

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 26 February 2021

LOCATION: Virtual (via Microsoft Teams)

PRESENT: Police & Crime Commissioner – Katy Bourne (KB)
Chief Executive Officer – Mark Streater (MS)
Chief Constable – Jo Shiner (JS)
Deputy Chief Constable – Julia Chapman (JC)

Head of Performance – Graham Kane (minutes)
Senior Communications Manager – Mandy Jameson (observing)
Communications Manager – Natalie McFall (observing)

This PAM was not webcast in accordance with national lockdown restrictions in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

REASSURANCE TO SUSSEX COMMUNITIES – CORONAVIRUS

Earlier this week (22 February), the Prime Minister set out a ‘road map’ for easing the ‘lockdown’ restrictions safely in England.

- A. How is the Force preparing for any potential increase in the number of recorded crimes and incidents anticipated once the restrictions are eased and there are a greater number of individuals visiting Sussex this spring/summer?**
- B. How many Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) has Sussex Police issued during the third lockdown? How many £800 FPNs have been issued to individuals attending gatherings of 15 or more people? And, what is the total number of FPNs issued to date?**
- C. How are you continuing to ensure that the powers available to the Force are used consistently and proportionately throughout Sussex?**
- D. It has been announced that a further £60 million of funding will be made available to police forces across England and Wales to manage financial pressures and to maintain COVID enforcement activity. How much of this additional funding will the Force receive? And, what plans are in place to spend this allocation in Sussex?**
- E. From 15 February 2021, anyone arriving in the United Kingdom (UK) from a ‘red list’ of countries is required to quarantine in a government-designated hotel for 10 days. How many hotels does this affect in Sussex? And, what additional considerations, if any, are presented to the Force by this new policy?**

The Chief Constable began by thanking the workforce of Sussex Police and the vast majority of members of the public for their continued support and endurance of the lockdown restrictions in place.

The recently announced road map will be the third cycle of lockdown that Sussex Police has prepared to exit from. The Force already has clear, robust and well-practiced plans in place to support them to police the easing of the lockdown restrictions and the planned navigation out of this pandemic. This includes making assessments of anticipated crime patterns – to understand better the complexities and demand on the workforce – and resource planning to maintain existing policing operations alongside this. This work will also include mapping out any future mutual-aid requests that are anticipated from other police force areas in England and Wales.

Sussex Police will continue to use engagement, explanation, education, encouragement and enforcement – known locally as the 5Es – to protect individuals, vulnerable communities and the National Health Service (NHS) as the lockdown restrictions start to be eased safely in England.

The Chief Constable explained that Sussex Police has a "huge amount of empathy" for local businesses and communities who have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. The Force want communities to see them as a "safe enabler" who will support them to get back up and running again as quickly and as safely as possible. It was emphasised that this approach does require individuals to take a sense of personal responsibility, remembering to be mindful of their own actions and behaviours, in order to reduce any unnecessary demand on the Force.

Sussex Police issued 990 FPNs during the third national lockdown – between 6 January and 21 February 2021 – although it was emphasised that no £800 FPNs have been issued to individuals attending gatherings of 15 or more people in a private dwelling. The Force has now issued a total of 2,130 FPNs between 27 March 2020 and 21 February 2021, which demonstrates an appropriate balance in the use of the 5Es in Sussex. Further information about the number of FPNs issued by each police force area can be viewed on the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) website through the following link: <https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/update-on-coronavirus-fpns-issued-by-police>

Operation Apollo is the joint Sussex and Surrey Police response to COVID-19. Any enforcement activity that is undertaken by the Force in this area continues to be monitored, scrutinised and authorised on a daily basis through this dedicated command structure. The Chief Constable remains confident that appropriate scrutiny measures are in place to ensure that the powers available to the Force are being used consistently, proportionately and fairly throughout Sussex. This includes taking legal advice and/or guidance from the Association of Criminal Records Office (ACRO), where appropriate.

JS confirmed that Sussex Police would receive £1.2 million of the additional £58 million funding to support the wider policing pressures as a result of the pandemic and to maintain the high-level of COVID-19 enforcement activity. This funding builds on the initial £624,000 of surge funding that was awarded to the Force to target the areas throughout the county with the greatest levels of non-compliance, both geographically and within sections of the community. This additional funding will also enable the Force to continue to provide a proactive, immediate and visible response to the enforcement of the COVID-19 restrictions in Sussex through the provision of additional policing patrols. The Sussex allocation of the other £2 million funding to increase the enforcement of coronavirus restrictions at the border, for those police force areas with ports and airports, is still to be determined for Gatwick Airport.

The Chief Constable confirmed that two designated hotels have been identified in Sussex for anyone arriving in the UK from the 'red list' of countries who needs to quarantine. Only one of these hotels is actually being used at present, with the other being held in reserve. Strong partnership working exists between Sussex Police and the other partners engaged around this area, including Gatwick Airport Limited, although the majority of the requirements in place to manage the processes and procedures in place for the hotels are the responsibility of Visas and Immigration, Border Force and other security services employed to support the hotels. The Force continues to remain fully engaged with the national processes around airports and the specific requirements of the police service. The use of this hotel has not presented Sussex Police with any issues to date, although a full policing response is in place, should this be required.

POLICING PRECEPT DECISION 2021/22

I have again been given public support to increase the policing part of the council tax by an extra £15 for an average Band D property in 2021/22 (equivalent to 7.5%). This decision received support from the Sussex Police & Crime Panel last month.

A. What difference do you expect members of the public to see and feel? And, by when?

JC confirmed that the additional funding will be used to support the three Sussex Police priorities: protecting our communities; catching criminals and delivering an outstanding service to victims, witnesses and the public.

Further to the decision taken to increase the policing part of the council tax in 2021/22, investment will be made in the following areas. This approach will support Sussex Police to meet the demands on local policing, investigations and the need for even more tougher enforcement to reduce criminality:

- *Continued increase to the policing presence in our towns and villages.*
- *Further investment into the Rural Crime Team and the Road Policing Unit.*
- *More detectives and investigators.*
- *A Public Confidence Team to resolve issues swiftly.*
- *Better use of data and intelligence to identify and catch criminals.*
- *Joint operations with other police force areas (including the Metropolitan Police Service) to tackle drugs and shut down county lines activity.*
- *More officers to manage the highest harm perpetrators.*
- *Expand local investigation and resolution centres to work closely with victims.*
- *A Digital Investigation Programme to improve the capture of online evidence.*

A programme of work has already been developed which sets out how this investment will be made and by when throughout the year. It is anticipated that this plan will be signed-off at Strategic Planning Board next week. KB requested a copy of the plan after it is signed-off.

It was emphasised that this investment will be delivered as part of a staged approach throughout 2021/22, ensuring that Sussex Police is able to maintain the capacity and capability to deliver against its core policing responsibilities, whilst simultaneously designing and implementing new services or making amendments to other areas.

The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that some of the investment will have an immediate impact. This includes the long-term support for Operation Centurion (to tackle drugs and county lines activity), additional support for the Anti-Corruption Unit and the creation of a Public Confidence Team to resolve issues within the Professional Standards Department.

The enhancement of investigative capacities through the provision of more detectives and investigators and increases to the capacity of the Information Access Team, to respond to requests for information and public enquiries within statutory timescales, are two further areas where the investment will be delivered faster than others.

Conversely, it was recognised that it will take longer to deliver the investment in other areas where the new or revised service needs to be designed. For example, the improvements to online investigative capabilities, through the Digital Investigation Improvement Programme, will require the procurement of tools, technology and equipment before this improvement can be embedded into Force policy and procedure.

ACTION: KB requested a copy of the investment plan for the programme of work in 2021/22 after this is signed-off by the Strategic Planning Board.

SPECIALIST ENFORCEMENT UNIT

Last month, Sussex Police launched a Specialist Enforcement Unit to provide visible and targeted operational police activity on the road network in Sussex.

- A. For the benefit of the viewers, what is the difference between the Specialist Enforcement Unit (SEU) and the Tactical Enforcement Unit (TEU)?**
- B. How will the SEU support the work of the TEU to proactively and robustly tackle criminals operating in Sussex?**
- C. What impact is the SEU anticipated to have on the Force's ability to respond to cross-border activity and offending?**
- D. How will the effectiveness of the SEU be measured?**
- E. How will you ensure that a 'van culture' does not develop within the SEU?**

JS confirmed that the SEU was unofficially launched on 4 January 2021, ahead of an official launch later in the month on 26 January 2021. The SEU has now been operational for the past 8 weeks.

KB was provided with explanation about the differences between the TEU and the SEU. The TEUs provide each of the three policing divisions across Sussex (Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex) with additional capacity and capability to carry out high-profile disruption and enforcement activity, targeting serious, organised and high-impact crime. The TEUs are tasked locally by the divisions and provide public reassurance through an enhanced and visible policing deterrent by tackling the offences that the communities want them to respond to through the execution of planned warrants and enforcement activity.

The SEU carry out proactive countywide disruption and enforcement operations on the roads across the county – targeting complex and critical issues and those involved in serious, organised and violent crime. The SEU targets individuals using the road network for criminality, focussing on combatting organised acquisitive crime and providing dedicated resources to reduce those killed or seriously injured on the roads in Sussex.

The unit consists of three separate uniformed teams, totalling 30 police officers, and is led by one inspector. The SEU also consists of an Investigative Team of seven police officers to support the policing divisions with investigations. The SEU is tasked by the Tactical Tasking and Coordinating Group (TTCG) based on information and intelligence received. This can also extend to the 'real-time' deployment of resources through the Force Contact Command and Control Department (FCCCD) to provide an instant response to any crimes in action.

The individuals within the SEU have more advanced driving skills and safe stop tactics (such as tactical pursuit and containment) in order to support the existing teams across the Force. The SEU also has dedicated support from the Dog Unit and the capability to move to locations based on threat, risk and harm and to provide an enhanced visibility on the roads, with the ability to target those offenders using it. The SEU will support and supplement the three TEUs through the provision of dedicated resources with enhanced roads policing capabilities to target criminality and those causing the most harm in Sussex on the road network.

The Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police has effective working relationships with police force areas (both regionally and nationally) and other partner agencies in order to respond to any cross-border activity, offending and criminality. KB was informed that clear protocols and guidelines exist – dependent on the circumstances of each incident – in respect of the command of cross-border policing operations and how these are managed and overseen in order to keep police officers, staff and members of the public as safe as possible.

The SEU demonstrated the following policing activity and intervention between 4 January and 22 February 2021:

- ✓ Over 3,100 hours delivering proactive policing across each of the three divisions.
- ✓ More than 180 intelligence logs submitted.
- ✓ 73 arrests made (including acquisitive crime, drug offences, vehicle offences and outstanding warrants).
- ✓ Over 50 traffic offences dealt with (including drink-and-drug driving offences and tackling disqualified drivers) and 37 vehicles seized.
- ✓ 11 pre-emptive vehicle tactics successfully deployed.
- ✓ Commodities seized (including drugs with a street value of more than £25,000, the recovery of over £25,000 in cash and various weapons).
- ✓ Two children safeguarded and 9 Single Combined Assessment of Risk Forms (SCARFs) completed.
- ✓ Five known Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) disrupted.

It was explained that the effectiveness of the SEU would be measured through a combination of the aforementioned performance indicators. The ability of the SEU to work collaboratively with the three policing divisions and external law enforcement agencies will also be used as a measurement of success. KB would like to better understand how the effectiveness of both enforcement units will be measured moving forward in order to demonstrate value for money from the investment made and will continue to monitor the performance of the Force in these areas.

The Chief Constable concluded by providing KB with assurances that the SEU would not become a specialist 'elite' group of police officers. There is a clear expectation that this unit will always act in a proportionate, ethical and transparent manner. Any culture that is developed or actions taken to the contrary will be challenged and addressed robustly.

DOG THEFTS IN SUSSEX

The increased demand for dogs during 'lockdown' has been attributed to a greater number of dog thefts being recorded throughout England and Wales.

A. How many reports of dog theft were recorded in 2020? How does this compare with previous years? And, what is the scale of this type of criminality in Sussex?

B. What impact has the pandemic had on dog thefts?

C. How is the Rural Crime Team being used to support the Sussex Police response to this type of criminality?

D. How is the Force proactively working with partners to tackle dog theft in Sussex?

E. Nationally, less than 1% of all dog thefts result in a conviction. What are the barriers to this and why is this conviction rate so low?

F. What are the key areas of risk around other crimes involving animals and wildlife in Sussex, including poaching, coursing and livestock worrying?

The Chief Constable acknowledged that dogs are pets for many individuals and families and that this is an "incredibly emotive subject" for many. It was also recognised that the Force has seen a significant and disproportionate increase in anecdotal evidence of dog thefts through social media that has resulted in an inaccurate perception from members of the public that dog thefts have increased in Sussex during lockdown. This increased focus has been particularly apparent during the past six months.

Sussex Police recorded 31 dog thefts in 2020, including at least 12 reports that related to disputes over dog ownership between known parties, rather than dog theft. The remaining cases included seven cases where the dogs were recovered after being located nearby or at a veterinary, six cases where it was believed that the dogs were lost rather than stolen and only six cases where there was evidence that the dogs had been taken by a third-party, unknown to the victim. There were a further three cases where the victim had ceased engagement with the Force, and it remains unknown as to whether the dog was ever found.

The Chief Constable provided assurances that cases of dog theft remain relatively low in Sussex, with only a small number of dogs actually having been stolen from kennels, gardens and public places in Sussex. There is also limited evidence to suggest that OCGs are targeting dogs in Sussex, although this appears to be an emerging threat for other police force areas within England and Wales.

JS confirmed that there were 56 reports of dog theft in 2019 and 44 reports of dog theft in 2018. However, the lack of a distinctive tag on the police systems used previously means that, without manually looking back into the circumstances of each report, it is not possible to accurately determine exactly how many of these dogs were actually stolen.

The Force has recently made improvements to its recording practices in this area to better identify instances of dog thefts moving forward. This has been achieved through the creation of a specific tag for dog theft. Any new reports received by Sussex Police through the FCCCD are now tagged under Operation Collar so that they can be easily tracked and monitored.

Further information about Operation Collar and the Sussex Police response to dog theft can be viewed on the Force website through the following link:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/police-forces/sussex-police/areas/campaigns/campaigns/op-collar/>

The Chief Constable confirmed that the Rural Crime Team (RCT) is leading on the response to dog thefts in Sussex. Tackling this area is a key priority for the team and all reports received by the Force – and allocated the Operation Collar tag – are passed to dedicated police officers within the RCT to scan, analyse and review the intelligence received. Any information of interest is disseminated to officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) within the team to investigate, as appropriate. This includes proactive policing patrols at any identified hot-spots and targeting suspicious vehicles and/or persons.

*The RCT is proactively working with partner agencies, including the **Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals** (RSPCA), Trading Standards, **DogLost** and the **National Farmers' Union**, to gather intelligence and cross-reference information about dog theft, found dogs and puppy farming. The RCT team is also seeking to educate and provide crime prevention advice to the dog owning community to enable them to better protect themselves and their pets.*

It was emphasised that the pandemic has presented Sussex Police with other emerging countryside crimes involving dogs, including dog fouling, littering and livestock worrying. Some of this behaviour and activity was attributed to new owners (with no previous experience of dogs) purchasing dogs during lockdown, the behaviour of dogs (and certain breeds) with limited or no recall ability and dogs that have not been socialised to the same extent that they usually would have because of the social distancing and lockdown restrictions in place for much of the past year.

The Chief Constable reminded all dog (and other pet) owners that they can assist the Force by taking some personal responsibility for protecting their animals from being stolen or getting lost. This includes:

- ✓ Ensuring that dogs are microchipped and registered with up to date information.*
- ✓ Investing in a collar and name tag, including your surname and telephone number, rather than simply the name of your pet.*
- ✓ Ensuring that gardens, yards and gates are locked and secured so that no one can gain entry to take your dog and that your dog cannot escape.*
- ✓ Not leaving your dog unattended in the garden, car or outside shops, wherever possible.*

*Members of the public were encouraged to report all thefts of dogs (or other pets and animals) and any suspicious behaviour or activity to Sussex Police **online** or by telephone to 101. Individuals will also need to notify your microchip database provider immediately and advise your local dog warden should your dog be lost or stolen. If you have any information about dog theft or puppy farming and do not feel comfortable reporting this to the police, you can call **Crimestoppers** (the independent charity anonymously) on 0800 555 111.*

KB concluded by reiterating that she has launched a public consultation about dog thefts, in partnership with the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC). The consultation will remain open until 17:00 on Friday, 12 March 2021 and can be viewed through the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/dogtheft>

DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEWS

There is a statutory requirement for all local authority areas to conduct a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) when someone aged 16 or over dies as a result of violence, abuse or neglect by a relative, household member or someone they have been in an intimate relationship with.

- A. How many domestic homicides were recorded in Sussex during 2020? And, how many DHRs have taken place?**
- B. Does this represent an increase from previous years? If so, is this increase attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 'stay at home' lockdown restrictions currently in place?**
- C. What processes do Sussex Police have in place to ensure that any learning and recommendations identified from the DHRs is embedded into operational policies, procedures and practices?**
- D. How are partner agencies involved in the process of addressing the recommendations identified from each DHR?**
- E. Last year, I secured £402,000 from the Home Office to set up the first countywide domestic abuse perpetrator programme. Can you provide me with an update regarding the progress made in respect of the programme to date?**

JC began by highlighting the devastating and significant impact that any domestic homicide will have on the family and friends of the individual concerned. Sussex Police will always seek to do everything within their powers to identify the individual(s) responsible and to bring the offender(s) to justice in order to provide some closure for the families and friends left behind.

It was highlighted that Sussex Police recorded five domestic homicides during 2020, arising from three separate incidents – Operation Cotton (3 x domestic homicides), Operation Harvester and Operation Maytree – with DHRs commissioned for each of these. A fourth DHR was also undertaken in respect of Operation Parkhead and, whilst it did not meet the criteria of a domestic homicide (where both parties have to be over the age of 16 years old), it did meet the criteria for a DHR, where only the victim has to be over 16 years old.

It was emphasised that the number of domestic homicides varies year-to-year in Sussex. Three domestic homicide incidents (and three domestic homicide victims) were recorded in 2019 and six domestic homicide incidents (and seven domestic homicide victims) were recorded in 2018. There were initial concerns about the potential for the pandemic to contribute towards an increase in domestic homicides in 2020, although this was not reflected in any increase in offences in Sussex, with the figures for 2020 comparable to previous years and below the numbers recorded in 2018.

It was highlighted that an Investigation Management Review (IMR) is commissioned as soon as the Force receives notification of a domestic homicide. The IMR is undertaken by the Crime Policy Review Team, with the summary, findings and recommendations presented to the Head of Public Protection, for approval. It was highlighted that this comprehensive review process can take up to 12-months to complete.

The progress made against any recommendations identified in the review will be monitored and tracked by the Strategic Support Officer within Sussex Police. Once completed and checked, these recommendations will be signed-off, by the Vulnerability Board, before any learning identified is shared with the Investigation and Intelligence Learning Board (IILB). This learning can include updating policies and/or guidance, briefing the workforce, changes to training, and testing compliance and understanding through audit. Any Forcewide learning that is, subsequently, highlighted is disseminated throughout Sussex and Surrey Police, via the Organisational Reassurance Board. This learning may also be shared with other police force areas throughout the South East region and rest of England and Wales, as appropriate.

Following the conclusion of a DHR, all of the multi-agency reports are combined, with any actions and/or recommendations progressed by the Multi-Agency Domestic Homicide Review Oversight Panel – chaired by the senior director from each of the three local authorities in Sussex. The findings and recommendations are discussed in detail to understand the impact, effectiveness of the collaboration between partner organisations and any collective themes identified. The approach ensures that all partner agencies are able to share collective learning, inform and update collective policies and procedures and to learn from each tragic event, including the development joint action plans, where appropriate. The Panel track and monitor the progress and activity of each of the recommendations until these are resolved to a satisfactory conclusion. KB would like to know whether any repeat learning, recommendations or actions are identified at the DHRs.

The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that a Sussex Perpetrator Intervention Programme will commence on 1 March 2021 to target persistent domestic abusers. This programme will be funded for a period of 12 months and consists of a multi-agency team, comprising dedicated and specialist resources, who will work with a cohort of the most active and highest harm domestic abuse perpetrators in Sussex to deliver behavioural change interventions. [EDIT: These resources include: two police officer offender managers, independent domestic violence advisor, mental health worker, drug and alcohol worker and two domestic abuse intervention coordinators].

The programme is voluntary and will work with a maximum caseload of between 40–45 perpetrators. The Force has already identified 17 high-risk perpetrators to commence the programme – using the risk-assessment developed by the College of Policing – but should any of the individuals identified not want to take part, Sussex Police will continue to use the disruption opportunities available to them. Further perpetrators will be added to the programme throughout the rest of the year.

To complement this high-harm provision, some of this funding will also be extended to Cranstoun – an independent company who offer a wide range of services across England, including domestic abuse services – to provide a rolling 12-week programme for medium-risk individuals and other agencies to self-refer into in order to seek support with challenging behaviour. In addition, a stalking intervention – set to launch on 8 March 2021 – will also be established to focus on compulsive and obsessive behaviour and aligned to Stalking Prevention Order applications, where appropriate.

ACTION: KB would like to know whether any repeat learning, recommendations or actions are identified at the Domestic Homicide Reviews.

USING MOBILE PHONES WHILST DRIVING

Earlier this month, police force areas throughout England and Wales took part in a two-week campaign to crackdown on drivers using mobile phones whilst driving.

A. How many drivers were issued with FPNs for using mobile phones whilst driving in Sussex across the two-week period?

B. How many drivers were issued with FPNs for this offence in 2019? And, what impact have the lockdown restrictions had on the number of FPNs issued?

C. Using mobile phones whilst driving is regarded as one of the 'fatal five' by the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP). What is the Force doing to target and catch those individuals who use mobile phones and/or other driver distractions whilst behind the wheel?

D. What other initiatives does Sussex Police have planned to target the other four elements throughout the rest of the calendar year?

E. In recent weeks, there have been reports of individuals caught doing speeds in excess of 100mph on the roads in Sussex. How are these individuals dealt with by the police?

JC began by reiterating that the use of hand-held mobile phones and other driver distractions (including satellite navigation systems, iPods, etc.) whilst behind the wheel is extremely dangerous. The Force continues to use a combination of engagement, education and enforcement – both in person and via social media – to highlight the importance of avoiding driver distractions, potential consequences and to encourage individuals to take personal responsibility for their actions. This approach is now embedded within local policing patrols and Road Policing Unit activity on a daily basis.

The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police issued 13 drivers with FPNs for using mobile phones whilst driving between 8 and 21 February 2021. The Force issued 402 FPNs to drivers for this offence during 2020 which represented a 6% increase from the 378 drivers fined for the same offence during 2019. It was emphasised that it is difficult to assess the impact that lockdown has had on one particular type of behaviour/offence and, despite fewer vehicles on the roads in Sussex, there were actually more FPNs issued in 2020 in comparison to the year before. This increased activity is attributed to an improved focus on road safety and enforcement activity, together with a reduced number of individuals on the roads, making the identification of offending behaviour easier.

It was recognised that mobile phones are just one of a number of other hand-held interactive communication devices that can be used by drivers. However, none of these other devices are currently covered by the existing legislation and the Home Office has recently carried out a consultation to look at criminalising the use of any hand-held interaction communication device in all circumstances whilst driving.

Sussex Police and the SSRP have a number of other campaigns and initiatives planned to target each of the other four components of the 'fatal four' – excessive speed; drink-and-drug-driving; not wearing a seatbelt and careless or dangerous driving – throughout the remainder of 2021. The Force will also extend further support to the full calendar of campaigns and activities coordinated by the NPCC to engage, educate and enforce offences relating other road group users, including powered two-wheelers, commercial vehicles and cyclists.

In respect of individuals caught driving at excessive speeds in Sussex, the Deputy Chief Constable explained that the role of the Force is to collate this information and to report the driver concerned for summons to court. This process occurs automatically for any individuals caught driving in excess of 100mph, with no option for police officers to issue drivers with a FPN for this offence. It is only Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service that has the power to award a ban to any driver for a period of time and/or issue a fine.

HMICFRS: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE REGIONAL ORGANISED CRIME UNITS

Earlier this month (10 February), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published the findings from their report into the 'Effectiveness of the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU)' in England and Wales. The inspection report highlighted the complexity and short-term nature of the ROCU funding as an 'cause of concern' which has a "significant detrimental effect on how well they operate".

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

B. The report highlighted that "local interests were found to affect prioritisation, rather than the regional and national threat, risk and harm". How do you respond to this?

C. The inspection report made six recommendations to the police and other national bodies and raised one cause of concern to further improve the effectiveness of the ROCU network. How will the Force work with the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU) and other bodies to progress these recommendations and address the cause of concern within the timelines?

D. Earlier this month (8 February), the UK downgraded its terrorism threat level from 'severe' to 'substantial'. What does this mean for Sussex Police?

E. Are you confident that the Force remains well placed in its plans and preparations to respond to any terrorist attack in Sussex, despite the continued impact of COVID-19?

JS reflected positively on the findings of the HMICFRS report in respect of the effectiveness of the ROCUs in England and Wales.

It was explained that the SEROCU comprises police officers and staff from Thames Valley Police, Sussex Police, Surrey Police and Hampshire Constabulary. From 1 April 2014, the SEROCU was aligned to the Counter Terrorism Policing South East, with Thames Valley Police the host police force area for both functions. As such, Assistant Chief Constable Pete O'Doherty works directly to Chief Constable John Campbell to exercise overall command of the regional crime and counter terrorism functions. It was also emphasised that a mature relationship exists between all four of the police force areas involved because the SEROCU was the second ROCU to be formed.

KB was provided with assurances that the SEROCU supports all members to tackle and address local, regional and national threat, risk and harm levels within an agreed control strategy. The oversight and scrutiny arrangements that have been established within the South East ensure that the resources are deployed to enable the SEROCU to prevent, disrupt and enforce serious and organised crime in the most appropriate and intelligence-led way through efficient and effective tasking and coordination.

A quarterly meeting between the Police & Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables for the four police force areas in the South East, provides a further opportunity to monitor and scrutinise the regional investment made into the SEROCU to ensure that each area receives a proportionate and equitable service locally from their respective contributions.

It was recognised that only two of the six recommendations and one cause of concern set out in the inspection report related to regional forces and ROCUs – the others were for the Home Office, NPCC and APCC to respond to. Sussex Police is already working with Thames Valley and the other members of the SEROCU to progress the two recommendations within the timelines prescribed.

The Chief Constable acknowledged the recent decision to downgrade the terrorist threat level in the UK and recognised that this did not present any significant difference to the Force – a "substantial" threat level means that a terrorist attack is still likely. Sussex Police will continue to ensure that a proportionate, exercised and well-rehearsed response is in place for any identified threat(s). This includes the coordination of a local multi-agency response with partners through the Sussex Resilience Forum and nationally through the Counter Terrorism Policing South East Network.

The importance of maintaining alertness, awareness and avoiding complacency was highlighted. Members of the public were encouraged to report any suspicious behaviour, activity or intelligence to the Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321, when an urgent response is not required. Individuals were reminded to telephone 999 when there is an imminent threat to life and/or property. Crimestoppers can also be contacted anonymously by telephoning 0800 555111.

Further information about 'Terrorism in the UK' is also available on the Sussex Police website and can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/t/terrorism-in-the-uk/>

NEXT UP:

The next PAM is on Friday, 19 March 2021 at 13:00. Further information can be viewed on my website through the following link:

www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/watch-live/