Sussex Police and Crime Panel

3 October 2025 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Lewes.

Present:

Cllr Baynham	Horsham District Council	Cllr Birch	Arun District Council
Cllr Khan	Crawley Borough Council	Cllr Ballard	Eastbourne Borough Council
Cllr Hollidge	East Sussex County Council	Cllr Standley	East Sussex County 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 Asaduzzaman	Brighton and Hove City Council	Cllr Meek	Lewes District Council

Substitutes: Cllr Asaduzzaman for Cllr Czolak, Cllr Meek for Cllr Keene

Apologies were received from Cllr Czolak (Brighton & Hove City Council), Cllr Sluman (Adur District Council), Cllr Hogan (Brighton & Hove City Council), Cllr Bangert (Chichester District Council), Cllr Keene (Lewes District Council), Cllr Bayliss (Rother District 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

58. Declarations of Interest

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

Panel Member	Personal Interest
Cllr Baynham	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources at Horsham District Council.
Cllr Ballard	Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Eastbourne Borough 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.
Cllr Czolak	Cabinet Advisor on Community Safety at Brighton and Hove City Council.
Cllr Whorlow	Vice Chair for Adur and Worthing Community Safety 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.
Mrs Scholefield	A serving magistrate.

59. Urgent Matters

59.1 There were no urgent matters declared.

60. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

60.1 The Panel is asked to approve the draft minutes of the previous meeting on 3 July 2025 as an accurate record.

60.2 It was clarified for the record that, under Paragraph 53.23 of the previous meeting minutes, funding from the National Driver Retraining Scheme is paid into the police fund and not the Commissioner's budget.

60.3 Resolved – the Committee approved the draft minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate record.

61. Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner

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

61.2 As a supplemental to the question received from the public, members raised concerns that complaints and intelligence brought by the public may not being given due weight and that the public may be forming a negative perception as a result.

61.3 The Commissioner encouraged all members of the public to report any crime they witness occurring and stressed that Sussex Police do not have the capacity to go back to every member of the public that reports a crime to inform them of their progress, and that this is not due to lack of effort or interest. The Commissioner stressed that the police have a duty to keep victims of crime informed however, and she further informed the Panel about a new reporting system being trialled which would allow the police to keep involved parties up to date with any progress.

61.4 The Chair invited questions from the Panel to the Commissioner. A summary of the main questions and responses were as follows:

1. Question: In light of the recent attack on a synagogue in Manchester, what is Sussex Police doing to protect the Jewish community and the Muslim community, in case of backlash as a result of the attack?
   Answer: The Commissioner offered her thoughts and prayers to the victims and their families and that all stand in solidarity with the Jewish community. The Commissioner assured the Panel that the Chief Constable had reassured her that Sussex Police were stepping up their engagement with various communities across Sussex.

2. Question: With only seven months to go until mayoral elections for Sussex, has there been any transition plan agreed and how will this affect the office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner?
   Answer: The Commissioner explained that the latest information from the government is that the office of Police and Crime Commissioner would be subsumed into the Mayor's office in 2027, not 2026 as previously suggested. Mr Mark Streater, Chief Executive Officer for the OSPCC, further explained to the Panel that an internal transition working group had been appointed and met regularly, alongside regular engagement with the Home Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG).

3. Question: As a supplemental to the above, will arrangements for the Police and Crime Panel continue as they currently are?
   Answer: The Commissioner confirmed that there were no plans for any changes to the arrangements for the Panel until such time as the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner transitions to the new Mayor's authority.

4. Question: How does the national threat level and the requirements of Operation Plato affect Sussex Police?
   Answer: The Commissioner explained that Sussex Police would be linked in through the National Police Chief's Council on the national threat level and any preparations involved. There was some confusion over whether the national threat level had been raised and it was verified by the Commissioner's team that the threat level had not been raised.

5. Question: With the Secretary of State for Transport now approving a second runway at Gatwick Airport, will this have an impact on policing and will more officers be recruited as a result?
   Answer: The Commissioner explained that Sussex Police has an ongoing agreement with Gatwick Airport Ltd around the policing of the airport and there would be an ongoing negotiation between the two in regard to the second runway and any additional resources needed. The Commissioner added that there was potential for disruption as a result of the second runway and any associated protests could impact Sussex Police.

6. Question: Is the Commissioner expecting government funding to help with the impact of increased passenger numbers at Gatwick Airport as a result of the second runway and associated impact on Sussex Police?
   Answer: The Commissioner explained that the current ongoing agreement between Gatwick Airport and Sussex Police would require a commercial conversation around resources and funding between the two organisations.

7. Question: According to a recent article on sexual offences investigations' collapse due to missing evidence in the Argus newspaper, 294 cases passed to the CPS by Sussex Police collapsed due to missing, uncollected, damaged or otherwise contaminated evidence. What are the Commissioner's comments on this and what steps are being taken to improve this statistic?
   Answer: The Commissioner cautioned that she could not comment on specific cases but generally, when a case cannot be taken forward by the CPS, and this is recorded as the police being at fault, it would be recorded in CPS data as an E72 in their data, which can potentially cover a lot of different scenarios. She acknowledged the challenges faced by police forces with the closure and outsourcing of forensic services and the effect this had on some cases. She stressed, however, that sexual offence victims are supported throughout the investigation and prosecution process, and that Sussex Police are working closely with CPS to ensure that any evidence in a case is gathered and presented in a timely manner to ensure the best chance for a conviction.

8. In a supplemental question to the above on the possibility of producing a report on this issue, Mr Mark Streater explained that the preservation of property seized in the course of an investigation is the remit of the Chief Constable and her team. He explained that Sussex Police had recently reviewed, and

would continue reviewing, how evidence is retained in their property stores with ongoing oversight from the Joint Audit Committee. The Commissioner further assured the Panel that she would be discussing the results of the review at a future accountability meeting with the Chief Constable and she would be happy to let the Panel know when that would take place after the review has completed.

9. Question: With the Government recently announcing the expansion of live facial recognition technology, with Sussex Police due to receive two vans equipped with the technology, does the Commissioner welcome this despite concerns around the newness of the technology and its accuracy, with associated concerns around racial bias and potential for discrimination? Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that the technology was designed to be reliable, proportionate, and fair, with guidelines for its use for the Police in line with legislation and explained how it determines persons of interest against a pre-selected watchlist. She stressed that any footage of persons not on that predetermined list would be instantly deleted and it is the police's responsibility to maintain this technology and deploy it only according to the relevant legislation. She then shared some anecdotes of its successful use to protect the public in Croydon, and assured the Panel of its purpose to inform and protect the public from offenders. Finally, she shared that Sussex Police had shared a list of frequently asked questions about the technology and its use on their website.

10. Question: As a supplemental to the above, is this the first time the technology has been deployed in Sussex or have Sussex Police already used other forms of live facial recognition? Answer: The Commissioner confirmed that it was the first time that live facial recognition was being used in Sussex and that the vans were being shared with Surrey Police. She further confirmed that Sussex Police had previously used retrospective facial recognition technology in the past.

11. Question: Have there been any impacts in terms of morale or resources on the police as a result of the asylum hotel protests? Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that Sussex Police were highly trained in keeping public order and were committed to facilitating peaceful protest but acknowledged the pressures faced by police forces in providing mutual aid to other forces when needed. She acknowledged the financial impact of providing officers to aid other forces but assured the Panel that those costs could be recouped from the National Police Chief's Council. She further acknowledged the recent challenges to police morale and that while those challenges exist, there are also positive examples of public duty among Sussex Police and the police community more widely.

12. Question: As a supplemental follow up to the above, have there been discussions with the Chief Constable in relation to other

agencies which have supported the police around the issues to do with asylum hotels and the hanging of flags in public places?
Answer: The Commissioner explained that it was her understanding that the issue of flags being hung in public places was the responsibility of the local council in the first instance, with the police becoming involved only if there was criminal behaviour occurring. She assured the Panel that she anticipated that the police would be in close contact with local authorities to support them on these issues.

13. Question: In reference to the recent Panorama documentary about the Metropolitan Police, does the Commissioner consider the behaviours and attitudes of police officers exposed by the programme to be a potential factor in the reluctance of victims to come forward and report crime, especially women and ethnic minorities?
Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that she agreed that there was such a possibility and explained the efforts of the Met Police Commissioner to address the issues exposed by the Panorama programme. Further, she explained the independent custody visitor scheme ran by the OSPCC and extended an offer for interested members of the Panel to visit for themselves.

14. Question: From a policing perspective, what can be done by the Chief Constable to ensure that frontline police officers are receiving the necessary support in order to the deliver the service expected by the public?
Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that the Chief Constable works alongside all staff organisations as well as frontline officers in order to ensure that morale is high and that they receive the right support in order to do their jobs, including engagement with her officers through outreach. The Commissioner shared her view that Sussex Police were incredibly empathetic as a police force and that victims were well-supported as a result.

15. Question: How will community safety policing powers ensure that small local businesses, especially independent retailers, on the high street are protected from crimes such as theft, vandalism, and anti-social behaviour, especially in cities such as Brighton and Hove?
Answer: The Commissioner acknowledged the difficulties of running a small business, especially in Brighton, and the challenges of policing such urban environments effectively. She explained her role as the national lead for business crime among PCCs and her efforts to highlight these issues. The Commissioner further explained to members that Sussex Police had a dedicated business crime team to tackle these issues and they were seeing a greater increase in reporting and solved rates for business crime.

16. Question: As a supplemental to the above, under the coming devolution measures announced by the government, how will devolution support a stronger collaboration between police, local

authorities, and small business networks to tackle crime and disorder in local communities?
Answer: The Commissioner stressed that this would be the remit of the incoming Mayor to determine but added that there are already several crime reduction partnerships across the county, with numerous business improvement districts, already collaborating to work with local authorities and the police to reduce business crime and improve economic growth.

17. Question: What does the term 'persistent' mean in relation to shoplifters, how a tagged 'persistent shoplifter' would be monitored, and what actions would be taken if that tagged person entered an area where crime could likely be committed again?
Answer: The Commissioner explained that a prolific offender is defined as someone with more than five crimes on their record. She further explained that the tags work similarly to other types, but with GPS tracking that allows the offender to be tracked and banned from areas where crime is likely to occur. She further added that this initiative was supported by the Chief Constable on an operational level.

18. Question: as a supplementary to the above, members asked who decided which offenders would receive tags?
Answer: The Commissioner explained that there would be a further announcement from her office about the scheme later in the week and she couldn't say more.

62. The Role of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner in holding Sussex Police to account for improving the response provided to hate crime

62.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced by Commissioner Bourne and presented by Mr Mark Streater, Chief Executive Officer, OSPCC.

62.2 The Chair invited the Panel to ask questions. A summary of questions and responses were as follows:

62.3 Members raised concerns over underreporting of hate crimes by historically affected groups and asked if there were any community groups which might be able to provide data to the police to more accurately inform their reporting.

62.4 The Commissioner acknowledged the difficulties experienced by some groups when reporting hate crime and explained that Sussex Police employ a number of hate crime coordinators and community engagement advisors across the force to support victims

and affected groups, which have started to yield some improvement. She further pointed out that victims could report anonymously through Crimestoppers, if they did not feel comfortable reporting crime directly to the police.

62.5 At the request of the Panel, the phone number for the Crimestoppers Contact Centre was included in the minutes: 0800 555 111.

62.6 Members requested that the Commissioner provide some clarity on the necessity of reporting non-hate crime incidents, due to the arguments made across the political spectrum about such being used as a means to curtail freedom of speech and as a waste of police resources.

62.7 The Commissioner explained that the recording of non-hate crime incidents was introduced after the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 as an early warning mechanism for police to monitor and gather intelligence across areas and groups, before escalation occurred, as well as tracking trends in prejudice and bias-related incidences, and as community reassurance by police forces.

62.8 Members shared concerns from their communities around evidence in hate crime cases and the burden of providing it.

62.9 The Commissioner stated she would expect the police to gather evidence from sources where the victim has no authority, such as evidence from cameras that do not belong to the victim, and added that their community engagement officers and victim support services have driven an improvement in the support offered to victims of hate crime.

62.10 Members raised questions around hate crime training for staff responding to reports via phone or the internet, and for the police officers deployed to follow up on those reports.

62.11 The Commissioner assured the panel that all new recruit cohorts receive training on hate crime, prior to them joining their neighbourhood coaching units. She further added that all current frontline officers are receiving training on hate crime from specialist officers. Finally, she stated that it was her understanding that contact centre staff had recently received refresher training on dealing with hate crime as well.

62.12 Members asked if there had been any research conducted, either by Victim Support or by the OSPCC, on the impact of support services on victims of hate crime.

62.13 The Commissioner assured the Panel that all support services funded through her office are subject to regular monitoring of their services which covers a wide area of inquiries, such as how victims have recovered and the success of any interventions, gathered on a monthly basis.

62.14 Considering the rise in hate crime incidents recorded in the report, the Panel asked for clarification over whether there is any one particular group identified as being disproportionately at risk of hate-related crime.

62.15 The Commissioner acknowledged the increase in hate crime incidents outlined in the report and the possible causes, including that Sussex Police has improved in encouraging reporting which has contributed to the increase. She assured the Panel that her office and Victim Services would continue to monitor on this issue and would respond to any massive increases appropriately.

62.16 Members raised concerns around the language used to define hate crime and its impact on the right to freedom of speech however stated their opinion that the police do a good job in a delicate situation.

62.17 The Commissioner acknowledged the challenges of policing hate crime and the right to freedom of speech in a democracy, and the growing difficulties caused by the increases in tension in society.

63. The Progress made by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner against the Sussex Police Estate Transformation Strategy 2025/2036

63.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, presented by Mr Iain McCulloch, Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.

63.2 A summary of the Panel's questions and answers is as follows:

63.3 Members inquired if there had been consideration given in the Strategy to places where the Police estate is not currently located.

63.4 The Commissioner assured the Panel that such consideration was undertaken during planning and it was very much dictated by the operational needs of Sussex Police, both current and future, and it was an ongoing piece of work.

63.5 Members raised concerns that there was no reference to both previous and current governments' priorities in building large numbers of homes and how these developments would affect the Strategy. Members also noted that there was no reference around commissioning work from small- to medium-sized employers as a part of the Strategy and national targets; and the lack of reference of sustainable building practices.

63.6 The Commissioner assured members that procurement processes promote social value, especially when using local providers. Further, the Commissioner explained that the overall goal of the strategy was to move placement of police properties away

from their historical locations, to where they best serve modern policing requirements and that housing growth has an effect on those locations, to best serve those communities and improve police responses. The Commissioner also emphasised the changes brought about by modern policing, including the flexible and mobile nature of police cars which effectively act as mobile police stations.

63.7 Mr McCulloch also assured the Panel that the Strategy is underpinned by the OSPCC's core governance processes and exist within that structure, even if the report does not directly reference them. The Commissioner also reassured the Panel that she sits on a monthly estates board which reviews the Strategy on a regular basis, comprised of senior officers as well as herself and Mr McCulloch.

63.8 Members raised concerns over the perception between the presence of a police station and the subsequent presence of police in an area, and any guarantee that if police stations are closed down, that more mobile police units would be visible to reassure local residents.

63.9 The Commissioner explained that such decisions would be affected by operational need and budget constraints, which she explained Sussex Police receives the eighth lowest in the country and the county has the seventh lowest precept.

63.10 Members noted the references to police hubs in community buildings, noting the improvements to customer service these bring about and the chance for improved cross-working with other agencies, and asked if these would comprise a major part of the Strategy.

63.11 The Commissioner explained that with the devolution proposals moving forward, she was reluctant to allocate resources to council buildings which may no longer be used after devolution. She also reiterated it was an open, ongoing conversation with communities to determine what best serves them and their needs.

63.12 The Panel noted the positive reaction from the public and various agencies to the use of the "pods" on certain high streets.

63.13 The Commissioner acknowledged the enhancements provided by the pods in addition to police stations and custody centres.

63.14 The Panel noted that the strategy did not mention local government reorganisation or its potential impact on the police estate, stating that this might need to be taken into consideration going forward.

63.15 The Commissioner acknowledged the point and assured the Panel that local government reorganisation was being taken into consideration in discussions and could be referenced now proposals had been agreed by local authorities and the government.

64. Quarterly Report of Complaints

64.1 The Panel noted that there have been no complaints received as of 29 September 2025.

65. Working Group Appointments

65.1 The Chair asked for volunteers from the Panel to be appointed to the working group to consider the development of the Commissioner's proposed precept.

65.2 The following Panel members volunteered and were appointed:

- Mrs Susan Scholefield
- Councillor Standley
- Councillor Baynham
- Mr Keith Napthine

65.3 Due to the number of councillors having sent apologies, it was proposed and accepted to ask for further volunteers for the working group outside of the meeting.

66. Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates

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

- Future meeting dates have been proposed as:

- 16 February (Provisional)
- 13 March 2026

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm

Chairman

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