

Four-year Police and Crime Plan scrutinised by Panel.

A POLICE and crime strategy setting out priorities, funding and performance has been presented to Sussex Police and Crime Panel.

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne presented her Police and Crime Plan 2024-28 at a meeting on Friday, March 14.

Introducing the Plan, Mrs Bourne highlighted the three public priorities on which the Plan was built: preventing crime and supporting victims and witnesses, investigating crimes, and bringing offenders to justice, and improving the trust in policing and building public confidence.

Presentation of the Plan had been delayed to allow for the Government's proposals around police reform to be published and Mrs Bourne warned that there could be updates if any significant changes are announced in the Government's white paper expected after April.

The Panel challenged the Commissioner over some of the wording in the Plan, suggesting that references to the public feeling safe should be changed to the public being safe.

But the Commissioner said the wording reflected her work with volunteer partners.

She said: "I want you to report your crime, and I want to encourage you to feel safer and the only way I can do that is not by telling you that you are safe but by allowing you to feel safe. That's why we use that wording."

During discussion about the road safety section of the Plan, and during questions from the Panel earlier in the meeting, the issue of Sussex Police's withdrawal from the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) was raised with members asking how this would impact on the force's priorities.

Referring to how she would measure road safety success, Mrs Bourne said: "The ultimate measure is the number of KSI going down. In 12 years under the SSRP those numbers have not changed. Over 1,000 people are either killed or seriously injured on the roads in Sussex every year."

She reassured the Panel that Sussex Police's withdrawal would not mean they would stop working on the roads with partners to reduce the number of those killed and seriously injured.

Mrs Bourne added: "The police enforce the roads, but the local authorities are responsible around the engineering, and there are other agencies responsible around

education. And it is only by working together that we can reduce those numbers, but we have got to do something better than what we are currently doing.”

Other issues raised by Panel members at Friday’s meeting included the perception around rural crime and communication between police and residents related to that, the police’s work with County Lines and cuckooing and the contents of the Crime and Policing Bill.

The Commissioner also presented a report to the Panel setting out her role in holding Sussex Police to account for improving their response to business crime.

Speaking after the meeting, Panel chairman Cllr Andrei Czolak said: “The Commissioner’s Police and Crime Plan is an important strategic document, and Panel members were keen to ensure it reflected the views of their residents, focussed on the most correct priorities, and had measurable targets.

“The Panel is a great forum for representatives to highlight specific issues affecting their communities and ensuring that the Commissioner is aware of and can address those concerns.”

The next meeting of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel will take place at County Hall in Lewes on Thursday, July 3 at 10.30am

Ends.