

## **PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING**

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**DATE:** 18 March 2022

**LOCATION:** Virtual (via Microsoft Teams)

**PRESENT:** Police & Crime Commissioner – Katy Bourne (KB)  
Chief Finance Officer – Iain McCulloch (IMcC)  
Chief Constable – Jo Shiner (JS)  
Deputy Chief Constable – Julia Chapman (JC)  
  
Head of Performance – Graham Kane (minutes)

### **POLICING PRECEPT DECISION 2022/23**

**On 28 January, I was given public support to increase the policing part of the council tax by an extra £10 for an average Band D property in 2022/23. This decision received unanimous support from the Sussex Police & Crime Panel.**

**A. What difference do you expect members of the public to see and feel? And when will this be realised by?**

**B. The police grant settlement also confirmed that Operation Uplift would continue into 2022/23, including the recruitment of another 163 police officers in Sussex and 9 officers to support the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit, plus a further 20 officers through the precept. What are your plans for progressing this recruitment within the prescribed timescales?**

**C. The Home Office recently shared concerns about increased attrition levels within some police forces. What processes are used in Sussex to accurately profile and manage attrition to meet allocation targets?**

**D. Can you provide me with a progress update regarding the number of police officers recruited in 2021/22?**

*JS welcomed the additional precept investment for 2022/23 and confirmed that the additional funding will be used by Sussex Police to meet the demands identified for local policing, investigations and the need for tougher enforcement to reduce criminality, building on and sustaining the investments made in previous years.*

*Members of the public should already be noticing a difference in terms of greater police visibility with officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) spending longer on foot patrols in communities throughout Sussex. The changing dynamics of criminal activity generated by significant increases in online crime and exploitation was recognised to have created further challenges for the Force to balance the needs for an increased visible policing presence whilst simultaneously providing an enhanced digital footprint.*

*The Chief Constable confirmed that comprehensive workforce plans have been produced to ensure that Sussex Police can recruit all 192 additional police officers in 2022/23. This recruitment will include 163 officers through Operation Uplift, 9 officers to support the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU) and 20 officers through the police precept [N.B. The first cohort of 77 new police officers will commence in post before the end of March 2022].*

*The Force is planning to recruit a total of 304 officers during the financial year to achieve the nett increase required, utilising the full range of available entry routes and back-office infrastructure to manage this process. Sussex Police has also retained the final interview stage of the process to ensure that the standard of the successful candidates recruited in Sussex remains high [N.B. It was recognised that many police force areas in England and Wales have removed this stage to streamline the recruitment process].*

*In addition, the Force is confident that it has accurately profiled attrition based on a local understanding of entry routes, hidden attrition and seasonal variation in Sussex to meet the allocation targets prescribed.*

*JS explained that the 6.7% attrition rate for all police officers in Sussex was less than the national average of 8% for all forces in England and Wales. These figures include all resignations, retirements, dismissals and transferees to other police force areas. The 23.7% attrition rate for student officers [in their two-year probation period] in Sussex was also recognised to be lower than the 30% attrition rate recorded for all apprenticeship schemes nationally.*

*KB was reassured to note that all leavers are offered an exit interview by People Services [within Human Resources] to identify and collate any themes, trends or reasons behind individuals deciding to leave the organisation. As a result of these exit interviews, many of the student officer leavers in Sussex were found to have either unrealistic expectations of policing, experienced changes in personal circumstances, decided that the work of a police officer was not for them or a combination of all three. Sussex Police is continuing to review and monitor the existing arrangements around student officers and make further enhancements to reduce these attrition rates further still.*

*The Chief Constable concluded by confirming that the additional investment raised from the precept in 2021/22 enabled the Force to accelerate recruitment plans last year. Sussex Police successfully recruited 302 police officers before 31 March 2021 to deliver the planned nett increase of 158 officers – which comprised 30 officers from the precept, 122 officers from Operation Uplift and six officers to support the SEROCU.*

## **BUDGET PRESSURES 2022/23**

**As part of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review, the Government expects more than £100 million of cashable efficiency savings delivered by police force areas in England and Wales by 2024/25, with £80 million of these efficiency savings expected in 2022/23.**

- A. What is the total savings requirement for Sussex Police in 2022/23? And how are you planning to deliver this?**
- B. How are you planning to manage the increased costs and budget pressures anticipated during the year?**
- C. What actions or mitigating factors, if any, have been identified to reduce these financial risks and pressures? How will this process be managed throughout the year?**
- D. What impact is the ongoing conflict in Ukraine anticipated to have on the Force budget?**

*JC confirmed that Sussex Police has identified a savings requirement of £17.5 million over the next four years to 2025/26. The specific savings requirement for the Force in 2022/23 is recognised to be £6 million, comprising both savings and efficiencies, and has been included within the financial planning arrangements and assumptions made in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26, including the provision of options for delivering a sustainable budget and capital programme over the medium term.*

*The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that the anticipated increases to pay, pension and National Insurance costs, together with increased fuel, gas and electricity costs and further increases to consumer price inflation will all result in additional costs and budget pressures for Sussex Police. The Force is continuing to negotiate longer-term contracts, wherever possible, to obtain better rates and manage the inflationary pressures most effectively.*

*Sussex Police has identified the areas where the savings required will be made and the progress made against these savings [or otherwise] will be closely managed at the monthly Strategic Planning Board. This meeting will also be used to monitor any existing financial risks and/or to highlight any newly identified risks throughout the financial year.*

*IMcC, Chief Finance Officer for the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner (OSPCC), and Peter Gillett, Director Finance for Sussex Police, are continuing to monitor and scrutinise Force performance in this area. The Joint Audit Committee also provides further independent assurance to the PCC and Chief Constable to ensure that efficient, effective and adequate assurance arrangements remain in place.*

*The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that the ongoing conflict in Ukraine will have an indirect impact on the Force budget. This is expected to present Sussex Police with some additional challenges in respect of increased costs for fuel and energy and supply chain delays for technology [i.e. laptops] and transport [i.e. vehicles] ordered.*

*Sussex Police is continuing to monitor closely any extra demand on resources that may be created through additional protests and/or increased numbers of asylum seekers taking refuge within the county as part of the Government's 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme. and will adjust their procurement profiling to meet any increases identified. The Force is also monitoring procurement and supply cost pressures on a regular basis to inform financial planning,*

## **EARLY INTERVENTION AND YOUTH VIOLENCE**

**The Early Intervention Youth Programme – REBOOT – aims to divert away from crime young people at risk of becoming involved in serious violence, and those who have already come to the attention of the police through anti-social behaviour and low-level criminality.**

**A. Last year, REBOOT was transferred to Sussex Police from the OSPCC to lead and manage. How are the Force continuing to ensure that a quality service for those young people at risk of becoming involved in serious violence is maintained?**

**B. Have any elements of the service provided been amended, reduced and/or increased for young people following the transfer from the OSPCC to the Force? And how have you ensured that level of service provided by REBOOT remains consistent?**

**C. How many young people have been identified and benefitted from the service provision in Sussex since 1 April 2021? How does this compare to 2020/21?**

**D. What positive outcomes have been delivered and achieved so far? And what measures are in place to monitor success in this area?**

*JC confirmed that REBOOT was transferred to Sussex Police on 1 April 2021. Since then, the Force has sought to build on the initial successes delivered by the OSPCC to develop further the programme to ensure that a quality service for those young people at risk of becoming involved in serious violence is maintained.*

*As part of this process, the Early Intervention Youth Programme has been refocused to target children and young people aged between 10 – 14 years old, instead of the broader age range [10 – 17 years old] used previously. This refinement was recognised to have reduced the size of the potential cohort in Sussex. Amendments have also been made to reduce the number of interventions – from five stages to four stages – with escalation through stages still apparent should any of the young people continue to find themselves 'at risk'.*

*KB was reminded that the children and young people referred to REBOOT are identified through a combination of information and intelligence provided by police officers and PCSOs within Neighbourhood Policing Teams and partner agencies within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs).*

*The number of individuals referred to the programme were recognised to be comparable to those recorded by the OSPCC previously. Between 1 April 2021 and 28 February 2022, REBOOT received 813 referrals, of which 293 young people (36%) were accepted onto the programme and progressed through the stages, as follows:*

**Stage 1:** 293 young people (100%) received a visit to their home address by a PCSO.

**Stage 2:** 72 young people (25%) were visited by a Neighbourhood Youth Officer to identify and support them in accessing diversionary activities.

**Stage 3:** One young person (<1%) took part in a further meeting with professionals engaged in the provision of support to establish positive impacts and additional support that could be offered.

**Stage 4:** No young person has been progressed to Stage 4 [assessment of the response provided and handover to a more appropriate partner, including children's services and/or the Youth Offending Service].

*REBOOT received 301 referrals [37%] that were recognised to be unsuitable because the offence(s) was either too serious and/or the young person was already known to children's services. A further 261 individuals [32%] were also referred to the voluntary programme but opted not to engage. It was emphasised that should this lack of engagement be linked to the police; the programme would try and secure engagement through another service provider.*

*Sussex Police will also seek to use The Children Act 1989 to remove children and young people from certain situations into care when it is appropriate for them to do so. It was highlighted that there are a complex set of procedures that exist to assess the circumstances and the type of referral to determine the most appropriate agency to respond [Section 17 – Child in Need or Section 47 – Child in Need of Protection].*

*The Early Intervention Youth Programme was recognised to have contributed to positive interventions and tangible reductions in both recorded incidents and crimes between 1 January and 31 December 2021. This included a 57% reduction in non-crime incidents recorded against the individuals engaged in stages 1 and 2 of the programme [reducing from 42 incidents to 18 incidents] and a 49% reduction in criminal offences recorded [reducing from 32 offences to 16 offences]. KB was reassured to note that the outcomes and interventions delivered by REBOOT are monitored and measured through the MASHs.*

*The Chief Constable concluded by highlighting that there is no continuity of approach between police force area in England and Wales in respect of diverting away from crime young people at risk of becoming involved in serious violence, and those who have already come to the attention of the police through anti-social behaviour and low-level criminality. It was recognised that a more collaborative approach is required nationally to further improve the police and partner response provided in this area.*

*Further information about REBOOT can be viewed on the Sussex Police website through the following link: <https://www.sussex.police.uk/police-forces/sussex-police/areas/campaigns/campaigns/reboot/>*

## **VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNITS**

**The Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) aims to protect young people and make the communities of Sussex safer by bringing together the police, local authorities, criminal justice, health and community organisations to tackle the root causes of serious violence.**

**A. How effective is the VRP at tackling serious youth violence in Sussex? And how do you ensure that victims remain supported throughout?**

**B. What strategy does the Force have for tackling serious violence in Sussex? And how effective is Sussex Police at working in partnership with respective agencies in this area?**

**C. How does the VRU 'problem profile' and 'response strategy' translate into operational policing activities, interventions and outcomes in Sussex?**

**D. What assurances can you provide that the current VRP model in Sussex is operating efficiently and effectively?**

*KB confirmed that 2021/22 represented the third consecutive year that repeat funding had been received from the Serious Violence Fund [Home Office] to tackle serious violence and knife crime in Sussex. This funding has been used to support, maintain and enhance the operational policing response to incidents of violence across the county, after Sussex was identified to be one of 18 police force areas in England and Wales identified as having an increased risk of serious violence.*

*Sussex Police has used these funds to support proactive police deployments, insight work [to understand better the root causes of the problems relating to serious violence in Sussex] and provide increased support for investigations activity to ensure crime reports are progressed to positive outcomes.*

*The Deputy Chief Constable explained that the VRP has developed a response strategy to address the 'problem profile' around serious violence in Sussex. The VRP uses a 'hub and spoke model' to commission interventions through the three Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) on Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex – with all activity in this area recorded as part of 'Operation Safety' to monitor better the progress made and achievements realised. This model embeds a public health approach and was recognised to be the most appropriate to address the different needs and challenges that the county of Sussex presents [i.e. urban .v. rural].*

*The effectiveness of this approach to tackle serious violence in Sussex was further demonstrated by the Force through the 24% reduction recorded in knife-enabled crime across the rolling year period to 30 September 2021, in comparison to the same period in 2020. Sussex Police far exceeded the 10% reduction in knife-enabled crime recorded by all police forces in England and Wales across the same period and also recorded the greatest percentage decrease within their Most Similar Group (MSG) [of 8 police forces], including notable reductions in both robbery [-19%] and possession of weapons offences [-18%]. KB congratulated Sussex Police on the performance demonstrated in this important area.*

*The reductions recorded in serious violence and possession of weapons offences in Sussex were attributed to the success of the VRP and the three VRUs, with available data highlighting that those police force areas with VRUs are demonstrating greater reductions in serious violence and knife crime in comparison to non-funded forces.*

*Early intervention and preventative work are recognised to be fundamental to violence reduction. Throughout 2021/22, Sussex Police has continued to work with partners to deter young people away from serious violence and knife crime with approximately, 3,500 children and young people having engaged in intervention activity across Sussex during the year.*

*One example of activity in this area has included showing children and young people a short 'virtual reality' (VR) film about a knife crime incident. The specialist VR headset shows a stabbing incident from various perspectives throughout the film including the victim, perpetrator, police officers, family members and medical experts. This hard-hitting production emphasises the devastating effects that an incident of this nature can have on the lives of all individuals involved.*

*The Deputy Chief Constable highlighted that the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021 will introduce a serious violence duty that will require local authorities, police, fire and rescue authorities, specified criminal justice agencies and health authorities to work together to formulate an evidence-based analysis of the problems associated with serious violence in a local area. These partners will then be required to produce and implement a strategy detailing how they will respond to those issues [N.B. The Bill is currently at the 'consideration of amendments' stage ahead of receiving Royal Assent later in 2022].*

*Sussex Police is also looking to adopt a cloud-based software platform – Interact – which overlays local data [from police, health, education and probation] with Office for National Statistics data to identify better intelligence regarding areas and 'hotspots' that can be proactively used to reduce instances of serious violence.*

*Between 1 April 2021 and 31 January 2022, activity in this area equated to an additional 1,294 days of policing in Sussex [equivalent to 3,080 hours] and the successful delivery of 2,563 different police operations. The following outcomes were demonstrated through this proactive activity:*

- ✓ Operation Safety engagement vehicle deployed >50 times within local communities.*
- ✓ Knife crime education lessons delivered to >100 schools, colleges and other educational establishments across Sussex.*
- ✓ >2,830 knives [and 135 other weapons] surrendered through the sustained provision of amnesty bins.*
- ✓ >200 uniformed and plain clothed proactive police patrols to 'hotspot' locations which contributed to: >400 stop and searches undertaken, >730 intelligence logs submitted, >220 arrests made, and >185 weapons seized.*
- ✓ >230 separate premises were visited to undertake test purchases, with advice and enforcement activity delivered to retailers as required.*
- ✓ >125 knife sweeps of public places completed, with knife arches used on 14 occasions in partnership with British Transport Police.*

*KB concluded by confirming that the funding for the VRP had been extended for the next three years to 2024/25.*

## **HMICFRS – POLICE AND CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE RESPONSE TO RAPE**

Last month [25 February], HMICFRS released the second phase of their two-part inspection report into the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) response to rape which examines rape cases from the point of charge through to their conclusion, including those decided in court. The first part [published in July 2021] focused on the period between a rape being reported to the police and the police and/or the CPS decision to take no further action.

**A. The charge and conviction rates for rape are recognised to be low nationally. What are Sussex Police doing to improve these rates locally? And how is performance in this area monitored by the Force?**

**B. A collective 21 recommendations for the police service and partner agencies were identified across the two reports. What plans are in place to ensure that each of the police specific recommendations are progressed within the prescribed timescales?**

*The Chief Constable recognised that the charge and conviction rates for rape are low in England and Wales and, in some areas, are continuing to decline. Sussex Police has a charge rate for rape of 3.6% and a conviction rate for rape of 70%. It was, however, highlighted that Force performance in this area is comparable to the charge and conviction rates demonstrated by other police forces nationally and, more specifically, within their MSG of forces.*

*KB was reassured to note that plans are in place to ensure that each of the 10 police specific recommendations set out across the two inspection reports are progressed within the prescribed timescales. A summary was provided in respect of each of the individual recommendations, as follows:*

Phase one: From report to police or CPS decision to take no further action

**Recommendation 1 – Immediately, police forces should ensure information on the protected characteristics of rape victims is accurately and consistently recorded.**

*It was highlighted that Sussex Police currently gather data about the protected characteristics of 64% of all rape victims. The Chief Constable recognised that more needs to be done to increase this overall figure because this information is used as part of the initial assessment to determine the most appropriate policing response and safeguarding arrangements required. The challenges and sensitivities of trying to obtain this personal information from victims at the point an offence is being reported was offered as some mitigation towards the current percentage of data gathered.*

*Sussex Police has recently refreshed the guidance that is provided to police officers and staff within the Force Contact Command and Control Centre in this respect to remind them of the requirements to record and transpose this data on the police systems accurately. The Force has also introduced a new process that extracts information already held on police systems which has contributed towards improvements in performance across this area by a further 20%.*

**Recommendation 2 – Police forces and support services should work together at a local level to better understand each other's roles. A co-ordinated approach will help make sure that all available and bespoke wrap-around support is offered to the victim throughout every stage of the case. The input of victims and their experiences should play a central role in shaping the support offered.**

*Sussex Police currently has a victim survey out to consultation to understand better the needs of victims and whether any gaps exist in terms of service provision from the police and/or support services. Survivors' Network are supporting the Force in this work.*

**Recommendation 3 – Police forces should collect data to record the different stages when, and reasons why, a victim may withdraw support for a case. The Home Office should review the available outcome codes so that the data gathered can help target necessary remedial action and improve victim care.**

*Sussex Police continue to record and collate data about the different stages when, and reasons why, a victim may withdraw support for a case. It was, however, emphasised that the exact reasons for the withdrawal of victim support for a case can be difficult to ascertain, multifaceted and/or cumulative in nature.*

*The importance of the Force delivering a cohesive and seamless response, in partnership with other support agencies, was recognised to enhance the confidence of victims to remain supportive of the investigation and subsequent progression of the case through the criminal justice system.*

**Recommendation 4 – Immediately, police forces and CPS Areas should work together at a local level to prioritise action to improve the effectiveness of case strategies and action plans, with rigorous target and review dates and a clear escalation and performance management process. The NPCC lead for adult sexual offences and the CPS lead should provide a national framework to help embed this activity.**

*Sussex Police has met this requirement and the recommendation has been officially signed off by HMICFRS. This was achieved through the delivery of an early advice pilot between the CPS and the police force areas of Sussex, Surrey and Kent.*

*The purpose of the pilot was to support joint investigations between the police and the CPS – from the beginning of a rape investigation all the way through to its conclusion – with the collective aim of reducing the length of time taken for a case to progress from investigation to charge to court.*

*Throughout the pilot, joint lines of enquiry and timescales for delivery dates were agreed and set between both parties for actions to be completed within. The provision of a named lawyer throughout the duration of case provided continuous and consistent direction, monitoring and targeted lines of enquiry and ensured that the case could be expedited towards a charging decision more efficiently.*

*It was highlighted that the pilot has contributed to a 300% increase in pre-charge decision submissions and has reduced the investigation length from 284 days to 114 days for solved rape cases and from 148 days to 109 days for all rape outcomes.*

**Recommendation 5 – Police forces and the CPS should work together at a local level to introduce appropriate ways to build a cohesive and seamless approach. This should improve relationships, communication and understanding of the roles of each organisation.**

*Sussex Police has met this requirement and the recommendation is awaiting sign off from HMICFRS. This was achieved through the delivery of the early advice pilot referred to in Recommendation 4 above.*

*The Chief Constable also confirmed that, wherever possible, a face-to-face meeting [either virtually or in person] between the investigator and the prosecutor is held for all cases referred to the CPS before any decision to take no further action is made.*

**Recommendation 6 – The police and the CPS, in consultation with commissioned and non-commissioned services and advocates, and victims, should review the current process for communicating to victims the fact that a decision to take no further action has been made. They should implement any changes needed so that these difficult messages are conveyed in a timely way that best suits the victims’ needs.**

*JS recognised the importance of demonstrating a victim-focused approach throughout a rape investigation and, even more significantly, when communicating to victims the fact that a decision to take no further action has been taken. This is linked to the ongoing victim survey work referred to in respect of Recommendation 2.*

*Sussex Police has recently reviewed the processes used to communicate and convey these difficult messages. This included work with the CPS, partner agencies [both commissioned and non-commissioned services] and victims to redesign the formal letter provided by the Sexual Offences Investigative Techniques (SOIT) officers in this scenario, highlighting the further support that is available and the Victims’ Right to Review (VRR) scheme.*

**Recommendation 7 – Police forces should ensure investigators understand that victims are entitled to have police decisions not to charge reviewed under the Victims’ Right to Review scheme and should periodically review levels of take-up.**

*Sussex Police recognise that more could be done by the SOIT officers to raise awareness of and explain better to victims that they are entitled to have police decisions not to charge reviewed under the VRR scheme, although this remains a CPS process.*

*It was also emphasised that the parameters and limitations of the scheme should be clearly communicated to victims from the outset to manage better expectations in terms of the process.*

#### Phase 2: Post-charge

**Recommendation 1 – Immediately, police and prosecutors should review and significantly improve communications with victims from the point of charge onwards.**

*The Chief Constable confirmed that the Witness Care Unit in Sussex already provide victims [and witnesses] with comprehensive and timely updates at each of the different stages – from the point of charge onwards – to keep them engaged in the process.*

**Recommendation 8 – Immediately, the police and the CPS should work collaboratively to ensure that bad character is considered in all rape cases, and progressed wherever it is applicable.**

*‘Bad character’ is defined by the Criminal Justice Act 2003 [sections 98 and 112] to include previous convictions for offences similar to those a defendant is being tried for, or ‘misconduct’, which includes offences that did not result in a conviction. It can also include other ‘reprehensible behaviour’, even where that behaviour does not constitute a criminal offence.*

*Sussex Police is working with the CPS to ensure that bad character is considered in all rape cases and progressed wherever this is applicable through effective disclosure.*

**Recommendation 9 – Immediately, forces should make sure that victims of rape are given the opportunity to make a victim personal statement (VPS) at the earliest possible time, with the option of updating this statement closer to the court trial date.**

*The Chief Constable was confident that all victims of rape are given the opportunity to make a Victim Personal Statement (VPS) at the earliest possible time. This process is managed in partnership between the SOIT officers and the Witness Care Unit. The Force also understands the importance of providing victims with the option of updating the VPS closer to the court trial date.*

**NEXT UP:**

The next PAM is on Friday, 22 April 2022 at 13:00. Further information can be viewed on my website through the following link:

[www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/watch-live/](http://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/watch-live/)