

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

30 June 2023 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Lewes.

Present:

Cllr Judy Rogers (Chair)	Hastings Borough Council	Cllr Andrei Czolak (Vice Chair)	Brighton & Hove City Council
Cllr Christian Mitchell	West Sussex County Council	Cllr Bob Standley	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Paul Keene	Lewes District Council	Cllr Kelvin Williams	Wealden District Council
Cllr Mark Baynham	Horsham District Council	Cllr Margaret Bannister	Eastbourne Borough Council
Cllr Kevin Boram	Adur District Council	Mr Keith Naphthine	Independent member
Mrs Susan Scholefield	Independent member	Cllr Rosey Whorlow	Worthing Borough Council
Cllr Shirley Haywood	Arun District Council	Cllr Christine Bayliss (Substitute)	Rother District Council
Cllr Michael Jones (Substitute)	Crawley Borough Council		

Substitutes:

Cllr Bayliss, Rother District Council (In place of Cllr Brian Drayson)
Cllr Jones, Crawley Borough Council (In place of Cllr Yasmin Khan)

Apologies were received from Cllr Tracie Bangert (Chichester District Council)

Also in attendance:

Part I

1. Appointment of Independent Members

1.1 Resolved – that the Panel:

1. Renewed the appointment of Mrs Susan Scholefield as an Independent Co-opted Member of the Panel, for a one-year term.
2. Renewed the appointment of Mr Keith Naphthine as an Independent Co-Opted Member of the Panel, for a one-year term.

2. Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman

- 2.1 Cllr Bayliss proposed Cllr Rogers as Chairman of the Panel for the forthcoming year. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Keene.
- 2.2 Cllr Boram proposed Cllr Mitchell as Chairman of the Panel for the forthcoming year. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Standley.
- 2.3 Cllr Jones requested a secret ballot which was agreed by the Panel.
- 2.4 Resolved – that Cllr Rogers is elected as Chairman of Sussex Police and Crime Panel for the ensuing year by four clear votes, with one abstention.
- 2.5 Cllr Rogers assumed control from Cllr Standley for the remainder of the meeting.
- 2.6 Cllr Mitchell proposed Cllr Standley as Vice Chairman of the Panel for the forthcoming year. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Boram.
- 2.7 Cllr Bannister proposed Cllr Baynham as Vice Chairman of the Panel for the forthcoming year. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Williams.
- 2.8 Cllr Keene proposed Cllr Czolak as Vice Chairman of the Panel for the forthcoming year. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Jones.
- 2.9 Cllr Whorlow requested a secret ballot which was agreed by the Panel.
- 2.10 Resolved – that Cllr Czolak is elected as Vice Chairman of Sussex Police and Crime Panel for the ensuing year by one clear vote, with one abstention.
- 2.11 Cllr Rogers and Cllr Czolak requested that they are referred to as Chair and Vice Chair respectively.
- 2.12 The Chair thanked former Panel members for their contributions and welcomed returning and new members to the annual meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

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

Panel Member	Personal Interest
Cllr Bayliss	Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Development at Rother District Council
Cllr Whorlow	Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing at Worthing Borough Council
Cllr Baynham	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources at Horsham District Council
Cllr Bannister	Cabinet Member for Tourism,

	Leisure, Accessibility and Community Safety at Eastbourne Borough Council
Cllr Williams	Cabinet Lead for Public Health and Asset Management
Cllr Rogers	Chair of Safer Hastings Partnership. Co-Chair of Hastings and Rother Community Safety Partnership.
Mrs Scholefield	Senior Independent Director of Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Mental Health Foundation Trust.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 4.1 Resolved - that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 March 2023 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

5. Annual Review of Membership and Proportionality

- 5.1 Resolved – that the Panel:

1. Agreed that a decision to invite any/both/neither of East Sussex and West Sussex County Councils to appoint a second representative be deferred to the 22 September meeting of the Panel.
2. Agreed that Brighton and Hove City Council be invited to appoint a Conservative second representative to the Panel, for a one-year period of office.

6. Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner

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

- 6.2 The Chairman invited questions from the Panel to the Commissioner. A summary of the main questions and responses were as follows:

1. Supplementary: In respect of the public written question from Mr Jacklin regarding the Northeye proposals, how is the Commissioner working with the Chief Constable to provide additional resources to Rother District through funding secured from the Home Office by the local MP?
Answer: The Commissioner reported that the Force has become a member of the Northeye Forum following a meeting with the local MP in April, at which the Home Office outlined their plans for the Northeye proposals. The Commissioner stated that her role is to ensure the Force is properly resourced and that she has

received initial reassurances from the Home Office that funding would be made available, but it is not yet known what this will look like. The Commissioner added that the Force has put in a bid to government to secure any additional funding for extra resourcing. She concluded that the Force does have an operational reserve to use if needed, which can be reclaimed through the Home Office.

2. Question: Can the Commissioner urge the Chief Constable to prioritise finding a resolution to the Force's ongoing CCTV contract matter, amid reports that the new provider would be eight times more expensive than the current contract, as well as concerns that cameras are no longer going to be monitored from the Force's central control room?

Answer: The Commissioner explained that the Force chairs a partnership made up of 22 local authorities and that attempts have been made to extend the term of the contract. Inspector Jo Atkinson is the Force's lead for reviewing the options available and presenting them to the partnership. The Commissioner gave re-assurance that the CCTV will not be switched off and that another partner will be able to provide cameras. She concluded that Crawley is one of three partner areas the Force is working with to find a resolution.

Supplementary: It should be fed back that the Force is at fault for procurement. Can the Commissioner look into how the monitoring of CCTV will work on an individual police officer basis?

Answer: The Commissioner commented that the partnership accepts shared responsibility, and that part of the blame lies with the current contract provider, as emphasised by recent 999 emergency phonenumber outages. The Commissioner said that she has written a complaint to the provider's Chief Executive and that it will take a collaborative effort from the partnership to resolve the situation.

3. Question: Is there a contingency plan for district and borough councils who will struggle to meet the costs of the new CCTV system?

Answer: The Commissioner confirmed that the partnership will decide if they offer financial support to struggling partners.

4. Question: In relation to the recent disappearance of unaccounted child asylum seekers from a hotel in Hove, does the Commissioner have concerns about the added pressure placed on Force resources?

Answer: The Commissioner confirmed that a dedicated independent unit made up of six officers has been set up and admitted that this has created an additional budget pressure. She explained that the local Divisional Commander is closely aligned with the Chief Executive of Brighton and Hove City Council and that the unit will be kept running for as long as necessary.

5. Question: CCTV is a key resource to the Force, what is your backstop to ensure the Force retains use of it?
Answer: The Commissioner clarified that the CCTV in question is not to be confused with the Force's own system. The Commissioner said that she is hopeful of a seamless transition to a better value, upgraded system through the new provider and that partners will witness a reduction in running costs over the long-term.
6. Question: What is the Commissioner's view on the application of Artificial Intelligence technologies to policing in Sussex, especially in terms of privacy?
Answer: The Commissioner explained that her role is to set the Force's strategic priorities and ensure that codes are adhered to. She added that the College of Policing is responsible for setting strict standards at national level. The Commissioner went on to say that her monthly Performance and Accountability Meetings (PAMs) are held to check and challenge the Force's performance against the Police and Crime Plan's priorities. She gave assurance that all national level matters such as The Casey Review are followed up at her PAMs.
Action: The Commissioner to consider adding artificial intelligence in policing to the agenda at a future Performance and Accountability Meeting.
7. Question: Where do matters stand on the discussion in respect of the use of police time in response to mental health callouts?
Answer: The Commissioner commented that there is a lot of ongoing work in this area nationally and that the Force has a dedicated mental health advocate, Andrew Gordon, who works very closely with Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust and other partners. The Commissioner said that Sussex Police was one of the first forces to successfully pilot sending a mental health nurse out with response teams to mental health callouts.
Action: The Panel's support officers to circulate the most recent report on mental health, received by the Panel, to members.

7. The Commissioner's Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2022/23

- 7.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced by Commissioner Bourne.
- 7.2 The Commissioner highlighted some of the progress made against the Police and Crime Plan's (2021/24) policing and crime objectives.
- 7.3 The Chairman invited the Panel to ask questions. A summary of questions and responses were as follows:
1. Question: In reference to page 31, second para, what does hotspot policing refer to?

Answer: The Commissioner explained that hotspot policing is a new method backed by government funding and involves a targeted

patrol over a short period of time. She added that the majority of the current 15 hotspots are in the Brighton and Hove area. The Commissioner was of the belief that criminality has not been pushed out elsewhere as a consequence and that results have been very successful.

2. Question: Hotspot policing in Hastings is ineffective in its current form, can the Commissioner use her presence to increase the 15-minute surveillance and drive through patrols to improve visibility through the new intake of officers?

Answer: The Commissioner disagreed that there is an issue in Hastings and said she would review the effectiveness and successes of hotspot policing throughout Sussex. She added that 103 new officers were recently attested and will be deployed across the County in the coming weeks.

Action: The Commissioner to check the Hastings data to see how effective the policing is proving.

3. Question: Do you have any concerns about progress made by the Force in respect of crime data integrity following the recent findings in HMICFRS's report.

Answer: The Commissioner explained that the Force has to report initial and then secondary crimes and of the sample taken, 11 crimes were found to be wrongly recorded and one or two were of a serious nature. The Commissioner confirmed that she wrote to HMICFRS's Chief Inspector regarding her concerns about the language used in the report and claims that 20,000 were not properly recorded. She added that the Home Office has since changed the rules on how crime is recorded and only initial crime recording is required. The Force would have been rated as Good/Outstanding under the new rule change.

Action: The Panel's support officers to circulate the most recent report on stop and searches, received by the Panel, to members.

4. Question: What impact has the backlog of court cases had on your policing strategy?

Answer: The Commissioner recognised that there was a backlog prior to the pandemic which has not improved, and placed a strain on policing, with around 23,000 victims still waiting for their case to be heard. She clarified that while her remit does not cover this area, the Force is working with partners such as the Crown Prosecution Service and HMICFRS on a collaborative way forward. The Commissioner paid tribute to third sector organisations who work with victims and acknowledged the issue with victims' motivation to give evidence as long as three years after the crime.

5. Question: The report omits a detailed reflection of the impact made by the Rural Crime Unit (RCU) since its formation, why is this?

Answer: The Commissioner acknowledged that her report offers an overview of the RCU's performance and offered to look to include a couple of case studies going forward in her next annual report. She referred the member to the Rural Crime Team's countywide monthly newsletter which provides an update on their challenges and successes and can be subscribed to by members of the public.

6. Comment: Shoplifting is a significant issue in Bexhill where there is a professional ring having links to County Lines. The Force have only attended one report of shoplifting so far this year, which involved an assault on a staff member. Incidents have been low-value but the impact is high-level.
 Answer: The Commissioner gave re-assurance that Project Pegasus is in operation countywide to provide the Force with an overview of serious and organised crime and that it is backed by 10 of the UK's biggest retailers currently. The Commissioner added that she is the national lead for the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners' portfolio group on business crime and road safety and is in regular communication with Safer Sussex Business Partnership.
 Supplementary: The presence of neighbourhood policing teams is sporadic, why are they being taken off duty and where are the extra officers promised by Operation Uplift?
 Answer: The Commissioner answered that this is due to promotions and re-deployment. She gave assurance that they are not always visible but a lot of work goes on behind the scenes and that while 'they may not be everywhere, they can be anywhere'.
 Action: The Commissioner offered to provide Cllr Bayliss, and any member requesting such, with the contact details for her local sergeant/divisional commander.
7. Question: Is the Force paying a high enough salary to attract police officer candidates?
 Answer: The Commissioner said that most Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) aim to progress to become police officers and this is the traditional recruitment pathway. She confirmed that PCSO numbers will not be cut in Sussex and her current focus is to improve their numbers and return them back to the Force's target figure.
 Comment: The role of a PCSO should be viewed as a career in itself and not a stepping-stone to becoming a police officer.
 Answer: The Commissioner explained that the Force is currently looking into new ways to attract PCSOs and has targeted recruiting an additional 97 by February 2024. She added that the PCSO role is a more attractive career for people with an interest in policing.
8. Comment: It was pointed out that the Commissioner's annual report does not contain a reference to the South-East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU) in respect of the Police and Crime Plan's Public Priority 2 – 'Relentless disruption of serious and organised crime'. Concern was also raised in relation to a national report on Regional Organised Crime Units.
 Answer: The Commissioner welcomed the feedback and said that the SEROCU is administered by Thames Valley Police, who she meets with quarterly to monitor performance.
 Action: The Commissioner to include a reference to the SEROCU's performance in her next annual report.

7.4 Resolved – that the Panel:

1. Recommended that the Commissioner considers publicising case studies on the work of the Rural Crime Team, if not in the Annual Report, then via other means.
2. Recommended that the Commissioner considers ways of promoting the role of Police Community Support Officer as a career in itself, rather than as a steppingstone towards becoming a police officer.
3. Noted its annual report and budget outturn for 2022/23.

8. Commissioner's Response to HMICFRS' Police, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Assessment of Sussex Police

- 8.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced by Commissioner Bourne.
- 8.2 The Chairman invited the Panel to ask questions. A summary of the main questions and responses were as follows:
 1. Question: Out of 43 police forces, only seven of the 43 forces had received two or more inadequate ratings. Were any of these inadequate areas apparent at an earlier stage or were you surprised by the outcomes?
Answer: The Commissioner explained that Operation Unify will bring forward work around crime data recording. She is confident that internal scrutiny within the Force is aware of arising issues and they do not wait for the inspection reports. The Commissioner added that HMICFRS' Chief Inspector is happy with progress the Force has made in this area. She concluded that the Force did not go into special measures because HMICFRS were aware that preventative work was already in place and she was confident that a reinspection today would result in a rating of "good".
 2. Question: In relation to Outcome 18, are there particular areas of the County prone to this sign-off? Is there a senior officer sign-off?
Answer: The Commissioner understood that it is a technical decision regarding the ethical recording of a named suspect who discontinues engagement. Mr Streater added that domestic abuse victims can name an offender and then retract the name by not pursuing the allegation and this influences the classification.
- 8.3 The Chair said she was disappointed to see the Force receive two inadequate ratings but feels more reassured by the Commissioner.
- 8.4 Resolved – The Panel noted the report. Support officers to identify the underperforming areas and add them to its work programme for future scrutiny.

9. Annual Report from the Host Authority

- 9.1 The Panel considered a report by the Clerk to the Sussex Police and Crime Panel.
- 9.2 The Commissioner offered new and returning Panel members the opportunity to attend a training session on the work of the Office of Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (OSPCC), as part of their induction.
Action: The OSPCC and Panel support officers to coordinate the visit.
- 9.3 Resolved – that the Panel noted its annual report and budget outturn for 2022/23.

10. Quarterly Report of Complaints

- 10.1 The Panel considered a report by the Clerk to the Sussex Police and Crime Panel.
- 10.2 Resolved – that the Panel noted the update.

11. Correspondence Since the Previous Meeting

- 11.1 The Chairman summarised a letter sent on behalf of the Panel to the Chairs of Health Overview Scrutiny Committees at East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council respectively, following an agreed action from the Panel meeting on 24 March.
- 11.2 Resolved – that the Panel noted the tabled correspondence.

12. Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates

- 12.1 The next meeting of the Panel would take place on 22 September 2023 at 10.30am, at County Hall, Lewes.

The meeting ended at 12.55 pm

Chairman