

## Sussex Police and Crime Panel

24 June 2022 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Lewes.

Present:

Cllr Mitchell	West Sussex County Council	Cllr Kevin Boram	Adur District Council
Cllr Roy Briscoe	Chichester District Council	Cllr Johnny Denis	Lewes District Council
Cllr Brian Drayson	Rother District Council	Cllr Philip Lunn	Wealden District Council
Cllr Steve Murphy left at 12.15pm	East Sussex County Council	Mr Keith Napthine	Independent member
Mrs Susan Scholefield	Independent member	Cllr James Walsh	West Sussex County Council
Cllr Rebecca Whippy	Eastbourne Borough Council	Cllr Elaine Hills	Brighton & Hove City Council
Cllr Sue Mullins	Crawley Borough Council	Cllr Dee Simson	Brighton & Hove City Council
Cllr Ian Hollidge	East Sussex County Council	Cllr John Belsey arrived at 10.45am, left at 11.27am	Mid Sussex District Council

Substitutes:

Cllr Philip Lunn, Wealden District Council (In place of Cllr Pam Doodes)  
Cllr Ian Hollidge, East Sussex County Council (In place of Cllr Bob Standley)  
Cllr John Belsey, Mid Sussex District Council (In place of Cllr Norman Webster)

Apologies were received from Cllr Pam Doodes (Wealden District Council), Cllr Jacky Pendleton (Arun District Council), Cllr Judy Rogers (Hastings Borough Council) and Cllr Tricia Youtan (Horsham District Council)

Also in attendance:

### Part I

#### 1. Appointment of Independent Members

1.1 Resolved – that the Panel:

1. Confirmed the appointment of Mrs Susan Scholefield as an Independent Co-Opted Member of the Panel, to take effect immediately, for a one-year term, renewable for up to five years.
2. Renewed the appointment of Mr Keith Napthine as an Independent Co-Opted Member of the Panel, to take effect immediately.

## **2. Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman**

- 2.1 Cllr Briscoe proposed Cllr Mitchell as Chairman of the Panel for the forthcoming year. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Drayson, and the appointment was agreed by the Panel.
- 2.2 Resolved – that Cllr Mitchell is elected as Chairman of Sussex Police and Crime Panel for the ensuing year.
- 2.3 Cllr Mitchell assumed control from Cllr Boram for the remainder of the meeting.
- 2.4 Cllr Lunn proposed Cllr Standley as Vice Chairman of the Panel for the forthcoming year. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Hollidge, and the appointment was agreed by the Panel.
- 2.5 Resolved – that Cllr Standley is elected as Vice Chairman of Sussex Police and Crime Panel for the ensuing year.

## **3. Annual Review of Membership and Proportionality**

- 3.1 Resolved – that the Panel:
  1. Agreed that Brighton and Hove City Council appoint a Conservative second representative to the Panel, Cllr Dee Simson, for a one-year period of office.
  2. Agreed that both East and West Sussex County Councils appoint an additional local authority member, for a one-year period of office; and
  3. Agreed the appointment of a Liberal Democrat councillor from East Sussex County Council, Cllr Steve Murphy, and a Liberal Democrat councillor from West Sussex County Council, Cllr James Walsh, effective immediately.

## **4. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

- 4.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 March 2022 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

## **5. Declarations of Interest**

- 5.1 In accordance with the Code of Conduct, members of the Panel declared the personal interests in the table below.

<b>Panel Member</b>	<b>Personal Interest</b>
Roy Briscoe	Member of Joint Arun and Chichester Community Safety Partnership

Johnny Denis	<p>Co-Chair of Lewes and Eastbourne Community Safety Partnership</p> <p>Lead Member for Community Safety at Lewes District Council</p> <p>Member of Lewes District Council – Community Safety Partnership – Joint Action Group</p>
Susan Scholefield	<p>A serving Magistrate</p> <p>Senior Independent Director of Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust</p>
Rebecca Whippy	<p>Co-Chair of Lewes and Eastbourne Community Safety Partnership</p> <p>Lead for Community Safety at Eastbourne Borough Council</p> <p>Member of Eastbourne Borough Council Joint Action Group</p> <p>Member of Eastbourne Neighbourhood Watch</p> <p>Independent SEND Litigator</p> <p>Director of Rebecca Whippy SEND Consultants</p>
Brian Drayson	Co-Chair Safer Rother Partnership
Dee Simson	Member of Brighton and Hove Community Safety Partnership
Kevin Boram	<p>Chairman of Adur and Worthing Safer Communities Partnership</p> <p>Adur Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing</p>

## 6. Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner

- 6.1 The Panel noted a published version of written public and Panel questions with answers from the Commissioner (copy appended to the signed minutes). The Panel had no supplementary questions in respect of the public questions.
- 6.2 The Chairman invited questions from the Panel to the Commissioner. A summary of the main questions and responses were as follows:
1. Question: What do you attribute the 8% increase in violent crime to in Sussex over the last year?

Answer: The national trend coincided with the easing of lockdown measures and Sussex Police is working hard to disrupt serious violence and knife crime. Drugs are known to be a driver of serious violence and Project Adder running in Hastings is one of eight Government-backed pilot areas aiming to rehabilitate drug users. The Force's ongoing work contributed to a 13% reduction in offences involving possession of weapons in 2020/21.

2. Question: What is the Commissioner's view on inflation patterns and its impact on officer and staff salaries within the Force?

Answer: Salaries are set nationally by the pay review body and the Force has so far budgeted for a 3% pay increase for police officers and staff, in comparison to 2 to 2.5% set by other UK forces. In the last 18 months Sussex Police previously budgeted staff salary at 3%, but the 2.1% increase meant that savings could be made and utilised elsewhere in the budget. All areas of the Force are under pressure from inflation and as a result, constant reviews are being undertaken with the Finance department. Using reserves is another option available to the Force in exceptional circumstances, if required.

3. Question: Is the Commissioner happy with the roads policing policy in effect in East Sussex?

Answer: There has been investment into the Roads Policing Unit and the enforcement aspect in particular. Operation Downsway launched in April to target antisocial and dangerous motorists and reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured. Countywide enforcement statistics from the weekend of 18 and 19 June included: 27 traffic regulations issued for speeding, mobile phone use and driving without a seatbelt, five arrests for drink and drug driving and more than 240 reports of camera van offences. The Force takes roads policing seriously and its message to road users is that enforcement "cannot be everywhere, but could be anywhere" in terms of the Force's presence to clamp down on irresponsible driver behaviour and improve road users' safety.

4. Question: Are there plans to improve the visibility of speed camera vans in the Rudgwick/Horsham area and could a depot be introduced in the north of the county?

Answer: This should be raised through the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) to address the need for a routine visible deterrent. The SSRP has responsibility over the road network and makes joint decisions with partners. The patrol route and schedule is not solely the Force's decision.

5. Question: Following a recent Government consultation, what is your interest in becoming the Sussex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) and assuming additional responsibility for Sussex's fire services?

Answer: Commissioner Bourne welcomed a conversation to discuss the role and recognised that Government wishes to bring the

oversight of fire service governance in line with the Police and Crime Commissioner model by appointing a directly elected individual. It was acknowledged that the merger of the role would be suitable for stand-alone fire services only, such as East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

6. Question: Is the Force working to address the issue of vehicle noise pollution caused by poor driving/riding, and does your office support any of the four pilot schemes proposed nationally?

Answer: Government has invited Members of Parliament (MPs) to bid for acoustic cameras in particular areas within their constituencies. The Chief Constable has written to Sussex MPs and offered blanket support for any bids submitted. The Commissioner is fully supportive of the pilots and sympathised with the disturbing impact regular noise pollution can have on residents.

7. Question: What is the Commissioner's strategy to restore confidence among businesses and owners following an increase in reports of Business Crime within retail shops?

Answer: The Force has a dedicated Business Crime Unit and its Business Crime Lead, Chris Neilson, works closely with the Commissioner's office. The Force is currently working with 22 of 80 Co-op stores within the county to make it easier for their staff to report theft. So far, reporting times have reduced from half an hour to three or four minutes. A priority of the Force within this area is to improve the efficiency of reporting mechanisms. It was acknowledged that reports of business crime have increased significantly, but a decline in the Force's ability to identify and prosecute prolific offenders. Prevention work carried out with first or second-time offenders to keep them out of the criminal justice system has the support of local businesses. The Commissioner explained that her office's bid to the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund would help to fund a full-time Business Crime Coordinator post within each of Sussex's district and boroughs.

8. Question: What is the Commissioner's view on the new Bill of Rights proposing to remove the right to family life for criminals and how this will change the Force's practical approach to policing in Sussex?

Answer: The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) was involved in the consultation but it is not expected that any views will be expressed other than responses to questions pertinent to victims and witnesses.

## **7. The Commissioner's Annual Report and Draft Financial Outturn Report 2021/22**

- 7.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced by Commissioner Bourne.

- 7.2 The Commissioner reflected on her tenth year in office as the longest-serving female Police and Crime Commissioner and the evolving work of the Panel.
- 7.3 The Commissioner highlighted some of the progress made against the Police and Crime Plan's (2021/24) policing and crime objectives:

Public Priority 1 – Strengthen local policing, tackle crime & prevent harm

- The Government's Operation Uplift funding has enabled the Force to recruit an additional 163 police officers, plus a further nine officers deployed in the regional South East Organised Crime Unit.
- Extra funding received from local taxpayers has also enabled the Force to employ a further 20 police officers.
- The Force is on course to deliver 192 new officers by March 2023.
- 101 call waiting times are now averaging around 5 minutes per phone call – down from 14 minutes three years ago.
- 93% of emergency 999 phone calls were answered within 10 seconds – this made Sussex Police the 4<sup>th</sup> best performing Force within England and Wales in this area.

Public Priority 2 – Relentless disruption of serious and organised crime

- The Specialist Enforcement Unit disrupted 64 County Lines.
- In addition, the SEU made 375 arrests and seized drugs, cash and weapons worth almost £1 million.
- Knife crime education lessons were delivered across 120 schools, colleges and other educational establishments in Sussex.
- More than 3,000 knives have been surrendered.

Public Priority 3 – Support and safeguard victims and tackle violence against women and girls

- Almost £3.7 million in Government funding spent on organisations to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) – nearly double the PCC's average annual investment in this area.
- A countywide consultation identified that women and girls wanted to talk to men and boys about calling out misogynistic behaviour and encourage their peers to do the same.
- The 'Do the Right Thing' campaign was fronted by four local celebrities and publicised at train stations, supermarkets and pubs.

- 7.4 The Chairman invited the Panel to ask questions. A summary of questions and responses were as follows:

- 1) Question: How successful has the Safe Space Sussex app been since it launched?

Answer: It has received more than 2,000 downloads during its soft launch with 300 contracts in place and further larger retailers set to come on board. The free app directs users who feel unsafe or vulnerable to find their nearest local safe spaces such as businesses and council buildings to seek help and support.

- 2) Question: In reference to page 50 regarding Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Abuse, what is the evidence for an additional 206 offences being attributed to improved accuracy of recording – and is the 27.1% annual increase similar to the previous year?

Answer: Operation Makesafe has helped encourage businesses to spot and report early signs of CSE, and has partly contributed to the increased volume. The progressive work around County Lines has also hidden cases of CSE which otherwise may have gone unreported. The increase is not a cause for alarm, but it is a reflection in the effectiveness of this crime being uncovered and talked about through the range of work carried out by the Force in this area. In addition, the OSPCC works with charities that deliver safeguarding training in schools and this had led to a number of disclosures made by pupils.

- 3) Question: In reference to page 36 regarding Road Safety, does the PCC share concerns regarding the 27% increase in collisions from 2020/21 up to 15,000 in 2021/22 - and is there a strategic approach to reduce the number of collisions?

Answer: It is a significant cause for concern, every year 1,000 people are either killed or seriously injured on Sussex roads. This data is in relation to police attendance and involvement at the scene of a collision, but the Force does also work with insurance companies (as part of the wider-reaching data collection) who report back on the underlying causes of collisions without police presence.

Action: The PCC agreed to provide Cllr Hollidge with a link to the collision rate data sourced by Sussex Safer Roads Partnership.

- 4) Question: When identified through the disruption of County Lines, how are children educated and rehabilitated so that it doesn't happen again?

Answer: A large amount of safeguarding takes place in these situations. Some children are known to authorities, and others not, making it challenging to track their next of kin. A large number of children are trafficked from outside of Sussex.

Action: The PCC offered to provide Cllr Whippy with more information on the Force's approach to rehabilitating and educating vulnerable children and children with learning difficulties removed from disrupted County Lines activity to ensure that they don't re-offend.

- 5) Question: What is the impact of inflation on Sussex Police's revenue and budget?

Answer: The Force has a £17 million funding gap to bridge in four years and currently holds reserves at 3%. A review is currently being held with a business partner to try and find savings and cut costs. The Force's energy and fuel costs have doubled and contract suppliers have negotiated higher prices due to their own inflationary pressures.

- 6) Question: A recent incident of reported handbag theft was not attended by the Force and public confidence is lost in these instances. Does the PCC receive feedback on reported cases that are not attended or require further action?

Answer: The public are correct to contact the OSPCC and submit a complaint if they are unhappy with a police response and phone calls are sampled through a resident contact panel to quality control call handling. A record of all cases is kept on file and can be re-opened if required.

- 7) Question: Given the inflationary pressures previously mentioned, it was suggested that the Budget and Precept Working Group is advised by an economist as there is a feeling that the local population doesn't fully understand how precepts are arrived at – what is the PCC's opinion on this?

Answer: The Group has a role as a critical friend but the final decision is that of the PCC. The Group is sufficiently supported and advised by the Chief Finance Officer for Sussex and Surrey Police who also consult treasury management officials.

- 8) Question: How is the PCC addressing climate change across the Force?

Answer: All forces are working towards the national targets set for 2050 including Sussex Police. The Force has made lots of changes to its estate to improve efficiency such as switching to LED lighting and gradually introducing electric vehicles to its fleet.

- 9) Question: In reference to pages 44 to 45 regarding online focus groups, is there any means for residents of Brighton and Hove to feed back?

Answer: Consultations are planned for urban areas including Brighton and Hove and thematic focus groups are to be arranged in addition.

- 10) In reference to page 39, Cllr Dennis pointed out that Eastbourne had been listed twice on the table in error instead of Worthing – the PCC committed to make the correction.

- 11) Question: What factors are associated with the issue of recruitment and retention, specifically in relation to Police Community Support Officers? (PCSOs)

Answer: One of the main factors, experienced across public and private sectors, is that people have re-evaluated their lives following the pandemic and the lifestyle flexibility afforded by virtual working has contributed to this. This is the third and final year of the Government's Operation Uplift recruitment campaign and it has proven more difficult to recruit than anticipated. The Force is working really hard in this area and credit goes to Adrian Rutherford (Director of People Services) and his team for ensuring the Force is on track to meet its recruitment targets. Trainee recruits' expectations of becoming a police officer don't always match the



reality in terms of the physical, mental and emotional demands. This is a common reason why new recruits realise that the career isn't for them and drop out during basic training. Rising reports of assaults carried out on police officers and rate of pay are other examples that hinder recruitment.

- 7.5 In summary of the discussion, the Chairman thanked the Commissioner, on behalf of the Panel, for addressing matters of interest raised by members and commended her on the report.
- 7.6 The following three formal recommendations were agreed by the Panel:
- 1) That the data included in the section on diversity should include the equivalent data for the Sussex population as a whole, to give context to the achievements of Sussex Police. That a narrative be included in the section on diversity, to bring to life achievement in this area.
  - 2) That the Annual Report includes a section on progress against Sussex Police's net zero ambitions, and in addressing climate change generally.
  - 3) That the Annual Report sets out the net change in officer numbers for the year, so that the number of officers recruited can be seen in the context of the numbers of officers leaving the organisation.

Resolved – that the Panel:

- i) Scrutinised the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report and draft Financial Outturn Report 2021/22.

## **8. Annual Report from the Host Authority**

- 8.1 The Panel considered a report by the Clerk to the Sussex Police and Crime Panel.
- 8.2 Resolved – that the Panel notes its annual report and budget outturn for 2021/22.

## **9. Opportunity to Feedback on the Strategic Review of Policing Briefing**

- 9.1 The Chairman highlighted the findings of a report on the Strategic Review of Policing in England and Wales by the Director of the Police Foundation, Dr. Rick Muir, following a virtual briefing given to some members on 17 May.

## **10. Formation of the UK Prosperity Fund Working Group**

- 10.1 The Chairman informed the Panel that the Group met virtually on 21 June and achieved its objectives within that meeting, meaning that the second scheduled meeting in July was not necessary. A further

meeting will be scheduled for mid to late March before that month's Panel meeting for the Group to scrutinise the outcomes.

## **11. Correspondence Since the Last Meeting**

- 11.1 The Chairman acknowledged the error in relation to the item wording within members' papers and clarified that it should read 'the Chairman of the Panel's' letter (not the Commissioner).
- 11.2 Cllr Denis commented that 'communications' has since been added as a standing agenda item at meetings of Lewes and Eastbourne Community Safety Partnership.
- 11.3 The Chairman summarised a letter received from Dr Jeremy Leach, Principal Policy Advisor at Wealden District Council, following his letter to Chairs of all Sussex Community Safety Partnerships dated 1 March 2022.

## **12. Quarterly Report of Complaints**

- 12.1 The Panel considered a report by the Clerk to the Sussex Police and Crime Panel.
- 12.2 Resolved – that the Panel note the update.

## **13. Work Programme Planning and Future Meeting Dates**

- 13.1 Mark Streater, OSPCC Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, suggested that a recent paper on Recruitment and Retention received by the Joint Audit Committee at its meeting on 9 June is circulated to Panel members prior to the next meeting on 23 September 2022. The Chairman agreed with this approach.
- 13.2 The next meeting of the Panel would take place on 23 September 2022 at 10.30am, at County Hall, Lewes.

The meeting ended at 12.58 pm

Chairman