and supermarket terrorist attacks in Paris last week.

The current threat level from international terrorism for the UK is assessed as Severe. Threat levels are continuously monitored based on intelligence received and local plans are regularly reviewed and reassessed against this level of threat. In particular, the general and specialist staffing levels within Sussex Police are annually reviewed according to anticipated need.

It was emphasised that community tensions across the county had been closely monitored through effective local connections but confirmed that there had not been a rise in community tensions in Sussex. A small number of calls and emails were received regarding social media commentary around the attacks but these levels were nothing more than would usually be expected. KB was also reassured to note that no additional reports of religious related hate crimes had been made since the attacks.

OP concluded by stating that she was confident that Sussex Police would either have the resources available in Sussex or would be able to mobilise support regionally or nationally should they be subject to similar terrorist threats in the county.

DRUG RELATED DEATHS

The recently reported tragic deaths of three men in Suffolk and a fourth man in Shropshire are believed to be linked to a dangerous batch of ecstasy.

A. Has there been any indication that this type of drug has been made available in Sussex?

B. How many drug related deaths occur across the county each year?

C. What are the Force and partners doing to tackle drug usage in Sussex and raise awareness of the associated dangers?

NM confirmed that there has been no indication that the dangerous batch of ecstasy, which has been attributed to the recently reported deaths of four men in Suffolk and Shropshire, has been made available in Sussex.

It was emphasised that there were 97 drug related deaths in Sussex across 2013. The figures for 2014 are not yet available for the complete year, but the part-year figures available indicate that there is a decreasing trend. It was highlighted that whilst some drug related deaths are directly related to controlled drugs, a number of other deaths occur as a result of misuse of prescribed drugs (or a combination of prescribed drugs and alcohol).

NM explained that Sussex Police work with local authorities, public health, trading standards and fire and rescue service partners to tackle drug usage in Sussex and to raise awareness of the associated dangers through a network of communicators. In addition, the three coroners' officers across Sussex understand the importance of highlighting the dangers of drug misuse. It is acknowledged that public health is the lead agency in this particular area of work, with Sussex Police providing a different but supportive role, in terms of enforcement.

MS asked for some further clarification around the Force's legal position in terms of unlawful supply. NM confirmed that the position is clear in terms of the potential for a manslaughter investigation to be opened if there is any suspicion that a death or multiple deaths have occurred as a direct result of the unlawful supply of controlled drugs. It was also highlighted that "joint enterprise" might be applicable in certain cases. This is where more than one person (and often an organised crime group) can be charged with the same crime if it can be proved that they were in some way involved in it.

ESTATES STRATEGY UPDATE

Last year, I unveiled a 5-year Estates Strategy, as part of a £20m investment programme for police buildings to improve the accessibility and visibility of neighbourhood policing by looking at how services can be delivered more efficiently.

A. Can you give me an update on the key progress made to date?

OP explained that a recent annual review confirmed that the Estates Strategy is on track to deliver savings of £1m. Sussex Police continue to look at the changing requirements of the Force and the disposal of properties, wherever appropriate.

In particular, progress to date includes the sale of Grove Road Police Station (Eastbourne), Hove Police Station and the Road Policing Unit bases at Southbourne, Hickstead and Hurstpierpoint. In addition, Slaugham Manor and Union Place (Worthing) have both been sold, subject to contract, and the lease at the Cliffe Industrial Estate (Lewes) has been terminated with the service transferred to other Sussex Police vehicle workshops.

It was also emphasised that the delivery of policing services at Midhurst, Lancing, Petworth, Horsham, Newhaven and Peacehaven police stations is currently being reconsidered to include co-location with local partners. Further projects are underway to relocate the services provided at Sussex House (Hollingbury) into other Sussex Police sites.

OP concluded by confirming that Hammonds Drive Police Station (Eastbourne), John Street (Brighton), Hastings, Crawley and Haywards Heath police stations and Police Headquarters (Lewes) are each being refurbished to increase capacities and improve overall efficiencies and effectiveness.