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Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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

Present:

Cllr Christian Mitchell	West Sussex County Council	Cllr Bob Standley	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Kevin Boram left at 12.03pm	Adur District Council	Cllr Roy Briscoe	Chichester District Council
Cllr Johnny Denis	Lewes District Council	Cllr Brian Drayson	Rother District Council
Cllr Elaine Hills	Brighton & Hove City Council	Cllr Sue Mullins	Crawley Borough Council
Mr Keith Napthine	Independent member	Cllr Jacky Pendleton left at 12.15pm	Arun District Council
Cllr Judy Rogers	Hastings Borough Council	Mrs Susan Scholefield	Independent member
Cllr Dee Simson	Brighton & Hove City Council	Cllr Sally Smith	Worthing Borough Council
Cllr Norman Webster	Mid Sussex District Council	Cllr Rebecca Whippy	Eastbourne Borough Council

Apologies were received from Cllr Pam Doodes (Wealden District Council), Cllr Steve Murphy (East Sussex County Council) and Cllr Tricia Youtan (Horsham District Council)

Also in attendance: Katy Bourne (Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner), Mark Streater (Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer for the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner) and Mervin Dadd (Chief Communications and Insight Officer for the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner).

Part I

14. Chairman's Welcome

- 14.1 The Chairman of the Panel recognised the work of Sussex Police and its policing contribution during the state funeral for Queen Elizabeth II on 19 September 2022.
- 14.2 The Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner expressed her pride and commended the role of Sussex Police officers for assisting the large-scale policing operation, including officers and staff who provided local cover in Sussex.

15. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 15.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 June 2022 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

16. Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner

- 16.1 The Panel noted a published version of written public and Panel questions with answers from the Commissioner (copy appended to the signed minutes). The Panel had no supplementary questions in respect of the public questions.
- 16.2 The Chairman invited questions from the Panel to the Commissioner. A summary of the main questions and responses were as follows:
1. Question: Are there any lessons to be learned in relation to the Force's policing of the state funeral for Queen Elizabeth II?
Answer: A national policing review and wash-up will be carried out in due course, but it is too soon to reflect on from the Force's perspective.
 2. Question: Does the Commissioner or Sussex Police measure trust in the Force, if so how?
Answer: Confidence is measured by Sussex Police in a variety of ways through complaints received, victim and specialist surveys, its online sentiment meter, gathering data from the national Safer Streets campaign and annual focus groups held in urban and rural areas across Sussex.
 3. Question: How will rising energy costs affect the Force's in-year budget?
Answer: This has been acknowledged in the Force's Medium-Term Financial Plan and is constantly being monitored and reviewed. BlueLight Commercial have been employed to procure vehicle fleets and negotiate contracts on behalf of forces nationally.
 4. Question: Following user reports of a service backlog, is the Commissioner confident that Operation Crackdown remains fit for purpose in its current guise, given the commitment shown to roads policing through precept increases?
Answer: Operation Crackdown is unique to Sussex and was launched in 2001 to provide members of the public with a direct means of reporting abandoned vehicles and, later, anti-social driving. The service is not as effective at present due to it operating on legacy IT infrastructure and its overall performance was questioned at a Performance and Accountability Meeting on 22 July 2022. Eighty thousand reports were submitted last year (32% increase on the previous year). Of those, 60,000 were made by Community Speed Watch groups and 20,000 related to anti-social driving. This led to 551 interventions which included prosecutions. Operation Crackdown is currently under review by the Force's Chief Inspector for Roads Policing with the aim of it being completed by the end of 2022.

17. The Role of the Commissioner in ensuring Sussex Police demonstrate an Efficient and Effective approach to Recruitment and Retention

17.1 The Panel considered a report from the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.

17.2 The Chairman invited questions from Panel members. A summary of those questions and their responses were as follows:

- Question: Is the Commissioner in contact with the Chief Constable regarding the drop-out rate of trainee recruits?
Answer: Exit questionnaires are completed and the results and trends are monitored by the Force. Seeking a different work-life balance and career progression are among the main reasons for early withdrawal.
Supplementary: What does the Force's recruitment strategy have planned once Operation Uplift comes to an end after the current year?
Answer: No plans have been finalised yet and the Force acknowledges that savings need to be made. Previous recruitment has been part-funded through precept increases following public demand for more policing visibility.
- Question: What are some of the characteristics of a 'new culture' referenced by the Commissioner?
Answer: The aim is for new officers and eventually the whole workforce to be trained in digital awareness and competence given the growing prominence of cyber-crime. Officers' increased social awareness through readily accessible media and social media channels was highlighted as an advantage to the Force.
Supplementary: Is there a concern about the loss of institutionalised knowledge to the Force through officers leaving?
Answer: Retired officers who draw their pension after 30 years of service are often re-employed as staff by the Force where it is felt they are able to bring relevant knowledge and experience to a role.
- Question: Is there a specific policy in place to support female staff going through menopause and prevent the loss of experienced staff?
Answer: The Commissioner welcomed the growing public discussion around the subject and its issues in the workplace and pinpointed it as a reason which prevents some women from attaining senior roles within the Force. Awareness and support is provided by the Force through listening circles and talks aimed at both young and older women.
Supplementary: Has a deep dive been carried out to understand why 18% of new officers require an above-average level of enhanced provision for additional learning needs?
Answer: The Commissioner stressed the importance of diversity and different ways of thinking that contribute to a richer police force.

- Question: Is the Commissioner assured that the Metropolitan Police is not offering 'golden handshakes' to attract Sussex Police officers to transfer to the London force?

Answer: Sussex Police have been less negatively impacted in comparison to the other eight Home Counties forces who have experienced a higher number of officers transferring to the Met Police. The Commissioner said that the Met Police's approach is undermining, and against the principle of policing. Commissioner Bourne praised the united policing efforts and mutual aid demonstrated by all 43 national forces during the funeral for Queen Elizabeth II.
- Question: Regarding the attrition rate, does the Force encourage its recruits to pursue specialist areas of policing that are of interest to them?

Answer: Recruits are made aware of the different opportunities to specialise, but they must first complete their basic training.

Supplementary: Has the Force sought to diversify its workforce by reaching out to the LGBT community and people with disabilities?

Answer: Sussex Police have worked hard to promote employment opportunities across all sectors but figures for these groups are difficult to record accurately as statements of declarations are not mandatory to complete.
- Question: Is the Commissioner satisfied that recruits are adequately vetted in respect of historical sexual and domestic abuse cases?

Answer: The Commissioner is confident with the assurances given to her by the Chief Constable after the latter was questioned about internal vetting processes at a recent Performance and Accountability Meeting.
- Question: Does the Commissioner share the perception that new recruits in the general lack resilience compared with predecessors in generations?

Answer: The Commissioner referred to the television documentary series 'Night Coppers' and praised its authenticity in following the realities of policing weekend nightlife in Brighton and Hove. She also attributed the spike in recruitment applications during Q4 to the show.

Supplementary: Is the Commissioner concerned by the Force losing valuable knowledge when PCSOs leave their role to progress and train as a police officer?

Answer: The Commissioner commented that the knowledge is not lost as the individuals are retained by the Force albeit in a different capacity. She admitted frustration that PCSO vacancies appear regularly but acknowledged it as a recognised career path to becoming a full-time police officer.
- Question: Has Sussex Police reverted back to its working arrangements pre-pandemic or has this brought about a permanent change?

Answer: The Commissioner confirmed that while operational policing arrangements have remained the same, the Force have adopted a flexible hybrid working model going forward to enable staff to work from home where possible.

17.3 The Panel welcomed and noted the report.

18. The Role of the Commissioner in ensuring Sussex Police demonstrate an Efficient and Effective approach to tackling Digital and Cyber-enabled Crime

18.1 The Panel considered a report from the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner. The report was introduced by Mark Streater, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer at the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.

18.2 The Chairman invited questions from Panel members. A summary of those questions and their responses were as follows:

- Question: How many officers and staff are the Cyber Crime Unit and Digital Forensics Team made up of?
Answer: Mr Streater offered to provide this information following the meeting.
- Question: Is the Commissioner satisfied that there is sufficient public visibility of policing activity in the digital world?
Answer: The Commissioner believed that cyber-crime awareness has increased in the business sector and is widely promoted at a national level. She did express concern for individuals who aren't familiar with their own online personal security.
- Question: Should the successful impact of the Cyber Crime Unit in terms of disruptions made be publicised in attempt to boost public awareness?
Answer: The Commissioner said that the Force does issue regular updates of proactive policing successes and that she highlights them too through her official channels.
- Question: Is the Commissioner satisfied with the level of investment in digital capability to manage evolving forms of cyber-crime?
Answer: The Commissioner is pleased that the Force has had the foresight to set up its Cyber Crime Unit in anticipation of a boom in this area.

18.3 Cllr Boram left the meeting at 12.03pm.

- Question: In relation to the fifth key performance indicator, can the Commissioner clarify the criteria for classifying certain young people as vulnerable?
Answer: A Prevent officer will intervene where specific vulnerabilities have been attributed to individuals.
- Question: Is there scope for the Force to work with the voluntary and third sector in a joined-up approach now that elderly people are becoming more digitally active?
Answer: The Commissioner explained that the Force employs two fraud case workers who regularly work with the elderly and that there is already some crossover work being delivered through the Force's partnership with Victim Support.

- Question: How does the banking protocol instigated by the Force to monitor large transactions by elderly people comply with General Data Protection Regulation?
Answer: The Commissioner explained that the protocol is part of Operation Signature and that strict criteria was put in place with regards to the sharing of personal information between the Force and banks. The protocol has saved in excess of £2 million in potential loss of public money.

18.4 Cllr Pendleton left the meeting at 12.15pm.

19. Reflection on Visits to Sussex Police's Kingstanding Training Centre and Force, Command and Control Department

- 19.1 The Chairman thanked the Commissioner and Chief Constable for facilitating both visits and invited verbal feedback from all attendees.
- 19.2 Members found the tour of Kingstanding training centre informative and insightful and highlighted the following takeaways – understanding how tactics have developed, seeing how skills houses as part of training recruits, witnessing a training drill petrol bomb reception and asking questions of officers.
- 19.3 Members reflected that the visit to the Force, Command and Control Department was interesting and provided the opportunity to witness CCTV operation in action, from surveillance to deployment.

20. Working Group Appointments

- 20.1 The Panel noted the proposed membership and dates for the Budget and Precept Working Group.

21. Correspondence Since the Last Meeting

- 21.1 The Panel noted the correspondence.

22. Quarterly Report of Complaints

- 22.1 The Panel considered a report by the Clerk to the Panel.
- 22.2 Resolved – that the Panel noted the update.

23. Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates

- 23.1 The next meeting of the Panel would take place on 27 January 2023 at 10.30am, at County Hall, Lewes.

The meeting ended at 12.25 pm

Chairman