

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING – YOUTH TAKEOVER DAY

DATE: 22 November 2013

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

PRESENT: Katy Bourne, Police & Crime Commissioner (KB)
Martin Richards, Chief Constable (MR)
Laurence Taylor, Superintendent (LT)
Tanya Jones, Temporary Detective Chief Inspector (TJ)
William Shears, East Sussex Youth Cabinet (WS)
Frankie Shaw-Velardo, West Sussex Youth Cabinet (FS-V)
Caitlin Nathan-Maister, Brighton & Hove Youth Council (CN-M)
Nikki Martin, West Sussex Youth Cabinet (NM)
Policy Officer Natacha Skelton – minutes
Executive Assistant Gina Wheatley

CN-M asked “what are the responsibilities of the Chief Constable?”

The Chief Constable is responsible for operational policing and the direction, command and control of his officers and staff (approximately 6,000). He is also responsible for a budget of over £250 million.

WS asked “how do you deal with anti-social behaviour and young people?”

LT stated that it is a fine balance between young people being young people and anti-social behaviour and there is a danger of criminalising young people. The media also portrays the wrong image of young people at times. There are specific Neighbourhood Policing Teams that go out on a Friday and Saturday night to engage with young people. There are also dedicated operations that target and address this behaviour, without criminalising it.

WS stated that Police Constable Kate Brookman, Neighbourhood Schools Officer, visiting schools is particularly beneficial.

LT informed the meeting that Sussex Police is one of the few forces in the country that has Neighbourhood Schools Officers and that he would like all officers to be comfortable talking to young people.

WS asked “are officers given specific training?”

LT stated that there is specific training given to officers with regards to prevention, enforcement and engagement.

TJ also stated that officers attend events such as Fresher’s Week.

NM asked “how has having a Police & Crime Commissioner affected the job of the police?”

TJ confirmed that having a Commissioner has been very positive because the police are now more aware of the issues that affect the public. The Commissioner provides a direct link between the police and the public which helps to ensure that resources are focussed efficiently and effectively.

MR stated that the Commissioner provides a more neutral perspective with a greater focus on the public. The Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account for delivering effective, efficient and responsive operational policing that responds to the needs of the public. Transparent scrutiny has been demonstrated by the Commissioner through these PAMs, including looking at topical local issues, such as the policing of the anti-fracking protestors at Balcombe earlier in the year. The Commissioner also provides the public with a single point of contact which is very different from the Sussex Police Authority, which was made up of 17 individual members.

LT stated that as a public service there is now a lot more clarity by having an elected Commissioner responsible for scrutinising the performance of the police.

FS-V asked "what is the most challenging aspect of your job Chief Constable?"

MR responded by stating that the most challenging aspect of his role as Chief Constable is to maintain performance with less money available. Dealing with the public can also be challenging but is the most exciting part of the job because it is tough not knowing what the next call will be.

FS-V asked "has anything been learnt from the policing of the anti-fracking protest?"

MR confirmed that lessons had been learnt from the policing of the anti-fracking protests and that Sussex Police are doing a road show to share these lessons.

CN-M asked "are anti-loitering devices still used by the Force?"

LT confirmed that these devices were used in the past but are not any longer.

WS asked "what are the police doing about cyber-crime?"

MR informed the group that cyber-crime is a top priority for the Force.

TJ stated that Police Constables go into schools and talk about bullying. There is a lot of education based around bullying, grooming and exploitation. Sussex Police also has a Facebook account with over 3,000 followers.

WS asked "is bullying illegal?"

LT confirmed that bullying is a form of harassment and needs to be reported.

NM asked "what is your opinion of the Youth Commission, Chief Constable?"

MR stated that a Youth Commission is very useful because it is made of representatives from a hard to reach group of people. Young people also account for a large number of victims and witnesses and are the future of policing.

FS-V asked "what is the most enjoyable part of your jobs?"

MR responded by stating that he enjoys being directly involved in police operations. He occasionally gets to take an active role too, which included being directly involved with the planning for the recent visit of the Queen to Sussex.

LT confirmed that he loves all aspects of the job and neighbourhood policing in particular. This is because he can make a tangible difference to communities.

TJ stated that she enjoys pulling everything together to solve crimes as a detective.

CN-M asked "should all drugs be decriminalised?"

LT responded by stating that drugs should not be decriminalised because even lower class drugs, such as cannabis, can cause harm.

CN-M asked "what are Sussex police doing to tackle the rise in legal highs?"

TJ confirmed that increased efforts are being made in terms of education.

MR stated that Sussex Police are working closely with other agencies to ensure that retailers do not sell them.

LT also stated that partnerships are working together to put pressure on politicians about how harmful these legal highs can be.

WS asked "what are Sussex Police doing to assist young people that are concerned about being a victim or witness at court?"

TJ confirmed that there are special measures that can be used when young people go to court, including video link evidence.

WS asked "how do Sussex Police encourage young people to report crime?"

LT confirmed that there are dedicated pages on the Sussex Police website devoted to young people.

KB stated that this is something that Sussex Police can look at specifically with the Youth Commission.

NM asked "do Sussex Police get a lot of school leavers when they recruit?"

MR confirmed that Sussex Police gets a mixture. The minimum age is 18 and the Force look for a combination of experience, judgment and good morals.

FS asked "why do Sussex Police listen to young people?"

MR stated that young people have good ideas and should be listened to.

FS-V asked "what can young people offer the police?"

LT acknowledged that young people offer valuable insight and perspective.

WS asked "do you think that Sussex Police are viewed negatively by the public?"

MR responded by stating that 'a good referee is one you do not notice!'

CN-M asked "what career path did you all take?"

MR stated that he went to Bristol University and studied Law.

LT informed the group that he went to Durham University.

TJ confirmed that she went to Bristol University and studied History.

KB thanked everyone for taking part in the Youth Takeover Day and made special mention to Police Constable, Kate Brookman for her assistance throughout.