

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 18 September 2020

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

PRESENT: Police & Crime Commissioner – Katy Bourne (KB)
Chief Executive Officer – Mark Streater (MS)
Chief Constable – Jo Shiner (JS)
Deputy Chief Constable – Julia Chapman (JC)
Digital Content Officer – Sammi Carwardine (webcasting)
Head of Performance – Graham Kane (retrospective minutes)

REASSURANCE TO SUSSEX COMMUNITIES – CORONAVIRUS

Earlier this week (Monday, 14 September 2020), new laws were introduced in England to tackle coronavirus by prohibiting social gatherings of more than six people. The new “rule of six” simplifies and strengthens the rules on social gatherings, making them easier to understand and easier for the police to enforce.

A. How has the Force responded to the introduction of this new legislation?

The Chief Constable provided KB with assurances that Sussex Police has a structure in place to manage any changes to the legislation and reiterated the importance of policing by consent. KB was reminded that police officers would continue to use their discretion to take a proportionate, appropriate and patient approach to the additional enforcement powers afforded to them by The Coronavirus Act 2020.

It was highlighted that the process of ‘Four Es’ – engagement; explanation; encouragement and enforcement would again be applied throughout Sussex before any Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) are issued to ensure that a consistent approach to policing exists across the county. The final stage of the process (to issue a FPN) will only be used as a last resort if the desired action has not been achieved as part of the interaction with police officers or if the breach is so clear and obvious.

JS confirmed that, on the whole, members of the public had demonstrated good levels of compliance with the new measures and restrictions introduced at the beginning of the week and thanked individuals again for their continued compliance and willingness to engage positively with the police service.

The Chief Constable concluded by thanking the frontline police officers, staff and other emergency services colleagues for their continued professionalism, resilience and commitment to protect the public from harm on a day-to-day basis. KB echoed these comments of support.

INVESTMENT AREAS FOLLOWING PRECEPT INCREASE

In January this year, I was given public support to increase the policing part of the Council Tax for 2020/21. The additional investment means that by 2023 there will be 250 more police officers, 50 more specialist police staff and 100 more Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) than there were in March 2018 – a total increase of 400 individuals.

A. Can you provide me with a progress update about how the additional funds have been used to date?

B. The 2020/21 funding settlement also provided PCCs with additional investment to recruit a further 129 police officers for Sussex Police through Operation Uplift, in addition to the 250 more officers the Force is already recruiting. How is this recruitment progressing and are you confident that all 129 officers will be in post before 31 March 2021?

The Chief Constable confirmed that the plans to recruit the 250 more police officers, 50 more specialist police staff and 100 more PCSOs within Sussex Police by March 2023 are progressing well, with progress ahead of where it needs to be in some areas.

The investment areas will enable the Force to protect communities better and catch more criminals, whilst striving to deliver an outstanding police service. The "fantastic" work of Adrian Rutherford, Director of People Services for Surrey and Sussex Police, was commended in this respect.

KB was provided with the following progress update about how the additional funds have been used, as follows:

Alongside the delivery of the Tactical Enforcement Units (TEUs) and the planned launch of the Specialist Enforcement Unit in January 2021 (see page 3 for further information), police officer, PCSOs and staff numbers have also been increased in the Road Policing Unit and Dog Unit, together with strengthening frontline investigative capabilities through enhancements to the administrative support in place, including the recruitment of 30 x Administrative Support Assistants.

Through the precept investment in 2020/21, Sussex Police introduced a Domestic Abuse Local Resolution Team to respond to low-risk, non-urgent reports of domestic abuse (grade 3). The team comprises of 39 specialist officers who have each been trained to respond exclusively to domestic abuse crimes and incidents.

A dedicated Superintendent post has also been introduced to specifically identify and tackle all elements of serious and organised crime and criminal exploitation, including child exploitation; modern slavery and county lines drugs gangs. This approach represents a more efficient, effective and targeted approach to identify and address these types of criminality. The implementation of this post and work that has already been delivered is recognised to be good practice by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

Sussex Police has also recruited additional individuals into the Sexual Offences Investigation Team (SOIT) within the Public Protection Team to increase the capacity, capability and consistency of these teams to support better victims of sexual offences. The Force has also recruited an additional 12 x Social Media Officers to maximise thus form of engagement with members of the public through social media platforms.

Since 1 June, a dedicated Rural Crime Team have been targeting the areas of agricultural; environmental; heritage and wildlife crime. The team consists of two x sergeants; 8 x police constables and six x PCSOs and operates out of bases at Midhurst (West Sussex) and Heathfield (East Sussex). This team provides specialist knowledge, engagement, intelligence gathering and enforcement activity across the county, with officers distributed throughout Sussex, together with the ability to come together to deliver targeted 'days of action'. This approach not only offers a visible deterrent to criminals, it provides more proactive and preventative policing in the rural parts of Sussex.

The Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police will recruit a further 129 police officers through Operation Uplift before 31 March 2021, in addition to the 250 more officers the Force is already recruiting. Operation Uplift is a Government campaign to recruit 20,000 new police officers throughout England and Wales over the next three years. The Force is still awaiting confirmation of the number of officers that will be allocated to Sussex through the campaign in 2022.

TACTICAL ENFORCEMENT UNIT

In December 2019, Sussex Police launched a Tactical Enforcement Unit (TEU) to carry out high profile disruption and enforcement activity across Sussex, supporting colleagues to target serious, organised and high impact crime.

A. What impact has the TEU had on the Force's ability to proactively tackle criminals operating in Sussex since its introduction?

B. In 2020/21, Sussex Police expanded the TEU model across Sussex to form three geographically based enforcement teams on each of the policing divisions (Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex). What additional capacity does this expansion provide Sussex Police to carry out targeted disruption, enforcement and patrol activities?

The Chief Constable began by reiterating that protecting communities and catching criminals remain drivers for everything that Sussex Police seeks to achieve.

The TEU is an important new addition – funded by an increase to the police precept – and is supported in its work by the Prevention Enforcement Team, Community Investigation Team, Tactical Firearms Unit and Dog Unit. The importance of the intelligence received from members of the public as part of this process was also recognised because this enables Sussex Police to develop an accurate picture of repeat offenders, times and locations which can be used to plan, target and deploy police resources to respond.

The primary role of the TEU is to provide a visible, proactive deterrent by working where the need is greatest and providing public reassurance by tackling the offences that the communities want them to respond to. The TEU is dedicated to capturing some of Sussex's most wanted and prolific offenders, including those involved in serious violence, organised crime and county lines drugs gangs, by providing the Force with an additional capacity to take criminals off the streets.

After launching the TEU in December 2019, Sussex Police has expanded the model across Sussex to form three geographically based enforcement teams on each of the policing divisions (Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex). Each of these teams consists of 8 x Police Constables, supervised by a Police Sergeant, with specialist skills in proactive policing to carry out targeted disruption, enforcement and patrol activities, wherever it is needed most.

The TEU has already carried out 545 stop and searches, made 292 arrests and generated 732 intelligence reports since the first team launched on 16 December 2019. The Chief Constable was "delighted" at the positive impact the TEU has already had and reaffirmed a commitment to prevent crime from happening in the first place in Sussex, rather than investigating it after it has already happened. These teams are "instrumental" in terms of taking criminals off the streets and preventing them from going on to commit other crimes.

The Force will continue to evaluate, develop and evolve the TEU model, including the provision of dedicated investigators, to ensure that, as well as catching criminals, appropriate charges are secured from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) which results in convictions through Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS). The delivery of the TEU is monitored at the Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable.

A Specialist Enforcement Team will be launched in January 2021 to tackle the most serious, organised and persistent criminals targeting the road networks in Sussex to carry out their criminality. Recruitment is underway for the 41 x officer posts in this team – each will be trained in specialist skills, including Tactical Pursuit and Containment (TPAC), with authorisation to bring pursuits to a conclusion using dedicated tactics.

CALL HANDLING TIMES AND CONTACT

A. Can you provide me with a further update regarding Force performance in respect of 999 – emergency calls; 101 – non-emergency calls and non-voice – emails, webforms and online reports.

B. What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on the Force Communication, Command and Control Department (FCCCD) and how has this been monitored and managed?

JC began by recognising the contribution that the teams (past and present) within the FCCCD have had in terms of improving the way that the Force is able to service the needs of members of the public.

In recent years, Sussex Police has made it easier for members of the public to get in contact with the Force by making significant improvements to its accessibility through reduced waiting times to the 101 non-emergency number and increased functionality through the Single Online Home (SOH).

The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that in the past six months (March to September 2020), Sussex Police answered 94% all telephone calls received to the 999-emergency number within 10 seconds. Across the same six-month period, it took an average of 4 minutes and 9 seconds to answer the 181,091 calls offered to the 101 non-emergency number, in comparison to the same period in 2019/20 when it took an average of 10 minutes and 4 seconds to answer the 183,477 calls received. To provide some context about call volumes, it was highlighted that averages of 683 emergency calls and 1,009 non-emergency calls per day have been received by the Force across the month of September 2020 to date.

The SOH is a common platform that allows members of the public to report, transact and contact the police online and was launched in Sussex in December 2018. The availability of this capability has resulted in a shift in demand from telephone calls to 'non-voice' platforms (including emails, webforms and online reports). Sussex Police received an average of 16,168 emails across the months of June, July and August 2020, with 12,561 webforms received in April 2020 and 10,010 in May 2020. It was also emphasised that more than half of these reports (54%) related to breaches of COVID-19 measures and other restrictions.

In addition, it was highlighted that following the introduction of the new laws in England to tackle coronavirus earlier this week, more than 200 additional calls were received to the 101 non-emergency number on Monday, 14 September 2020. The Force is starting to see an increase in the number of emails, webforms and online reports received in respect of breaches too. JC confirmed that Sussex Police has well-established business continuity plans in place to manage any increased demand within the FCCCD that is generated as a result of COVID-19. This has included splitting out resources across four different physical locations in order to increase the resilience of the department and to facilitate better social distancing measures.

KB concluded by thanking the police officers and staff involved for the continued and sustained improvements to call handling times and public contact that have been demonstrated by the Force in the FCCCD.

HMICFRS – A CALL FOR HELP: POLICE CONTACT MANAGEMENT THROUGH CALL HANDLING AND CONTROL ROOMS IN 2018/19

In July 2020, HMICFRS published the findings from their inspection of contact management through call handling and control rooms in England and Wales. The inspection report highlighted that “police control rooms are in danger of being overwhelmed by the ever rising and increasingly more complex demands they face.”

A. How have you reflected on the findings of this report?

B. The report recommended that, during 2020, each police force should adopt the National Contact Management Strategy developed by the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) to ensure that the service provided to the public is “consistent and equitable, and not dependent on where somebody lives.” Has the national strategy been implemented in Sussex?

C. HMICFRS also set out a number of other “next steps for better contact management”. How are you progressing each of these?

The Deputy Chief Constable recognised that nationally it is accepted that police force areas need to provide a better service to members of the public through their control rooms. This included an acknowledgement that the control rooms and the systems in place to support them need to be changed, redesigned and modernised in order to facilitate a better response to the increasingly more complex demand being experienced throughout England and Wales.

JC confirmed that the HMICFRS report reflected the actions that Sussex Police had already identified to deliver improvements to public contact through its Contact Management Transformation Programme. This work has been supported by the additional investment that has been generated for the FCCCD through increases to the police precept previously.

It was highlighted that Sussex Police has implemented and adopted fully the National Contact Management Strategy and the principles contained within it through the existing Transformation Programme. A separate action plan has been produced for HMICFRS which focusses around three different principles for improvement: public focused; effective channel management and prioritisation of contact.

Through the precept investment in 2020/21, Sussex Police introduced a Domestic Abuse Local Resolution Team to respond to low-risk, non-urgent reports of domestic abuse. The team comprises of 39 specialist officers who have each been trained to respond exclusively to domestic abuse crimes and incidents. Following triage, the team endeavour to contact victims of domestic abuse within 24 hours and to make an appointment within 48 hours of initial contact, either in person or via a phone app which leaves no trace on the mobile telephone. The team has managed more than 1,800 incidents to date with the support provided by this team generating a 96% satisfaction rate for each of the victims who have used this service.

It was highlighted that Sussex Police will commence the process of updating its telephony systems in 2021 which is anticipated to deliver efficiencies to call management processes and the management of the workforce within the FCCCD. The Force is also now able to play the telephone calls received from members of the public to the officers in attendance to provide them with an enhanced understanding and early assessment of the situation they are about to encounter. Another technological advancement has included the use of video calls through the Investigations and Resolution Centre – a feature that has proved to be particularly helpful during lockdown.

SOLVED RATES

Sussex Police solved 12,949 of the 121,582 crimes recorded across the rolling year period to 31 August 2020. This equates to a solved crime rate of 10.7%.

- A. Can you provide me with an update regarding performance in this area?**
- B. Are there any solved rates that you would like to see improvements in?**
- C. How is the Investigations Framework being used by the Force to focus on the crimes which cause the most harm?**
- D. How effective is the THRIVE decision-making model used by Sussex Police?**
- E. What impact is THRIVE having on solved rates and how is performance in this area monitored?**

JC confirmed that Sussex Police will always endeavour to solve any crime that is reported to them but recognised that some crimes are more challenging than others. There are several factors that will have an impact on the solvability of each crime, including the availability of witnesses, CCTV and forensic evidence to assist the police in the identification of the offender. Sussex Police resources also need to be prioritised to tackle the most serious crimes and those which cause the greatest harm to the individual, whilst continuing to recognise that behind every crime is a victim.

The Deputy Chief Constable expressed a commitment to improve the solved crime rates for Sussex Police. Burglary (both residential and business and community) was one particular crime type highlighted where improvements to the number of offences solved are sought, with the Force endeavouring to ensure that the Crime Scene Investigation team attends, wherever possible, and that crime prevention advice is provided to all properties in the immediate area through 'cocooning' – a reactive strategy to protect against the reoccurrence of residential burglary.

Another area where further improvements to the solved rates were expressed is rape and serious sexual offences. The Force has established good working relationships with the CPS to increase the number of offences referred to them for consideration and assessments around charging.

It was also highlighted that Sussex Police is on the process of developing the range of Out of Court Disposal options available in Sussex, including 'Checkpoint' – an early intervention programme that aims to divert individuals away from the criminal justice system by considering alternative approaches to prosecution. Instead, individuals are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their offending behaviour and rehabilitation with the aim of achieving desistance from their criminal activities. A similar approach has also been adopted by schools and other educational establishments to intervene and offer children and young people diversionary activities which are broader than simply pursuing prosecutions through the criminal justice system. This approach should also contribute positively to reductions in the number of children and young people who are criminalised unnecessarily.

In 2016, Sussex Police introduced the Investigations Framework which enables police officers and staff to focus on the most serious crimes or those offences that cause the greatest harm. The Framework provides a consistent set of principles on which decisions about investigations can be made and acknowledges that the Force should not investigate all reported crimes. This approach involves making assessments about each case individually and prioritising the crimes that cause the greatest harm to victims and communities, bringing the most prolific offenders to justice and assessing the viability of success for all lines of enquiry.

The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that the Force has recently reviewed the Investigations Framework and made amendments to how it is used throughout Sussex to ensure that it is more aligned to the National Decision-Making Model.

As referred to in the previous item on page 5 (HMICFRS – A call for help), all staff within the FCCCD are trained in the use of the Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) decision-making model. This approach seeks to ensure that the Force has the "right resources, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time".

Sussex Police will constantly reassess any report received through THRIVE because the information provided to the police can change, develop or adapt which could increase or reduce the associated threat, risk and harm, requiring an escalation or de-escalation of the planned policing response. The effectiveness of THRIVE is monitored and managed through continual internal audits, 'dip sampling' of investigations (by listening into calls) and coaching by Police Sergeants (for those officers deployed locally) to ensure that it is understood and being used appropriately by all officers and staff.

It is recognised that THRIVE will have an impact on solved rates because any decision that is taken at the outset that results in a delay in the policing response could result in the evidence available being lost or diminished, resulting in a detrimental impact on the ability of the Force to apprehend the offender.

NATIONAL POLICE CHIEFS' COUNCIL AND COLLEGE OF POLICING – OFFICER AND STAFF SAFETY REVIEW

Earlier this month, the NPCC and College of Policing released their 'Officer and Staff Safety Review' of the arrangements to secure the safety of police officers and police staff engaged in frontline policing. The review highlighted a 31% increase in assaults against emergency service workers during the pandemic across the four-week period to 2 August 2020, in comparison to the same period in 2019.

A. What do the number of assaults 'with' and 'without injury' on police officers and staff look like in Sussex?

C. How accurate do you consider these recorded assaults to be and do these replicate the increasing national trend?

D. How does the Force support those officers and staff who are assaulted as part of their day-to-day duties?

E. What measures is the Force taking to reduce the risk of assaults on officers and staff?

F. The review made 28 recommendations to enhance the safety and wellbeing of all police officers and staff across England and Wales, of which 13 of these were specifically relevant to Chief Constables. What plans are in place to ensure that these recommendations are progressed by the Force?

JS confirmed that the review was "incredibly welcome" in terms of recognising the risks that frontline police officers, staff and other emergency services colleagues face every time they go out to protect and serve the public.

The number of assaults 'with' and 'without injury' on police officers and staff in Sussex was found to replicate the increasing national trend in England and Wales. For example, 289 assaults were recorded in 2015/16 which has increased significantly year-on-year to 628 assaults in 2019/20. Some of the increases were attributed to improved reporting with a greater number of police officers and staff now more confident to report these assaults, including near misses, and hate crimes through the appropriate channels.

The number of recorded assaults 'with injury' for police officers, PCSOs and Special Constables in Sussex was 43 between 5 July and 2 August 2020, representing a 43% increase on the same period in 2019 (when 30 offences were recorded). There were 128 assaults 'without injury' recorded in Sussex across the same four-week period too (compared to 76 in 2019). These numbers highlight the importance of providing officers and staff with the right training, equipment and support, both before and after any assaults might occur.

Sussex Police has adopted the 'Seven Point Investigation Plan' for responding to assaults on police officers, staff and volunteers in the execution of their duties, as follows:

- ✓ *Assaults on police officers and police staff should be investigated with the same care, compassion and commitment as an assault on any member of the public;*
- ✓ *The Victim Code applies to all victims and therefore to assaults on police officers and staff;*
- ✓ *The assaulted officer must never have to investigate their own assault;*
- ✓ *Victims recover better and more quickly if they receive the right welfare and supervision;*
- ✓ *The supervisor must ensure that the divisional command team is informed to provide continuity of welfare support;*
- ✓ *The assaulted officer and the supervisor must complete an injury on duty report; and*
- ✓ *To achieve a successful prosecution, the best evidence must be presented.*

Sussex Police is currently undertaking a review into the existing investigations of assaults and hate crimes against police officers and staff. The procurement of van cells (to make the process of transporting non-compliant or violent detainees safer), equipping all officers with Tasers (if they are willing, able and successfully pass the training), greater use of spit and bite guards and the availability of rigged handcuffs for all officers are each anticipated to have a positive impact in terms of reducing the number of assaults.

The Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police has already made good progress to ensure that each of the 13 recommendations is progressed to enhance the safety and wellbeing of all police officers and staff. The work to implement each of these recommendations is being led on by Adrian Rutherford, Director of People Services for Surrey and Sussex Police.

The Officer and Staff Safety Review and the associated recommendations can be viewed in full through the following link: <https://news.npcc.police.uk/resources/cop-npcc-officer-staff-safety-review-010920>

NEXT UP:

The next PAM is on Friday, 23 October 2020 at 13:00. Further information can be viewed through the following link: www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/watch-live/