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## Sussex Police and Crime Panel

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

Present:

|                 |                              |               |                             |
|-----------------|------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Cllr Czolak     | Brighton & Hove City Council | Cllr Baynham  | Horsham District Council    |
| Cllr Bangert    | Chichester 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 Keene    | Lewes District Council      |
| Cllr Bayliss    | Rother District Council      | Cllr Williams | Wealden District Council    |
| Cllr Ali        | West Sussex County Council   | Cllr Whorlow  | Worthing Borough Council    |
| Cllr Cooke      | Mid-Sussex District Council  | Mr Napthine   | Independent Co-opted Member |
| Mrs Scholefield | Independent Co-opted Member  |               |                             |

Substitutes:

Mrs Sarah Peacock, Independent Co-opted Member

Apologies were received from Cllr Sluman (Adur District Council), Cllr Birch (Arun District Council), Cllr Hogan (Brighton & Hove City Council), Cllr Mitchell (West Sussex County Council) and Cllr Warne (Hastings 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

#### 45. Appointment of Independent Members

45.1 Resolved – that the Panel:

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

#### 46. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

- 46.1 Cllr Bayliss proposed Cllr Czolak as Chair of the Panel for the forthcoming year. Cllr Khan seconded the proposal.
- 46.2 Mr Keith Napthine proposed Cllr Keene as Chair of the Panel for the forthcoming year. Cllr Bangert seconded the proposal.
- 46.3 A secret ballot was then held, which was won by Cllr Czolak by a majority of votes.
- 46.4 Resolved – that Cllr Czolak was elected Chair of Sussex Police and Crime Panel for the ensuing year.
- 46.5 Cllr Williams proposed Cllr Baynham for the role of Vice-Chair of the Panel for the forthcoming year. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Czolak and there was no challenge.
- 46.6 Resolved – that Cllr Baynham was elected Vice-Chair of Sussex Police and Crime Panel for the ensuing year.

#### **47. Annual Review of Membership and Proportionality**

- 47.1 Resolved – that the Panel:
1. Agreed that Brighton and Hove City Council be invited to appoint a Conservative second representative to the Panel for a one-year period of office, to take effect immediately.
  2. Agreed that both East and West Sussex County Councils should each be invited to appoint an additional local authority member for a one-year period of office.
  3. Agreed to invite appointments of a Conservative second councillor from East Sussex County Council and a Conservative second councillor from West Sussex County Council.
  4. Agreed to the appointments of Cllrs Emma Hogan, Brighton and Hove City Council, Ian Hollidge of East Sussex County Council, and Zack Ali of West Sussex County Council to the Panel for a period of one year.

#### **48. Declarations of Interest**

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

| <b>Panel Member</b> | <b>Personal Interest</b> |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
|---------------------|--------------------------|

|                 |                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cllr Ballard    | Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Eastbourne Borough Council                                                                                     |
| Cllr Bayliss    | Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development at Rother District 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 Cooke      | Cabinet Member for Communities at Mid-Sussex District Council.                                                                                         |
| Cllr Czolak     | Cabinet Advisor on Community Safety at Brighton and Hove City Council.                                                                                 |
| Mrs Scholefield | A serving magistrate.                                                                                                                                  |
| Cllr Whorlow    | Vice Chair for Adur and Worthing Community Safety Partnership.<br><br>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.                                                                       |

#### **49. Urgent Matters**

49.1 No urgent matters were raised by the Panel.

#### **50. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

50.1 The Panel was asked to approve the draft minutes of the previous meeting on 14 March 2025 as an accurate record.

50.2 Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 March 2025 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the chair.

#### **51. Panel Correspondence since the last meeting**

51.1 The Chair asked the Panel to note the correspondence sent and received since matters raised at the meeting on 14 March.

51.2 Resolved – that the Panel noted the correspondence received since 14 March 2025.

## **52. Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner**

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

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

1. Question: What lessons have been learned by Sussex Police and East Sussex County Council from Operation Skylark and how will the PCC move forward with any similar issues?  
Answer: The Commissioner explained that a review by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) had been conducted on the police response to the riots last year and that, while Sussex did not see any riots, a lot of learning had been drawn from that and had been made available on the webcast of last month's meeting with the Chief Constable and was still available to view online. The Commissioner further added that Sussex Police were in a good position and had processes in place to address such situations if they did arise in future.
2. Question: In reference to a complaint due to an incident involving several persons extorting money from the owner of a camping and caravan park in West Wittering, the Commissioner was asked if she felt satisfied with the actions of Sussex Police when called to the scene and their awareness of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, Section 61.  
Answer: The Commissioner stressed that this was ultimately an operational matter, and it would be inappropriate for her to comment if this were an ongoing complaint, and they would need to see what Sussex Police's response to the complaint would be before making any further comment.
3. Question: On the requests from certain parishes and town councils under sections 25 and 96 of the 1996 Police Act to fund additional PCSOs to tackle various issues in their areas, what evidence does the Commissioner have that this approach works, and would she want to see it encouraged?  
Answer: The Commissioner stressed her longstanding support for PCSOs and her attempts to encourage the recruitment of more under the previous Chief Constable, which had not led to widespread support at the parish council level. The Commissioner then explained her work to fund and recruit community and business wardens, the latter of which had seen most success with previous years seeing cooperation with Southern Co-Op to fund

antisocial behaviour wardens. The Commissioner confirmed that ultimately, the funding and recruitment of PCSOs is the remit of the Chief Constable and there were no current plans for co-funding.

4. Question: Giving the recognised rise of phone theft on a national scale, does the Commissioner agree that Sussex Police should be recording data on phone theft as this is not currently a mandatory practice?

Answer: The Commissioner acknowledged the point but explained that crime recording rules are set by the Home Office and further, in Sussex the Niche crime recording system is not set up to record phone theft data as this would require additional extra flags to be added to the record, which would require further permissions from the company that operates Niche, which would take time to submit an application.

5. Question: In reference to the tragic case of a young girl struck by a vehicle in Newhaven this week and the Safer Roads Partnership, what were the Commissioner's views on the usage of sonic cameras and 20 mph speed limit zones to deal with loud motor vehicles in towns and rural parts of the county?

Answer: The Commissioner said that her understanding was that the technology did not currently exist at the moment and pilot schemes to trial similar technologies had not gone anywhere. She added that this was something that the Department for Science, Technology, and Innovation would be exploring, and she was sure that, as technology improved, funding for these would be made available in due course. Finally, she stressed Sussex Police's commitment to road safety through the use of speed cameras and policing the speed limit zones to decrease noise and road traffic collisions. She reminded the Panel that Sussex Police had just launched their annual summer campaign around speed limits.

6. As a supplementary question, members raised the successful pilot conducted by Kensington and Chelsea Borough on the use of sonic cameras and their continued use after a three-year trial. The Commissioner acknowledged point and reiterated that the Department for Science, Technology, and Innovation would be leading on that.

7. Question: Considering the upcoming changes to local government within the next year, how will the annual reporting currently conducted by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner be managed for this same time next year?

Answer: The Commissioner explained that currently, there were no concrete plans for how the annual reporting would be handled after the forthcoming changes to local government in Sussex, with the assumption being that the responsibilities of the PCC would be transferred to the office of the newly elected Mayor. The Commissioner added that as the report was retrospective, there would be one more annual report from the OSPCC before the transfer to an elected Mayor.

8. Question: In reference to the Commissioner and Chief Constable's decision to withdraw from the Safer Roads Partnership, what progress has the Commissioner made in setting up the Fatal Five unit and what work is it conducting to tackle road safety in Sussex?  
Answer: The Commissioner confirmed that work was ongoing in establishing the Fatal Five Unit, that the business case had been completed, and they were now in the process of establishing the scope of the unit, with the report due by October 2025, with hopes to be running in the new year.
9. Question: With the Safer Roads Partnership speed vans still operational on Sussex roads, are Sussex Police running road safety operations jointly with the partnership or separately?  
Answer: The Commissioner said she would need to look into this as it is an operational matter, and she was not currently aware of how Sussex Police is operating their road safety vehicles. The Commissioner further stressed that while Sussex Police had withdrawn from the partnership, they were still committed to the enforcement of road safety in Sussex.
10. As a supplementary comment to the previous question, members raised the work conducted by Sussex Police with community speed watch groups in Sussex and its expansion across the country, culminating in the first national community speed watch day on 11<sup>th</sup> July. The Commissioner acknowledged this and the fact that Sussex has more community speed watch groups than any other county, and the vital work these volunteers do to educate on road safety.
11. The Chair raised the possibility of the Commissioner or one of her teams being invited to an event organised by the family and friends of a deceased young woman to educate on road safety on the 11<sup>th</sup> July. The Commissioner said that she was cautiously open to the possibility but would not wish to encroach on the family's grief and use the day as a political opportunity.
12. Question: On the topic of DBS check delays, how is the situation in Sussex progressing?  
Answer: The Commissioner stated that the DBS check delays was a regular topic in her meetings with the Chief Constable and she was monitoring the situation closely in the monthly performance meetings. She confirmed that the backlog was being reduced, with a triage process in place to expedite simple checks, and steady progress was being made, however, the Chief Constable had stressed the need for a centralised technology solution to be found and that Sussex Police was not alone in having difficulties.
13. The Panel raised supplementary questions around the reduction figure of 31% and what this means in reality. The Commissioner explained that there had been a focus on this in her Performance Accountability Meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> June, with more detail included then, and that her role was to ensure that Sussex Police retained a focus on working to reduce the backlog of DBS checks and she was

confident that they had implemented processes to improve their performance.

14. The Panel raised the possibility of a report on Sussex Police's improved performance on DBS checks being brought to the next meeting.
15. The Commissioner reiterated her confidence in Sussex Police's improved performance and her role in keeping their focus and added that any Sussex resident facing hardship, as a result of DBS check delays, could request an expedited response.
16. Question: On Operation Downsway, where there are accident hotspots identified, whether Sussex Police might focus their training and public awareness raising efforts there to promote road safety? Answer: The Commissioner explained that education was the remit of the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, with enforcement being within the Police's remit, and she recommended the Panel reach out to the county authorities to ask what their intentions are around education and raising awareness in accident hotspots. The Commissioner added that she funded a caseworker from the charity Break to support Sussex families who had lost loved ones to road safety accidents.

### **53. The Commissioner's Annual Report and Financial Outturn Report 2024-25**

- 53.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, introduced by Commissioner Bourne.
- 53.2 The Chair invited the Panel to ask questions. A summary of questions and responses were as follows:
- 53.3 Members raised concerns around rural crime and the relatively small number of dedicated officers for such a large geographical area and if the Commissioner had plans to expand the team.
- 53.4 The Commissioner confirmed they were restricted by funding limitations and added that Sussex Police had the largest rural crime team in the South East.
- 53.5 Members expressed their satisfaction in the rural crime team's work overall and the added focus this has brought to a previously under-resourced area of policing.
- 53.6 In reference to Section 4C of the report, members asked what items of spending did not ultimately receive the original allotted funding?
- 53.7 The Commissioner explained that they were currently in the midst of their estates transformation strategy and that had an effect on the figures. She also explained that sometimes the gaps in spending were due to issues with property sales.

- 53.8 Mr McCulloch, Chief Finance Officer OSPCC, added that they were in the midst of managing large transformation schemes and capital budgets often span more than one financial year which adds to the discrepancy. He affirmed his confidence that between the OSPCC and Sussex Police, they were monitoring this as closely as possible.
- 53.9 As a supplementary question, members asked what the process would be to apply for a rollover of the unspent funds?
- 53.10 The Chief Finance Officer explained the governance process to scrutinise finances with Sussex Police before making recommendations to the Commissioner for approval, which would be published as a key decision on the OSPCC website.
- 53.11 The Panel noted the Commissioner's approval of the £5 million funding from central government into business and retail crime as this was an ongoing issue for Sussex and her investment in the DISC app in Rother and other districts and boroughs across Sussex.
- 53.12 Members raised concerns around the discrepancy between an increased reporting rate for business-related crime and a decrease in the solve rate for reported crimes and issues with the DISC app, particularly in the Bexhill area.
- 53.13 The Commissioner reminded the Panel that the DISC app was never meant to be integral to solving business crimes, it was an information sharing app to encourage reporting and it was the joint responsibility of the Police and the local authorities to educate businesses on its use. She then explained that there were a limited number of handsets, and she had committed to working with local authorities to increase these, either through partial or complete funding.
- 53.14 In reference to the issues in Bexhill, the Commissioner explained that she had been told these issues were due to a lack of education about the app's function and this had led to less pick-up among local businesses, and there was ongoing work to train businesses in how to best use the app. The Commissioner reaffirmed her commitment to combating business crime and the improved solve rates for business crime.
- 53.15 On a supplementary question, members asked how confident Sussex Police were that they were investigating all shoplifting cases and not continuing to apply the previous government's advice on not investigating shoplifting cases where the value of goods stolen was below £200?
- 53.16 The Commissioner explained the context behind the previous government's advice and her feeling that it ultimately had not worked to deter shoplifting as consequences for offenders were mild and short-term. She added that she had received reassurances from the Chief Constable when raising this issue, that Sussex Police do

not consider a £200 limit when investigating shoplifting, and this has been reflected in public statements by the National Police Chiefs' Council.

53.17 The Commissioner explained her work with Sussex Police and the Safer Sussex Business Partnership to ensure a localised approach to business crime and to encourage local businesses to get involved.

53.18 Members raised questions around funding for the Fatal Five unit and if there had been any improvements made over the last twelve months since leaving the old Safer Roads partnership.

53.19 The Commissioner explained that the Fatal Five unit was currently in the scoping phase and the funding would come from her own budget. She added that the Fatal Five unit was one of her manifesto pledges and it would take time to set up, but work was underway and ongoing to do so.

53.20 Members raised further questions about drivers' speeding awareness courses and whether they were offered as bespoke to Sussex and the dangers of speeding on roads in rural areas.

53.21 The Commissioner explained that individual areas decided who ran driver awareness courses, either in person or online, by procurement and that Sussex Police had just done so, and that there was no bespoke offer to ensure a continuity of standard across the country.

53.22 Referring back to the funding for the Fatal Five unit, members asked if the funding would equate to more money being invested in this area than when Sussex Police withdrew from the Safer Roads Partnership?

53.23 The Commissioner explained that the funding came from the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) into her budget and there were certain rules determining how and where it was spent, meaning it could not be spent elsewhere.

53.24 Members asked what steps were being taken to address the rise in young men engaging in near-fatal strangulation during sexual intercourse with female partners?

53.25 The Commissioner said she would consult with her victims' commissioning team and come back to the Panel with an answer.

53.26 Members raised concerns around the lack of mentions about hate crime in the Commissioner's report.

53.27 The Commissioner explained that the report is a look back on certain areas rather than a general review, and that hate crime is covered under victims' commissioning, and that they work with several organisations that deliver services to support victims and raise awareness.

- 53.28 The Panel was also reminded that the Chief Constable employs a Chief Officer who is responsible for looking into issues around diversity, race, hate etc, and personally leads on the force's internal and external policies around dealing with these issues.
- 53.29 Members raised the possibility of receiving more information on the steps taken to combat hate crime in general, but also more specifically on hate crime targeted against women and girls, and the LGBTQIA+ community.
- 53.30 The Commissioner added that she would be happy to facilitate a meeting between the Panel and the victims commissioning team to discuss this further.
- 53.31 Members asked if there were certain milestones to be met, either in funding or changes to property, in the Commissioner's goal of moving towards net zero by 2050.
- 53.32 The Commissioner confirmed there were ongoing work programmes around these goals, including looking at financial and environmental issues that might affect this. She confirmed that there were ongoing challenges that made the estate difficult, in affordability terms, to meet the long-term goals of net zero carbon.
- 53.33 Members asked if the Commissioner was engaged with any specific entities to help with these objectives and are there any ambitions to bring the transformation completion forward to the 2040s, and if there were any intentions to move any funds from the projected savings towards other objectives, such as hiring more officers.
- 53.34 The Commissioner explained that if any of the savings were in capital, they would be reinvested in capital. She added that Sussex Police belong to several national policing groups to facilitate the move towards net zero carbon.
- 53.35 The Panel asked what steps the Commissioner was taking to mitigate the £5 million pressure on the police budget and how these were progressing.
- 53.36 The Commissioner explained that they had been set a target of £5 million in savings through efficiencies-finding, which they were on track to do this year, however the recent spending review meant that they were looking at a 1.7% increase in real terms, which would continue to put pressure on Sussex Police, along with the rises in National Insurance and pay increases, with the government's funding reliant on the Commissioner raising council tax to the maximum. The Commissioner reaffirmed her commitment to finding savings where possible and her confidence that this year's target had been met.

- 53.37 Members asked what impact the Rural Crime Team was making in terms of tackling rural crime and improving the solve rate.
- 53.38 The Commissioner said they were committed to further improving the solve rate for rural crime but that they were limited by funding, and they would continue to work cross-border with other forces to combat rural crime. She added that they would look to include a case study in next year's report to illustrate the team's work.
- 53.39 The Panel asked if there were any updates the Commissioner could offer on the plans for Centenary House in Worthing under Sussex Police?
- 53.40 The Commissioner said she unfortunately could not offer any updates as discussions about the building were ongoing and sensitive.
- 53.41 The Panel acknowledged the Commissioner's disappointment in the cut to funding for immediate justice programmes and asked if there was any local evidence about its effective use in Sussex?
- 53.42 The Commissioner said they had the data but not to hand but assured the Panel that it was good news, and she was committed to funding it for another year.
- 53.43 The Chair then called for a ten-minute comfort break in proceedings.

**54. The role of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner in ensuring the effectiveness of vetting processes within Sussex Police**

- 54.1 The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 54.2 The report was introduced by Mr Mark Streater, Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 54.3 A summary of the Panel's questions and answers is as follows:
- 54.4 Considering the report by HMICFRS that considered Sussex Police's vetting processes and identified three areas for improvement, the Panel asked how this disconnect occurred and how will it be rectified going forward?
- 54.5 The Commissioner assured the Panel that she would be addressing the inspection report by next month's Performance Accountability meeting with the Chief Constable. She further added that she did not view the inspection findings as a failure for Sussex Police and that there was always learning to be identified, and that she still retained confidence in Sussex Police's processes.

54.6 Members raised concerns around the number of areas requiring improvement identified by the report and that while requiring improvement is not a failure, it is also not a successful result.

54.7 The Commissioner cautioned that the data used by HMICFRS in the report would have been at least eight months old and the report may not include improvements made since the inspection.

54.8 The Commissioner explained that, at her next meeting with the Chief Constable on 17<sup>th</sup> July, she would be going through the recommendations listed in the report and asking exactly what was being planned by the Chief Constable and her team to rectify these issues.

54.9 The Panel raised the possibility of revisiting this issue once the Commissioner has had a chance to fully analyse the inspection findings and discuss them with the Chief Constable.

54.10 The Commissioner assured the Panel that she would be holding Sussex Police to account on the findings of the inspection and their plans to improve. The Commissioner added that she would welcome any submissions from the Panel on questions she could raise with the Chief Constable before the Performance Accountability meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> July.

## **55. Annual Report from the Host Authority**

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

## **56. Quarterly Report of Complaints**

56.1 The Panel noted the report and that there have been no complaints received as of 30 June 2025.

## **57. Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates**

57.1 The Chair noted the next meeting of the Panel will take place on Friday 3 October 2025, at 10:30am at County Hall, Lewes.

Future meeting dates have been proposed as:

- 30 January 2026
- 16 February (Provisional)
- 13 March 2026

The meeting ended at 12.42 pm

Chairman

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