

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 20 May 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)

Correspondence and Admin Officer – Elliot Saunders (webcasting)
Head of Performance – Graham Kane (minutes)

POLICE OFFICER RECRUITMENT UPDATE

In 2022/23, Sussex Police will recruit 192 additional police officers. This will comprise 163 officers [through Operation Uplift], 9 officers to support the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit [also through Operation Uplift] and a further 20 officers through the precept.

A. What do the plans look like for progressing the recruitment of these 192 officers during the year? And how many different intakes are planned?

B. What challenges, if any, do you anticipate this additional recruitment will present? And how will these be managed by the Force?

C. At the Performance & Accountability Meeting (PAM), in March 2022, Sussex Police was recognised to have a 24% attrition rate for student officers. How is the Force continuing to monitor and manage this attrition rate to ensure that the allocation targets can be delivered? Have any enhancements been made to existing processes to try and reduce the attrition rate for student officers?

The Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police is “on track” to recruit all the additional officers planned during 2022/23. The significant and continued contribution made by Adrian Rutherford, Director of People Services, and his team to manage, progress and deliver this recruitment within the prescribed timelines was recognised.

JS explained that comprehensive workforce plans have been developed to ensure that Sussex Police can recruit all 192 additional police officers during the year. This will include the recruitment of 380 officers in 2022/23 to achieve the nett increase required, utilising the full range of direct entry routes, together with transferees and rejoiners. This will comprise intakes of 76 officers in June 2022, 88 officers in September 2022, 40 officers in October 2022 and further intakes of 88 officers in January and March 2023, respectively.

In 2021/22, Sussex Police recorded a police officer joiner rate of 42% for females and 6% for individuals who describe their ethnicity as Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME). The importance of sustaining and increasing these numbers further still was recognised to continue to improve the overall diversity of the workforce. It was emphasised that Sussex Police have also been targeting schools, colleges and universities, together with veterans from military backgrounds, to demonstrate the varied roles and different opportunities that exist for careers in policing. Further information about a career within Sussex Police can be viewed through the following link:

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

JS explained that the additional recruitment required will present Sussex Police with some increased challenges and highlighted that the Force would continue to focus on quality rather than quantity to deliver the volume of recruitment required. This approach will ensure that the new officers have the appropriate skills and attributes required to deliver effective policing in Sussex and to complement and maintain the high standards that already exist within the Force.

KB was reassured to note that Sussex Police will continue to maintain the final face-to-face interview stage of the recruitment process to ensure that the standard of successful candidates in Sussex remains high [N.B. As highlighted at a previous PAM, many police force areas in England and Wales have removed this stage of the process to streamline recruitment timelines].

The Chief Constable confirmed that the 24% attrition rate for student officers in their two-year probation period [reported at the PAM in March 2022] has remained consistent since then and that Sussex is not recognised to be an outlier compared to other police forces in England and Wales. Performance in this area is closely monitored by the Deputy Chief Constable at the monthly Strategic Planning Board with all workforce plans reviewed and adjusted based on any unexpected attrition or individuals remaining with the organisation for longer. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on attrition rates over the past two years was also highlighted through delayed retirements and greater numbers of individuals leaving due to changes to police officer pension legislation.

All leavers are offered an exit interview by People Services to identify and collate any themes, trends or reasons behind individuals deciding to leave the organisation. These exit interviews have confirmed that there are many different reasons for student officers deciding to leave Sussex Police and have included unrealistic expectations of policing, changes in personal circumstances, incompatibility with the work [of a police officer] and/or misconduct issues. The Force has also introduced a process whereby all leavers or any individuals who have indicated that they may be considering leaving the Force are spoken to by a dedicated Inspector to understand the personal and professional reasons for this and to consider whether any additional support or adjustments could be made to reverse this decision.

The ongoing cost of living crisis was also recognised to be having an impact on all police officers and staff, including the recruitment and retention of new student officers. The Force is working hard to support the workforce in this respect by providing access to financial advisors and charities who can share advice, guidance and assistance about all matters relating to finance. Sussex Police is continuing to review and monitor the existing arrangements in place around student officers and will seek to make further adjustments to reduce these attrition rates further still wherever possible.

The Chief Constable concluded by providing KB with assurances that Sussex Police would deliver the additional police officers required in Sussex during 2022/23 and reiterated the importance of delivering the uplift in officer numbers within the timelines prescribed.

TACKLING COUNTY LINES

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation.

A. How many active county lines are there currently in Sussex? How many lines were disrupted/arrests made for county lines offences in 2021/22? And how does this compare to previous years?

B. What progress has been made by Sussex Police to disrupt criminal activity in this area? And how is the Specialist Enforcement Unit being used to support the policing response in Sussex?

C. What does success look like for the Force in this area? How do you measure the effectiveness of the policing response? And how is this success publicised?

D. How are Sussex Police proactively working with partners to tackle county lines? How effective are these working arrangements? And is any additional support required?

E. What impact is the County Lines Coordination Centre – launched by the National Crime Agency – having on the Sussex Police response to this criminality? How are you monitoring the levels of intelligence submitted to the County Lines Coordination Centre and the number of times the Force is tasked to respond locally?

The Chief Constable began by defining county lines as “a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines.” It was emphasised that county lines are not a specific crime type and, instead, represents a change in the tactics and methodology used by organised crime groups to commit criminal activity.

JS estimated that there are 40 active county lines in operation in Sussex at present, although the difficulties in accurately quantifying the number of active lines at any one time and/or making comparisons with other areas in England and Wales was highlighted. The importance of using any intelligence received to proactively identify and disrupt these drug lines before they become established was considered more important than the actual numbers of county lines in existence. This approach seeks to prevent offences from occurring in the first instance and to reduce the level of harm caused to the communities of Sussex.

The illegal drugs transportation of drugs from one area to another usually takes place across county borders. Many of the active county lines in Sussex are recognised to be operating from within London, although these lines can be operational from further afield. This makes collaboration between other police force areas and partner agencies essential to improve the effectiveness of the response provided. All police officers in Sussex have received enhanced training to assist them to recognise better and understand fully the impact of county lines offending and the associated links with modern slavery and to support them with this collaborated activity.

KB was reassured to note that Sussex Police are working hard to proactively tackle, disrupt and remove county lines in Sussex. It was highlighted that Operation Extreme – a dedicated police operation to target and disrupt the supply of drugs into Brighton & Hove – has delivered the following operational policing activity in the six-month period since it was launched in September 2021, alongside the Metropolitan Police Service and other partner agencies:

- ✓ 5,965 wraps of ‘Class A’ drugs seized.
- ✓ £31,326 in cash seized.
- ✓ 64 individuals arrested and/or detained.
- ✓ 20 ‘Class A’ drug lines disrupted, with the controllers arrested and charged.
- ✓ 24 suspects charged and remanded in custody.
- ✓ 13 guilty pleas, either sentenced or awaiting sentence.
- ✓ 9 weapons seized, including knives, machetes and an imitation firearm.

Further information about Operation Extreme can be viewed on the Sussex Police website through the following link:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/cy-GB/news/sussex/news/news/dozens-of-arrests-and-brighton-county-drug-lines-disrupted-in-huge-crackdown/>

The Chief Constable confirmed that the Force disrupted 224 county lines in Sussex during 2021/22. This represented a 22% increase from the 183 drug lines taken out in 2020/21. A further 8 county lines have already been disrupted by Sussex Police since April 2022.

It was emphasised that it is the responsibility of everyone to tackle county lines, including the users of the drugs that are supplied through this medium. It was highlighted that the Force is now starting to proactively target individuals within middle and upper classes who are using 'Class A' drugs recreationally and, thus, supporting county lines activity without necessarily understanding the correlation between serious violence, knife crime and the associated consequences to others.

Sussex Police are using the Specialist Enforcement Unit and the Tactical Enforcement Units, alongside the Neighbourhood Enforcement Teams and Operation Centurion – a dedicated police operation to tackle county lines – to deliver operational policing activity in this area. In total, Sussex Police has more than 150 police officers and additional staff engaged and focused on this important area.

The importance of securing all available evidence in the 'golden hour' immediately following an arrest was recognised to maximise the likelihood of securing a guilty plea on arrest or a successful conviction at court. This approach has resulted in the seizure of cash, drugs, vehicles and luxury items, and the generation of valuable information and intelligence about other county lines and offending behaviour to support further police activity.

JS confirmed that the County Lines Coordination Centre (CLCC) has supported Sussex Police to make several successful applications for Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders and Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders in Sussex, with the Force considered to have an effective response in place. Sussex Police also work closely with the CLCC during intensification weeks to collate and manage the data recorded and held on police systems and to shared good practice whenever this is identified.

MODERN SLAVERY

Modern slavery is the illegal exploitation of individuals for personal or commercial gain.

A. How do you ensure that all frontline police officers and staff are able to identify and recognise modern slavery in all its forms? And what training is provided to the workforce?

B. How is modern slavery prioritised by the Force alongside all other demands? Where does modern slavery sit in terms of the policing priorities for Sussex Police? And what specific activity was undertaken by Sussex Police to tackle modern slavery during 2021/22?

C. In 2016/17, I provided the Force with additional funds to establish an 'Anti-Modern Slavery Manager' post to coordinate activity in this important area. I understand that this post no longer exists within the organisation. Without this post, how is the Force structured to respond to modern slavery?

D. During 2021/22, Sussex Police recorded 170 modern slavery offences – this represented a 28% reduction [and 65 fewer recorded offences] in comparison to 2020/21. What do you attribute the reduced numbers of recorded offences to? And what are Sussex Police doing to raise awareness and support victims to report all offences?

E. How many arrests, charges and successful prosecutions were made in Sussex during 2021/22 for offences of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour? And how does this compare with previous years?

F. How do you measure the effectiveness of the Sussex Police response to modern slavery? How is performance in this area monitored?

G. Are you confident that the Force is using the full range of enforcement powers available through the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to tackle all forms of modern slavery?

JC explained that modern slavery covers a wide range of abuse and exploitation including human trafficking; forced labour; domestic servitude; sexual exploitation; criminal exploitation and/or organ harvesting. The significant impact that modern slavery can have on the individuals who are exploited and forced to undertake acts against their will was recognised.

Modern slavery and organised immigration crime is one of the agreed priorities for Sussex Police in 2022/23 and has been included within the Control Strategy. This approach will ensure that dedicated police resources are proactively tasked to gather intelligence around modern slavery offences, partnership work with other agencies is maximised and that the awareness of these offences is increased across the workforce.

The importance of all police officers and staff being able to identify and recognise modern slavery offences was highlighted. The awareness of all forms of offending behaviour in this area is raised with officers and staff through the provision of dedicated training to the workforce. Further information about modern slavery is made available to officers and staff through the Sussex Police intranet and at supervisor briefings, with messages heightened during intensification periods and proactive campaigns.

The Force also has 26 divisional and departmental single points of contact with specialist knowledge in this area to cascade additional information to the workforce. Each of the Response and Neighbourhood Policing Teams have access to further information, guidance and practical advice about modern slavery through an application [Crewmate] on their Mobile Data Terminals [smartphones].

Members of the public with any information about an individual(s) they suspect may be the victim(s) of modern slavery were encouraged to report this to Sussex Police for consideration. These reports can be made by telephone to 101 or online through the Force website: <https://www.sussex.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/>

Alternatively, individuals can contact the Modern Slavery Helpline [confidentially] by telephone to 08000 121 700 or report this to Crime Stoppers [anonymously] on 0800 555 111. Each of these lines are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Individuals with a hearing or speech impairment can also use the Force textphone service on 18001 101.

The Deputy Chief Constable explained that Sussex Police established an exploitation post to oversee, support and scrutinise activity across the areas of county lines, modern slavery, Operation Safety [the force response to tackling knife crime and serious violence] and child exploitation. This position was funded by investment received from the precept in 2020/21 and is led by Detective Superintendent Stu Hale, supported by the thematic lead officer for modern slavery, Superintendent Kris Ottery. JC also confirmed that an Exploitation Manager and three Exploitation Coordinators have recently been recruited and are due to commence in post on 6 June 2022 to deliver a structured response to modern slavery throughout the Force.

It was highlighted that individuals subject to modern slavery do not always recognise themselves to be victims of crime and, in some cases, do not have trust or confidence in the police service. This position can be further complicated by language barriers, victims being scripted by their exploiters and threats made to the families of victims overseas which can make engagement with victims more difficult.

JC highlighted that Sussex Police is nearing completion of a partnership project to provide short-term accommodation for victims of modern slavery as part of a trauma-informed approach to victims, funded by the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner. This work aims to remove a gap in the provision of housing and support for victims before they are accepted onto the National Referral Mechanism [within the Home Office] and afforded accommodation or where accommodation may be unavailable.

The Force are also working towards the recruitment of a volunteer Victim Navigator – funded by the charity organisation Justice & Care – to provide a dedicated link between modern slavery victims and the police. This individual will have specialist training in modern slavery and will seek to improve communication and engagement with victims because, historically, this has made safeguarding arrangements and securing convictions more difficult. [N.B. This post has already been successfully introduced in two other police force areas – Surrey and Kent].

The 28% reduction in the number of modern slavery offences recorded in Sussex during 2021/22 was primarily attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included reduced opportunities for officers, staff and Police Community Support Officers to identify modern slavery offences [with car washes and nail bars where forced labour has been used previously unable to operate, for example] and fewer reports received from the Immigration Removal Centres at Gatwick Airport due to restrictions in movement and reduced opportunities to travel.

The Deputy Chief Constable recognised that the ongoing conflict in Ukraine could present an opportunity for vulnerable individuals to be exploited through modern slavery offences. The Force is working closely with partners to understand the scale and impact of the situation in Sussex and to address the potential risks presented by any additional offending.

It was highlighted that the arrests and charges for modern slavery offences in Sussex continues to remain low. This position is recognised to be apparent across England and Wales due to the challenges set out above in respect of crime recording and the recent impact of the pandemic.

Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Arrests	22	53	68	55	40
Charges	1	0	0	2	3

JC provided KB with assurances that the Force is using the full range of enforcement powers available to them through the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to tackle all forms of modern slavery in Sussex. This includes making applications for Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders and Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders, wherever appropriate.

The Deputy Chief Constable explained that performance in this area is monitored against the National Policing Standards, on a six-monthly basis, supported by the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU). A regional action plan for Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime is also used by the four police forces [Hampshire Constabulary, Surrey Police, Sussex Police and Thames Valley Police] to update performance against each of the areas of prevent, pursue, protect and prepare.

Sussex Police use the monthly Vulnerability Board [chaired by Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Tanya Jones] and a quarterly Modern Slavery Scrutiny Panel [chaired by Superintendent Kris Ottery] to monitor modern slavery performance in Sussex. This includes looking at all aspects of modern slavery including call handling; crime recording; safeguarding; investigation; compliance with the National Referral Mechanism; engagement with the Crown Prosecution Service; civil orders; financial investigation; innovation and the use of templates on the police records management system [Niche]. Further oversight in this area is also provided through the Force Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group structure [chaired by Assistant Chief Constable Fiona Macpherson].

Last year, the Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy Board [chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable] commissioned a Modern Slavery Victim Service Assessment looking at a range of areas included call handling, response and deployment, investigation and crime management. The overall standards delivered in Sussex were recognised to be good across each of the areas considered, with each of the actions and recommendations identified progressed and tracked through the Board.

Sussex Police work with the National Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Network – comprising representation from the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, National Police Chiefs' Council and the Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Unit (MSOICU) – to improve the response to modern slavery in Sussex. This includes sharing information, intelligence and results, receiving details of initiatives delivered and best practice identified, and raising awareness about potential funding opportunities for consideration.

CIPFA – ASSET MANAGEMENT HEALTH CHECK [OF THE SUSSEX POLICE ESTATE]

Last year, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) conducted an 'Asset Management Health Check' for Sussex Police to consider the organisation's performance in relation to the management of its land and building assets. An overall average score of 8 out of 10 recorded for the Force, with the following issues identified:

Potential lack of dialogue with operational areas to understand their property needs and/or requirements

A. How do you assure yourself that the dialogue between the Property Team and the Command Team is appropriate to demonstrate a collaborative approach to asset management in respect of operational policing?

B. The pandemic has resulted in changes being introduced to accommodation standards and agile working policies to improve the use of space across the police estate. What further work is being undertaken to maximise the efficient use of this space?

Inadequate funding levels for maintenance leading to a general deterioration in the condition of the estate

C. CIPFA concluded that the "*current maintenance budgets do not appear to be sufficient to maintain the estate to an acceptable standard and the condition of its property stock is deteriorating.*" What is being done by the Force to ensure that both the level of funding allocated to maintain the estate is appropriate and to highlight the consequences of not doing so?

D. How do you plan to increase the level of benchmarking undertaken [with other police force areas] with regards to maintenance spend against maintenance backlog/maintenance need?

Contract management of compliance activities

E. What improvements to contract management processes and procedures are being planned, particularly around statutory compliance? When will these changes be implemented? And will these amendments to processes and procedures cover the identification and management of remedial works too?

New operating model for maintenance activities

F. In August 2021, Sussex Police took back responsibility for undertaking maintenance of the police estate, instead of outsourcing this to a contractor. What work has been undertaken to review this revised approach to ensure the delivery of value for money? And how will performance be monitored?

Use of assets

G. The review found that "*the Force should review the income generating potential of its Firearms and Training Centre [at Kingstanding] to ensure that, at the very least, third-party use costs are covered.*" How is this area being addressed?

The Deputy Chief Constable welcomed the Asset Management Health Check undertaken by CIPFA and explained that Sussex Police were pleased to have received the overall score 8 out of 10. This comprised individual scores of 9 for Strategic Functions and Facilities Management; 8 for Estates Management, Repairs and Maintenance and Statutory Compliance, and 7 for Design and Construction. The report also recognised that there are opportunities for the Force to improve asset management processes and performance in this area further still.

It was highlighted that a monthly Strategic Estates Oversight Board is attended by stakeholders and representatives from the Command Team and Estates and Facilities Department to improve the collective approach to asset management in respect of operational policing. This is further supported by individual meetings between the Estates and Facilities Team and Chief Superintendents/Heads of Department to ensure that a consistent approach exists in respect of property and estates across the Force.

Following receipt of the report from CIPFA, the Strategic Change Board created an action to improve asset management processes and governance within Sussex Police, and to ensure that effective allocation and ownership of assets and forward planning replacement programmes are developed to assist with financial planning.

JC acknowledged that the pandemic has changed the way that nearly all organisations now work and recognised the importance of the police service embracing these changes too. The direction from Sussex Police to its workforce has been to adopt more agile hybrid working arrangements between home and office, with clear principles and policies developed by People Services to support and manage police officers and staff in this respect. It was recognised that the workforce will be provided with the ability to work from home, where appropriate, and greater opportunities to work from different parts of the police estate through 'hot desking' and the provision of more breakout rooms to support individuals with these adaptations to working practices.

This change in approach has also provided the Force with an opportunity to look at the police estate to ensure that it remains suitable, fit-for-purpose and that it is maintained appropriately. IMcC confirmed that the Commissioner is currently in the development of an Estates Strategy 2022/27 to enable the effective governance of all land and property. This will include ensuring that the police estate is able to respond to the ever-changing environment in which it operates in respect of social, legal, political, economic and technological landscapes. A copy of this revised strategy is set to be published in summer 2022.

The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that the Head of Estates and Facilities is responsible for overseeing a 10-year maintenance plan [worth approximately £30m] which has been developed with support from external consultants. The plan is based on a full site assessment and uses a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) structure to ensure that the Force prioritises any statutory requirements and focuses on the most urgent maintenance work. The costs and values of each site, industry best practice and the necessity for any improvement or remedial work are all factors that are considered by the Force as part of this decision-making. Sussex Police has an annual budget of £1.4m for this maintenance plan, although this was recognised to have reduced in recent years to support the Force with their overall savings requirement.

It was emphasised that Sussex Police already work with CIPFA, National Police Estates Group and other police force areas within the South East region to undertake comparison and benchmarking activity in terms of maintenance spend. It was highlighted that the Force currently spends £22.61 in maintenance costs per square metre per year, compared to an average of £23.60 spent by police forces in England and Wales. The Sussex Police estate was also recognised to be older than most other police forces, with 55% of the buildings built between 1945 – 1975 [compared to 38% nationally] and 38% of the buildings built after 1975 [compared to 48% nationally]. The Force will continue to use this benchmarking data to monitor maintenance programmes and planned capital and revenue expenditure moving forward.

JC confirmed that Sussex Police has a Statutory Compliance Register for all sites across the police estate. This 'live' document is routinely monitored and updated by the Maintenance Manager to ensure that all relevant compliance checks and assessments are undertaken and that any remedial work identified and required is completed.

The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that the responsibility for the general day-to-day maintenance of the Sussex Police estate was transferred back 'in-house' within the Estates and Facilities Department in August 2021. The Force adapted its helpdesk software to include the full asset register and planned maintenance programme which is now being used as the main scheduling tool for the maintenance team across the police estate. A monthly performance monitoring regime is also in place for all maintenance services that is overseen by the Estates Strategic Oversight Board. An initial review of these revised arrangements has confirmed that there has been neither an increase in costs nor a reduction in the level of service provided. A full post implementation review is scheduled to commence in September 2022 to understand better the impact of these changes and whether any further improvements and/or cost savings can be identified.

KB was reassured to note that Sussex Police has undertaken a "huge amount of work" to improve and enhance the income generation potential at Kingstanding – the training centre used by the Force. This has included the introduction of an Operations Command Business Support Team tasked with working towards delivering a cost neutral training function for Sussex by exploring ways to capitalise on income generation opportunities by using the facilities more widely.

In 2021/22, Sussex Police received >£29,000 for hiring out the training facilities to other police force areas and partner agencies [both in England and Wales and internationally]. It was also highlighted that further discussions with the Force are underway with the College of Policing and Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) regarding the provision of public safety training across the areas of public order, protester removal and method of entry training which are all expected to generate additional revenue that can be reinvested into the Force.

Sussex Police will continue to look at further opportunities to create and maximise income generation streams in this area by working towards developing a "centre of excellence" for training.

NEXT UP:

The next PAM is on Friday, 17 June 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/