

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 17 January 2014

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 Giles York (GY)
Director of Finance (MB)
Policy Officer Graham Kane – minutes
Communications Manager Rosie Gooch
Administration Clerk Sarah Tibbott
Detective Chief Inspector Emma Brice

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

CHRISTMAS DRINK-DRIVING CAMPAIGN 2013

The Sussex Police Christmas drink-driving campaign took place again in December 2013. Can you provide me with an update regarding the number of drivers that were breathalysed and subsequently arrested for drink-driving offences?

A) How do these figures compare to December 2012?

B) I also note that this was the first year that drivers charged with drink-driving had their names and addresses published by Sussex Police and other forces. Is there evidence to suggest that this proactive approach has had a more positive impact in deterring the number of drink-drivers on the roads of Sussex?

GY confirmed that during December 2013 over 4,000 motorists were breathalysed and 120 individuals were charged for drink-driving offences. This equated to 3% and was the same proportion compared to 2012. GY highlighted that there was no pattern of offenders but was still disappointed that individuals continue to take risks and drink-drive.

In addition, members of the public were able to text Sussex Police this year to report those they suspected of drink-driving and more impairment tests were carried out at the roadside to test for substance misuse, compared to 2012.

Sussex Police made the decision to publish the names and addresses of those drivers charged with drink-driving offences this year, for the first time, in line with other forces. GY stated that this information was already in the public domain through court listings and concluded that the publicity around this ensured that the campaign remained in the media throughout the month of December. The Force will evaluate the impact of this tactic ahead of any future campaigns.

OUT OF COURT DISPOSALS

Q. Out of court disposals are the powers given to the police to provide on-the-spot sanctions to low-level crime and anti-social behaviour. Examples of these disposals include the issuing of cautions and Fixed Penalty Notices. Can you clarify what crimes and incidents these out of court disposals are used for in Sussex?

A) What evidence is there to suggest that the use of out of court disposals is positively contributing to reduced levels of crime and reoffending?

B) How do Sussex Police monitor and review the overall effectiveness of out of court disposals?

GY explained that out-of-court disposals are a method of dealing with low level crimes outside of the court process with more consideration for what the victim wants. These disposals provide police officers with increased discretion and can ensure that justice is brought in a timely manner. Cautions, Fixed Penalty Notices, Penalty Notice for Disorder and Community Resolutions were all highlighted as examples.

GY confirmed that it is difficult to say whether out of court disposals are contributing to reduced levels of crime and reoffending. However, it was highlighted that in Sussex over 80% of adults (and over 70% of youths) that are cautioned do not go on to reoffend in the next 12 months. Similarly, over 84% of adults (and over 80% of youths) that are given a Community Resolution do not go on to reoffend in the next 12 months.

GY provided reassurance that an independent multi-agency Community Resolution Scrutiny Panel meet quarterly to review the use of Community Resolutions in Sussex. This Panel consists of representatives from Youth Offending Services, Probation, Local Authority, Strategic Independent Advisory Group, Victim Support, Magistrate Bench Chairs, Crown Prosecution Service and Sussex Police.

ACTION: What impact does Community Resolution have on reducing crime? How do Sussex compare nationally in terms of out-of-court disposal usage? Are Penalty Notices for Disorder and Fixed Penalty Notices an effective penalty? How many people do not pay the fines? Information to be shared with KB.

STOP AND SEARCH

Q. The recently published report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission highlighted that a disproportionately high number of stop and searches are carried out on black individuals in Sussex. Can you explain why this is so high in Sussex?

A) Is this apparent across all of Sussex or does it vary by geographical area?

B) What assurances can you provide me that every stop and search is justified and is likely to have a positive outcome in reducing crime?

C) What training is provided to officers in the powers of stop and search?

D) How frequently does this training take place?

GY reiterated that the power of stop and search is an effective tool for the police which engages with the public and increases police visibility. It was stated that the levels of black population in Sussex have reduced by approximately 10,000 from the 2001 Census which has affected the figures for the county and was the reason for the disproportionality being highlighted in Sussex.

GY explained that all new officers are provided with comprehensive stop and search training. Refreshed training is also available through Click Video on the Sussex Police Intranet to remind existing officers of their powers and responsibilities. It was also highlighted that supervisors should routinely monitor the use of stop and search powers by officers, including the development of action plans if any particular issues are identified. In addition, it was emphasised that a Stop & Search Panel meets every two months to review police activity and scrutinise the use of stop and search powers.

ACTION: How do Sussex Police check that officers have refreshed their training by watching the Click Videos? Information to be shared with KB.

CRIME & COMMUNITY SAFETY

20MPH ENFORCEMENT

Q) A large proportion of the correspondence received by the OSPCC relates to road safety and the enforcement of 20mph speed limits. Can you explain the approach that Sussex Police are taking to enforce these 20mph speed limits?

A) What can members of the public do if they are concerned about speeding vehicles in their area?

GY confirmed that Sussex Police continue to work together with the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership to improve road safety and reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads of Sussex through education, engineering and enforcement. The 20mph limits are designed to be self-enforcing and Sussex Police work with the local authority to monitor specific areas of concern.

GY concluded by stating that if members of the public are concerned about speeding vehicles in their area they can report this via Operation Crackdown, look at setting up a Community Speed Watch group in their area or raise this issue to officers at local street or panel meetings.

ACTION: How is the effectiveness of the Community Speed Watch scheme measured in Sussex? Information to be shared with KB.

RAPE DETECTION RATE

Q. It was highlighted at the December PAM that the detection rates for serious sexual offences, including rape, were low in Sussex, particularly in Brighton & Hove. What does the Force plan look like to increase the detection rate for rape?

A) What preventative initiatives have been introduced by Sussex Police to increase awareness and reduce the risk of individuals becoming the victim of a serious sexual offence?

B) What other measures can be introduced or changed to increase victim support and cooperation in terms of bringing these matters to court?

GY confirmed that rape and other serious sexual offences remain a high priority for Sussex Police. It was highlighted that a focussed plan for Brighton & Hove Division has been developed to review all active and undetected rape investigations. A Rape Detection Strategy has also been developed to improve performance forcewide.

GY acknowledged that there is a need to reduce the time taken to process victims through the criminal justice system. Investment in proposals to professionalise the service to victims is underway which includes dedicated safeguarding and investigation teams. GY also highlighted that Sussex Police are targeting perpetrators as well as heightening awareness to potential victims and providing prevention advice.

ACTION: Peter James' scripted video: "Rape – short word, long sentence" to be shared with KB.

VICTIM FOCUS

SATISFACTION

The Force measure user satisfaction through telephone surveys with victims of crime that are conducted independently. Can you explain how Sussex Police use the survey results to improve this user satisfaction?

A) I was very pleased to note that 94% of those surveyed were satisfied with the treatment that they received from Sussex Police. However, I am aware that satisfaction with police action and being kept informed have both reduced. What steps is the Force taking to keep victims of crime better informed?

GY explained that Sussex Police use the satisfaction survey results to compare their performance against time and to improve the experience of victims. This is done through the monitoring of trends, patterns and outliers. Any feedback received through the satisfaction surveys are shared with the officers directly to improve processes and procedures.

It was also highlighted that only 74% of victims are satisfied with the way that the Force has kept them informed and GY acknowledged that there are plans in place to improve these figures. This includes initiatives such as 60 second briefings which have been recognised nationally. The Citizen Focus Branch is also working closely with the districts with the lowest satisfaction rates for keeping people informed.

ACTION: How do Sussex Police judge the effectiveness of victim contracts? Information to be shared with KB.

OPERATION CRANBERRY

Q. 'Operation Cranberry' is the Sussex Police response to reports of domestic abuse over the Christmas and New Year period. How successful was this latest Operation?

A) How important is the use of the body-worn video cameras by officers to assist in securing vital evidence?

B) Are you able to tell if the number of repeat domestic abuse victims has reduced over this time?

C) How many domestic abuse crimes and incidents do you anticipate are not reported to the police?

GY stated that this is the fifth year that Operation Cranberry has been run by Sussex Police over the Christmas and New Year period. The dedicated patrols were in operation from 20 December 2013 to 1 January 2014 and vulnerable individuals were identified in advance to these patrols. There was a 9% increase in reporting over this period which equates to an additional five reports each day, in comparison to 2012. The increase could also be attributed to an increase in trust and confidence in the police.

GY reiterated that the use of body-worn video cameras by officers is very important to assist in securing vital evidence. National studies have indicated that a victim is likely to experience between 18 and 25 incidents of domestic abuse and violence before a report is made to the police. The British Crime Survey supports this and suggests that only every third crime is actually reported.

ACTION: What information do officers attending a domestic abuse scene provide to potential victims regarding support available from police and partners? How do officers judge whether leaving information about the "Talk to me" campaign would be a risk to a victim? Information to be shared with KB.

VALUE FOR MONEY

ESTATES STRATEGY

Q. In June, I unveiled a 5-year estates strategy. This is 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. Can you give me a further update on the progress made to date?

MB provided updates regarding the progress made against the estates strategy. It was highlighted that the underlying principle behind the strategy is to ensure the service, accessibility and visibility provided to the public is either maintained or improved regardless of any reductions to the estate and revenue costs.

MB confirmed that Sussex Police have already delivered significant change which supports the estates strategy and achieves both revenue savings and capital receipts. This has included that implementation of Community Hubs in Crawley and Barnham and the Public Contact Point at Hove Town Hall, together with the sale of Hove Police Station, Hickstead, Hurstpierpoint and Southbourne units. It was highlighted that most recently the Force has moved the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) and Public Contact Point out of Grove Road Police Station in Eastbourne in to 1a Grove Road, alongside Eastbourne Borough Council.

MB stated that Sussex Police are currently redeveloping the Hammonds Drive Operational Policing Base in Eastbourne. The work will be completed in July and includes an extensive site refurbishment. It was also highlighted that this will be the first operational site to incorporate Future Workplace principles. Other initiatives include:

- Working with Chichester District Council and Midhurst Leisure Centre to explore whether a dedicated police facility and shared Public Contact Point could be incorporated within the new Community Leisure Centre and Library Development;
- A refurbishment of Portslade Town Hall will house the local NPT (similar to the Community Hubs in Crawley and Barnham);
- A planning request has been submitted for Peacehaven Police Station to develop the site, whilst retaining space for the local NPT. The Force is also exploring the potential opportunity to make use of space within the town council too;
- Working with external consultants to look at the overall estates programme, together with completing more detailed plans for refurbishing Police Headquarters in Lewes and Brighton Police Station. Both will increase capacities and will enable the Force to exit from Sussex House, Hollingbury;
- Marketing a number of sites including Slaugham Manor and Grove Road, Eastbourne.

MB emphasised that moving forward the Force anticipate further sharing of premises with partners to deliver better customer service. This also builds on the achievements already realised at both the Hove and Eastbourne Public Contact Points. Sussex Police will also attempt to make more efficient use of buildings, reducing cellular offices and to provide the appropriate technology to allow people to do their job effectively. All of this will be done alongside changing the existing culture and established working practices.

RECRUITMENT

Q. I was pleased to be able open the recruitment process for police officers, PCSOs and special constables to increase the resources at your disposal. Can you provide me with a progress update for each of the processes?

A) How will you decide where to post these officers and staff?

B) What innovative roles are you looking for the Special Constables to perform?

MB provided progress updates for each of the recruitment processes:

PCSOs

The Force raised the bar in terms of standards with a particular emphasis on candidates who speak central/eastern European languages and received over 650 applications. 65 candidates were successful and have either now joined or will join in the spring. It was highlighted that the September cohort included three PCSOs who have eastern European language skills. Sussex Police have recently advertised again for PCSOs to fill the 2014 intakes, which has received over 600 applications and interviews are commencing shortly.

Police Officers

The Force received over 1,400 applications. An online paper sift reduced this number to 650 candidates who attended the national SEARCH assessment centres, followed by interviews, fitness tests, vetting and medical checks. MB confirmed that 40 new officers joined the Force in November 2013 and are currently being trained. A further 90 candidates enrolled on the Certificate of Knowledge in Policing (CKP) course and will form the pool for police officer intakes during 2014. A further 117 candidates will be interviewed in March and will form the cohort for the next CKP course in the summer.

Special Constables

Sussex Police launched the 'Would you do the right thing?' campaign in August 2013 have received over 1,000 applications to date. A cohort of 40 Special Constables started in November/December. There are currently 200 live applications which are at various stages of the recruitment process. These will form the basis of the cohorts during 2014. GY concluded by confirming that the Force is now constantly open for Special Constable applications.

GY also confirmed that Special Constables have traditionally been posted to NPT, with some supporting colleagues in response roles. However, it was emphasised that Special Constables are now working in much less 'conventional' roles.

7 are now posted to the Roads Policing Unit (with an additional 3 to be recruited in 2014). More than 20 have been trained in Police Support Unit (PSU) duties (Sussex Police are one of only three forces to have Specials trained at Level 2 PSU). 6 Specials are being trialled at Gatwick Airport to work alongside Gatwick NPT. Brighton & Hove Division has successfully set up a Man Hunt Unit using Special Constables, which is now being trialled on East and West Sussex.

The Force is also exploring roles for Special Constables in Child Protection, Hi-Tech Crime, Counter Terrorism, Licensing and Wildlife Crime (with 8 already trained). GY stated that Sussex Police, in collaboration with neighbouring forces, are also exploring the possibility of Special Constables that are trained in one force being deployed in other force areas.