

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 13 December 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 (minutes)

CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in the South East Area is responsible for prosecuting cases in Sussex, Surrey and Kent.

- A. For the benefit of the viewers, what is the National File Standard (NFS)?**
- B. The Chief Crown Prosecutor for the South East has raised concerns about the quality of the files submitted to the CPS. What measures has the Force put in place to ensure that the quality of files submitted meet the NFS?**
- C. A recently published article in The Telegraph highlighted that “rape victims are eight times more likely to get justice in some areas of the country than others” and evidenced a “huge decline in charging rates” across all 43 police force areas in England and Wales.” What is the position in Sussex?**
- D. At last month’s PAM, it was highlighted that the Sexual Offence Investigation Trained (SOIT) police officers and staff are contributing towards reduced workloads for Specialist Investigation Units. How resilient are these units?**
- E. How many vacancies are being held on the Specialist Investigation Units?**
- F. What impact are the vacancies having on the Specialist Investigation Units?**

GY confirmed that the NFS is a national system that sets out how case files should be prepared as an investigation progresses. It allows investigators to iteratively build files with as much information as is required at any given stage – whether that is for advice, first appearance or trial.

The NFS is set by the Attorney General and is the most efficient way of ensuring that information is prepared only when it is necessary, preventing wasted effort. The staged approach also means that much of the paperwork may have already been completed by the time the investigation is complete, leaving less to do at that stage and preventing duplication of effort. Files that are prepared to the NFS provide the court, prosecution and defence with all the information that is necessary to progress the case.

The Chief Constable explained that Sussex Police takes the NFS “very seriously” and that he regularly meets with the Chief Crown Prosecutor to discuss this. Positive engagement with the CPS also includes consistent two-way feedback when the Force has not met the NFS to understand better whether any gaps exist in the system or which parts of the process can be improved at the earliest possible opportunity. It was acknowledged that further work is still required in this area.

It was emphasised that a forcewide Gold Group, chaired by Assistant Chief Constable Julia Chapman, was established six months ago to improve the quality of files submitted. The CPS has been invited to become more involved in the file quality monitoring process to ensure that justice is routinely able to be delivered for victims of crime in Sussex and a joint action plan between the Force and the CPS has been created.

It was highlighted that the CPS has informed the Force that improvements in direction compliance have been noted for both the Magistrates' Courts and Crown Courts. GY explained that Crown Court direction compliance rates have improved from 79% in 2017 to 92% in 2019, with conviction rates at 77%.

In respect of the recently published article, GY explained that the highest performing police force area was North Yorkshire (with a charge rate of 14.2%) and the lowest charge rate was 1.6% in Kent. Reassurance was provided to KB that whilst Sussex has experienced a similar reduction to the other areas in England and Wales, the Force appears in the middle of the table with a charge rate of 6.1%. The Chief Constable confirmed that there has been a significant increase in the recording of serious sexual offences and rapes. It was highlighted that some of these relate to historical offences in the context of domestic abuse and that, in certain circumstances, a charge or prosecution is not always the most appropriate outcome for the victim. The full range of out-of-court disposals available will always be considered.

Sussex Police is working closely with the CPS to improve the charge rates for these offences. This includes receiving "early investigative advice" from the CPS that provides further guidance and instruction, over and above the NFS. The CPS is "really positive" about working with Sussex Police in this way and continues to encourage individual officers to take advantage of this advice when screening case files. This work develops further the monitoring arrangements already in place after Sussex Police previously embedded a Detective Inspector post within the CPS to look at file quality before these are submitted for decision. The provision of office space for CPS staff to use within John Street Police Station (in Brighton) has improved collaboration in this area too by enhancing the face-to-face communication that exists between both organisations.

Working in the Specialist Investigation Units (SIUs) requires significant training in order to ensure that individuals have the professional knowledge, capacity and capability required to respond to the demanding and emotive work they are responsible for. The Chief Constable expressed concern about the resilience of those that work in the SIUs because of the type of work (for which enhanced wellbeing measures are in place to support and protect these individuals), resourcing levels (because of the challenging nature of the work) and workloads (which are significant and continue to increase).

It was recognised that investment has been made in the Public Protection capability of the Force in recent years as a result of the money raised by increases to the police precept. This has included growth in the Paedophile On-Line Investigation Team, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs, Violent Sexual Offenders Register and Safeguarding teams.

The SIUs are currently understrength across each of the three policing divisions – this is in line with national shortages and difficulties attracting detectives. The Force has attempted to mitigate this shortfall by paying detectives more money on completion of the National Investigator Exam (NIE), recompensing those detectives who work in SIU with enhanced salaries in recognition of it being a difficult place to work and encouraging transferee detectives from other police force areas in England and Wales. In addition, the Force is using Professionalising Investigations Programme (PIP) 1 and 2 Investigators to assist with the day-to-day workload of the SIUs. The Force is considering changing 'Investigations' back to 'Criminal Investigations Department' to improve the attractiveness of working in this particular policing function too.

Sussex Police has also sort to improve the attractiveness of being a detective by running a dedicated campaign to target serving police officers and supporting them through the next NIE process in March 2020. It was confirmed that 60 officers are scheduled to take their detective exams next year and whilst this will not fill all the outstanding vacancies within the SIUs, it will have a positive impact on resource levels by summer 2020. This area will continue to remain a priority for the Force.

ACTION: KB would like to know what the improvement looks like for Magistrates' Courts in respect of court direction compliance.

OPERATION RIBBON – DOMESTIC ABUSE CAMPAIGN 2019

'Operation Ribbon', the dedicated Sussex Police response to reports of domestic abuse, commenced on 18 November and ran for three weeks until 10 December 2019. The campaign focussed on coercive and controlling behaviour in a domestic context.

- A. What was the rationale for running this campaign earlier in the year?**
- B. What are some of the key challenges for Sussex Police in respect of coercive and controlling behaviour?**
- C. How have you reflected on this latest campaign?**
- D. Earlier this year, HMICFRS published a report that considered the response the police service provides to victims of domestic abuse. It was recognised that an "extremely varied use" of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) existed throughout England and Wales. What monitoring arrangements are in place in Sussex around the use of DVPOs?**
- E. Clare's Law was introduced to provide individuals or third parties with the opportunity to request information about an individual for the purposes of protecting a potential victim from domestic violence. Is this safeguard something that continues to be widely used in Sussex?**

The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that domestic abuse remains a key focus and priority for Sussex Police throughout the calendar year. Operation Ribbon was launched earlier than it has been in previous years to coincide with other campaigns, including: International Men's Day (19 November) and White Ribbon Day (25 November), together with its associated '16 Days of Action'. It was highlighted that domestic abuse is not always physical, and the aim of the campaign was to raise awareness of coercive and controlling behaviour.

Coercive control was first recognised in law as a form of domestic abuse in 2015 and is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation, intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten a victim. This controlling behaviour is designed to make a person dependent by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence and regulating their everyday behaviour. It can create a deep sense of fear that affects all elements of a person's life, making it incredibly hard for people to have the confidence to break free of this sort of abusive relationship.

It was emphasised that often people who experience coercive and controlling behaviour do not recognise that they are victims of domestic abuse because they are conditioned and manipulated to accept this as normal and acceptable behaviour within a relationship. The difficulties getting victims to understand the cumulative effect of this type of behaviour and the importance of publicising the different ways for victims to contact Sussex Police, third parties or charities to report these offences were highlighted.

Sussex Police has seen an increase in the number of reports of domestic abuse crimes and incidents, including 3,213 additional offences recorded in the rolling year period to 30 November 2019, in comparison to the same period in 2018. The improvements in recording are attributed to police officers and staff recognising these offences better when deployed to calls and a greater awareness of potential victims and the safeguarding arrangements required.

JS reiterated that Sussex Police take their safeguarding responsibilities "very seriously" and always endeavour to leave a victim in a safer position than when contact was first made. Sussex Police is using DVPOs as a matter of routine and compare favourably to the numbers issued by other police force areas in England and Wales. The DVPOs remain subject to regular monitoring arrangements at the Domestic Abuse Operational Group, with additional oversight provided by the Police Effectiveness Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Board to ensure that proportionate use exists in the right circumstances.

It was also emphasised that clear processes and procedures are in place regarding the police response to any breaches of DVPOs. This includes reassessing the case, identifying any further offences that may have been committed and considering whether any additional safeguarding is required for the victim.

It was highlighted that Clare's Law, otherwise known as the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme (DADS), was introduced across England and Wales in March 2014 to provide individuals or third parties with the opportunity to request specific information about an individual for the purposes of protecting a potential victim from domestic violence.

The Deputy Chief Constable Confirmed that Clare's Law is used appropriately by Sussex Police with each request for information considered on its own merits. The Force has received 286 applications across the rolling year period to 30 September 2019 and has made 119 disclosures, with a further 17 applications still being considered. This equates to 42% of all data requested under DADS being disclosed. In comparison, only 65 requests were received throughout 2015, of which 26 disclosures (40%) were made. The increased number of requests are attributed to improved public awareness of DADS through greater publicity and promotion of the Scheme. Further information about making a request under Clare's Law can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/daa/domestic-abuse/alpha/request-information-under-clares-law/>

Domestic abuse can be reported to Sussex Police online or by calling 101 or 999 in an emergency. Further information, support and advice about domestic abuse can be viewed through the following link: **<https://www.sussex.police.uk/domesticabuse>**

ACTION: KB requested a breakdown of the number of reports of domestic abuse crimes and incidents by week in 2019/20.

ACTION: KB requested the number of Domestic Violence Protection Order breaches in 2019/20.

ACTION: KB requested some comparative information about the number of applications and subsequent disclosures made under Clare's Law in Sussex and its Most Similar Group of police forces since it was introduced in March 2014.

OPERATION DRAGONFLY – DRINK-AND-DRUG-DRIVE CAMPAIGN 2019

'Operation Dragonfly', the dedicated Sussex Police drink-and-drug-drive campaign, will launch next week.

A. What are the aims and objectives of Operation Dragonfly this year?

B. Drink-and-drug-driving is regarded as one of the 'fatal four' by the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership. How will the Partnership support this campaign?

C. How can members of the public with any specific concerns about individuals they suspect of drink-or-drug-driving report these to Sussex Police?

The Deputy Chief Constable reminded viewers that Operation Dragonfly is part of rolling programme of campaigns that are implemented by the Force 365 days a year, throughout the calendar year, to tackle drink-and-drug-driving in Sussex.

The campaign will begin on Wednesday, 18 December 2019 in the lead up to Christmas and New Year celebrations, and will run until 1 January 2020, inclusive. The aims and objectives of Operation Dragonfly are to:

- *target the irresponsible and dangerous drivers on the roads of Sussex and to reduce the number of individuals killed or seriously injured;*
- *protect other road users from the harm caused by those who choose to drink-and-drug-drive; and*
- *raise public awareness of the enforcement activity taking place in Sussex.*

It was highlighted that the campaign is being run in conjunction with the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and DriveSmart in Surrey. The campaign will comprise of a significant amount of activity, including: high-visibility, covert and unmarked patrols; targeting areas and roads that drink-and-drug drivers may use; road safety messages and encouraging intelligence reports from members of the public. This additional activity will provide the Force with an enhanced proactive capability to maximise the possibility of catching those individuals who are drink-and-drug-driving with the aim to reduce the number of individuals killed or seriously injured on the roads of Sussex.

Further support will also be realised from East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and the South East Coast Ambulance Service, including: shared press releases; social media announcements and attending public events to promote and publicise the campaign.

JS reminded anyone that is prepared to drive under the influence of drink or drugs that they could face the following consequences:

- *killing or seriously injuring yourself or someone else;*
- *a minimum 12-month ban;*
- *an unlimited fine;*
- *a possible prison sentence;*
- *a criminal record that could affect your current and future employment;*
- *an increase in your car insurance costs; and*
- *trouble travelling to countries such as the USA.*

Members of the public with specific concerns about individuals they suspect of drink-or-drug-driving are asked to report these to Sussex Police by text to 65999, through Operation Crackdown (www.operationcrackdown.co.uk), by email to contactcentre@sussex.pnn.police.uk or via the Sussex Police website (www.sussex.police.uk). Individuals can also contact the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111. If it is known that someone is drink-or-drug-driving, members of the public should call 999 immediately.

KB concluded by stating that the results of this campaign would be discussed at next month's Performance & Accountability Meeting (PAM) on 24 January 2020.

SPECIAL CONSTABLE RECRUITMENT UPDATE

I was pleased that Sussex Police reopened the Special Constable recruitment process last month to increase the volunteer resources available to the Force.

A. The recruitment process closed earlier this week. Can you provide me with an update regarding the response?

JS confirmed that 208 applications were received between the period 25 November and 9 December 2019 when the latest Special Constable recruitment process was opened. This included a wide range of applicants, including 20 internal candidates, with 11% declaring their ethnicity as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and positive diversity in terms of gender.

The Force has 107 active Special Constables in Sussex, with two further intakes of 24 individuals planned for May and August 2020. It was acknowledged that these Special Constables have volunteered more than 28,240 hours in the past 12 months and that they remain an "incredibly important and valued part of the policing family". It was also highlighted that Special Constables can now work in more specialist roles, including: public order; safeguarding and rural policing.

Whilst recruitment has officially closed, it was emphasised that Sussex Police will always take applications from anyone wishing to become a Special Constable in Sussex, particularly from any individuals with any specialist skill sets.

In respect of the new PCSO model that was launched in Sussex last month (November 2019), the Deputy Chief Constable recognised the importance of local communities knowing who the PCSO for their area is. This revised approach means that every community throughout the county now has at least one named PCSO. Members of the public can find out who this individual is for the geographic area where they live by inputting their postcode at www.police.uk (Edit: Please note that some areas will have more than one named PCSO).

It was highlighted that further communications about the changes to the PCSO model in Sussex will be carried out with local authorities to clarify further and embed fully the revised process. This will include providing local authorities with a list of all named PCSOs for each area, in addition to the online facility. KB asked the Force to ensure that any communications made are disseminated to district; borough; town and parish councils, in the interests of consistency and transparency.

SOLVED CRIME RATES

Sussex Police has solved 13,892 of the 126,563 crimes recorded across the rolling year period to 30 November 2019. This equates to a solved crime rate of 11.0%.

- A. Can you provide me with an update regarding performance in this area?**
- B. Are there any solved rates that you are particularly concerned about?**
- C. How is the Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) decision-making model used by Sussex Police?**
- D. What impact is THRIVE having on solved rates and how is this monitored?**

GY began by acknowledging that Sussex Police could do better than the current 11% solved crime rate. It was recognised that whilst these rates have been reducing and are lower than those recorded previously, they are in line with the reductions realised by other police force areas in England and Wales.

This is partly attributed to there being fewer police officers than there were previously when the solved crime rates were higher, although the ongoing police officer recruitment in Sussex is anticipated to contribute tangible improvements to these solved rates moving forward.

The Force has also made a conscientious shift in recent years to focus on protecting the most vulnerable by prioritising the crimes that cause the greatest harm to victims and the communities. The **Investigations Framework** recognises that the Force should not investigate everything and, instead, has to be selective with finite resources and to make choices about where these efforts are directed.

Another contributing factor to these reduced solved crime rates is the changing complexities of the crimes being recorded. This includes the volume of digital media that is now associated with investigating crimes today and the complicated rules around disclosure that is resulting in more time being taken to resolve these. KB was, however, reassured to hear that there has been an improvement in the volume of serious crimes detected.

THRIVE is the supporting acronym that assists staff in the Force Contact Command and Control Centre (FCCCC) to assess the calls received to determine the most appropriate graded response based on the information that is made available at the point of contact. There are four types of call grades used in Sussex: Emergency (Grade 1); Priority (Grade 2); Scheduled (Grade 3) and Resolution without deployment (Grade 4).

It was acknowledged that THRIVE is having an impact on solved crime rates because the Force is having to prioritise the crimes that it investigates in accordance with limited resources. This approach enables the Force to judge those crimes that are most important to members of the public, as set out in the Investigations Framework.

The Chief Constable confirmed that solved crime rates are monitored at the point of contact through the FCCCC and that associated performance measures are put in place for each call received. The investigations carried out by the Force are also monitored and scrutinised through a monthly Gold Group and at the PEEL Board. This accountability is supported further by Power BI, a system that enables the Force to search databases to identify the highest harm crimes, offenders and vulnerability. The granularity of this system means that this data can be analysed down to an individual police officer and victim level.

The Chief Constable concluded by confirming that an improvement in solved crime rates is anticipated to commence immediately. This will be supported by the increased investment made through Operation Uplift, the 20,000 new police officers that will be recruited throughout England and Wales over the next three years, together with the money raised by the precept locally in Sussex.

Sussex Police has already recruited 36 of the 129 additional police officers allocated to them from the first cohort of 6,000 officers (out of the total 20,000 officers) that are set to be recruited by the end of 2020/21. It was also recognised that the following changes are required in Sussex to support further improvements in this important area:

- ✓ increased investment in the Investigations teams responsible for solving crimes;
- ✓ developments in the proactive capacity and capability of the Force to enable them to "get back on the front foot"; and
- ✓ the provision of additional supervisors to manage the new and inexperienced police officers, following the recent and continued recruitment campaigns.

KB agreed to bring solved crime rates back to the PAM on 20 March 2020 to ascertain whether there has been any improvement in this area.

ACTION: Solved crime rates to be added to the PAM on 20 March 2020.

HMICFRS – VALUE FOR MONEY PROFILE 2019

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) recently published the Value for Money Profile 2019 which outlines how each of the police forces in England and Wales are providing value for money across their service areas.

A. How have you reflected on the profile for Sussex?

B. How are you using the Profile to identify any differences that exist between police force areas?

C. What specific actions has the Force undertaken to make continued and further efficiency savings?

GY explained that the Value for Money (VfM) profiles provide detailed comparative data on a wide range of policing activities in respect of: how much forces spend on different policing activities; how crime levels compare across police force areas and outcomes achieved and workforce costs (broken down by role, rank and gender).

The VfM profiles are based on data provided by each police force area in England and Wales. It is important to note that whilst the profiles highlight where any differences exist, they do not explain the reasons why they exist. This is because one police force might spend more on a specific function or remunerate its police officers and staff more than another.

GY confirmed that Sussex Police use the VfM Profile as an indicative measure to look at spend, although caution was expressed in respect of the timeliness of the data contained within it (which is based on figures for 2018/19) and variances that exist in terms of the way that each individual police force area calculates this information locally.

Sussex Police has the 9th lowest net revenue spend in England and Wales and fourth lowest in their Most Similar Group (MSG) of seven other police force areas (Avon & Somerset; Essex; Hampshire; Hertfordshire; Leicestershire; Staffordshire and Thames Valley). This position is even more encouraging given that Sussex (and the South East region) remains one of the most expensive places to live in the country. The Force also has the 7th lowest police grant settlement in England and Wales (and second lowest in the MSG) and the fourth lowest precept in England and Wales (and the fourth lowest in the MSG). The Chief Constable emphasised that Sussex Police is demonstrating “phenomenal” value for money based on what the Force is delivering and where this is being delivered (geographically) in the country.

*The **HMICFRS VfM Dashboard** highlighted the police custody provision in Sussex as an area where the Force is spending significantly more than other police force areas for this function. GY explained that the reason for this apparent anomaly is a 30-year Private Finance Initiative (PFI) that exists with a private supplier to supply both the buildings and the staff that operate in police custody in Sussex. The cost of the custody buildings in other police force areas will not be included in these expenditure figures and is the reason for this disparity. It was, however, highlighted that the Force has recently renegotiated this contract to change both the provider and the provision to the extent that from January 2020 Sussex Police will take responsibility for circa 80 additional staff as a direct result.*

The Chief Constable concluded by stating that the Force are continuing to pursue further efficiency savings across all areas of policing. Sussex Police has a track-record of delivering savings at the same time as investing in police officer numbers. Examples of some specific cost savings include changing the contract for conference calls (which has saved more than £10,000) and the (aforementioned) PFI contract which has generated savings of hundreds of thousands of pounds. The Force is continuously reviewing its contracts and networking capabilities to ascertain whether any further efficiency savings can be made.