

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 15 November 2019

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

PRESENT: Police & Crime Commissioner – Katy Bourne OBE (KB)
Chief Executive Officer – Mark Streater (MS)
Chief Constable – Giles York (GY)
Deputy Chief Constable – Jo Shiner (JS)
Digital Content Manager– Sammi Carwardine (audio recording)
Head of Performance – Graham Kane (retrospective minutes)

OPERATION UPLIFT – POLICE OFFICER RECRUITMENT UPDATE

In July 2019, the Prime Minister announced that 20,000 new police officers would be recruited throughout England and Wales over the next three years.

A. Last month (October), the Policing Minister confirmed that 6,000 of these officers would be recruited by the end of 2020/21 and that Sussex Police would be allocated 129 of these additional officers. What impact will this allocation have on the recruitment that is already progressing on the back of the increase to the policing part of the Council Tax for 2019/20?

B. The Chancellor recently announced a new funding pot of £45.1m to support the recruitment of an additional 2,000 officers by 31 March 2020. How do you plan to spend the Sussex allocation before the March 2020 deadline?

C. In respect of police staff, what key changes have there been in recent months and how have these been communicated to the workforce?

GY reiterated that Sussex Police is continuing to grow the size of the organisation and that this growth will positively increase the number of police officers available in Sussex. The increases to police officer numbers confirm that the Force is recruiting faster than it is losing officers through natural wastage (leavers, transferees and retirements), as follows:

<i>November 2018:</i>	<i>2,529 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) police officers</i>
<i>March 2019:</i>	<i>2,610 FTE police officers</i>
<i>October 2019:</i>	<i>2,649 FTE police officers</i>
<i>March 2020:</i>	<i>2,725 FTE police officers (forecasted)</i>

FTE is based on an officer working a 40 hour week and does not equate to headcount.

It was also emphasised Sussex Police recruited an additional 36 officers in October 2019, over and above the existing plans in place, to meet the requirement to recruit an additional 250 police officers by March 2023, following the decision to increase the policing part of the Council Tax in 2019/20. These officers are currently going through their initial training and will graduate to Independent Patrol after 15 weeks of training.

In December 2019, Sussex Police will welcome the first cohort of 'Apprentice Police Constables' and, after successfully completing the course, these officers will graduate with a degree. It was emphasised that these individuals will be employed on a three-year probation period instead of the standard two-year probation period employed by all police forces areas in England and Wales.

GY explained that he was confident Sussex Police would be able to spend the £618,836 allocated to the Force from the new funding pot. It was emphasised that the vast majority of this funding will be used to pay for police officer salaries. The significant progress that Sussex Police has made in terms of recruiting 242 new police officers in the past 12 months means that further funding might need to be requested from the Chancellor.

The Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police needs to grow the number of police staff employed within the organisation in order to be able to accommodate, support and train the new police officer posts. It was also recognised that many of the new police officers have been recruited from civilian posts within the Force.

In addition, it was highlighted that Sussex Police is "on track" to increase the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) by 100 (from 186) to 286 before 31 March 2020. Last month, Sussex Police also changed the PCSO model in Sussex to provide every community throughout the county with at least one named PCSO. By inputting a postcode (at www.police.uk) members of the public can find out who the named PCSO is for the geographic area where they live – some areas will have more than one.

It was emphasised that the Force is working hard to reach out to under-represented groups as part of these recruitment uplifts to try and reflect better the communities of Sussex by increasing the proportion of female, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) individuals within Sussex Police.

GY concluded by encouraging anyone who is interested in a career in policing to visit the Sussex Police website to find out more about becoming a police officer, staff or PCSO. This includes transferees from other police force areas and those who have previously been in the police service and left. Further information can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/police-forces/sussex-police/areas/ca/careers>

OPERATION PEEL – POLICING OF THE BONFIRE CELEBRATIONS

The UK's biggest bonfire night celebrations took place in Lewes on Tuesday, 5 November 2019. Operation Peel was the Sussex Police response to support the bonfire societies and ensure public safety.

A. How have you reflected on the event?

B. Can you tell me how many arrests were made by Sussex Police and how many individuals were treated for injuries by the South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAMB) and St. John Ambulance?

C. How effective were the multi-agency partnership working arrangements in place?

JS began by thanking the vast majority of the members of the public who attended the bonfire night celebrations in Lewes and other areas in Sussex last week for doing so in a safe and sensible manner.

The Deputy Chief Constable reflected positively on the event in Lewes on Tuesday, 5 November 2019 and confirmed that an estimated 25,000 people packed into the town to watch more than 30 processions and firework displays. It was emphasised that the resources used to police the event were proportionate to the number of police officers, staff and PCSOs used for last year's celebrations.

Sussex Police made 9 arrests over the course of the evening for a number of different and minor offences. It was also emphasised that SECAMB and St. John Ambulance treated approximately 55 individuals for minor injuries, with a number of these medical episodes relating to non-bonfire-related injuries.

The success of the celebrations was attributed to well-rehearsed and extensive multi-agency planning and partnership working to ensure that public safety was prioritised. These partners included: Sussex Police, bonfire societies, Lewes District Council, East Sussex County Council, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS), SECAMB, St. John Ambulance, British Transport Police and Southern Rail.

The formal multi-agency and Force-led debriefs are scheduled to take place shortly, including looking at any feedback received from members of the public and partner agencies, before the planning for the policing of the bonfire night celebrations in 2020 commences.

MODERN SLAVERY

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 created the role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC) to encourage the identification of victims and good practice in the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of modern slavery offences.

- A. Are you confident that modern slavery and human trafficking is treated as serious organised crime in Sussex?**
- B. Has there been an increase in the number of modern slavery crimes recorded in Sussex in recent years?**
- C. The IASC expressed concerns about the apparent reduction in the number of offenders being referred to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for charging advice or a decision. This is anticipated to result in fewer prosecutions and convictions in the coming years. What is the position in Sussex?**
- D. Last month, the IASC published her Strategic Plan for 2019/21 which identified four priorities for tackling modern slavery. How will the Force support these priority areas in Sussex?**
- E. Further to the bodies of 39 people found in a lorry container in Essex last month, can you explain what the difference between 'human trafficking' and 'human smuggling' is?**
- F. Are you using the full range of powers in the Modern Slavery Act to tackle the criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults as they are trafficked along county lines?**
- G. Do police officers in Sussex have the right expert advice and support to help them to investigate modern slavery and human trafficking and present strong cases to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)?**

JS confirmed that modern slavery and human trafficking offences are treated as serious organised crime in Sussex. It was acknowledged that both of these offences are often "hidden in plain sight" which is contributing to a significant under-reporting in this area.

This under-reporting is attributed to individuals either not having the trust and confidence to come forward to report these offences in the first instance or being fearful of authority, dependent of the country they may have been trafficked from. It is also understood that some victims might not even know how or who to report these crimes to. The challenges for Sussex Police include making police officers, staff, PCSOs and members of the public better at identifying these offences (even if they might not be immediately obvious), ensuring that detectives have ownership for investigating any reported offences and to continue to encourage victims of these crimes to report these to the police service. This includes supporting reluctant witnesses to come forward and safeguarding them from harm when they do.

The Deputy Chief Constable explained that modern slavery forms part of the Force's control strategy which directs police action, activity and resource in this area. Performance is monitored by the Serious Crime Command through the Tactical Tasking and Co-ordinating Group (TTCG) to look at ongoing investigations, whether any opportunities have been missed and the relationships that exist between other supporting agencies.

It was highlighted that the number of modern slavery crimes recorded in Sussex increased by 111% from 73 in 2017/18 to 154 in 2018/19. Changes to the recording requirements in 2019/20 have made the recording of these offences more complex than previously but, despite these changes, 183 modern slavery offences have already been recorded during 2019/20 to date. These increases were recognised to be "positive" by Sussex Police and were attributed to both an improvement in the identification of these offences and the accurate recording of crime.

JS confirmed that Sussex Police had experienced a small increase in the number of offenders referred to the CPS from 6 in 2017/18 to 8 in 2018/19. These numbers are still acknowledged to be low and the Force is working "really hard" to improve performance in this area and increase these numbers further still. Encouraging victims to support prosecutions, together with the length of time it takes a case to get to trial and the lag-effect of any subsequent convictions, are all contributing factors to these small numbers. This performance was recognised to be consistent with the number of offenders referred to the CPS in other police force areas throughout England and Wales.

The Deputy Chief Constable explained that any identified victims of modern slavery offences in Sussex are referred to the national support mechanism, Rescue and Response (R&R), via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs), to ensure that victims of these crimes receive "expert" support. It was acknowledged that Sussex Police use these arrangements effectively but recognised the importance of ensuring that victims of modern slavery offences are safeguarded and that the Force is tackling offenders at a regional, national and international level was highlighted to be as equally important as referring offenders to the CPS.

JS explained that the Force has plans in place to address the four priority areas for tackling modern slavery set out in the IASC's Strategic Plan: improving victim care and support; supporting law enforcement and prosecutions; focusing on prevention and getting value from research and innovation. The Force is primarily focussing on the first two of these areas, as follows:

- ✓ **Improving victim care and support:** Sussex Police has established a 'Victim Navigator' post to ensure that every victim of modern slavery is appropriately assessed. This position is fully-funded by Justice and Care – a national charity that rescues victims of slavery and human trafficking. The Force has secured a dedicated 'safe-house' to provide victims with a safe and secure environment to confide in the police. Sussex Police has also invested in dedicated modern slavery staff, partnership working and improvements to the learning, training and provisions made available to local authorities in respect of this area.*
- ✓ **Supporting law enforcement and prosecutions:** The Force has introduced a three-day 'Specialist Investigator' course that has already enhanced the ability of 25 detectives to present better the cases being referred to the CPS. The introduction of an improved modern slavery package for new detectives, providing bespoke inputs to investigation hubs and raising awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking offences to all frontline police officers, staff and PCSOs (including new recruits) are other initiatives Sussex police has introduced in this area.*

Clarification was provided that human smuggling relates to "the facilitation of clandestine non-European Union migrants into the United Kingdom (UK) with no leave to enter or remain" and is an offence under the Immigration Act. Human trafficking relates to "the recruitment or the facilitated transport of a person with a view to their exploitation" and is an offence under the Modern Slavery Act that is not dependent on the nationality of the victim or the involvement of a UK border. It was emphasised that whilst these are distinct offences, they can run in parallel at different times during the process.

The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police explores and uses the full range of powers and safeguarding opportunities available to them as set out in the Acts, taking the unique circumstances of each offence and the number of victims into account. KB was reassured to note that this activity is monitored through the Local Policing Board, TTCG and Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Board.

It was recognised that the following activities could all contribute to improvements in this area, including: the identification of an increased number of victims (either through discovery or individuals coming forward to report modern slavery offences); improving the awareness of members of the public and working closer with partner agencies to present strong cases to the CPS to secure a greater number of prosecutions and convictions.

SEXUAL OFFENCE INVESTIGATION TRAINED OFFICERS AND STAFF

Last September (2018), Sussex Police established a new team of 22 Sexual Offence Investigation Trained (SOIT) police officers and staff to support victims of rape and serious sexual assaults throughout a criminal investigation.

- A. Can you explain how the SOIT team support victims of these offences?**
- B. Has the introduction of the SOIT officers contributed to an improvement in the quality of the evidence and cases presented to the CPS?**
- C. Have the solved rates for rapes and serious sexual assaults in Sussex improved as a result of the SOIT officers?**
- D. How do you measure the effectiveness of the SOIT officers?**
- E. Are there any plans to expand the size of the SOIT team further?**

GY explained that early engagement, wherever possible, with victims of rapes and serious sexual assaults is essential to ensure that these individuals can be supported appropriately.

The establishment of a dedicated team of SOIT officers and staff in 2018 has enabled the Force to support victims through the traumatic first contact with the police and to provide them with the confidence to assist the Force with the investigation and any subsequent prosecution through the courts. This improved consistency includes making the same SOIT officer available to victims throughout the process, from initial reporting and investigation to court proceedings and beyond. This approach endeavours to put the victim at the heart of everything that Sussex Police does in this respect.

The Chief Constable confirmed that whilst it is difficult to ascertain whether the introduction of the SOIT officers has contributed to an improvement in the quality of the evidence and cases presented to the CPS, the experience of victims, in terms of providing this evidence, is recognised to have been enhanced.

Sussex Police uses the Achieving Best Evidence mechanism to interview victims and, rather than the traditional methods of interview, this approach aims to make victims feel as comfortable and confident as possible in order to gather the traumatic details of the offences they may have suffered. The consistency of this relationship between the victim and the SOIT officer may also help them to illicit more information from them than might otherwise have been possible. This approach is contributing towards reducing the investigative workload for detectives within the Specialist Investigation Units (SIUs) and is resulting in improved case files being presented to the CPS.

It was emphasised that to infer that the solved rates for rapes and serious sexual assaults in Sussex have improved as a direct result of the introduction of the SOIT officers "over-simplifies" the complexities of investigating these types of offences. Instead, the progressively increasing number of reports of rapes and serious sexual assaults per day in Sussex, increasing from 2.3 in 2014 to 4.8 in 2019, is regarded as a positive by the Force and is attributed to an improvement in the confidence of members of the public to report these offences to the police, rather than an actual increase in offending. These figures are in line with the reports made to other police force areas across England and Wales. KB requested a breakdown of the gender of the victims of rapes and serious sexual assaults in Sussex.

The SOIT officers are recognised to be fundamentally important in terms of continuing this increase in reporting. The effectiveness of the SOIT officers is monitored through the joint Sussex Police and CPS Performance Board to understand better what the quality of the case files and prosecutions look like. Other measurements include the Force having two Detective Inspectors embedded within the CPS to monitor file quality before they are submitted for decision and the provision of office space within John Street Police Station (in Brighton) for CPS to utilise to improve collaboration in this area.

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The Chief Constable confirmed that in addition to the aforementioned successes of the SOIT team a "strong business case" exists to increase the capacity and capability of the officers and staff by expanding the team further still and that any additional investment raised through the precept in 2020/21 would be invested into this area.

ACTION: KB requested a breakdown of the gender of the victims of rapes and serious sexual assaults in Sussex.

101 – NON-EMERGENCY CALL HANDLING TIMES

I remain pleased with the steadily improving picture for the non-emergency call handling times to the 101 telephone number.

A. Can you provide me with a further update in this area?

B. How is the investment and recruitment progressing within the Force Contact Command and Control Department?

JS began by recognising the contribution that the teams (past and present) within the Force Contact Command and Control Centre (FCCCC) have had in terms of improving the way that the Force is able to service the needs of members of the public.

All telephone calls received by Sussex Police are answered within seconds by the Switchboard before they are triaged in line with the Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) decision-making model. At this point, if the call is not an emergency and it cannot be resolved immediately, it is transferred to the non-emergency number for response. This is the stage of the process where members of the public have previously experienced delays.

Across the month of September 2019, it took an average of 7 minutes and 31 seconds to answer the 29,253 calls that were offered to the non-emergency number, in comparison to the same month in 2018 when it took an average of 17 minutes and 57 seconds to answer the same calls. This performance was maintained across October 2019 with the 28,957 calls offered answered within 7 minutes and 48 seconds, compared to 20 minutes and 23 seconds for the same month last year. The increase of 17 seconds from September to October 2019 is attributed to staff vacating the FCCCC for 24 hours to take part in a planned training exercise.

There has also been a "significant" improvement in the number of abandoned calls across both of these months in comparison to last year too. It was highlighted that 22.5% of all calls were abandoned in September 2019 (compared to 48.0% in September 2018) and 22.4% of all calls were abandoned in October 2019 (compared to 50.7% in October 2018). This improved performance meant that the FCCCC was able to answer 6,510 more calls in September 2019 (or 217 more calls a day) and 7,502 more calls in October 2019 (or 242 more calls a day), compared to the same months in the previous year. The reduced call handling times and improvements to abandoned calls is providing members of the public with greater accessibility to Sussex Police.

It was emphasised that the Force now receives the third highest number of enquiries of 'non-voice' demand (including emails, webforms and online reports) through the Single Online Home (SOH), behind only the Metropolitan Police Service and Greater Manchester Police. The 36,195 non-voice demand enquiries received through the SOH across the months of September and October 2019 was recognised to be an encouraging shift in demand and enables Sussex Police to manage better their demand in a more intelligent manner.

The Deputy Chief Constable concluded by confirming that recruitment to the FCCCC is progressing well and that the Force is "on track" to fill the planned establishment of 205 FTE posts by 31 March 2020.

ACTION: KB asked what the establishment and strength levels were for the FCCCC as at 31 March 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

ECONOMIC CRIME

A joint Sussex and Surrey Police Economic Crime Unit (ECU) exists to protect individuals from the impact of financial crime, investigate offences and prosecute offenders. Tactical and strategic advice and assistance in this area is also provided by the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU) and National Crime Agency (NCA).

A. Can you outline the different ways of recovering money gained through criminality?

B. Last year, the SEROCU set up Operation Climate to disrupt and remove the profit from serious and organised crime across the South East region. How does this civil process differ from a criminal prosecution?

C. How much has Sussex Police recovered through the Proceeds of Crime Act in the past three years?

D. How effectively are other investigative powers being used by the SEROCU?

GY explained that there are a "myriad" of different ways to recover money gained through criminality. Some of the more prominent methods include: confiscation orders; cash forfeiture orders and account freezing orders. Forfeiture through the Misuse of Drugs Act and sentencing through the Powers of Criminal Courts Act are two other methods used. The Force has also recovered more than £800,000 from their eBay site which auctions off stolen and lost property where the owner cannot be identified.

The Chief Constable went on to explain a few of the differences between the powers set out in the Proceeds of Crime Act, as follows:

Confiscation Orders: *This is awarded by a Crown Court during the prosecution of an individual through a criminal trial. If a criminal conviction is secured, a confiscation order can be granted. A confiscation order is a criminal action set against the level of benefit gained through criminality. The amount for each confiscation order is calculated by adding up the total value of the funds gained through criminal activity (both assets and/or cash seized). At the same time, an 'available amount' can also be declared that can be confiscated immediately. If the available amount is less than the confiscation order given, then the remaining balance stays with the individuals for the rest of their lives.*

Cash Forfeiture Orders: *This is not about prosecuting an individual and, instead, simply focusses on the cash seized. No criminal conviction in court is required for a cash forfeiture to be awarded providing that the civil burden of proof has been met that the cash was gained as a result of criminal activity or is intended for it. It was also emphasised that a cash forfeiture order can run alongside a criminal investigation.*

Account Freezing Orders: *This order, again, focusses on the money seized rather than the individual and involves the further investigation of a balance(s) in a bank account that is more than £1,000 in value. If any suspicious activity is suspected then the account(s) can be frozen and a cash forfeiture order applied for.*

All of the money received through POCA is sent to central Government for reallocation. This is apportioned between Her Majesty's Treasury and the three law enforcement agencies – Sussex Police, CPS and Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) – on a 50/50 basis to strengthen their capacity to tackle this criminality.

For confiscation orders, this 50% allocation is then split into thirds, as follows:

- *One third to the agency responsible for the collection of the monies – HMCTS;*
- *One third to the prosecuting authority – Crown Prosecution Service (CPS); and*
- *One third to the Financial Investigators – Sussex Police.*

For cash forfeiture orders and account freezing orders, the money is shared equally between Her Majesty's Treasury and Sussex Police on a 50/50 basis.

The Chief Constable explained that one of the greatest differences between a criminal prosecution and a civil process is that a criminal prosecution needs to be proven "beyond reasonable doubt", whereas a civil process only needs to be proven on the "balance of probabilities".

It was highlighted that Sussex Police is making good use of the regional assets available to them through the SEROCU – a police unit responsible for delivering specialist and niche capabilities to Hampshire Constabulary, Surrey Police, Sussex Police and Thames Valley Police. It was also emphasised that Sussex Police has made 18 referrals under Operation Climate – an intelligence-led operation to develop the use of account freezing orders – of which 9 of these have been taken on by the SEROCU.

GY confirmed that over the past three years, Sussex Police has been awarded orders amounting to £7.9 million, of which a total of £6.1 million has been recovered, with a further £2.7 million still outstanding for recovery. The different methods of recovery and the timescales in place for each make calculating these totals accurately a more difficult task. It was highlighted that the money that is returned from Her Majesty's Treasury to Sussex Police is split equally between the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner and the Force. These funds are used to support initiatives in the communities that either help reduce or prevent crime in Sussex, including the Community Safety Fund. Further information can be viewed through the following link: <https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/apply-for-funding/>. The money recovered is also used to enhance further the capacity and capability of Sussex Police to carry out these financial investigations.

It was recognised that the SEROCU is utilising effectively the suspicious activity reports, defence against money laundering reports and account freezing orders available to them. These investigative powers are recognised to assist the Force in its response to the financial industry when any anomalies or irregularities are identified and to protect better any vulnerable victims. Assurances were provided to KB that the returns from the SEROCU are distributed as evenly as possible between the four police force areas and that no obvious disproportionality exists. Performance in this area is monitored at quarterly SEROCU meetings attended by both KB and GY.