

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 **Friday, 9 October 2026** at **County Hall, Lewes**.

Lauren McCann

Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel

30 September 2026

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: <https://eastsussex.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>.

Agenda

- 10.30 am 1. **Declarations of Interest** (Pages 5 - 6)
- 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.
2. **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.
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 7 - 22)
- To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting on 2nd July 2026.
- 10.35 am 4. **Public & 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 Chair (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).

Three questions have been submitted in advance by the Chair and one question has been received from one correspondent. The Panel is invited to note the responses and pose any supplementary questions.

11.05 am 5. **The Commissioner's role in Sussex Police's work to tackle Violence against Women and Girls** (Pages 25 - 36)

The report provides an overview of the role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner in holding Sussex Police to account for its response to violence against women and girls (VAWG).

The Panel is asked to scrutinise the Commissioner's work in this area, in particular how well the Commissioner is assured that investment, commissioned services and Sussex Police's activity to tackle violence against women and girls are delivering measurable improvements in victim outcomes, public confidence and offender accountability.

12.05 pm 6. **The Commissioner's role in Sussex Police's use of AI-Enabled Surveillance** (Pages 37 - 46)

This report sets out the role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) in ensuring the effective and appropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-related technology by Sussex Police.

The Panel is asked to scrutinise the Commissioner's work in this area, in particular to consider how well the PCC is assured that the use of artificial intelligence by Sussex Police delivers measurable benefits while maintaining public trust, ethical standards and value for money.

1.05 pm 7. **Quarterly Report of Complaints** (Pages 47 - 48)

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.

1.10 pm 8. **Working Group Appointments**

The Panel is asked to appoint the membership for the Budget and Precept Working Group.

The Group acts as a critical friend in the development of the

budget and proposed precept for 2027/28.

The Working Group will meet twice, informally and virtually, in mid-November 2026 and in January 2027 – dates to be confirmed, depending on member and officer availability. The Group will appoint its Chair at the outset of the first meeting.

1.15 pm 9. **Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates**

The next meeting of the Panel will take place on 29th January 2027 at 10.30 a.m. at County Hall, Lewes.

Future meeting dates are set out below:

22nd February 2027 (Provisional)

12th March 2027

25th June 2027

8th October 2027

To all members of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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Panel Member	Personal Interest
Cllr Ballard	Cabinet Lead for Community Safety at Eastbourne Borough Council. East Sussex County Councillor.
Cllr Baynham	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources at Horsham District Council. Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee Chair at West Sussex County Council.
Cllr Bayliss	Deputy Leader at Rother District Council.
Cllr Birch	Chair of Housing and Wellbeing Committee at Arun District Council.
Cllr Charatan	Cabinet Member for Public Protection at Crawley Borough Council.
Cllr Cooke	Cabinet Member for Communities at Mid-Sussex District Council.
Cllr Ford	Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture, & Leisure at Worthing Borough Council.
Cllr Grimshaw	Cabinet Advisor for Community Safety and Brighton & Hove City Council.
Mrs Scholefield	A serving magistrate.

Cllr Becca Horn	Community Safety and Environmental Services Portfolio Holder at Hastings Borough Council. East Sussex County Councillor.
Cllr Lowe	Cabinet Member for Communities, Wellbeing, & Leisure at Adur District Council. West Sussex County Councillor.
Cllr Williams	Cabinet Lead for Public Health and Asset Management at Wealden District Council. East Sussex County Councillor.
Cllr Woolley	East Sussex County Councillor. Board Member of the Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority.

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

2 July 2026 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Lewes.

Present:

Cllr Lowe		Cllr Birch	Arun District Council
Cllr Amanda Grimshaw	Brighton and Hove Council	Cllr Charatan	Crawley Borough Council
Cllr Ballard	Eastbourne Borough Council	Cllr Woolley	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Horn	Hastings Borough Council	Cllr Baynham	Horsham District Council
Cllr Keene	Lewes District Council	Cllr Bayliss	Rother District Council
Cllr Williams	Wealden District Council	Cllr Gravely	
Dominic Ford		Mr Napthine	Independent Co-opted Member
Mrs Scholefield	Independent Co-opted Member	Cllr Weller	Chichester District Council
Cllr Wood	Mid Sussex District Council		

Substitutes:

Cllr Weller, Chichester District Council

Apologies were received from Cllr Cooke (Mid Sussex District Council) and Tiffany Taylor

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

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 Napthine as an Independent Co-Opted Member of the Panel, for a one-year term.

2. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

- 2.1. Cllr Gravely proposed Cllr Baynham as Chair of the Panel for the forthcoming year. Cllr Williams seconded the proposal.
- 2.2. Cllr Birch proposed Cllr Keene as Chair of the Panel for the forthcoming year. Cllr Bayliss seconded the proposal.
- 2.3. A secret ballot was then held, which was won by Cllr Keene by a majority of votes.
- 2.4. Resolved – that Cllr Keene was elected Chair of Sussex Police and Crime Panel for the ensuing year.
- 2.5. Cllr Bayliss proposed Cllr Grimshaw for the role of Vice-Chair of the Panel for the forthcoming year. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Lowe.
- 2.6. Cllr Gravely proposed Cllr Baynham for the role of Vice-Chair of the Panel for the forthcoming year. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Williams.
- 2.7. A secret ballot was then held, which was won by Cllr Baynham by a majority of votes.
- 2.8. Resolved – that Cllr Baynham was elected Vice-Chair of Sussex Police and Crime Panel for the ensuing year.

3. Annual Review of Membership and Proportionality

- 3.1. Resolved – that the Panel:
 1. 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, to take effect immediately.
 2. Agreed 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.
 3. That the Panel agreed Option A as set out in the report:

‘That one of ESSC or WSCC appoints a Conservative additional member, and the other an additional Reform councillor.’
 4. Authorised the Clerk to amend the Panel’s decision in respect of recommendation 3 in the event Chichester District Council appoints either a Conservative or a Reform representative.

4. Declarations of Interest

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

Panel Member	Personal Interest

Cllr Ballard	Cabinet Lead for Community Safety at Eastbourne Borough Council. East Sussex County Councillor.
Cllr Baynham	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources at Horsham District Council. Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee Chair at West Sussex County Council.
Cllr Bayliss	Deputy Leader at Rother District Council.
Cllr Birch	Chair of Housing and Wellbeing Committee at Arun District Council.
Cllr Charatan	Cabinet Member for Public Protection at Crawley Borough Council.
Cllr Cooke	Cabinet Member for Communities at Mid-Sussex District Council.
Cllr Ford	Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture, & Leisure at Worthing Borough Council.
Cllr Gravely	Chair for Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee at West Sussex County Council.
Cllr Grimshaw	Cabinet Advisor for Community Safety and Brighton & Hove City Council.
Mrs Scholefield	A serving magistrate.
Cllr Becca Horn	Community Safety and Environmental Services Portfolio Holder at Hastings Borough Council.

	East Sussex County Councillor.
Cllr Lowe	Cabinet Member for Communities, Wellbeing, & Leisure at Adur District Council. West Sussex County Councillor.
Cllr Weller	Councillor for Selsey Town Council.
Cllr Williams	Cabinet Lead for Public Health and Asset Management at Wealden District Council. East Sussex County Councillor.
Cllr Woolley	East Sussex County Councillor. Board Member of the Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority.

5. Urgent Matters

- 5.1. There were no urgent matters raised.

6. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 6.1. The Panel is asked to approve the draft minutes of the previous meeting on 13 March 2026 as an accurate record.
- 6.2. Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 March 2026 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

7. Panel Questions to the Commissioner

- 7.1. The Chair invited questions from the Panel to the Commissioner.
- 7.2. A summary of the main questions and responses were as follows:
- 7.3. The Commissioner wished it stated for the public record that she did not appreciate comments about her wardrobe and that she preferred the focus remain on her work.

1. Question: 'On the subject of the Commissioner's withdrawal of proposed legal action against the Panel, can the Commissioner confirm the

cost of any legal advice she received and whether any public funds were used to pay for part, or all, of that legal advice?’

Answer: The Commissioner invited a FOI request if the member wished to see a breakdown of legal costs as this is not discussed in public forums. Additionally, the Commissioner stated that the reason for her withdrawal of legal action was a reluctance to go to judicial review as this would incur an unnecessary expense for the public purse as mediation had been ruled out.

2. Question: ‘At the last meeting, the Commissioner was urgently seeking funds to support policing in East Sussex as a result of the marches in Crowborough. Has she been successful in securing some funding, and will it cover some or all of the extra costs incurred by the increased policing demand?’

Answer: The Commissioner clarified that the extra funding that they had requested from the Home Office had been for policing in general, not just for the marches. She then explained that they had agreed a figure of £800,000 with the Home Office to help offset the cost of extra policing on Sussex residents. Finally, she explained that the expectation was that they would be reapplying in the coming years due to the government’s decision to extend the use of Crowborough as housing for migrants until 2030. The Commissioner also extended her thanks to senior officers for their work in applying to the government for this funding on her behalf.

3. Question: ‘On the topic of the withdrawal of night marshals from urban centres in West Sussex, triggered by the Home Office, has there been any further funding identified for even a partial continuation of the initiative?’

Answer: The Commissioner stated that the initial withdrawal of funding from the initiative was not her decision, it was the Home Office, replacing it with a knife concentration scheme where it was very difficult to make the case for night marshals within that scheme’s boundaries. Further, she stated that with the pressures on the policing budget, there was no money or funding stream for the initiative and her own disappointment in the Home Office’s decision to withdraw the funding.

4. Question: ‘What are the differences that allowed the night marshals initiative to continue in Brighton, but not in Crawley or Eastbourne?’

Answer: The Commissioner explained it was due to the conditions set by the government when submitting bids for the knife concentration funding.

5. Question: ‘Is the Commissioner aware of the impact of the Fatal Five unit on the number of people killed or seriously injured on Sussex roads?’

Answer: The Commissioner explained that they were starting to see results from the unit’s work however she cautioned that the team had not been running for very long so final results were still unknown. However, she stated that they had, so far, seen an 11% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on Sussex roads compared to the same time period last year, despite an additional 1300 collisions reported, with a 42% reduction in fatalities when compared to the same period.

6. Question: ‘On the use of AI cameras to detect driving offences such as phone use, does the Commissioner feel that the first three months of using such devices have been a success, does their use represent good value for money, and are they likely to be rolled out further in future?’

Answer: The Commissioner clarified that the AI cameras were only introduced as a pilot for a set period and that it had largely been considered a success, and that she expected that the National Police Chiefs roads portfolio would be collating the information from the pilot and would produce a report in due course.

7. Question: 'Does that mean that the cameras are no longer in use or that they've been put on hold for the time being until a report is produced?'

Answer: The Commissioner confirmed that they had been put on hold due to the set timescale for the pilot.

8. Question: 'On the subject of unauthorised traveller encampments, are you happy that Sussex Police's current strategy and work is doing a good job in this area so far?'

Answer: The Commissioner explained she had discussed Sussex Police's strategy for dealing with unauthorised encampments during her Performance and Accountability meetings in May 2026 and stated that the Chief Constable had confirmed the legislation around unauthorised encampments had remained unchanged and recognised the importance of a locally-led, locally-driven multi-agency response within the boundaries set by human rights legislation. Further, she stated that she had been reassured that there was a robust approach and that the police work within the law in a proportionate way.

9. Question: 'The PCC is clearly committed to restorative justice. Is there any indication to suggest that the work has reduced reoffending rates?'

Answer: The Commissioner explained that there was often a positive impact on offenders participating in restorative justice programmes.

10. Question: 'Has mental health introduced challenges to the implementation of restorative justice?'

Answer: The Commissioner stressed that the restorative justice programme was very much victim-led and victim-based, so 25 partner agencies work to support the victim in whatever outcome they wish to see, whether that includes a criminal justice outcome or not; however there had been evidence of positive impacts on offender participants in the programmes as well.

11. Question: 'Out of the 25 partner agencies mentioned, are there any mental health specialists that could help facilitate that aspect of the programme?'

Answer: The Commissioner stressed that the restorative practice practitioners in Sussex are held up as examples of good practice across the country, including mental health care for participants, but explained she would need to provide further information outside of the meeting as she did not have the details to hand.

12. Question: 'On emergency resilience and preparedness, considering current international tensions, what is the precise detail of Sussex Police's preparedness? And is the Commissioner satisfied that our preparation for emergencies in Sussex is satisfactory?'

Answer: The Commissioner stressed that responsibility for local preparedness was in the hands of the local resilience partnership and the

strategic resilience partnership across Sussex, and the question might better directed to them specifically.

13. Question: 'Is it not concerning that the Commissioner's office is not leading on this, considering the role that Sussex Police would be expected to play in an emergency situation?'

Answer: The Commissioner explained that the Police did sit on local resilience forums which deal with issues such as response to water shortages, but she was not aware of any work being done on preparedness for an international conflict or strategic resilience as her office would not be involved.

14. Question: 'Is there any initial feedback from the local consultation launched by the PCC on government plans to regionally merge police forces?'

Answer: The Commissioner explained the government plans were not concrete at this moment in time, however a report was being produced by Lord Bernard Hogan Howe on force mergers, with an initial report expected in August 2026, but cautioned that with potential upcoming changes in government, the idea might get shelved altogether. Further, she updated members that the consultation had been started and was ongoing but added that in her conversations with the public, there was not much support for the idea of a merger with other police forces.

15. Question: 'Is there any relationship between the fact that Sussex Police scored a 'requires improvement' in crime resolution rates and the fact that it is one of the most underfunded forces in the country?'

Answer: The Commissioner stated that it was always difficult to work within the constraints of Sussex Police's budget and she had argued since her first term of office that Sussex Police is underfunded by central government and the police precept. She explained that the report had covered a period 18 months before it was published and that under new inspection rules, Sussex Police would've recorded better assessment scores, and would do so in future inspections, in part thanks to the work of the Chief Constable, her officers, and police personnel.

16. Question: 'Can the Commissioner give an indication of where she fought the Home Office on Sussex Police funding considering the high level of operational demand within the county?'

Answer: The Commissioner explained the funding formula used to determine police funding from central government, stressing that Sussex was disadvantaged in comparison to other forces. She affirmed that where they had managed to increase numbers of officers on the streets, they had seen reductions in crime and improvements in solve rates, but she had limited influence over central government policy around police funding.

17. Question: 'Community networks are reporting that some incidents reported through Operation Crackdown are being inappropriately redirected to local authorities. Is there sufficient clarity around responsibility in this area between police and local authorities?'

Answer: After clarification on which aspects of Operation Crackdown were specified in the question, the Commissioner explained that if the incidents referenced were around noise and noise abatement, the responsibility for those lies with the local authority, whereas other issues such as speeding

or antisocial behaviour on the roads would lie with the police. She invited members to submit further information on the specific incidents for her office to respond to outside of the meeting.

18. Question: 'What are the challenges faced by the Chief Constable in ensuring that officers deploy Body Worn Video (BWV) consistently? And do officers have discretion over when the devices are switched on?'

Answer: The Commissioner explained that was an operational question and that would be better directed to the Chief Constable, however she stated that she had been a big proponent for the introduction of BWV into policing, and that they had been a good implementation since they came into use ten years ago.

8. The Commissioner's Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2025/26

- 8.1. The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced by Commissioner Bourne.
- 8.2. The Chair invited the Panel to ask questions. A summary of questions and responses were as follows:
- 8.3. Members inquired if the Commissioner was considering any strategic partnerships for education and prevention work focussed on young people and their access to potentially harmful online content.
- 8.4. The Commissioner acknowledged the benefits and downsides of social media, especially for young people, and explained to members that she had partnered with the Breck Foundation, whose aim is to educate young people in online safety and peer support, and further informed the Panel about their funded youth ambassadorship scheme, and their success in raising awareness and educating their fellow young people. The Commissioner then informed the Panel that they were going to extend the scheme for another year, and further across Sussex.
- 8.5. Members asked further questions around the scope of the work, including whether it extended to online misogyny and toxic masculinity targeting young men.
- 8.6. The Commissioner explained the Breck Foundation's focus was around cyber-bullying but she had previously funded schools-based education on toxic masculinity and misogynistic online content, and she affirmed she was open to continued funding for such initiatives in the future.
- 8.7. Members raised concerns that the report was inconsistent in showing the impacts of various data outlined in the report and that more clarity could be provided on how this information is affecting stated objectives in a practical sense. Members suggested a traffic light-style system could be implemented against objectives to show progress.

- 8.8. Members further asked if the use of AI beyond its initial trial by Sussex Police in policing traffic offences had been considered.
- 8.9. The Commissioner stated she had noted members' concerns and suggestions around the report. She further explained that AI use by police currently sat with the College of Policing and was likely to sit within the national police service being explored by the government and the Home Office, and they would set the direction for AI use in policing going forward. Finally the Commissioner reiterated that she had been committed to the use of new technologies from the beginning of her tenure in office and remained so.
- 8.10. In the interests of time, the Chair invited members to write to the Commissioner if they required further information on the subjects raised.
- 8.11. Members acknowledged the work of volunteers in police custody suites. Further, they asked if there were any statistics on deaths in custody and if these should be included in the report. Finally, members raised concerns around the strategic allocation of resources such as custody suites and asked if the south-west of the county had not been disadvantaged when their custody suite was shut down.
- 8.12. The Commissioner explained that the report would not show such statistics because it is based on work her office has done in the past year, and further, that any deaths in custody cases would be referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) for investigation rather than her office. However, she assured members that she regularly held the police to account on this matter. On the closure of custody suites, the Commissioner explained that the operational decision to close custody suites had been brought in before her time in office and that it was ultimately the Chief Constable's decision whether the suites are utilised operationally. Finally, she informed members that there had not been any deaths in police custody in Sussex within the last year.
- 8.13. In reference to topics raised in the previous agenda item, members asked if the Commissioner's office had been engaged by Lord Hogan Howe's review on potential merger of police forces.
- 8.14. The Commissioner explained that she had spoken with Lord Howe very recently and firmly expressed her views on police force mergers. When asked what those views were, she stated that she was very against any merger of Sussex Police with any other police force or similar proposals, as she feared that local issues and concerns would become lost if the force's jurisdiction was widened to include other counties.
- 8.15. On the topic of BWV and the proposed future rollout of BWV to all frontline officers, members asked if that meant there were currently officers deployed without BWV.

- 8.16. The Commissioner explained that BWV had to be consistently activated by wearers and this was due to the huge influx of new officers that required training on its use. She stressed that this was an operational issue and would be better directed to the Chief Constable.
- 8.17. On the topic of Safe Space Sussex, members asked the Commissioner if there had been any evidence, anecdotal or otherwise, to suggest the scheme had created a positive impact. Members also raised the prospect of safe spaces being established in Sussex for the LGBTQIA+ community.
- 8.18. The Commissioner confirmed she did not know at that moment but she would rather have the safe spaces in place than not, if needed. She acknowledged that there was more work to be done to raise awareness of the scheme for the general public.
- 8.19. The panel requested more information on how the impact of the Commissioner's perpetrator intervention programmes were being measured, both currently, and in the longer-term.
- 8.20. The Commissioner explained the parameters of the programmes under Drive Project and directed members to the Drive Project website for further information.
- 8.21. Members raised concerns that the notifiable rural crime solve rate remained at 4% despite an increase in police officers and resources being directed at the issue and asked what measures were being considered to improve this.
- 8.22. The Commissioner explained that that specific statistic refers to crimes that have been sent to court and that a positive outcome is not necessarily one that results in criminal justice proceedings, such as an agreement between victim and offender. She stressed that they tended to see a lot more of rural crimes with positive outcomes that have not gone to court. She stressed the difficulty in proving many rural crimes due to the necessity to catch offenders in the act, in often isolated locations, but that she was assured that things were improving.
- 8.23. Members raised the concerns from local farmers that some of the rural crime happening in their areas that had an organised crime element to them that had led to repeated incidents.
- 8.24. The Commissioner explained the difficulties involved in cross-border organised crime that members had described but assured the Panel that the regional organised crime unit would become involved in such cases, with cooperation from multiple police forces, and further that a lot of work was being done by the National Rural Crime Unit team on identifying and analysing patterns in rural crime. Finally, she reassured the Panel that they would continue to maintain the local rural crime unit.

- 8.25. Members asked for more information on how the police planned to continue improving solve rates for burglary in 26/27.
- 8.26. The Commissioner assured members she regularly covered burglary solve rates in her performance and accountability meetings with the Chief Constable, and further that the Chief Constable constantly reassured her that the police response to burglaries was consistent and had been met with positive feedback from victims.
- 8.27. Members raised the prospect of meeting with the Commissioner to discuss extending the amnesty bin scheme for knives to other locations than police stations, due to this being a potential deterrent for those wishing to surrender blades.
- 8.28. The Commissioner explained that would be an operational decision, not within her remit, and reminded the Panel that there was a potential security risk with sharp bladed objects being stored, however temporarily, at public locations other than a police station however, she assured members she was open to discussions with any interested parties around potential improvements to the scheme, or through the community safety partnerships, on which the Chief Executive Officer, OSPCC, also sits.
- 8.29. Members asked if the pilot of Operation STOP across East Sussex, with a proposed rollout of ten more tags to support the operation's objectives, was limited by the cost of the tags themselves, and if there was any scope for partnership with outside bodies, such as the Chamber of Commerce to fund more.
- 8.30. The Commissioner reminded the Panel that this was an initial pilot, with limited scope for the time being, but they had received some interest from other police forces, and assured members this limit was not due to cost, but to ensure the scheme works before potentially investing further, and stressed the holistic nature of the scheme in supporting offenders to break the cycle of offending. Finally, the Commissioner explained some of the difficulties involved with the scheme and that the scheme would be evaluated at its end and assured members that if it had been found to have had a positive impact, more funding for an extended rollout could be considered, and she was happy to bring the evaluation results to the Panel next year.
- 8.31. Members raised concerns around cuckooing and the effects on the victims, and requested more information around how this issue was being handled by the police and the Commissioner's office.
- 8.32. The Commissioner assured members that Sussex Police took cuckooing extremely seriously and had done so for some time, stating her delight that cuckooing had been made a specific criminal offence, expressing her hope that the new legislation might be usable in many elder abuse cases as well.
- 8.33. Members cited links between temporary accommodation, houses of multiple occupation, and cuckooing in densely occupied

residential areas, before asking the Commissioner how residents can report suspected cuckooing incidents to help Sussex Police target their resources and if she planned to review residents' views on this.

- 8.34. The Commissioner stressed that she always encouraged residents to report suspected criminal activity and had been working to drive down response times on 101 calls as a result, which they had seen success in doing. She also stated that anonymous reporting was possible through Crimestoppers. Finally, she explained that there were no current plans to review this process and that it was set nationally.
- 8.35. Members raised concerns around the cost of the net zero targets in the report and questioned if there would be scrutiny around how the spending was being allocated.
- 8.36. The Chief Finance Officer assured members that any decision on transport strategy and net zero targets was not being rushed due to restrictions on the funding and assessing the operational capabilities of the vehicles, and confirmed that they scrutinised those decisions through the OSPCC and took guidance from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).
- 8.37. Members stated their pleasure in the opening of the Old Police Cells Museum under the custodianship of the OSPCC, preserving the history and heritage of Sussex, and Sussex Police. The Commissioner iterated her own sentiments in being able to preserve the museum and suggested it might be worth organising a visit for the Panel if there was interest.
- 8.38. Members reiterated their desire for a clearer picture of the PCC's objectives and the progress against them, preferably in the form of a RAG rating document, to better guide the Panel's own scrutiny.

9. The Role of the PCC in Sussex Police's Work to Tackle Knife Crime

- 9.1. The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced by Commissioner Bourne, and presented by the Chief Executive Officer, Mark Streater.
- 9.2. The Chair invited the Panel to ask questions. A summary of the discussion was as follows:
- 9.3. Members requested more information on the use of 'knife arches' and their role in tackling knife crime, particularly in schools or colleges.
- 9.4. The Commissioner explained that she was not aware that the knife arches had been used in schools however she said she would be happy to continue the conversation with members further outside of the meeting.

- 9.5. Mr Streater also added that he would raise the issue at the Violence Reduction Executive Board next week to help facilitate further discussion.
- 9.6. Members asked for more information on what circumstances would prompt the use of a knife arch in a school setting.
- 9.7. Mr Streater explained that the use of any policing tool was intelligence-led and this could come from concerns raised in the local area, or initiatives in those areas, which the police would use to target the use of such tools.
- 9.8. Members asked how the statistics on reported knife crime related to the overall crime statistics and whether it was known how much knife crime is non-reported. Members also raised concerns around how to encourage victims to report and the barriers they may face in reporting.
- 9.9. Mr Streater assured members that there was a wide suite of measures on what constitutes knife, and knife-related crime, and that the Violence Reduction Partnership employs dedicated analysts to assess this issue. He acknowledged that knife crime is often underreported, from both victims and offenders, and that the Partnership was working with the NHS and local councils to get a clear picture of what was going on. Further, he added that the report does not label the reduction in knife crime as satisfactory and that the police were not resting on their laurels in their work to continue driving knife and knife-related crime down.
- 9.10. In response to members' interest in further information, Mr Streater encouraged the Panel to inquire of their councils' representatives on the Partnership Board.
- 9.11. Members raised concerns around online knife crime and asked if there were any further statistics available on the use of indirect knife crime, such as online use of a knife to threaten or intimidate.
- 9.12. Mr Streater clarified to members that knife-related crime required the in-person element to be considered such, and that indirect 'online' knife crime might be considered under other legislation as a threat to cause bodily harm or death and would be recorded elsewhere.
- 9.13. Members asked what the OSPCC is doing to improve public confidence and reassure communities while ensuring transparency around the risks of knife crime.
- 9.14. The Commissioner referred members to the information in the report, citing her work with the Community Safety Partnerships, and suggested that it might be worth asking them to put it on their agenda to discuss further.

9.15. Members inquired if the Commissioner was using media or similar publications to target communities to raise awareness of these issues.

9.16. The Commissioner explained that there will be national policing operations running campaigns to raise awareness, as well as partner campaigns and schools' officers whose role is raise awareness in educational environments where there is a particular concern.

10. Annual Report from the Host Authority

10.1. Resolved – that the Panel agreed to note the report.

11. Quarterly Report of Complaints

11.1. Members noted the Quarterly report and cited concerns about the lack of detail on the complaints made. They requested that more detail be included about the nature of the complaints in future.

11.2. The Clerk of the Panel explained to members that due to the complaints being ruled as not within the remit of the Panel, it was deemed inappropriate to include the nature of the complaints in the report, however a supplemental report could be circulated to members outside of the Panel meeting.

11.3. The Chief Executive Officer, OSPCC, respectfully requested that, in light of new members joining the Panel, awareness being raised on members' adherence to the elected local policing bodies complaints and misconduct regulations and their responsibilities as Panel members.

11.4. The Clerk noted the request.

11.5. Resolved – that the Panel noted the report and the Chief Executive Officer's request.

12. Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates

12.1 The Chair noted the next meeting of the Panel will take place on Friday 9 October 2026, at 10:30am at County Hall, Lewes.

12.2 Future meeting dates have been proposed as:

- 29th January 2027
- 22nd February 2027 (Provisional)
- 12th March 2027

The meeting ended at 1.06 pm

Chair

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Panel Questions to the Commissioner**9 October 2026****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.

1. Written question from Cllr Paul Keene, Lewes District Council.**Question:**

'What assurance has the Commissioner sought and received from the Chief Constable on Sussex Police's preparedness for coordinated protest and disorder at Sussex ports and on the open coast, and whether the Sussex Resilience Forum holds a specific plan for Newhaven and Shoreham?'

Answer: TBC

2. Written question from Cllr Paul Keene, Lewes District Council.**Question:**

'Is the PCC satisfied that Sussex Police has assessed the westward shift in crossing routes evidenced by the Baie de Seine launch of 06 September, what maritime awareness activity is current at Newhaven, at Shoreham, and along the open coast, and what arrangements exist with Border Force and the port authorities?'

Answer: TBC

3. Written question from Cllr Paul Keene, Lewes District Council.

Question:

'Can the PCC reassure the Panel around what mutual aid and national mobilisation arrangements Sussex Police can call upon, and within what timeframe, in the light of the inspectorate's finding of 18 December 2024 that national mobilisation was activated four days too late in the summer of 2024?'

Answer: TBC

4. Written question from Mrs Karen Pryer of Worthing

Question:

'E-bikes and scooters are now presenting a real, and potentially dangerous, problem.

Just one example: walking along the seafront from Perch/Parade in Worthing today, an electric bike, with 2 people on it, shot past us on the cycle lane, at a speed of about 20mph.

Someone inadvertently crossing that lane, e.g. a young child, would not have stood a chance.

Clearly, those riders - that's just one of many examples - do not care that this behaviour is both dangerous and illegal. (This time, the riders were not wearing balaclavas though I have seen quite a few with those on.)

Sadly, we never see police officers around to act as a deterrent to this behaviour, which is on the increase.

Is the Commissioner satisfied that the relevant laws are being enforced in Sussex? Has consideration been given to confiscating these vehicles?'

Answer: TBC



Sussex Police and Crime Panel

9 October 2026

The Commissioner's Role in Sussex Police's work to tackle Violence against Women and Girls

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Focus for Scrutiny:

The Panel is asked how well the Commissioner is assured that investment, commissioned services and Sussex Police's activity to tackle violence against women and girls are delivering measurable improvements in victim outcomes, public confidence and offender accountability

1. Background

- 1.1 The item has been added to the agenda at the request of the Panel.
- 1.2 This subject was [last scrutinised](#) at the Panel's meeting on 25 March 2022. The Panel also [scrutinised](#) 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. at its meeting on 27 September 2024.

Lauren McCann

Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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Appendices

Appendix A - The Commissioner's Role in Sussex Police's work to tackle Violence against Women and Girls

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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 holding Sussex Police to account for providing an effective response to violence against women and girls
Date:	9 October 2026
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 ensuring Sussex Police provide an effective response to violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Sussex.
- 1.2 The report also provides an overview of the threat and scale of VAWG (both nationally and in Sussex), the national strategy and Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2024/28, the Sussex Police response to VAWG, the support provided for victims of these offences and the role of the Sussex PCC in terms of holding the Chief Constable to account for performance in this area.

2.0 Threat and scale of violence against women and girls

- 2.1 The harm caused to victims and society by VAWG in all its forms is immeasurable. VAWG remains a critical national threat throughout England and Wales which deeply impacts the safety, wellbeing and confidence of all communities.
- 2.2 There is no standalone criminal offence or statutory definition for VAWG nationally. Instead, VAWG is used as an overarching term to describe a wide range of acts of violence and/or abuse, including:
 - ✓ Rape and serious sexual offences (including non-contact sexual offences, such as voyeurism and indecent exposure)
 - ✓ Domestic abuse
 - ✓ Stalking and harassment
 - ✓ Honour-based abuse (including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and 'honour' killings)
- 2.3 While these offences are recognised to disproportionately impact and affect women and girls, the term 'violence against women and girls' refers to all victims of any of these offences. As such, VAWG is applicable to male victims of the same crimes.
- 2.4 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) police-recorded homicide data for England and Wales confirmed that there were 155 female victims of homicide recorded across 2024/25. Of the homicides recorded, 104 victims were female where the principal suspect charged was male (90%). Of all adult female victims, over half (56%) of these were a result of a domestic (partner, ex-partner or family member) homicide (75), with all but four of these victims killed by a male suspect (95%).

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- 2.5 There have been general increases in police recorded sexual offences and domestic abuse-related offences over the last decade, largely because of improvements in police recording practices, the introduction of new offences and increased reporting by victims of crime.
- 2.6 There were 217,567 sexual offences (including rape) recorded in England and Wales between 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026. This represented a 4% increase with an additional 8,453 offences recorded compared to the 209,114 crimes recorded in the same period in 2024/25. More than 34% of the sexual offences recorded by the police across this period were also rape offences (+4%).
- 2.7 In Sussex, total recorded sexual offences reduced by 2% across the rolling year period ending 31 March 2026, with 135 fewer offences recorded (6,400) compared to the 6,535 sexual offences recorded across 2024/25. Rape offences equated to 33% of these sexual offences in Sussex (-1%).
- 2.8 There were 834,256 domestic abuse-related offences recorded in England and Wales between 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026. This represented a 2% increase with an additional 17,763 offences recorded compared to the 816,493 crimes recorded in the same period in 2024/25. More than 77% of the domestic abuse-related offences recorded by the police across this period were violence against the person offences.
- 2.9 In Sussex, total recorded domestic abuse-related offences also increased by 2% across the rolling year period ending 31 March 2026, with 417 more offences recorded (21,432) compared to the 21,015 domestic abuse-related offences recorded across 2024/25. Violence against the person offences equated to 76% of these offences (+/-0%).
- 2.10 It is also recognised that police recorded crime alone cannot provide a complete measure of the prevalence of VAWG, particularly given the historically under-reported nature of many of these offences.
- 2.11 The policing response to VAWG has been shown to be inconsistent by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) previously, although this position is recognised to have improved in recent years.
- 2.12 In February 2023, the (former) presiding Home Secretary added the policing of VAWG to the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) as one of seven national threats which all police forces in England and Wales must demonstrate that they have the plans and capability to respond to, in addition to regular policing requirements. This additional threat was added in response to a recommendation made by HMICFRS in their inspection report into the 'Police response to violence against women and girls'. The report can be viewed through the following link:
<https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publications/police-response-to-violence-against-women-and-girls/>
- 2.13 Policing, and society, must build on this momentum by continuing to focus on those who target women and girls so that this offending behaviour can be eradicated. It is also imperative that there is a national focus on supporting police forces to better prioritise VAWG-related crimes and offences.

3.0 Freedom from Violence and Abuse

- 3.1 In December 2025, the Government published its national strategy – 'Freedom from Violence and Abuse: A cross-Government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls' – which set out the vision and actions required to meet its ambition to halve violence against women and girls within 10 years.
- 3.2 The strategy outlined a "whole-of-society" approach to tackle VAWG, working across Government, public services and wider society to make lasting, meaningful change across the three areas set out within: prevention and early intervention, relentless pursuit of perpetrators, and support for victims and survivors.
- 3.3 It is important to note that the national strategy recognises men and boys as both victims of violence and abuse and as key partners in the prevention of these offences. While maintaining a primary focus on the disproportionate impact of violence against women and girls, the strategy also includes a commitment to improve the support provided for male victims, challenge harmful gender norms, promote healthy masculinity and ensure that men and boys are reflected within prevention and victim-support measures too.
- 3.4 The national strategy can be viewed through the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/freedom-from-violence-and-abuse-a-cross-government-strategy>

4.0 Sussex Police response to violence against women and girls

- 4.1 Tackling violence against women and girls has featured prominently within the Operational Delivery Plan for Sussex Police for many years which remains focused around three core pillars, as follows:
 - Protect our communities
 - Catch criminals
 - Deliver an outstanding service
- 4.2 The Force has used the recently published national strategy to strengthen its approach to VAWG-related offences, improve public confidence in the local response provided and ensure that better outcomes are delivered for women and girls in Sussex.
- 4.3 Sussex Police has undertaken a significant amount of work in this area and introduced a range of different preventative activities and initiatives to tackle violence against women and girls locally. This includes:
 - ✓ Implementing Operation Soteria to transform and improve how Sussex Police investigate rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO). The adoption of the national operating model has ensured that a more consistent approach exists to all RASSO investigations which are victim-centered, suspect-focused and context-led, regardless of police force area.
 - ✓ Creating specialist teams within the Force to investigate the most serious and complex reports of rape and serious sexual offences (including attempts), alongside any sexual assaults where the offence is particularly serious or has aggravating factors. These offences are allocated to either the Bluestone Team or Iris Team for investigation based on the age of the victim at the time of reporting.

Appendix A

- ✓ Introducing a High Harm Perpetrator Programme to provide 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).

N.B. This programme is funded by the PCC through a funding award from the Home Office through the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Fund and is delivered in partnership with the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner.

- ✓ Using Live Facial Recognition (LFR) vans to compare a live camera feed of faces against a pre-determined watchlist to identify and arrest individuals who pose the greatest threat, risk and harm to women and girls, including sex offenders, domestic abusers and those individuals who may have breached bail conditions and/or any restrictions in place.
- ✓ Introducing Operation Shield (known as Operation Vigilant nationally) to provide dedicated patrols – comprising both uniformed and plain clothes officers – to identify those individuals who are demonstrating signs of predatory behaviour (i.e. sexual harassment, voyeurism and inappropriate touching) to better safeguard women and girls in the nighttime economy.
- ✓ Supporting the national scheme – 'Ask for Angela' – where individuals in a licensed premises can ask for Angela at the bar if they feel unsafe, vulnerable or threatened and need a discrete way of asking for support.
- ✓ Being awarded White Ribbon status in recognition of the Force's ongoing commitment to raise awareness of domestic abuse and tackle violence against women and girls (*N.B. Sussex Police was the first police force area in England and Wales to be awarded this status in July 2013*).

N.B. The above list provides an example of some of the activities and initiatives delivered by Sussex Police in this area and is not exhaustive.

- 4.4 Sussex Police has also undertaken a strategic analysis around VAWG to identify areas where these offences are most prevalent in public spaces. This information has been used to direct and target resources and patrol activity (particularly around the nighttime economy) and to understand better where further policing support is required and any gaps that may exist in terms of service delivery and safeguarding arrangements for victims.
- 4.5 Funding worth more than £3.926million – secured through the Government's Safer Streets Fund and Safety of Women at Night Fund – has supported the Force to deliver education, awareness and behaviour change programmes that tackle VAWG in public spaces across Sussex. This has been achieved through the delivery of new initiatives, building on existing practices and effective offender management to provide a lasting response to VAWG.

4.6 Further information about the Sussex Police response to VAWG can be viewed on the Force website through the following links:

- Rape, sexual assault and other sexual offences
<https://www.sussex.police.uk/ro/report/rsa/alpha-v1/v1/rape-sexual-assault-other-sexual-offences/>
- Domestic abuse
<https://www.sussex.police.uk/youarenotalone>

5.0 Role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

5.1 The PCC has statutory responsibilities to issue a police and crime plan which sets the policing and crime objectives for the police force area, commission support services for victims of crime throughout Sussex and to hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of Sussex Police.

5.2 Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2024/28

5.2.1 The Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2024/28 sets the strategic direction for policing, crime and community safety throughout Sussex.

5.2.2 The plan comprises three overarching Public Priorities, developed by the PCC in consultation with members of the public and partners in Sussex:

- ✓ Public Priority 1 – Prevent crime and support victims and witnesses
- ✓ Public Priority 2 – Investigate crime and bring offenders to justice
- ✓ Public Priority 3 – Improve trust in policing and build public confidence

5.2.3 The plan is underpinned by a central theme to tackle VAWG and to make women and girls feel safer in public spaces, with this approach reflected across each of the three priority areas, as follows:

5.2.4 Public Priority 1 – Prevent crime and support victims and witnesses

The support provided to victims and witnesses and the importance of maintaining high-quality victim support services is highlighted in this section of the plan. This approach includes early intervention, education, safeguarding and work with communities to challenge harmful attitudes and behaviours that contribute to violence against women and girls.

5.2.5 Public Priority 2 – Investigate crime and bring offenders to justice

The importance of developing interventions that address perpetrator behaviour and reduce repeat victimisation is covered within this priority area. This includes a commitment to improving investigative standards, strengthening the response provided to sexual offences and domestic abuse, targeting perpetrators and increasing positive outcomes for victims of crime, including women and girls.

5.2.6 Public Priority 3 – Improve trust in policing and build public confidence

The requirement to build trust and public confidence is recognised to be crucial in terms of ensuring that women and girls feel able to seek help and report offences to the police. The importance of treating victims with dignity and respect, encouraging greater reporting of traditionally under-reported crimes, improving accessibility to policing services and demonstrating visible policing action against perpetrators is all covered in this section of the plan.

5.2.7 The Sussex Police & Crime Plan recognises that VAWG remains a significant threat to the safety, wellbeing and confidence of women and girls throughout Sussex and, like the national strategy, acknowledges that a coordinated response from Sussex Police, local authorities, health services and community safety partners is required to eradicate this abhorrent behaviour from society.

5.2.8 The plan can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/pcc-priorities/pcc-priorities/sussex-police-crime-plan/>

5.3 Commissioning support services for victims of crime

5.3.1 The PCC continues to commission and fund support services and interventions to prevent VAWG-related offending and provide emotional and practical support to help women and girls to recover from these offences in Sussex.

5.3.2 In 2026/27, the PCC commissioned 29 different organisations to provide 42 separate support services for victims of VAWG-related offences throughout Sussex. This equated to commissioned services worth more than £4.594million across the year.

5.3.3 These services were commissioned in line with the independent sexual violence needs assessment (commissioned by the PCC in 2025/26) which sought to understand better the needs of adult victims of sexual violence (aged 16+), alongside the shared Domestic Abuse Strategy for Sussex which was developed in partnership with the pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Board.

5.3.4 The PCC funded organisations to provide specialist advice, support counselling and therapeutic provisions for women and girls who are victims of rape, sexual offences and stalking across Sussex.

5.3.5 The PCC also provides funding to Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council to co-commission services for victims of domestic abuse (including coercive control) and assist the local authorities in delivering their statutory duty to provide support to victims of domestic abuse under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

5.3.6 This support includes funding for independent sexual violence advisors (ISVAs); independent domestic violence advisors (IDVAs); counselling services; specialist advocacy and guidance; support provisions for children and young people, outreach recovery groups and peer support, as well as the provision of training for frontline staff and professionals.

- 5.3.7 The PCC's approach to commissioning also recognises the individual circumstances of victims and barriers that may exist in terms of accessing support services. As such, specialist support provisions have been made available for communities and groups that may experience additional barriers to seeking help, including older victims, LGBTQ+ communities, and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
- 5.3.8 The services commissioned in Sussex are subject to performance monitoring arrangements to ensure that the funding is reaching those who need support and that it is delivering the outcomes for which it was awarded. This includes consideration of service demand, accessibility, service-user outcomes and feedback from victims and survivors.
- 5.3.9 A full list of each of the organisations that received grant funding from the PCC in 2026/27 to prevent violence against women and girls and to support victims to cope and recover from these offences can be viewed in Appendix A.
- 5.3.10 Further information about all the victim support services funded by the PCC can be viewed through the following link:
<https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/pcc-priorities/victim-services/commissioning/list-of-funded-services/>

5.4 Holding the Chief Constable to account

- 5.4.1 The PCC has continued to hold the Chief Constable to account for delivering efficient and effective policing in Sussex that is responsive to the needs of the public.
- 5.4.2 The PCC has used her monthly webcast Performance & Accountability Meetings (PAMs) to scrutinise performance, monitor outcomes and ensure that the policing activity undertaken to tackle violence against women and girls reflects the needs and expectations of members of the public.
- 5.4.3 The Sussex Police response to tackling VAWG was raised most recently at the PAM on 19 February 2026 following the publication of the national strategy. This session is archived and can be viewed through the following link:
<https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/how-we-work/watch-live/>
- 5.4.4 The PCC's ongoing scrutiny of Sussex Police performance in this area has continued to focus on:
- ✓ Public confidence in reporting VAWG-related offences
 - ✓ The response to repeat victims and those assessed to be at greatest risk
 - ✓ The quality and timeliness of investigations into rape and serious sexual offences
 - ✓ Successful outcomes and the reasons cases do not progress through the criminal justice system
 - ✓ The identification and proactive management of repeat and high-harm perpetrators
 - ✓ Police use of protective powers and orders, including domestic violence protection notices and domestic violence protection orders
 - ✓ Victim satisfaction and confidence, including whether victims feel listened to, supported and kept informed

- ✓ The effectiveness of the Force's response to stalking, including the use of stalking protection orders
- ✓ Evidence that investment and interventions are producing measurable improvements

5.4.5 The PCC also holds quarterly performance meetings with the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable to discuss all aspects of Sussex Police performance, including the provision of enhanced scrutiny around the Force response to tackling VAWG.

5.4.6 This oversight includes reviewing the contact and response provided to emergency, urgent and priority calls relating to domestic abuse; recorded crimes and successful outcomes relating to rape and domestic abuse offences; use of domestic violence police notices, domestic violence protection orders and stalking protection orders; victim satisfaction with the 'whole experience' and 'confidence' in Sussex Police for domestic abuse, and detailed performance information relating to all rape and serious sexual offences.

6.0 Summary

6.1 The PCC recognises that providing an effective response to violence against women and girls and tackling this offending behaviour is essential to building a more just and equal society and ending the epidemic of VAWG.

6.2 The impact of VAWG-related offences cannot be underestimated. As such, providing a victim-centred response that is aligned to local and national priorities remains fundamentally essential in terms of preventing further harm to victims and protecting better the communities in Sussex.

6.3 The PCC has sought to make additional funding and resources available to the Chief Constable to increase the capacity and capability of Sussex Police to strengthen its approach to tackling VAWG offences, reducing the number of offences committed against women and girls and ensuring that these individuals feel safer in local communities across Sussex.

6.4 Now that this investment has been realised through increases in the police precept in recent years and the additional funding secured nationally, the PCC will hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of an enhanced policing response. This will include an expectation that the interventions delivered by Sussex Police continue to contribute to improved outcomes for women and girls, improving public confidence in the local response provided to VAWG-related offences and maximising opportunities to hold more offenders to account through the criminal justice system.

Mark Streater

Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer

Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

**Appendix A –
OSPCC grant funding for organisations who support victims to recover from VAWG-related offences in 2026/27**

Name of Organisation	Name of Project	Funding
Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse	Specialist support for families bereaved by suicide and/or unexplained deaths following domestic abuse	£20,000
Barnardo's	Project SOLAH (Safer Online at Home) support for children and young people	£66,780
Brighton & Hove City Council	Contribution to the specialist domestic abuse service	£80,000
Brighton Women's Centre	Provision of Safe Space Sussex Women's Hubs in St Leonards-on-Sea and Eastbourne	£40,800
Brighton Women's Centre	Senior Practitioner for Women's Accommodation Support Service and Trauma Hub to support those with more complex needs	£59,187
Brighton Women's Centre	Therapeutic and support services provision	£68,008
Child & Adolescent to Parent Abuse First Response	Online platform for child to parent abuse support	£8,670
Counselling Plus Community	Domestic abuse and sexual violence counselling	£40,433
East Sussex County Council	Contribution to the specialist domestic abuse service	£131,000
Friends, Families & Travellers	Domestic abuse and sexual violence support for Gypsies, Romas and Travellers	£23,314
Hersana	Counselling for those at risk of harmful practices	£49,195
Hersana	Independent Gender-based Violence Advisor post	£124,949
Hourglass	Community response to domestic abuse and Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor post for older victims	£119,656
LGBT Switchboard	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor posts for LGBTQ+ community	£120,275
LGBT Switchboard	Sexual violence group support service	£60,000
Lifecentre	Journey to Recovery (employment programme for victims and survivors of sexual violence)	£128,008
Lotus Families	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor posts and Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse group sessions	£128,883
My Sisters' House	Police support advocate role	£40,000
My Sisters' House	Domestic Abuse Recovering Together Programme (recovery programme to support women and children who have escaped domestic abuse)	£88,798
My Sisters' House	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor post for Eastern European Community	£59,900

Name of Organisation	Name of Project	Funding
Oasis Project	Looking Forward Project (programme for women who have had a child or children permanently removed from their care via the family court)	£33,216
Rise	Young Persons Violence Advisor post to provide young survivors with age-specific support and advice	£30,816
Rise	Group recovery work for victims & survivors of domestic abuse	£41,305
Safe in Sussex	Group support and 1-2-1 support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse	£182,503
Streetlight UK	Support for women who wish to leave the sex industry	£27,420
Survivors' Network	Specialist advice, support and counselling for victims of rape and other serious sexual offences	£433,067
Survivors' Network	Outreach service and group support for survivors of sexual violence (biological women only)	£24,462
Survivors' Network	Independent Sexual Violence Advisor posts for adults, children and young people	£359,273
Survivors' Network	Outreach service and group support for survivors of sexual violence	£109,670
Sussex Community Development Association	Domestic abuse outreach worker	£27,336
Sussex Prisoners Families	Getting Through Project (support for families whose loved ones have been arrested for accessing online child sexual materials)	£25,700
The Daisy Chain Project	Pro-bono legal advice for victims of domestic abuse	£81,090
HOPE Charity Project	Seeds of Hope pilot providing support to young people through emotional wellbeing sessions, therapeutic activities and coaching	£27,000
The You Trust	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor and Child Independent Domestic Violence Advisor posts	£155,729
Veritas Justice	Stalking advocacy and advice service	£238,548
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)	£26,839
Veritas Justice	Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers posts	£91,212
Victim Support	Pan Sussex multi-crime type support provision	£744,384
Victim Support	Pan Sussex Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor posts	£213,427
Worth Services	Contribution to the specialist domestic abuse service and Child Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy post	£108,681
YADA	The Esther Project (specialist support for those in the sex industry)	£10,200
YMCA DownsLink Group	Provision of the What is Sexual Exploitation service to support Project SOLAH (Safer Online at Home)	£144,683
Total		£4,594,423



Sussex Police and Crime Panel

9 October 2026

The role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner in ensuring the effective and appropriate use of artificial intelligence-related technology by Sussex Police.

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Focus for Scrutiny:

The Panel is asked to consider how well the PCC is assured that the use of artificial intelligence by Sussex Police delivers measurable benefits while maintaining public trust, ethical standards and value for money.

1. Background

1.1 The item has been added to the agenda at the request of the Panel.

Lauren McCann

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 effective and appropriate use of artificial intelligence-related technology by 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 effective and appropriate use of artificial intelligence-related technology by Sussex Police
Date:	9 October 2026
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 ensuring the effective and appropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-related technology by Sussex Police.
- 1.2 The report also provides an overview of the current and planned use of AI technology by Sussex Police; the governance, oversight and accountability arrangements in place to monitor the use of this technology and the role of the Sussex PCC in this process in terms of holding the Chief Constable to account for performance in this area.

2.0 Current and planned use of AI technology by Sussex Police

- 2.1 AI in policing is not a single product or programme and is, instead, a broad range of capabilities that are increasingly widespread, varied and embedded across the multiple strands of technology already relied on by the police service.
- 2.2 Sussex Police is progressively using AI-related initiatives, tools and technology to change the way that policing services are being delivered in Sussex by maximising the potential opportunities to change processes and procedures by doing things differently.
- 2.3 The Force recognises that, if used safely and appropriately, AI can improve how data is managed and used to support the delivery of policing operations, assist with decision-making and enable customer interactions to be more efficient and effective. This has already been achieved by automating processes, reducing duplication of effort and improving communication with stakeholders, including victims of crime.
- 2.4 Sussex Police seek to adopt a proportionate, risk-based approach to innovation and has several AI-related initiatives that are currently operational. These projects are summarised in the table on the next page, alongside the other AI technology that is being piloted, explored or in active development for the future, as follows:

Initiative	Purpose	Status
Automated Video Redaction	To securely blur and/or mask sensitive details in digital evidence, including faces, vehicle registration numbers and identifying logos	Operational
Text Redaction	To automatically find and remove private data from digital files, including names, addresses and identification numbers	Operational
Sussex Police Victim Portal	To provide guided and automated messaging and updates about ongoing investigations to victims of crime	Operational
Live Facial Recognition Vans	To support the real-time deployment comparing a live camera feed of faces against a pre-determined watchlist, with overt signage, advanced notices and the immediate deletion of any non-matches	Operational
Demand Forecasting	To forecast incident demand (e.g. location, type and response category) and visualise this within operational demand and resource management tools	Operational
Transcription (speech-to-text)	To convert witness accounts obtained via Microsoft Teams into statement form	Pilot
AI Agent Crime Data Integrity	To assess crime data integrity performance, offering suggestions for corrections to crime recording decisions	Exploratory
Service Management Tool	To enable increased user self-service and improved problem management analytics, reducing costs and increasing system reliability	Planned
AI Server Proof of Value	To test different options relating to the use of cloud-based and local processing and data storage capabilities	Planned

2.5 Sussex Police has also explored the use of AI-related initiatives for low-risk administrative tasks which do not involve operational or personal data. These include:

- ✓ Legal research for legislation and case law queries
- ✓ Daily media monitoring
- ✓ Awards administration
- ✓ Minutes, actions and papers (for non-operational/non-sensitive meetings)
- ✓ Document and report summarisation
- ✓ Feedback from training courses delivered

3.0 Governance, oversight and accountability arrangements

3.1 Sussex Police recognises that the use of any AI-related initiatives and tools in a policing context must be lawful, necessary and proportionate in order to promote fairness, avoid bias and prevent any discrimination.

3.2 Where AI-related tools process personal data, Sussex Police is required to comply with the United Kingdom (UK) General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 to maintain security of the information, alongside respecting the fundamental freedoms set out within the Human Rights Act 1998.

- 3.3 This includes the routine completion of data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) before the introduction of any new AI technology is considered. Where sensitive data is proposed and/or revisions to the original use case are intended (i.e. expanding the scope of the Live Facial Recognition watchlist) additional grounds set out in law must be satisfied through the completion of a revised DPIA before the technology can be made operational. This includes the requirement to produce an appropriate policy document and further consideration as to whether the use of this tool should be explained in the privacy notice for Sussex Police.
- 3.4 The use of AI systems in Sussex must remain justifiable and explainable, with their reasoning processes open to scrutiny wherever operationally feasible. It is important to note that the Force only uses AI to support decision-making, with all operational policing decisions remaining human-led. This means that any outputs generated by AI tools are reviewed by police officers and staff before any decision is taken.
- 3.5 Where any use of this technology could potentially amount to automated decision-making with legal and/or other similarly significant effects, meaningful and effective human oversight processes have been introduced for all decision-making that is supported using this technology, with other appropriate safeguards (e.g. legal protections) applied prior to any use. This includes the requirement to have sufficient information and authority to challenge those outputs and not simply relying upon or endorsing automated recommendations.
- 3.6 The Force is governed by the national frameworks and materials which have been created by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), College of Policing and Information Commissioner's Office relating to the use of AI technology and has adopted a local approach to its standard operating procedures that is consistent with the accountability and transparency principles, policies and guidance issued by each of these bodies.
- 3.7 As the data controller, the Force must understand and assess the use of each type of AI technology on a case-by-case basis to address and manage any risks and concerns before these tools become operational, as follows:
 - ✓ The security of data stored in off-premises, cloud-based environments, including the risk of unregulated international transfer
 - ✓ Potential for large language models to ingest, learn from and recycle operational and/or sensitive data
 - ✓ The risk of AI producing results based on bias, hallucination or sycophancy (i.e. the machine telling the user what it believes the user wants to hear)
 - ✓ The risk of an over-reliance on AI generation resulting in a reduction in core human skills, including accurate report writing
- 3.8 Sussex Police has also set out the limitations for the use of AI-related initiatives throughout the workforce, including the controlled use of Microsoft Copilot – an AI-powered assistant available as a standalone web experience, integrated tool and dedicated app which is built into many police systems – after local and national assessments highlighted that this product is not currently appropriate for processing personal and/or operational data.

Agenda Item 6

Appendix A

- 3.9 The Force continues to provide police officers and staff with proactive communications, advice and guidance around the responsible use of AI-related initiatives to educate and raise awareness amongst the workforce, including specific messaging around the appropriate use of Microsoft Copilot and offering remedial training packages for those individuals identified as having potentially been involved in the processing of personal and/or operational data.
- 3.10 Sussex Police has also established an Artificial Intelligence Governance Board, chaired by the Chief Operating Officer, which is responsible for monitoring the appropriate use of all AI-related technology in Sussex. This Board is accountable for ensuring ongoing compliance with all applicable legislation, policy and guidance in this area.
- 3.11 An internal audit into the AI and robotics process automation (RPA) used by Sussex Police (and Surrey Police) was undertaken by the Southern Internal Audit Partnership in May 2026. The scope of the audit was to consider whether the policies and procedures in place for the use of AI and RPA across both force areas was aligned with national legislation, policy and guidance.
- 3.12 The independent auditor issued a 'reasonable' assurance opinion and found that there is generally a sound system of governance, risk management and control measures in place, with limited issues, non-compliance and/or scope for improvement identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
- 3.13 The Force has developed an Artificial Intelligence Policy (1236/2026) and an Overt Deployment of Live Facial Recognition Technology Policy for Sussex Police and Surrey Police (1249/2025). Both policies can be viewed on the Sussex Police website through the following links:
- Artificial Intelligence Policy – https://www.sussex.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/foi-media/sussex/other_information/foi-super-response--artificial-intelligence-ai-v5.1.pdf
 - Overt Deployment of Live Facial Recognition Technology Policy – <https://www.sussex.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/foi-media/sussex/policies/overt-deployment-of-live-facial-recognition-lfr-technology-policy-surrey-and-sussex-1249.pdf>
- 3.14 Both policies in Sussex (and Surrey) are aligned with national frameworks and guidelines, including the AI Strategy and AI Playbook for Policing (developed by the NPCC) and the authorised professional practice (APP) for data ethics and data-driven technologies (developed by the College of Policing).
- 3.15 Further information about each of these policies and the individual APPs can be viewed through the following links:
- NPCC AI Strategy – <https://www.npcc.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/publications/publications-log/science-and-innovation/2025/npcc-ai-strategy.pdf>
 - NPCC AI Playbook for Policing – <https://library.college.police.uk/docs/NPCC/Artificial-intelligence-playbook-policing-2025.pdf>

- College of Policing APP Data Ethics –
<https://www.college.police.uk/app/data-ethics>
- College of Policing APP Data-Driven Technologies –
<https://www.college.police.uk/app/data-driven-technologies>

- 3.16 Sussex Police (and Surrey Police) has also compiled a single response covering the many points detailed in the different requests for information received to date relating to the use of AI-related technology by both police force areas. This approach was introduced following the high volume of requests made about this subject matter to ensure ongoing transparency and maximise public confidence.
- 3.17 A copy of this 'super response' can be viewed on the Sussex Police website through the following link:
https://www.sussex.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/foi-media/sussex/other_information/foi-super-response--artificial-intelligence-ai-v5.1.pdf

4.0 Role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

- 4.1 The PCC recognises that the effective and appropriate use of AI-related technology remains fundamentally important to support the delivery of policing operations, decision-making and interactions with victims of crime and members of the public in a more efficient and effective manner.
- 4.2 The PCC is also mindful that the use of any AI-related initiatives by Sussex Police must be lawful, necessary and proportionate in order to promote fairness, avoid bias and prevent any discrimination, whilst simultaneously remaining compliant with all data protection law in the UK and the freedoms set out within the Human Rights Act.
- 4.3 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 includes an expectation that Sussex Police will continue to use AI-related tools and initiatives to automate processes, reduce duplication of effort and improve communication with all stakeholders to better protect the communities in Sussex.
- 4.4 The PCC has continued to use her monthly webcast Performance & Accountability Meetings (PAMs) to scrutinise and challenge the Chief Constable about the use of AI-related technology by Sussex Police on behalf of members of the public.
- 4.5 The Force's use of AI technology to support police investigations was raised at the most recent PAM on 17 September 2026. This area was also discussed at the PAM on 23 October 2023 (Artificial Intelligence in Policing). Both sessions are archived and, together with the summary notes from the meetings, can be viewed on the PCC's website through the following link:
<https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/how-we-work/watch-live/>

5.0 Launch of Police.AI

- 5.1 In June 2026, Police.AI was launched as a new national centre dedicated to the responsible development, piloting and scaling of AI in policing.
- 5.2 The launch of Police.AI forms a central part of the Police Reform White Paper – published in January 2026 – and aims to provide the police service with the data and technology required to keep pace with criminality and ensure that the best possible service to the public is delivered, alongside enabling chief constables to deploy AI tools in a responsible manner which builds and maintains public consent, trust and confidence.
- 5.3 The creation of a national centre for AI in policing, supported by investment of £75million by the Home Office over the next three years as part of a wider £140million AI investment package, will create a platform for identifying, testing and scaling the use of AI technology across all police force areas.
- 5.4 Through Police.AI, a public-facing registry will be developed to provide national oversight, transparency and consistency in the adoption of AI-related technology across policing. The registry will summarise each of the initiatives currently being deployed by police forces throughout England and Wales and aims to make the use of AI more accountable, evidence-based and publicly understandable.
- 5.5 Sussex Police is one of six pilot forces currently working with Police.AI to develop further the questions and processes that will be used to create the registry, alongside Bedfordshire Police; Metropolitan Police Service; South Wales Police; Surrey Police and West Midlands Police.
- 5.6 The registry is anticipated to provide one trusted, nationally owned picture of all the AI tools currently being utilised by the police service and the individual steps taken to ensure the reliability of these tools before operational usage commences. This approach also aims to make the use of AI technology more accountable, evidence-based and publicly understandable. The first iteration of the registry is anticipated to be made available (for internal use) by autumn 2026.

6.0 Summary

- 6.1 The PCC recognises that the responsible use of AI has considerable potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in Sussex, reducing administrative burdens, supporting the workforce and improving services provided to victims of crime and members of the public.
- 6.2 However, the adoption of new technology must be driven by an evidenced policing need and demonstrable public benefit, rather than pursuing innovation for its own sake. The use of AI must remain lawful, necessary, proportionate and subject to effective governance, meaningful human oversight and appropriate transparency.
- 6.3 The PCC will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account not simply for how AI technology is introduced, but for the outcomes it delivers, the risks it creates and mitigates, the value for money it provides and its impact on public trust and confidence.

- 6.4 As AI technology and the regulatory framework continue to develop, the PCC will expect Sussex Police to demonstrate that its governance, workforce capability and safeguards evolve at the same pace, with enhanced scrutiny applied to those technologies carrying the greatest potential implications for individuals and communities.

Mark Streater

Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer

Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

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Quarterly Report of Complaints

9 October 2026

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 29 September 2026

- 2.1 During the subject period, two people 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 were beyond the remit of the Panel.

3 Complaints

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

- 3.1.1 One of the correspondents raised issues concerning Victim Support, unrelated to any action and/or decision of the Commissioner. The other correspondent highlighted that they had not received a response to correspondence sent to the Commissioner's office, and Panel officers were able to confirm that a response had subsequently been sent.

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

- 3.1.2 None - see 2.1

Serious Complaints (allegations of criminal conduct)

- 3.1.3 None - see 2.1

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

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