

Public Document Pack

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Members are hereby requested to attend the meeting of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel, to be held at **10.30 am** on **Thursday, 3 July 2025** at **County Hall, Lewes**.

Tony Kershaw

Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel

25 June 2025

Webcasting Notice

Please note: This meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via East Sussex County Council's website on the internet – at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm that the meeting is to be filmed. Generally the public gallery is not filmed. However, by entering the meeting room and using the public seating area you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. The webcast will be available via the link below: <http://www.eastsussex.public-i.tv/core/>.

Agenda

10.30 am 1. **Appointment of Independent Members**

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires the Panel to have a minimum of two Independent Co-opted Members. Independent Co-opted Members have one-year terms and can be re-appointed annually for up to five years.

Mrs Susan Scholefield's appointment commenced in June 2022.
Mr Keith Naphthine's appointment commenced in June 2021.

In line with the recommendations of the interview panel, the Panel is asked to:

1. Renew the appointment of Mrs Susan Scholefield, Independent Co-opted Member, for a one-year term.
2. Renew the appointment of Mr Keith Naphthine, Independent Co-opted Member, for a one-year term.

10.35 am 2. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

The Panel will be invited to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair for the 2025/26 municipal year.

10.45 am 3. **Declarations of Interest**

Members and officers must declare any pecuniary or personal interest in any business on the agenda. They should also make declarations at any stage such an interest becomes apparent during the meeting. Consideration should be given to leaving the meeting if the nature of the interest warrants it. If in doubt

contact Democratic Services, West Sussex County Council, before the meeting.

- 10.50 am 4. **Urgent Matters**
- Items not on the agenda which the Chair of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances.
- 10.55 am 5. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 16)
- To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting on 14 March 2025.
- 11.00 am 6. **Panel Correspondence since the last meeting** (Pages 17 - 22)
- For the Panel to note correspondence to and from this Panel since the meeting on 14 March 2025 under Appendices A-B.
- 11.05 am 7. **Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner** (Pages 23 - 24)
- The Panel is asked to raise any strategic issues or queries concerning crime and policing in Sussex with the Commissioner.
- Written questions may be submitted by members of the public up to two weeks in advance of a meeting. The Commissioner or the Chairman (as appropriate) will be invited to provide a response by noon of the day before the meeting. Questions, together with as many responses as possible, will be published on the Panel's website (www.sussexpcp.gov.uk).
- 2 questions have been received from one correspondent. The Panel is invited to note the responses and pose any supplementary questions.
- 11.35 am 8. **Annual Review of Membership and Proportionality** (Pages 25 - 30)
- Report by the Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel.
- The Panel is required to undertake an annual review of proportionality to take account of any changes to the political composition of constituent authorities during the course of the previous year. The attached report provides the latest political composition of local authorities in Sussex and a calculation of proportionality of the Panel.
- The Panel is required to agree additional appointments, where these will make the Panel more politically proportionate.
- 11.45 am 9. **The Commissioner's Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2024-25** (Pages 31 - 88)

The Police and Crime Panel is required to scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report.

The report provides an update on performance against the three Public Priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan 2021/24 – and the policing and crime objectives contained within – for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

The report also presents the draft revenue and capital outturn position for the overall police budget under the direction of the Police and Crime Commissioner for 2024/25, ahead of the audited accounts being published.

- 12.45 pm 10. **The role of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner in ensuring the effectiveness of vetting processes within Sussex Police** (Pages 89 - 100)

The Panel is asked to consider a report from the Police and Crime Commissioner on her role in holding Sussex Police to account for the effectiveness of its vetting processes.

- 1.45 pm 11. **Annual Report from the Host Authority** (Pages 101 - 104)

Report by the Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel.

The Host Authority is required to submit to the Panel an annual budget report detailing income and expenditure of the Panel during the previous year. The report also includes a summary of the main work of the Panel over the last year.

The Panel is asked to note the report.

- 1.50 pm 12. **Quarterly Report of Complaints** (Pages 105 - 106)

Report by the Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel.

The report provides details of the correspondence received and the action taken.

The Panel is asked to consider the report and raise any issues or concerns.

- 1.55 pm 13. **Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates**

The next meeting of the Panel will take place on 3rd October at 10.30 a.m. at County Hall, Lewes.

Future meeting dates are set out below:

- 30th January 2026

- 16th February 2026
- 13th March 2026

To all members of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

14 March 2025 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Lewes.

Present:

Cllr Czolak	Brighton & Hove City Council	Cllr Baynham	Horsham District Council
Cllr Sluman	Adur District Council	Cllr Birch	Arun District Council
Cllr Bangert	Chichester District Council	Cllr Khan	Crawley Borough Council
Cllr Ballard	Eastbourne Borough Council	Cllr Ian Hollidge	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Bob Standley	East Sussex County Council	Cllr Williams	Wealden District Council
Cllr Mitchell	West Sussex County Council	Cllr Cooke	Mid-Sussex District Council
Mrs Scholefield	Independent Co-opted Member	Cllr Warne	Hastings Borough Council
Cllr Byrne	Rother District Council	Cllr Clews	Lewes District Council
Mrs Sarah Peacock	Independent Co-opted Member	Cllr Crow	West Sussex County Council

Substitutes:

Cllr Warne, Hastings Borough Council
 Cllr Byrne, Rother District Council
 Cllr Clews, Lewes District Council
 Mrs Sarah Peacock, Independent Co-opted Member
 Cllr Crow, West Sussex County Council

Apologies were received from Cllr Hogan (Brighton & Hove City Council), Cllr Haffenden (Hastings Borough Council), Cllr Keene (Lewes District Council), Cllr Bayliss (Rother District Council), Cllr Ali (West Sussex County Council), Cllr Whorlow (Worthing Borough Council) and Mr Naphine (Independent Co-opted Member)

Also in attendance: Mrs Katy Bourne, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, Mark Streater, OSPCC, Iain McCulloch, OSPCC, Mervin Dadd, OSPCC.

Part I

36. Declarations of Interest

36.1 In accordance with the Code of Conduct, members of the Panel declared the personal interests in the table below:

Panel Member	Personal Interest
Cllr Baynham	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources at Horsham District Council.
Cllr Bangert	Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing at Chichester District Council.
Cllr Birch	Chair of Housing and Wellbeing Committee at Arun District Council.
Cllr Cooke	Cabinet Member for Communities at Mid-Sussex District Council.
Cllr Gauge	A serving magistrate.
Mrs Scholefield	A serving magistrate.
Cllr Sluman	Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing at Adur District Council.
Cllr Whorlow	Vice Chair for Adur and Worthing Community Safety Partnership. Cabinet Member for Safety, Equalities and Inclusion at Worthing Borough Council.
Cllr Williams	Cabinet Lead for Public Health and Asset Management at Wealden District Council.

37. Urgent Matters

37.1 No urgent matters were raised by the Panel.

38. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

38.1 The Panel was asked to approve the draft minutes of the previous meeting on 31 January 2025 as an accurate record (cream paper).

38.2 Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 31 January 2025 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the chair.

39. Panel Correspondence since the last Meeting

39.1 The Chair asked the Panel to note the correspondence sent and received since matters raised at the meeting on 31 January.

39.2 Resolved – that the Panel noted the correspondence received since 31 January 2025.

40. Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner

40.1 The Panel noted a published version of written public and Panel questions with answers from the Commissioner (copy appended to the signed minutes).

40.2 The Chair invited questions from the Panel to the Commissioner. A summary of the main questions and responses were as follows:

1. Question: With some 999 calls in rural areas of Sussex being redirected to Kent or adjoining authorities for action, what improvements might be considered by Sussex Police in order to improve communication between the police and rural residents when reporting crime.

Answer: The Commissioner affirmed that Sussex Police have consistently been placed first nationally for answering 999 calls within the allotted time limit, and that cross-border work only resulted when a Sussex patrol vehicle wasn't available to take the job. The Commissioner added that new technology had just been launched that would improve feedback to members of the public who report to the police and they would look to see how that progressed over the coming weeks.

2. Question: Where residents live close to the Kent border in the north of Sussex, can clarification be offered that information reported to Kent Police due to being redirected to Kent, is then sent on to Sussex Police?

Answer: The Commissioner confirmed that there was a protocol for information reported to another police force being sent on to the appropriate force, and that she would seek clarification from Sussex Police around 999 calls from certain area trunk codes being automatically directed to Kent instead of Sussex Police.

3. Question: If ANPR cameras were placed on private land in order to combat rural crime, could the evidence be used by the police due to the location of the cameras?

Answer: The Commissioner said that the question was operational in nature and out of her remit. It was confirmed that the police could consider any evidence when investigating a crime, regardless of the

location it was taken from, however whether it would be permissible for use in prosecution, would be another matter.

4. Question: On the issue of County Lines and cuckooing, what is planned strategically across Sussex, currently and over the next four years, to address these issues?

Answer: The Commissioner stated that police work to address County Lines and its associated crimes was ongoing and operationally sensitive. In reference to cuckooing, the Commissioner said that the new Policing and Crime Bill was explicitly focused on combating cuckooing, with the aim to make it a specific offence to protect the public as it is not currently an offence and requires the use of other laws in order to convict criminals who have engaged in cuckooing.

5. Question: It was requested that a future report spotlight County Lines and cuckooing, with focus on the police response and future plans to continue addressing these issues.

Answer: The Commissioner explained that county lines was largely handled by the National Crime Agency and the regional crime units, with intelligence being dispersed to individual forces as appropriate, and that this was a national, ongoing priority for all forces. She confirmed she would be happy to provide a report with relevant statistics for the Panel to consider.

6. Question: In reference to the measures in the Police and Crime Bill to combat violence against women and girls, does the Commissioner welcome these and are there adequate resources to implement them in Sussex?

Answer: The Commissioner stated that she welcomed the Bill and that it had not been lost as a priority due to the changes in central government. She further added that she particularly welcomed the measures tackling stalking, child criminal exploitation, and child sexual abuse.

7. Question: Were there any additional areas not covered by the Bill that the Commissioner would have liked to have seen addressed? And how much input did the Commissioner have into the contents of the Bill?

Answer: The Commissioner said that she had been given a lot of input under the previous government and this input was carried over by the current government and is reflected in several areas of the Bill. The Commissioner confirmed that the opposition were consulting on the contents of the Bill with the Conservative PCC group and would present their response in due course.

8. Question: Does the Commissioner consider that the local resilience forum would gain more autonomy and resources from LGR and is it expected that the PCC will be delegated authority from the government?

Answer: The Commissioner said that, while considering the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the government's announced increase in defence spending, there may be opportunities for the local resilience forums as well as with the implementation of mayors under the devolution proposals.

9. Question: The Commissioner was asked her thoughts on why Sussex Police had withdrawn from various working partnerships, such as the abandoned vehicles partnership with Wealden Council, with local authorities without prior consultation?

Answer: The Commissioner confirmed that this was all part of the Sussex Police Notice of Withdrawal from the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, the notice of which was given in September 2024. The Commissioner stressed that this did not mean that Sussex Police would no longer be working on the roads or with local partners. The Commissioner also stated that the abandoned vehicles partnership was a national outlier and went against national police policy, and that this was a statutory duty for the local authority to administer.

10. Question: as a supplemental question to the above, would Sussex Police's withdrawal from the partnership cause long-term delays and a reduction in the level of service for removing abandoned vehicles?

Answer: The Commissioner advised that where representations about Sussex Police's withdrawal needed to be made, these should be made to the ABP working group and through senior operational managers.

11. Question: With reference to the recent cases in the London Metropolitan Police service around police vetting, could the Commissioner supply equivalent statistics for Sussex Police, for officers on vetting leave and for officers whose vetting status was being reviewed, for a future meeting?

Answer: The Commissioner reassured the Panel that the issue of vetting police officers had been reviewed by Sussex Police and remained on their radar. It was confirmed to the Panel that in light of the High Court ruling, all forces were reviewing their vetting processes and outstanding cases, with the impact on Sussex being risk assessed as extremely low. The Commissioner confirmed she would be happy to provide those statistics if possible.

12. Question: In light of the precept increase approved at the last meeting of the Panel, how much of the precept is funded by Brighton and Hove residents, as there was a perception by residents in these areas that they paid more than they received in return?

Answer: The Commissioner stressed that Sussex Police is a force that covers two geographical counties and is pro-rata-ed against that. The Commissioner further stressed that the residents of Brighton and Hove receive a large portion of those resources due to its size, population, and their high crime rate.

41. Sussex Police and Crime Plan 2024/2028 - Report from the OSPCC

41.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.

41.2 The Commissioner introduced the report and apologised for the delay in publishing the report due to waiting for the government's policing and crime reforms to be announced. The Commissioner further advised that the report would be updated in due course as more announcements on reform were made.

41.3 A summary of questions from the Panel and answers is as follows:

1. Question: How will the intelligence-led Fatal Five Roads Unit make a difference to residents, and how this will differ from previous approaches?

Answer: The Commissioner explained that they were currently in discussions with Sussex Police around a business plan for the unit, but that proposals for how the unit would operate would be for it to comprise of mobile officers who could move according to local need to carry out enforcement work, in order to tackle the Fatal Five, namely speeding, driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, driving while using a mobile phone, and not wearing a seatbelt.

2. Question: How will the Commissioner measure the success of this unit once it is operational?

Answer: The Commissioner said that the ultimate measure of success will lie in the reduction of incidents resulting in people 'killed or seriously injured' (KSIs), and stressed that in 12 years of the Safer Roads Partnership, this has not reduced so it was time to change strategy and this new unit proposal would work to achieve that.

3. Question: Page 39 of the report references performance measures for each of the priorities and policing objectives listed in the plan but there were not included in the plan. How does the Commissioner plan to make these publicly available, and to the Panel?

Answer: The Commissioner explained that she had access to a wide range of tools to hold the Chief Constable to account, all of which provided robust, detailed information with which to measure success or failure of objectives, which were publicly available via the monthly performance meetings held with the Chief Constable which were also webcast and archived to encourage scrutiny and accountability. The Commissioner concluded by stressing that this document was a strategic document, not an operational one.

4. Question: as a supplementary question to the above, for the benefit of scrutiny, might it not be useful to have a summary of measures with performance to measure against?

Answer: The Commissioner reminded the Panel that she published an annual report which would highlight these measurements and how these are achieved.

5. Question: In light of the local government reforms announced by the government, what is the legal status of the plan going forward?

Answer: The Commissioner explained that the document was a live document and was a statutory requirement for a police and crime commissioner to produce such plans for their four-year term. The Commissioner further added that it was her understanding that the powers and responsibilities of the PCC would be assumed by the mayor once elected.

6. Question: In reference to the violence against women and girls (VAWG) agenda, would the Commissioner be working alongside partners to introduce initiatives such as SPOs and the Richmond open spaces protocol?

Answer: The Commissioner confirmed there were several public space protection orders in force across Sussex, implemented by Sussex Police in partnership with local authorities. She added that she would continue to work with local authorities to keep all members of the public safe in public spaces, as set out in the plan.

7. Question: Has the Commissioner seen that increased visibility of police has improved public confidence in the police, leading to reductions in crime rates, as referenced in the plan?

Answer: The Commissioner stressed that feelings of safety are subjective and can differ from person to person, which is why general language was used, and added that they had seen tangible improvements in public confidence as a result of increased police visibility, measured by the reductions of crimes seen in areas where hotspot policing has been implemented.

8. Question: as a supplementary question to the above, on pages 38 and 40 of the plan, where the term 'to make women and girls feel safer' is used, what more could be done to monitor and calculate success on this measure? And what could be done to make women and girls 'be' safer as opposed to merely feeling safer?

Answer: The Commissioner said that safety for individual people was largely subjective and varied from person to person and so they used a general wording to reflect this. The Commissioner explained that she used that wording, after consulting with voluntary partners in the VAWG sphere, because she wanted women and girls to not just be safe as an objective measurement of reduced crime but also to feel safe so they would be able to report a crime if and when it happens to them, which is why that wording was used.

9. Question: To encourage residents to feel safe, not just when walking in their local areas, but also when cycling, could police officers on bicycles be made more visible and available to residents?

Answer: The Commissioner said that there are police bicycles in some of the cities and added that the Chief Constable had recently changed the

training methods for probationary police officers to ensure they spend more time 'on the beat' and in their local communities to encourage public confidence and to learn beat craft rather than spending all their time in response vehicles.

10. Question: What assurances can the Commissioner give to the Panel that she and the police will work constructively as equal partners to make Sussex's roads safer?

Answer: The Commissioner said that improving road safety is a key priority in the plan and that the Chief Constable would be required to give due regard to that priority in her operational planning. She further reiterated her commitment to working together with the police and local authorities to reduce the mortality rates on Sussex roads.

11. Question: With reference to the Commissioner's words on ensuring police capacity to tackle the volume and complexity of fraud and cybercrime, is it a true assessment that they currently do not have that capacity? And if so, how could that change?

Answer: The Commissioner expressed her view that expecting police forces to tackle fraud and cybercrime alone would be a bad idea, which was why the previous government set up the National Cybercrime Centre, with work being led by the National Crime Agency, the Cybercrime Intelligence Centre, and the City of London Police to support police forces, and that the wording in the plan was to assess how Sussex Police contributes to that while acknowledging that they cannot tackle this issue alone.

12. Question: Is the Commissioner confident in the current partnership approach to tackling fraud and cybercrime?

Answer: While stressing that she did not have the level of oversight that central government ministers do, the Commissioner stated that Sussex Police was functioning well at the local level in working with partners and looking for ways to improve their approaches and capacity to tackle fraud and cybercrime.

13. Question: Would someone who caused a KSI due to drug driving be stripped of their licence, especially if the incident resulted in a fatality and the driver had been previously found to be under the influence of drugs?

Answer: The Commissioner acknowledged there was a loophole in regards to drug driving prior to being charged in court, which she had raised with the Chief Constable, and iterated that the Chief Constable was keen to see that loophole closed.

14. Question: Considering the growing prevalence of digital forensics in the investigation of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) cases, is Sussex Police currently utilising digital forensics or intending to do so? And what future does the Commissioner see Sussex Police pursuing if they do not currently use or intend to use digital forensics in investigating RASSO cases?

Answer: The Commissioner acknowledged the increasing prevalence of digital forensics in RASSO cases and assured the Panel that Sussex Police pursues all avenues of investigation, including all methods and technologies in digital forensics to investigate RASSO cases. Further, she affirmed that Sussex Police remains linked in with Op Soteria and the national ongoing work in this area, with an ongoing commitment to invest in new technologies to improve capacity in this area.

41.4 Members observed that the plan acknowledged the work of the voluntary sector in supporting the police, both behind the scenes and on frontline duties, and how invaluable this support has been for Sussex Police in improving their approach to tackling various crimes.

42. The role of the Sussex PCC in holding Sussex Police to account for improving the response provided to business crime

42.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.

42.2 The Commissioner introduced the report.

42.3 A summary of the Panel's questions and answers is as follows:

1. Question: What learning has been sought from Crawley and how can they be replicated to improve in other areas of Sussex?

Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that the improvement was also being replicated across Sussex, citing the fact that of all South East police forces, Sussex had the highest reporting rate for business crime, which indicated that the ongoing work was going well. The Commissioner also said she wanted to commend the Chief Constable's courage in encouraging businesses to report crime, knowing it might draw criticism due to the rates of crime, but reporting is a key part of addressing the issue and reducing the crime rate in future.

2. Question: In reference to the district of Rother, which has seen an increase of 79% from 2023-2024, would the Commissioner engage more with other town councils and town management systems outside the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), in Rother, and across Sussex?

Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that she works across all areas of Sussex, whether they have a BID or not, and emphasised the importance of the Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs). She further stated that the increase in reporting in Rother was ultimately a good sign of local businesses feeling confident to report and engage with the police.

3. Question: With the perception among some communities that business crime, and in particular shoplifting, is a victimless crime, what more can be done to explain the impact that business crime has on communities as a potential deterrent?

Answer: The Commissioner explained her disappointment that shoplifting has become so unchallenged and her view that the only way to prevent criminality to ensure that the public know that there is a working deterrent to prevent such acts and ensure prosecution when they do occur, including electronic tagging for prolific shoplifters.

4. Question: Will the BCRPs be funded and for how long?

Answer: The Commissioner explained that they were currently in discussions about how to fund the BCRPs and the duration of said funding.

5. Question: When someone underage steals from a shop, what happens to them?

Answer: The Commissioner explained that, in her view, there are three types of perpetrators who engage in shop theft: firstly, those involved with organised crime, those stealing due to some form of necessity, and those who were opportunists who do tend to be younger. The Commissioner emphasised that they don't necessarily want opportunist shop thefts to be immediately criminalised on the first offence, instead ensuring they are educated as to the impact of their actions and consequences if they should reoffend.

6. Question: What can be done to tackle the reseller market after shop theft has occurred?

Answer: The Commissioner explained that the retailers had made it clear that they wanted to go after the reseller markets to further deter the theft of goods for resale. The Commissioner said that issue was going to be addressed at the next Retail Crime Forum but that she was not sure yet what that would look like.

7. Question: Considering recent press reports that Worthing has one of the worst shoplifting rates in the county and the conflicting date that there has been a 22% reduction in business crime in the report for that area, what is the reason for this conflict in the statistics?

Answer: The Commissioner explained that the press tend to get their information through Freedom of Information (FOIs) requests and thus, the information is usually out of date by the time they receive it, whereas the data included in the report is the most up-to-date data available and recorded through Sussex Police.

8. Question: Does the Commissioner think that the reduction shown in the statistics for Worthing is because of crime reduction or businesses not engaging with reporting business crime?

Answer: The Commissioner stated that she felt there was a lot of good work going on in Worthing, including several pilot schemes to encourage business crime reporting, and this was having a deterring effect. The Commissioner further explained one of these pilot schemes, a One-Touch reporting scheme for the local Co-Op with a protocol for reporting agreed with Sussex Police which continued to be successful.

9. Question: Page 67 of the report shows an increase of only 2% in crime reporting in the Wealden area. Does the Commissioner think this is due to a lack of reporting and retailers not engaging with the police when business crime occurs?

Answer: The Commissioner said that Wealden has shown an increase in reporting, which to be encouraged, and that Wealden has only just rolled out the Disc platform for businesses to report crime which may be why there has not been as large an increase in reporting as seen in other areas of Sussex.

10. Question: The Panel asked for clarification on the pilot scheme being run with the Co-Op in Worthing and the crimes that are or are not being reported, and if these are included in the datasets within the report.

Answer: The Commissioner explained that the police had provided Co-Op staff with a protocol for recording information about crimes that is then sent on to police for them to determine if the intelligence is actionable and that all crimes, whether recorded or formally reported, are included within the report's datasets.

11. Question: Has any analysis been conducted to determine if there's a correlation between areas of deprivation and increase in shop theft?

Answer: The Commissioner said that the retailers have been clear that these shop thefts have been driven by organised crime gangs, with an estimated £2 billion in losses in the last year, and operate across multiple areas and counties. She further explained that on a local level, prolific offenders are more likely to be driven by drugs or alcohol dependencies as their motive for stealing. The Commissioner stressed that in the uncommon case where someone is stealing to live, the police would look to help them by signposting them to organisations that can aid them rather than criminalise them.

12. Question: As a supplementary to the previous question, are the organised crime gangs recruiting shop thieves in the same manner as the drug gangs recruit?

Answer: The Commissioner agreed there were similarities, explaining that the gangs are run like business and are unfortunately highly effective.

42.4 The Chair summarised the discussions, stating that the Panel had been interested to look at the data from the perspective of local areas and the importance of BCRPs in maintaining this increase in business crime reporting. The Chair further said that there were no actions for this agenda but asked the Panel to agree to note the report.

42.5 The Panel agreed to note the report.

43. Quarterly Report of Complaints

Agenda Item 5

43.1 The Panel noted that there have been no complaints received as of 10 March 2025.

44. Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates

44.1 The Chair noted the next meeting of the Panel will take place on Thursday 3 July 2025, at 10:30am at County Hall, Lewes.

Future meeting dates have been proposed as:

- 3 October 2025
- 30 January 2026
- 16 February (Provisional)
- 13 March 2026

The meeting ended at 12.55 pm

Chairman



Councillor Andrei Czolak
Chair of Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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Via email

17 March 2025

Draft Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2024/28

Dear Commissioner Bourne,

Thank you for your engagement with the Panel during the 2024/28 Police & Crime Plan preparation process, culminating in statutory scrutiny of the latest draft at the meeting on 14 March 2025. The Panel supported and welcomed the draft Plan, but raised several points that I hope you will consider before the Plan is published.

A summary of the comments and suggestions follows.

- Although mention is made of performance measures being drawn up, none have been set out in the draft Plan. It would be helpful for these to be published, so that the public are clear on what constitutes success, or failure.
- Concerns were raised around whether it would be better if the focus on increasing confidence in Sussex Police, and making women and girls *feel* safer, should instead be a focus on residents *being* safer, through a reduction in the incidence of crime.
- The Panel was reassured that Sussex Police would continue to work in partnership with the highway authorities in working to make our roads safer.
- The Panel welcomed the recognition of the increased demands placed upon digital forensics, and the importance of this work in tackling crime.

The Panel would be grateful to receive your response in due course.

With best wishes,

Councillor Andrei Czolak
Chair of Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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Katy Bourne OBE
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**Sussex
Police & Crime
Commissioner**

Councillor Andrei Czolak
Chair of the Sussex Police & Crime Panel
County Hall
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27 March 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dear Mr Czolak".

Draft Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2024/28

Thank you for your letter dated 17 March 2025.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Sussex Police & Crime Panel for their positive feedback about my draft Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2024/28 at its meeting earlier this month.

Further to the discussions at the meeting, I can confirm the following in respect of the four areas you have highlighted:

- I am satisfied that the text included within the 'Monitoring and Measuring Progress Against the Priorities' section of the plan sets out how the performance of the Chief Constable, Sussex Police and policing and crime stakeholders will be measured.

As discussed at the meeting, the performance measures contained within the plan comprise a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures as listed in the individual bullet points contained within the series of supporting police and crime objectives provided under each of the three overarching public priorities.

I have a weekly meeting with the Chief Constable [or Deputy Chief Constable in her absence] and continue to use publicly webcast monthly Performance & Accountability Meetings (PAMs) to hold the senior leaders within the Force to account for the performance of Sussex Police. My office is also represented on the strategic oversight boards held by Sussex Police at which performance against all crime types is presented and discussed on a monthly and/or quarterly basis.

The Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Office for National Statistics and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) provide regular assessments and comparative evaluations of police force performance in England and Wales, with the figures and relative position of Sussex Police to other police forces providing me with an additional source of independent data to check and challenge how the Force is delivering on the priorities contained within my Sussex Police & Crime Plan.



In addition to these assessments, quarterly Community Safety Partnership meetings are held locally across Sussex which further scrutinise crime and policing data across local geographical areas, including the consideration of regional and/or national Neighbourhood Watch reports.

The support services provided to victims and witnesses in Sussex is also rated by users and quality-assured by the Ministry of Justice and Home Office, alongside the unannounced visits made by Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) to independently monitor and observe the care and dignity of people detained in each of the five police custody centres in Sussex.

Lastly, we use public satisfaction surveys – conducted by the Force and my office – which allows us to cross-reference individual experiences of interactions with the police service by location and demographic features.

I will formally report on the progress made and achievements demonstrated against the plan to the Panel through my annual report.

- I am reassured that the wording used within section '1b. Tackle violence against women and girls to make them feel safer in public spaces' of the plan remains appropriate. As highlighted at the meeting, my plan has been developed in consultation with members of the public, victims and partners to ensure that it accurately reflects the policing, crime and community safety issues most important to everyone.

My fundamental aim is to make Sussex safer for everyone through effective and visible deterrence and prevention activity, alongside the provision of a swift and appropriate police response, investigation and prosecution of offenders, with parallel support provided for all victims and witnesses.

We know that if individuals **feel** safe because of these measures they are more likely to have the trust and confidence to report incidents to the police which, in turn, enables the Force to solve more crimes and, consequently, make people and places **safer**.

The terminology used in the plan is also reflective of the discussions I have had with victims, survivors and support service providers in Sussex to better understand their feelings around safety and ensure that this wording remains appropriate. As such, I can confirm that the **feel safer** wording used in the draft plan will continue to remain in the final version published on my website and I thank Panel members for their useful discussion around this.

- As highlighted at the meeting, Sussex Police remain dedicated to improving road safety but both the Chief Constable and I recognise that there are better ways of working with local partners in this area to improve the effectiveness of the response provided, outside of the current Sussex Safer Roads Partnership structure.

I will continue to support the Chief Constable in the creation of more effective partnership working to reduce the number of road traffic collisions and individuals killed or seriously injured on the roads in Sussex. This will include supporting Sussex Police to establish a dedicated and intelligence-led Fatal Five Roads Unit to tackle anti-social driving behaviour and address the 'fatal five' factors behind collisions to save lives – speeding; drink and drug driving; not wearing a seatbelt; driver distractions, and careless driving.

Katy Bourne OBE
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

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The Office of the
Sussex Police &
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Sackville House
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**Sussex
Police & Crime
Commissioner**

- I am grateful that the Panel members recognised the exponential increase in digital evidence and the importance of Sussex Police improving their response to this. The heightened volume and demand for the examination of an array of digital devices and the scale of the information and data that now needs to be extracted from these has created additional challenges for the Force to gather this digital evidence in an efficient and effective manner.

Police officers and staff must continue to have the capacity, capability, systems and equipment required to respond to the volume and complexities of interrogating these devices to extract the digital forensics necessary to investigate these offences effectively.

The precept uplift in 2025/26 [which was supported by the majority of Panel members in January 2025] will build on the investment made in this area in recent years by preserving the improvements made to the digital support provisions available to support police investigations and the innovative analytical tools required to deliver smarter evidence-based policing in Sussex.

I look forward to sharing a copy of my finalised Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2024/28 with you and the Panel members before the end of the month.

Yours sincerely

Katy Bourne OBE
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

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Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner

3 July 2025

Report by the Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel

Below is a schedule of the questions received prior to this meeting and where possible responses have been included. Responses will be tabled at the meeting that were not available at the time of despatch. Written questions must be received two weeks before a meeting of the Panel and the Commissioner or Panel Chairman is invited to provide a response by noon of the day before the meeting.

Questions relating to operational matters of Sussex Police are passed to a relevant officer at Sussex Police for a response, with a brief summary of such questions provided below. For the current meeting, two questions have been received from one correspondent for response from the Commissioner.

1. Written question from Nigel Jacklin of Normans Bay, East Sussex.

Question:

"In response to my January question relating to the cost of policing potential disorder in August 2024 you wrote:

The Chief Constable submitted a claim of £113,000 to the Home Office in November 2024 for reimbursement of the costs incurred by Sussex Police in response to this disorder locally through Operation Skylark. The Force is still awaiting a decision from the Home Office in respect of these costs and no payment has been received to date."

Has a decision been made and if so, can you share it?"

Answer: TBC

2. Written Question from Nigel Jacklin of Normans Bay, East Sussex.

Question:

"Are there any published statistics you can share about the number of complaints received by Sussex Police, how long Sussex Police take to respond to these complaints and the proportion that get referred to you for review?"

Agenda Item 7

Are you satisfied with these levels of complaints, referrals and time taken and do you have any other observations based on the complaints you see?"

Answer: TBC



SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME PANEL

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

3 July 2025

Review of Membership and Proportionality

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Recommendations

That the Panel:

1. Agrees that Brighton and Hove City Council be invited to appoint a Conservative second representative to the Panel (see para 2.2 & 2.3), for a one-year period of office, to take effect immediately.
2. Agrees that both East and West Sussex County Councils should each be invited to appoint an additional local authority member for a one-year period of office (see 2.6); and
3. Subject to agreeing recommendations 1 and 2, agrees to invite appointments of a Conservative second councillor from East Sussex County Council and a Conservative second councillor from West Sussex County Council. (see 2.6 and 2.7), to take effect immediately.

1. Background

- 1.1 Schedule 6, paragraph 31 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the Act) requires the Panel to consider ("from time to time") whether available seats could be assigned to additional councillor members to enable the balanced appointment objective to be met, or more effectively met. If so, the Act requires the Panel to exercise this option. The balanced appointment objective is that the councillor members of the Panel (when taken together) represent the political make-up of the 15 Sussex local authorities (when taken together). The Constitution of Sussex Police and Crime Panel sets out that the Panel reviews its political make-up and size once a year, at its Annual Meeting.
- 1.2 The 15 Sussex local authorities can appoint any councillor of their choosing (i.e. without regard to that councillor's political affiliation).

2. Additional Local Authority Members

Agenda Item 8

- 2.1 The Panel is required to appoint additional councillors from East Sussex County Council and/or West Sussex County Council if these would improve political proportionality and, as set out below, this is now the case.
- 2.2 Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) has an automatic second appointment, which must be made in accordance with the Panel’s recommendation as to political affiliation.
- 2.3 Referring to appendix 1, the allocation of the second BHCC seat to a Conservative councillor for 2025/26 is the most effective means of contributing towards the balanced appointment objective.

Recommendation 1:

That the Panel:

- 1. Agrees that Brighton and Hove City Council be invited to appoint a Conservative second representative to the Panel, for a one-year period of office.

Including the second BHCC Conservative councillor appointment, the resulting Panel make-up is below:

Table 1 – Political Make-Up of a 16 Member Panel, Assuming Recommendation 1

Number of Councillor Seats	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Green
16	3	5	5	3

- 2.4 From Appendix 1, the theoretical politically proportionate make-up of a 16/17/18-member Panel is (as of 17 June 2025) set out in Table 2. The statutory maximum number of councillor Panel members is 18. For the purposes of this discussion, the two Independent Co-opted Panel Members are not considered.

Table 2 – Theoretical Politically Proportionate Panel Make-Up

Number of Councillor Seats	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Green	Other Parties
16	4.61	3.94	3.70	1.91	1.84
17	4.9	4.19	3.93	2.03	1.95
18	5.19	4.44	4.16	2.15	2.07

- 2.5 The Panel’s Constitution states that in order to meet the statutory duties imposed under the Act, additional Local Authority Members must be

appointed from each of the county councils on the agreement of the Panel, to address any perceived imbalance in political proportionality. Such members will have a one-year period of office. The Panel should today review its proportionality against the political make-up of Sussex and determine the arrangement it wishes to operate for 2025/26.

- 2.6 Considering the data in appendix 1, and assuming under recommendation 1 that the Panel agrees that the additional member from BHCC for 2025/26 be a Conservative councillor, the most politically proportionate Panel would arise if both of the county councils were to each appoint a Conservative councillor.
- 2.7 For clarity, make-up of the resulting 18-councillor Panel, by political party, will be as below:

Conservative	5 (5.19)
Liberal Democrat	5 (4.44)
Labour	5 (4.16)
Green	3 (2.15)

Note:

- 1. Shown in parenthesis is the politically proportionate aspiration

Recommendations 2 and 3

That the Panel:

- 2 Agrees that both East and West Sussex County Councils should each be invited to appoint an additional local authority member, for a one-year period of office; and
- 3 Subject to agreeing recommendations 1 and 2, agrees to invite appointments of a Conservative second councillor from East Sussex County Council and a Conservative second councillor from West Sussex County Council.

3. Resource Implications and Value for Money

- 3.1 For 2025/26, the Home Office grant allows for up to £920 per Panel Member for travelling expenses.

4. Risk Management Implications

- 4.1 The Panel must strive to be politically and geographically proportionate. Failure to adequately do so risks breaching the relevant terms of the Act.

5. Other Considerations – Equality – Crime Reduction – Human Rights

- 5.1 Not applicable.

Agenda Item 8

Tony Kershaw

Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Political Make-up of Sussex Local Authorities (17 June 2025)

Political Make-Up of Sussex Local Authorities (June 2025)

Authority	Principal Member's Party	Con	LD	Lab	Green	Reform	AOI ₂	Brighton and Hove Ind	Hastings Ind	Arun Ind	Wealden Ind	West Sussex Green and Ind Alliance	Ind Dem	CDC Green and Local Alliance	Burges Hill Ind	Worthing Ind	Shoreham Beach Residents Assoc	Ind ₁	Vacancy	Total
Adur	Labour	7		17	2												2	1		29
Arun	Green	19	14	8	5	2				2								4		54
Brighton & Hove	Labour	5		36	8			2										3		54
Chichester	Lib Dem	5	25											6						36
Crawley	Labour	11		25																36
East Sussex	Conservative	24	12	5	5								2					2		50
Eastbourne	Lib Dem	8	19																	27
Hastings	Green	5		9	12				6											32
Horsham	Lib Dem	12	27		9															48
Lewes	Green		15	8	16													2		41
Mid Sussex	Lib Dem	18	20	1	4										1			4		48
Rother	Labour	10	6	8	3		7											3	1	38
Wealden	Lib Dem	10	11	2	11						7		4							45
West Sussex	Conservative	41	10	9		4						5						1		70
Worthing	Labour	11		21	2											3				37
Total		186	159	149	77	6	7	2	6	2	7	5	6	6	1	3	2	20	1	645
Proportionality		28.84%	24.65%	23.10%	11.94%	0.93%	1.09%	0.31%	0.93%	0.31%	1.09%	0.78%	0.93%	0.93%	0.16%	0.47%	0.31%	3.10%	0.16%	
Seats	16	4.61	3.94	3.70	1.91	0.15	0.17	0.05	0.15	0.05	0.17	0.12	0.15	0.15	0.02	0.07	0.05	0.50	0.02	
Seats	17	4.90	4.19	3.93	2.03	0.16	0.18	0.05	0.16	0.05	0.18	0.13	0.16	0.16	0.03	0.08	0.05	0.53	0.03	
Seats	18	5.19	4.44	4.16	2.15	0.17	0.20	0.06	0.17	0.06	0.20	0.14	0.17	0.17	0.03	0.08	0.06	0.56	0.03	

Summary of 15 Principal Members:

Conservative	2
Liberal Democrat	5
Labour	5
Green	3

Notes:

Ind₁ Proportionality calculated for a group. However, since this category comprises several separate independent members, the actual proportionality is lower

AOI₂ Association of Independents

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SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME PANEL

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

3 July 2025

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2024/25

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Recommendations

That the Panel:

1. Reviews, puts questions to the Commissioner, and makes recommendations on the Annual Report and draft Financial Outturn Report for 2024/25

1. Background

- 1.1 In accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Commissioner must provide the Panel with their Annual Report, and the Panel must question the Commissioner and review it.
- 1.2 Following the meeting, the Panel must make and publish a report to the Commissioner. The Commissioner must respond to the report and publish the response.

2. Discussion

- 2.1 The applicable Police and Crime Plan in place for the reporting period is that for 2021/24, which can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3GWKfE1>
- 2.2 The three objectives (termed Public Priorities) set out in the Plan are:
 - Strengthen local policing, tackle crime and prevent harm
 - Relentless disruption of serious and organised crime
 - Support victims cope and safeguard the vulnerable
- 2.3 The content and structure of the Annual Report should be determined on the basis of local preferences and need, but might include:
 - How the PCC has exercised and fulfilled their statutory duties and functions in each financial year

- The progress that has been made in the year in meeting the objectives in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan (see 2.2)
 - End-of-year performance against any targets set, including exception reporting on any areas in which performance has substantially fallen short of, or exceeded, expectations
 - Performance outcomes in relation to specific crime, community safety or criminal justice grants or feedback on delivery at a geographical area or departmental level
 - End-of-year financial positions, including how resources have been allocated, details of any significant under or overspend and the decisions made with regard to council tax precept
 - Aims and aspirations for the following year, based on any re-evaluation of local need.
- 2.4 Following the meeting, a report by the Panel will be prepared in consultation with the Chairman, and dispatched and published within two working days.

Tony Kershaw

Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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Appendices:

Appendix A – OSPCC Covering Report for the Commissioner's Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2024/25

Appendix B - Annual Report 2024/25



To:	The Sussex Police & Crime Panel.
From:	The Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner.
Subject:	The Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner's Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2024/25.
Date:	3 July 2025.
Recommendation:	That the Sussex Police & Crime Panel note the report.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update on performance against the three Public Priorities set out in the Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2021/24 and the policing and crime objectives contained within for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
- 1.2 The report also sets out the draft financial outturn position for 2024/25, ahead of the audited accounts being published.

2.0 Annual Report 2024/25

- 2.1 The Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) has a statutory duty to produce an Annual Report as set out in Chapter 3 – Section 12(1) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.
- 2.2 The Act prescribes that the content of the Annual Report should include:
 - (a) the exercise of the elected local policing body's functions in each financial year; and
 - (b) the progress which has been made in the financial year in meeting the policing and crime objectives in the body's Police & Crime Plan.

3.0 Achievements, areas of work and progress made in 2024/25

- 3.1 The achievements, areas of work and progress made by the PCC and her office in 2024/25 are summarised in the Annual Report under each of the Public Priorities contained within the [previous] plan, as follows:

Priority 1 – Strengthen policing, tackle crime, prevent harm and anti-social behaviour.
Priority 2 – Relentless disruption of serious and organised crime.
Priority 3 – Support and safeguard victims and tackle violence against women and girls.

- 3.2 The draft financial outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2025 is also included within the report, ahead of the audited accounts being published.

Mark Streater
Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer
Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

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**Sussex
Police & Crime
Commissioner**

**Annual Report and
Financial Outturn Report
2024/25**

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1. Introduction

Welcome to my 2024/25 Annual Report.

This is my 12th annual report looking back for the year on how the policing priorities for Sussex, determined by residents, have been addressed and how local people feel about their police force.

The following pages are a summary of the policing and community safety initiatives supported by my office and the quality assured services provided for victims of crime that I fund.

You will see that I continue to exercise my statutory duty to scrutinise the performance of Sussex Police and ensure it delivers efficient and effective policing despite increases in demand and rising costs. There has been significant progress made in some key aspects of Force performance and areas that show the benefits of applying new technology and better processes, particularly around public contact and call-handling times.

With the change of Government last year, some funding for previously successful programmes [including Immediate Justice] were either cut or ended, whilst other funding streams to tackle violent crime, anti-social behaviour and shoplifting [including 'hotspot policing'] were maintained.

Based on what the public, the residents and businesses in Sussex tell me, I have developed a Police & Crime Plan for each term I have been elected to serve as PCC. You can read the latest plan on my website [[HYPERLINK](#)].

The public tell me that it is the visible presence of police officers that makes them feel safe so I am delighted that Sussex Police has exceeded its recruitment targets and that we achieved a headcount of 3,297 police officers by March 2025. This was equivalent to 3,216 full-time equivalent (FTE) posts.

The deployment of a new telephony platform in November 2023, led to Sussex Police becoming one of the top performing police forces in England and Wales for much of the past year and the best in the country during the month of May 2024 for timeliness in answering calls. Alongside the Queue Buster call system and encouraging more contact online, Sussex Police reduced the volume of calls it receives and the number of abandoned calls recorded. The Force is currently trialling the Citizens' Portal platform for some crimes so that victims can stay up to date with crime reports and investigations.

As is only right for a mainly rural county, Sussex is now very well served by a dedicated Rural Crime Team which has specialist police officers, drones and vehicles equipped to tackle a range of crimes. The team have developed good relationships with farms, businesses and rural communities, collating concerns and intelligence that they can share with neighbourhood policing teams and our bordering county forces, to tackle travelling criminal gangs and recover stolen plant equipment and machinery.

With most residents saying anti-social behaviour was the biggest issue for them, I secured funding for Sussex to be one of the Immediate Justice pilot areas which saw offenders cleaning graffiti, clearing public spaces and repairing damage with visible reparative activities. The public really liked this quick and effective payback programme so they will be disappointed to hear that the new Government has stopped funding it altogether.

We had better news securing £1.4million of funding for 'hotspot' policing which proved very effective at reducing violent crime, anti-social behaviour and shoplifting across 2024/25, delivering 831 extra policing days. As this report goes to print, I am pleased to confirm that further 'hotspot' funding for the year ahead has been committed.

Agenda Item 9

Appendix B

My office also secured continuation funding from the Home Office for the Sussex Violence Reduction Unit – first established over five years ago – enabling police and partners to continue the work that keeps the risk of violence against the person low in Sussex.

Having set up a specialist Drugs and County Lines Team called Centurion in 2021, Sussex Police has continued its effective collaboration with the Metropolitan Police Service and last year they targeted and dismantled 120 county drug lines supplying Sussex and Surrey. The Specialist Enforcement Unit and Tactical Enforcement Units have also kept up their pressure on serious and organised criminals. Together, the SEU and TEUs have conducted more than 1,000 searches and made over 950 arrests which is a great return on our investment in this additional specialist capability.

My office has been very successful in securing Safer Streets funding from the previous Government and, in 2024/25, we were able to allocate a further £351,500 for specific interventions to reduce violence against women and girls. We invested in eight victim co-ordinator posts [through Project Fides] as key contact points between female victims of rape and investigators, and they were able to support 1,400 victims over the year and re-engage 480 victims who had withdrawn from the criminal justice process.

Victims of fraud in the county can access support and advice from the Fraud Case Workers funded by my office and, last year, they helped 600 victims and recovered more than £1million from banking institutions that otherwise would have been lost.

For victims of people bereaved or seriously injured on our roads, I have continued to financially support the road safety charity Brake and, last year, our new dedicated Brake Caseworker supported 147 people affected by road deaths and injuries.

The Force still runs Operation Downsway which last year led to 772 traffic offence reports. The public made over 13,000 reports to Operation Crackdown to report dangerous and anti-social driving and our 3,000 Community Speedwatch volunteers reported more than 45,000 people exceeding the speed limit leading to more than 30,000 people being offered driver training courses as an alternative to prosecution.

With increases in collisions on our roads and an increase in the number of people killed or seriously injured, the Chief Constable and I took the decision to leave the stagnating Safer Sussex Roads Partnership to find better and more innovative ways to make our roads safer. Looking forward, I have agreed with the Chief Constable that the Force will establish a dedicated Fatal Five Roads Unit to tackle the antisocial behaviour, especially speeding, on the roads of Sussex.

The Business Crime Team in Sussex Police identified 29 'hotspot' locations with high volumes of shoplifting and repeat offending and, over the year, made 4,700 visits to businesses and met with 90,000 members of the public. This hotspot activity led to 300 arrests and was complemented by the rollout of the DISC platform – a cloud-based system for businesses and police to share information – with a 34% increase in crimes reported last year. With One Touch Reporting in place across 24 Co-op stores in Sussex, there has been a steady increase in successful outcomes for incidents reported by stores through this platform which increased to 18% in 2024/25 [compared to 11% in 2021/22].

Following the change of Government last year, I lobbied the incoming administration to maintain funding and support for the hugely successful Pegasus Partnership which I convened, bringing together 15 of the biggest retailers in the UK and the police service at a national level, to map organised retail crime gangs through the existing OPAL national crime unit for serious acquisitive crime. The intelligence analysts within OPAL have provided police forces with intel packages about hundreds of criminals and dozens of gangs which has led to 148 arrests, 10 deportations and a 50% reduction in high-harm retail offending by organised criminals. The retailers, who financially backed our Pegasus Partnership to the tune of £1million, were delighted that the Policing Minister has recognised the success of this unique collaboration and pledged £5million over the next three years to scale up the work of OPAL against organised retail crime gangs.

Whilst the risk of burglary is still low in Sussex and there has been steady progress in reducing domestic and business burglaries, I still want to see an improvement in solved rates for these offences and will continue to monitor the police's performance in this area carefully.

For the 12th year running, I have maintained community safety funding for the 12 District and Borough Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and for Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council. I have allocated £1.2million and my Partnerships Team works closely with each CSP on local initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour and safer streets activity.

Since 2014, PCCs have been responsible for commissioning services that help victims of crime cope and recover and, last year, nearly 50,000 victims were referred to our services which are quality-assured and funded with £5.4million from my office.

One of the highlights of the year for me is visiting the local crime prevention projects across our county. Last year, I was able to support a further 94 community initiatives through my Safer in Sussex Community Fund with £235,884, bringing the total to £2.3million and nearly 600 projects supported over the past ten years.

We have a well-deserved reputation for innovation and fresh approaches to crime prevention and offender management in Sussex and I am pleased to have instigated and funded ground-breaking prevention and perpetrator programmes to help offenders of stalking and domestic abuse to change their behaviour.

As the Chair of the Sussex Criminal Justice Board, I hear about the challenges to the capacity of our court, prison and probation services and we continue to work with the key stakeholders in the criminal justice system to try to support prison leavers and prevent re-offending.

For persistent shoplifters, I have long campaigned for electronic tagging to be used where offenders are not jailed and I am pleased to report that we will be trialling tagging later in 2025/26 and, after that, the introduction of live facial recognition technology.

After the local and national elections last year, Sussex saw some changes to the political landscape with new councillors and Members of Parliament elected. I want to welcome these newly-elected representatives and encourage them to reach out to my office if they think I can help with any of the issues raised by their constituents. I also want to thank the Sussex Police & Crime Panel, including its new members and Chair, for their continued support and diligence.

I must also acknowledge the members of staff in my office for their professionalism and total dedication to the people of Sussex as well as all the partners and volunteers who have stepped forward and stepped up over the past year.

Finally, I would like to thank Chief Constable Jo Shiner for her leadership and commitment to providing the best possible policing service for our county. I am delighted that her outstanding public service has been recognised with the award of the King's Police Medal.

I remain committed to delivering for all Sussex residents and making sure your concerns and ideas are heard and articulated.

I look forward to continuing to build on our collective achievements over the next year and further developing my effective working relationship with Sussex Police officers and staff in order to keep us all safer in Sussex.

Katy Bourne OBE
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

2. Progress Made Against Public Priorities

2a. Public Priority 1 – Strengthen policing, tackle crime, prevent harm and anti-social behaviour

Local, Visible and Accessible Policing

Recruitment of more police officers – Following a public consultation, the PCC was given public support to increase the policing part of the council tax for 2024/25. This added an extra £13 per year for an average Band D property and was supported and endorsed by the Police & Crime Panel at their meeting in January 2024.

This extra investment ensured that Sussex Police was able to preserve the improvements made to operational policing capacity, capability, visibility and accessibility through investment in previous years, despite the ongoing and significant financial challenges.

It has also supported the Force to deliver the change programmes required to ensure they have the most efficient policing model possible to protect communities, catch criminals and deliver an outstanding service. This has included building on the progress already made in crime prevention, response and investigations through further investment in digital support for investigation and analytics to deliver smarter evidence-based policing.

The previous Government also extended the maintenance grant to support police force areas in England and Wales to maintain police officer numbers during 2024/25, following the Police Uplift Programme (PUP) which recruited 20,000 new police officers in England and Wales over the past three years to 31 March 2023.

The maintenance grant was confirmed as £425million in 2024/25, with £9.1million allocated to Sussex Police. To qualify for the full amount, the Force was asked to maintain an enhanced baseline target figure of 3,226 officers [headcount] at two points within the year – 30 September 2024 and 31 March 2025. Sussex Police overachieved against both targets at each checkpoint with 3,297 officers [and 3,216.82 full time equivalent officers, based on actual hours worked] in post as of 31 March 2025 – this represented an additional 71 officers [headcount] compared to the enhanced target.

The PCC has also continued to work with the Chief Constable throughout the year to improve workforce diversity and ensure that this better reflects the demographics of Sussex, demonstrating a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity and promoting a culture that fully embraces this position.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2025/26, the PCC increased the precept by £14 per year for an average Band D property. This extra investment will protect essential policing services and ensure that the increases made to frontline police officers [through the precept and PUP since 2018] continue to be maintained.

Call Handling Times and Contact

Responding to a shift in demand for public contact – Call handling times and digital contact remains extremely important to members of the public who need to contact Sussex Police.

Sussex Police has observed a sustained change in public contact preferences, with members of the public increasingly opting for online and digital methods over traditional telephone calls. The PCC has supported the Force to respond to this shift in demand by improving its capacity to manage contact, engage with the public and reduce repeat calls through the recruitment of omniscient call handlers, improved triage processes and further enhancements made to technology, including the expansion of Single Online Home (SOH) capabilities – a platform that allows the public to report, transact and contact the police online.

There was a 10% reduction in the number of 999 calls received in 2024/25 which equated to 30,630 fewer emergency calls received compared to the year before. This shift in demand for emergency policing services was reflective of the nationally reducing trends recorded for police forces in England and Wales.

Of the 277,493 emergency calls received by the Force during the performance plan year, approximately 95% were answered within 10 seconds. Sussex Police was also the best performing police force in England and Wales in terms of 999 call handling performance across the month of May 2024, with 94.5% of the 24,236 emergency calls received by the Force answered within 10 seconds.

These improvements in performance are directly attributed to the introduction of a new telephony platform in November 2023 – as part of the Joint Force Contact and Telephony Programme – which has transformed the way that the Force is able to operate within the Force Contact, Command and Control Department (FCCCD). This has enabled contact handlers to automatically flex between emergency and non-emergency calls in an agile manner according to demand which has created omnicompetence amongst the workforce in the contact centre and maximises the number of individuals available to respond to incoming calls at any one time.

This enhanced ability to record, allocate and deploy resources to these different calls for service has been supported by the implementation of a new workforce management system which uses data as a forecasting tool to ensure that appropriate staffing levels are in place to respond to periods of peak demand. This approach has ensured that supervisors now spend less time on duty planning and rostering which has enabled them to better support the contact handlers with the calls for service they are responding to.

Non-emergency calls increased by 13% across 2024/25 with an additional 32,508 more 101 calls received across the year. This was the second consecutive year-on-year increase recorded for non-emergency calls recorded since 2022/23, despite the greater availability of alternative channels through which members of the public can now contact the police.

An average wait time of 2 minutes and 46 seconds was recorded for the 288,949 non-emergency calls received during 2024/25, with the number of abandoned calls also reducing to 7.7% across the year. This represented a further reduction of 1 minute and 24 seconds from 2023/24 [4 minutes and 10 seconds] and was directly attributed to the success of the new telephony platform and revised operating model. This represents continued and sustained progress compared to the average wait time of 14 minutes and 16 seconds per call recorded in 2018/19, prior to the commencement of the Contact Transformation Programme.

The introduction of QueueBuster – a call back service that provides members of the public calling 101 with a more convenient option to avoid having to wait on hold by creating a 'virtual position' for them in the queue during periods of peak demand – was also recognised to be positively contributing towards the reductions in the number of abandoned calls recorded. Sussex Police received 43,020 requests for a call back through QueueBuster during 2024/25, with an average response time of 11 minutes and 13 seconds provided for these calls.

The Force also recorded a 6% reduction in the number of webforms submitted to Sussex Police through the SOH across 2024/25. This equated to 4,470 fewer webforms received compared to the 69,484 digital contacts received across the year before, although some of this online demand is recognised to have shifted across to the non-emergency number because of the reduced average wait times demonstrated.

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SOH provides a nationally approved and structured capability to facilitate the more efficient and effective reporting of incidents and crimes through a dedicated webpage. Each of these webforms is triaged and graded within 24 hours to determine the most appropriate policing response and ensure that any potential risks or vulnerabilities are identified and prioritised, with an average response time of four hours provided for these digital contacts across 2024/25.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2025/26, Sussex Police will make further enhancements to the management and distribution of non-voice demand to provide a more responsive service, alongside improvements to the interactive voice response system and greater use of text messaging and Microsoft Teams to communicate with members of the public.

Road Safety

Making the roads in Sussex safer: The PCC has continued to encourage communities, road users and partners to play a full and active part in making the roads of Sussex safer, working in partnership with Operation Crackdown and Community Speed Watch groups to achieve this.

In October 2024, the Chief Constable and PCC recognised that there are better ways of working with local partners to improve the effectiveness of the response provided around road safety, outside of the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) structure, and formally announced that Sussex Police would be leaving the partnership on 31 March 2025. In 2025/26, the PCC will support the Chief Constable to find better ways of working with local partners in this area to improve the effectiveness of the response provided.

In 2024/25, there were 254 more collisions recorded in Sussex [8,716] which represented a 3% increase from the 8,462 collisions recorded in 2023/24. This contributed towards a 2% increase in the number of collisions involving victims killed and/or seriously injured (KSIs) on the roads in Sussex [474], compared to the 465 collisions recorded across the same period last year – this equated to an increase of nine collisions involving KSIs. Of the casualties, there were four more fatalities recorded [65] compared to the 61 fatalities recorded in 2023/24 [+7%].

The PCC has also continued to commission Brake – the road safety charity – to provide a specialist support service for people bereaved and seriously injured by road crashes. This funding has been used to provide a dedicated caseworker who supported 147 people impacted by road death and injury in Sussex during 2024/25.

Sussex Police has sustained Operation Downsway, a Forcewide operation established to target those using the roads irresponsibly in Sussex through speeding and anti-social driving/motorbike riding. This initiative focuses on the provision of education and enforcement activity at locations identified by communities as having concerns for road safety with two main aims: to target offenders, and to keep everyone safe on the roads of Sussex.

Operation Downsway contributed to the following operational activity in 2024/25:

- ✓ 138 breath and drug tests administered at the roadside, resulting in nine arrests for drink-and-drug driving/motorbike riding
- ✓ 772 traffic offence reports and 81 fixed penalty notices issued, with many motorists also asked to ensure that vehicles are maintained in a roadworthy condition under the Vehicle Defect Rectification Scheme
- ✓ 36 individuals issued with summonses to court
- ✓ 58 warnings provided to motorists for vehicles being used in a manner which causes alarm, distress or annoyance [Section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002]
- ✓ 548 instances where words of advice were offered to drivers and riders

Across the same period, more than 13,000 reports were made to Operation Crackdown – the online reporting platform for members of the public and partners to refer incidents of anti-social driving and/or abandoned vehicles. This activity has enabled Sussex Police to develop intelligence regarding repeat offenders, vehicles, times and locations which are used to plan, target and deploy police resources to respond to these concerns from members of the public, alongside supporting the Force to deliver proactive enforcement activity and provide educational materials to support and influence changes to driver and rider behaviour and attitudes.

The circa. 300 Community Speedwatch (CSW) groups in Sussex, utilising more than 3,000 volunteers, have continued to use detection devices to monitor local vehicle speeds in partnership with the police. During 2024/25, the volunteers reported more than 43,000 drivers exceeding the speed limit in their local communities to the police with the aim of educating drivers to slow down.

Through the Central Ticket & Summons Unit, over 68,000 offences were successfully concluded through a range of different legal outcomes, including over 30,000 individuals who were offered a place on the National Diversion Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) as an alternative to prosecution. This activity was supported by the Safety Camera Team who continued to provide high visibility enforcement throughout Sussex targeting the routes and roads where data highlighted a risk of collisions and KSIs due to excessive speed. More than 32,000 offences were detected at these locations before being progressed to either an educational or judicial disposal.

The Force has also continued to tackle the most serious, organised and persistent criminals by targeting the road networks in Sussex. The Specialist Enforcement Unit (SEU) has continued to carry out proactive countywide disruption and enforcement operations on the roads across the county. The SEU targets individuals using the road network for criminality, focusing on combatting organised acquisitive crime and providing dedicated resources to reduce those killed or seriously injured on the roads in Sussex.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2025/26, Sussex will focus on the areas where policing resources and expertise can have the greatest impact in terms of reducing the number of road traffic collisions and KSIs recorded on the roads in Sussex through the establishment of a dedicated and intelligence led Fatal Five Roads Unit.

Rural Crime

Maintained the Rural Crime Team – The PCC has continued to support the Chief Constable to maintain a **Rural Crime Team** [HYPERLINK] (RCT) in Sussex. The team was launched in 2020/21 and remains dedicated to protecting rural communities, their livelihoods and the unique challenges faced by those living and working in rural and isolated communities.

The RCT provides a proactive and visible policing presence across the rural areas in Sussex, working to reduce the levels of recorded crime and the associated fear of crime. The team is focused on building strong relationships with local communities, gathering intelligence, targeting offenders and tackling emerging crime trends specific to the countryside.

The RCT consists of 20 police officers and staff, comprising two police sergeants, 12 police constables and six PCSOs operating from bases in Heathfield [East Sussex] and Midhurst [West Sussex]. The team provides specialist knowledge, enforcement activity, crime prevention activity and reassurance patrols across rural Sussex.

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During 2024/25, the team continued to provide a visible policing presence, tangible deterrence and reassurance to rural areas affected most by theft, poaching, hare coursing and livestock worrying. This has included hundreds of intelligence reports generated following visible policing patrols; numerous stop and searches carried out and arrests made; enforcement of warrants to recover stolen property, heavy machinery and animals; proactive stops, checks and recovery of vehicles and trailers on false number plates, and investigations into illicit metal detecting and the recovery of stolen coins on private land.

In addition, the RCT has continued to build trust and strengthen relationships with rural communities through attendance at targeted engagement events held throughout Sussex, including the South of England Show [to raise awareness of rural crime and provide crime prevention advice] and the Fresher's Fair at Plumpton College [to establish dialogues with agricultural students and the next generation of farmers].

In February 2025, the PCC funded 1,000 specialist SelectaDNA™ property marking kits to help farmers and those working in the agricultural sector across Sussex to forensically mark their equipment and protect it from theft. The initiative – run in collaboration with the National Farmers' Union – allows farmers, landowners and rural businesses to mark valuable tools, machinery, and equipment with a permanent DNA-based solution that links recovered property directly back to its rightful owner, whilst simultaneously deterring offenders from theft. It is an aspiration of the Force to visit every farm in Sussex across 2025/26 to offer them the tools and equipment marking kits.

The team also undertook several joint operations with the rural teams in Hampshire and Kent as part of a series of cross-border operations targeting travelling criminals operating across county lines. Further collaboration took place with the Environment Agency and local authorities in Sussex to tackle rural environmental crime, including fly-tipping and illegal waste disposal.

The impact of this work has contributed positively towards successful enforcement outcomes and has helped to develop stronger relationships with landowners, farmers and residents, ensuring that the rural communities in Sussex feel better connected to their local policing teams.

The RCT achieved the following performance across the performance plan year:

- ✓ 1,393 patrol hours in rural communities
- ✓ 925 engagement activities and community-based events
- ✓ 450 farms visited, including attendance at 49 livestock worrying issues and 51 wildlife incidents
- ✓ 834 instances of crime prevention and target hardening advice offered
- ✓ 86 heritage sites patrolled
- ✓ 34 items of machinery and/or vehicles recovered after being involved in a crime

All operational activity around rural crimes, incidents and offences is recorded and collated by Sussex Police through a marker called Operation Tracker. The RCT attended almost 1,500 calls for service generated by computer aided dispatch (CAD) through this marker to speak to victims, offer crime prevention advice and respond to the matters reported, together with a further 622 CADs that were not included within the marker but still within the remit of the team to address. The RCT demonstrated a solved rate of 7% for all notifiable rural crimes in 2024/25, with positive outcomes also achieved for many other instances where the offences were non-notifiable [including livestock worrying].

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2025/26, the RCT will seek to strengthen further its proactive approach to crime prevention through the introduction of informal street surgeries designed to improve visibility, accessibility and engagement with policing across the rural communities and isolated areas in Sussex.

Maintained the South East Partnership Against Rural Crime – The South East Partnership Against Rural Crime (SEPARC) was maintained by the police forces in Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Kent and Thames Valley across 2024/25 to protect better rural communities and make the region a more hostile environment for countryside offenders.

The SEPARC coordinated multiple different policing operations throughout the year – led by local police forces operating within the partnership – to target specific crime trends, disrupt wildlife, environmental, heritage and agricultural criminals and enhance community safety across the region.

This cross-border activity comprised numerous stop and search checks made against individuals, vehicles and machinery; seizure of vehicles, machinery and other items involved in crimes or theft-related offences, and the coordination of visits to maritime shipping ports to examine illegally imported freight and cargo. All activity was overseen and coordinated by a Tactical Delivery Group responsible for sharing information and bringing together representatives from the police and relevant partner agencies.

Business and Retail Crime

Dedicated Business Crime Team maintained – Sussex Police have continued to maintain a **Business Crime Team** [HYPERLINK] (BCT) to tackle business and retail crime, identify prolific offenders and provide support to business communities in Sussex.

Launched in 2021/22, the team supports the business community by working closely with partners, businesses and customers to generate better intelligence and ensure that a more focused police response is provided to reports of business crime. The BCT comprises one police inspector, three supervisors and 12 specialist investigators – acting as the single points of contact (SPOCS) – dedicated to responding to crime across three specific areas [Brighton & Hove and Crawley, East Sussex and West Sussex]. This approach also means that any repeat or prolific offenders and patterns of criminality can be identified quickly.

The SPOCs have established effective working relationships with local businesses and Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs) in Sussex and are responsible for investigating circa. 55% of all business and retail crime reported to Sussex Police. Operation Apprentice also brings together the BCT, districts and BCRPs to ensure that the most prolific retail crime offenders are targeted for investigation, enforcement and civil orders.

In October 2024, the BCT was integrated within the Initial Investigations Team (IIT) – formerly known as the Incident Resolution Centre – to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Sussex Police investigation of and their response to reports of business crime. This revised approach seeks to use modern technology to work smarter and engage with and support victims of crime during the initial stages of their reports [via remote applications].

Since April 2024, Sussex Police has used Microsoft Power BI [an interactive data visualisation tool] to identify 'hotspot' locations for anti-social behaviour across the county from the business crime and intelligence recorded by the Force. This proactive activity has resulted in the identification of 29 'hotspot' locations throughout Sussex, with each hotspot having identified the business and retail locations where crime repeatedly occurs.

These locations and businesses are visited on a regular basis by the 'hotspot' policing team to engage with the business owners, provide reassurance to the local community and increase public confidence in the Sussex Police response to business crime. The team has made almost 4,700 visits to these locations and businesses across Sussex, with more than 90,000 engagements recorded with members of the public within these hotspots. This 'hotspot' patrol activity has also contributed to nearly 300 arrests having been made and more than 300 stop searches undertaken for a variety of different items, including stolen property.

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The BCT leads on Operation Apprentice – the Sussex Police response to tackle the prolific and high harm offenders of business and retail crime across Sussex and throughout the individual 'hotspot' locations identified within. The data collated by the Force is used by the team to support a regular meeting cycle between BCRPs and local Neighbourhood Policing Teams to proactively target the repeat offenders and locations identified. This includes undertaking enforcement activity and the issuing of civil orders, alongside problem-solving activity in the 'hotspot' locations within local communities.

The Force has expanded the existing channels of crime reporting through the introduction of 'One Touch Reporting' and the increased use of DISC – the cloud-based crime management system empowering communities to self-manage low level crime and anti-social behaviour. This platform enables better engagement between policing teams, businesses and local authorities to support messaging, identification of suspects and awareness raising of the civil orders available to influence changes in offender behaviour, whilst improving the confidence of local communities in the policing response.

During 2024/25, access to DISC was extended to include Lewes and Rother districts. This cumulatively contributed to 281,205 logins to the platform [+50% compared to 187,551 in 2023]; 7,668 crimes reported to Sussex Police [+34% compared to 5,702 in 2023] and 1,642 news alerts published [+7% compared to 1,536 in 2023]. There are also plans to expand the use of DISC further still in Sussex across 2025/26, including greater use of the reporting platform across Arun and Chichester districts.

Throughout the year, Sussex Police has continued to lead on One Touch Reporting – a unique time-saving initiative that the PCC originally piloted with 24 Co-op stores and National Business Crime Solution (NBCS) to make the reporting of business crime more efficient and effective.

One Touch Reporting has directly contributed towards an increase in the volume of shoplifting offences reported to Sussex Police, a greater collation of evidence and an enhanced identification of prolific offenders and 'hotspot' locations which has contributed to improved arrest, charge and conviction rates. The successful outcome rate recorded for the offences specifically handled by the BCT have increased year-on-year from 11% in 2021/22 to 18% in 2024/25. These successful outcome rates are anticipated to increase further still in 2025/26, with work ongoing to scale up the use of this platform across the rest of Sussex, alongside national interest too.

The BCT will continue to work smartly to investigate business crimes, improve partnership working and tackle this criminality through a more innovative use of technology. This will include the greater use of artificial intelligence (AI), facial recognition and piloting more efficient reporting processes and technology which allows for digital evidence, such as CCTV footage, to be shared with the Force directly for immediate access to evidence. These improved processes will enable staff to continue serving customers, rather than waiting to talk to the police.

This approach will also include bringing together intelligence from across the county to provide crime prevention advice and catch the criminals who are targeting and affecting businesses large and small, leading to more positive outcomes and increased business confidence in police.

Sussex Police also developed a Business Crime Strategy and Operational Delivery Plan across the year to further drive activity across the thematic areas identified within the national Retail Crime Action Plan. This approach seeks to provide a specific focus on commercial robbery, violence against shop workers and theft from shops.

Funding of £5m secured for Project Pegasus – The PCC has continued to lead nationally on business crime and has successfully persuaded retailers and police to combine industry knowledge with law enforcement activity to tackle serious and organised retail crime across England and Wales.

In October 2023, with the support and endorsement of the [previous] Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention and the Home Office, the PCC convened a business and police partnership called Project Pegasus to scope organised retail crime and create intelligence packages for individual police forces to act on. The Pegasus Partnership initiative represents a radically improved way for retailers to share intelligence with policing, to better understand the tactics used by organised retail crime gangs and identify more offenders.

Financial contributions worth almost £1million have been received from 15 of the country's biggest national retailers – via a secretariat co-ordinated by security provider Mitie – to build a new capability of analysts and intelligence officers within OPAL – the existing specialist national crime unit for serious acquisitive crime. The dedicated team has built a comprehensive intelligence picture of the organised crime gangs that are responsible for many shoplifting incidents across the country to help target and dismantle them, including an increased number of offences against the horticultural sector [at garden centres].

Following the change in Government in May 2024, the PCC continued to lobby the new Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention for further support to maintain the team of specialist police officers and analysts to work within OPAL. In December 2024, the Government committed a further £5million in funding over the next three-years to support the continued delivery of the partnership initiative and to maintain the progress made in this area to support the fight back against organised retail crime gangs.

INFOGRAPHIC: Funding of £5m secured for Project Pegasus

Burglary

Risk of being burgled continues to remain low – The PCC and Sussex Police have continued to raise awareness of the significant impact that burglaries can have on victims, encourage members of the public to protect their homes from the threat of intruders and to detect these crimes by proactively targeting the offenders responsible.

There was a 4% reduction in the number of residential burglaries recorded in Sussex in 2024/25. This equated to 122 fewer burglary crimes recorded compared to the 3,341 offences recorded the year before, with these reductions apparent across each of the three policing divisions.

Of the total burglaries recorded, there was also a 4% reduction in the recorded number of non-residential burglaries [including business premises] across the same period. These recorded offences reduced from 2,189 to 2,107 offences – a reduction of 82 non-residential burglaries compared to 2023/24. Again, these reductions were apparent across each of the three divisions.

The risk of being burgled in Sussex continues to remain low, with the Force positioned 14th lowest out of 43 police force areas in England and Wales and second in their most similar group (MSG) of eight police forces, in terms of the risk of burglary per 1,000 population [March 2025]. Operation Magpie – the dedicated Force response to burglary crimes – delivers crime prevention initiatives throughout the year to ensure that the risk of crime remains low.

Sussex recorded a successful outcome rate of 7.5% for all burglary offences in Sussex during 2024/25. This equated to 145 more burglary crimes solved [432] compared to the 287 offences solved the year before [5.3%], with these increases again apparent across each of the three policing divisions.

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The low solved rate was recognised to be consistent with the trends recorded by all police forces in England and Wales, with the absence of available witnesses, CCTV footage and/or forensic evidence attributed to the difficulties and challenges in solving these crimes. Sussex Police was positioned 36th out of 43 police forces, and sixth within their MSG, in terms of the successful outcome rate for burglary crimes [March 2025].

LOOKING AHEAD: Burglary continues to remain an important area of policing for Sussex Police to improve on during 2025/26 and beyond.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Tackling ASB through mediation: The PCC has continued to fund the Sussex Mediation Alliance (SMA) to provide consistent mediation services in Sussex across two service providers: Brighton & Hove Independent Mediation Service and Mediation Plus.

The OSPCC has introduced effective monitoring arrangements around the service provided in Sussex which have contributed towards positive improvements for service users and reduced demand for Sussex Police. Consequently, the provision of this service was moved to a three-year contract and, following a successful tender process, SMA will continue to deliver this service in Sussex until 31 March 2026.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is understood to be a 'crime of confidence', whereby the more confident members of the public are about the ability of the police to respond, the more likely they are to report incidents to the police. Sussex Police has continued to encourage members of the public to report any incidents and offences to develop information and intelligence regarding repeat offenders, times and locations which can then be used to plan, target and deploy police resources. The early identification of ASB is recognised to be fundamental to prevent conflict from escalating further and to decrease community tensions.

In 2024/25, the SMA received 146 referrals directly from Sussex Police for resolution through mediation and coaching to prevent the conflict from escalating any further, distributed across Sussex as follows: 40 in Brighton & Hove, 60 in East Sussex and 46 in West Sussex. Anti-social behaviour was the most common type of dispute and accounted for 62 cases [and 42%], followed by noise and neighbour disputes [41 cases and 28%] and property disputes [26 cases and 18%]. The services also saw referrals around vehicle parking, property-related issues and family relationship breakdowns.

The service has managed to secure engagement from both parties to attempt to find a resolution in around two-thirds of all cases, with every positive outcome – including successful mediation, conflict resolution coaching and/or improved communication skills [for either party] – reducing the demand placed on Sussex Police.

The PCC has continued to encourage Sussex Police to work with schools and other educational establishments to engage with children and young people to build confidence in policing, promote positive behaviours and educate them about the impact their actions and behaviours can have on others within the local community, without unnecessarily criminalising them. This work is routinely undertaken by the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Neighbourhood Youth Officers, supported by youth services within local authorities.

INFOGRAPHIC: 146 referrals for mediation services

Increase in Anti-Social Behaviour Case Reviews – There was a 16% increase in the number of anti-social behaviour (ASB) case reviews received in Sussex in 2024/25, in comparison to the year before [44] – this equated to seven more activations received [51].

Year	Case Reviews	Adur & Worthing	Arun	Brighton & Hove	Chichester	Crawley	Eastbourne	Hastings	Horsham	Lewes	Mid Sussex	Rother	Wealden	Sussex
2023/24	Received	1	0	7	2	12	2	4	5	1	6	4	0	44
	Met threshold	0	0	4	1	7	0	2	5	0	3	2	0	24
2024/25	Received	2	1	8	5	8	2	3	14	2	5	1	0	51
	Met threshold	0	0	5	5	6	0	0	11	1	3	1	0	32

A case review [formally known as a Community Trigger] empowers repeat victims of ASB to request a review of the actions partner agencies have taken to resolve their concerns with the aim of finding a solution to the core problems causing the anti-social behaviour.

Of the case reviews received, 63% of these [32] met the threshold for activation in 2024/25 – with three separate incidents of ASB experienced and reported in the last six months. This represented an eight-percentage point increase from the 55% of case reviews which met the threshold in 2023/24 [24], including eight more activations [32].

Technology

Continued investment in Body Worn Video – The PCC has continued to invest in the use of Body Worn Video (BWV) technology to ensure that all frontline officers and staff are equipped with personal-issue cameras when they are deployed. The BWV cameras are an established way of capturing and securing real-time evidence in an easy to use and accessible digital format.

Sussex Police maintains circa. 1,900 cameras in police stations throughout the Force. A centralised booking system is used for the cameras to ensure that the equipment is fully charged and functional before these devices are issued to individual officers and staff at the point of deployment.

During 2023/24, Sussex Police installed new batteries across its BWV technology to ensure that the devices can be used by the frontline workforce for longer before they required charging. The comprehensive support provisions in place with the supplier also ensures that these cameras are repaired and replaced in a timely manner to maximise their availability to support operational policing activity. Further enhancements to the system are being planned to reduce the time it takes police officers to categorise and upload the footage.

This technology is particularly useful for increasing the number of convictions for domestic abuse crimes [including victimless prosecutions where the victim does not want to support a prosecution] by using the evidence captured through BWV. This platform also ensures that interactions with members of the public remain professional and accountable and helps to safeguard officers and staff by reducing the number of assaults against them.

LOOKING AHEAD: During 2025/26, the Force will continue to seek to maximise the benefits of BWV by ensuring that all frontline officers and staff routinely deploy this technology and that these devices are routinely activated in all appropriate operational situations.

Approval of plans to implement a new Digital Evidence Management System – In January 2025, Sussex Police and Surrey Police approved plans to implement a new Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) to enable both forces to store, analyse, prepare and share all types of digital evidence and assets related to investigations and cases.

The new DEMS kiosks will be deployed across the two police force areas to enable police officers and staff to securely view digital materials and footage captured by businesses and members of the public [including doorbells, mobile phones and/or dashcam footage] more efficiently and effectively with these materials automatically ingested into the system for evidential consideration – removing the need for manual downloading and uploading through portable digital media devices.

The previous kiosks installed across the Sussex and Surrey police estate [in 2020/21] had access issues which required the adoption of workaround solutions to upload evidential items to the DEMS. The new solution – set to be implemented during 2025/26 – will provide users with access to the comprehensive software solution used by detectives, investigators, prosecutors and law enforcement professionals, NICE Investigate.

Alongside the implementation of this new system, Sussex Police will seek to reduce the costs of storing the digital evidence captured by maximising the use of new retention and archiving rules and deleting copies of items that are shared with the Crown Prosecution Service [and other third parties] after individual cases have been closed.

LOOKING AHEAD: During 2025/26, the new Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) will be implemented across Sussex Police and Surrey Police to enable both forces to store, analyse, prepare and share all types of digital evidence and assets related to investigations and cases more efficiently and effectively.

Introduction of the Citizen Portal – In March 2025, Sussex Police introduced the Citizen Portal – a new customer relationship management platform which enables some victims of crime to receive online updates about the progress of the ongoing investigations into the offence(s) reported, helping to improve the police response and the quality of the victim support provided.

The platform provides an additional mechanism to support Sussex Police to engage and communicate with victims of crime, offering more freedom and greater flexibility in how individuals choose to contact the Force and obtain updates throughout the investigation process. This system introduces direct and automated messages which enables individuals to receive updates on the progress made with their investigations [i.e., status of an investigation, whether an arrest has been made, etc], alongside the ability to message the police officer in charge of a case, without having to call the non-emergency number to request an update and/or to provide any additional information required.

The introduction of the Citizen Portal is part of a longer-term programme of modernisation and service improvement to support the Force with its delivery of the victims' rights set out within the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime [i.e., the minimum standard that organisations must provide to victims of crime]. The platform is currently being used for a limited number of crime types to ensure that the system can cope and manage with the demand received and that it is delivering the standard of performance required.

LOOKING AHEAD: Sussex Police will continue to expand the different types of crimes included within the Citizen Portal to maximise the use of this platform.

Sussex Police Estate

Continued investment in the police estate – A total of £1.720million was invested in the Sussex Police estate in 2024/25. The PCC has continued to ensure that the property used for policing is in the right place, is 'fit for purpose' and is financially viable. This approach means that no police facility with a public reception will be removed until a suitable local alternative is identified, examining options for sharing with partners and disposal for redevelopment wherever the police estate is under-used.

The PCC is responsible for the Sussex Police estate and, as the landlord, has developed a Sussex Police Estate Transformation Strategy 2024/2036 [HYPERLINK] to enable the effective governance of all land and property. The land and sites were valued at £164.3million on 31 March 2025.

Despite more than £60million invested in the past decade, a considerable proportion of the 88 main sites were constructed before 1975 and are now outdated for modern policing methods and technology. The size, age and condition of the police estate means that its future is increasingly unaffordable, with significant capital liabilities of over £250million projected across the next 10 years, alongside rising annual operating costs.

Furthermore, the police estate – totalling approximately 98,500 square meters – is recognised to have an estimated surplus of 25% with some of the buildings in locations no longer optimal due to changing crime patterns and/or traffic congestion, with many of these sites now falling short of operational and equality standards, presenting a financially unsustainable status quo that requires a 'step change' transformation.

To address these challenges and ensure the estate remains fit for purpose, the new strategy outlines the plans to rationalise the police estate and generate income for reinvestment. A key focus is achieving significant reductions in both annual operating costs and future capital liabilities. This will be achieved by generating income through the disposal of surplus assets and buildings, with 100% of the capital receipts being used to fund reinvestment in the retained estate.

The strategy also involves identifying the parts of the estate to retain and improve for efficiency, exploring shared bases and innovative mobile solutions and ensuring retained and new buildings are highly efficient [aiming for 'very good' or 'excellent' according to the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method standards], meet operational needs, enhance staff wellbeing and contribute positively to the net zero carbon target by 2050. The success metrics for this transformation include achieving £1.25million in revenue savings, 20% reduction in capital liabilities and a further reduction in carbon emissions.

During 2024/25, Sussex Police made investments to replace electrical and mechanical assets across various sites within the police estate to deliver efficiencies and better align the organisation with its net zero ambitions. Other delivery highlights throughout the year included: further improvements made to Brighton Police Station through the installation of upgraded CCTV and resurfacing works to the upper car park area; installation of new perimeter fencing at the Sussex Police Training Centre [Kingstanding] to improve security; refurbishment of facilities within Sussex Police Headquarters [Lewes] and Crawley Police Station to enhance working and welfare facilities, alongside fitting new vehicle barrier gates and the completion of roof repairs at Bognor Regis Police Station, alongside continued works to redevelop Centenary House [Worthing].

The sale and disposal of East Grinstead Police Station, Polegate Traffic Base, Pulborough Police Station and land owned in Goring took place during 2024/25, with the facilities at Astley House [Lewes] and Woodingdean Police Box also progressed for sale and anticipated to be completed during 2025/26. Sussex Police ceased leasehold occupation at Hove Town Hall and Portslade Town Hall across the year too.

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The Force has also used Operation Safeguard funding – received from the Home Office for the potential use of Sussex Police custody cells to temporarily hold prisoners who cannot be accommodated in the prison establishment – to make further investments across the police estate in 2024/25. A further £492,450 is set to be carried forward to complete a small number of approved projects at Brighton Police Station, Hammonds Drive [Eastbourne], Haywards Heath Police Station, Horsham Police Station and Midhurst Police Station during 2025/26.

The PCC continued to work closely with the Estates Team for Sussex Police to secure additional investment from district and borough councils throughout the county through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 Agreements. This funding is used to support further investment and improvements in the Sussex Police estate and existing policing infrastructure.

In 2024/25, the PCC applied for £238,540 of CIL funding from the South Downs National Park Authority and received further funding of £203,579 across the year from Section 106 Agreements to support investment in automatic number plate recognition (ANPR); speed awareness kits; solar photovoltaic panels, and rainwater harvesting projects. In total, the PCC has secured almost £3million for Sussex Police through Section 106 Agreements and CILs since 2015/16, with £867,805 received to date.

Sussex Police have also continued to work with the National Police Estates Group to ensure that the police and other emergency services are a primary consideration within the existing planning system for any new developments throughout the country.

INFOGRAPHIC: Section 106 funding worth £238,540 secured from new developments to improve the policing infrastructure

Climate Change

Driving sustainable change across Sussex Police through Project Polar Bear – Sussex Police has continued to build on the success of Project Polar Bear to deliver a renewed approach to energy usage and change working practices throughout the Force.

Project Polar Bear was launched by Sussex Police in 2022/23 response to the global energy crisis to deliver a new approach to energy usage and transform working practices across the police estate. In 2023/24, Project Polar Bear achieved a 10% reduction in energy usage by focusing on reducing overall energy consumption by implementing simple, effective measures, including engaging staff in energy saving actions and undertaking a large-scale shift to energy-efficient lighting.

Building on this success, the Force has expanded Project Polar Bear to raise awareness of and promote different ways to save energy [and money] through the development of a physical 'switch-off' campaign, encouraging officers and staff to save energy and reduce waste. This campaign has created a culture of sustainability, with the workforce encouraged to recycle more and adopt energy saving behaviours. This approach has been reinforced through the delivery of consistent communications reminding individuals to turn off lights and computers, alongside other campaigns aimed at promoting behavioural change and enhancing recycling efforts. These efforts culminated in an additional 6% reduction in electricity usage and 3% less gas usage during 2024/25.

Working towards the Government net zero target by 2050 – As part of an ongoing commitment to deliver the Government's net zero target by 2050, Sussex Police has commissioned Ricardo [and environmental consulting services company] to assess the greenhouse gas emissions from the police estate, in line with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

This will enable Sussex Police to develop targeted strategies to reduce emissions and achieve the ambitious national carbon reduction goals through a better understanding of the emissions generated across three separate areas, as follows:

Scope 1 – Emissions from owned or controlled sources, including fleet and heating, currently contribute to 16% of the total Force emissions.

Scope 2 – Indirect emissions from purchased electricity currently account for 5% of all Sussex Police emissions.

Scope 3 – Emissions from purchased goods and services, including all indirect emissions associated with the supply chain, currently contribute towards 79% of the total emissions for the Force.

As part of an ongoing commitment to sustainability, Sussex Police has also created decarbonisation strategies, introduced sustainable procurement practices and is currently transitioning to an electric vehicle fleet to help the organisation move closer to achieving its net zero goals.

Development of an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy – Sussex Police share a Joint Transport Service (JTS) with Surrey Police and has developed an electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure strategy for the two forces to support this collaboration.

The JTS currently consists of a fleet of 1,162 vehicles comprising several different vehicle types, as follows: 11% of these vehicles are either electric vehicles [44], hybrid vehicles [82] or hydrogen vehicles [3], with the rest of the fleet comprising 893 diesel-powered vehicles [77%] and 140 vehicles running on petrol [12%]. Given this distribution, it is imperative that Sussex Police continue to prioritise the transition to an EV dominant fleet moving forwards.

Through the JTS, Sussex Police is working with the National Association of Police Fleet Managers, National Police Chiefs' Council and BlueLight Commercial to look at phasing out sales of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 and supporting the transition to zero emission vehicles (ZEV). This has included participation in the Department for Transport consultation on the move towards ZEV and the additional funding required to meet the costs of replacing internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles with ZEV that meet the specification for policing operations.

This work includes assessing the electrical capacity throughout the police estate and the additional funding required to improve the electrical power generation, transportation and physical infrastructure required on police sites and public charging points to develop an effective EV solution.

There is also an ongoing project aimed at expanding the solar capacity across the Sussex estate, which will better enable the transition to an EV dominant fleet in the future and support the Force to work towards achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

LOOKING AHEAD: Sussex Police will continue to look at the cost and practicalities of transitioning to a fleet of electric and/or hydrogen vehicles to work towards delivering the net zero emission target from 2050 in accordance with the plans and funding strategy set by the Government.

Partnership Activity to Reduce Crime

Funding protected for Community Safety Partnerships – In 2024/25, the PCC protected community safety funding in Sussex for the 12th year running and allocated £1.215million to Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council and each of the 12 District and Borough Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).

The PCC continues to support fully the CSPs to address crime and anti-social behaviour at a district level, respond dynamically to emerging threats and issues, and implement local activity in line with their strategic objectives as required. Many of the CSPs continued to explore opportunities to work more collaboratively during the year and it is evident that strong relationships exist with wider partnership members and the local communities.

INFOGRAPHIC: £1.215m in community safety funding allocated throughout Sussex.

LOOKING AHEAD: The PCC has made a further commitment to protect community safety funding again in 2025/26.

Ongoing support for the Sussex Restorative Justice Partnership – The Sussex Restorative Justice Partnership [HYPERLINK] (SRJP) continued to provide ongoing support to victims of crime seeking restitution, rather than a criminal justice outcome, by confronting perpetrators and describing the impact of the crime upon them and their families.

Restorative justice brings those harmed by crime and those responsible for the harm into communication with each other, enabling all parties affected by an incident to find a positive way forward and repair the harm caused. The SRJP comprises more than 20 statutory and voluntary sector organisations across Sussex and continues to be recognised as good practice nationally.

The PCC established the SRJP in 2014 and remains committed to embedding restorative justice and delivering restorative practice within Sussex Police and the wider partnership. The service has a dedicated Services Delivery Manager to ensure that the restorative practice in Sussex supports the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, processes are streamlined to make it easier for partners and volunteers to access and that best practice is achieved.

The PCC has continued to work with Sussex Police to develop the range of out-of-court-disposal options available in Sussex to divert individuals away from the criminal justice system by considering alternative approaches to prosecution. This included referrals to a range of services that tackle substance misuse, anger management, and hate crime, together with activities focused on acquisitive crime, fraud, fire safety and wildlife crime.

Many perpetrators were also offered the opportunity to attend victim awareness programmes supported by the CSPs. The Sussex Police Restorative Services Team has also continued to support the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner with the delivery of an Immediate Justice programme as a complementary out-of-court-disposal.

The SRJP continues to support the disposals delivered through the Community Remedy process, with 414 cases resolved through this option during the year – this represented a 107% reduction compared to 2023/24. In addition, 410 referrals were made to the SRJP and taken forward by the Restorative Services Team in Sussex during 2024/25, with a further 986 referrals also received through the Youth Offending Service (YOS). This is a notable increase in both demand for service and delivery compared to the previous year.

The Hub delivered 137 restorative outcomes throughout the financial year, with the YOS contributing a further 285 outcomes. Across the SRJP, there were 12 direct and 125 indirect outcomes delivered through shuttle mediation and the exchange of letters between victims and offenders – with satisfaction levels remaining at 100% throughout.

INFOGRAPHIC: 410 referrals made to the Sussex Restorative Justice Partnership

Continued delivery of an Immediate Justice pilot programme – In 2024/25, the PCC secured a further £1million of funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) to enable the continued delivery of an Immediate Justice pilot programme in Sussex – one of only 10 ‘trailblazer’ police force areas in England and Wales to have secured this extra funding.

The programme was implemented to ensure that those committing anti-social behaviour take accountability for their actions, whilst providing victims and communities with a voice in how they would like offenders to make amends for their behaviour, utilising out of court resolutions through the Community Remedy document. The initiative was primarily targeted at children and young people aged between 12 – 17 years old through out-of-court-disposals, although the scheme was extended to include adult offenders from June 2024 onwards.

The types of offences suitable for Immediate Justice in Sussex are any offences that can be considered anti-social and could directly impact on a victim and/or the wider community. These can include: criminal damage; common assault and/or battery; possession of drugs; drunk and disorderly; harassment [without violence]; public order and theft [including shoplifting].

Through undertaking visible, practical and meaningful activities, offenders pay back directly to the community through unpaid work and swiftly repair any harm and damage they may have caused to victims and communities. This includes gardening, litter picking, maintaining public spaces and the removal of graffiti.

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, Sussex Police managed 381 Immediate Justice referrals through the pilot programme, with 308 of these relating to children and young people [81%] and 73 relating to adults [19%]. In total, 513 individuals have been through the programme since it first started in June 2023 which has delivered more than 1,000 hours of reparative work in local communities throughout Sussex.

LOOKING AHEAD: During 2025/26, the programme will continue to be delivered in Sussex for children and young people despite the Government funding for the Immediate Justice programmes established throughout England and Wales having now been ceased. This will be funded by the PCC and delivered through the three Youth Justice Services in Sussex, utilising their experience to engage with these children and young people to influence and change their behaviours to prevent further offending.

Introduced a restorative justice platform – In 2024/25, Sussex Police introduced a comprehensive new restorative justice platform to replace the Empowering Communities Inclusion & Neighbourhood management System (ECINS) used previously.

MyRJ is a dedicated and secure case management system designed by restorative justice practitioners to underpin the delivery of restorative justice in Sussex. Funded by the PCC, this platform is used by Sussex Police and restorative justice delivery partners to support a collaborative, multi-agency approach to repairing harm and finding a positive way forward for practitioners.

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Appendix B

Further funding awarded through the Safer in Sussex Community Fund – The PCC allocated a further £235,884 from her Safer in Sussex Community Fund (SiSCF) in 2024/25 to support 94 local projects across Sussex to tackle crime and improve community safety [representing average funding of £2,509 per project].

The SiSCF provides financial support [grant awards up to £5,000] to a diverse range of local organisations and community projects that aim to reduce crime and improve community safety.

In total, £2.3million has been allocated to support 591 community projects since the SiSCF was created. This has included support for young and older people, homelessness, scams and fraud awareness and businesses affected by crime. A list of each of the successful applications to the SiSCF can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/apply-for-funding/>

INFOGRAPHIC: £2.3m allocated to support 591 community projects

Coordinated the activity of the Sussex Criminal Justice Board – The PCC continued to chair the Sussex Criminal Justice Board (SCJB) to coordinate the activity of local agencies in providing an efficient and effective criminal justice system for Sussex.

The purpose of the SCJB is to provide a framework which brings together strategic leaders from across the criminal justice system with the intention of improving the experience of victims and witnesses of crime in Sussex, alongside increasing the confidence of members of the public in the supporting criminal justice processes.

The SCJB remains focused on improving conviction rates across the criminal justice system, with a specific focus on improving how the police investigate rape and better support victims of domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault.

In 2023/24, all 43 police forces in England and Wales signed up to Operation Soteria – a transformational approach between the police and Crown Prosecution Service to improve outcomes for rape and sexual offence cases. As one of the 14 pathfinder forces to join the expansion programme for Operation Soteria Bluestone [in October 2022], Sussex Police was well-positioned to embed the national operating model developed by the programme to ensure that a more consistent approach exists to all rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO) investigations which are victim-centred, suspect-focused and context-led, regardless of the police force area.

Sussex Police demonstrated increases in the number of solved outcomes and detections [for these offences] across the performance plan year with further improvements anticipated to be realised during 2025/26. The PCC will continue to monitor Force performance in this important area through the SCJB and her monthly webcast Performance & Accountability Meetings.

Public Engagement

Understanding priorities and concerns through engagement and consultation – In 2024/25, the PCC's extensive public engagement programme included attendance at various events and locations in Sussex throughout the year and the completion of two #SaferInSussex surveys shared with residents and partners.

Community engagement took place both in person and online across 2024/25. The in-person events covered locations, including: Angmering; Bognor; Brighton & Hove; Chichester; Crawley; Hassocks; Horsham; Selsey and Shoreham-by-Sea, alongside attendance at countywide events, including a Safer in Sussex Community Fund event and Sussex Association of Local Councils conference.

Online engagement comprised 17 dedicated focus groups with parish councillors and clerks across Sussex. The information received and discussion topics covered at the groups have been used by the PCC to make decisions around policing priorities and budgets.

The dedicated focus groups took place across East Sussex and West Sussex as follows:

East Sussex

Eastbourne; Lewes [x2]; Rother [x3] and Wealden [x2]

West Sussex

Adur & Worthing; Arun; Chichester [x2]; Crawley; Horsham [x2] and Mid Sussex [x2]

Public engagement activity was also used to raise awareness of and highlight community safety initiatives funded by the PCC, particularly at the events aimed at students, including the distribution of anti-spiking drink covers [known as StopTopps] to keep people safe when they are out and the Safe Space Sussex online directory [to enable victims to find the most relevant support service through a safe and confidential route].

In 2024/25, the Communications Team within the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner provided support to Sussex Police by hosting various focus groups tailored at children and young people, visiting schools, colleges and youth groups across the county. These sessions were run using games and creative activities to ask the more than 110 children and young people about their experiences with the police, their feelings of safety and opinions on what could make them feel safer.

Measuring public confidence through a #SaferInSussex survey – To support her engagement campaign, the PCC launched an online #SaferInSussex survey to measure public confidence throughout the county.

The survey was promoted and distributed at public engagement events [via paper copy and QR code], published online through the PCC's website and social media channels and was shared with local partners in Sussex, including the NHS, town, district and borough councils, Neighbourhood Watch and local pharmacies.

The survey received almost 3,200 responses between September – October 2024 and found that anti-social behaviour and dangerous driving were the two areas that concerned Sussex residents the most in terms of experiencing crime and feeling unsafe in their communities. An increased visible policing presence [both police officers and PCSOs] and better police engagement were highlighted as the two top measures that were recognised to make respondents feel safer.

The PCC also commissioned an external poll of residents in Sussex across a range of topics including crime reporting, awareness and police funding to assist her with making the precept decision for 2025/26. The survey repeated the poll previously undertaken in 2023 and received 2,524 responses between November – December 2024 which represented a 17% increase from last year.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2025/26, the PCC will continue to consult and engage with members of the public and will seek to broaden and expand this engagement to include a wide-ranging sample of Sussex residents.

Holding the Chief Constable to Account

Regular scrutiny at the Performance & Accountability Meetings – The PCC continued to use publicly webcast monthly Performance & Accountability Meetings (PAMs) to hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of Sussex Police.

The PAMs provide scrutiny and transparency over a broad range of policing functions, decisions and operational activity, alongside any inspection reports published by HMICFRS.

In 2024/25, the PAMs included challenges around the police response to: domestic abuse; burglary; road safety [including drink-and-drug-driving]; firearms licensing; policing and mental health [including Right Care, Right Person Scheme]; anti-social behaviour; rural crime; business crime [including shoplifting]; unauthorised encampments; neighbourhood policing; Police Race Action Plan; Code of Ethics and Code of Practice for Ethical Policing; police use of bail and released under investigation; Disclosure and Barring Service checks, and police officer recruitment.

Other topics, including the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) inspection reports into the progress to introduce a national operating model for rape and other serious sexual offences investigations; activism and impartiality in policing, and the police response to the public disorder in July and August 2024 were also raised at the PAMs across the year.

The PAMs continue to be recognised as good practice nationally by both the Home Secretary and the Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention. Each of the PAM sessions are archived and, together with the summary minutes from the meetings, can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/watch-live/>

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2025/26, HMICFRS will undertake a 'Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy' (PEEL) assessment of Sussex Police. The findings from this inspection will be published in 2026/27.

Review of police complaints – Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner received 241 reviews following complaints made about Sussex Police, with 229 of these reviews assessed as valid [95%].

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a significant change to the police complaints system, building on the previous reforms to both the complaint and conduct systems, and expanding the role of PCCs in this process. The complaint reviews are undertaken by the office, on behalf of the PCC, in accordance with the Independent Office for Police Conduct Statutory Guidance and consider whether the outcome of the handling of the initial complaint by Sussex Police was reasonable and proportionate.

Each of the reviews received by the office during 2024/25 was acknowledged and progressed, with 207 of these reviews completed throughout the year and the remaining 22 reviews already underway. Of the reviews completed, 185 reviews were not upheld by the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner [89%] and 22 reviews were upheld [11%].

The most common themes of the complaints made against the Force related to delivery of duties and service [including police action following contact and general level of service], police powers, policies and procedures [including the power to arrest and detain, use of force and detention in police custody] and individual behaviours [including incivility, impoliteness and language and tone of communication]. The office routinely identifies recommendations and organisational learning through the review process for Sussex Police to consider and address.

Effective disposal of Police Appeals Tribunals – The OSPCC received five notices of appeals against the findings of gross [serious] misconduct brought against police officers within Sussex Police during 2024/25. This represented a 150% increase from the two PATs received and processed during 2023/24.

Police Appeals Tribunals (PATs) are governed by the Police Appeals Tribunals Rules 2020 and delegate important procedural and administrative functions to the PCC to undertake and enable the effective and efficient disposal of any appeals received. This process is delivered by the OSPCC on behalf of the PCC.

All notices of appeals against the findings and sanctions of gross misconduct hearings were acknowledged and progressed across the year. One of the PATs was upheld with the police officers involved reinstated within Sussex Police and the other tribunals are currently progressing with individual hearings scheduled during 2025/26.

Development of a Police & Crime Commissioner Interim Security Protocol – In 2024/25, the PCC developed an Interim Security Protocol for all Police & Crime Commissioners in England and Wales on behalf of the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC).

Last year, the PCC commissioned a piece of work aimed at understanding the threat and risk faced by PCCs in terms of their personal security. That analysis highlighted unacceptable levels of threat, abuse and harassment of some PCCs simply for carrying out their roles on behalf of the public, alongside a simultaneous increase in attacks against politicians recorded nationally in recent years.

This work has directly culminated in positive enhancements having been made to the security offered to PCCs through the creation of an Interim Security Protocol and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) letter to all chief constables. As a result, there is now a dedicated local Elected Official Advisor in each police force area – under Operation Ford – and a structure in place to support effective implementation and clear application for all PCC areas.

The protocol also established an agreement with His Majesty's Revenue & Customs to provide PCCs with a tax exemption for all security measures purchased in response to security concerns relating to their role, including the purchase of alarm systems, CCTV camera and personal security devices.

Transfer of the Old Police Cells Museum to the Sussex PCC – In 2024/25, PCC offered to take on the responsibility for the Old Police Cells Museum at Brighton Town Hall to safeguard the existence of the museum and the ability to showcase the heritage collection owned by the PCC. The Trustees of the Old Police Cells Museum are very grateful and agreed to dissolve the museum as a charity and transfer it under the care and stewardship of the PCC and Sussex Police in line with models adopted by other police museums nationally.

This approach will safeguard the collection of circa. 1,200 heritage assets, artifacts and memorabilia relating to the history of policing in Sussex through the provision of a unique platform to promote, exhibit and display the objects, alongside supporting ongoing engagement with local communities about policing issues and community interest matters to build and strength public relations.

The museum is temporarily closed whilst essential improvements are carried out on the Town Hall with the museum set to re-open in autumn 2025.

LOOKING AHEAD: The PCC formally took over responsibility for the Old Police Cells Museum on 1 April 2025, including the day-to-day management, oversight and administration of all museum-related matters.

2b. Public Priority 2 – Relentless disruption of serious and organised crime

Homicide, Serious Violence and Knife Crime

Consistently low homicides recorded – The PCC has continued to support all available measures introduced by police and partners to reduce the number of people killed by homicide in Sussex.

The number of recorded homicides in Sussex remained consistently low in 2024/25, with nine homicides recorded across the year. This was two fewer homicides recorded compared to 2023/24 [11].

More than £3.054m funding secured to tackle serious violence – The PCC was successful in securing funding worth more than £3.054million during 2024/25 to tackle serious violence in Sussex, including:

[SUBHEADING] Hotspot Response Funding of £1.436m secured – During 2024/25, the Home Office combined the existing serious violence funding streams into a single Hotspot Response Fund across the year to tackle ASB and serious violence in the highest demand locations after recognising the crossover that exists between both areas of criminality.

Sussex Police was allocated funding of £1,436million to deliver this targeted hotspot policing and problem-solving activity across the year. This included conducting high-visibility patrols and engagement activities in locations where knife crime, serious violence and ASB was most concentrated. These funds also supported proactive police deployments, insight work [to understand better the root causes of the problems relating to serious violence in Sussex] and increased support for investigations activity to ensure crime reports were progressed to positive outcomes. Alongside the high visibility policing, problem-solving work was also undertaken to tackle the causes and drivers of serious violence in these locations.

During 2024/25, the funding delivered:

- 4,894 high visibility patrols [equivalent to 831 days of policing in hotspot locations]
- Engagement with circa. 103,000 individuals – comprising 66,000 adults and 37,000 young people [aged under 25 years old]
- 5,032 visits and engagements with local businesses
- 339 stop and searches undertaken and 316 arrests made
- The Night Safety Marshals also delivered more than 6,552 hours of activity within high-harm areas, recording attendance at more than 4,500 incidents [with 389 of these relating to support for vulnerable women and girls]

INFOGRAPHIC 1: £1.436m to support enforcement activity in Sussex

INFOGRAPHIC 2: 339 stop and searches undertaken 316 arrests made

[SUBHEADING] Maintained support for the Violence Reduction Unit – The PCC secured a further £1.047million from the Home Office to continue to maintain and support violence reduction throughout the county.

The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in Sussex comprises a Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) which has a devolved 'hub and spoke' model. The VRP 'hub' is based within Sussex Police and is supported by local 'spoke' partnerships based within each of the three local authorities [Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex].

The Sussex VRP was established in 2019/20 to provide the leadership and strategic coordination around the local response to serious violence. The partnership brings together specialists from the police, local government, health, probation services and community organisations to tackle serious violence and the underlying causes of violent crime. The 'spoke' partnerships are responsible for coordinating the work, activities and interventions delivered in this area to reduce the risks to individuals and communities throughout Sussex.

The Sussex VRP defines serious violence as crime types that cause or are intended to cause serious injury, covering homicide, knife crime [including knife possession], personal robbery and gun crime, where these occur in a public place. The partnership focuses on activity that seeks to prevent serious violence and building connectivity between aligned workstreams such as domestic abuse, exploitation and violence against women and girls. This includes understanding and addressing the needs of both victims and perpetrators of serious violence.

There was a 3% reduction in serious violence crimes [public place and non-domestic] recorded in Sussex during 2024/25 which equated to 49 fewer serious violent crimes recorded compared to the 1,935 offences recorded across 2023/24. This comprised reductions recorded for knife crime offences [-5% and 34 fewer offences] and grievous bodily harm and wounding [-7% and 54 fewer offences], with a small increase recorded for robbery [+2% and 18 more offences] across the performance plan year.

There was also a 2% reduction in the number of possession of weapons offences recorded in Sussex across the financial year [public place and non-domestic], which equated to 42 fewer offences in comparison to the 1,935 recorded in 2023/24. This comprised reductions recorded for possession of bladed and/or sharp instruments [-3% and 35 fewer offences] and possession of firearms [-47% and 114 fewer offences] across the same period, although there was a 33% increase recorded for possession of other weapons [which equated to 149 more offences].

During 2024/25, there was a 4% reduction in serious violence recorded in Sussex [and 76 fewer offences] when compared to the baseline figures before VRP funded activity was fully established [December 2019]. This included five fewer public place and non-domestic-related homicides recorded across the year in comparison to the baseline. The overall reduction recorded in serious violence in Sussex continues to be attributed to the success of the VRP and the three partnerships that support them.

The risk of 'violence against the person' in Sussex continues to remain low, with the Force positioned 23rd out of 43 police force areas in England and Wales, and third in their MSG, in terms of the risk of violence per 1,000 population.

Early intervention and preventative work are recognised to be fundamental to violence reduction. Throughout the year, Sussex Police has continued to work with partners to deter young people away from serious violence and knife crime. During 2024/25, more than 7,800 children and young people and over 220 individuals [aged 25 years old and over] engaged in intervention activity across Sussex, with training provided to more than 350 professionals across the same period.

[SUBHEADING] £570,947 secured to implement to the Serious Violence Duty – The PCC also secured £570,947 of extra funding from the Home Office over two years [£301,198 in 2023/24 and £269,749 in 2024/25] to assist Sussex Police with implementing the Serious Violence Duty locally.

This duty was introduced nationally to ensure that all relevant services and responsible authorities throughout Sussex work together to share information and collaborate on interventions to prevent and reduce serious crimes in local communities. The Serious Violence Executive Board and Serious Violence Reduction Steering Group continue to meet regularly to oversee the work of Sussex Police and partners in this important area.

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As part of the Government's Young Futures Programme, each police force area in England and Wales with a Violence Reduction Unit has been asked to pilot Prevention Partnerships and Prevention Panels during 2025/26. The aim of these multi-agency arrangements is to offer support to young people at escalating risk of being drawn into crime at an earlier stage, reducing the harm caused to individuals and local communities.

LOOKING AHEAD: The current funding for the VRP remains in place until the end of March 2026. This will enable Sussex Police to continue the work to tackle serious violence and to reduce further the risks to individuals and communities throughout Sussex.

INFOGRAPHIC: £1.047m to maintain a Violence Reduction Partnership

Maintained the Specialist Enforcement Unit and Tactical Enforcement Units – The PCC has continued to provide the Chief Constable with resources to reinforce the local capacity and national capability of Sussex Police to carry out high-profile disruptions and enforcement activities targeting serious and organised criminals.

Specialist Enforcement Unit

The Force has sought to tackle the most serious, organised and persistent criminals who target the road networks in Sussex. The Specialist Enforcement Unit (SEU) has carried out proactive countywide disruption and enforcement operations on roads across the county since the unit was first established in January 2021. The SEU is comprised of specially trained officers who target individuals who are using the road network for criminality, focusing on combatting organised acquisitive crime and providing dedicated resources to reduce those killed or seriously injured on the roads in Sussex.

The SEU consists of two uniformed operational teams made up of 30 police constables and three sergeants, led by one Inspector. The unit is tasked by the Tactical Tasking and Coordinating Group based on information and intelligence received. This extends to the 'real-time' deployment of resources through the Force Contact, Command and Control Department to provide a fast-time response to any crimes in action on the road network in Sussex.

The individuals within the SEU have advanced driving skills and safe stop tactics [such as tactical pursuit and containment] to support existing teams across the Force, with support from the Dog Unit utilised as required. The unit also has the ability and capability to move to locations based on threat, risk, and harm and to provide enhanced visibility on the roads, targeting those offenders using them for criminality.

During 2024/25, the SEU undertook proactive policing activity and interventions throughout Sussex to deliver >650 stop and searches [comprising both individuals and vehicles] and made >450 arrests, including >100 arrests for drug and other organised crime offences; >110 arrests for sexual offences and other offences against the person and >100 arrests for traffic related cases [including drink-and-drug driving and disqualified/uninsured drivers], and generated >400 intelligence reports. The unit also seized significant amounts of commodities [including more than 300 kilograms of drugs; over £25,000 in cash and several offensive weapons] to further reduce the risk to members of the public and increasing investigative opportunities.

Alongside this activity, the SEU has continued to support national campaigns and operations, working with partner forces and agencies to disrupt criminal activity. This included support for Operation Pandilla – a cross-border operation into the disruption of serious organised acquisitive crime on the road network led by Thames Valley Police.

Tactical Enforcement Units

The unit is supported by the three Tactical Enforcement Units (TEUs) which provide each of the policing divisions with additional capacity and capability to target criminality and capture some of the most serious, wanted and prolific offenders in Sussex.

Launched in 2019/20, the TEUs carry out high profile disruption and enforcement activity across Sussex. The TEUs are tasked locally by the divisions and provide public reassurance through an enhanced and visible policing deterrent in 'hotspot' locations by tackling the offences that communities want them to respond to through the execution of planned warrants and enforcement activity to tackle the most high-harm perpetrators.

Each of the TEUs comprises one sergeant and eight police constables with specialist skills in proactive policing, equipped to carry out targeted disruption, enforcement and patrol activities to tackle the offences that communities want them to prioritise.

During 2024/25, the TEU carried out >330 stop and searches; made >500 arrests; generated >350 intelligence reports and submitted >240 referrals to safeguard vulnerable individuals through proactive policing patrols. The unit also seized significant amounts of commodities across the year, including significant quantities of different illegal substances [comprising Class A, Class B and Class C drugs] and more than £180,000 in cash.

INFOGRAPHIC: SEU and TEU delivered almost 1,000 stop and searches and made more than 950 arrests

Drugs and County Lines

Investment in a dedicated County Lines Team – The PCC has continued to ensure that the Chief Constable has the resources required to tackle and disrupt the organised crime groups responsible for county lines drug gang activity in Sussex effectively.

A dedicated County Lines Team – known as Centurion – was established in Sussex During 2020/21 to target individuals operating county drug lines, working collaboratively with other police forces, to arrest and convict those responsible, prevent and detect the serious violence that is associated with this criminality, and safeguard exploited and vulnerable individuals including juveniles.

Sussex Police has also continued to work closely with and provide support to the Metropolitan Police Service to target offenders and offending behaviour impacting communities in Sussex through Operation Centurion – an operation to share intelligence and investigate county lines and the dealing of controlled substances.

This collaborative approach enables the swift sharing of intelligence, early identification of telephone lines presenting the greatest risk, and the prompt intervention of those dealing in controlled substances. This response aims to bring offenders to justice, whilst safeguarding vulnerable persons and those being exploited by this crime type. During 2024/25, the team successfully disrupted or dismantled more than 120 county drug lines known to be operating across Surrey and Sussex.

The Neighbourhood Policing Teams within each policing district in Sussex undertake regular visits to identified properties to safeguard and support vulnerable adults and tackle 'cuckooing' – a term used to describe the action of organised crime groups, gangs or other criminals taking over the property of a vulnerable adult with the sole purpose of using it for criminal activity.

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It is recognised that children and young people can be forced into criminality [including drug dealing; street robbery; serious violence; burglary and vehicle theft] through psychological grooming. The Force are aware of the inherent challenges associated with identifying and safeguarding those most at risk and the importance of tackling this effectively through the policing response provided. This is because the crime, by its very nature, is often hidden, with victims unable to recognise and/or report the harm to which they are subject.

Sussex Police has taken a multi-layered approach to overcome these challenges at a strategic, tactical and operational level and has invested £165,000 in a permanent Exploitation Team which supports the police and partner response to all forms of exploitation, including drugs and county lines. There is one Exploitation Manager post and three Exploitation Coordinator posts within the team [all police staff], with one coordinator based on each of the three policing divisions in Sussex responsible for holding a specific area of exploitation as their tactical area for advice.

The Force has also embedded a series of multi-agency meetings – led by senior detectives – to review all exploitation-related intelligence received with partners to maximise the effectiveness of the response provided and ensure that no opportunities are missed to safeguard victims and/or target perpetrators.

Sussex Police has sought to improve police officer and staff recognition of exploitation, improve the effectiveness of the policing response provided, and to adopt any learning, tactics and best practice identified locally, regionally and nationally to tackle county lines drug supply and activity. Technology is now being used to support operational policing in this area, with guidance developed around a range of exploitation-related scenarios that is now accessible to police officers via their handheld mobile data terminals.

The Force has also worked with partner agencies to raise awareness of this type of criminality and share information more effectively to strengthen the response provided to victims and survivors. Sussex Police is in the process of creating a dashboard to identify those individuals most at risk of exploitation and those suspected of exploiting others, with a view to sharing this information with partners to develop further the collective response in this area and protect better the communities of Sussex.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2025/26, the Crime and Policing Act will introduce a new criminal offence to tackle the practice known as 'cuckooing', whereby criminals take control over the home of another person to use it for criminal activity. Ahead of its introduction, Sussex Police is providing enhanced training to all police officers within the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Neighbourhood Response Teams around this illegal practice.

Maintained drug intervention funding – The PCC maintained the drug intervention funding in Sussex at £312,948 during 2024/25. This represented the 12th consecutive year that this funding has been maintained locally, despite continued reductions in community safety grant funding from central Government. The PCC has made more than £3.4million available for drug interventions in Sussex across this period.

In 2024/25, each local authority area within Sussex formed a Combatting Drugs Partnership and has worked with key partners to develop strategic plans to help reduce the supply and demand for drugs and to deliver a high-quality treatment and recovery system.

The partnerships meet regularly and have clear aims and objectives, underpinned by action plans. There is a clear understanding of service provision in their areas and some delivery partners working across local authority boundaries continue to support countywide best practice. The work of these partnerships continues to be underpinned by the previous Government's drug strategy – 'From Harm to Hope' – a 10-year plan to cut crime and save lives by reducing the supply and demand for drugs and delivering a high-quality treatment and recovery system.

Throughout the year, the PCC has continued to work closely with these partnerships to support delivery of those plans because of the strong links between drug use and crime. The partnerships have also recognised the harm caused by and the need for alcohol dependency [and wider related harms] to be included within this area of work too.

LOOKING AHEAD: The PCC will maintain drug intervention funding for Sussex at the same level in 2025/26.

Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Increased awareness of criminal exploitation – The PCC has continued to work with Sussex Police and other partner agencies to protect children from criminal exploitation by raising awareness and increasing the reporting of these offences against children.

In 2024/25, Operation Makesafe was relaunched to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation within the hospitality industry. This approach provided business leaders with information, advice and guidance to assist them in identifying the signs of exploitation of children and young people, and the relevant contact details to report any suspicious circumstances and/or concerns identified.

The Force also participated in a regional pilot with The Children’s Society to improve the safeguarding responses provided by hotel chains operating within the South East region across the year.

There was a 29% increase in the number of offences involving child sexual exploitation in Sussex during 2024/25 [1,117] – this equated to 248 more offences recorded compared the 869 offences recorded the year before. This increase in reported crime is attributed to an improvement in the identification of exploitation in all its forms and the more accurate recording of offences, rather than an actual increase in offending.

Following the national Hydrant Programme and the Baroness Casey Review, Sussex Police has produced a profile of group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation throughout the county which estimates that circa. 3% of all offending behaviour nationally takes place in Sussex.

The Force has introduced Operation Swordfish to improve the oversight and coordination of investigative responses where children assessed to be at high-risk of exploitation are subject to two or more investigations. This emerging practice to safeguard better high-risk children at risk of exploitation has been recognised positively by HMICFRS.

Sussex Police also leads on Operation Limelight – a multi-agency safeguarding operation at Gatwick Airport which is run before and after the school holidays across the academic year to safeguard woman and girls from being taken out of the country for forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other harmful practices.

The police operation is supported by Border Force, Brighton & Hove City Council, Gatwick Airport Limited, Hersona, West Sussex County Council and the single points of contact for harmful practice within Sussex Police.

The inbound and outbound flights to and from areas where there is a high prevalence of harmful practices are targeted as part of the response, with proactive engagement with passengers to establish their reasons for travelling and to raise awareness of these safeguarding issues. Law enforcement officers are also briefed to identify other offences as part of this operation, including exploitation and trafficking activity.

Operation Limelight is recognised to be the largest in England and Wales and this consistent approach has received interest from several law enforcement agencies across Europe who are seeking to replicate its success.

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During 2024/25, the PCC continued to ensure that child victims receive the support they need and that more offenders are brought to justice. This has included commissioning Barnardo's and YMCA DownsLink Group to provide a service to children who have been sexually exploited in Sussex, and Survivors' Network to provide a Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy Service to support children and young people [and their families] who have been raped or sexually abused. This provision includes dedicated one-to-one support to assist individuals with any journey through the criminal justice system and beyond as part of their ongoing recovery.

Fraud and Cyber-Crime

Maintained the Digital Investigation Support Unit – In January 2022, the Digital Investigation Support Unit (DISU) was launched across Sussex Police and Surrey Police to support investigations where physical and/or online digital evidence is involved.

The DISU – established following investment from the precept in 2021/22 – is delivered in partnership with Surrey Police – comprises 14 police officers and staff to support frontline officers and investigative staff to obtain evidence that may have been beyond their capabilities previously.

The unit was maintained across both police force areas during 2024/25 and has continued to have a positive impact on crime investigation outcomes. During the year, the DISU supported 182 enquiries in Sussex by employing advanced and innovative tactics to identify offenders and tackle a range of different criminality including homicides, serious and organised crime, stalking and harassment [both physical and online] and sextortion offences, alongside supporting investigations to locate high risk missing persons and vulnerable children and young people.

Modern Day Slavery

Protecting vulnerable people – The PCC has continued to work with law enforcement agencies, local authorities, non-governmental organisations and charities to coordinate the local, regional and national response to modern day slavery through the National Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Network (NATMSN).

NATMSN brings together PCCs from across England and Wales, the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the Modern Slavery Unit within the Home Office to understand, improve and deliver a more cohesive response to all forms of modern day slavery.

Sussex Police recorded 176 modern day slavery offences between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, with criminal exploitation and labour exploitation the two most common offence types – this equated to 39 fewer offences [-18%] compared to the 215 reports recorded the previous year.

The Force also reported 607 modern slavey incidents to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – a framework used to identify and refer potential victims of modern slavery and ensure that they receive the appropriate support – throughout the year [+7%], with more than half of these referrals coming from the two immigration centres at Gatwick Airport.

During 2024/25, Sussex Police continued to enhance its operational policing response to modern day slavery investigations in line with the updated policing standards set by the NPCC, strategic priorities of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and the national Strategic Policing Requirement. This has included the provision of integrated training for police officers and investigators to improve their knowledge and understanding of modern day slavery offences which are recognised to be complex and cross many different areas of criminality.

The PCC has also continued to support the Sussex Anti-Slavery Network, comprising key stakeholders, to ensure that victims are identified, offences are reported, and that enforcement activity is provided as part of any response, wherever appropriate. In 2024/25, the Network has continued to invest in training for its members to improve the capacity, capability, and inter-operability of all partner agencies to respond.

Throughout the year, Sussex Police undertook the following policing activity in respect of modern slavery:

- ✓ regular operations with the Specialist Enforcement Unit on the road network in Sussex to prevent, target and disrupt organised immigration crime
- ✓ further enhancements made to the policing response plans for organised immigration crime, including both inland and maritime offences
- ✓ continued work on a Sussex Modern Slavery Profile to understand better the scale and complexity of offending behaviour that will be used to inform future prevention, engagement and partnership activity
- ✓ investment in specialist training and continuous professional development around modern slavery and organised immigration crime – for critical incident managers, response and investigations teams, and police officers and staff working within the Force Contact Command & Control Department
- ✓ continued support provided to the national Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Operational Policing Team

2c. Public Priority 3 – Support and safeguard victims and tackle violence against women and girls

Domestic Abuse

Co-Commissioned Services – In 2024/25, the PCC provided funding to Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council to co-commission services for victims of domestic abuse and support the local authorities to deliver their statutory duty to provide support to victims of domestic abuse under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The PCC provided funding for a High Harm Perpetrator Programme aimed at working with some of the highest risk perpetrators of domestic abuse and stalking to try and manage and change their behaviour, in partnership with Sussex Police, Interventions Alliance, Brighton Housing Trust and Veritas Justice. Alongside working with the perpetrators, the programme also provides support to the victims of these offences through the provision of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors.

The PCC also directly commissions 25 organisations to provide a range of additional services to support victims of domestic abuse in Sussex, including practical, advocacy and therapeutic support.

Co-hosted a Sussex Domestic Abuse Conference – In January 2025, the PCC co-hosted a dedicated domestic abuse conference in partnership with Victim Support and the Domestic Abuse Team within West Sussex County Council. The theme for the conference was 'Nobody Left Behind'.

The conference was attended by more than 300 service providers, survivors and individuals who wanted to learn more about protecting, supporting and helping victims and survivors of domestic abuse and was recognised to be the largest of its kind ever held in Sussex.

A pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Strategy was also launched at the event which sets out the strategic priorities for tackling domestic abuse throughout Sussex between 2025/27 and ensure that the statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 are delivered. The strategy sets out the priority areas where attention and resources will be focused to achieve the best outcomes for all survivors of domestic abuse [and their children] across three separate pillars: early intervention and prevention; support for everyone, and recovery.

Stalking and Harassment

Increased reporting of stalking and harassment – The PCC has continued to ensure that Sussex Police remains funded, equipped and trained to recognise and respond to stalking and harassment.

As a result of this additional investment, the Force has seen a 229% increase in reports of stalking and harassment since 2015/16 – with 11,986 reports received in 2024/25. There was also an 8% increase in the number of solved crimes across the year, with 947 of these offences solved by Sussex Police, compared to 875 in 2023/24.

The PCC has continued to fund a local, specialist advocacy service – Veritas Justice – to assist victims of stalking through the criminal justice process in Sussex. This service also provides safeguarding advice for victims of cyber-enabled stalking and supports individuals through the criminal justice system and as part of their recovery.

In 2024/25, Veritas Justice provided intervention and support more than 3,000 victims of stalking. This included advice and guidance about keeping safe online, safety planning and ongoing support through police investigations and during court appearances.

INFOGRAPHIC: More than 3,000 victims of stalking supported by Veritas Justice

Prevention and Perpetrator Programmes

Maintained Perpetrator Programmes – In 2024/25, the PCC successfully secured further funding of £677,808 from the Home Office Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Fund to maintain the prevention and perpetrator programmes previously established in Sussex across the performance plan year.

[SUBHEADING] Complex Domestic Abuse and Stalking Unit – The Complex Domestic Abuse and Stalking Unit (CDASU) continues to provide tailored interventions for persistent perpetrators of domestic abuse and stalking offences with multiple and complex needs by supporting them to recognise and address their abusive behaviours.

The CDASU [established in 2021/2022] work with a cohort of the most active and high-harm domestic abuse perpetrators in Sussex. The multi-agency team comprises police offender managers, independent domestic violence advisors, substance misuse workers and a mental health worker [psychotherapist].

The unit worked with 126 perpetrators during 2024/25. The programme is voluntary and, should any of the individuals identified for participation decide not to engage, Sussex Police will continue to use the robust disruption opportunities available to them.

[SUBHEADING] High Harm Perpetrator Programme – The programme provides a tailored intervention for persistent perpetrators of domestic abuse and stalking, with multiple and complex needs, by supporting them to recognise and address their abusive behaviours through the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Programme and Compulsive and Obsessive Behaviour Interventions (COBI). During 2024/25, the high harm perpetrator programme worked with 126 complex offenders and COBI were delivered to 12 perpetrators across 194 sessions throughout the same 12-month period.

[SUBHEADING] Stalking Clinic and Stalking Protection Orders – The Stalking Clinic comprises multi-agency representatives from Sussex Police, Crown Prosecution Service, Probation Service and Veritas Justice Stalking Advocacy Service, alongside specialist information technology teams for cyberstalking. The clinic meets monthly to assess and provide specialist advice to officers investigating high-risk cases of stalking.

During 2024/25, the Stalking Clinic discussed 52 high-risk cases in Sussex. The continuation of a Stalking Protection Order (SPO) Coordinator Role [within the clinic] also contributed to almost 70 successful applications for SPOs being granted across the year, helping to further safeguard victims.

Rape and Serious Sexual Offences

Continued investment in rape, sexual violence and exploitation – During 2024/25, the PCC provided funding to 11 organisations throughout Sussex to assist victims and survivors with their recoveries from rape, sexual violence and exploitation.

Survivors' Network [HYPERLINK] is responsible for delivering the advice and counselling service provided for survivors of rape, sexual violence and abuse across Sussex. This is a pan-Sussex service and is co-commissioned with the three local authorities [Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council], with the PCC retaining overall responsibility as the lead commissioner.

During 2024/25, Survivors' Network received over 3,500 referrals and supported more than 2,000 survivors [>60%]. The provision of a Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ChISVA) also ensured that nearly 280 children, young people and their families received enhanced support throughout police investigations, court appearances and beyond to assist them in their recoveries.

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The PCC also funded several other organisations and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) who support victims and survivors of rape, sexual abuse and exploitation across the year. These organisations collectively received more than 3,000 referrals during 2024/25, with support provided to over 2,000 of these victims and survivors [>67%].

INFOGRAPHIC: More than 2,000 adult victims of rape, sexual abuse and exploitation and almost 280 children and young people supported

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls

Further funding secured through Safer Streets 5 – The PCC successfully secured £813,449 of extra funding over two years [£461,946 in 2023/24 and £351,503 in 2024/25] from the Home Office to provide interventions aimed at reducing neighbourhood crime [domestic burglary, robbery, theft from person and vehicle crime], tackling anti-social behaviour and reducing violence against women and girls (VAWG) in public spaces.

In 2024/25, this funding was used to fund the following three projects in Sussex:

Project Fides: This project was the creation of eight victim coordinator posts to act as a point of contact for female victims of rape in a public place. The coordinators have sought to build rapport with victims of these crimes and to gain a better understanding of the barriers that may have stopped them from supporting a prosecution previously, including specific support for almost 1,400 cases across the year.

The victim coordinators also contacted almost 480 victims during 2024/25 who had previously disengaged from the criminal justice system process. The coordinators have also sought to ensure that the right support services have been offered to meet the needs of the victims, alongside the provision of regular updates as the investigations progress.

Upgrading public facing CCTV: In support of protecting women and girls in public spaces, this project has upgraded the circa. 500 public facing CCTV in Sussex from a standalone hard-wired system to a wireless, cloud-based system. The technology is cheaper and more cost-efficient to run compared with the former solution and is anticipated to save police and partners an average of 40% a year on previous running costs.

Fraud

Continued investment in dedicated fraud caseworkers – As one of the commissioned support services, Victim Support holds the contract for providing multi-crime support in Sussex which includes the provision of dedicated fraud caseworkers to tackle the financial, physical, psychological and sexual abuse of older people. This organisation provides one-to-one tailored support to those identified as being most vulnerable to repeat fraud – a demographic that includes older people.

This approach supports and raises awareness of Operation Signature – the nationally adopted Sussex Police campaign to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud – to recognise victims of all types of fraud as victims of crime and to provide preventative measures to support and protect them from further targeting.

The Sussex Fraud Case Workers received more than 1,000 referrals during the year and supported almost 600 victims [>60%], many of whom had experienced substantial financial loss and have additional needs – such as physical frailties and adult social care issues – which make them more vulnerable to becoming repeat victims. During 2024/25, the caseworkers also supported these individuals and all victims of fraud to recover more than £1million from banking institutions across the year.

INFOGRAPHIC 1: Sussex Fraud Case Workers supported almost 600 victims

INFOGRAPHIC 2: More than £1m recovered from banking institutions on behalf of fraud victims

Quality Victim Support Services

Range of services commissioned to support victims – The PCC has a statutory responsibility to provide victim support services in Sussex and continued to commission a range of services to support victims throughout the county.

In 2024/25, almost 50,000 victims were referred to these commissioned support services in Sussex, with over 18,000 individuals [>40%] representing new cases [not known to the service already] and requiring one-to-one support.

As one of the commissioned support services, Victim Support holds the contract for providing multi-crime support in Sussex. During 2024/25, Victim Support received almost 20,000 referrals and contacted over 10,000 of the aforementioned victims of crime to offer them support following referrals [50%].

Of those victims contacted, nearly 4,000 individuals engaged with the service and more than 1,000 victims are still receiving ongoing emotional support for what they have experienced. Each of the other victims were referred to local specialist service providers to receive enhanced support, including victims of domestic abuse, stalking and sexual violence.

INFOGRAPHIC: Almost 20,000 referrals received and more than 10,000 victims contacted

Maintained standards through the Safe Space Sussex Funding Network – The PCC continued to invest in funding projects to support some of the most vulnerable victims as part of an ongoing commitment to develop a diverse landscape of support services in Sussex.

During 2024/25, £5.4million was invested into victim support services for victims in Sussex. This included £270,000 provided to specialist support services through the Safe Space Sussex Funding Network – a competitive funding tranche launched in 2017/18 that continues to grow and develop.

There are currently 44 'approved' providers of specialist support services within the Funding Network who have each been able to demonstrate the high levels of quality standards and assurance required. Further information about the Funding Network can be viewed through the following link: www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/apply-for-funding/safe-space-sussex-funding-network/

INFOGRAPHIC 1: £5.4m invested in victim support services in Sussex

INFOGRAPHIC 2: £270,000 invested in the Safe Space Sussex Funding Network

Safeguard the Vulnerable

Enhancements to the Safe Space Sussex online directory – The PCC has continued to develop and enhance Safe Space Sussex – the online directory of victim support services available throughout Sussex – to enable victims to find the most relevant support service through a safe and confidential route.

Safe Space Sussex provides a mechanism for Sussex residents to seek help and guidance and supports the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime which entitles all victims to receive appropriate support, regardless of whether they choose to report to the police.

Safe Space Sussex website – which hosts the information about the individual locations and provides directions to these – was accessed more than 47,000 times. The most visited pages on the site included the search function to find a service, information about different types of crime and specific pages for support service providers.

INFOGRAPHIC: More than 47,000 visitors to Safe Space Sussex

Continued delivery of the Safe Space Sussex Scheme – In March 2022, the PCC created a [Safe Space Sussex Scheme](#) [HYPERLINK] to allow members of the public to locate designated safe spaces near to their current location, should they feel unsafe using funding secured from the Home Office – Science, Technology and Research (STAR) Fund.

There are currently more than 220 safe space locations throughout Sussex where individuals can access trained support when they are feeling vulnerable. During 2024/25, the Safe Space Sussex app migrated onto the Safe Space Sussex website to provide better usability and enhanced accessibility. Further information can be viewed through the following link: <https://www.safespacesussex.org.uk/>

INFOGRAPHIC: More than 220 Safe Space locations in Sussex

Improve Access to Justice

Effective Independent Custody Visiting Scheme – The PCC has continued to oversee an established and effective Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Scheme in Sussex. The Scheme has 45 dedicated volunteers who make unannounced visits to independently monitor and observe the care and dignity of people detained in each of the five police custody centres in Sussex: Brighton, Crawley, Eastbourne, Hastings and Worthing. This service was extended to include independent monitoring of the Border Force custody centre and the Animal Welfare Scheme at Gatwick Airport during 2024/25.

There was a 9% increase in the number of custody visits made by the ICVs in 2024/25, in comparison to the year before. This equated to 20 more visits compared to the 235 visits completed during 2023/24, with these visits undertaken at a range of different times during a 24-hour period, before inspection reports were submitted to the ICV Scheme Manager for review and action as appropriate. Of those unannounced visits made, more than 698 detained persons accepted a visit with the ICVs to discuss their welfare, rights, entitlements, and dignity in police custody. This represented a 4% reduction from the 728 accepted visits in 2023/24.

The ICVs have worked within police custody legislation and guidelines to introduce new standards for detainee dignity and welfare. This has included adjustments made to night-time lighting levels in custody cells to promote better rest and sleep, and the creation of a new national referral pathway to provide support for those experiencing menopause symptoms whilst in police custody in England & Wales.

Several positive changes to detainee care were introduced by the scheme during the year. This included a wider range of food and drink items [including decaffeinated drinks to assist with calming anxiety and stress during the custody process] and additional resources and distraction items to help those detained in police custody with their mental wellbeing and to manage the time whilst investigation processes are completed [including the introduction of new reading books, newspapers and magazines in a range of different languages, and greater accessibility to self-care items and personal hygiene products, [including face and body wipes], alongside the promotion of the Samaritans support service [following the publication of the 'Prevention of deaths in police custody and apparent suicides following release' report in June 2024].

Throughout the year, the scheme introduced additional oversight and scrutiny around other custody processes, including a monthly audit into vulnerable adult and juvenile detainee strip searches. These independent reviews scrutinise the strip search processes to ensure that the process is compliant with the requirements of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 for children, young people and vulnerable adults, together with creating more accurate recording practices. This approach seeks to ensure that Sussex Police is compliant with the law and regulations, whilst maintaining and upholding the dignity and human rights of the detainees.

The scheme has recommenced the quarterly panel meetings at each of the custody centres to review performance statistics, areas for improvement and to share notable practice identified by the ICVs. A new recruitment, training and continuous professional development strategy has also been introduced, alongside a feedback forum for volunteers to optimise the performance of the scheme and personal development of the ICVs. More information has been made available through a range of public meetings, events and online resources across the year too.

In 2023/24, Sussex Police introduced several changes to the operating model for police custody to improve the effectiveness of the detention provision in Sussex. The ICVs have continued to monitor the implementation of this programme through weekly visits and reviews to ensure that these changes have been embedded, whilst maintaining and upholding the high levels of safeguarding, dignity and welfare standards demonstrated previously for people detained in police custody.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2025/26, the PCC will seek to secure the highest national level of accreditation for the ICV Scheme in Sussex again through the Quality Assurance Framework awarded by the Independent Custody Visiting Association, alongside the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management from Investing in Volunteers.

INFOGRAPHIC: 9% increase in custody visits made by ICVs in 2024/25

3. Strategic Policing Requirement

The [Strategic Policing Requirement](#) [HYPERLINK] (SPR) sets out those threats which the Home Secretary has determined are the biggest threat to public safety and must be given due regard by PCCs when issuing and varying Police & Crime Plans.

The SPR supports PCCs and Chief Constables to plan, prepare and respond to these threats by clearly linking the local response to the national, highlighting the capabilities and partnerships that policing needs to ensure it can fulfil its national responsibilities.

The SPR contains seven national threats, as follows:

- violence against women and girls
- terrorism
- serious and organised crime
- national cyber event
- child sexual abuse
- public disorder
- civil emergencies

The SPR provides details of the action required from policing at local and regional level to the critical national threats.

The PCC has given due regard to each of the seven threat areas identified in the SPR within her new [Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2024/28](#) [HYPERLINK] and as part of her statutory role of holding the Chief Constable to account during 2024/25.

4. Managing Resources

4a. Summary of financial context 2024/25

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 created two separate corporations' sole: the PCC and the Chief Constable.

The PCC is responsible for: receiving all income and funding; making all payments from the overall Police Fund and control of all assets, liabilities and reserves.

The functions of the Chief Constable are fulfilled under this Act. The annual budget is set by the PCC in consultation with the Chief Constable. A scheme of delegation is in operation between the two bodies determining their respective responsibilities, as well as local arrangements in respect of the use of the PCC's assets and staff.

Financial planning sits at the heart of good public financial management. Alongside budget preparation, performance management and reporting, the ability to look strategically beyond the current budget period is a crucial process to support the PCC's resilience and long-term financial sustainability.

The four-year strategic financial planning tool – the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) – is one of the key planning tools helping to identify available resources and options for delivering the three Public Priorities within the PCC's Police & Crime Plan and the national Strategic Policing Requirements.

2024/25 Budget

The PCC worked closely with the Chief Constable and her senior team to understand the operational needs of Sussex Police for the financial year 2024/25 and the financial pressures on the Force.

The PCC considered the financial and other implications of precept funding levels, use of reserves, inflation and other cost pressures against several budget scenarios as part of the financial planning process. The level of cost increase from inflation and other costs changes of £33.2million, when set against a £25million grant and precept increase, requires use of other resources and cost reductions to balance the budget.

The PCC, alongside Sussex Police, reviewed all budgets in detail during 2023/24 in collaboration with the Service Transformation Programme to highlight options for identifying and delivering efficiency savings and/or generating income, with the aim of setting a balanced budget.

A £13 precept uplift in 2024/25 would enable Sussex Police to meet the increased costs whilst preserving the improvements in operational capacity and capability made through investment in previous years. It would also support the cost of delivering the change required to ensure they have the most efficient policing model possible, building on the investment already made in innovation such as digital support for investigation and analytics to deliver smarter evidence-based policing.

The PCC and the public [as we know from our survey and consultation results] wanted to maintain the investment that had been made to date – the police officers, police staff, PCSOs and smart systems and capabilities. Yet, even with a £13 increase in the precept and other resources, including the use of reserves, it was not enough to balance the budget and offset the large cost increases that were anticipated, leaving the requirement to make £5million savings to balance the budget for 2024/25.

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The decision to increase the police precept to fund operational policing was also based on the results of substantial public consultation including focus groups with parish, town and district councillors and a Police Budget and Priorities Survey in which residents gave their views.

The £13 a year increase per Band D property was supported and endorsed by the Police & Crime Panel at their meeting on 26 January 2024.

The 2024/25 net revenue budget was approved by the PCC in February 2024 at £396million. This consisted of the following:

- Government grant for Sussex in 2024/25 of £229.6million.
- the precept was increased by £13 to £252.91 for a Band D property, generating £164.9million.
- provision for increases in pay and prices, including growth, inflation and cost pressures of £33.2million.
- the requirement to make a further £5million of savings.
- the PCC delegated a budget of £385.5million to the Chief Constable for 2024/25 to enable the discharge of operational activities under police direction and control.

Revenue Budget	2024/25 £m
Sussex Police Operational Delivery Budget	385.500
Office of the Sussex PCC	1.926
PCC	0.119
Community Safety	1.728
Victim Support & Restorative Justice [net of specific grant]	0.408
Other OPCC financing budgets including reserves transfers	6.300
Total Budget	395.981

The capital and investment budget, which funds the purchase, enhancement and replacement of long-term asset, was approved by the PCC in February 2024 at £14.8million and subsequently uplifted for slippage from 2023/24 to £25.1million.

Throughout the year, the PCC has closely scrutinised the spending of the budget, delivery of the policing investment and performance. Scrutiny has been provided through a variety of publicly webcast monthly Performance & Accountability Meetings, Local Policing Accountability Boards, internal financial monitoring meetings and other monitoring within the scheme of governance. The key decisions taken by the PCC can be viewed through the following link: <https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/how-we-work/pcc-decisions/>

4b. Summary of financial performance 2024/25

Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner Direct Operating Costs		Cost £	Total Cost £
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner Direct Operating and Commissioning Costs	PCC direct costs [<i>salary and oncosts</i>] Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner Community Safety Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan Victim Support & Restorative Justice Violence Reduction Programme Safer Streets National Roads Policing Operations, Intelligence and Investigation <i>Less Grant Funding & External Income</i> <i>Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan Grant</i> <i>Victims & Restorative Justice Grant</i> <i>Violence Reduction Programme Grant</i> <i>Safer Streets Grant</i> <i>National Roads Policing Operations, Intelligence and Investigation</i>	0.1m 1.8m 1.9m 0.9m 5.5m 1.3m 0.3m 3.2m (0.9m) (5.5m) (1.3m) (0.4m) (3.2m)	<hr/> 3.7m
Policing services provided by Sussex Police	Police Officers Police Staff (including PCSOs) Other Employee Costs* Buildings Transport Supplies & Services Third-Party Payments** <i>less Sussex Police income</i>	223.1m 117.8m 8.6m 13.6m 7.4m 45.5m 4.5m (45.0m)	<hr/> 375.5m
Capital Financing	Capital financing costs <i>Less interest income on balances</i>	8.3m (4.1m)	<hr/> 4.2m
Planned transfers to/(from) reserves			14.2m
Total Cost of Services			397.6m
Funded By	Funding from Government Council Tax Total Funding	(234.2m) (165.3m) (399.5m)	(399.5m)
Net revenue (surplus)/deficit			(1.9m)

* Includes ill health pension payments, employee expenses, training and restructure costs

** Includes third party payments to other government bodies, partnerships and external initiatives

The figures shown in the above table are as per the draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25 and are subject to audit. They include all office costs and services commissioned by the PCC and the cost of all activities carried out by Sussex Police.

4c. Summary of financial headlines 2024/25

The key financial headlines from the revenue and capital outturn 2024/25 are summarised below.

The revenue outturn, subject to audit, is as follows:

- £1.9million [0.5%] underspend on the revised revenue budget of £399.5million [increased for additional grant resources received for the police officer pay award].
- £0.7million [0.2%] underspend on the operational delivery budget delegated to the Chief Constable.
- a favourable variance of £1.2million on the OSPCC budget, including:
 - an underspend within financial provisions and reserves totalling £0.3million.
 - Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner, community safety and commissioning budget underspent by £0.9million. Of this, £0.7million arose within the victims commissioning budget due to the timing of the spending. This will be carried forward to meet commitments within the victim budget during 2025/26.

The capital and investment budget for 2024/25 was approved by the PCC in February 2024 at £15.6million. During the year, budget virements were agreed, resulting in a revised capital budget of £20.2million.

The final outturn for the capital and investment programme for the year is an under-spend of £4.0million. A case to carry slippage forward will be scrutinised and approved in July 2025.

Total usable reserves as of 31 March 2025 amounted to £63.3million. This included general reserves of £15million, equating to 4% of the 2024/25 net budget, plus £48.3million of other reserves earmarked for specific purposes and future commitments. This includes the 2024/25 underspend outturn figure, although it does not include year-end adjustments to the Insurance Reserve.

The summary of the reserves on 31 March 2025 can be found in the Statement of Accounts which also include further details of the financial performance of 2024/25. The draft accounts, subject to audit, can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/financials/accounts/>

4d. Financial outlook for 2025/26 and beyond

Key Financial Pressures

Around 80% of our budget goes towards personnel costs, primarily police officer and staff salaries. The remaining 20% covers operational costs, including vehicles, information technology (IT) and victim services. Both areas face significant and, often, unpredictable cost increases as follows:

- **Workforce Costs:** Recent national pay awards for police officers [e.g., 7% in 2023 and 4.75% in 2024] have consistently exceeded budgeted amounts, creating substantial funding shortfalls [e.g., £7.1million in 2023]. This is largely due to central Government grants not fully accounting for the actual cost of police officer pay, pushing more of the burden onto local council tax. Additionally, increased Employer National Insurance Contributions (NIC) will add an estimated £700,000 net shortfall in 2025/26.
- **Operating Costs:** These costs are highly exposed to rising prices. While the rate of inflation has slowed from its peak, overall prices have still risen by approximately 34% since Quarter 3 in 2019/20, creating a cumulative impact. We cannot easily adjust our income [grants and council tax] mid-year, meaning cost reductions are necessary if income is maximised. Rising oil prices and a weaker Great British Pound against the United States Dollar continue to pose a risk of further inflation.
- **Capital Costs:** Managing debt for long-term investments, like buildings and equipment, is becoming more expensive due to fluctuating interest rates and rising UK Government bond prices [also known as Gilts]. For instance, the 25-year Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) interest rate was 6.15% in January 2025, increasing our borrowing costs.

Budget Outlook & Funding

The 2025/26 budget is £423.6million. While Home Office grants remain the largest funding source, local council tax [precept] has significantly increased its share of funding, now accounting for an estimated 42% compared to 30% in 2013/14.

Even with a £14 increase to the council tax precept, we still face a £5million budget shortfall for 2025/26. Plans are being developed to mitigate these pressures and identify sustainable savings, primarily through a Transformation Programme.

Strategic Considerations

- **Police Officer Numbers:** The Home Office mandates maintaining police officer numbers [target 3,226 in 2025/26] to avoid significant grant penalties [£7.5million]. This means savings cannot be achieved by reducing police officer numbers, placing the burden of further cuts on other budgets, including police staff.
- **Reserves:** Funds are held in reserves to mitigate risks and fund specific change programmes. Some earmarked reserves are being used to help balance the 2025/26 budget, while the General Reserve is maintained at 4% of the budget.
- **Comprehensive Spending Review (SR25):** Recent government announcements project a real term increase in police spending power [2.3% average to 2028/29 and 1.7% from 2025/26]. However, much of this increase is expected to come from local council tax rises. A key unknown is the Police Reform Programme which aims for efficiencies but lacks specific financial forecasts for costs and savings, posing a significant medium-term risk.
- **Local Government Reform and Devolution:** The Government plans to extend devolution, creating new Mayoral Strategic Authorities with greater powers over areas, including public safety. Sussex is part of the Devolution Priority Programme to establish such an authority in May 2026. While offering opportunities for greater local control, this will involve a significant change in governance, potentially affecting the role of the PCC, and requires careful collaboration and financial planning to maintain public safety.

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Conclusion

The financial estimates for 2025/26 are considered robust and reserves are adequate, provided that senior leadership actively delivers on planned savings to address the identified budget gap and manage ongoing financial risks in an uncertain economic and political landscape.

5. National Contribution

In addition to her work in Sussex, the PCC made the following contributions nationally in 2024/25:

- Board member for the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC).
- PCC representative on the Home Secretary's National Oversight Board for Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment.
- APCC lead for Business and Retail Crime.
- APCC spokesperson for PCC Security and Safeguarding.
- Attends the APCC Criminal Justice System and Victims Standing Group.
- Attends the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) National Stalking and Harassment Offences Working Group.
- Member of the NPCC Audit and Assurance Board.
- Attends His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) strategic briefings following inspections of Sussex Police.
- Group Leader of the Conservative Police & Crime Commissioners.

The PCC also attended the following national events throughout 2024/25:

April 2024: PCC participated in Home Office roundtable events to discuss the Retail Theft Action Plan.

May 2024: PCC provided an update on Project Pegasus at the Retail Steering Group as part of the NPCC Retail Crime Strategic Delivery Plan 2024/25.

June 2024: PCC met with the Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) to launch Project Fides and spoke at the Westminster Legal Policy Forum on the 'Next steps for tackling shoplifting and retail crime' as a keynote speaker.

July 2024: PCC attended a reception at the Houses of Parliament to celebrate Brake – the road safety charity.

August 2024: PCC participated in the NPCC Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan meeting around 'Hotspot Policing' and the Immediate Justice Oversight Board.

September 2024: PCC spoke at the Centre for Young Lives and Premier League Charitable Fund event to promote the value of sport and youth involvement and participated in an interview about the super-complaint submitted on behalf of the National Stalking Consortium.

October 2024: PCC attended the Safer Sussex Business Partnership and met with the National Farmers' Union, Rural Crime Team and local farmers to demonstrate the SelectaDNA tool and equipment marking kits to prevent and deter rural crime thefts.

November 2024: PCC took part in a Ministerial roundtable event on VAWG; spoke at the APCC and NPCC Partnership Summit; attended a Parliamentary reception to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Victim Support and was a guest speaker at a Veritas Justice event celebrating 10 years of stalking advocacy.

December 2024: PCC spoke at the first Retail Crime Forum about the successes of Project Pegasus; was a guest speaker at the Security Working Group roundtable event to encourage greater collaboration between the police and private security and attended the PCC Engagement Day at the National Crime Agency.

January 2025: PCC chaired the Westminster Legal Policy Forum Conference on 'Tackling retail Crime in England and Wales: next steps for tackling retail crime and anti-social behaviour'.

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February 2025: PCC attended the 'Tackling Drugs: Learning from Project ADDER to make our streets safer' conference.

March 2025: PCC spoke at the Association of Convenience Stores – Safe and Responsible Retailing Conference; attended a Parliamentary reception to 'Stop Tool Theft' and participated in a National Stalking and Harassment Working Group.

6. Sussex Police: Workforce Diversity

On 31 March 2025, Sussex Police comprised 3,297 police officers and 2,681 police staff [including 269 PCSOs] – a total workforce of 5,978 individuals [headcount].

Ethnicity

- 131 police officers identified as being from a Black, Asian and Global Majority background (4%); 2,991 identified as white (91%); 113 preferred not to say (3%) and 62 individuals did not disclose their ethnicity (2%).
- 81 police staff identified as being from a Black, Asian and Global Majority background (3%); 2,415 identified as white (90%); 52 preferred not to say (2%) and 133 individuals did not disclose their ethnicity (5%).

CENSUS 2021: In Sussex, 9% of the population identified their ethnicity as Black, Asian and Global Majority and 91% identified as white.

Sex and Gender

- 1,236 police officers identified as female (37%) and 2,061 identified as male (63%).
- 1,717 police staff identified as female (64%) and 964 identified as male (36%).
- Eight police officers and staff identified their gender identity as trans; eight identified as non-binary; nine identified as intersex and 18 identified as other. A further 232 officers and staff preferred not to say, and 666 individuals did not disclose their gender identity.

CENSUS 2021: In Sussex, 49% of the population identified their gender as female and 45% identified as male. A further 0.17% of the population identified their gender identity as trans, 0.15% identified as non-binary and 0.15% identified as other. A further 5% of the population did not disclose their gender identity.

Religion

- 13 police officers identified as Buddhist (0.4%); 862 as Christian (26%); five as Hindu (0.2%); five as Jewish (0.2%); 13 as Muslim (0.4%); one as Sikh (0.03%); 59 as other (2%) and 1,683 as none (51%). A further 273 officers (8%) preferred not to say, and 383 individuals did not disclose their religion (12%).
- 11 police staff identified as Buddhist (0.4%); 860 as Christian (32%); four as Hindu (0.2%); five as Jewish (0.2%); 15 as Muslim (0.6%); two as Sikh (0.1%); 57 as other (2%) and 1,323 as not having a religion (49%). A further 169 staff preferred not to say (6%), and 235 individuals did not disclose their religion (9%).

CENSUS 2021: In Sussex, 0.5% of the population identified their religion as Buddhist, 45% as Christian, 0.8% as Hindu, 0.3% as Jewish, 2% as Muslim, 0.1% as Sikh, 0.7% as other and 45% as no religion. A further 6% of individuals did not disclose their religion.

Age

- 375 police officers identified as being 16-24 years old (11%); 917 as 25-34 years old (28%); 973 as 35-44 years old (30%); 904 as 45-54 years old (27%); 126 as 55-64 years old (4%) and two as 65 years and over (0.1%).
- 142 police staff identified as 16-24 years old (5%); 608 as 25-34 years old (23%); 565 as 35-44 years old (21%); 653 as 45-54 years old (24%); 622 as 55-64 years old (23%) and 91 s 65 years and over (3%).

CENSUS 2021: In Sussex, 12% of the population stated their age as 16-24 years old, 14% as 25-34 years old, 15% as 35-44 years old, 17% as 45-54 years old, 16% as 55-64 years old, 14% as 65-74 years old and 13% as 75+ years.

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Disability

- 329 police officers identified as having a disability (10%); 2,388 had no disability (72%); 150 preferred not to say (5%) and 430 individuals did not disclose (13%).
- 284 police staff identified as having a disability (11%); 2,071 had no disability (77%); 76 preferred not to say (3%) and 250 individuals did not disclose (9%).

CENSUS 2021: In Sussex, 26% of the population identified as having a disability and 74% did not declare a disability.

Sexual Orientation

- 112 police officers identified as bisexual (3%); 186 as gay or lesbian (6%); 2,412 as heterosexual (73%); six as other (0.2%); 221 preferred not to say (7%) and 360 individuals did not disclose their sexual orientation (11%).
- 70 police staff identified as bisexual (3%); 123 as gay or lesbian (5%); 2,088 as heterosexual (78%); 14 as other (0.5%); 150 preferred not to say (6%) and 236 individuals did not disclose their sexual orientation (9%).

CENSUS 2021: In Sussex, 2% of the population identified their sexual orientation as bisexual, 2% as gay or lesbian, 88% as heterosexual, 0.4% as other and 7% individuals did not disclose their sexual orientation.

7. Summary of Funding Allocated to Victims' Services and Others in Sussex

Ministry of Justice – Funding Allocated to Victims' Services in Sussex

Name of Organisation	Name of Project	Funding
Barnardo's	Project SOLAH [Safer Online At Home] Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) for children and young people	£79,971
Brighton & Hove City Council	Safe Space Sussex	£15,000
Brighton & Hove City Council	Domestic abuse specialist	£80,000
Brighton Women's Centre	Safe Space Sussex Women's Hub	£40,000
Brighton Women's Centre	Senior Practitioner for Women's Accommodation Support Worker and Trauma Hub	£58,026
Brighton Women's Centre	Staffing and internal pathways	£15,000
Brighton Women's Centre	Support and wellbeing provisions	£52,079
Child and Adolescent to Parent Abuse First Response	Online platform for child to parent abuse support	£8,500
Change, Grow, Live	Funding to provide Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) and Hospital IDVA posts across East Sussex	£18,418
Counselling Plus Community	Domestic abuse and sexual violence counselling	£35,032
Counselling Plus Community	Domestic abuse and sexual violence counselling	£15,000
East Sussex County Council	Contribution to the specialist domestic abuse service	£131,000
Friends, Families & Travellers	Group worker for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence	£10,000
Friends, Families & Travellers	Domestic abuse and sexual violence support for Gypsies, Romas and Travellers	£22,857
Hersana	IDVA posts for ethnic minorities	£122,499
Hersana	Counselling for those at risk of harmful practices	£48,230
Hersana	Training and support around immigration	£10,000.00
Hourglass	Community response to domestic abuse	£28,072
Hourglass	IDVA post for older people	£89,238
LGBT Switchboard	IDVA for LGBTQ+ community	£45,849
LGBT Switchboard	IDVA for LGBTQ+ community	£72,068
Lifecentre	Journey to Recovery – Employment [employment programme for victims and survivors of sexual violence]	£125,497
Lifecentre	Rape and sexual abuse support funding	£19,000
Lotus Families	IDVA triage post for domestic abuse service	£18,000
Lotus Families	IDVA post and Lotus Programme [domestic abuse recovery programme]	£45,283
Lotus Families	IDVA for children and young people and delivery of the 'Who's in Charge' group sessions	£49,573
ManKind	Counselling and recovery programme	£106,896
ManKind	IDVA post for males	£165,018
ManKind	ISVA post for males	£45,740
ManKind	Support for male victims of sexual violence	£23,000
ManKind	Support for male victims of sexual violence	£20,000
My Sisters' House	DART+ Programme [recovery programme to support women and children who have escaped domestic abuse]	£64,698
My Sisters' House	IDVA for Eastern European community	£51,070
Oasis Project	Looking Forward Project [programme for women who have had children permanently removed from their care via family court]	£32,566
Oasis Project	Lived experience inclusion, training and capacity increase	£19,000
Our Neighbourhood	Group and activity sessions for victims of domestic abuse	£8,000
Rise	Group recovery for those victims of domestic abuse	£40,495
Rise	Regroup [recovery and empowerment group for those who are no longer in an abusive relationship]	£10,000
Safe in Sussex	Early intervention and recovery	£110,944

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Safe in Sussex	IDVAs for ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+	£67,954
Safe in Sussex	Triage worker for domestic abuse service	£10,000
Streetlight UK	Support for individuals who wish to leave the sex industry	£26,883
Streetlight UK	Volunteer coordinator and police training	£32,000
Survivors' Network	ISVAs for adults and children and young people	£148,158
Survivors' Network	Complex caseworkers, ISVA for people who experience racism and ISVA for those with multiple and complex needs	£135,000
Survivors' Network	Outreach service and group support	£107,520
Survivors' Network	Sexual abuse specialist post	£424,576
Survivors' Network	ISVAs for children and young people	£69,070
Survivors' Network	Training and provision of support for those involved in the sex industry	£35,000
Sussex Community Development Association	Domestic abuse outreach worker	£26,800
The Daisy Chain Project	Pro bono legal advice for victims of domestic abuse	£79,500
The You Trust	IDVAs for children and young people	£88,950
The You Trust	IDVA post for Worthing	£65,075
Veritas Justice	IDVA for victims of stalking	£45,920
Veritas Justice	Volunteering for Change project [improved access to support, alongside raising awareness through the sharing of improved knowledge and expertise for victims of stalking]	£26,313
Veritas Justice	Stalking Advocacy Service	£233,871
Veritas Justice	IDVA for victims of stalking	£43,504
Veritas Justice	Stalking support group for survivors	£10,000
Victim Support	Helpline provision	£32,240
Victim Support	IDVA posts	£162,673
Victim Support	Pan Sussex multi-crime type support provision	£722,398
Victim Support	Young Witness Service	£89,087
Worth Services	IDVA post for children and young children	£53,609
Worth Services	IDVA post for children and young children	£54,500
Yada	The Esther Project [specialist support for those in the sex industry]	£10,000
Yada	The Esther Project [specialist support for those in the sex industry]	£20,000
YMCA DownsLink Group	Trainer for child victims of sexual exploitation sessions	£20,000
YMCA DownsLink Group	Project SOLAH ISVAs for children and young people	£115,471
Total		£4,892,691

Home Office – Safer Streets Fund – Round 5

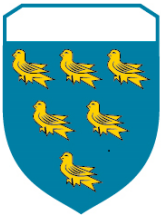
Name of Organisation	Name of Project	Funding
Sussex Police	Project Fides [investment in new victim coordinator roles]	£228,072
Adur District Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£1,569
Arun District Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£5,696
Bexhill Town Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£4,334
Brighton & Hove City Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£14,505
Chichester District Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£8,382
Crawley Borough Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£15,852
Eastbourne Borough Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£4,263
Hailsham Town Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£2,078
Hastings Borough Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£8,044
Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£645
Lewes District Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£1,236
Mid Sussex District Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£8,902
Newhaven Town Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£627
Polegate Town Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£519
Seaford Town Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£1,361

Sussex Police	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras [including management costs]	£39,751
Uckfield Town Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£645
Worthing Borough Council	Upgrades to public facing CCTV cameras	£5,022
Total		£351,503

Home Office – Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Fund

Name of Organisation	Name of Project	Funding
Brighton Housing Trust	Psychotherapist and specialist mental health worker	£61,672
Change, Grow, Live	IDVA post	£48,000
Change, Grow, Live	Substance misuse workers	£98,000
Centre for Public Innovation	Evaluation of the High Harm Perpetrator Programme	£9,515
Centre for Public Innovation	Evaluation of the Multi-Agency Task and Coordination Group	£7,000
Friends Meeting House	Hire of Friends Meeting house for the High Harm Perpetrator Programme	£3,456
Interventions Alliance	Compulsive and Obsessive Behaviour Interventions Programme	£249,930
Sussex Police	Sussex Police salary costs	£223,422
Sussex Police	Buddi smart tags	£13,500
Sussex Police	Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme	£12,558
Veritas Justice	Provision of support to the High Harm Perpetrator Programme Sussex Stalking Clinic	£32,130
West Sussex County Council	IDVA post	£48,000
Total		£807,183

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SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME PANEL

The Role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner in Ensuring the Effectiveness of Vetting Processes within Sussex Police.

3 July 2025

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Focus for Scrutiny

The Panel may wish to consider:

- The effectiveness of the Commissioner's work in holding the Force to account for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of vetting standards, and whether the approach should evolve in the light of the recent HMICFRS inspection report.

1. Background

- 1.1 The item was requested by the Panel following a request from a member at the March 2025 meeting.

2. Focus for Scrutiny

- 2.1 The Panel may wish to consider:

- The effectiveness of the Commissioner's work in holding the Force to account for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of vetting standards, and whether the approach should evolve in the light of the recent HMICFRS inspection report.

Tony Kershaw

Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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Appendices:

Appendix A - The role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner in ensuring the effectiveness of vetting processes within Sussex Police.

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To:	The Sussex Police & Crime Panel.
From:	The Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner.
Subject:	The role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner in ensuring the effectiveness of vetting processes within Sussex Police.
Date:	3 July 2025.
Recommendation:	That the Sussex Police & Crime Panel note the report.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) in holding Sussex Police to account for the effectiveness of the vetting standards and processes used within Sussex Police.
- 1.2 The report provides an outline of the purpose of vetting; guidance and procedures for vetting; types of vetting; decision-making for vetting; considerations around convictions and cautions; oversight and accountability for vetting and the role of the PCC in this process in terms of holding the Chief Constable to account.
- 1.3 The report also sets out some of the further reforms to the police dismissal system that were formally announced in April 2025.

2.0 The purpose of vetting

- 2.1 It is imperative that all individuals in the police service in England and Wales maintain the highest ethical and professional standards and act with the utmost integrity. This position is crucial in terms of ensuring that only those who are suitable can join, and remain in, policing and that trust and confidence in the service is maintained.
- 2.2 It is essential that members of the public are confident that police vetting standards and processes for all potential and serving police officers and staff are robust and effective in identifying those individuals who pose a potential risk to others and/or those who are otherwise unsuitable to work within the police service. It is also fundamental that those working in policing are also able to maintain the trust and confidence of their individual chief constable to perform their role and deliver policing services.
- 2.3 Police vetting is conducted across all police forces nationally to identify, assess and manage risk relating to the following areas:
 - corruption and coercion
 - integrity
 - leadership
 - national security
 - operational safety
 - protection of police and/or organisational assets
 - public safety
 - public trust and confidence

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2.4 Undertaking consistent and effective vetting assists all police forces to identify those individuals who may be unsuitable to work in, and remain in, the police service and/or who have access to police or organisational assets. This can include individuals who:

- are unsuitable through criminal activity or association
- pose a risk to members of the public and to those who are vulnerable
- have a demonstrable lack of honesty
- have previously behaved in a manner that is inconsistent with the standards of professional behaviour expected
- are financially vulnerable
- lack the necessary maturity and/or self-control, even if their integrity is not in question

3.0 Vetting Code of Practice and Vetting Authorised Professional Practice

3.1 The Vetting Code of Practice – developed by the College of Policing – sets out the expectations of chief officers in relation to vetting, which are to be applied by all police force areas in England and Wales.

3.2 This code was developed to help achieve, implement and maintain the national standards, as set out in the supporting authorised professional practice (APP) for vetting, and to ensure that those standards are consistently applied across the police service.

3.3 Vetting units in each police force must have a nominated Force Vetting Manager or equivalent who has the delegated authority of the chief constable to grant, decline and/or withdraw vetting clearances relevant to their force or area. The Force Vetting Manager must deliver the expectations set out in the Vetting Code of Practice on behalf of their chief constable and comply with the standards set out in the vetting APP.

3.4 These arrangements may also be delivered collaboratively with other police forces. This is the position for Sussex Police and Surrey Police, with a Joint Force Vetting Unit (JFVU) established in September 2016 to undertake these functions on behalf of both forces.

3.5 Further information about the Vetting Code of Practice and Vetting Authorised Professional Practice can be viewed through the following links:

3.5.1 Vetting Code of Practice

<https://www.college.police.uk/guidance/vetting-code-practice>

3.5.2 Vetting Authorised Professional Practice

<https://assets.college.police.uk/s3fs-public/2024-12/Vetting-authorised-professional-practice.pdf>

4.0 Types of vetting

4.1 There are currently three different types of vetting used by the police service in England and Wales: recruitment vetting; management vetting and non-police personnel vetting, as follows:

4.2 Recruitment Vetting

4.2.1 Recruitment vetting (RV) clearance is the minimum level of police vetting required for police officers, police staff and special constables to be recruited and maintain employment or service. This type of vetting allows unsupervised access to the police estate and any information required to perform these roles.

4.2.2 This level of vetting assesses whether individuals pose an unacceptable and/or identifiable threat to the trust and confidence of the public in, and reputation of, policing. If RV clearance is granted, this allows individuals to have regular access to police assets, materials and information up to 'official-sensitive' on the Government Classification Scheme (GCS).

4.3 Management Vetting

4.3.1 The purpose of management vetting (MV) is to provide additional assurance when assessing the integrity, reliability and potential for financial vulnerability of vetting applicants. This level of vetting is required for those police officers and staff in posts that require access to sensitive police premises, information, intelligence, financial or operational assets, where:

- the risk of potential compromise of those assets is high, and/or
- the risk of serious damage to the force is substantial

4.3.2 All police personnel with long-term, frequent and uncontrolled access to 'secret' police assets, and occasional access to 'top secret' police assets, as defined by the Government Classification Scheme, should hold MV clearance.

4.3.3 MV is a prerequisite level of clearance for police personnel who require Security Check (SC) vetting [for access to classified information] or Developed Vetting (DV) which is the most comprehensive level of security clearance in the United Kingdom. If MV clearance cannot be obtained, National Security Vetting (NSV) clearance cannot be granted.

4.4 Non-Police Personnel Vetting

4.4.1 Non-police personnel vetting (NPPV) is applied to anyone other than police officers, police staff and special constables who require a level of police vetting clearance.

4.4.2 NPPV vetting has four separate levels: NPPV 1; NPPV 2 [Abbreviated]; NPPV 2 [Full] and NPPV 3, as follows:

- NPPV 1 – This clearance allows unescorted access to non-sensitive police premises, but no access to classified information. For example, this level of vetting would be granted for plumbers, vehicle recovery operators and removal personnel.

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- NPPV 2 [Abbreviated] – This clearance allows regular, unescorted access to non-sensitive police premises. It allows routine access to police materials and information up to 'official-sensitive' on the GCS, either on police premises or by remote access. This level of clearance is not sufficient to allow access to police systems.
- NPPV 2 [Full] – This clearance allows regular, unescorted access to non-sensitive police premises and unsupervised access to police systems required as part of the role. This level of clearance allows routine access to police materials and information classified up to 'official-sensitive' on the GCS, with occasional access to documents classified as 'secret'.
- NPPV 3 – This clearance allows regular unescorted access to sensitive police premises and unsupervised access to police systems required as part of the role. This level of clearance allows access to police materials and information classified up to 'secret' on the GCS, with occasional access to documents classified as 'top secret'.

5.0 Decision-making for vetting

5.1 All police vetting decisions in England and Wales are made in accordance with the following:

- ✓ National Decision Model [used for making all decisions in policing]
- ✓ Vetting Code of Practice
- ✓ Vetting Authorised Professional Practice
- ✓ Standards of Professional Behaviour [set out in Schedule 2 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020]
- ✓ Code of Ethics [supported by the Code of Practice for Ethical Policing]

5.2 There are several mandatory basic checks that are undertaken for all police officers, staff and volunteers before they commence employment with the Force. These consist of extensive checks on application including crime system and crime report allegation checks; credit reference checks [to consider any potential vulnerability from a financial perspective]; open-source enquiries [on search engines and social media sites]; review of voting registers; checks with the Ministry of Defence and Criminal Records Office; checks into other professional standards and vetting databases, and employment checks [with previous police force areas, where appropriate].

5.3 Further checks are also undertaken on the Police National Computer, Police National Database and by the Counter Terrorism Unit in respect of the partners, family, associates and co-habitants [aged 10 years old and over] of all individual applicants.

5.4 Many of these checks are repeated and/or additional vetting is undertaken should any changes be made to a role an individual is performing as part of any internal movement in respect of access to vulnerable individuals, systems and/or sensitive information. The level of vetting should remain proportionate to the role that an individual is performing and the information that they have access to.

- 5.5 Police vetting decisions are made once all the necessary information and intelligence has been gathered and considered to enable informed, balanced and proportionate decisions to be taken in a consistent manner.
- 5.6 In assessing risk and vulnerability, decision makers must consider all possible threats, their likelihood and potential impact. Where potential threats are identified, these are, typically, associated vulnerabilities. The level of vulnerability will be case-specific and will depend on the individual circumstances of the applicant.
- 5.7 There is a three-tier system for decision-making responsibility within the JFVU, as follows:
- Tier 1 – Vetting caseworkers make decisions for low-risk cases
 - Tier 2 – Vetting supervisors make decisions for medium- and high-risk cases
 - Tier 3 – Force Vetting Manager makes decisions for all vetting appeals
- 5.8 All vetting decisions are formally recorded on a standard decision template and saved within the vetting file. This activity should be continuously appraised on a regular basis to ensure that it remains current and accurate.

6.0 Considerations around convictions and cautions

- 6.1 The vetting APP has a rebuttable presumption that individuals with convictions and cautions are likely to have their vetting applications declined.
- 6.2 Each case must be considered on its individual merits in relation to the role being undertaken and/or the police assets or information being accessed. This process will include the consideration of factors such as the type of offence, outcome, length of time that has passed and the age of the applicant at the time the offence occurred.
- 6.3 The JFVU uses standard national guidance to assist in their decision-making around convictions and cautions. Offences where any of the following practices or characteristics are present will also, most likely, result in the vetting application being declined:
- dishonest or corrupt practices
 - relates to violence
 - involves a contact or non-contact sexual offence
 - demonstrates targeting of persons due to their vulnerabilities and/or protected characteristics
 - evidence of violence, intimidation, harassment, discrimination, racism, homophobia and/or disablism
 - evidence of violence against women and girls
 - evidence of sexual impropriety, sexism, misogyny, domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and/or controlling or coercive behaviour
 - patterns of adverse behaviours
- 6.4 All convictions that result in a custodial prison sentence and/or where individuals are included within the sex offenders register or have mandatory sex offender notification requirements must result in vetting being declined.

7.0 Oversight and accountability for vetting

- 7.1 The Force Vetting Manager is responsible for ensuring that robust quality assurance processes are in place and remains accountable for all decisions made in respect of police vetting. The purpose of this quality assurance is to ensure that all decision-making remains appropriate and proportionate for the individual circumstances of each application and to provide effective oversight that the vetting arrangements are compliant with the Vetting Code of Practice and vetting APP.
- 7.2 Quality assurance checks are currently undertaken on a bi-weekly basis across all levels of the JFVU. This activity is carried out by dip checking a sample of vetting cases to look for any errors in recording and ensure that all decisions taken are suitable and appropriate. These decisions are made by the following individuals within the team:
- Vetting caseworker decisions are checked by the vetting supervisors
 - Vetting supervisor decisions are checked by the Force Vetting Manager
 - Force Vetting Manager decisions are checked by the Chief Inspector within the Professional Standards Department.
- 7.3 Feedback is provided about the individual cases that have been reviewed to identify any organisational learning and to support any training requirements that may be required. These checks are conducted on a bi-weekly basis to ensure that retrospective action can be taken before any individual commences in post or starts a new role, should an incorrect decision about the vetting clearance be made.

8.0 Data Wash Exercise

- 8.1 In January 2023, the Government announced that all police officers, staff and volunteers in England and Wales would be checked against the Police National Database to identify any intelligence and/or allegations that required further investigation.
- 8.2 The outcome of the data wash exercise was positive for Sussex Police, with further action required for only two of the 6,116 police officers, staff and volunteers within the Force who were checked against the database. Both were recognised to be vetting-related issues, with a notifiable association retrospectively added to the personal record for one member of police staff and no further action is required for the police volunteer who has concluded their role with Sussex Police. It was also acknowledged that no criminal investigation was required for either of these two individuals in Sussex.
- 8.3 Further to the data wash exercise, Sussex Police now run daily searches for all existing police officers, staff and volunteers on a 24-hour basis against any new information, incidents and reports that may have been recorded by the Force using Microsoft Power BI – an interactive data visualisation software tool. This process has been further expanded to ensure that any information generated through these searches is subject to consistent assessment and proportionate action taken by the most appropriate unit.

- 8.4 There has been no direction from the College of Policing that another data wash exercise will be required for police forces in England and Wales. The implementation of an annual integrity review for all police officers, staff and volunteers captures the same information and is now completed by line managers each year.
- 8.5 The purpose of the reviews is to capture any changes in personal circumstances that require disclosure to vetting and, if changes are identified, a further vetting review will be carried out if required. This addresses the same purpose as the data wash exercise undertaken previously, with the JFVU recognised to have received increased numbers of vetting reviews immediately after annual integrity reviews are submitted which provides further assurances that the revised process is effective.

9.0 Role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

- 9.1 It is a statutory responsibility for the PCC to hold the Chief Constable to account for delivering efficient and effective policing in Sussex that is responsive to the needs of the public. This has included holding the Force to account for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the vetting standards and processes used within Sussex Police.
- 9.2 The PCC has continued to use her monthly webcast Performance & Accountability Meetings (PAMs) to scrutinise and challenge the Chief Constable about the effectiveness of the vetting arrangements used within Sussex Police on behalf of members of the public.
- 9.3 The authorised professional practice for vetting was raised as a theme at the most recent PAM held on 23 April 2025. This area of performance has also been raised at the PAMs held on 17 February 2023 [Police Officer and Staff Data Wash Exercise and Vetting Arrangements] and 18 November 2022 [His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) – An inspection of vetting, misconduct and misogyny in the police service]. Each of these sessions is archived and can be viewed through the following link: <https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/how-we-work/watch-live/>
- 9.4 The PCC has sought to make additional funding available to the Chief Constable through precept investment to increase the capacity and capability of the Professional Standards Department within Sussex Police, including strengthening the JFVU and Anti-Corruption Unit. This investment has enhanced the resources available to process, review and consider any information and intelligence received to support vetting applications, alongside the delivery of a robust response where any further investigations are required.
- 9.5 Following a recommendation made within the HMICFRS inspection report into vetting, misconduct and misogyny in the police service, the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner (OSPCC) established an auditable quality assurance process around the vetting decisions made by Sussex Police which resulted in the vetting either having been rejected and/or conditionally approved. The OSPCC also considers whether any disproportionality exists in this process based on any of the nine protected characteristics defined under the Equality Act 2010.

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- 9.6 This process was established by the OSPCC in May 2024 and is undertaken on a quarterly basis by the Assurance & Complaints Manager [within the OSPCC] and comprises a dip-check of approximately 10% of all vetting rejections recorded in the previous three-month period.
- 9.7 The office has undertaken 20 dip-checks of rejected vetting decisions to date. This comprised six applications reviewed in May 2024, eight applications reviewed in August 2024 and a further six applications reviewed in February 2025, with the outcomes of these reviews discussed at an oversight meeting between the Assurance & Complaints Manager and the Head of JFVU. None of the vetting decisions considered so far have been found to be incorrect nor has any feedback or organisational learning been identified, although this process is recognised to be another effective tool in terms of holding Sussex Police to account for performance in this important area.

10.0 HMICFRS – Effectiveness of integrity arrangements in Sussex Police

- 10.1 On 30 May 2025, HMICFRS published the findings from their inspection report into how well Sussex Police manage the vetting of its police officers and staff, uphold the standards of professional behaviour addressing potential breaches, and tackle potential corruption and protecting the information it holds, as part of its police integrity inspection programme.
- 10.2 The report found that Sussex Police 'requires improvement' in each of the three different areas assessed within the inspection, including detailed findings about the things the Force is doing well at and the specific areas where it should improve. The HMICFRS report can be viewed through the following link:
<https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/publications/effectiveness-of-integrity-arrangements-in-sussex-police/>
- 10.3 The PCC will discuss the content of the inspection report with the Chief Constable at her PAM on 17 July 2025. This session will be webcast live at 13:00 through the following link:
<https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/how-we-work/watch-live/>

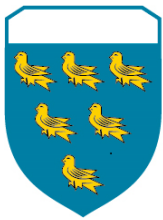
11.0 Further reforms to the police dismissal system

- 11.1 Following a High Court ruling in February 2025 that police forces could not dismiss officers by removing their vetting clearance after failing a check, the Government have introduced new legislation that will now make it a legal requirement for all serving police officers to hold and maintain vetting clearance, together with establishing a procedure for withdrawing this clearance where there is evidence that an officer may no longer be suitable to hold it.
- 11.2 The reformed police dismissal system came into force on 14 May 2025 and means that any police officer who does not have the requisite level of vetting clearance required to undertake their role or an ability to maintain that level of vetting will no longer be able to serve as an officer. These new measures are also attached to the Police [Performance] Regulations 2020 which concern unsatisfactory performance, unacceptable attendance and gross incompetence.

- 11.3 The Professional Standards Department have reviewed, assessed and interpreted the content of the new legislation to ensure that this is fully understood and has created fair, transparent and supporting processes and procedures that will enable these measures to be delivered locally. The PCC will monitor and scrutinise the introduction of these changes as part of her existing performance and accountability processes.

Mark Streater
Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer
Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

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Sussex Police and Crime Panel

3 July 2025

Annual Report from the Host Authority for 2024/25

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

1. Background

1.1 The Panel incurred the costs below in respect of its operation in the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

- £69,949.39 for administrative expenses.
- £624.20 for members' expenses.

Total: £70,573.59

In line with the terms of the grant, the Host Authority (West Sussex County Council) submitted a claim for this amount in early May, ahead of the 30 June deadline.

1.2 The Panel is required to publish a summary of its operating costs every year. A breakdown of expenses can be found on the Panel's webpage:
<https://sussexpcp.gov.uk/about/>

2. Discussion

2.1 The Panel met formally four times in 2024/25. The meetings were held in person, in public, at County Hall, Lewes. All meetings were webcast, with 212 people watching the Annual meeting online (57 live, 155 via the archive).

2.2 All statutory duties were fulfilled in 24/25, namely:

- Scrutiny of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Annual Report in June 2024
- Holding a confirmation hearing for the proposed appointment of a Chief Constable in September 2024.
- Scrutiny of the Commissioner's proposed precept in January 2025
- Scrutiny of the draft Police and Crime Plan 2024/28 in March 2025.

All are deemed "special functions" within the relevant legislation.

- 2.3 Scrutiny of the PCC's Annual Report 2023/24 considered performance against the three strands of the Police and Crime Plan 2021/24, and delivery of initiatives funded by previous precept increases.
- 2.4 The Panel worked with the Commissioner's officers in two Working Group meetings, to consider development of the 2025/26 budget and precept.
- 2.5 The Group made comments to guide the Commissioner's office in their development of the precept, which were taken up as the work progressed.
- 2.6 Informed by the Working Group's final report, the Panel reviewed and supported the PCC's proposed precept in January 2025.
- 2.7 The Panel additionally scrutinised the Commissioner's role in specific areas of interest at its formal meetings. These were:
 - The Role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner in Holding Sussex Police to Account for Improving the Response Provided to Victims of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences
 - Draft Public Priorities in the Sussex Police and Crime Plan 24/28
 - The role of the Sussex PCC in holding Sussex Police to account for improving the response provided to business crime
- 2.8 A special meeting of the Complaints Sub-Committee was held on 11 April 2024 at County Hall, Lewes. The Sub-Committee, meeting for the first time since the Panel's inception, was required to consider a non-serious complaint against the PCC. The complaint was not upheld. Following the conclusion of the Sub Committee's work, a procedure for informal resolution was drafted, in consultation with the Commissioner's office. The Panel agreed to adopt this procedure at its meeting in January 2025. At the same meeting the Panel agreed amendments to its Constitution, in the most part reflecting changes to its practice and Home Office guidance.
- 2.9 Training was offered to all new members joining the Panel during the year
- 2.10 Members visited Sussex Police's Contact, Command, and Control Centre.
- 2.11 The Annual Conference for Police Fire and Crime Panels was not held in 2024, due to an anticipated clash with a general election. It is hoped the Conference will resume in November 2025.
- 2.12 The Panel's website continues to operate effectively. For example, for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025:
 - There were 5,253 (4,740 in 23/24) visits to the site, with pages viewed 10,142 (7,849 in 23/24) times in total.

- The average visits per day was 14. There were spikes in traffic coinciding with the publication of agenda papers for upcoming meetings. The biggest spike (approx. 464 visits) coincided with the publication of papers for the June 2024 meeting, at which the Panel considered the Commissioner’s annual report.
- The most popular pages remain the homepage, as expected, with the “previous meetings” page the second most popular. This suggests the site is widely used to view archive minutes and webcast recordings, as well as access information on forthcoming meetings including meeting agendas.

Funding for 2025/2026

- 2.13 It is assumed that the Home Office funding will remain unchanged for 2025/26, comprising £53,300 for Panel administration costs, and up to £18,400 (20 x £920), available for members’ allowable expenses. The two sums are not ring-fenced, giving a total of £71,700 (unchanged since 2012).
- 2.14 The funding is normally paid in arrears, in six-monthly instalments. The PCP must publish details of all Panel expenditure, including administration costs and individual Panel member claims for expenses, on its website. Per para 1.2, the Panel has complied with this requirement for 24/25.
- 2.15 It is anticipated that the staff costs of administering the Panel will be achieved within the envelope of funding provided by the Home Office for the forthcoming year.

3. Resource Implications and Value for Money

- 3.1 The Constitution of Sussex Police and Crime Panel states that its total running costs shall be contained within the funding provided by the Home Office.

4. Risk Management Implications

- 4.1 None

5. Other Considerations – Equality – Crime Reduction – Human Rights

- 5.1 Not applicable

Tony Kershaw

Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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Agenda Item 11

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Quarterly Report of Complaints

3 July 2025

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Focus for Scrutiny

That the Panel considers any complaints against the Commissioner, and any action that the Panel might take in respect of these.

1. Background

- 1.1 In accordance with the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2011, Sussex Police & Crime Panel (PCP) is responsible for the initial handling of complaints against the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).
- 1.2 At its meeting of 26 November 2012, the Panel decided to delegate its initial handling duties to the Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel, and to consider a report of the complaints received, quarterly.
- 1.3 Complaints deemed to be serious (those alleging criminal conduct) are referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). However, IOPC guidance recommends that a Panel makes an initial assessment of the complaint (before making a referral to the IOPC) to decide whether or not it meets the definition of a "serious complaint".
- 1.4 Regarding non-serious complaints, a sub-committee can meet to consider any of these which in the Panel's view require informal resolution.

2 Correspondence Received up until 24 January 2025

- 2.1 The Panel takes the view that all correspondence raising issues with policing in Sussex should be recorded, whether or not the issues fall within the Panel's statutory remit.
- 2.2 During the subject period, one person contacted the Panel to raise matters (either directly, referred via the IOPC, or referred by the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (OSPCC)). The matters are non-serious in nature and, at the time of publication, are being subject to initial handling.

3 Complaints

Correspondence Recorded, but not Considered by the Clerk to be a Complaint within the Panel's Remit:

3.1.1 See 2.2

Correspondence Recorded, and Considered by the Clerk to be a Non-Serious Complaint within the Panel's Remit:

3.1.2 See 2.2

Serious Complaints (allegations of criminal conduct)

3.1.3 None received.

Updates from Matters Previously Reported.

3.1.4 None

4 Resource Implications and Value for Money

4.1 The cost of handling complaints is met from the funds provided by the Home Office for the operation and administration of Sussex Police and Crime Panel.

5 Risk Management Implications

5.1 It is important that residents can have confidence in the integrity of the system for handling complaints against the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner and their Deputy (where one has been appointed).

6 Other Considerations – Equality – Crime Reduction – Human Rights

6.1 Not applicable

Tony Kershaw

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