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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 **Thursday, 2 July 2026** at **County Hall, Lewes**.

Lauren McCann
Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel

24 June 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. **Appointment of Independent Members**

The Panel is asked to:

1. Renew the appointment of Mrs Susan Scholefield, Independent Co-opted Member, for a one-year term.

2. Renew the appointment of Mr Keith Napthine, Independent Co-opted Member, for a one-year term.

2. **Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Panel will be invited to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair for the 2026/27 municipal year.

10.35 am 3. **Annual Review of Membership and Proportionality** (Pages 5 - 12)

Report by the Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel. The Panel is required to undertake an annual review of proportionality to take account of any changes to the political composition of constituent authorities during the course of the previous year.

The attached report provides the latest political composition of local authorities in Sussex and a calculation of proportionality of the Panel.

The Panel is required to agree additional appointments, where these will make the Panel more politically proportionate.

10.40 am 4. **Declarations of Interest**

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.

10.42 am 5. **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.

10.45 am 6. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 13 - 22)

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting on 13 March 2026.

10.47 am 7. **Panel Questions to the Commissioner**

The Panel is asked to raise any strategic issues or queries concerning crime and policing in Sussex with the Commissioner.

11.20 am 8. **The Commissioner's Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2025/26** (Pages 23 - 82)

The Police and Crime Panel is required to scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Annual Report.

The report provides an update on performance against the three Public Priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan 2024/28 – and the policing and crime objectives contained within – for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

The report also presents the draft revenue and capital outturn position for the overall police budget under the direction of the Police and Crime Commissioner for 2025/26, ahead of the audited accounts being published.

12.35 pm 9. **The role of the PCC in Sussex Police's work to tackle knife crime** (Pages 83 - 92)

To scrutinise the Commissioner’s role in holding Sussex Police to account for its approach to tackling knife crime.

1.35 pm 10. **Annual Report from the Host Authority** (Pages 93 - 96)

Report by the Clerk to the Police and Crime Panel. The Host Authority is required to submit to the Panel an annual budget report detailing income and expenditure of the Panel during the previous year.

The report also includes a summary of the main work of the Panel over the last year. The Panel is asked to note the report.

1.40 pm 11. **Quarterly Report of Complaints** (Pages 97 - 98)

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.

1.45 pm 12. **Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates**

The next meeting of the Panel will take place on 9 October 2026 at 10.30 a.m. at County Hall, Lewes.

Future meeting dates are set out below:

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

To all members of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME PANEL

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

2 July 2026

Review of Membership and Proportionality

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Recommendations

The Panel is recommended to:

Review its proportionality against the political make-up of Sussex and determine the arrangement it wishes to operate for 2026/27 and:

1. Agree that Brighton and Hove City Council be invited to appoint a Conservative second representative to the Panel (see para 2.3 & 2.4), for a one-year period of office, to take effect immediately.

2. Agree 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; and

3. Subject to agreeing recommendations 1 and 2, agree either Option A or Option B set out in the report.

4. Authorise 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.

1. Background

1.1 Schedule 6, paragraph 31 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the Act) requires the Panel to consider ("from time to time") whether available seats could be assigned to additional councillor members to enable the balanced appointment objective to be met, or more effectively met. If so, the Act requires the Panel to exercise this option. The balanced appointment objective is that the councillor members of the Panel (when taken together) represent the political make-up of the 15 Sussex local authorities (when taken together). The Constitution of Sussex Police and Crime Panel sets out that the Panel reviews its political make-up and size once a year, at its Annual Meeting.

1.2 The 15 Sussex local authorities can appoint any councillor of their choosing (i.e. without regard to that councillor's political affiliation).

2. Additional Local Authority Members

2.1 The Panel is required to appoint additional councillors from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and/or West Sussex County Council (WSCC) if these would improve political proportionality and, as set out below, this is now the case.

2.2 At the time of publication, Chichester District Council has yet to appoint its representative.

2.3 Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) has an automatic second appointment, which must be made in accordance with the Panel's recommendation as to political affiliation.

2.4 Referring to appendix 1 (Political Make-up of Sussex Local Authorities), the allocation of the second BHCC seat to a Conservative councillor for 2026/27 is the most effective means of contributing towards the balanced appointment objective.

Recommendation 1:

That the Panel agrees that Brighton and Hove City Council be invited to appoint a Conservative second representative to the Panel, for a one-year period of office.

Including the second BHCC Conservative councillor appointment, the resulting Panel make-up is below:

Table 1 – Political Make-Up of a 16 Member Panel, Assuming Recommendation 1 (with one vacancy, see 2.2)

Number of Councillor Seats	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Conservative	Green	Reform
16	5	5	1	3	1

2.5 From Appendix 1, the theoretical politically proportionate make-up of a 16/17/18-member Panel as of 23 Jun 2026 is set out in Table 2. The statutory maximum number of councillor Panel members is 18. For the purposes of this discussion, the two Independent Co-opted Panel Members are not considered.

Table 2 – Theoretical Politically Proportionate Panel Make-Up

Number of Councillor Seats	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Conservative	Green	Reform
16	4.29	2.95	2.78	2.73	1.96
17	4.56	3.14	2.95	2.90	2.08
18	4.83	3.32	3.13	3.07	2.20

2.6 The Panel's Constitution states that in order to meet the statutory duties imposed under the Act, additional local authority members must be appointed from each of the county councils on the agreement of the Panel, to address any perceived imbalance in political proportionality. Such members will have a one-year period of office. The Panel should today review its proportionality against the political make-up of Sussex and determine the arrangement it wishes to operate for 2026/27.

2.7 Considering the data in appendix 1, and assuming recommendation 1 is agreed, there is still some political imbalance, with under-representation of Conservative and Reform political parties. To achieve a more politically balanced membership, the Panel's Constitution enables one additional member to be appointed from either or both ESCC and WSCC. It is a matter for the Panel on this occasion to determine which political groups these additional members should represent, with two options (A and B) set out below for consideration. The Clerk will work with colleagues in both councils to ensure the requisite representatives are appointed in time for the Panel's next meeting, in accordance with the Panel's decision.

Option A:

That one of ESSC or WSCC appoints a Conservative additional member, and the other an additional Reform councillor.

2.8 For clarity, make-up of the resulting 18-councillor Panel, by political party, will be as below (with one vacancy, see 2.2):

Liberal Democrat	5 (4.83)
Labour	5 (3.32)
Conservative	2 (3.13)
Green	3 (3.07)
Reform	2 (2.20)

Note:

1. Shown in parenthesis is the politically proportionate aspiration
2. In the event Chichester District Council appoints its representative before the date of the Panel's annual meeting, members will be updated with a revised version of this report. In the event the appointment is made after the annual meeting, but makes a significant difference to the analysis

presented herein (ie if the authority appoints either a Conservative or a Reform representative) Clerk will adjust the Panel's decision accordingly.

2.9 Under Option A, ESCC, having proportionately more Reform councillors, would be invited to appoint the additional Reform councillor and WSCC, having proportionately more Conservative councillors, would be invited to appoint the additional Conservative councillor.

Option B:

That ESSC and WSCC both appoint a Conservative additional member.

2.10 For clarity, make-up of the resulting 18-councillor Panel, by political party, will be as below (with one vacancy, see 2.2):

Liberal Democrat	5 (4.83)
Labour	5 (3.32)
Conservative	3 (3.13)
Green	3 (3.07)
Reform	1 (2.20)

Recommendations 2, 3 and 4:

That the Panel:

2. Agrees 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; and

3. Subject to agreeing recommendations 1 and 2, agrees either Option A or Option B.

4. Agrees that the Clerk is authorised 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.

3. Resource Implications and Value for Money

3.1 For 2026/27, the Home Office grant allows for up to £920 per Panel Member for travelling expenses.

4. Risk Management Implications

4.1 The Panel must strive to be politically and geographically proportionate. Failure to adequately do so risks breaching the relevant terms of the Act.

5. Other Considerations – Equality – Crime Reduction – Human Rights

5.1 Not applicable.

Lauren McCann
Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Political Make-up of Sussex Local Authorities (23 June 2026)

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Political Make-Up of Sussex Local Authorities (June 2026)

Authority	Principal Member's Party	LD	Lab	Con	Green	Reform	AOI[2]	Brighton and Hove Ind	Arun Ind	Chichester Local Alliance	Ind Dem	WSCC Local Alliance	Burgess Hill Ind	Shoreham Beach Residents Assoc	Green Independent	Ind[1]	Vacancy	Total
Adur	Labour		17		2	6								2		2		**29**
Arun	Green	14	8	19	5	2			2						1	3		**54**
Brighton & Hove	Labour		33	5	10			2								3	1	**54**
Chichester	TBC	24		5	2					4						1		**36**
Crawley	Labour		21	4		11												**36**
East Sussex	Reform	13		3	11	22					1							**50**
Eastbourne	Lib Dem	19		8														**27**
Hastings	Green		3	2	19	6										2		**32**
Horsham	Lib Dem	26		11	9	1										1		**48**
Lewes	Green	14	8		18											1		**41**
Mid Sussex	Lib Dem	19	1	18	5								1			4		**48**
Rother	Labour	9	6	11	3	1	6									2		**38**
Wealden	Lib Dem	11	2	9	11	2										10		**45**
West Sussex	Lib Dem	23	5	11	7	23						1						**70**
Worthing	Labour	1	15	6	8	5										2		**37**
Total		**173**	**119**	**112**	**110**	**79**	**6**	**2**	**2**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**31**	**1**	**645**
Proportionality		26.82%	18.45%	17.36%	17.05%	12.25%	0.93%	0.31%	0.31%	0.62%	0.16%	0.16%	0.16%	0.31%	0.16%	4.81%	0.16%	
Seats	**16**	4.29	2.95	2.78	2.73	1.96	0.15	0.05	0.05	0.10	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.05	0.02	0.77	0.02	
Seats	**17**	4.56	3.14	2.95	2.90	2.08	0.16	0.05	0.05	0.11	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.82	0.03	
Seats	**18**	4.83	3.32	3.13	3.07	2.20	0.17	0.06	0.06	0.11	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.87	0.03	

Summary of 15 Principal Members:

Conservative	0
Liberal Democrat	5
Labour	5
Green	3
Reform	1

Notes:

Ind[1] Proportionality calculated for a group. However, since this category comprises several separate independent members, the actual proportionality is lower

AOI[2] Association of Independents

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Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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

Present:

Cllr Czolak	Brighton & Hove City Council	Cllr Warne	Hastings Borough Council
Cllr Birch	Arun District Council	Cllr Bangert	Chichester District Council
Cllr Khan	Crawley Borough Council	Cllr Ballard	Eastbourne Borough Council
Cllr Ian Hollidge	East Sussex County Council	Cllr Bob Standley	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Keene	Lewes District Council	Cllr Bayliss	Rother District Council
Cllr Williams	Wealden District Council	Cllr Ali	West Sussex County Council
Cllr Mitchell	West Sussex County Council	Cllr Cooke	Mid-Sussex District Council
Mr Napthine	Independent Co-opted Member	Mrs Scholefield	Independent Co-opted Member
Cllr Raby	Horsham District Council		

Substitutes:

Cllr Raby, Horsham District Council

Apologies were received from Cllr Baynham (Horsham District Council), Cllr Sluman (Adur District Council), Cllr Hogan (Brighton & Hove City Council) and Cllr Whorlow (Worthing Borough Council)

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

80. Declarations of Interest

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.
Cllr Baynham	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources at Horsham District Council.
Cllr Bangert	Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing at Chichester District Council.
Cllr Birch	Chair of Housing and Wellbeing Committee at Arun District Council.
Cllr Cooke	Cabinet Member for Communities at Mid-Sussex District Council.
Mrs Scholefield	A serving magistrate.
Cllr Sluman	Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing at Adur District Council.
Cllr Whorlow	Vice Chair for Adur and Worthing Community Partnership. Cabinet Member for Safety, Equalities, and Inclusion at Worthing Borough Council.
Cllr Williams	Cabinet Lead for Public Health and Asset Management at Wealden District Council.

81. Urgent Matters

81.1 With the agreement of the Chair, Mr Mark Streater delivered a statement from the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, addressing the vote of censure passed by the Panel at the previous meeting and putting forward her response and the actions she planned to take in reply (A copy of the full statement is available online).

82. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

82.1 The Panel is asked to approve the draft minutes of the previous meeting on 30 January 2026 as an accurate record.

82.2 Cllr Cooke requested that the minutes be amended to reflect her attendance at the previous meeting, and the amendment was agreed.

82.3 Resolved – that the Panel approved the minutes of the previous meeting on 30 January 2026 as an accurate record and have been signed by the Chair.

83. Panel Correspondence since the last Meeting

83.1 The Panel was asked to note the correspondence sent and received on behalf of the Panel since the previous meeting on 30 January 2026.

83.2 Resolved – that the Panel noted the correspondence sent and received since the previous meeting on 30 January 2026.

84. Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner

84.1 A summary of questions from the Panel to the Commissioner, with accompanying answers, follows:

1. Question: 'Many of the residents of Bexhill, and around the county, have been complaining about noisy vehicles disturbing and causing a nuisance. There have been issues determining who is best placed to deal with these complaints, between environmental health and the police, with a campaign championed by Boris Johnson in 2022 to tackle this issue. Is it the Commissioner's policy to encourage the police to stop this blight on our residents?'
Answer: The Commissioner explained that the aforementioned campaign was not piloted outside of London, she was not aware of the outcome, and she has not seen it rolled out anywhere else in the country. Further, she informed the Panel that the Fatal Five Unit had been rolled out in January, its remit including issues raised by the public such as vehicle noise complaints.

2. Question: 'We are talking about criminality where vehicles exceed the 80-decibel legal limit, with council environmental health officers not having the capacity to enforce, while the police do. Could this be something the police prioritise as it is causing a lot of concern for our residents?'
Answer: The Commissioner reminded members that currently, noise was still considered a civil matter, with little opportunity for the police to enforce, however she would always encourage residents to report noise concerns via Op Crackdown, the non-emergency 101, and online.

3. Question: 'In Hastings recently, there have been two deaths and a number of traffic accidents with pedestrians. Has the Commissioner noted a rise in serious traffic accidents since the end of the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and the introduction of the Fatal Five roads unit?'
Answer: The Commissioner said that she did not have the data to hand today however this could be checked via the Op Crackdown portal as they would hold some of the data.

4. Question: 'The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, Claire's Law, was launched in 2014 to provide information within 28 days that could protect someone from being a victim of an attack i.e. whether a current or ex-partner has a violent or abusive past. Is the Commissioner satisfied that Sussex Police is meeting its duties under the law?'
Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that she regularly checked Clare's Law in her performance and accountability meetings with the Chief Constable, and she would be happy to provide that information to members if requested. **ACTION: For the OSPCC to provide more information on Clare's Law and Sussex Police's performance in meeting its duties under the Law.**

5. Question: 'At the last meeting, the Commissioner said she would be applying for extra funds to cover the costs of extra policing requirements around Crowborough. Have you had any success in getting some funding from central government to offset the cost of policing so it does not fall on local residents?'
Answer: The Commissioner informed the Panel that her office was engaging with the Home Office and the process for this was ongoing.

6. Question: 'Given the turmoil in the world currently, can Sussex residents be reassured that Sussex Police has robust plans and adequate resources in place to handle a major incident?'
Answer: The Commissioner told members that the current threat was considered to be substantial, and she was reassured that Sussex Police has plans in place, assessed by the local Sussex Resilience Forum, and in liaison with the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC). She then informed members that this topic would be on the agenda for the next performance and accountability meeting with the Chief Constable.

7. Question: 'In a recent report, it was reported that 41% of crime was recorded as fraud. In Arun, residents have lost £1.6 million through fraud, with one resident losing £200,000. With a large population of elderly residents who are susceptible to this kind of crime, and with 54% of victims being recorded as 75 years-old or over, what is the Commissioner doing to hold Sussex Police to account to address this and ensure criminals are held to account?'
Answer: The Commissioner informed the Panel that Sussex Police had instigated Operation Signature, as the first of its kind in the country and now adopted by other police forces, where they target specifically those groups most at risk from fraud. The Commissioner explained that she raises this regularly, most recently at the last performance and accountability meeting on 19th February, and her office provides two fraud caseworkers via Victim Support. Finally, she informed the Panel that she was very reassured that Sussex Police is working to address this issue, as

well as the various other initiatives that have been put in place to combat fraud.

8. Question: 'How is success on this going to be monitored and measured, considering we still have this high level of crime?'
Answer: The Commissioner explained that fraud is dealt with at the national level by the City of London Police, where they collate information via their Report Fraud website, which is then disseminated down to each police force, at which point Sussex Police will assess that information, identify those most at-risk, and then make contact with those individuals under Operation Signature. The Commissioner assured the Panel that she was constantly reviewing this, and through her performance meetings with the Chief Constable.

9. Question: 'Another sort of fraud that we are seeing locally is sextortion, especially among younger people. Is there anything being done to address that and to reassure young people if they find themselves in that situation?'
Answer: The Commissioner assured members that work was ongoing, both within Sussex Police and nationally, with support for victims available via Victim Support in her office.

10. Question: 'Is the Commissioner, in her oversight role, satisfied that Sussex Police has been acting even-handedly in dealing with various issues that have arisen as a result of the Crowborough demonstrations?'
Answer: The Commissioner indicated that she was satisfied with how Sussex Police handled the various issues indicated.

84.2 A point of order was raised after a member's question, due to ongoing legal process around the motion of censure tabled at the previous meeting, and as the Commissioner and Chair were not aware of the correspondence referred to by the member, the question was withdrawn.

11. Question: 'Southbourne has the only military base in West Sussex at Baker Barracks, with a tri-service population, many of whom are or soon will be overseas. Does the Commissioner work to engage with and support the military on Thorney Island?'
Answer: The Commissioner indicated she was not aware of anything specific.

12. Question: 'On the topic of the Right Person, Right Care health initiative, whereby healthcare professionals take the lead rather than police officers in cases of mental health concerns, how does the Commissioner feel the initiative is going, is it a success, and has it reduced the number of hours officers spend dealing with those experiencing mental health issues?'
Answer: The Commissioner indicated that she had previously brought a report on this to the Panel, and while she had not been convinced that the initiative would be the solution others promised, she understood it was moving forward. The Commissioner asked that the report be sent on to interested members. **Action: to send the OSPCC's report on Right Person, Right Care to panel members.**

13. Question: 'Does the Commissioner think that the situation is better or worse now for people with mental health crises?'
Answer: The Commissioner said that she would prefer not to give an opinion off the top of her head but provide facts and data to the Panel through the report.

14. Question: 'The HMICFRS Peel Assessment report, published by the Inspectorate in July 2025, found that in addition to one 'Good' and seven 'Adequate' findings, Sussex Police required improvement at investigating crime. Is the Commissioner satisfied that sufficient progress has been made in addressing this findings?'
Answer: The Commissioner informed the Panel that they covered the full Peel report at their performance and accountability meeting in September 2025, where they looked at the recommendations made, and is available at the PCC's website for review.

15. Question: 'E-bikes seem to be picking up a certain notoriety in the press currently, following the death of an elderly man. Strategically, in Sussex, what is the current situation around the illegal upgrades that are being applied to these bikes, especially considering the difficulties the police are experiencing in enforcing the law around E-bikes?'
Answer: The Commissioner indicated that she was not aware of the current strategic local position in regard to E-bikes and that there was ongoing work at the national level.

84.3 Members commented that, during their visit to the call centre at Sussex Police HQ, they were impressed by the patience and professionalism of call handlers and expressed their wish that the Commissioner pass their remarks back to the Chief Constable. The Commissioner informed the Panel that their comments were noted and would be passed on to the Chief Constable.

85. The outcomes and organisational learning arising from the Sussex PCC's role as the review body for Schedule 3 complaints

85.1 The Commissioner introduced a report by her office. The Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Mark Streater, then presented the report to the Panel.

85.2 A summary of questions from panel members and answers follows:

1. Question: 'Under Section 5.21 General Administration, letters of dissatisfaction are sent to the Commissioner, following the outcome of police decisions being shared. What do you then do with those letters, how are they reviewed, and do you use them to hold the Chief Constable to account?'
Answer: The Commissioner explained to the Panel that her team reviews all complaints, with around 15% of complaints being upheld, and assured members that they then go back to the police to review the complaints and offer a written apology or other remedies.

Supplementary: The Chief Executive Officer further explained the complaints procedure available to Sussex residents and the right to review the investigation process by the OSPCC and indicated that they always encourage complainants to submit their letters to the OSPCC even when a formal appeals process has not been instigated. The Commissioner added that they hold regular governance and integrity meetings where any trends can be identified and addressed.

2. Question: 'On the topic of trends, does the Commissioner have any insight on current trends over the past five years? Has there been an increase in the number of complaints?'
   Answer: The Commissioner explained that they only see letters of dissatisfaction so it is difficult to assess trends, and these can vary year-to-year, and she would be concerned if no complaints were ever upheld.

3. Question: 'Is the Commissioner satisfied that the public are aware of the complaints process?'
   Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that she was sure the public were aware due to an increase in the number of complaints and reviews recently, however the percentage of complaints that were upheld has remained largely the same.

4. Question: 'Have there been any specific complaints around the use of technologies such as facial recognition and gait analysis?'
   Answer: The Commissioner explained the complaints are specifically around conduct and against individuals, not more general issues, but assured members that technology such as facial recognition is being looked at nationally. She also added that higher-level complaints tend to go to the IOPC rather than to her office.

86. Sussex Police's Progress in recruiting to maintain the Home Office's baseline headcount

86.1 The Commissioner introduced a report by her office. The Chief Finance Officer, Mr. Iain McCulloch, then presented the report to the Panel.

86.2 A summary of members' questions and answers follows:

86.3 Panel members indicated their congratulations on Sussex Police's success in recruiting more police officers and the positive effect this was having on the visibility of police officers on the streets.

1. Question: 'How successful has Sussex Police's use of apprenticeships to drive recruitment been?
   Answer: The Commissioner explained that she did not have the information to hand on apprenticeships, but her office would be

happy to share with members. **ACTION: For the OSPCC to provide more information on the successful use of apprenticeship programmes in increasing and maintaining police officer recruitment.**

2. Question: 'Is there difficulty with the PCSOs using their roles as a through-route into policing and the need to constantly backfill with PCSOs?'
   Answer: The Commissioner confirmed her pride in the work done by Sussex Police PCSOs and added it was important to keep all avenues of recruitment open, including the route from PCSO to full-time police officer.

3. Question: 'What are the current retention rates for police officers and is any planning done around age and retirement?'
   Answer: The Commissioner gave the Panel her assurance that she regularly reviews retention rates and holds the Chief Constable to account on this issue.

4. Question: 'Do we have assurance that the community safety partnership is to be retained, as it's seen as an extremely useful way of working by local councils?'
   Answer: The Commissioner explained to members that she had just written to community safety partnerships across Sussex to assure them that CSP monies for this coming year will be maintained but she could offer no guarantees for subsequent years.

87. Independent Member Term of Office

87.1 At the invitation of the Chair, the Senior Advisor to the Panel explained the proposal to members to agree to waive the constitutional term limits and role re-recruitment requirements for independent members of the Panel due to the coming abolition of Police and Crime Panels.

87.2 The Chair then called for the Panel to agree or reject the proposal.

87.3 The Panel unanimously agreed to the proposal.

88. Quarterly Report of Complaints

88.1 The Panel noted the report and that there have been no complaints received as of 3rd March 2026.

89. Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates

89.1 The Chair noted the next meeting of the Panel will take place on Thursday 2nd July 2026, at 10:30am at County Hall, Lewes.

Future meeting dates have been proposed as:

- 9th October 2026
- 29th January 2027
- 22nd February 2027 (Provisional)
- 12th March 2027

The meeting ended at 11.20 am

Chairman

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SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME PANEL

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

2 July 2026

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2025/26

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Recommendations

That the Panel:

1. Reviews, puts questions to the Commissioner, and makes recommendations on the Annual Report and draft Financial Outturn Report for 2025/26

1. **Background**

1.1 In accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Commissioner must provide the Panel with their Annual Report, and the Panel must question the Commissioner and review it.

1.2 Following the meeting, the Panel must make and publish a report to the Commissioner. The Commissioner must respond to the report and publish the response.

2. **Discussion**

2.1 The applicable Police and Crime Plan in place for the reporting period is that for 2024/28, which can be found here: https://tinyurl.com/2uu7vsbs

2.2 The three objectives (termed Public Priorities) set out in the Plan are:

- Prevent crime and support victims and witnesses
- Investigate crime and bring offenders to justice
- Improve trust in policing and build public confidence

2.3 The content and structure of the Annual Report should be determined on the basis of local preferences and need, but might include:

- How the PCC has exercised and fulfilled their statutory duties and functions in each financial year

- The progress that has been made in the year in meeting the objectives in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan (see 2.2)
- End-of-year performance against any targets set, including exception reporting on any areas in which performance has substantially fallen short of, or exceeded, expectations
- Performance outcomes in relation to specific crime, community safety or criminal justice grants or feedback on delivery at a geographical area or departmental level
- End-of-year financial positions, including how resources have been allocated, details of any significant under or overspend and the decisions made with regard to council tax precept
- Aims and aspirations for the following year, based on any re-evaluation of local need.

2.4 Following the meeting, a report by the Panel will be prepared in consultation with the Chairman, and dispatched and published within two working days.

Lauren McCann
Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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Appendices:

Appendix A – OSPCC Covering Report for the Commissioner's Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2025/26

Appendix B **-** Annual Report 2025/26

Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

To:	The Sussex Police & Crime Panel.
From:	The Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner.
Subject:	The Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner's Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2025/26.
Date:	2 July 2026.
Recommendation:	That the Sussex Police & Crime Panel note the report.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on performance against the three Public Priorities set out in the Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2024/28 and the policing and crime objectives contained within for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

1.2 The report also sets out the draft financial outturn position for 2025/26, ahead of the audited accounts being published.

2.0 Annual Report 2025/26

2.1 The Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) has a statutory duty to produce an Annual Report as set out in Chapter 3 – Section 12(1) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

2.2 The Act prescribes that the content of the Annual Report should include:

(a) the exercise of the elected local policing body's functions in each financial year; and
(b) the progress which has been made in the financial year in meeting the policing and crime objectives in the body's Police & Crime Plan.

3.0 Achievements, areas of work and progress made in 2025/26

3.1 The achievements, areas of work and progress made by the PCC and her office in 2025/26 are summarised in the Annual Report under each of the Public Priorities contained within the plan, as follows:

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

3.2 The draft financial outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2026 is also included within the report, ahead of the audited accounts being published.

Mark Streater
Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer
Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

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Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2025/26

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1. Introduction

** INTRODUCTION TO FOLLOW **

Katy Bourne OBE
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

2. Progress Made Against Public Priorities

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

2.1.1 Maintain high quality and effective support services to safeguard victims and witnesses in Sussex

Quality victim support services

Range of services commissioned to support victims – The PCC has a statutory responsibility to provide victim support services in Sussex and continued to commission a range of services to support victims throughout the county.

In 2025/26, almost 55,000 victims were referred to these commissioned support services in Sussex, with over 20,000 individuals representing new cases (not known to the service already) and requiring one-to-one support.

As one of the commissioned support services, Victim Support holds the contract for providing multi-crime support in Sussex. During 2025/26, Victim Support received almost 30,000 referrals and contacted nearly 15,000 of the victims of crime referred to the commissioned services to offer them support following referrals.

Of those victims contacted, over 5,000 individuals engaged with the service and more than 3,000 victims are still receiving ongoing emotional support for what they have experienced. Each of the other victims were referred to local specialist service providers to receive enhanced support, including victims of domestic abuse, stalking and sexual violence.

To ensure that the services commissioned meet the needs of victims, the PCC constantly listens to the feedback provided by victims, survivors and partners. During 2025/26, an independent needs assessment was commissioned by the PCC to understand better the needs of adult survivors of sexual violence (16 years of age+).

The Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner has also worked closely with the Pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Board to develop a shared strategy for Sussex. As a result, the PCC has already commissioned three new support services which commenced in April 2026, with further support services planned for 2026/27.

INFOGRAPHIC: Almost 30,000 referrals received and more than 15,000 victims contacted

Maintained standards through the Safe Space Sussex Funding Network – The PCC continued to invest in funding projects to support some of the most vulnerable victims as part of an ongoing commitment to develop a diverse landscape of support services in Sussex.

During 2025/26, £5.2million was invested into victim support services for victims in Sussex. This included the additional provision of almost £92,000 to all victim services across Sussex to assist them with meeting the increased National Insurance contributions (+2%) introduced by the Government and the ongoing increases to the cost of living.

There are currently 42 'approved' providers of specialist support services within the Funding Network who have each been able to demonstrate the high levels of quality standards and assurance required. Further information about the Funding Network can be viewed through the following link: www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/apply-for-funding/safe-space-sussex-funding-network/

INFOGRAPHIC 1: £5.2m invested in victim support services in Sussex
INFOGRAPHIC 2: 42 approved providers of specialist support services

Enhancements to the Safe Space Sussex online directory – The PCC has continued to develop and enhance Safe Space Sussex – the online directory of victim support services available throughout Sussex – to enable victims to find the most relevant support service through a safe and confidential route.

Safe Space Sussex provides a mechanism for Sussex residents to seek help and guidance and supports the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime which entitles all victims to receive appropriate support, regardless of whether they choose to report anything to the police.

Safe Space Sussex website – which hosts the information about the individual locations and provides directions to these – was accessed almost 45,000 times. The most visited pages on the site included the search function to find a service, information about different types of crime and specific pages for support service providers.

INFOGRAPHIC: Almost 45,000 visitors to Safe Space Sussex

2.1.2 Tackle violence against women and girls to make them feel safer in public spaces

Violence against women and girls

Coordinated the activity of the Sussex Criminal Justice Board – The PCC continued to chair the Sussex Criminal Justice Board (SCJB) to coordinate the activity of local agencies in providing an efficient and effective criminal justice system for Sussex.

The purpose of the SCJB is to provide a framework which brings together strategic leaders from across the criminal justice system with the intention of improving the experience of victims and witnesses of crime in Sussex, alongside increasing the confidence of members of the public in the criminal justice processes that support this.

The SCJB remains focused on improving conviction rates across the criminal justice system, with a specific focus on improving the timeliness of the police investigations into rape and the provision of enhanced support for victims of domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault.

In 2023/24, all 43 police forces in England and Wales signed up to Operation Soteria – a transformational approach between the police and Crown Prosecution Service to improve outcomes for rape and sexual offence cases. As one of the 14 pathfinder forces to join the expansion programme for Operation Soteria Bluestone (in October 2022), Sussex Police was well-positioned to embed the national operating model developed by the programme to ensure that a more consistent approach exists to all rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO) investigations which are victim-centred, suspect-focused and context-led, regardless of the police force area.

In May 2025, Sussex Police established a new Bluestone Team for RASSO investigations, with five policing hubs positioned across the county in Brighton, Crawley, Eastbourne, Hastings and Littlehampton. These dedicated investigators are focused on bringing offenders to justice, ensuring that the voices of victims are heard and that they are supported throughout the criminal justice process.

Following its implementation, the team recorded a 53% increase in the number of solved outcomes for rape (+65 offences) and a 27% increase in solved outcomes for serious sexual offences (+125 offences) with more offenders brought to justice for their actions. This revised approach to RASSO has also contributed towards reductions in the average length of time taken to complete these investigations, some of which are recognised to be incredibly complex. Further improvements in performance are anticipated to be realised by the Bluestone Team during 2026/27.

The PCC will continue to monitor Sussex Police performance in this important area through the SCJB and her monthly webcast Performance & Accountability Meetings.

Rape and serious sexual offences

Continued investment in rape, sexual violence and exploitation – During 2025/26, the PCC provided funding to 13 organisations throughout Sussex to assist victims and survivors with their recoveries from rape, sexual violence and exploitation.

Survivors' Network [HYPERLINK] is responsible for delivering the advice and counselling service provided for survivors of rape, sexual violence and abuse across Sussex. This is a pan-Sussex service and is co-commissioned with the three local authorities (Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council), with the PCC retaining overall responsibility as the lead commissioner.

During 2025/26, Survivors' Network received over 3,500 new referrals and during the year supported more than 4,500 survivors. The provision of a Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ChISVA) also ensured that nearly 800 children, young people and their families received enhanced support throughout police investigations, court appearances and beyond to assist them in their recoveries.

The PCC also funded several other organisations and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) who support victims and survivors of rape, sexual abuse and exploitation across the year. These organisations collectively received more than 3,300 referrals during 2025/26, with support provided to over 2,300 of these victims and survivors.

INFOGRAPHIC: More than 4,500 adult victims of rape, sexual abuse and exploitation and almost 800 children and young people supported

2.1.3 Support community safety partners to deliver activities which prevent and reduce crime and divert young people from offending

Partnership activity to reduce crime

Funding protected for Community Safety Partnerships – In 2025/26, the PCC protected community safety funding in Sussex for the 13th consecutive year and allocated £1.215million to Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council and each of the 12 District and Borough Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). In total, the PCC has made more than £15.8million available to CSPs in Sussex since 2013/14.

The PCC continues to support fully the CSPs in addressing crime and anti-social behaviour at a district level, respond dynamically to emerging threats and issues, and implement local activity in line with their strategic objectives as required. Many of the CSPs continued to explore opportunities to work more collaboratively during the year and it is evident that strong relationships exist with wider partnership members and local communities.

During 2025/26, Sussex Police and the CSPs worked together to deliver the 'Safer Streets Summer Initiative' and 'Winter of Action' which were aimed at reducing crime in town centres through increased high visibility patrols and engagement with community safety and Business Crime Reduction Partnerships. These collective campaigns contributed towards the delivery of an additional 10,000 patrols and resulted in more than 480 arrests being made.

INFOGRAPHIC: £1.215m in community safety funding allocated throughout Sussex.

LOOKING AHEAD: The PCC has made a further commitment to protect community safety funding again in 2026/27.

Further funding awarded through the Safer in Sussex Community Fund – The PCC allocated a further £125,218 from her Safer in Sussex Community Fund (SiSCF) in 2025/26 to support 33 local projects across Sussex to tackle crime and improve community safety (representing average funding of £3,794 per project).

The SiSCF provides financial support (grant awards up to £5,000) to a diverse range of local organisations and community projects that aim to reduce crime and improve community safety.

In total, £2.425million has been allocated to support 624 community projects since the SiSCF was created. This has included support for young and older people, homelessness, scams and fraud awareness, and businesses affected by crime. A list of each of the successful applications to the SiSCF can be viewed through the following link: https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/apply-for-funding/

INFOGRAPHIC: £2.425m allocated to support 624 community projects

Ongoing support for the Sussex Restorative Justice Partnership – The Sussex Restorative Justice Partnership [HYPERLINK] (SRJP) continued to provide ongoing support to victims of crime seeking restitution, rather than a criminal justice outcome, by confronting perpetrators and describing the impact of the crime upon them and their families.

Restorative justice brings those harmed by crime and those responsible for the harm into communication with each other, enabling all parties affected by an incident to find a positive way forward and repair the harm caused. The SRJP comprises more than 20 statutory and voluntary sector organisations across Sussex and continues to be recognised as good practice nationally.

The PCC established the SRJP in 2014 and remains committed to embedding restorative justice and delivering restorative practice within Sussex Police and the wider partnership. The service has a dedicated Services Delivery Manager to ensure that the restorative practice in Sussex supports the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, processes are streamlined to make it easier for partners and volunteers to access and that best practice is achieved.

The PCC has continued to work with Sussex Police to develop the range of out-of-court-disposal options available in Sussex to divert individuals away from the criminal justice system by considering alternative approaches to prosecution. This included referrals to a range of services that tackle substance misuse, anger management and hate crime, together with activities focused on acquisitive crime, fraud, fire safety and wildlife crime.

Many perpetrators were also offered the opportunity to attend victim awareness programmes supported by the CSPs. The Sussex Police Restorative Services Team has also continued to support the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner with the delivery of an Immediate Justice programme as a complementary out-of-court-disposal (see 'Continued delivery of an Immediate Justice pilot programme' for more information).

The SRJP continues to support the disposals delivered through the Community Remedy process, with 281 cases resolved through this option during the year – this represented a 32% reduction in cases compared to 2024/25. In addition, 248 referrals were made to the SRJP and taken forward by the Restorative Services Team in Sussex during 2025/26, with a further 727 referrals also received through the Youth Offending Service (YOS).

The core delivery team within Sussex Police delivered 153 restorative outcomes throughout the financial year, with the YOS contributing a further 193 outcomes. Across the SRJP, there were seven direct and 146 indirect outcomes delivered through shuttle mediation and the exchange of letters between victims and offenders – with satisfaction levels remaining at 100% throughout.

INFOGRAPHIC: 248 referrals made to the Sussex Restorative Justice Partnership

Continued delivery of the Safe Space Sussex Scheme – The PCC has continued to deliver a Safe Space Sussex Scheme [HYPERLINK] to allow members of the public to locate designated safe spaces near to their current location should they feel unsafe. The scheme was launched in March 2022 using funding secured from the Home Office Science, Technology and Research (STAR) Fund.

There are currently more than 280 Safe Space locations throughout Sussex where individuals can access trained support, if they are feeling vulnerable. This represented a 27% increase from the 220 safe space locations available during 2024/25 (+60). Further information can be viewed through the following link:
https://www.safespacesussex.org.uk/

INFOGRAPHIC: More than 280 Safe Space locations in Sussex

2.1.4 Develop a partnership response to tackle and prevent perpetrator behaviour through offender programmes and interventions, to reduce repeat victimisation and reoffending

Perpetrator intervention

Maintained Perpetrator Programmes – In 2025/2026, the PCC successfully secured further funding of £677,808 from the Home Office Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Fund to maintain the prevention and perpetrator programmes previously established in Sussex across the performance plan year.

[SUBHEADING] **Complex Domestic Abuse and Stalking Unit –** The Complex Domestic Abuse and Stalking Unit (CDASU) continued to provide tailored interventions for persistent perpetrators of domestic abuse and stalking offences with multiple and complex needs by supporting them to recognise and address their abusive behaviours.

The CDASU (established in 2021/22) work with a cohort of the most active and high-harm domestic abuse perpetrators in Sussex. The multi-agency team comprises police offender managers, independent domestic violence advisors, substance misuse workers and a mental health worker (psychotherapist).

The unit worked with 139 perpetrators during 2025/26. The programme is voluntary and, should any of the individuals identified for participation decide not to engage, Sussex Police will continue to use the robust disruption opportunities available to them.

[SUBHEADING] **High Harm Perpetrator Programme –** The programme provides 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). During 2025/26, the high harm perpetrator programme worked with 139 complex offenders (both domestic abuse and stalking) with COBI delivered to 21 perpetrators across 336 sessions throughout the same 12-month period.

[SUBHEADING] **Stalking Clinic and Stalking Protection Orders –** The Stalking Clinic comprises multi-agency representatives from Sussex Police, Crown Prosecution Service, Probation Service and Veritas Justice Stalking Advocacy Service, alongside specialist information technology teams for cyberstalking. The clinic meets monthly to assess and provide specialist advice to officers investigating high-risk cases of stalking.

During 2025/26, the Stalking Clinic discussed 56 cases in Sussex (+8% from 2024/25). The continuation of a Stalking Protection Order (SPO) Coordinator Role within the clinic also contributed to almost 60 successful applications for SPOs being granted across the year, helping to further safeguard victims.

2.1.5 Prevent and support individuals and businesses from becoming victims of fraud and cyber-crime

Fraud and cyber crime

Maintained the Digital Investigation Support Unit – In 2025/26, Sussex Police continued to maintain a Digital Investigation Support Unit (DISU) to support investigations where physical and/or online digital evidence is involved.

The DISU – established following investment from the precept in 2021/22 – is a specialist support function (delivered in partnership with Surrey Police) which provides digital, technical and investigative assistance to support frontline officers, rather than leading on investigations. Based at locations in Lewes and Woking, the DISU comprises 12 police officers and staff across three distinct areas of work: digital media investigations, internet intelligence and investigation, and digital training.

Throughout the year, the DISU received 369 taskings for investigation support in Sussex, employing advanced and innovative tactics to identify offenders and tackle a range of criminality, including homicides, serious and organised crime, stalking and harassment (both physical and online) and sextortion. This represented a 58% increase in taskings from 2024/25 (234) and highlights the greater number of criminal offences (and activity) that take place across multiple threat areas which now include a digital element.

The unit also supported investigations to locate high-risk missing persons, vulnerable children and young people and individuals being actively sought by law enforcement agencies, both in the United Kingdom and abroad.

Continued investment in dedicated fraud caseworkers – As one of the commissioned support services, Victim Support holds the contract for providing multi-crime support in Sussex which includes the provision of dedicated fraud caseworkers to tackle the financial, physical, psychological and sexual abuse of older people. This organisation provides one-to-one tailored support to those identified as being most vulnerable to repeat fraud – a demographic that includes older people.

This approach supports and raises awareness of Operation Signature – the nationally adopted Sussex Police campaign to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud – to recognise victims of all types of fraud as victims of crime and to provide preventative measures to support and protect them from further targeting.

The Sussex fraud caseworkers received more than 1,269 referrals during the year and supported 1,162 victims (92%), many of whom had experienced substantial financial loss and have additional needs – such as physical frailties and adult social care issues – which make them more vulnerable to becoming repeat victims.

During 2025/26, the fraud caseworkers supported these individuals to recover circa £125,000 from banking institutions across the financial year. In total, more than £2.78million has been recovered by the caseworkers for all victims of fraud over the past three years since 2023/24.

INFOGRAPHIC 1: Sussex Fraud Caseworkers supported 1,162 victims
INFOGRAPHIC 2: More than £2.78m recovered from banking institutions on behalf of fraud victims

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

2.2.1 Improve the standard and effectiveness of investigations

Investigations and positive outcomes

Continued investment in Body Worn Video – The PCC has continued to invest in the use of Body Worn Video (BWV) technology to ensure that all frontline officers and staff are equipped with personal-issue cameras when they are deployed. The BWV cameras are an established way of capturing and securing real-time evidence in an easy to use and accessible digital format.

Sussex Police maintain circa 1,900 cameras in police stations throughout the Force. A centralised booking system is used for the cameras to ensure that the equipment is fully charged and functional before these devices are issued to individual officers and staff at the point of deployment. The platform has had numerous updates across the performance plan year, including the introduction of new features and enhanced support capabilities.

During 2025/26, Sussex Police continued to maximise the investment made in the BWV platform, including the trial of a new assisted redaction feature which enables officers to complete any editing and/or redaction required to digitalise footage for Crown Prosecution Service and court submissions in a timelier and more effective manner. Once fully implemented, this enhancement will provide investigating officers with a comprehensive mechanism to assist with preparing and building case files for digital video exhibits.

LOOKING AHEAD: During 2026/27, the Force will continue to seek to maximise the benefits of BWV by ensuring that all frontline officers and staff routinely deploy this technology and that these devices are consistently activated in all appropriate operational situations. Alongside this, a rollout of assisted video redaction software is also anticipated to be delivered across the year.

Planned Digital Evidence Management System Upload Kiosks Remediation Project – In January 2025, Sussex Police and Surrey Police approved plans to refresh the Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) upload kiosks used across both forces to address known issues with existing devices.

The DEMS Upload Kiosks Remediation Project will modernise these kiosks across the police estate to improve the secure and effective handling of CCTV footage and other digital media submitted by members of the public, businesses and partner organisations (including doorbell, mobile phone and/or dashcam footage captured). The solution replaces ageing technology with modern, cloud-managed devices which automatically ingest digital media materials into the system for evidential consideration and will resolve long-standing access issues, whilst simultaneously retaining a familiar process for frontline officers and staff.

During 2025/26, the new technical solution was designed, built and tested ahead of device procurement and implementation. Once deployed, the kiosks will deliver improved reliability and supportability, enhanced security safeguards for handling digital evidence and simplified device management. This will also enable the removal of technology that is now out of date (but still operational) and the resultant cost and effort of continually maintaining, patching and working around these systems instead of fully upgrading them, supporting more efficient investigations and reducing risks in the management of digital evidence.

LOOKING AHEAD: The new kiosks will be implemented across the Sussex Police (and Surrey Police) estate as part of a phased rollout between April and July 2026 to enable both forces to store, analyse, prepare and share all types of digital evidence and assets related to investigations and cases more efficiently and effectively.

2.2.2 Optimise the positive outcomes and experience delivered for victims of crime

Positive outcomes and experience

Introduction of the Sussex Police Portal – In March 2025, the Force introduced the Sussex Police Portal – a new customer relationship management platform which enables victims of crime to receive digital updates about the progress of the ongoing investigations into the offence(s) reported, helping to improve the police response and the quality of the victim support provided.

The platform provides an additional mechanism to support Sussex Police to engage and communicate with victims of crime by enabling individuals to receive direct updates on the progress made with their investigations (e.g. status of an investigation, whether an arrest has been made, etc), alongside the ability to message the police officer in charge of a case, without having to call the non-emergency number to request an update and/or to provide any additional information required.

Throughout the year, the Portal was extended to include all non-serious crimes to utilise the full potential of the system. This platform can now be used for victims of qualifying domestic abuse flagged occurrences and those individuals flagged as vulnerable after additional safeguarding was developed and introduced, including bespoke initial messaging, ability for officers to immediately opt victims out of messaging and quick exit buttons from the Sussex Police Portal. Two-factor authentication was also enabled for all users as an extra layer of security across the year.

The messaging used across the Force was continually reviewed, updated and developed throughout the year to provide a better service for victims of crime. This included creating additional messaging for victims of burglary offences which provides them with additional support and advice, alongside the ability for victims of crime to submit a victim needs assessment via the Portal which enables the police to assess the level of emotional, practical and safety support required.

During 2025/26, over 165,000 automated messages were sent to more than 23,000 different victims of crime, with 4,356 accounts created to since the system was introduced (31 March 2026) which represents 32% of all eligible individuals. There were also more than 2,500 messages sent to the officer in charge, with more than 100,000 messages delivered to victims, comprising update notifications about the cases and other direct messages from the officers leading the investigations.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, the Force will expand further the different types of crimes included within the Sussex Police Portal to maximise the effectiveness of this platform.

Burglary

Risk of being burgled continues to remain low – The PCC and Sussex Police have continued to raise awareness of the significant impact that burglaries can have on victims, by encouraging members of the public to protect their homes from the threat of intruders and detecting more of these crimes by proactively targeting the offenders responsible.

There was a 12% reduction in the number of residential burglaries recorded in Sussex in 2025/26. This equated to 375 fewer burglary crimes recorded compared to the 3,213 offences in the previous year, with these reductions apparent across each of the three policing divisions.

Of the total burglaries recorded, there was also a 15% reduction in the number of non-residential burglaries (including business premises) across the same period. These recorded offences reduced from 1,202 to 1,003 offences – a reduction of 325 non-residential burglaries compared to 2024/25. Again, these reductions were apparent across each of the three divisions.

The risk of being burgled in Sussex continues to remain low, with the Force positioned 13th lowest out of 43 police force areas in England and Wales and second in their most similar group (MSG) of eight police forces, in terms of the risk of burglary per 1,000 population (March 2026). Operation Magpie – the dedicated Force response to burglary crimes – delivers crime prevention initiatives throughout the year to ensure that the risk of crime remains low.

Sussex recorded a successful outcome rate of 8.9% for all burglary offences in Sussex during 2025/26. This equated to nine more burglary crimes solved compared to the 425 offences solved the year before (7.3%), with these increases again apparent across each of the three policing divisions.

The low solved rate was recognised to be consistent with the trends recorded by all police forces in England and Wales, with the absence of available witnesses, CCTV footage and/or forensic evidence attributed to the difficulties and challenges in solving these crimes. Sussex Police was positioned 32nd out of 43 police forces, and sixth within their MSG, in terms of the successful outcome rate for burglary crimes (March 2026).

LOOKING AHEAD: Burglary continues to remain an important area of policing for Sussex Police to improve on during 2026/27 and beyond.

2.2.3 Reduce homicide, serious violence and knife crime in Sussex

Homicide, serious violence and knife crime

Consistently low homicides recorded – The PCC has continued to support all available measures introduced by police and partners to reduce the number of people killed by homicide in Sussex.

The number of recorded homicides in Sussex remained consistently low in 2025/26, with eight homicides recorded across the year. This was one fewer homicide recorded compared to 2024/25 (9) and two fewer homicides recorded compared to 2023/24 (11).

More than £2.919m funding secured to tackle serious violence – The PCC was successful in securing funding worth more than £2.919million during 2025/26 to tackle serious violence in Sussex, including:

[SUBHEADING] **Hotspot Response Funding of £1.436m secured** – During 2025/26, the Home Office continued to combine the existing serious violence funding streams into a single Hotspot Response Fund across the year to tackle ASB and serious violence in the highest demand locations after recognising the crossover that exists between both areas of criminality.

Sussex Police was allocated funding of £1.436million to deliver this targeted 'hotspot' policing and problem-solving activity across the year. This included conducting high-visibility patrols and engagement activities in locations where knife crime, serious violence and ASB was most concentrated. These funds also supported proactive police deployments, insight work (to understand better the root causes of the problems relating to serious violence in Sussex) and increased support for investigations activity to ensure crime reports were progressed to positive outcomes. Alongside the high-visibility policing, problem-solving work was also undertaken to tackle the causes and drivers of serious violence in these locations.

During 2025/26, the funding delivered:

- Over 10,000 hours of high-visibility police patrols (equivalent to more than 1,250 days of policing in 'hotspot' locations)
- Engagement with circa 86,000 individuals and local businesses
- Almost 500 stop and searches undertaken and over 490 arrests made
- The Night Safety Marshals also delivered more than 19,000 hours of activity within high-harm areas, recording engagement at over 3,200 incidents

INFOGRAPHIC 1: £1.436m to support enforcement activity in Sussex
INFOGRAPHIC 2: Almost 500 stop and searches undertaken and over 490 arrests made

[SUBHEADING] **Maintained support for the Violence Reduction Unit –** The PCC secured a further £1.047million from the Home Office to continue to maintain and support violence reduction throughout the county across the year.

The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in Sussex comprises a Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) which implemented a hybrid model of delivery during 2025/26 following a comprehensive review. The pan-Sussex VRP team is based within Sussex Police and is supported by local partnerships based within each of the three local authorities (Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex).

The Sussex VRP was established in 2019/20 to provide the leadership and strategic coordination around the local response to serious violence. The partnership brings together specialists from the police, local government, health, probation services and community organisations to tackle serious violence and the underlying causes of violent crime. The local authorities and third-sector providers are responsible for delivering the commissioned interventions in this area to reduce the risks to individuals and communities throughout Sussex.

The Sussex VRP defines serious violence as crime types that cause or are intended to cause serious injury, covering homicide, knife crime (including knife possession), personal robbery and gun crime, where these occur in a public place. The partnership focuses on activity that seeks to prevent serious violence and building connectivity between aligned workstreams such as domestic abuse, exploitation and violence against women and girls. This includes understanding and addressing the needs of both victims and perpetrators of serious violence.

There was a 24% increase in serious violence crimes (public place and non-domestic) recorded in Sussex during 2025/26 which equated to 460 more serious violent crimes compared to the 1,878 offences recorded in 2024/25. This comprised reductions recorded for knife crime offences (-24% and 147 fewer offences) and grievous bodily harm and wounding (-10% and 69 fewer offences), with a large increase recorded for robbery (57% and 589 more offences) across the performance plan year. This increase was largely due to the Home Office Counting Rules changing the definition of robbery relating to business property in April 2025.

There was an 8% reduction in the number of possession of weapons offences recorded in Sussex across the financial year (public place and non-domestic), which equated to 121 fewer offences in comparison to the 1,424 recorded in 2024/25. This comprised reductions recorded for possession of bladed and/or sharp instruments (-3% and 22 fewer offences) and possession of firearms (-16% and 16 fewer offences) across the same period.

During 2025/26, there was a 19% increase in serious violence recorded in Sussex (and 376 more offences) when compared to the baseline figures before VRP funded activity was fully established (December 2019), although this did include seven fewer public place and non-domestic-related homicides recorded across the year in comparison to the baseline.

The risk of 'violence against the person' in Sussex continues to remain low, with the Force positioned 31st out of 43 police force areas in England and Wales, and sixth in their MSG, in terms of the risk of violence per 1,000 population.

Early intervention and preventative work are recognised to be fundamental to violence reduction. Throughout the year, Sussex Police continued to work with partners to deter young people away from serious violence and knife crime. During 2025/26, more than 4,500 children and young people and over 100 individuals (aged 25 years old and over) engaged in intervention activity across Sussex, with training provided to circa 150 professionals across the same period.

LOOKING AHEAD: The current funding for the VRP remains in place until the end of March 2027. This will enable Sussex Police and partners to continue the work to tackle serious violence and to reduce further the risks to individuals and communities throughout Sussex.

INFOGRAPHIC: £1.047m to maintain a Violence Reduction Partnership

[SUBHEADING] **Further £269,749 secured to deliver the Serious Violence Duty –** The PCC also secured a further £269,749 from the Home Office in 2025/26 to assist Sussex Police and partners with delivering the Serious Violence Duty locally. This is in addition to the funding received across 2023/24 (£301,198) and 2024/25 (£269,749) to implement the duty previously.

This duty was introduced nationally to ensure that all relevant services and responsible authorities throughout Sussex work together to share information and collaborate on interventions to prevent and reduce serious crimes in local communities. The Serious Violence Reduction Steering Group amalgamated into the Violence Reduction Executive Board across the year and meets regularly to oversee the work of Sussex Police and partners in this important area.

INFOGRAPHIC: £269,749 secured to deliver the Serious Violence Duty

[SUBHEADING] **£167,700 secured for a Young Futures Prevention Panel Pilot –** In 2025/26, the PCC secured £167,700 from the Home Office to deliver a Young Futures Prevention Panel (YFPP) pilot in West Sussex.

As one of 20 police force areas in England and Wales with a Violence Reduction Unit (see 'Maintained support for the Violence Reduction Unit' for more information), Sussex was asked to pilot a YFPP within the performance plan year in line with the Home Office Young Futures Programme.

The role of the YFPPs is to drive multi-agency partnership working to identify children and young people (between 8 – 17 years) at an escalating risk of being drawn into crime and anti-social behaviour at an earlier stage. Once identified, this cohort are provided with access to local support services and interventions (both universal and targeted) in a more systematic way to divert them away from offending behaviour and reduce the harm caused to individuals and local communities.

The YFPP pilot was established in West Sussex in September 2025 to identify 'at risk' children and young people through a series of referral pathways. The panel consists of statutory and non-statutory partners and meets bi-monthly to consider each child and young person and determine what support is required and who is best-placed to provide it, using a consent-based model.

Following its launch, 178 young people were referred to the panel across the trial period to 31 March 2026. Of these, 85 individuals met the criteria to receive active referrals (48%).

LOOKING AHEAD: The pilot will continue in West Sussex across 2026/27, albeit with no additional funding made available after the Home Office incorporated this into the Violence Reduction Partnership grant for the year, ahead of the anticipated national rollout of the YFPPs across England and Wales in 2027/28.

INFOGRAPHIC: £167,700 secured for a Young Futures Prevention Panel Pilot

£594,909 secured through the Knife Crime Concentration Fund – In March 2026, the PCC successfully obtained a further £594,909 from the Home Office through the Knife Crime Concentration Fund (KCCF) to halve knife crime in England and Wales within a decade.

The funding will be used to deliver intensive, problem-solving activity in four targeted, high-harm locations across Sussex to reduce knife crime – two in Brighton and one each in Eastbourne and Crawley. This enhanced and targeted policing activity will be delivered across 2026/27 and will be monitored by the PCC at her monthly webcast Performance & Accountability Meetings.

INFOGRAPHIC: £594,909 secured through the Knife Crime Concentration Fund

2.2.4 Deliver enforcement activity to target and disrupt serious organised crime gangs and high-impact crimes

Drugs and county lines

Investment in a dedicated County Lines Team – The PCC continued to ensure that the Chief Constable has the resources required to tackle and disrupt the organised crime groups responsible for county lines drug gang activity in Sussex effectively.

A dedicated County Lines Team – known as Centurion – was established in Sussex (and Surrey) during 2020/21 to target individuals operating county drug lines, working collaboratively with other police forces, to arrest and convict those responsible, prevent and detect the serious violence that is associated with this criminality, and safeguard exploited and vulnerable individuals including juveniles.

Sussex Police has also continued to work closely with and provide support to the Metropolitan Police Service to target offenders and offending behaviour impacting communities in Sussex through Operation Orochi – to target and disrupt serious organised criminals who perpetrate county drug line supply into Sussex.

This collaborative approach enables the swift sharing of intelligence, early identification of communication lines presenting the greatest risk, and prompt intervention to target those dealing in controlled substances. This response aims to bring offenders to justice, whilst safeguarding vulnerable persons and those being exploited by this crime type. During 2025/26, the team successfully disrupted or dismantled almost 80 county drug lines known to be operating across Sussex, securing over 200 charges relating to drugs and/or weapon-related offences.

The Neighbourhood Policing Teams within each policing district in Sussex undertake regular visits to identified properties to safeguard and support vulnerable adults and tackle 'cuckooing' – a term used to describe the action of organised crime groups, gangs or other criminals taking over the property of a vulnerable adult with the sole purpose of using it for criminal activity.

It is recognised that children and young people can be forced into criminality (including drug dealing, street robbery, serious violence, burglary and vehicle theft) through psychological coercion and grooming. The Force are aware of the inherent challenges associated with identifying and safeguarding those most at risk and the importance of tackling this effectively through the policing response provided. This is because the crime, by its very nature, is often hidden, with victims unable to recognise and/or report the harm to which they are subject.

Sussex Police has taken a multi-layered approach to overcome these challenges at a strategic, tactical and operational level and continues to invest in a Force Exploitation Team which supports the police and partner response to all forms of exploitation, including drugs and county lines. There is one Force Exploitation Manager post and three Exploitation Coordinator posts within the team (all police staff), with one coordinator based in each of the three policing divisions in Sussex responsible for leading on a specific area of exploitation and for providing tactical advice to any officers and staff who may require further information and/or assistance.

Sussex Police has sought to improve police officer and staff recognition of exploitation, improve the effectiveness of the policing response provided, and to adopt any learning, tactics and best practice identified locally, regionally and nationally to tackle county lines drug supply and activity. Technology is now being used to support operational policing in this area, with guidance developed around a range of exploitation-related scenarios that is now accessible to police officers via their handheld mobile data terminals.

The Force has also worked with partner agencies to raise awareness of this type of criminality and share information more effectively to strengthen the response provided to victims and survivors. Sussex Police has created multiple dashboards to identify those individuals most at risk of exploitation and those suspected of exploiting others, with a view to sharing this information with partners to develop further the collective response in this area and protect better the communities of Sussex. These analytical tools and products are used to support and inform police and partner activity in this area through multi-agency Tactical Tasking and Coordination Groups which manage intelligence, identify crime trends and ensure that resources are deployed effectively.

The County Lines Team also provide specialist support around the location and recovery of missing children who are linked to exploitation and county drug lines and recognised to be at an increased risk of harm.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, the Crime and Policing Act will introduce a new criminal offence to tackle the practice known as 'cuckooing', whereby criminals take control over the home of another person to use it for criminal activity. Ahead of its introduction, Sussex Police is providing enhanced training to all police officers within the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Neighbourhood Response Teams around this practice.

Maintained drug intervention funding – The PCC continued to maintain drug intervention funding in Sussex at £312,948 during 2025/26. This represented the 13th consecutive year that this funding has been maintained locally, despite continued reductions in community safety grant funding from central Government. In total, the PCC has made more than £4.068million available for drug interventions in Sussex across this period.

In 2024/25, each local authority area within Sussex formed a Combatting Drugs Partnership and has worked with key partners to develop strategic plans to help reduce the supply and demand for drugs and to deliver a high-quality treatment and recovery system. The partnerships meet regularly and have defined aims and objectives, underpinned by action plans. There is a clear understanding of service provision in their areas and some delivery partners working across local authority boundaries continue to support countywide best practice.

The work of these partnerships continues to be underpinned by the drug strategy developed by the (previous) Government – 'From Harm to Hope' – which is a 10-year plan to cut crime and save lives by reducing the supply and demand for drugs and delivering a high-quality treatment and recovery system.

Throughout the year, the PCC continued to work closely with these partnerships to support delivery of those strategic plans because of the strong links between drug use and crime. The partnerships have also recognised the need for alcohol dependency, and its wider related harms, to be included within this area of work.

LOOKING AHEAD: The PCC will maintain drug intervention funding for Sussex at the same level in 2026/27.

Maintained the Specialist Enforcement Unit and Tactical Enforcement Units – The PCC has continued to provide the Chief Constable with resources to reinforce the local capacity and national capability of Sussex Police to carry out high-profile disruptions and enforcement activities targeting serious and organised criminals.

Specialist Enforcement Unit

The Force has sought to tackle the most serious, organised and persistent criminals who target the road networks in Sussex. The Specialist Enforcement Unit (SEU) has carried out proactive countywide disruption and enforcement operations on roads across the county since the unit was first established in January 2021. The SEU is comprised of specially trained officers who target individuals who are using the road network for criminality, focusing on combatting organised acquisitive crime and providing dedicated resources to reduce those killed or seriously injured on the roads in Sussex.

The SEU consists of two uniformed operational teams made up of 19 police constables and four sergeants, led by one Inspector. The unit is directed by the Tactical Tasking and Coordinating Group based on information and intelligence received. This extends to the 'real-time' deployment of resources through the Force Contact, Command and Control Department to provide a fast-time response to any crimes in action on the road network in Sussex.

The individuals within the SEU have advanced driving skills and safe stop tactics (such as tactical pursuit and containment) to support existing teams across the Force, with support from the Dog Unit utilised as required. The unit also has the ability and capability to move to locations based on threat, risk, and harm and to provide enhanced visibility on the roads, targeting those offenders using them for criminality.

During 2025/26, the SEU undertook proactive policing activity and interventions throughout Sussex to deliver more than 1,300 stop and searches (comprising both individuals and vehicles), over 520 arrests (comprising circa 160 arrests for drug and other organised crime offences, over 60 arrests for sexual offences and other offences against the person and more than 150 arrests for traffic related cases, including drink-and-drug driving and disqualified/uninsured drivers), alongside generating in excess of 600 intelligence reports.

The unit also seized significant amounts of commodities throughout the year, including over £100,000 in cash, almost 50 kilograms of drugs and more than 60 weapons (comprising firearms, machetes and other bladed articles) to further reduce the risk to members of the public and to increase investigative opportunities.

Alongside this activity, the SEU has continued to support national campaigns and operations, working with partner forces and agencies to disrupt criminal activity. This included support for Operation Pandilla – a cross-border operation into the disruption of serious organised acquisitive crime on the road network led by Thames Valley Police.

Tactical Enforcement Units

The Specialist Enforcement Unit is supported by the three Tactical Enforcement Units (TEUs) which provide each of the policing divisions with additional capacity and capability to target criminality and capture some of the most serious, wanted and prolific offenders in Sussex.

Launched in 2019/20, the TEUs carry out high-profile disruption and enforcement activity across Sussex. The TEUs are tasked locally by the divisions and provide public reassurance through an enhanced and visible policing deterrent in 'hotspot' locations by tackling the offences that communities want them to respond to through the execution of planned warrants and enforcement activity to tackle the most high-harm perpetrators.

Each of the TEUs comprises one sergeant and eight police constables with specialist skills in proactive policing, equipped to carry out targeted disruption, enforcement and patrol activities to tackle the offences that communities want them to prioritise.

During 2025/26, the three TEUs carried out 300 stop and searches on vehicles, exercised 100 warrants, made 824 arrests, generated 534 intelligence reports and submitted a significant number of referrals to safeguard vulnerable individuals through proactive policing patrols. The unit also seized significant amounts of commodities across the year, including quantities of different illegal substances (comprising Class A, Class B and Class C drugs) and more than £180,000 in cash.

INFOGRAPHIC: SEU and TEUs carried out over 1,600 stop and searches on vehicles and made more than 1,300 arrests

2.2.5 Tackle business and retail crime to make our shops and high streets safer places to work in and visit

Tackle business and retail crime

Dedicated Business Crime Team maintained – In 2025/26, Sussex Police continued to maintain a Business Crime Team [HYPERLINK] (BCT) to tackle business and retail crime, identify prolific offenders and provide support to business communities in Sussex.

Launched in 2021/22, the team supports the business community by working closely with partners, businesses and customers to generate better intelligence and ensure that a more focused police response is provided to reports of business crime. The BCT comprises one police inspector, three supervisors and 17 investigators dedicated to responding to crime across the three policing divisions. This approach also means that any repeat or prolific offenders and patterns of criminality can be identified quickly.

The BCT have established effective working relationships with local businesses, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs) in Sussex and were responsible for investigating circa 83% all shoplifting offences reported to Sussex Police during 2025/26.

The team also leads on Operation Apprentice – the Sussex Police response to tackle the most prolific and high-harm offenders of business and retail crime across Sussex and identify the 'hotspot' locations where this repeat offending is taking place. The data collated by the Force is used by the team to support a regular meeting cycle between BCRPs and local Neighbourhood Policing Teams to proactively target the repeat offenders and locations identified. This includes undertaking enforcement activity and the issuing of civil orders, alongside problem-solving activity in the 'hotspot' locations within local communities.

During 2025/26, Sussex Police secured 1,782 charges against 138 repeat offenders through Operation Apprentice. Of those criminal convictions secured, custodial sentences totalling 545 weeks imprisonment were granted and 85 criminal behaviour orders (CBOs) were issued for theft-related offences. The CBOs prohibit the offenders from doing anything described in the order and/or require the offenders to do anything prescribed in the order. The CBO can include exclusion zones (in conjunction with a specific location), centred around previous offending behaviour, and the requirement to wear an electronic tag (see Operation STOP) or engage with drug and alcohol services.

Throughout the year, Sussex Police has continued to support the additional channels of crime reporting available to businesses and retailers. This includes leading on One Touch Reporting – a time-saving initiative introduced by the PCC across 24 Co-op stores and the National Business Crime Solution (NBCS) to make the reporting of business crime more efficient and effective.

One Touch Reporting has directly contributed towards an increase in the volume of shoplifting offences reported to Sussex Police, a greater collation of evidence and an enhanced identification of prolific offenders and 'hotspot' locations which has contributed to improved arrest, charge and conviction rates. The successful outcome rate recorded for the offences specifically handled by the BCT have increased year-on-year from 11% in 2021/22 to 19% in 2025/26. These successful outcome rates are anticipated to increase still further across the current performance plan year as the Force explore other innovative solutions available to them to improve crime reporting across the retail sector.

Alongside this, Sussex Police increased the use of DISC – a cloud-based crime management system empowering communities to self-manage low-level crime and anti-social behaviour – across the year. This platform enables better engagement between policing teams, businesses and local authorities to support proactive messaging, identification of suspects and raise awareness of those offenders subject to civil orders. This approach also provides businesses with an alternative reporting channel and improves the confidence of local communities in the policing response delivered.

During 2025/26, there were 491,121 logins to the DISC platform (+74% compared to 282,814 recorded across the previous year), 9,378 crimes reported to Sussex Police (+22% compared to 7,706 in 2024/25) and 2,452 news alerts published (+49% compared to 1,642 in 2024/25). There are also plans to expand the use of DISC further in Sussex across 2026/27.

The BCT will continue to work smartly to investigate business crimes, improve partnership working and tackle this criminality through a more innovative use of technology. This includes the greater use of artificial intelligence (AI), facial recognition and piloting more efficient reporting processes and technology which allows for digital evidence, such as CCTV footage, to be shared with the Force directly for immediate access to evidence.

This approach will also include bringing together intelligence from across the county to provide crime prevention advice and catch the criminals who are targeting and affecting businesses large and small, leading to more positive outcomes and increased business confidence in police.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, Sussex Police will refresh its Business Crime Strategy and Operational Delivery Plan to drive further activity across the thematic areas identified within the national Retail Crime Action Plan. This approach seeks to provide a specific focus on police attendance, investigations and crime prevention.

Launched Operation STOP in Sussex – In October 2025, the PCC launched a ground-breaking pilot tagging scheme in Sussex named Operation STOP (Shop Theft Offender Pilot) which aims to tackle persistent shoplifting, reduce reoffending and aid rehabilitation through real-time monitoring and, in time, the provision of tailored support.

The initiative – led by my office – was initially trialled in East Sussex in partnership with Sussex Police, His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS), Crown Prosecution Service and probation services, and marks the first time electronic global positioning system (GPS) tags have been deployed specifically to address shoplifting in the UK.

As part of an ongoing commitment to tackle retail crime, the PCC provided the Force with funding for 10 electronic tags which have been deployed to support the pilot. Sussex Police successfully added nine criminal behaviour orders (CBOs) to the sentences imposed on conviction of theft from shop offences, with seven of these tags fitted (78%) before 31 March 2026 (one individual was given a custodial sentence and not eligible for a tag and another individual has absconded and cannot currently be located for a tag to be fitted). An additional five applications for CBOs are still awaiting a court hearing and are expected to be granted in 2026/27.

Operation STOP is recognised to have contributed to significant reductions in shop theft by the tagged individuals since the pilot first launched, including one prolific offender who has not reoffended since having the tag fitted. Early analysis also indicates that significant savings have been generated for local businesses, Sussex Police and the wider criminal justice system through the shop thefts that have been prevented by this pilot.

The data gathered from the pilot between October 2025 and March 2026 has:

- ✓ highlighted when individuals wearing tags were in the vicinity of any recorded crimes
- ✓ quickly eliminated tag wearers as suspects for other recorded offences
- ✓ identified previously unknown offences
- ✓ informed targeted police activity around the handling of stolen goods and drug supply
- ✓ prevented the need for police officers to follow vehicles because the tag wearer was identified to be a passenger

In addition, there has been an increase in confidence among local retailers in East Sussex created by the visible offender displacement in local areas (with none of the individual tag wearers having returned to the shops where offending behaviour was committed previously) and the associated reductions in recorded shoplifting offences.

LOOKING AHEAD: On 1 May 2026, Operation STOP will be expanded across the rest of Sussex. This will include the provision of a further 10 tags for use in Brighton & Hove Division and West Sussex Division respectively to increase the data returns and enable a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot to be completed across the performance plan year.

Continued to lead on Project Pegasus – The PCC continued to lead nationally on business and retail crime having successfully persuaded retailers and the police service to combine industry knowledge with law enforcement activity to tackle serious and organised retail crime across England and Wales.

In October 2023, the Pegasus Partnership was created to scope organised retail crime and create intelligence packages for individual police forces to act on. This initiative radically improved the ability of retailers to share intelligence with policing, to better understand the tactics used by organised retail crime gangs and identify more offenders.

Financial contributions worth almost £1million have been received from 15 of the country's biggest national retailers to build a new capability of analysts and intelligence officers within OPAL – the existing specialist national crime unit for serious acquisitive crime. The dedicated team has built a comprehensive intelligence picture of the organised crime gangs that are responsible for many shoplifting incidents across the country to help target and dismantle them.

Since the unit was launched two years ago in May 2024, it has supported 203 referrals from retailers and police forces, resulting in 84 operations being carried out to tackle organised crime gangs targeting the retail sector. A total of 605 offenders have been identified and tens of thousands of pounds worth of stolen goods recovered, resulting in 257 arrests, 118 years' worth of imprisonments and 22 deportations. The Pegasus Partnership also contributed to a 73% reduction in offending by organised crime groups referred into the unit.

The Pegasus Partnership, as it stands, concluded at the end of 2025/26, with the work set to be carried forward by OPAL. The Government have also committed £5million in funding over the next three years to continue this specialist work, which will be vital in maintaining the progress made in this area to support the fight back against organised retail crime gangs and to keep the public safe.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, the Crime and Policing Act will introduce a standalone criminal offence of assaulting a retail worker in response to increases in the frequency and severity of violence and abuse experienced by staff. This new offence will ensure that data on these attacks is collected separately to other assaults and will allow the police to better plan responses. The Act will also remove the £200 limit which will ensure that shop theft is no longer a 'summary-only' offence heard at a magistrates' court with minimal punishment.

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

2.3.1 Make policing visible to improve public confidence and tackle anti-social behaviour

Local, visible and accessible policing

Recruitment of more police officers – Following a public consultation, the PCC was given public support to increase the policing part of the council tax (called the precept) for 2025/26. This added an extra £14 per year for an average Band D property and was supported and endorsed by the Police & Crime Panel at its meeting in January 2025.

This extra investment ensured that Sussex Police was able to protect and sustain the operational policing capacity, system capabilities and service improvements delivered previously, despite increasing demand and significant financial challenges. This has included building on the progress already made in crime prevention, response and investigations through further investment in digital support for investigation and analytics to deliver smarter evidence-based policing.

It has also supported the Force to commit resources in the areas that would have the greatest impact and contribute towards delivering the best possible outcomes for victims of crime and members of the public, whilst simultaneously delivering the change programmes required to ensure that the most efficient policing model exists in Sussex to protect communities, catch criminals and deliver an outstanding service.

The previous Government also extended the maintenance grant to support police force areas in England and Wales to maintain police officer numbers during 2025/26, following the Police Uplift Programme (PUP) which recruited 20,000 new police officers in England and Wales over the three years to 31 March 2023.

The maintenance grant was confirmed as £377million in 2025/26, with £10.7million allocated to Sussex Police. This comprised a PUP performance grant of £7.5million and an additional recruitment 'top up' grant of £3.2million towards the cost of the additional recruitment over and above the baseline target.

To qualify for the full amount, the Force was asked to maintain an enhanced baseline target figure of 3,226 officers (headcount) at two points within the year – 30 September 2025 and 31 March 2026. Sussex Police overachieved against both targets at each checkpoint with 3,342 officers (and 3,259.68 full time equivalent (FTE) officers, based on actual hours worked) in post as of 31 March 2026 – this represented an additional 73 officers (headcount) above the enhanced target (when the additional 43 officers funded through the Neighbourhood Policing Grant in 2025/26 are added to create a revised target of 3,269 officers).

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, the PCC increased the precept by £15 per year for an average Band D property. This extra investment will protect essential policing services and ensure that the enhancements made to operational policing capacity and service improvements continue to be protected and maintained.

Police officers, staff, PCSOs, special constables and volunteers

Sussex Police were also allocated £4.6million through the Neighbourhood Policing Grant in 2025/26 to recruit an additional 43 FTE police officers within its Neighbourhood Policing Teams. This recruitment comprised 37 FTE police constables and 6 FTE police sergeants, with most of these additional officers having been assigned to Neighbourhood Policing Teams throughout Sussex across the performance plan year.

The police grant funding settlement confirmed that a new Neighbourhood Policing Grant would replace the Police Officer Maintenance Grant in 2026/27. This amended approach also means that the baseline police officer headcount figure of 3,226 established for Sussex Police to maintain previously now no longer exists, alongside the two formal checkpoints that were used to measure the progress made by the Force against this target.

The PCC has continued to work with the Chief Constable throughout the year to improve workforce diversity and ensure that this better reflects the demographics of Sussex, demonstrating a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity and promoting a culture that fully embraces this position.

Effective Independent Custody Visiting Scheme – The PCC has continued to oversee an established and effective Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Scheme in Sussex. The Scheme has 53 dedicated volunteers who make weekly unannounced visits to independently monitor and observe the safeguarding, dignity and welfare of individuals detained in each of the five police custody centres in Sussex: Brighton, Crawley, Eastbourne, Hastings and Worthing.

There was a 23% increase in the number of custody visits made [313] by the ICVs in 2025/26, in comparison to the year before. This equated to 58 more visits compared to the 255 visits completed during 2024/25, with these visits undertaken at a range of different times during a 24-hour period, before inspection reports were submitted to the Public Trust and Confidence Manager for review and action as appropriate. Of those unannounced visits made, more than 662 detained persons accepted a visit with the ICVs to discuss their welfare, rights, entitlements and dignity in police custody [27%]. This represented a 5% reduction from the 698 accepted visits in 2024/25.

The ICVs continue to work within national and international custody and detention legislation and guidelines to introduce and monitor standards for the safeguarding, dignity and welfare of people detained. This has included monitoring the night-time lighting levels in custody cells to promote better wellbeing, rest and sleep, and the ongoing support for the national referral pathway to provide support for those experiencing menopause symptoms whilst in police custody in England and Wales.

The custody visits, observations and reports made by the ICVs have led to several positive changes to detainee care during 2025/26. This included the provision of in-cell wash packs to assist with personal care and dignity, a review of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) to support young people and adults (including re-training for the officers and staff who provide the care), and improvements to the maintenance of the police custody estate, including the general upkeep of outdoor exercise areas, cleaning of pedestrian access and egress pathways, repairing of cells marked 'out of use' and the servicing of boilers to maintain the provision of hot water and heating for those detained.

The ICVs have worked hard to ensure that the expected standards of care and dignity have been upheld throughout the year. This included access to a greater range of food and drink items (to assist with calming anxiety and stress during the custody process) and additional resources and distraction items to help those detained in police custody with their mental wellbeing and to manage the time whilst investigation processes are completed (including the introduction of reading materials in a range of different languages, the provision of religious items and support for individuals with neurodiversity and additional learning needs).

In addition, the ICVs have observed, recorded and reported on the support provided by healthcare professionals, appropriate adults, legal advisers and interpreters, alongside the promotion of the Samaritans support service (following the publication of the 'Prevention of deaths in police custody and apparent suicides following release' report in 2024/25).

Throughout the year, the scheme maintained the additional oversight and scrutiny introduced previously around other custody processes, including a monthly audit of the strip searches undertaken on young people and vulnerable adults. These independent reviews scrutinise the strip search processes to ensure that the process is compliant with the requirements of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 for children, young people and vulnerable adults, together with creating more accurate recording practices. This approach seeks to ensure that Sussex Police is compliant with the law and regulations, whilst maintaining and upholding the dignity and human rights of the detainees.

The quarterly panel meetings at each of the custody centres have also continued across the performance plan year to review performance statistics, areas for improvement and share notable practice identified by the ICVs. The recruitment, training and continuous professional development strategy introduced previously has been developed further, alongside maintaining the feedback forum for volunteers to optimise the performance of the scheme and personal development of the ICVs. Additional information has been made available through a range of public meetings, events and online resources across the year.

The ICV scheme was extended to include the independent monitoring of the Border Force custody centre and the Animal Welfare Scheme at Gatwick Airport during 2024/25. Last year, the volunteers undertook 15 visits to the custody facilities at the airport to provide independent scrutiny of the welfare of the people detained. As a result of these visits, improvements have been made to raise awareness of the menopause transition in custody and nicotine addiction (and withdrawal) symptoms, alongside the proactive provision of ear defenders (as an accessory aid) to try and prevent sensory overload for neurodiverse individuals detained by Border Force.

The volunteers also undertook unannounced visits to observe kennel, vehicle and training conditions throughout the year to ensure that the standards of dog care, handling and general wellbeing aligned with the recognised best practice in animal welfare. These visits contributed towards the introduction of kennel temperature gauges and white boards with dog safeguarding information adjacent to each kennel, alongside replacement beds for the dogs and additional lighting in the grass exercise area.

INFOGRAPHIC: 23% increase in custody visits made by ICVs in 2025/26

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, the PCC will seek to focus on maintaining and strengthening independent oversight of police custody, ensuring that the rights, welfare and dignity of detainees continue to be protected.

Public engagement

Understanding priorities and concerns through engagement and consultation – In 2025/26, the PCC's extensive public engagement programme included attendance at numerous events and locations in Sussex throughout the year and the completion of two Safer in Sussex surveys, widely shared with residents and partners.

More than 20 community engagements took place across 2025/26, both in person and online. The in-person events covered locations including Bognor Regis, Bolney, Brighton, Camber Sands, Chichester, Crawley, Gatwick, Hailsham, Handcross, Hastings, Lewes and Uckfield. These events included Safer in Sussex Community Fund visits, the launch of the Sussex Youth Ambassadors scheme, the Sussex Association of Local Councils conference and bespoke events with community groups.

Online engagement comprised nine dedicated focus groups with parish councillors and clerks across Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex. The information provided by representatives at these focus groups has helped to inform the PCC's decisions around policing priorities and budgets.

Public engagement activity was also used to raise awareness of, and highlight, community safety initiatives funded by the PCC. This included the distribution of anti-spiking drink covers (known as StopTopps) at student events and venues to keep individuals safe when they are socialising and the promotion of the Safe Space Sussex online directory which enables victims of crime to find the most appropriate support service for them, securely and confidentially.

Another focus for public engagement was supporting the rural communities and tradespeople in Sussex. The PCC funded 1,000 SelectaDNA kits across the year which mark tools with a synthetic DNA that can be traced back to their owner if the tool and/or machinery is stolen. The kits, along with accompanying signs and stickers, act as a deterrent to criminals. A dedicated tool-marking event was hosted at a farm in Bolney in May 2025 for farmers and landowners, alongside a series of dedicated 'days of action' for tradespeople at Wickes home improvement stores across the county.

Measuring public confidence through a Safer in Sussex survey – To support her engagement campaign, the PCC launched an online Safer in Sussex survey to measure public confidence throughout the county.

The survey was promoted and published online through the PCC's website and social media channels, as well as being shared with local partners in Sussex, including the National Health Service (NHS), town, district and borough councils, Neighbourhood Watch and local pharmacies.

The survey received over 3,000 responses between May and October 2025 and found that anti-social behaviour and dangerous driving remain the two areas that concern Sussex residents the most in terms of experiencing crime and feeling unsafe in their communities. An increased visible policing presence (by both police officers and PCSOs) and enhanced sentencing levels were highlighted as the two top measures recognised to make respondents feel safer.

The PCC also commissioned an external poll of residents in Sussex across a range of topics including crime reporting, awareness of local policing priorities and police funding to assist her with making a precept decision for 2025/26. The survey built on the insight from the polls previously undertaken in 2023 and 2024 and received almost 2,500 responses between November and December 2025.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, the PCC will continue to consult and engage with members of the public to help shape and inform local policing priorities and will run tailored consultations looking at specific issues facing local communities across the county.

Anti-social behaviour

Continued delivery of an Immediate Justice pilot programme – In 2025/26, the PCC ensured the continued delivery of the Immediate Justice pilot programme in Sussex, despite the Government having stopped the funding made available for the pilot programmes established throughout England and Wales the year before.

In 2023/24, the PCC secured £1million of funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) (as part of £2million made available over two years) to develop and deliver a pilot programme in Sussex – one of only 10 'trailblazer' police force areas in England and Wales to have secured this extra funding.

The programme was implemented to ensure that those committing anti-social behaviour take accountability for their actions, whilst providing victims and communities with a voice in how they would like offenders to make amends for their behaviour, utilising out-of-court resolutions through the Community Remedy document. The initiative was primarily targeted at children and young people aged between 12 and 17 years old through out-of-court disposals, although the scheme was extended to include adult offenders from June 2024 onwards.

The types of crimes suitable for Immediate Justice in Sussex are any offences that could be considered anti-social and may directly impact on a victim and/or the wider community. These offences included criminal damage, common assault and/or battery, possession of drugs, drunk and disorderly, harassment (without violence), public order and theft (including shoplifting).

Through undertaking visible, practical and meaningful activities, the offenders undertook direct payback to victims and communities through unpaid work and swiftly repairing any harm and damage caused. This included gardening, litter picking, maintaining public spaces and the removal of graffiti.

During 2025/26, the PCC ensured the continued delivery of this programme in Sussex after making additional funding available from the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner (OSPCC) utilising the experience of the three Youth Justice Services locally to engage with these children and young people to influence and change their behaviours to prevent further offending.

Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, Sussex Police managed 86 Immediate Justice referrals through the pilot programme, with all of these relating to children and young people. In total, almost 600 individuals were supported through the programme since it first started in June 2023 which delivered nearly 11,000 hours of reparative work in local communities throughout Sussex.

INFOGRAPHIC: Almost 600 individuals supported through the Immediate Justice pilot

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour through mediation: The PCC has continued to fund the Sussex Mediation Alliance (SMA) to provide consistent mediation services in Sussex across two service providers: Brighton & Hove Independent Mediation Service and Mediation Plus.

The OSPCC has introduced effective monitoring arrangements around the service provided in Sussex which have contributed towards positive improvements for service users and reduced demand for Sussex Police. Consequently, the provision of this service was moved to a three-year contract and, following a successful tender process, SMA will continue to deliver this service in Sussex until 31 March 2026.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is understood to be a 'crime of confidence', whereby the more confident members of the public are about the ability of the police to respond, the more likely they are to report incidents to the police. Sussex Police has continued to encourage members of the public to report any incidents and offences to develop information and intelligence regarding repeat offenders, times and locations which can then be used to plan, target and deploy police resources. The early identification of ASB is also recognised to be fundamental to prevent conflict from escalating further and to decrease community tensions.

In 2025/26, the SMA received 148 referrals directly from Sussex Police for resolution through mediation to prevent the conflict from escalating any further, distributed across Sussex as follows: 52 in Brighton & Hove, 62 in East Sussex and 34 in West Sussex. Noise and neighbour issues were the most common type of dispute and accounted for 57 cases (39%) which was followed by anti-social behaviour (55 cases and 37%). The services also saw referrals around vehicles and parking, property-related issues (including home improvements) and family relationship breakdowns.

The service has managed to secure engagement from both parties to attempt to find a resolution in around two-thirds of all cases, with every positive outcome – including successful mediation, conflict resolution coaching and/or improved communication skills (for either party) – reducing the demand placed on Sussex Police.

The PCC has continued to encourage Sussex Police to work with schools and other educational establishments to engage with children and young people to build confidence in policing, promote positive behaviours and educate them about the impact their actions and behaviours can have on others within the local community, without unnecessarily criminalising them. This work is routinely undertaken by the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Neighbourhood Youth Officers, supported by youth services within local authorities.

INFOGRAPHIC: 148 referrals for mediation services

Increase in Anti-Social Behaviour Case Reviews – There was a 6% reduction in the number of anti-social behaviour (ASB) case reviews received in Sussex in 2025/26, in comparison to the year before (51) – this equated to three fewer activations received (48).

A case review (formally known as a Community Trigger) empowers repeat victims of ASB to request a review of the actions partner agencies have taken to resolve their concerns with the aim of finding a solution to the core problems causing the anti-social behaviour.

Year	Community Triggers	Adur & Worthing	Arun	Brighton & Hove	Chichester	Crawley	Eastbourne	Hastings	Horsham	Lewes	Mid Sussex	Rother	Wealden	**Sussex**
2024/25	Received	2	1	8	5	8	2	3	14	2	5	1	0	**51**
	Met threshold	0	0	5	5	6	0	0	11	1	3	1	0	**32**
2025/26	Received	3	3	13	2	3	1	3	10	4	3	3	0	**48**
	Met threshold	2	0	5	0	0	0	0	8	1	1	0	0	**17**

Of the case reviews received, 35% of these (17) met the threshold for activation in 2025/26 – with three separate incidents of ASB experienced and reported in the last six months. This represented a 47% reduction in the number of case reviews which met the threshold compared to 2024/25 (32), including 15 fewer activations across the year.

2.3.2 Provide an effective and accessible police service for all

Access to policing

Continued investment in the police estate – A total of £1.845million was invested in the Sussex Police estate across 2025/26. The PCC has continued to ensure that the property used for policing is in the right place, is 'fit for purpose' and is financially viable. This approach means that no police facility with a public reception will be removed until a suitable local alternative is identified, examining options for sharing with partners and disposal for redevelopment wherever the police estate is under-used.

The PCC is responsible for the Sussex Police estate and, as the landlord, has developed a Sussex Police Estate Transformation Strategy 2025/2036 [HYPERLINK] to meet current and future operational needs and enable the effective governance of all land and property. The land and sites were valued at £164.3million on 31 March 2026.

Despite more than £60million invested in the past decade, a considerable proportion of the 88 main sites were constructed before 1975 and are now creating additional challenges for modern policing methods and technology. The police estate – totalling approximately 98,500 square meters – is also recognised to have an estimated surplus of 20-25% buildings, with some of these sites presenting further challenges in terms of location, size, age and condition which means that its future is increasingly unaffordable.

With significant capital liabilities of over £250million projected across the next 10 years, alongside rising annual operating costs of circa £12million, a 'step change' reset is required to ensure that limited financial resources are focused increasingly on frontline policing, rather than an oversized and ageing estate.

To address these challenges and ensure the estate remains fit for purpose, the new strategy outlines the plans to rationalise the police estate and generate income for reinvestment. A key focus is achieving significant reductions in both annual operating costs and future capital liabilities. This will be achieved by generating income through the disposal of surplus assets and buildings, with 100% of the capital receipts being used to fund reinvestment in the retained estate, alongside a significant capital investment programme.

The strategy also involves identifying the parts of the estate to retain and improve for efficiency, exploring shared bases and innovative mobile solutions, and ensuring retained and new buildings are highly efficient (aiming for 'very good' or 'excellent' according to the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method standards), meet operational needs, enhance staff wellbeing and contribute positively to the net zero carbon target of 2050.

During 2025/26, Sussex Police made investments to replace electrical and mechanical assets across various sites within the police estate to deliver efficiencies and reduce the future running costs of the estate, whilst reducing the carbon footprint for the organisation to try and support its net zero ambitions.

Other delivery highlights throughout the year included upgrades to the electrical, fire alarm, CCTV and access controls at Sussex Police Headquarters in Lewes, Brighton Police Station in John Street and Brighton Custody Centre in Hollingbury, new roofing at the Sussex Police Training Centre in Kingstanding and replacement windows and roof repairs at Bognor Regis Police Station, alongside the installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery banks to generate and store solar energy.

The sale and disposal of Woodingdean Police Box and land owned in both Goring and Haywards Heath took place during 2025/26, with Astley House in Lewes and land at Bognor currently being progressed for sale and anticipated to complete during 2026/27. Sussex Police also ceased leasehold occupation at Peacehaven Meridian Centre, Lancing Parish Hall and Beddingham Radio Mast across the year.

The Force has also used more than £150,000 in Operation Safeguard funding – received from the Home Office for the potential use of Sussex Police custody cells to temporarily hold prisoners who cannot be accommodated in the prison establishment – to make further investments across the police estate in 2025/26. This has included improvements to the welfare facilities for police officers, staff and visitors at the sites at Brighton Custody Centre, Brighton Police Station, Hammonds Drive in Eastbourne, Haywards Heath Police Station, and Midhurst Police Station. Further enhancements to the facilities in the post room and uniform store at Sussex Police Headquarters are set to be completed during 2026/27.

The PCC continued to work closely with the Estates Team within Sussex Police to secure additional investment from district and borough councils throughout the county through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 Agreements. This funding is used to support further investment and improvements in the Sussex Police estate and existing policing infrastructure.

In 2025/26, the PCC applied for £2,719million of CIL funding from local authorities and received further funding of £319,798 across the year from Section 106 Agreements to support investment in automatic number plate recognition (ANPR), speed awareness kits, solar photovoltaic panels, and rainwater harvesting projects. In total, the PCC has secured more than £3million for Sussex Police through Section 106 Agreements and CILs since 2015/16, with £867,805 received to date (29%).

Sussex Police have also continued to work with the National Police Estates Group to ensure that the police and other emergency services are a primary consideration within the existing planning system for any new developments throughout the country.

INFOGRAPHIC: Section 106 funding worth £319,798 secured from new developments to improve the policing infrastructure

Driving sustainable change across Sussex Police through Project Polar Bear – Sussex Police has continued to build on the success of Project Polar Bear to deliver a renewed approach to energy usage and to change working practices throughout the Force.

Project Polar Bear was launched by Sussex Police in 2022/23 – in response to the global energy crisis – to reduce overall consumption and create a culture of sustainability by implementing simple and effective measures, including a large-scale shift to more efficient Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting (with 95% of the police estate now using LED lights) and encouraging staff to recycle more and adopt energy saving behaviours. This approach has been reinforced through the delivery of communications reminding individuals to turn off lights and any unused equipment, alongside other campaigns aimed at enhancing recycling efforts and promoting positive behavioural changes.

During 2025/26, the Force sought to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions further still throughout the organisation. This included a 1% reduction in electricity usage recorded across the year through a renewed focus on renewable energy, including the installation of 21 sophisticated solar arrays and battery systems within the police estate to reduce costs and enable energy storage which can be used to support the expanding fleet of electric vehicles (with this programme set to be expanded across a further 11 sites next year).

A 5% reduction in gas consumption was also achieved across the year through the replacement of older gas boilers with more efficient models and the improved control of heating systems, alongside enhanced energy management practices. Overall, there has been a 25% reduction in carbon emissions across the Sussex Police estate since 2019/20.

Alongside this, the Force installed automatic meter readers in all police buildings to identify leaks and/or abnormal water usage. Water efficiency continues to remain a priority for Sussex Police and plans have been developed to strengthen further water reporting and explore other measures to reduce consumption and improve sustainability across 2026/27, including waterless urinals and water recycling systems.

To support this work, Sussex Police (together with Surrey Police) have recruited a dedicated Environmental and Sustainability Manager to monitor performance, lead carbon-reduction projects and encourage environmentally responsible behaviour across both force areas.

Working towards the Government net zero target by 2050 – In 2025/26, Sussex Police began formally reporting greenhouse gas emissions from the police estate (in line with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol) as part of an ongoing commitment to deliver the Government's net zero target by 2050.

This involves recording the emissions incurred across three separate scopes: emissions from owned or controlled sources (including fleet and buildings), indirect emissions from purchased electricity and emissions from purchased goods and services (including all indirect emissions associated with the supply chain, business travel and commuting). This approach enables Sussex Police to develop targeted strategies to reduce emissions and achieve the ambitious national carbon reduction goals through a better understanding of the emissions generated across these individual areas.

As part of an ongoing commitment to sustainability, Sussex Police has also created decarbonisation strategies, introduced sustainable procurement practices and is currently transitioning to an electric vehicle fleet to help the organisation move closer to achieving its net zero goals.

Development of an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy – Sussex Police share a Joint Transport Service (JTS) with Surrey Police and has developed an electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure strategy for the two forces to support this collaboration.

The JTS currently consists of a fleet of 1,158 vehicles (May 2026) comprising the following vehicle powertrain types: 816 diesel-powered vehicles (70%), 144 petrol vehicles (12%), 54 electric vehicles (5%), 141 hybrid vehicles (12%) and three hydrogen vehicles (0.3%). Given this distribution – with 17% of vehicles either electric, hybrid or hydrogen (198) – it is imperative that Sussex Police continue to prioritise the transition to an EV dominant fleet moving forwards.

Through the JTS, Sussex Police is working with the National Association of Police Fleet Managers, National Police Chiefs' Council and BlueLight Commercial to look at phasing out sales of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 and supporting the transition to zero emission vehicles (ZEV). This has included participation in the Department for Transport consultation on the move towards ZEV and the additional funding required to meet the costs of replacing internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles with ZEV that meet the specification for policing operations.

This work includes assessing the electrical capacity throughout the police estate and the additional funding required to improve the electrical power generation, transportation and physical infrastructure required on police sites and public charging points to develop an effective EV solution.

There is also an ongoing project aimed at expanding the solar capacity across the Sussex estate, which will better enable the transition to an EV dominant fleet in the future and support the Force to work towards achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, Sussex Police will continue to assess the cost and practicalities of transitioning to a fleet of electric and/or hydrogen vehicles to work towards delivering the net zero emission target set by the Government from 2050.

Transfer of the Old Police Cells Museum to the Sussex PCC – On 1 April 2025, the PCC formally took over the Old Police Cells Museum at Brighton Town Hall to safeguard the existence of the museum and showcase the heritage collection. This including taking on responsibility for the day-to-day management, oversight and administration of all museum-related matters.

The Trustees of the Old Police Cells Museum supported this move and agreed to dissolve the museum as a charity and transfer it under the care and stewardship of the PCC and Sussex Police, in line with models adopted by other police museums nationally.

This approach safeguarded the collection of circa 1,200 heritage assets, artifacts and memorabilia relating to the history of policing in Sussex through the provision of a unique platform to promote, exhibit and display the objects, alongside supporting ongoing engagement with local communities about policing issues and community interest matters to build and strengthen public relations.

The museum was closed throughout 2025/26 whilst essential improvements were carried out to the Town Hall.

LOOKING AHEAD: The Old Police Cells Museum was officially reopened on 13 May 2026 and will accommodate visitors in three different ways: public tours, private tours and educational tours. The museum will be promoted through refreshed marketing materials, increased online and social media presence and through ongoing partnership working with Brighton & Hove City Council to increase the number of visitors to this historic space.

Rural crime

Maintained the Rural Crime Team – In 2025/26, the PCC continued to support the Chief Constable in maintaining a Rural Crime Team [HYPERLINK] (RCT) in Sussex. The team was launched in 2020/21 and remains dedicated to protecting rural communities, their livelihoods and the unique challenges faced by those living and working in rural and isolated communities.

The RCT provides a proactive and visible policing presence across the rural areas in Sussex, aiming to reduce recorded crime levels and the associated fear of criminal activity. The team renewed its Rural Crime Strategy across the year and remains focused on building strong relationships with rural communities, gathering intelligence, targeting offenders, and addressing emerging criminal trends that affect the countryside.

The RCT consists of 21 police officers and staff, comprising one police inspector, two police sergeants, 12 police constables and six PCSOs operating from bases in Heathfield in East Sussex and Midhurst in West Sussex. The team provides specialist knowledge, enforcement activity, crime prevention activity and reassurance patrols across rural Sussex.

The team continued to provide a visible policing presence, tangible deterrence and reassurance to rural areas affected most by theft, poaching, hare coursing and livestock worrying across 2025/26. This work has generated hundreds of intelligence reports following visible policing patrols, numerous stop and searches (and resulting arrests), execution of enforcement warrants to recover stolen property, heavy machinery and animals, proactive stops, checks and seizures of vehicles and trailers using false number plates, and investigations into illegal metal detecting, including the recovery of stolen coins from private land.

In addition, the RCT has continued to build trust and strengthen relationships with rural communities through attendance at targeted engagement events held throughout Sussex, including the South of England Show (to raise awareness of rural crime and provide crime prevention advice) and the Fresher's Fair at Plumpton College (to establish dialogues with agricultural students and the next generation of farmers).

Following attendance at community engagement events previously, the RCT identified recurring concerns from members of the public regarding limited awareness and understanding of rural specific offences amongst officers from other policing functions and staff within the Force Contact, Command and Control Department (FCCCD). During 2025/26, the team sought to address this knowledge gap through a structured programme of training inputs and awareness raising to all frontline officers and staff within the FCCCD.

Early indications suggest this work has had a positive impact on the response provided to rural-related incidents at the first point of contact, with improved levels of call handling, accuracy of incident categorisation and victim support recorded during initial attendance. These enhancements have been assessed through qualitative feedback gathered at public meetings and community forums, indicating increased confidence in the service provided.

In February 2025, the PCC funded 1,000 specialist SelectaDNA™ property marking kits to help farmers and those working in the agricultural sector across Sussex to forensically mark their equipment and protect it from theft. The initiative – run in partnership with the National Farmers' Union (NFU) – allows farmers, landowners and rural businesses to mark valuable tools, machinery, and equipment with a permanent DNA-based solution that links recovered property directly back to its rightful owner, whilst simultaneously deterring offenders from theft. Sussex Police are recognised to be one of the greatest users of property-marking kits and delivered these to 240 farms across 2025/26, marking 3,441 items of equipment in this process.

Further collaboration took place with the Environment Agency and local authorities in Sussex to tackle rural environmental crime, including fly-tipping and illegal waste disposal (Operation Barley). These operations are intelligence-led and target 'hotspot' locations that have experienced repeat reports of fly tipping and associated waste crime. This collaborative approach maximises enforcement opportunities, enhances information sharing and strengthens collective capability to prevent and deter environmental crime throughout Sussex.

The RCT achieved the following performance across 2025/26:

- ✓ 2,986 patrol hours in rural communities (+114% from the previous year)
- ✓ 1,628 engagement activities and community-based events (+76%)
- ✓ 1,644 visits to farms made (+265%), including attendance at 54 livestock worrying issues (+10%) and 171 wildlife incidents (+235%)
- ✓ 130 heritage sites patrolled (+51%)
- ✓ 35 items of machinery and/or vehicles recovered after being involved in a crime (+3%)
- ✓ 793 instances of crime prevention and target hardening advice offered (-5%)

The 5% reduction in crime prevention and target hardening advice is attributed to a decrease in proactive farm visits during periods of peak operational demand within the farming community. These periods are often driven by seasonal agricultural activity and have been consistently identified as times when farmers and landowners have limited availability and are less able to engage in extended discussions about preventative activity. As a direct result, the RCT has adapted its accessibility and response by making themselves available to visit when directly requested to do so by the farming community which ensures that crime prevention advice continues to be provided in a targeted and timely manner, aligned to stakeholder availability and operational need.

All operational activity around rural crimes, incidents and offences is recorded and collated by Sussex Police through a marker called Operation Tracker. The RCT attended approximately 1,200 calls for service generated by computer-aided dispatch (CAD) through this marker to speak to victims, offer crime prevention advice and respond to the matters reported, together with a further 562 crimes and 391 incident occurrences that were not included within the marker but still within the remit of the team to address. The RCT demonstrated a solved rate of 4% for all notifiable rural crimes in 2025/26, with positive outcomes also achieved for many other instances where the offences were non-notifiable (including livestock worrying).

The impact of this work has contributed positively towards successful enforcement outcomes and has helped to develop stronger relationships with landowners, farmers and residents, ensuring that the rural communities in Sussex feel better connected to their local policing teams.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, the RCT will strengthen further its partnership working with rural communities by attending and engaging at events, alongside the continued delivery of informal street surgeries designed to improve visibility, accessibility and maximise engagement with policing services across remote and isolated locations in Sussex.

Maintained the South East Partnership Against Rural Crime – The South East Partnership Against Rural Crime (SEPARC) was maintained by the police forces in Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Kent and Thames Valley across 2025/26 to protect better rural communities and make the region a more hostile environment for countryside offenders.

The SEPARC is multi-agency collaboration which brings together regional police forces and partner organisations to address rural criminality that operates across police force borders. Across the year, the rural policing teams operating within the partnership coordinated a series of joint operations to target specific crime trends, disrupt wildlife, environmental, heritage and agricultural criminals and enhance community safety across the region.

The partnership is supported by a Tactical Delivery Group which meets fortnightly to assess emerging trends, identify priority issues and coordinate enforcement activity from the police and relevant partner agencies across the region. Tasking and operational deployment are directly informed by this group, ensuring that a consistent and intelligence-led approach exists to targeting organised and travelling criminals operating across county lines.

This cross-border activity comprised targeted operations which focused on the movement and theft of agricultural plant and farm machinery across police force areas. These deployments generated valuable intelligence opportunities, led to proactive vehicle stops and searches and contributed to an improved understanding of offending patterns and offender mobility.

These SEPARC deployments also incorporated proactive engagement activity to provide reassurance to rural communities disproportionately impacted by these offences. This visible and collaborative approach sought to provide further assurances that rural crime concerns are being actively addressed through coordinated and targeted regional action.

2.3.3 Answer calls for service promptly and attend these calls in a timely manner

Public contact and response times

Responding to a shift in demand for public contact – Call handling times and digital contact continues to remain important to members of the public who need to contact Sussex Police.

Sussex Police has observed a sustained change in public contact preferences, with members of the public increasingly opting for online and digital methods over traditional telephone calls. The PCC has supported the Force to respond to this shift in demand by improving its capacity to manage contact, engage with the public and reduce repeat calls through the recruitment of omnicompetent call handers, improved triage processes and further enhancements made to technology, including the expansion of Single Online Home (SOH) capabilities – a platform that allows the public to report, transact and contact the police online.

There was a 0.4% increase in the number of 999 calls received in 2025/26 which equated to 997 additional emergency calls received compared to the year before. This small shift in demand for emergency policing services was reflective of the nationally increasing trend recorded for police forces in England and Wales (+2.3%).

Of the 278,490 emergency calls received by the Force during the performance plan year, 98.2% of these were answered within 10 seconds. Sussex Police was also the best performing police force in England and Wales in terms of 999 call handling performance for eight consecutive months between August 2025 and March 2026.

These improvements in performance are directly attributed to the introduction of a new telephony platform in November 2023 – as part of the Joint Force Contact and Telephony Programme – which has transformed the way that the Force is able to operate within the Force Contact, Command and Control Department. This has enabled contact handlers to automatically flex between emergency and non-emergency calls in an agile manner according to demand which has created omnicompetence amongst the workforce in the contact centre and maximises the number of individuals available to respond to incoming calls at any one time.

This enhanced ability to record, allocate and deploy resources to these different calls for service has been supported by the implementation of a new workforce management system which uses data as a forecasting tool to ensure that appropriate staffing levels are in place to respond to periods of peak demand. This approach has ensured that supervisors now spend less time on duty planning and rostering which has enabled them to better support the contact handlers with the calls for service they are responding to.

Non-emergency calls increased by 1.4% across 2025/26 with an additional 4,076 more 101 calls received across the year. This was the third consecutive year-on-year increase recorded for non-emergency calls recorded since 2022/23, despite the greater availability of alternative channels through which members of the public can now contact the police.

An average wait time of one minute and two seconds was recorded for the 293,025 non-emergency calls received during 2025/26, with the number of abandoned calls also reducing to 2.9% across the year. This represented a further reduction of one minute and 44 seconds from 2024/25 (two minutes and 46 seconds) and was directly attributed to the success of the new telephony platform and revised operating model. This represents continued and sustained progress compared to the average wait time of 14 minutes and 16 seconds per call recorded in 2018/19, prior to the commencement of the Contact Transformation Programme.

The previous introduction of QueueBuster – a call back service that provides members of the public calling 101 with a more convenient option to avoid having to wait on hold by creating a 'virtual position' for them in the queue during periods of peak demand – is continuing to positively contribute towards the reductions in the number of abandoned calls recorded. Sussex Police received 16,653 requests for a call back through QueueBuster during 2025/26, with an average response time of six minutes and two seconds provided for these calls. This represented a 46% improvement from the response time recorded for QueueBuster during 2024/25 (11 minutes and 13 seconds).

The Force also recorded a 3% reduction in the number of webforms submitted to Sussex Police through the SOH across 2025/26. This equated to 1,892 fewer webforms received compared to the 65,014 digital contacts received across the year before, although some of this online demand is recognised to have shifted across to the non-emergency number because of the reduced average wait times demonstrated.

SOH provides a nationally approved and structured capability to facilitate the more efficient and effective reporting of incidents and crimes through a dedicated webpage. Each of these webforms is triaged and graded within 24 hours to determine the most appropriate policing response and ensure that any potential risks or vulnerabilities are identified and prioritised, with an average (mean) response time of four hours and 17 minutes provided for all digital contacts across 2025/26.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, Sussex Police will continue to review all forms of contact to ensure they provide the best possible service to those seeking assistance. As communication methods evolve, the Force will explore and develop opportunities to improve the service further still through enhanced digital reporting channels and capabilities.

2.3.4 Make the roads of Sussex safer

Road safety

Making the roads in Sussex safer – The PCC has continued to encourage communities, road users and partners to play a full and active part in making the roads of Sussex safer, working in partnership with Operation Crackdown and Community Speed Watch groups to achieve this.

In 2025/26, there was an 11% reduction in the number of collisions involving victims killed and/or seriously injured (KSIs) on the roads in Sussex (419) compared to the 473 collisions recorded across the same period last year – this equated to 54 fewer collisions involving KSIs, despite an additional 1,309 collisions recorded (+15%). Of the casualties recorded, there were 27 fewer fatalities (37) compared to the 64 fatalities recorded across 2024/25 – this represented a 42% reduction.

The PCC has also continued to commission Brake – the road safety charity – to provide a specialist support service for people bereaved or seriously injured by road crashes. This funding has been used to provide a dedicated caseworker who supported 132 people impacted by road death and injury in Sussex during 2025/26.

Sussex Police has sustained Operation Downsway, a Forcewide operation established to target those using the roads irresponsibly in Sussex through speeding and anti-social driving/motorbike riding. This initiative focuses on the provision of education and enforcement activity at locations identified by communities as having concerns for road safety with two main aims: to target offenders, and to keep everyone safe on the roads of Sussex.

Operation Downsway contributed to the following operational activity in 2025/26:

- ✓ 66 breath and drug tests administered at the roadside, resulting in 15 arrests for drink-and-drug driving
- ✓ 413 traffic offence reports, fixed penalty notices and notices issued for minor vehicle defaults (i.e. worn tyres, broken bulbs and cracked lights) under the Vehicle Defect Rectification Scheme
- ✓ 27 individuals issued with summonses to court
- ✓ 42 warnings provided to motorists for vehicles being used in a manner which causes alarm, distress or annoyance (Section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002)
- ✓ 375 instances where words of advice were offered to drivers and riders

Across the same period, almost 14,000 reports were made to Operation Crackdown – the online reporting platform for members of the public and partners to refer incidents of anti-social driving and/or abandoned vehicles. This activity has enabled Sussex Police to develop intelligence regarding repeat offenders, vehicles, times and locations which is used to plan, target and deploy police resources to respond to these concerns from members of the public, alongside supporting the Force to deliver proactive enforcement activity and provide educational materials to support and influence changes to driver and rider behaviour and attitudes.

The 360 plus Community Speedwatch groups in Sussex, utilising more than 3,000 volunteers, have continued to use detection devices to monitor local vehicle speeds in partnership with the police. During 2025/26, the volunteers reported more than 40,000 drivers exceeding the speed limit in their local communities to the police with the aim of educating drivers to slow down.

Through the Central Ticket & Summons Unit, almost 90,000 offences were successfully concluded through a range of different legal outcomes, including over 86,000 individuals who were offered a place on the National Diversion Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) as an alternative to prosecution. This activity was supported by the Safety Camera Team who continued to provide high-visibility enforcement throughout Sussex targeting the routes and roads where data highlighted a risk of collisions and KSIs due to excessive speed. A further 40,000 offences were detected at these locations before being progressed to either an educational or judicial disposal.

The Force has also continued to tackle the most serious, organised and persistent criminals by targeting the road networks in Sussex. The Specialist Enforcement Unit (SEU) has continued to carry out proactive countywide disruption and enforcement operations on the roads across the county. The SEU targets individuals using the road network for criminality, focusing on combatting organised acquisitive crime and providing dedicated resources to reduce those killed or seriously injured on the roads in Sussex.

Launch of Fatal Five Unit – On 29 January 2026, the PCC established a dedicated and intelligence led Fatal Five Unit to focus on the areas where policing resources and expertise can have the greatest impact in terms of reducing the number of road traffic collisions and people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the roads in Sussex.

The new unit has been created to change driver behaviours on roads and reduce KSIs by tackling the five most common causes of fatal and serious injury collisions on the roads: drink and drug-driving, speeding, failing to wear a seatbelt, distracted driving, and careless driving.

The Fatal Five Unit uses a data-led approach to support the policing response and target the locations where it will have the greatest impact. This includes using collision and speed data, information shared by individuals and local communities and the intelligence generated by the neighbourhood policing teams, alongside the data collected by the Community Speed Watch groups and the continued reports of anti-social driving submitted through Operation Crackdown. The unit also uses automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) to target specific vehicles and prolific offenders who have been identified from the above data sources.

During the first two months, the unit proactively dealt with 425 offences through a combination of fixed penalty notices, traffic offence reports or reporting individuals for summons to court. The team also seized 26 vehicles being used by unlicenced or uninsured drivers, issued 17 formal warnings for using vehicles in manner causing alarm, distress or annoyance and made 52 arrests for driving-related offences, including drink and drug-driving, alongside further arrests for burglary, grievous bodily harm, serious sexual offences, possession of weapons and other criminal offences across the same period. This proactive policing activity demonstrates further the capability of the unit to deal with criminals using the road network in Sussex.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, the Fatal Five Unit will continue to provide an enhanced and visible enforcement and education presence to make the roads of Sussex safer. This will include addressing the road safety issues highlighted by Community Speed Watch groups and reports made to Operation Crackdown and the Force Contact, Command and Control Department.

2.3.5 Encourage greater reporting of traditionally under-reported crimes to Sussex Police

Abuse and coercive control

Co-Commissioned Services – In 2025/26, the PCC provided 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 support the local authorities in delivering their statutory duty to provide support to victims of domestic abuse under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The PCC provided funding for a High Harm Perpetrator Programme aimed at working with some of the highest risk perpetrators of domestic abuse and stalking to try and manage and change their behaviour, in partnership with Sussex Police, Interventions Alliance, Brighton Housing Trust and Veritas Justice. Alongside working with the perpetrators, the programme also provides support to the victims of these offences through the provision of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors.

The PCC also directly commissions 33 organisations to provide a range of additional services to support victims of domestic abuse in Sussex, including practical, advocacy and therapeutic support.

Stalking

Increased reporting of stalking and harassment – The PCC has continued to ensure that Sussex Police remain funded, equipped and trained to recognise and respond to stalking and harassment.

As a result of this additional investment, the Force has seen a 265% increase in reports of stalking and harassment since 2015/16 – with 9,890 reports recorded in 2025/26 (+6,153). However, there was a 14% reduction in the number of solved crimes across the year, with 747 of these offences solved by Sussex Police, compared to 923 in 2024/25.

The PCC has continued to fund a local, specialist advocacy service – Veritas Justice – to assist victims of stalking through the criminal justice process in Sussex. This service also provides safeguarding advice for victims of cyber-enabled stalking and supports individuals through the criminal justice system and as part of their recovery.

In 2025/26, Veritas Justice provided intervention and support to more than 4,000 victims of stalking. This included advice and guidance about keeping safe online, safety planning and ongoing support through police investigations and during court appearances.

INFOGRAPHIC: More than 4,000 victims of stalking supported by Veritas Justice

Safeguard the vulnerable

Increased awareness of sexual exploitation – The PCC has continued to work with Sussex Police and other partner agencies to protect children from sexual exploitation by raising awareness and increasing the reporting of these offences against children.

The Hydrant Programme – a national policing programme to coordinate, support and improve the police response to child protection, sexual exploitation and non-recent child sexual abuse – has refreshed Operation Makesafe which aims to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation within the hospitality industry.

This approach provided business leaders with information, advice and guidance to assist them in identifying the signs of exploitation of children and young people, and the relevant contact details to report any suspicious circumstances and/or concerns identified. Sussex Police continue to work directly with the Hydrant Programme to ensure that local plans and activity align with the national strategy.

There was a 1% increase in the number of offences recorded with a child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE) marker in Sussex during 2025/26 (3,033) – this equated to 19 more offences recorded compared to the 3,014 offences recorded the year before. This small increase in reported crime is attributed to an improvement in the identification of exploitation in all its forms and the more accurate recording of offences, rather than an actual increase in offending.

Following the best practice identified nationally through the Hydrant Programme, Sussex Police is now producing an annual profile of group-based CSAE throughout the county, utilising all available partnership data to develop a comprehensive view about this type of offending. Sussex Police is also supporting Operation Beaconport, a national operation led by the National Crime Agency, which is reviewing historic reports of, and investigations into. group-based CSAE that were closed without a prosecution having been secured over the past 10 years.

The Force introduced Operation Swordfish in 2024 to improve the oversight and coordination of investigative responses where children assessed to be at high risk of exploitation are subject to two or more investigations. This emerging practice to safeguard high-risk children at risk of exploitation more effectively has been recognised positively by HMICFRS previously and is included in the national guidance around 'Disrupting Exploitation' published by The Children's Society.

Sussex Police also lead on Operation Limelight – a multi-agency safeguarding operation at Gatwick Airport which is run before and after the school holidays across the academic year to safeguard woman and girls from being taken out of the country for forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other harmful practices.

The police operation is supported by Border Force, Brighton & Hove City Council, Gatwick Airport Limited, Hersana, West Sussex County Council and the single points of contact for harmful practice within Sussex Police.

The inbound and outbound flights to and from areas where there is a higher occurrence of harmful practices are targeted as part of the response, with proactive engagement with passengers to establish their reasons for travelling and to raise awareness of these safeguarding issues. Law enforcement officers are also briefed to identify other offences as part of this operation, including exploitation and trafficking activity.

Operation Limelight is recognised to be the largest taskforce in England and Wales and this consistent approach has received interest from several law enforcement agencies across Europe who are seeking to replicate its success.

During 2025/26, the PCC continued to ensure that child victims receive the support they need and that more offenders are brought to justice. This has included commissioning Barnardo's and YMCA DownsLink Group to provide a service to children who have been sexually exploited in Sussex, and Survivors' Network to provide a Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy Service to support children and young people (and their families) who have been raped or sexually abused. This provision includes dedicated one-to-one support to assist individuals with any journey through the criminal justice system and beyond as part of their ongoing recovery.

Sussex Police has also used the 'Think Twice' campaign which explores the risks of online intimacy to complement the preventative work already being undertaken by the Police Youth Engagement Officers in senior schools across Sussex to raise awareness of the dangers of 'sextortion' and 'blackmail for further images' amongst teenage girls and boys. The Force have commissioned illustrators and authors to develop a series of educational tools, briefings and other materials that can be used by safeguarding leads in schools and other educational establishments to raise awareness of the potential consequences around online intimacy.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, the Crime and Policing Act will also introduce a standalone criminal offence for child criminal exploitation for the first time which will enhance the ability of Sussex Police to target adults who coerce, control and/or manipulate children into committing crimes, such as county lines, drug dealing or organised robbery, as well as increasing the opportunities for children to be identified.

Criminal exploitation, abuse and modern day slavery

Protecting vulnerable people – The PCC has continued to work with law enforcement agencies, local authorities, non-governmental organisations and charities to coordinate the local, regional and national response to modern day slavery through the National Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Network (NATMSN).

NATMSN brings together PCCs from across England and Wales, the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the Modern Slavery Unit within the Home Office to understand, improve and deliver a more cohesive response to all forms of modern day slavery.

Sussex Police recorded 316 modern day slavery offences between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, with criminal exploitation and labour exploitation the two most common offence types. This equated to 133 more offences (+73%) compared to the 183 reports recorded the previous year.

During 2025/26, the Force also reported 614 modern day slavey incidents to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – a framework used to identify and refer potential victims of modern slavery and ensure that they receive the appropriate support – throughout the year (+1%), with more than half of these referrals coming from the two immigration centres at Gatwick Airport.

The PCC has continued to support the Sussex Anti-Slavery Network, comprising key stakeholders, to ensure that victims are identified, offences are reported, and that enforcement activity is provided as part of any response wherever appropriate. In 2025/26, the Network continued to invest in training for its members to improve the capacity, capability, and inter-operability of all partner agencies to respond.

Throughout the year, Sussex Police undertook the following policing activity in respect of modern slavery:

- ✓ enhanced its operational policing response to modern day slavery investigations in line with the updated policing standards set by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), strategic priorities of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and the national Strategic Policing Requirement (this included the provision of integrated training for police officers and investigators to improve their knowledge and understanding of modern day slavery offences which are recognised to be complex and cross many different areas of criminality)
- ✓ included modern day slavery within the Force Strategic Assessment, serious and organised crime local profiles and threat assessments to better raise awareness of emerging threats and vulnerabilities
- ✓ coordinated localised 'days of action' and policing operations to disrupt organised crime groups, individuals and businesses suspected of modern day slavery and exploitation
- ✓ supported the NPCC and National Crime Agency (NCA) by coordinating local activity during intensification periods where modern slavery has been identified as a vulnerability
- ✓ introduced single point of contacts (SPOCs) who are subject matter experts on each of the three policing divisions and established modern day slavery and organised immigration crime support meetings to review investigations and share any learning identified

- ✓ inputs have been delivered by the Force Exploitation Team – both internally to officers and staff and externally to partners – to raise awareness of exploitation and the NRM process
- ✓ completed multi-agency safeguarding visits to hotels accommodating asylum seekers who are recognised to be at an increased risk of human trafficking
- ✓ participated in the Home Office pilot to devolve decision-making for child victims of modern day slavery and human trafficking from central government to local authorities. All children in Sussex now have decisions made locally within 90 days
- ✓ the East Sussex Discovery Team continued to complete proactive multi-agency visits to identify and disrupt modern day slavery and human trafficking offences
- ✓ regular operations with the Specialist Enforcement Unit on the road networks to prevent, target and disrupt modern day slavery and organised immigration crime
- ✓ further enhancements made to policing response plans for organised immigration crime, including both inland and maritime offences
- ✓ investment in specialist training and continuous professional development around modern slavery and organised immigration crime for Critical Incident Managers, Neighbourhood Response and Response Investigations Teams, and police officers and staff working within the Force Contact, Command & Control Department
- ✓ improved intelligence-sharing processes to improve the identification of modern slavery intelligence and to provide a more streamlined process for partners to submit information to the police
- ✓ continued support and engagement provided to the national Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Operational Policing Team

Elder abuse

Launch of Report Fraud – In December 2025, Report Fraud was launched to provide a single, modern, national reporting, triage and intelligence platform for fraud and cyber crime across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, for the first time.

Through the new service, intelligence is assessed and disseminated across forces, with serious and complex cases identified for specialist investigation, and victims directed into a consistent national standard of care and support.

Since the launch of Report Fraud, Sussex Police has recorded a reduction in the number of telephone calls and digital contacts received requesting support for cases of fraud and will continue to monitor this position locally.

The Force continued to remain sighted on all victims of fraud recorded in Sussex through the routine provision of a list of individuals shared by Report Fraud to ensure that the fraud caseworkers can continue to provide bespoke help, support and assistance to the most vulnerable individuals in Sussex (see 'Continued investment in dedicated fraud caseworkers' for more information). This also replicates the same approach adopted by Action Fraud previously.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, Sussex Police will continue to understand better the impact the new national platform is having on victims and businesses.

3. Monitoring and Measuring Progress Against the Public Priorities

PEEL Assessment of Sussex Police – In 2025/26, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) published the findings from their 'Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy' (PEEL) assessment of Sussex Police in 2023/25.

Sussex Police was one of only four police forces nationally to be graded 'good' for 'responding to the public' which highlights the significant improvements made in recent years to make it easier for members of the public to contact the Force. Performance in this area was in complete contrast to the 'inadequate' grading that was received for responding to the public in 2023.

Seven areas within the Force were rated as 'adequate', including leadership and force management, protecting vulnerable people, managing offenders, preventing crime, police powers and public treatment, recording data about crime, and developing a positive workforce. It is recognised that the PEEL inspection was more rigorous than before so to achieve the same ratings in many areas – with limited investment – is a sign of success and is testament to the continued efforts of the Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable and the police officers, staff and volunteers working so hard to keep everyone safe throughout the county.

HMICFRS highlighted that 'investigating crime' was an area where change and improvement was needed. Sussex Police has undertaken a significant amount of work and effort to improve the standard (and timeliness) of investigations and to achieve more successful outcomes for victims of crime. The 'requires improvement' grading received in this area will be addressed as part of longer-term plans to improve investigations in Sussex by moving police officers into more specialist teams for adult and child protection and high-risk domestic and sexual offence investigations.

The PCC has a statutory role to scrutinise the performance of Sussex Police. The HMICFRS reports provide an independent, objective, and external view of the Force's performance and support the extensive and robust challenge and scrutiny that takes place around these reports. This includes ensuring that Sussex Police have the necessary tools and support required to address the changes, areas for improvement and recommendations needed to serve the residents of Sussex most effectively.

Regular scrutiny at the Performance & Accountability Meetings – The PCC continued to use publicly webcast monthly Performance & Accountability Meetings (PAMs) to hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of Sussex Police.

The PAMs provide scrutiny and transparency over a broad range of policing functions, decisions and operational activity, alongside any inspection reports published by HMICFRS.

In 2025/26, the PAMs included challenges around the police response to: burglary, business crime (including the shop theft pilot tagging scheme), call handling times and digital contact, county lines and cuckooing, Disclosure and Barring Service checks, domestic abuse (including Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy), firearms licensing, hate crime, knife crime, Live Facial Recognition, neighbourhood policing (including the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee and Neighbourhood Policing Grant), police officer recruitment (including the Police Officer Maintenance Grant), Police Race Action Plan, road safety (including drink-and-drug-driving) and stalking protection orders.

Other topics, including the HMICFRS inspection reports into the Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) of Sussex Police, crime investigations, police response to the public disorder in July and August 2024 (part two), effectiveness of the integrity arrangements in Sussex Police and the inspection of the effectiveness of police and law enforcement bodies were also raised at the PAMs across the year.

The PAMs have been recognised as good practice nationally by the (previous) Home Secretary and the Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention. Each of the PAM sessions are archived and, together with the summary minutes from the meetings, can be viewed through the following link:
https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/watch-live/

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2026/27, HMICFRS will undertake a further 'Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy' (PEEL) assessment of Sussex Police. The findings from this inspection will be published in 2027/28.

Review of police complaints – Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner received 265 reviews following complaints made about Sussex Police, with 237 of these reviews assessed as valid (89%).

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a significant change to the police complaints system, building on the previous reforms to both the complaint and conduct systems, and expanding the role of PCCs in this process. The complaint reviews are undertaken by the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner (OSPCC), on behalf of the PCC, in accordance with the Independent Office for Police Conduct Statutory Guidance and consider whether the outcome of the handling of the initial complaint by Sussex Police was reasonable and proportionate.

Each of the reviews received by the office during 2025/26 was acknowledged and progressed, with 232 of these reviews completed throughout the year and the remaining five reviews underway. Of the reviews completed, 195 reviews were not upheld by the OSPCC (84%), and 37 reviews were upheld (16%).

The most common themes of the complaints made against the Force related to delivery of duties and service (including police action following contact and general level of service), police powers, policies and procedures (including the power to arrest and detain, use of force and detention in police custody) and individual behaviours (including incivility, impoliteness and language and tone of communication). The office routinely identifies recommendations and organisational learning through the review process for Sussex Police to consider and address.

Effective disposal of Police Appeals Tribunals – The Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner received four notices of appeals against the findings of gross (serious) misconduct brought against police officers within Sussex Police during 2025/26. This represented a 20% reduction from the five Police Appeals Tribunals (PATs) received and processed during 2024/25.

PATs are governed by the Police Appeals Tribunals Rules 2020 and delegate important procedural and administrative functions to the PCC to undertake and enable the effective and efficient disposal of any appeals received. This process is delivered by the OSPCC on behalf of the PCC.

Due to an indemnity issue, all PAT Chairs in England and Wales are currently on strike and refusing to chair PAT hearings. This means that none of the appeals received from police officers and special constables against the findings and sanctions of gross misconduct hearings are being progressed nationally.

As the PAT Chairs are appointed by the Home Office, it is them that must provide the indemnity for these hearings unless alternative arrangements are made to update the legislation. These ongoing delays continue to undermine the effective operation of the police complaints and conduct system and erode public trust and confidence.

4. Strategic Policing Requirement

The Strategic Policing Requirement [HYPERLINK] (SPR) sets out those threats which the Home Secretary has determined are the biggest threat to public safety and must be given due regard by PCCs when issuing and varying Police & Crime Plans.

The SPR supports PCCs and Chief Constables to plan, prepare and respond to these threats by clearly linking the local response to the national, highlighting the capabilities and partnerships that policing needs to ensure it can fulfil its national responsibilities.

The SPR contains seven national threats, as follows:

- violence against women and girls
- terrorism
- serious and organised crime
- national cyber incidents
- child sexual abuse
- public disorder
- civil emergencies

The SPR provides details of the action required from policing at local and regional level to the critical national threats.

The PCC has given due regard to each of the seven threat areas identified in the SPR within her new Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2024/28 [HYPERLINK] and as part of her statutory role of holding the Chief Constable to account during 2025/26.

5. Managing Resources

5.1 Summary of financial context 2025/26

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 created two separate bodies: the PCC and the Chief Constable.

The PCC is responsible for: receiving all income and funding; making all payments from the overall Police Fund; and control of all assets, liabilities and reserves.

The functions of the Chief Constable are set out under this Act. The annual budget is confirmed by the PCC in consultation with the Chief Constable. A scheme of delegation is in operation between the two bodies determining their respective responsibilities, as well as local arrangements in respect of the use of the PCC's assets and staff.

Financial planning sits at the heart of good public financial management. Alongside budget preparation, performance management and reporting, the ability to look strategically beyond the current budget period is a crucial process to support the resilience and long-term financial sustainability of the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner and Sussex Police.

The four-year strategic financial planning tool – the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) – is one of the key planning tools helping to identify available resources and options for delivering the three Public Priorities within the PCC's Police & Crime Plan and the national Strategic Policing Requirements.

2025/26 Budget

The PCC worked closely with the Chief Constable and her senior team to understand the operational needs of Sussex Police for the financial year 2025/26 and the financial pressures on the Force.

The PCC considered the financial and other implications of precept funding levels, use of reserves, inflation, and other cost pressures as part of the financial planning process. The level of cost increase from inflation (£11.4million) and other cost changes (£20.7million) totals £32.1million for 2025/26.

A £14 precept uplift in 2025/26 enabled Sussex Police to meet the increased costs whilst maintaining the progress achieved to date, sustaining the operational capacity that has been built, and enabling them to make the most of data and technology to deliver better value for money for the public.

Even with the £14 increase to the precept and a total grant funding increase of £16.1 million, expenditure still had to be reduced, leaving the requirement to make £5million of savings to balance the budget for 2025/26.

The decision to increase the police precept was supported by substantial public consultation, including 20 focus groups with councillors, clerks and chambers of commerce, as well as an independent poll of 2,524 residents where 53% supported some level of precept increase.

The 2025/26 total gross revenue budget was set at £423.689million, as follows:

- Government grant for Sussex in 2025/26 totalling £245.721million
- Precept was increased by £14 (5.5%) to £266.91 for a Band D property, generating a total council tax requirement of £177.340million
- Provision for increases in total costs (including pay, price inflation and other pressures) amounting to £32.1million
- The requirement to make a further £5million in planned efficiency savings
- The PCC delegated an Operational Delivery Budget of £413.1million to the Chief Constable for 2025/26 to enable the discharge of operational activities

Revenue Budget 2025/26

Budget Area	£million
Sussex Police Operational Delivery Budget	413.100
Office of the Sussex PCC	1.948
PCC	0.122
Community Safety	1.732
Immediate Justice *(six-month continuation)*	0.197
Victim Support & Restorative Justice *(net of £4.590million grant)*	0.408
Financial Provisions	6.182
Total Revenue Budget	**423.689**

N.B. The Net Budget Requirement after subtracting £1.709million in reserve transfers is £421.980million

Capital and Investment

The capital and investment programme, which funds the purchase, enhancement and replacement of long-term assets such as IT, fleet and estates was set at £28million for 2025/26.

Throughout the year, the PCC closely scrutinised the spending of the budget, delivery of the policing investment and performance. Scrutiny has been provided through a variety of publicly webcast monthly Performance & Accountability Meetings, Local Policing Accountability Boards, internal financial monitoring meetings and other monitoring within the scheme of governance. The key decisions taken by the PCC can be viewed through the following link: https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/how-we-work/pcc-decisions/

5.2 Summary of financial performance 2025/26

Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner Direct Operating Costs		Cost £million	Total Cost £million
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner Direct Operating and Commissioning Costs	PCC direct costs (*salary and oncosts*)	0.1	
	Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner	2.0	
	Community Safety	1.8	
	Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan	0.2	
	Victim Support & Restorative Justice	5.8	
	Violence Reduction Programme	1.3	
	National Roads Policing Operations, Intelligence and Investigation	0.8	
	Less Grant Funding & External Income		
	Victim Support & Restorative Justice Grant	*(5.3)*	
	Violence Reduction Programme Grant	*(1.3)*	
	National Roads Policing Operations, Intelligence and Investigation	*(0.8)*	
			4.6
Policing services provided by Sussex Police	Police officers	238.3	
	Police staff (including PCSOs)	127.0	
	Other employee costs*	8.7	
	Buildings	14.2	
	Transport	7.2	
	Supplies and services	47.1	
	Third-party payments**	4.6	
	Less Sussex Police income	*(49.0)*	
			398.1
Capital Financing	Capital financing costs	17.4	
	Less interest income on balances	*(3.8)*	
			13.6
Planned transfers to/(from) reserves			8.0
Total Cost of Services			424.2
Funded By	Funding from Government	(248.0)	
	Council Tax	(177.8)	
	Total Funding		(425.8)
Net revenue (surplus)/deficit			(1.6)

* *Includes ill-health pension payments, employee expenses, training and restructure costs*
** *Includes third party payments to other government bodies, partnerships and external initiatives*

The figures shown in the above table are as per the draft Statement of Accounts 2025/26 and are subject to audit. They include all office costs and services commissioned by the PCC and the cost of all activities carried out by Sussex Police.

5.3 Summary of financial headlines 2025/26

The key financial headlines from the revenue and capital outturn for 2025/26 are summarised below.

The 2025/26 revenue budget was approved by the PCC in February 2025 at £423.7million, consisting of the following:

- Government grant for Sussex in 2025/26 of £245.7million – an increase from the figure of £234.2million awarded in 2024/25
- the precept was increased by £14 for a Band D property, generating an additional £9.5million of income
- provision for increases in pay and prices, including growth, inflation and cost pressures of £32.2million
- the requirement to make a further £5million of savings
- the PCC delegated £402million (94%) of the net revenue resources to the Chief Constable for 2025/26 to enable the discharge of operational policing under police direction and control
- during the year, an additional Government grant of £2.6million was allocated to Sussex to assist with the 4.2% police officer pay award

The revenue outturn, subject to audit, is as follows:

- £1.5million (0.4%) underspend on the revised revenue budget of £425.9million
- £1.8million (0.5%) underspend on the operational delivery budget delegated to the Chief Constable
- the operational variance includes one-off income, prior year pension adjustments and slippage for activity that requires funding to be carried forward into 2026/27. Excluding these one-off adjustments from the cost base results in a core budget overspend of £0.4million
- an adverse variance of £0.2million on the OSPCC budget, including:
  - Transfer to/from reserves of £8.1m from revenue
  - General reserves were maintained at 4% in line with the Reserves Strategy

The capital and investment budget for 2025/26 was approved by the PCC in February 2025 at £28million. During the year, budget virements were agreed for slippage resulting in a revised capital budget of £21.9million.

The final outturn for the capital and investment programme was £14million for the year resulting in an under-spend of £7.9million. A case to carry slippage forward was subject to PCC approval.

The PCC's policy on reserves is based on a thorough understanding of the organisation's needs and risks. Part of this process is to give a clear explanation of the existing and proposed use of reserves. The detailed reserves policy can be found in the MTFS, and the balances held can be found in the Statement of Accounts.

Draft total usable reserves as of 31 March 2026 amounted to £69.9million. This includes general reserves of £16.9million, equating to a minimum of 4% of the 2025/26 net budget, plus £53million of other reserves that are allocated to specific delivery commitments and earmarked for future project and operational requirements over the medium-term planning period, notably to maintain the vast and aged police estate, and replace core technical systems. This figure excludes year-end reserve transfers yet to be actioned for 2025/26, including an underspend outturn figure and will change ahead of the accounts being published.

The summary of the reserves on 31 March 2026 can be found in the Statement of Accounts which also includes further details of the financial performance of 2025/26. The draft accounts, subject to audit, can be viewed through the following link:
[LINK TO BE ADDED WHEN PUBLISHED]

5.4 Financial outlook for 2026/27 and beyond

1. Key Financial Pressures

The financial landscape for Sussex Police is defined by a period of significant volatility, primarily driven by high inflationary pressures on workforce costs and complex operational demands. As a personnel-heavy organisation, where 80% of total expenditure is allocated to the workforce, financial resilience has been tested by successive above-budget pay awards and changes to employer National Insurance contributions.

Furthermore, demand for services has become increasingly complex and time-consuming. The average time an officer spends at an incident has risen by 36%, from 36 minutes in 2016 to 49 minutes in 2025. The Force also recorded the highest volume of serious crime since 2016 in 2025, driven by growth in recorded serious sexual offences and drug trafficking.

The rapid growth of digitally enabled offending (fraud and cyber crime) and the higher evidential standards required by the Crown Prosecution Service for charging decisions are both creating substantial new workloads for investigators.

Nationally, the Home Office has mandated the Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme (PECP), requiring £354million in cashable savings from policing by 2028/29. For Sussex Police, this necessitates the delivery of £6.8million in local efficiencies and savings in 2026/27 alone to balance the budget.

2. Budget Outlook and Funding

The final police grant settlement for 2026/27 confirmed that resources worth £443.2million will be made available to Sussex Police. This comprised £254.2million in Home Office grant funding (a 3.5% cash increase) which was predicated on the PCC increasing the annual council tax bill for Band D properties by £15. This 5.6% precept increase brought the proportion of policing paid for through local taxation in Sussex to 43%, compared to just 30% a decade ago.

However, the settlement presented a major structural challenge. The government has 'rolled up' specific, ring-fenced grants – including the Police Uplift Programme – into the core police funding formula. This consolidation creates a significant "maths gap", as funding no longer follows headcount but instead relies upon a 30-year-old mathematical model. For Sussex Police, which successfully recruited an additional 73 officers in 2025/26 to mitigate national shortfalls, this formula change effectively wipes out the associated funding, resulting in a £5.3million settlement shortfall against previous planning assumptions.

Consequently, even with the maximum £15 precept increase, the Sussex Police budget was left with a £4million net deficit from the settlement shortfall which, combined with previously forecast pressures, has resulted in a total budget deficit of £6.8million for the 2026/27 financial year.

3. Strategic Considerations

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) notes the financial ambiguity of the proposed structural and governance reforms. The White Paper, "From Local to National: A New Model for Policing" published in January 2026, has mandated the most significant modernisation of the police service in 200 years, shifting from a 43-force model toward a centralised National Police Service (NPS) and fewer, larger regional forces.

An Independent Review into police force structures is currently taking place to inform the next steps of this work. As there is no 'new' money allocated for this police reform, there is a high strategic risk that local budgets will be forced to absorb complex transition costs without a confirmed fair-funding settlement.

Linked to this, the change to the police funding formula has been delayed until structural mergers are underway. This prolongs the period in which Sussex Police must operate under an outdated funding model that does not fully reflect local demand.

Locally, the governance of Sussex Police is also undergoing transformation. The functions of the Sussex PCC are planned to transition to a directly elected Mayor for the new Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority in May 2028. Maximising the precept now is, therefore, deemed strategically imperative to ensure long-term financial resilience and to deliver a stable, financially sound organisation to the new mayoral governance structure.

Capital investment also remains a critical strategic priority. The four-year capital and investment programme requires £148.1million to fund the Estates Transformation Strategy, transition to an Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) fleet, and implement advanced digital technology, such as artificial intelligence and Live Facial Recognition (LFR). With long-term borrowing costs via the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) at their highest level in over a quarter of a century, the financing of these essential capital programmes will place an additional strain on revenue capacity.

4. Conclusion

Sussex Police remain a highly efficient, low-cost force, maintaining the 16th lowest Net Revenue Expenditure per head nationally and the 7th lowest precept in England and Wales. Nevertheless, the structural reality of central funding consistently falling short of operational costs dictates that the organisation cannot rely on grants alone to preserve its status as a "going concern".

Navigating the financial landscape of 2026/27 and beyond necessitates a dual strategy of maximising local tax income through the precept whilst actively pursuing cashable efficiencies. The £15 precept increase was essential to protect the significant investments made in frontline officer numbers, to manage the increasingly complex nature of modern crime and to ensure the Force remains financially resilient through an unprecedented period of local and national reform.

6. National Contribution

In addition to her work in Sussex, the PCC made the following contribution nationally in 2025/26:

- Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC) lead for Business and Retail Crime
- APCC spokesperson for PCC Security and Safeguarding
- Attended the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Stalking and Harassment Offences Working Group
- Attended His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) strategic briefings following inspections of Sussex Police
- Chaired the Pegasus Partnership with police and retailers at a national level to tackle serious and organised retail crime across England and Wales

The PCC also attended the following national events during 2025/26:

April 2025: PCC attended the Closer Police and Private Security Collaboration roundtable meeting, participated in a panel discussion with local Members of Parliament for BBC Politics South East and joined an APCC briefing on the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee.

May 2025: PCC attended an APCC briefing on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation.

June 2025: PCC participated in the South East Organised Waste Crime roundtable meeting and attended the launch of the National Farmers' Union (NFU) Mutual 2025 Rural Crime Report at the Houses of Parliament.

July 2025: PCC attended the APPC General Meeting and participated in the South East Partnership Against Rural Crime (SEPARC).

August 2025: PCC appeared on Good Morning Britain to discuss shoplifting and participated in a Local Government Reorganisation Stakeholder Engagement event.

September 2025: PCC chaired an APCC Business and Retail Crime meeting, took part in a meeting with the Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) and the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) to discuss writing a collaborative open letter to the Government regarding shop theft and attended an introductory session on Police & Crime Commissioners and the Devolution Priority Programme.

October 2025: PCC participated in a panel discussion for BBC Politics South East, took part in a meeting with representatives from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Board Members at Bexhill Town Hall and attended the Get Britain Growing: South East Conference.

November 2025: PCC spoke at the Crimestoppers Annual Dinner as a keynote speaker, participated in a Rural Crime roundtable meeting, attended an APCC New Tech Ethics meeting and participated in a Joint Retail Sector Council (RSC) and Retail Crime Forum (RCF) meeting.

December 2025: PCC attended the South East Regional Collaboration Board meeting with the other Police & Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables from Hampshire Constabulary, Kent Police, Surrey Police and Thames Valley Police.

January 2026: PCC participated in a Home Office Ministerial visit to Sussex Police Headquarters (Lewes, East Sussex) to discuss the outcomes following the delivery of the Winter of Action initiative and attended the APCC General Meeting**.**

February 2026: PCC participated in a Rural Crime roundtable meeting and met with the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire to discuss shop theft and Operation STOP.

March 2026: PCC attended the South East Regional Collaboration Board meeting, spoke at the Retail Crime Forum about the successes of Project Pegasus, participated in the NPCC National Stalking & Harassment Offences Working Group and attended the Pegasus Steering Group meeting.

7. Sussex Police: Workforce Diversity

On 31 March 2026, Sussex Police comprised 3,356 police officers and 2,689 police staff (including 279 PCSOs) – a total workforce of 6,045 individuals (headcount).

Ethnicity

- 143 police officers identified as being from a Black, Asian and Global Majority background (4%), 3,042 identified as white (91%), 113 preferred not to say (3%) and 58 individuals did not disclose their ethnicity (2%)
- 90 police staff identified as being from a Black, Asian and Global Majority background (3%), 2,437 identified as white (91%), 54 preferred not to say (2%) and 108 individuals did not disclose their ethnicity (4%)

CENSUS 2021: In Sussex, 9% of the population identified their ethnicity as Black, Asian and Global Majority and 91% identified as white.

Sex and Gender

- 1,246 police officers identified as female (37%) and 2,110 identified as male (63%)
- 1,745 police staff identified as female (65%) and 944 identified as male (35%)
- Eight police officers and staff identified their gender identity as trans, six identified as non-binary, six identified as intersex and 14 identified as other. A further 222 officers and staff preferred not to say, and 598 individuals did not disclose their gender identity

CENSUS 2021: In Sussex, 49% of the population identified their gender as female and 45% identified as male. A further 0.17% of the population identified their gender identity as trans, 0.15% identified as non-binary and 0.15% identified as other. A further 5% of the population did not disclose their gender identity.

Religion

- 12 police officers identified as Buddhist (0.4%), 870 as Christian (26%), six as Hindu (0.2%), five as Jewish (0.2%), 18 as Muslim (0.5%), one as Sikh (0.03%), 59 as other (2%) and 1,767 as none (53%). A further 268 officers (8%) preferred not to say, and 350 individuals did not disclose their religion (10%)
- 11 police staff identified as Buddhist (0.4%), 837 as Christian (31%), four as Hindu (0.2%), six as Jewish (0.2%), 18 as Muslim (0.7%), one as Sikh (0.04%), 54 as other (2%) and 1,387 as not having a religion (52%). A further 165 staff preferred not to say (6%), and 206 individuals did not disclose their religion (8%)

CENSUS 2021: In Sussex, 0.5% of the population identified their religion as Buddhist, 45% as Christian, 0.8% as Hindu, 0.3% as Jewish, 2% as Muslim, 0.1% as Sikh, 0.7% as other and 45% as no religion. A further 6% of individuals did not disclose their religion.

Age

- 357 police officers identified as being 16-24 years old (11%), 1,007 as 25-34 years old (30%), 936 as 35-44 years old (28%), 907 as 45-54 years old (27%), 146 as 55-64 years old (4%) and three as 65 years and over (1%)
- 134 police staff identified as 16-24 years old (5%), 613 as 25-34 years old (23%), 565 as 35-44 years old (21%), 638 as 45-54 years old (24%), 651 as 55-64 years old (24%) and 88 as 65 years and over (3%)

CENSUS 2021: In Sussex, 12% of the population stated their age as 16-24 years old, 14% as 25-34 years old, 15% as 35-44 years old, 17% as 45-54 years old, 16% as 55-64 years old, 14% as 65-74 years old and 13% as 75+ years.

Disability

- 373 police officers identified as having a disability (11%), 2,444 had no disability (73%), 147 preferred not to say (4%) and 392 individuals did not disclose (12%)
- 305 police staff identified as having a disability (11%), 2,083 had no disability (77%), 82 preferred not to say (3%) and 219 individuals did not disclose (8%)

CENSUS 2021: In Sussex, 26% of the population identified as having a disability and 74% did not declare a disability.

Sexual Orientation

- 118 police officers identified as bisexual (4%), 189 as gay or lesbian (6%), 2,496 as heterosexual (74%), seven as other (0.2%), 220 preferred not to say (7%) and 326 individuals did not disclose their sexual orientation (10%)
- 78 police staff identified as bisexual (3%), 123 as gay or lesbian (5%), 2,109 as heterosexual (78%), 14 as other (0.5%), 160 preferred not to say (6%) and 205 individuals did not disclose their sexual orientation (8%)

CENSUS 2021: In Sussex, 2% of the population identified their sexual orientation as bisexual, 2% as gay or lesbian, 88% as heterosexual, 0.4% as other and 7% individuals did not disclose their sexual orientation.

8. Summary of Funding Allocated to Victims' Services and Others in Sussex

8.1 Ministry of Justice: Funding Allocated to Victims' Services in Sussex

Name of Organisation	Name of Project or Funding Use	Funding
Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse	Specialist support for families bereaved by suicide and/or unexplained deaths following domestic abuse	£25,000
Barnardo's	Project SOLAH (Safer Online at Home) support for children and young people	£66,780
Brake	Independent Road Victim Advocate caseworker post to provide support to bereaved and injured victims of road traffic collisions	£47,335
Brighton & Hove City Council	Safe Space Sussex location at St Paul's Church, Brighton to provide support for anyone in need of help on a Friday and Saturday night	£15,000
Brighton & Hove City Council	Contribution to the specialist domestic abuse service	£80,000
Brighton Women's Centre	Safe Space Sussex Women's Hub	£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	£62,508
Child & Adolescent to Parent Abuse First Response	Online platform for child to parent abuse support	£8,670
Centre for Public Innovation	Sexual violence needs assessment for Sussex	£44,980
Change, Grow, Live	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor and Health Independent Domestic Violence Advisor posts	£23,851
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	Dometic abuse and sexual violence support for Gypsies, Romas and Travellers	£23,314
Hersana	Independent Gender-based Violence Advisor post	£124,949
Hersana	Counselling for those at risk of harmful practices	£49,195
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
Lifecentre	Journey to Recovery (employment programme for victims and survivors of sexual violence)	£128,008
Lotus Families	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor post and Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse group sessions	£50,564
Lotus Families	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor triage post for domestic abuse service and delivery of the 'Who's in Charge' group sessions	£69,282
ManKind	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor posts for male victims and counselling and recovery programme	£112,212
ManKind	Independent Sexual Violence Advisor for male victims	£214,502
My Sisters' House Women's Centre	Domestic Abuse Recovering Together Programme (recovery programme to support women and children who have escaped domestic abuse)	£65,991
My Sisters' House Women's Centre	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor post for Eastern European community	£52,091
Oasis Project	Looking Forward Project (programme for women who have had a child or children permanently removed from their care via the family court)	£33,217
Rise	Group recovery work for victims and survivors of domestic abuse	£41,305
Rise	Young Persons Violence Advisor post to provide young survivors with age-specific support and advice	£61,631
Safe in Sussex	Domestic abuse outreach worker	£69,313
Safe In Sussex	Group support and 1-2-1 support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse	£113,163
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	£433,068
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
Survivors' Network	Outreach service and group support for survivors of sexual violence (biological women only)	£40,000

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
The Hope Charity	Mental health support for families	£30,000
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	Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers posts	£91,212
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
Victim Support	Pan Sussex multi-crime type support provision	£744,384
Victim Support	Young Witness Service	£90,869
Victim Support	Pan Sussex Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor posts	£165,927
Victim Support	Domestic abuse helpline	£32,885
Worth Services	Contribution to the specialist domestic abuse service and Child Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy post	£108,681
YMCA DownsLink Group	Provision of the What is Sexual Exploitation service to support Project SOLAH (Safer Online at Home)	£144,683
Yada	The Esther Project (specialist support for those in the sex industry)	£10,200
Total		**£5,037,726**

Home Office: Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Fund

Name of Organisation	Name of Project or Funding Use	Funding
Brighton Housing Trust	Psychotherapist and specialist mental health worker	£90,385
Change, Grow, Live	Senior substance misuse and complex needs worker	£88,919
Interventions Alliance	Compulsive and Obsessive Behaviour Interventions Programme	£145,000
Interventions Alliance	Challenging Unhealthy Beliefs and Behaviours Programme	10,000
Sussex Police	Sussex Police salary costs for High Harm Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme	£108,165
Sussex Police	Sussex Police salary costs for Stalking Clinic and Compulsive and Obsessive Behaviour Interventions Programme, including Buddi smart tags	£110,665
Veritas Justice	Provision of support to the Sussex Stalking Clinic and High Harm Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme	£32,130
Victim Support	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor post for Brighton & Hove and East Sussex	£48,000
Worth Services	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor post for West Sussex	£48,000
Total		**£681,264**

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SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME PANEL

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

2 July 2026

The Role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner in Ensuring Sussex Police Provide an Effective Response to Knife-enabled Crime

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Focus for Scrutiny:

The Panel is asked to scrutinise the Commissioner's work in holding Sussex Police to account for the effectiveness of the response to knife-enabled crime.

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 Sussex Police provide an effective response to knife-enabled crime

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Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

To:	The Sussex Police & Crime Panel.
From:	The Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner.
Subject:	The role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner in ensuring Sussex Police provide an effective response to knife-enabled crime.
Date:	2 July 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 that Sussex Police provide an effective response to knife-enabled crime in Sussex.

1.2 The report also provides an outline of the threat and scale of knife crime, the Sussex Police response to knife-enabled crime, national strategy and legislation to tackle knife crime, 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 Threat and scale of knife crime in Sussex and England Wales

2.1 There were 49,151 knife-enabled crimes recorded in England and Wales between 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025. This equated to 5,397 fewer offences recorded compared to the 54,548 crimes recorded in the same period in 2024 and represented a 10% reduction.

2.2 In Sussex, total recorded knife-enabled crimes reduced by 15% across 2025, with 167 fewer offences recorded [940] across the calendar year compared to the 1,107 knife-enabled crimes recorded in 2024. Sussex Police also recorded the 32nd lowest volume of knife-enabled crimes across the 43 police force areas for the same 12-month period.

2.3 These reductions were also greater than the collective 9% reduction recorded by the police forces in the South East region [Hampshire Constabulary, Kent Police, Surrey Police and Thames Valley Police] and the reduction recorded for all police forces nationally [-10%].

2.4 The prevalence of knife-enabled crime in Sussex continues to remain low, with 53 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument per 100,000 population recorded across 2025, compared to 80 offences per 100,000 for all forces in England and Wales. The Force was also positioned 20th out of 43 police force areas nationally in terms of the lowest number of offences recorded [per 100,000 population] across the same 12-month period.

2.5 One of the challenges for the police is that there is no national definition of knife crime and, as such, this can be interpreted to include any criminal offence that is commissioned with the use of a knife, bladed or pointed article, including razors and broken glass bottles. It is also important to note that knife-enabled crime is different from unlawful ownership or possession of a knife, blade or other pointed article.

2.6 Knife-enabled crime includes several crime types where a knife, bladed or other pointed article is used or threatened in the commission of the specified offence, with the majority consisting of assault and/or robbery. This also extends to offences where the weapon may not have been seen but is believed to be present at the time of the offence by the victim or witness(es). Knife-enabled crime must also take place in person and does not include remote threats or instances when images of knives are sent to individuals via social media.

2.7 Further information about 'Defining knife crime' can be viewed on the College of Policing website through the following link: https://www.college.police.uk/guidance/knife-crime-problem-solving-guide/defining-knife-crime

3.0 Sussex Police response to knife-enabled crime

3.1 Knife-enabled crime is one of the agreed priorities for Sussex Police in 2026/27 and continues to be included within the control strategy used by the Force. This approach ensures that dedicated police resources are proactively tasked with delivering targeted policing activity in this area, collaborative work with statutory partners and other agencies is maximised and that the workforce is aware of the importance of preventing and tackling knife crime effectively.

3.2 Sussex Police undertake year-round policing activity and focused operations to prevent knife-enabled crime, educate individuals about the possible consequences of carrying knives [and other offensive weapons] and deliver targeted enforcement activity at locations throughout Sussex identified as having higher-than-average rates of knife-enabled crime and serious violence. This collective activity is delivered across three strands of policing: prevention, education and enforcement.

3.3 Prevention

3.3.1 The Force work collaboratively with a range of statutory and non-statutory partners to address serious violence and the underlying causes of violent crime throughout Sussex. This partnership activity is delivered through the Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) which provides the leadership and strategic coordination around the local response to serious violence.

3.3.2 Launched in 2019/20, the Partnership brings together specialist partners from the police, local government, probation services, health and social care providers and the community, charity and voluntary sector to tackle serious violence and the underlying causes of violent crime.

3.3.3 Early intervention and preventative work are recognised to be fundamental in terms of reducing the risk of serious violence to individuals and local communities. During 2025/26, the VRP worked with more than 4,500 children and young people engaged in intervention activity across Sussex to try and deter them serious violence and knife crime.

3.3.4 In line with the Home Office Young Futures Programme, Sussex established a Young Futures Prevention Panel (YFPP) pilot in West Sussex in September 2025 to identify 'at risk' children and young people through a series of referral pathways. The Panel consists of multi-agency partners and meets bi-monthly to consider each child and young person and determine what support is required and which service is best-placed to provide it.

3.3.5 Following its launch, 178 young people were referred to the Panel across the trial period to 31 March 2026, of which 85 of these individuals met the criteria to receive active referrals [48%]. The pilot will run for a further year during 2026/27, after which it is anticipated that YFPPs will be rolled out nationally across England and Wales in 2027/28.

3.3.6 Sussex Police has developed a Habitual Knife Carrier (HKC) index to identify, monitor and support individuals and cohorts at risk of becoming involved in knife-enabled crime. This multi-agency approach aims to intervene early and divert individuals from current or future involvement in knife-enabled crime and other criminal activity [N.B. The HKC index is now recognised to be 'best practice' and is used by all police force areas in England and Wales].

3.3.7 The Force undertake high-visibility patrols and engagement activity in town centres, public places and other 'hotspot' locations throughout Sussex identified as having higher-than-average rates of knife-enabled crime and serious violence. These visible patrols are undertaken by a combination of uniformed and plain clothes officers to maximise the impact and effectiveness. During 2025/26, Sussex Police delivered almost 11,000 hours of targeted hotspot policing patrols and problem-solving activity in these areas which resulted in nearly 100 knives and other offensive weapons being seized from public locations, alongside proactive and visible engagement with circa. 86,000 individuals and local businesses.

3.3.8 Stop and search powers are also used where there is reasonable suspicion that individuals are carrying weapons. Sussex Police target known individuals and habitual weapon carriers, where lawful and proportionate grounds exist to do so, based on information and intelligence received from a range of different sources and submissions. During 2025/26, Sussex Police conducted 497 stop and searches as part of this hotspot policing activity which resulted in more than 490 arrests being made.

3.3.9 To support this work, the Force undertake knife sweeps and searches of public spaces, wooded areas and undergrowth in hotspot locations throughout the year where intelligence suggests that knife-enabled crime may be an issue or areas where drug-related offences are known to have taken place previously.

3.3.10 Sussex Police continue to use knife arches [i.e. walk-through metal detectors] and other technology to find and detect metallic objects, including knives and other weapons, in public spaces and schools, colleges and other educational establishments as part of targeted police activity in this area.

3.3.11 The Force have also made knife amnesty bins available all year round at police stations across Sussex where individuals can safely dispose of knives, blades or pointed articles [and other offensive weapons] with no repercussions, consequences or questions asked.

3.3.12 Sussex Police and partners have continued to deliver on the Serious Violence Duty locally. The duty was introduced nationally in January 2023 to ensure that all relevant services and responsible authorities work together to share information and collaborate on interventions to prevent and reduce serious crimes in local communities. The work of the Force and partners in delivering the duty in Sussex is overseen by a Violence Reduction Executive Board, chaired by the Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer within the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner.

3.3.13 Sussex Police also plan to introduce a Safer Knife Replacement Scheme pilot in 2026/27 which will swap pointed kitchen knives with safer round-ended ones. The scheme builds on best practice identified in other police force areas and aims to make homes, schools and communities safer, and lower the risk of harm in households identified as being at greater risk of harm, whether by accident or on purpose. Individuals who take part in the replacement scheme receive safety advice about the dangers of inappropriate knife use too.

3.4 Education

3.4.1 Sussex Police make proactive visits to schools, colleges and other educational establishments throughout the county – via Neighbourhood Youth Officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) – to provide targeted inputs to children and young people around knife crime awareness, the potential consequences of possessing, carrying and using knives [or other offensive weapons] and the profound trauma these offences can have on victims, families, communities and the professionals who respond.

3.4.2 Sussex Police support Operation Sceptre – a national initiative launched in 2016 to tackle knife crime across England and Wales. This comprises an enhanced policing response delivered through a period of intensified action during two separate weeks of the calendar year [March and November] to raise awareness and educate individuals and communities about knife crime and the work that is taking place locally to tackle the root causes of this serious violence.

3.4.3 The Force also undertakes complementary engagement activity with individuals and local communities to educate them further about knife-enabled crime and remind businesses and retailers about their duty to sell knives [and other weapons] in a lawful and responsible manner.

3.5 Enforcement

3.5.1 Sussex Police continue to review, triage and evaluate any information and intelligence received from members of the public and multi-agency partners about individuals who may be in possession of knives and/or are engaged in the illegal selling of knives [and other weapons]. This includes assessing the submissions made based on threat, harm and risk to determine whether the reported intelligence requires immediate action, a safeguarding response or can be used to support ongoing investigations and pursue enforcement activity.

3.5.2 The Force conducts regular knife test purchases – both online and in person – in partnership with Trading Standards and utilising police cadets as underage volunteers to ensure that the businesses and retailers selling these weapons on a lawful basis are fully compliant with the legislation and age restrictions in place. This approach seeks to use a combination of engagement, education and enforcement, with the outcome taken dependent on an investigation into the individual circumstances involved and/or whether a business or retailer is a repeat offender.

3.5.3 Sussex Police has also increased its partnership working with Border Force and other agencies to intercept illegal knives imported into the country and visit the addresses where these knives were intended for delivery to gather information and intelligence, investigate any other criminal offences that may be identified and undertake enforcement activity as appropriate.

3.5.4 Further information about the Sussex Police response to serious violence, including knife crime, can be viewed through the following link: https://www.sussex.police.uk/police-forces/sussex-police/areas/campaigns/campaigns/serious-violence/

4.0 National strategy and legislation to tackle knife crime

4.1 In April 2026, the Government published a plan – 'Protecting lives, building hope' – which set out the actions being taken to deliver a sustained reduction in knife crime to meet its ambition to halve knife crime in a decade. This includes a commitment to:

- ✓ SUPPORT young people so they get a better start in life
- ✓ STOP those at risk from turning to knife crime
- ✓ POLICE our streets to punish perpetrators and stop offending
- ✓ END the cycle of knife crime

4.2 The plan can be viewed in full through the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-lives-building-hope-a-plan-to-halve-knife-crime

4.3 The implementation of the Crime and Policing Act 2026 [also in April 2026] strengthened further the law on the online sale of knives and ensured that the police and the courts now have the necessary powers to remove offensive weapons from the streets, public spaces and communities across England and Wales. This included specific enhancements to:

- strengthen age verification requirements for the online sale and delivery of knives and crossbows
- introduce a requirement on retailers to report bulk sales of bladed articles
- hold senior managers of online platforms personally liable for failure to take action to remove illegal content relating to knives and offensive weapons
- enable the police to seize, retain and destroy knives held in private when they are lawfully on private property and have reasonable grounds to suspect the item(s) will likely be used in connection with unlawful violence
- increase the maximum penalty, from six months' imprisonment to two years' imprisonment, for the offences of private possession, importation, manufacture, sale or supply of prohibited offensive weapons and knives and of selling knives to those under 18
- introduce a new offence of possession of a knife or offensive weapon in public or private with intent to use unlawful violence. The offence will carry a maximum penalty of seven years' imprisonment. The police will also have a new power to seize knives on any premises if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the knife is likely to be used in connection with unlawful violence.

5.0 Funding secured by the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

5.1 The PCC was successful in securing funding worth more than £2.919million during 2025/26 to tackle serious violence in Sussex, including targeted activities to improve the police response to knife-enabled crime and the possession of other offensive weapons. This funding comprised:

- ✓ £1.436million from the Home Office Hotspot Response Fund to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) and serious violence in the highest demand locations after recognising the crossover that exists between both areas of criminality

- ✓ £1.047million from the Home Office to maintain the local response to serious violence and support violence reduction throughout the county through the Violence Reduction Partnership

- ✓ £269,749 to assist Sussex Police and all relevant services and responsible authorities to work together to deliver the Serious Violence Duty by sharing information and collaborating on interventions to prevent and reduce serious crimes in local communities

- ✓ £167,700 to deliver a Young Futures Prevention Panel pilot in West Sussex to identify children and young people at an escalating risk of being drawn into crime and ASB at an earlier stage and to provide them with access to local support services and interventions to divert them away from this offending behaviour

5.2 These funds are in addition to the funding worth more than £15.175million secured by the PCC in previous years to strengthen the police and partner response to tackling serious violence [and knife crime] in Sussex and to reduce the harm caused to individuals and local communities. The amount of funding received each year, and the funding use, is summarised in the table below:

Year	Amount	Funding Use
2024/25	£2.752m	'Hotspot' response funding to tackle ASB and serious violence in the highest demand locations; Violence Reduction Partnership and implementation of the Serious Violence Duty
2023/24	£1.847m	'GRIP' funding to tackle serious violence and knife crime; Violence Reduction Partnership and implementation of the Serious Violence Duty
2022/23	£2.123m	'GRIP' funding to tackle serious violence and knife crime and Violence Reduction Partnership
2021/22	£2.000m	'GRIP' funding to tackle serious violence and knife crime; Violence Reduction Partnership; SWITCH mentoring programme and trauma informed training programme
2020/21	£2.450m	'Surge' enforcement activity; Early Intervention Youth Programme: REBOOT and Violence Reduction Partnership
2019/20	£3.111m	'Surge' enforcement activity; Early Intervention Youth Programme: REBOOT and Violence Reduction Partnership
2018/19	£0.891m	Early Intervention Youth Programme: REBOOT

N.B. The PCC has secured more than £18.094million to tackle serious violence, including knife crime, in Sussex since 2018/19.

5.3 In March 2026, the PCC secured a further £594,909 from the Home Office through the Knife Crime Concentration Fund (KCCF) which aims to halve knife crime in England and Wales within a decade. This funding will be used to deliver intensive, problem-solving activity in four targeted, high-harm locations across Sussex to reduce knife crime – two in Brighton and one each in Eastbourne and Crawley. This enhanced and targeted policing activity will be delivered across 2026/27 and will be monitored by the PCC at her monthly webcast Performance & Accountability Meetings [see 'Role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner' for more information].

5.4 The PCC allocated a further £1.215million to Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council and each of the 12 District and Borough Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in Sussex across 2026/27. This was the 14th consecutive year that the PCC has protected this funding, despite reductions in national funding allocations, which has been used by each of the CSPs to tackle crime and local priorities, including serious violence, knife crime and the possession of offensive weapon offences.

5.5 Other local projects which provide diversionary activities for children and young people to develop resilience in positive settings and, indirectly, tackle serious violence and knife crime in Sussex have been supported through the Safer in Sussex Community Fund (SiSCF). This included 17 projects [ranging from youth clubs to boxing clubs to mentoring initiatives] which received £57,777 of funding in 2025/26.

5.6 The SiSCF provides financial support [grant awards up to £5,000] to a diverse range of local organisations and community projects that aim to reduce crime and improve community safety. In total, £2.425million has been allocated by the PCC to support 624 community projects since the fund was first created.

6.0 Role of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

6.1 The Sussex PCC recognises that tackling knife-enabled crime effectively remains fundamentally important to better protect the communities in Sussex.

6.2 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 deliver targeted activities to tackle knife-enabled crime and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the response provided by the Force.

6.3 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 Sussex Police continue to tackle knife-enabled crime by identifying children and young people at an escalating risk of being drawn into knife crime and providing them with greater access to local support services and interventions to divert them away from this offending behaviour.

6.4 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. The PCC has continued to use her monthly webcast Performance & Accountability Meetings (PAMs) to scrutinise and challenge the Chief Constable about the Sussex Police response to knife-enabled crime on behalf of members of the public.

6.5 The Force's response to knife crime was raised at the most recent PAM on 21 May 2026 [Office for National Statistics – Knife Crime]. This area was also discussed at the PAMs on 25 November 2025 [Operation Sceptre – Knife Crime Awareness Week]; 22 May 2025 [Knife-Enabled Crime] and 18 October 2024 [Knife Amnesty – National Surrender and Compensation Scheme]. Each of these sessions is archived and, together with the summary notes from the meeting, can be viewed on the PCC's website through the following link: https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/how-we-work/watch-live/

Mark Streater
Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer
Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME PANEL

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

2 July 2026

Annual Report from the Host Authority for 2025/26

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

1. **Background**

1.1 The Panel incurred the costs below in respect of its operation in the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

- £70,987.59 for administrative expenses.
- £554.40 for members' expenses.

Total: £71,541.99

In line with the terms of the grant, the Host Authority (West Sussex County Council) submitted a claim for this amount in early June, ahead of the 30 June deadline.

1.2 The Panel is required to publish a summary of its operating costs every year. A breakdown of expenses can be found on the Panel's webpage: https://sussexpcp.gov.uk/about/

2. **Discussion**

2.1 The Panel met formally four times in 2025/26. The meetings were held in person, in public, at County Hall, Lewes. Panel meetings are furthermore webcast live. 1079 people watched the January meeting online (76 live, 1003 via the archive).

2.2 All statutory scrutiny duties were fulfilled in 25/26, namely:

- Scrutiny of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Annual Report in July 2025
- Scrutiny of the Commissioner's proposed precept in January 2026

Both are deemed "special functions" within the relevant legislation.

2.3 Scrutiny of the PCC's Annual Report 2024/25 considered performance against the three strands of the Police and Crime Plan 2021/24, and delivery of initiatives funded by previous precept increases.

2.4 The Panel worked with the Commissioner's officers in two Working Group meetings, to consider development of the 2026/27 budget and precept.

2.5 The Group made comments to guide the Commissioner's office in their development of the precept, which were taken up as the work progressed.

2.6 Informed by the Working Group's final report, the Panel reviewed and supported the PCC's proposed precept in January 2026.

2.7 The Panel additionally scrutinised the Commissioner's role in specific areas of interest at its formal meetings. These were:

- Ensuring the Effectiveness of Vetting Processes within Sussex Police
- Hate Crime
- Estates Strategy 2024/28
- County Lines and Cuckooing
- The outcomes and organisational learning arising from the Sussex PCC's role as the review body for Schedule 3 complaints
- Sussex Police's Progress in recruiting to maintain the Home Office's baseline headcount

2.8 Training was offered to all new members joining the Panel during the year

2.9 Members visited Sussex Police's Contact, Command, and Control Centre, and the training facility in Kingstanding. Members also attended an informal presentation on Victim Services.

2.10 The Annual Conference for Police Fire and Crime Panels was not held in 2025. It is hoped the conference will resume in 2026/27.

2.11 The Panel's website continues to operate effectively. For example, for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026:

- There were 6697 (5,253 in 24/25) visits to the site, with pages viewed 12,451 (10,142 in 24/25) times in total.
- The average visits per day was 18. There were spikes in traffic coinciding with the publication of agenda papers for upcoming meetings. The biggest spike (approx. 368 visits) coincided with the publication of minutes for the July 2025 (annual) meeting, at which the Panel considered the Commissioner's annual report.

- The most popular pages remain the homepage, as expected, with the "previous meetings" page, the second most popular. This suggests the

site is widely used to view archive minutes and webcast recordings, as well as access information on forthcoming meetings including meeting agendas.

Funding for 2026/27

2.12 Home Office funding will remain unchanged for 2026/27, comprising £53,300 for Panel administration costs, and up to £18,400 (20 x £920), available for members' allowable expenses. The two sums are not ring-fenced, giving a total of £71,700 (unchanged since 2012).

2.13 The funding is normally paid in arrears, in six-monthly instalments. The PCP must publish details of all Panel expenditure, including administration costs and individual Panel member claims for expenses, on its website. Per para 1.2, the Panel has complied with this requirement for 25/26.

2.14 It is anticipated that the staff costs of administering the Panel will be achieved within the envelope of funding provided by the Home Office for the forthcoming year.

3. **Resource Implications and Value for Money**

3.1 The Constitution of Sussex Police and Crime Panel states that its total running costs shall be contained within the funding provided by the Home Office.

4. **Risk Management Implications**

4.1 None

5. **Other Considerations – Equality – Crime Reduction – Human Rights**

5.1 Not applicable

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SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME PANEL

Quarterly Report of Complaints

2 July 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 24 June 2026

2.1 During the subject period, four 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. Each complainant was referred to the correct agency for considering the matter raised.

3 Complaints

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

3.1.1 None - see 2.1

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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