



Sussex Police and Crime Panel – Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner

23 September 2022

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.

Six questions relating to operational matters of Sussex Police were passed to a relevant officer at Sussex Police for a response, with a brief summary of such questions provided below. For the current meeting, 14 questions have been received for responses from the Commissioner.

1. Written question from a Crawley resident

E-scooters, Why are you not policing this? We now in Crawley have e-scooters blatantly driving down the roads. How many e-scooter riders have you fined and how many scooters have been confiscated?

Answer:

Thank you for your question.

I can confirm that the use of electric scooters [outside of the dedicated trials taking place in 32 areas in England] remains illegal and that it is a recognised offence to use these scooters on public roads, cycle lanes, footpaths and/or pavements. Electric scooters are only permitted to be used on private land that is not accessible to the public.

Sussex Police have issued guidance to all police officers about the legislation and powers that are available to them around the illegal use of electric scooters in Sussex. The approach demonstrated in Sussex should be an escalating one and will vary depending on the individual circumstances involved. This will comprise a range of different actions including a verbal warning, formal warning, prosecution or seizure of the scooter as follows:

Verbal warning – The Force is using the 4Es – engagement, explanation, encouragement and enforcement – approach to respond to individuals caught using these powered transporters. A leaflet has been produced for officers to disseminate to individuals who are stopped and spoken with to assist them in this educational process.

Formal warning – A formal warning can be issued to an individual [under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002] if an electric scooter is used in a manner which causes alarm, distress or annoyance. This approach also provides the police with the option to seize the vehicle, should any reoffending occur.

Prosecution – An individual can be arrested (if conditions are met) or a report for summons issued because electric scooters are classed as motor vehicles offences under the Road Traffic Act.

Seizure – Police officers may seize and retain electric scooters [under Section 165 of the Road Traffic Act] because the riders are both unlicensed and uninsured. Seized scooters may be reclaimed from a police station on payment of a statutory fee; alternatively, the scooters will be destroyed.

All incidents of illegal electric scooter usage should be reported to Sussex Police. This approach enables the Force to develop intelligence regarding repeat offenders, times and locations which can be used to plan, target and deploy police resources. Members of the public are encouraged to submit these reports by telephone to 101 or online through the following link:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about>

I would also like to assure you that Sussex Police is currently targeting 'hotspots' – identified through the reports received from members of the public – where electric scooters are being illegally and/or repeatedly used. The Force has also launched Operation Expel to proactively tackle the illegal use of electric scooters in Sussex by engaging, educating and explaining further the legislation around the use of these scooters to individuals and local communities.

I would like to reassure you that electric scooters are being dealt with robustly when they are observed as being used illegally in Sussex and that it remains the responsibility of all police officers to take action against any offenders identified. I can also confirm that the level of police enforcement around this area has continued to increase year-on-year. Sussex Police seized 20 electric scooters during the calendar year of 2020 and 93 scooters during 2021. The Force has already seized a further 202 scooters across 2022 [to 31 August 2022].

2. Written question from Stewart Macfarlane of Worthing

The number of cyclists using sports bikes, electric bikes, electric scooters, electric and manual boards, roller skates, electric single wheels, etc has increased and will continue unless policed. Those involved wear ample protective ware and obviously feel comfortable ignoring any sensible signage which is scarce. Many have no regard for pedestrians.

The last straw was two evenings ago around 10pm, taking my dog for a walk in the coolness of the evening, I was nearly hit by a large motorized bike carrying two people. It is just a matter of time before a pedestrian is severely injured.

My question is this, when will the policing of Sussex improve and address this public safety issue and implement penalties to deter those who ignore public safety with impunity?

Thank you for your question.

I can confirm that the use of electric scooters [outside of the dedicated trials taking place in 32 areas in England] remains illegal and that it is a recognised offence to use these scooters on public roads, cycle lanes, footpaths and/or pavements. Electric scooters are only permitted to be used on private land that is not accessible to the public.

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3. Written question from Joan Jacobs of Bognor Regis

I regularly see E scooters on the road which are unlicensed and some still come down our alleyway, one in particular rides down around 7.30 in the morning. I have in the past given the police a photo of a girl, but I am unsure if anything was ever done. My husband a few weeks ago nearly collided with a boy of about 14 in Hewitts Lane near the Co-op. He came flying round the corner and they nearly collided. I have reported some of these incidences in the past but nothing seems to be done so. I have given up reporting these e scooter riders. What are the Police going to do about these anti-social riders.

Why are there no Police on the streets, we never even see any PCSO's. Boris Johnson promised more Police, where are West Sussex's Police? On our council tax the Police have the highest increase where is that money being spent?

There have been several incidences of anti-social behaviour of late in Bognor and in Aldwick. A large gang of boys congregate outside the Co-op in Rose Green in the evening. I wouldn't want to go up there at night. We have seen anti-social behaviour last week from 5 boys outside Morrisons. The security man was trying to get them to leave but all he got was abuse, this from nine-year olds. There was also an incidence of boys on the same day causing problems in The Works. The employers asked them to leave as they were causing trouble but they would not. They phoned the Police who said had they committed a crime if not nothing we can do. Is this the right message to send to these children.

We have had trouble with schoolboys riding through our alleyway - St Richards to Rochester Way of late. I do not have a problem with them using the cut through which saves them using the main road but they are now starting to become a problem. You neither move out of the way or get pushed if using the alleyway as a pedestrian. This happened to a man recently who was walking down the alleyway. The four boys speeded up to get past him but when this did not work they pushed him out if the way. We witnessed this as we live in the cul-de sac of Rochester Way. How are you going to stop these anti-social boys on bikes riding on the pavement?

Thank you for your question.

Firstly, I can confirm that the use of electric scooters [outside of the dedicated trials taking place in 32 areas in England] remains illegal and that it is a recognised offence to use these scooters on public roads, cycle lanes, footpaths and/or pavements. Electric scooters are only permitted to be used on private land that is not accessible to the public.

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Secondly, I am also happy to provide a summary of police officer recruitment in Sussex since 2018/19 as follows:

| Police Officers Increase Table | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | Total |
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| Precept | 120 | 30 | 50 | 30 | 20 | 250 |
| Total | 120 | 30 | 179 | 158 | 192 | 679 |

During 2021/22, Sussex Police recruited an additional 122 police officers through Operation Uplift – the Government’s campaign to recruit 20,000 new police officers in England and Wales by 31 March 2023 – and 30 officers as part of the precept increase for the year. A further six officers were recruited to support the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROUCU) during the year too.

The 2022/23 funding settlement has provided the Commissioner with additional ringfenced investment to recruit another 163 police officers in Sussex and 9 officers to support the SEROUCU – as part of the national uplift programme – plus a further 20 officers through the precept.

I can confirm a share of the new police officers – recruited through Operation Uplift – will form part of the extra officers allocated to West Sussex Division. Sussex Police do not disclose the exact number of officers that work across each of the police districts contained within for operational reasons; however, these officers are allocated to stations throughout the Division based on current and projected demand, internal movement and vacancies, and are reviewed regularly.

This included intakes of new officers across each of the six policing districts on West Sussex Division during April and August 2022. After completing their initial training, these officers will take time to imbed locally and will require a further period of training before their independent patrol status is granted. Further intakes of police officers are planned for each of the districts during the remainder of 2022/23.

Finally, it is important that all incidents of anti-social and offending behaviour are reported because this enables Sussex Police to develop an accurate picture of intelligence regarding repeat offenders, times and locations which can be used to plan, target and deploy local policing resources to respond.

If you have any specific information about anti-social behaviour crimes or incidents in Bognor Regis, I would encourage you to contact Sussex Police by telephone to 101 or online through the following link:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us/>

4. Written question from a Rustington resident, name withheld on request

When will the policing of illegal electric powered scooters be actioned?

Only today (and incidents are usually everyday) TWO children mounted on ONE scooter aged around 9 years old decided to exit from the Community Tip road on a sharp bend turning right onto the main A284 (see Map attached).

I have dashcam video of the event.

Thank you for your question.

I can confirm that the use of electric scooters [outside of the dedicated trials taking place in 32 areas in England] remains illegal and that it is a recognised offence to use these scooters on public roads, cycle lanes, footpaths and/or pavements. Electric scooters are only permitted to be used on private land that is not accessible to the public.

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5. Written question from a Sussex resident

What are you going to do about cyclists who don't abide by the Highway Code?

It's become a major issue, riding on pavements, through shopping precincts, through red lights, exceeding the speed limit especially on electric bikes, riding the wrong way on one-way streets. Very few wear helmets, more and more accidents taking up NHS time. No sign of any policing for these problems, check out the speed of cyclists on Worthing seafront promenade. Someone will be killed one day, the announced change in the law doing away with the archaic maximum two years sentence for killing someone on a bike means nothing as if it's supposed to be a deterrent it needs to be policed. Action is needed now. What have you got planned?

Thank you for your question.

I can confirm that cycling on the pavement is an offence under Section 72 of the Highways Act 1835, as amended by Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1888, unless there is a sign indicating a shared use cycle path. I understand that cycling on footways is often a significant local issue and causes much concern, particularly to the most vulnerable road users, such as the elderly, disabled and visually impaired.

I also acknowledge that cycling on pavements is punishable by a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) under Section 51 and Schedule 3 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988. The enforcement of cycling offences is an operational matter and is the responsibility of local police officers and Police Community Support Officers to use their discretion regarding the issuing of FPNs for reckless, careless and inconsiderate cycling on the pavements.

It is important that all cycling offences are reported because this enables Sussex Police to develop an accurate picture of intelligence regarding repeat offenders, times and locations which can be used to plan, target and deploy local policing resources to respond.

If you have any specific information about cycling offences in your area, I would encourage you to contact Sussex Police by telephone to 101 or online through the following link: <https://www.sussex.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us/>

6. Written question from John Parker of Bognor Regis

During the Crime Panel, recorded in September 2020, it was reported Police would be tackling Speeding and Exhaust noise.

How have you measured the progress of this objective?

(Note: In Chalcraft Lane and West Meads Drive, Bognor Regis, we see no improvement)

Thank you for your question.

I understand the importance that the residents of Sussex place on road safety and remain fully supportive of the work carried out by Sussex Police and the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) to tackle and prevent the main causes of serious injuries and deaths on the county's roads. I also acknowledge that safer roads and communities can be created by working together and sharing the roads responsibly.

The Safety Camera Team form part of the SSRP and are authorised by the Chief Constable to carry out their role of gathering evidence. The team have been fully trained in the use of all aspects of the Home Office Type Approved (HOTA) devices they are using and complement the static cameras in place across Sussex. Further information can be viewed through the following link:

<https://sussexsaferroads.gov.uk/safety-camera-team/>

I can confirm that that the Safety Camera Team have visited Chalcraft Lane and West Meads Drive to undertaken enforcement activity 14 and 5 times, respectively, since January 2022. In past 12 months, the Safety Camera Team have captured and processed more than 780 speeding offences [August 2021 – July 2022]. It is also worth emphasising that the site at West Meads Drive was initially included within the Speed Management Plan because of the presence of a school in the location. I note that the school has since been demolished and the risk for the area has subsequently reduced.

I recognise that illegally fitted exhaust systems and the inappropriate use of Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs) not only affect road safety but also the quality of life in local communities across Sussex. In order to tackle this problem, the Road Policing Unit (RPU) within Sussex Police conduct an enforcement operation – Operation Ride – throughout the summer months, because the use of PTWs predominantly increases as the weather improves.

Marked and unmarked units, including plain police motorcycles equipped with recording capabilities, patrol roads used frequently by PTWs. Offending drivers and riders are stopped, and their vehicles and bikes are examined for illegally fitted equipment, including exhaust systems, with any offences discovered subject to prosecution through the courts. The RPU Casualty Reduction Team also provide educational material and seminars to drivers and riders throughout the year, to positively influence behaviour and attitudes.

Operation Crackdown is a joint initiative run by Sussex Police and the SSRP which provides the communities of Sussex with an opportunity to report specific instances of anti-social driving on the roads. This enables the Force and the SSRP to develop intelligence regarding repeat offenders, vehicles, times and locations which can then be used to plan, target and deploy police resources. If you have any specific information about the anti-social use of vehicles, exhaust systems and PTWs in Bognor Regis, please visit the Operation Crackdown website [www.operationcrackdown.org] and report this. Alternatively, you can call 01243 642222 during office hours to speak to an operator.

7. Written question from Graham Sitton of Horsham

Can the Police Commissioner urge West Sussex County Councillors to change the advisory 20mph signs around schools which cannot be enforced and generally ignored to the standard mandatory 20mph signs which may be enforced, please.

We have deployed on many occasions to a place near a school within the advisory signs and reported vehicles for exceeding the 30mph limit. Only buses take notice of the 20mph advisory when Community Speedwatch is deployed.

The standard 20mph signs would not cost anything in electricity or maintenance.

Thank you for your question.

I understand the importance that the residents of Sussex place on road safety and remain fully supportive of the valuable work carried out by Community Speed Watch groups to make the roads of Sussex safer. I would like to see more communities becoming involved in working towards tackling and preventing the main causes of serious injuries and deaths on the county's roads.

I would encourage you to raise your concerns about the advisory speed limit signs in your local area to West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) directly. This remains the most appropriate method of highlighting your concerns and requesting standard repeater road signs in the area. Further information about how to raise concerns about highways within your area and to apply for a community scheme can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/leisure-recreation-and-community/supporting-local-communities/apply-for-a-community-highways-scheme/>

Sussex Police can enforce any legally established speed limit, although the Force would not routinely expect to enforce 20mph limits because there is an expectation that there would be sufficient traffic calming measures in place to slow traffic, including speed bumps and traffic islands, to ensure that average speeds are kept low.

The National Police Chiefs' Council guidelines include thresholds for enforcement across all speed limits to underpin a consistent approach. However, it is for local police forces to apply a proportionate approach to the enforcement of 20mph limits based on risk to individuals, property and the seriousness of any breach.

I would also like to reassure you that where drivers are found to be exceeding 20mph speed limits through wilful offending, I fully expect Sussex Police to enforce the limit and prosecute these offenders accordingly.

8. Written question from Aiden Zeall of Crawley

Please can Commissioner Bourne explain what exactly does "strategic policing" involve?

Thank you for your question.

Strategic policing is focused on what, in strategic terms, the police need to achieve rather than how they should achieve it.

As Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), I have a statutory duty to set the strategic direction for policing in Sussex and to publish a Police & Crime Plan which sets out how this policing will be delivered against the police and crime priorities contained within.

I have developed the Plan in consultation with members of the public and partners in Sussex to ensure that the priorities identified accurately reflect the policing, crime and community safety issues important to them.

The Plan is a living document and is reviewed and refreshed periodically to ensure that it continues to accurately reflect local and national priorities. A copy of my Police & Crime Plan 2021/24 can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/media/6521/sussex-police-crime-plan-2021-24.pdf>

The Home Secretary has also identified the following national threats which all police force areas in England and Wales must demonstrate that they have the plans and capability to respond to, in addition to local policing requirements. This is called the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) and these threats are identified as: public disorder; civil emergencies; serious and organised crime; terrorism; national cyber security incidents; child sexual abuse, and violence against women and girls.

The policing requirement to counter these threats is set out in the SPR and forces are required to evidence preparedness against five areas: capacity; contribution; capability; consistency, and connectivity.

The Chief Constable and I must have "due regard" to the SPR and ensure that the police force is in a state of readiness to respond, in addition to business as usual.

I must also ensure that sufficient funds are set aside to maintain the Force's contribution under the SPR. This includes ensuring that sufficient resilience and capacity exists to cover the contribution of Sussex Police.

Further information about the role of the PCC can be viewed on the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners website through the following link:

<https://apccs.police.uk/role-of-the-pcc/>

9. Written question from Martin Humphreys of Selsey

Since the creation of the police commissioner role we have experienced a steady decline in police presence in the town of Selsey. The Police station has been closed and the only police presence I am aware of is now on Facebook posts telling me to stay out of the sun, drink water and buy ice creams. The Selsey area now has a buoyant drugs and fire arms business (you can check this yourself in telegram groups).

From the Commissioner's strategic position, is the situation we now see in Selsey repeated around Sussex? When faced with such persistent lawlessness due to a lack of a policing presence, what alternatives do residents have to taking the law into their own hands?

Thank you for your questions.

I shared these with Sussex Police because the content specifically related to operational policy and procedure.

Chief Inspector Nick Bowman, District Commander for Chichester and Arun, confirmed that he recently attended a meeting including the parish council in Selsey to understand better the effectiveness of engagement with Sussex Police to ensure that local issues could be reported and addressed. The meeting was well attended, with the overwhelming sentiment reflecting a healthy working relationship with the local policing team, including positive feedback about how the community is served by its Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

The seasonal demand experienced by Selsey during the summer months is recognised, with increases to the local population and additional visitors to the area acknowledged to create additional challenges for residents and a greater demand on the police service to respond.

Following the closure of Selsey Police Station in 2017/18, Sussex Police opened a base within the Town Hall at Selsey Town Council on 2 February 2018 to provide police officers and PCSOs with a shared space to work from on the High Street. Although this facility is not a public contact point, it enables the local policing team to retain a visible presence and work in the same buildings as partners to facilitate collaborative working and the sharing of information. Members of the public can also still report crimes and incidents to the police via the yellow telephone positioned outside the hall.

In the rolling 12-month period to 24 August 2022, there were 654 crimes recorded in Selsey, of which 84 related to offences of criminal damage [12.8%] and 10 related to drug offences [1.5%]. This relatively low level of offending is attributed to the success of Operation Harp – a proactive operation delivered in the area to target anti-social behaviour and drug offences.

There are currently two named PCSOs within the Neighbourhood Policing Team for Selsey North and South: Oliver Broad and Paul Slater. The Force plan to deploy a third PCSO to the area once the establishment levels for West Sussex Division are met [see below for further information about police officer recruitment].

I am reassured that Chief Inspector Bowman has reviewed the patrol plan for the PCSOs in Selsey and has confirmed there are many different locations where the two individuals have provided a visible presence in the town and made use of the police base within the Town Council as part of their public engagement activity. It was also acknowledged that several social media posts were posted throughout the calendar year to highlight foot patrol activity in Selsey and ongoing engagement with local schools and businesses.

I am also pleased to confirm that a new Anti-Social Behaviour Officer post has been created by Chichester District Council to tackle anti-social behaviour in Selsey. The postholder, a former PCSO with Sussex Police, commenced in post in May 2022 and is anticipated to complement the existing policing response in the area by working positively and effectively with the local PCSOs.

The Neighbourhood Policing Team has also been tasked with looking at what further time could be spent within the local community and whether a street briefing may be beneficial to address the concerns you have raised. Further information can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/area/your-area/sussex/chichester/selsey-north-and-south/about-us/top-reported-crimes-in-this-area>

I am also happy to provide a summary of police officer recruitment in Sussex since 2018/19 as follows:

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10. Written question from Suzanne Lewis of Pound Hill, Crawley

I would like to know why, when I have been the victim of crime, I am made to feel like a criminal myself. I have lost quite a lot of respect for the police recently having been attacked by both my neighbours. I have developed mild agoraphobia because of this.

Thank you for your message.

I am sorry to hear that you have been a victim of crime in Sussex.

Victim Support can provide you with free, tailored support services whether you have reported this crime to Sussex Police or not. Victim Support can also provide you with information about further specialist support services available in your local area. To access this help and support, please contact Victim Support as follows:

Telephone: 0808 168 9274

Email: shorehamvcu@victimsupport.org.uk

Website: <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/resources/sussex/>

Further information can also be viewed on my website through the following link: <https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/victims-services/help-support/>

The Chief Constable is responsible for investigating complaints against police officers and staff relating to operational and policy matters. If you remain dissatisfied with the level of service you have received from Sussex Police, I would encourage you to submit a complaint to the Chief Constable.

This can be submitted by email to: psd@sussex.police.uk or in writing to The Chief Constable, Sussex Police Headquarters, Malling House, Church Lane, Lewes, BN7 2DZ. The Professional Standards Department will then consider your submission before contacting you directly.

11. Written question from Rosemarie Standen of Shoreham-by-Sea

- 1) Is the Commissioner satisfied with the actions Sussex Police plan to take about the recent report showing very few burglaries are ever solved?**
- 2) You hear so many people saying what's the point in ringing the police no-one ever comes out, or seems interested - how are you going to change this perception?**

Thank you for your questions.

I would like to start by reassuring you that burglary [including theft and acquisitive crime] is one of the three Public Priorities set out within my Police & Crime Plan 2021/24 under 'Public Priority 1 – Strengthen local policing, tackle crime and prevent harm'. The Plan has been developed in consultation with members of the public and partners in Sussex to ensure that the strategic priorities contained within accurately reflect the policing, crime and community safety issues important to them. It can be viewed through the following link: <https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/media/6521/sussex-police-crime-plan-2021-24.pdf>

My Annual Reports provide progress updates about how I – as the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner – seek to hold the Chief Constable and her team to account for the operational delivery of policing against these priorities, including reductions to acquisitive crime. The performance of Sussex Police in respect of this area is published by the Force, Home Office and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS).

Sussex Police are working hard to deliver the priorities set out within my Plan and remain committed to protecting our communities, catching criminals and delivering an outstanding service. Burglary, theft and acquisitive crime remain a priority for Sussex Police. The Force have continued to raise awareness of the significant impact that these offences can have on victims, encourage members of the public to protect their homes and valuables from the threat of intruders and theft and to detect more of these crimes by proactively targeting the offenders responsible.

This approach is supported by Operation Magpie – the dedicated police response to burglary crimes – which delivers crime prevention initiatives throughout the year. Further scrutiny around performance in this area is provided at the Daily Divisional Meetings (DDMs) on each of the three policing divisions to identify any spikes, 'hotspots' and/or known offenders in order to proactively target local policing resources. The Rural Crime Team and Specialist Enforcement Unit are used to strengthen the Force's capacity and capability in this important area too. Further information about protecting your home from crime is available on the Sussex Police website through the following link: <https://www.sussex.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/protect-home-crime/>

I am pleased to confirm that there was a 16% reduction in the number of recorded burglaries [both residential and non-residential burglaries, including business premises] in Sussex during 2021/22. This equated to 814 fewer offences recorded [4,180] compared to the 4,994 burglaries recorded in 2020/21, with these reductions apparent across each of the three policing divisions.

The risk of being burgled in Sussex also continues to remain low, with the Force positioned 4th lowest out of 43 police force areas in England and Wales and 1st in their Most Similar Group (MSG) of 8 forces, in terms of the risk of burglary per 1,000 population.

I am reassured to note that an expectation exists for police officers in Sussex to attend all reported residential burglaries to undertake an investigation of the scene and to look for any available witnesses and/or CCTV, with crime scene investigators deployed to gather any potential forensic evidence. As an aside, this approach and increased visibility also raises and heightens the awareness of other residents within the neighbouring area too.

All frontline officers and staff in Sussex have also received additional training to maximise opportunities to identify and gather evidence, and to consider all possible lines of enquiries to catch those responsible. All residential burglary offences must now be finalised by a Detective Sergeant [or a police staff equivalent] to ensure that all reasonable lines of enquiry have been identified and considered proportionately.

Sussex Police demonstrated a solved rate of 6% for burglary offences across 2021/22, although this represented a 21% reduction in the number of offences solved throughout the year and contributed to a lower solved rate compared to the year before [7%].

The Force remains committed to protecting communities, catching criminals and delivering an outstanding service to members of the public, although I recognise that the Force needs to improve performance in this area by solving more burglary offences and holding more offenders accountable for their actions. This forms part of the wider work of Operation Unify to change the culture in Sussex and provide a renewed focus on the importance of solving crime, holding offenders to account and improving trust and confidence [in the police] for victims.

I have continued to use my monthly webcast Performance & Accountability Meetings (PAMs) to scrutinise and challenge the Chief Constable about the Sussex Police response to burglary, theft and acquisitive crime on behalf of members of the public. Burglary was raised most recently as a theme at the PAM on 22 July 2022, with further challenges made on 18 December 2021, 18 October 2019 and 16 November 2018 before then. Each of these sessions are archived and can be viewed on my website through the following link:

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

I hope the above provides you with some reassurance about the performance of Sussex Police and the ongoing work to tackle burglaries, thefts and other acquisitive crimes in Sussex. I will continue to use my PAMs to provide further scrutiny around the effectiveness of the policing response in this important area and seek to demonstrate improvements in the solved rates for these offences.

12. Written question from Cllr Deborah Urquhart, West Sussex County Councillor for Angmering and Findon

'Following the amended Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 coming into effect earlier this year, the threshold at which the police can use powers to remove unauthorised encampments was reduced, and "residing or intending to reside on land without consent in or with a vehicle" became a criminal offence. Despite this, yet again there have been many unauthorised encampments along the coast of West Sussex this summer and it appears that this change in law has made little difference to the number of instances and continues to blight the lives of our communities.

Can the Commissioner advise if Sussex Police have determined if/how they intend to apply their new powers, and what difference the Commissioner hopes the public might expect to see as a result?'

Thank you for your questions. I shared these with Sussex Police because the content specifically related to operational policy and procedure.

Firstly, it is worth emphasising that local authorities are the lead agency for responding to unauthorised encampments. This includes a dedicated responsibility for driving a multi-agency response that is supported by the police. Local authorities also have their own set of powers to respond to unauthorised encampments, separate from those powers afforded to the police. The new powers set out within the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, following amendments to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, were introduced to support and improve the multi-agency response to unauthorised encampments.

Secondly, it is important to clarify that the new legislation does not make residing or intending to reside on land a criminal offence. However, it will become a criminal offence if a person(s) is residing or intending to reside on land without consent in or with a vehicle and one or more of the following conditions in subsection 60C(4) of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 are met:

- A person has caused, or is likely to cause, significant damage, disruption, or distress and have met the other conditions in s60C(1) and (2).
- A constable must consider if the person has caused or is likely to cause significant damage, disruption or distress.
- Under s60C(4), a person can commit the offence if they are not yet physically on the land and if they are likely to cause significant damage, disruption or distress.

A criminal offence is committed when a person meets all the conditions in s60C (1) and meets one of the following:

- a) a person fails to comply with the request to leave as soon as reasonably practicable; or
- b) a person re-enters or enters the land with an intention of residing there without consent and has, or intends to have a vehicle with them, within 12 months of the request being made.

Thirdly, Sussex Police has already used the new powers alongside existing powers to proactively respond to multiple unauthorised encampments across the summer months to prevent significant damage, disruption and/or distress and will continue to use these powers whenever this is deemed to be necessary and proportionate. Further information about the police powers to respond to unauthorised encampments can be viewed through the following link:

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05116/>

I am reassured that the new legislation has been incorporated into existing Sussex Police policies and procedures in relation to unauthorised encampments. The Force has also developed a bespoke briefing and made this available to all frontline officers involved in providing a policing response and the ongoing management of unauthorised encampments to ensure that a consistent approach exists across Sussex. Each reported incident of an unauthorised encampment is also subject to a site assessment by a police officer and is supported by regular reviews, from an officer of the rank of Chief Inspector or above, where any assessment is made in relation to whether the threshold to use police powers has been met.

Finally, it is my intention to discuss unauthorised encampments with the Chief Constable at my webcast monthly Performance & Accountability Meeting (PAM) on 21 October 2022 to understand better what the Force has done to consider the new powers introduced by the legislation and the impact these powers are having on improving the police response. I will also ask the Chief Constable to explain how Sussex Police is working with partners [including local authorities and landowners] to respond proactively to unauthorised encampments in Sussex. This session will be available to view on my website through the following link:

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

13. Written question from XXX of XXX

What strategy will Sussex Police adopt to enforce the CURRENT law applied to unlawful encampments to remedy the abject failure of policing to protect the public from organised criminal gangs during the events of summer 2022. There are three aspects:

- 1. What is the strategy to educate the officers in the current provisions of the law applying to unlawful encampments specifically as the provisions now make it criminal offences to abuse and attack while attempting unlawful encampments, and this applies to both private land and public land.**
- 2. What strategy will be employed from now on to enforce the law and protect local residents by robustly applying the law in such a way to create sufficient deterrent to 'organised criminal gangs' so that they do not return to our region and repeat the crimes committed in summer 2022.**
- 3. What actions will be taken to feedback and provide assurance to local residents that the police will enforce the law and properly protect them, despite their having to invest costs in private security companies in addition to their significant contributions to local taxes raised to provide a police force. Residents are aware that our current force is anecdotally considered 'soft' and has not been as successful as police in other regions to deter these crimes. This action would include replying to the report of abuse and assault properly submitted to the police and correcting the failure to record such assaults as a crime which has not yet happened.**

Thank you for your questions. I shared these with Sussex Police because the content specifically related to operational policy and procedure.

Firstly, it is worth emphasising that local authorities are the lead agency for responding to unauthorised encampments. This includes a dedicated responsibility for driving a multi-agency response that is supported by the police. Local authorities also have their own set of powers to respond to unauthorised encampments, separate from those powers afforded to the police. The new powers set out within the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, following amendments to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, were introduced to support and improve the multi-agency response to unauthorised encampments.

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- A person has caused, or is likely to cause, significant damage, disruption, or distress and have met the other conditions in s60C(1) and (2).
- A constable must consider if the person has caused or is likely to cause significant damage, disruption or distress.
- Under s60C(4), a person can commit the offence if they are not yet physically on the land and if they are likely to cause significant damage, disruption or distress.

A criminal offence is committed when a person meets all the conditions in s60C (1) and meets one of the following:

- a) a person fails to comply with the request to leave as soon as reasonably practicable; or
- b) a person re-enters or enters the land with an intention of residing there without consent and has, or intends to have a vehicle with them, within 12 months of the request being made.

Thirdly, Sussex Police has already used the new powers alongside existing powers to proactively respond to multiple unauthorised encampments across the summer months to prevent significant damage, disruption and/or distress and will continue to use these powers whenever this is deemed to be necessary and proportionate. Further information about the police powers to respond to unauthorised encampments can be viewed through the following link:

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05116/>

I am reassured that the new legislation has been incorporated into existing Sussex Police policies and procedures in relation to unauthorised encampments. The Force has also developed a bespoke briefing and made this available to all frontline officers involved in providing a policing response and the ongoing management of unauthorised encampments to ensure that a consistent approach exists across Sussex. Each reported incident of an unauthorised encampment is also subject to a site assessment by a police officer and is supported by regular reviews, from an officer of the rank of Chief Inspector or above, where any assessment is made in relation to whether the threshold to use police powers has been met.

Finally, it is my intention to discuss unauthorised encampments with the Chief Constable at my webcast monthly Performance & Accountability Meeting (PAM) on 21 October 2022 to understand better what the Force has done to consider the new powers introduced by the legislation and the impact these powers are having on improving the police response. I will also ask the Chief Constable to explain how Sussex Police is working with partners [including local authorities and landowners] to respond proactively to unauthorised encampments in Sussex. This session will be available to view on my website through the following link:

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14. Written question Maria Paszkiewicz of Crawley

I am a semi-retired legal translator, Chartered Linguist and Registered Public Service Interpreter (English law), with over 30 years of experience.

In courts I sometimes encounter Witness Statements taken unprofessionally at police stations - often rejected by court. Is the Commissioner content with the training Sussex Police officers receive on how to work with translators and interpreters, and the process for recruiting professional and registered linguists?

It is very costly for a police force to bring the case to court only to find out that the translated key evidence e.g Witness Statement is inadmissible. The impact on victim is huge, with no chance of justice.

I recall several occasions, while appointed by court to translate for a victim, where only English version of a Witness Statement was available to the victim prior to a trial. No original Polish version - a source document - as given by victim in a police station was available, neither a translator's certificate. On these occasions, I had to perform a sight translation into Polish for a victim who did not recognise the Witness Statement as the evidence she gave at a police station during an interview. Moreover, I heard that it was an interpreter who generated and asked the questions - effectively conducting the interview - not the police officer!

Thank you for your questions. I shared these with Sussex Police because the content specifically related to operational policy and procedure.

Firstly, it is worth highlighting that we live in a diverse and multi-cultural society and many individuals who come into contact with the police service do not speak fluent English. This can include victims, suspects, witnesses and any other individuals who may need advice or guidance from the police. In England and Wales, the police service use interpreters and translators to assist them with communicating effectively with those individuals who speak limited, or no English. A similar service is also provided for any individuals who require some form of non-spoken interpreter.

Secondly, the interpreters used by all police forces in England and Wales are engaged through a National Police Dynamic Purchasing System for Language Service Providers (LSP), via a formal contract. Capita is the LSP used in Sussex at present and are responsible for ensuring that those deployed to police assignments hold a Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) or a Diploma in Police Interpreting (DPI). These individuals must also hold Non-Police Personnel Vetting at Level 3 and must have completed several hours experience in public service interpreting before undertaking any police assignments. There are a series of separate requirements for non-spoken interpreters.

There are exceptions to the above, when interpreters are required urgently or where no interpreters with the correct requirements are available. In these instances, the use of the interpreter must be risk assessed and approved by an officer of the rank of inspector or above.

Last year, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) recommended a system of approving and accrediting interpreters and translators to ensure that every interpreter and translator holds the required qualifications, vetting and experience to undertake police assignments. All police approved interpreters and translators (PAIT) are now authorised by Leicestershire Police, on behalf of police forces in England and Wales. The PAIT Scheme went live for spoken language face-to-face interpreting on 1 April 2021.

Thirdly, the College of Policing has issued guidance for all police officers and staff around both the use of interpreters and translators, and the processes used to brief them. Sussex Police adhere to this guidance through both the practical application and training that is delivered to all officers and staff through the Dedicated Coaching Units within Sussex Police, with the same principles applicable for victims, suspects and witnesses.

This includes providing basic training around the use of interpreters and statements – both face-to-face and remotely – and guidance about interviewing victims and witnesses and working together effectively to achieve best evidence in criminal proceedings. Additional support is also provided to police officers and staff around the use of translators and linguistics on both the 'specialist interviewing' and 'serious and complex interview' courses. Further information can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.npcc.police.uk/NationalPolicing/NationalPoliceDynamicPurchasingSy.aspx>

The arrangements for the use of interpreters and translators for witnesses at court are directed by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) guidance and NPCC guidance for Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings. The initial translation from a witness statement taken at a police station would be completed by the LSP [i.e., Capita in Sussex], with the police also responsible for arranging the interpreters and translators for defendants who are on remand. Suppliers can only be added onto the LSP list [e.g., Capita, Big Word etc.] if they have been accredited by Leicestershire Police, on behalf of the NPCC, to undertake police assignments for all police forces.

If the matter proceeds to court, it is the responsibility of the Crown Prosecution Service and/or defence to arrange independent interpreters for their own witnesses, with the National Crime Agency (NCA) responsible for providing translators from another approved list. If any questions about the standard or competence of an interpreter or translator are raised, a hearing should be adjourned so that these can be resolved, with an alternative interpreter or translator sourced as required.

Finally, the Head of Custody has also confirmed that the Force are currently going through a tender process for a new LSP in Sussex, with a procurement framework in place to support this. The new contract for the provision of translators and interpreters is set to be launched in Sussex on 1 November 2022, with assurances provided that any LSP awarded the tender will have been approved by Leicestershire Police and will be fully PAIT compliant.

Six further operational questions were received and answered by Sussex Police, as follows:

Question A

It was asked whether the Force has enforcement plans in relation to frequent motorist speeding on a section of the A264 in Broadbridge Heath, passing through Wickhurst Green.

Concerns were also raised regarding the rise in crime in Wickhurst Green and Broadbridge Heath village.

Question B

It was asked what enforcement plans are in place to stop the anti-social use of the bus gate and Co-op car park on Broadbridge Way, Broadbridge Heath. The Force was also called upon to clamp down on night-time racing in the area.

Question C

It was asked who resident groups should contact to get involved with helping to monitor speeding and exhaust noise on the B2133 between Wisborough Green and Loxwood.

Question D

It was asked why there is an absence of police officers on foot patrol after a noticeable increase in cyclists and e-scooters using the pavement on Broadwater Street East.

Question E

It was asked whether the Force is aware of and has plans to curb excessive speeding and exhaust noise on the A259 through Lancing, from the Saltings Roundabout in Shoreham to Brooklands during less congested periods.

Question F

It was asked what enforcement powers the Force has in relation to parents and guardians dangerously parking on double yellow lines to collect schoolchildren from roads surrounding North Lancing School.

Ends.