

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 22 October 2014

LOCATION: Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner, Sackville House, Lewes

PRESENT: Police & Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne (KB)
Chief Executive Mark Streater (MS)
Chief Constable Giles York (GY)
Assistant Chief Constable Stuart Cundy (SC)
Director of Finance Mark Baker (MB)
Performance & Information Officer Graham Kane – minutes
Communications Manager Rosie Gooch
Correspondence & Administration Clerk Sarah Tibbott
Detective Chief Inspector Emma Brice

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING – 22.10.2014

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

What have been the recent operational highlights for the Force?

A. Have there been any key Operations or challenges?

B. How have you reflected on these?

GY reported that a recent operational highlight for the Force included Police Sergeant Mark Emery receiving national recognition at the Police Bravery Awards 2014 for successfully raising the alarm in relation to a fire in a four-storey building and ensuring that all of the occupants were safely evacuated.

PS Emery attended the awards ceremony in London with Assistant Chief Constable Robin Smith and Mark White from the Sussex Police Federation.

CRIME & COMMUNITY SAFETY

UK THREAT LEVEL

Q. With the UK threat level from Islamist extremists being raised to Severe in the summer and in the past week raised to Substantial, against British police officers and staff, what assurances can you give that Sussex Police has put in place effective measures to deal with this danger?

GY provided assurances that Sussex Police are experienced at dealing with counter terrorism and have put in place effective measures to deal with the change in UK threat level. This has included Forcewide messages to officers and staff reminding them to remain vigilant at all times and to maintain the personal safety measures already in existence.

GY concluded by encouraging individuals with any information, intelligence or concerns relating to Islamist extremists report them to Sussex Police directly or anonymously to Crimestoppers.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME & POLICING ACT 2014

Q. This week marked the introduction of the new powers set out in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014, including the Community Trigger and Community Remedy. The aim of these powers is to ensure that the most vulnerable victims of low level anti-social behaviour and hate crimes are better protected and to provide victims with a say in how offenders should make amends for their actions. Can you explain what this will mean for victims in Sussex and how it will be rolled out?

GY confirmed that the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014 was introduced this week, including the Community Trigger and Community Remedy powers.

Community Trigger – GY explained that the Community Trigger is victim-led and gives victims and communities the right to require action is taken where an ongoing anti-social behaviour or hate crime problem has not been addressed.

The threshold for the Community Trigger in Sussex will be met "if you have reported three separate anti-social behaviour or a hate incidents in the last six months and no action has yet been taken by police, local authorities or other organisations". It was also highlighted that third-party reporting is accepted.

The Community Trigger referral form and further details about the power can be found through the following link: www.sussex.police.uk/policing-in-sussex/your-community/community-trigger. The referral forms are also available on request from any Police Station in Sussex, local authorities and other organisations.

It was also emphasised that Brighton & Hove piloted the Community Trigger on behalf of the Home Office in 2012. Throughout the six month pilot, the Community Trigger was activated nine times, of which five activations met the threshold. It was then identified that two of these activations required further action and intervention.

It was confirmed that all Inspectors, Sergeants, Constables and PCSOs involved in Neighbourhood Policing will receive an e-learning training module that has been produced by the National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT).

GY reassured KB that an initial review of the Community Trigger process and procedure is scheduled to take place three months after implementation.

Community Remedy – The Commissioner had a statutory obligation to consult with members of the public regarding the possible out-of-court sanctions as part of either a Community Resolution or Conditional Caution that they would like to see included in the Community Remedy document for Sussex.

A consultation was launched on 28 July 2014 and ran until 30 September 2014. There were 2,419 responses to the consultation, of which 68% of the respondents confirmed that they had previously been the victim of crime.

The results of the consultation will form the basis of the discussions between the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable ahead of the publication of this document.

KB highlighted the importance of widely communicating the availability of these new powers to all residents in Sussex.

SUSSEX POLICE DOMESTIC ABUSE & VIOLENCE ACTION PLAN

Q. Sussex Police published this month, its new Action Plan to tackle Domestic Abuse and Violence. What do you see as the main priorities in that plan and how are they being addressed?

SC confirmed that the Sussex Police Domestic Abuse & Violence Action Plan was published by the Force in September 2014 and makes 18 recommendations.

The Plan commits to providing all officers and staff throughout Sussex Police with a rolling programme of dedicated one-day domestic violence and abuse training to increase knowledge around this area of work and to remove any internal culture barriers. Further enhanced training for call handlers and specialist investigators will also be provided for those dedicated staff, including coercive control and targeting hard to reach communities.

KB reminded SC of a quote from the HMIC report, "Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse", which stated that "police forces should ensure that their approach to domestic abuse training is evidence-based. Training should be face-to-face rather than provided through e-learning". SC confirmed that this will be the approach taken by Sussex Police.

Dedicated domestic abuse courts (to ensure that trials happen on the day that they are listed), partnership working with serial perpetrators (including better support mechanisms to divert them away from domestic violence and abuse) and safety planning for survivors are each additional elements that have been included in the recommendations.

NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY APOLOGY TO CHILDREN AT RISK OF ABUSE

As you will be aware, Keith Bristow, Head of the National Crime Agency, recently apologised for putting children in England Wales at risk of abuse by delaying the release of information to local police forces which had been gathered as part of a dedicated police operation in Canada.

A. Can you confirm how many of the individuals identified by Project Spade were residents in Sussex?

B. Of those individuals passed to Sussex Police, what measures is the Force taking to investigate the allegations of child sexual exploitation?

GY provided some context and explained that this is a growing area of business for Sussex Police and the other forces in England and Wales. The need to understand the scale and level of criminality and to prioritise those individuals who pose the greatest risk to communities was emphasised.

SC confirmed that 68 of the 2,345 cases identified by Project Spade and passed onto police forces in England and Wales were residents in Sussex. Of which, 18 had already been investigated or dealt with, four no longer resided in Sussex (and their details were forwarded to the relevant police force for further investigation) and one had died.

It was reported that a further 127 referrals have since been received by Sussex Police from a variety of sources, in addition to those which have been identified and detected by the Force themselves. It was highlighted that all intelligence reports received by the Force are assessed for severity, impact and threat. Sussex Police have enhanced the number of officers and staff working in their Paedophile On Line Investigation Team (POLIT) to improve their response to tackling child sexual exploitation.

GY stated that Sussex Police are looking to work with the other forces in the South East Region to collectively improve the response in this area, including benchmarking, identifying good practice and scoping work for further regional cooperation.

SC concluded by making a further appeal to any individuals with information, intelligence or concerns in relation to child sexual exploitation to report them to Sussex Police directly or anonymously to Crimestoppers.

VICTIM SATISFACTION – KEPT INFORMED

Q. We have previously looked at the areas of service that effect victim satisfaction, with the biggest area for improvement being the need to keep victims better updated. Is this still the case and what new measures are being put in place to improve it?

GY reiterated that victim satisfaction, and the "kept informed" strand in particular, remains a priority for Sussex.

It was highlighted that "Victim Contracts" are routinely established with all victims of crime which set out the frequency and method by which victims would like to receive updates regarding the investigation of their crime.

GY confirmed that an internal review into the investigation of crime (and subsequent victim satisfaction) has been commissioned, together with looking at the "kept informed" element of victim satisfaction at the Force's Public Service Strategy Board. It is anticipated that both of these measures will contribute towards an improvement in performance.

It was explained that user satisfaction is measured through a telephone survey with victims of crime. The surveys are conducted by a research company on behalf of Sussex Police and comprise of a nationally prescribed set of questions. Approximately 3,000 surveys are carried out annually amongst victims of domestic burglary, violent crime, vehicle crime, burglary other than dwelling, theft, criminal damage and hate incidents.

The information gathered from the surveys is used to populate five Statutory Performance Indicators which are reported to the Home Office on a quarterly basis. These measure satisfaction with Ease of Contact, Police Actions (taken to deal with the incident), Follow Up (being kept informed), Treatment (by Sussex Police) and the Whole Experience.

GY acknowledged that other forces are performing better than Sussex Police against the same set of criteria and accepted that improvements can be made in this area.

HMIC REPORT ON UNDERCOVER POLICING IN ENGLAND & WALES

Q. The recently published HMIC inspection report on “undercover policing in England and Wales”, highlighted concerns around the lack of training and knowledge some senior officers had in how to use this tactic lawfully and within the proper professional practice required. What assurance can you give me that this is being addressed for your senior team and that the public can be confident in the way that these operations are being carried out in Sussex?

GY confirmed that undercover policing is a legitimate, lawful and effective policing tactic.

It was established that the Force has a clear protocol for undercover policing in Sussex which requires senior officers to authorise and record each individual use of the tactic to ensure that proportionate responses exist. Assurances were provided that the training requirements of the senior team are being addressed which involves completing a three-day course regarding the lawful use of this tactic within prescribed professional guidelines.

Operation Reduction was provided as an ongoing example of covert surveillance being successfully used as a tactic in Brighton & Hove which focusses on purchasing illegal drugs from identified dealers in the City.

It was highlighted that the Office of Surveillance Commissioners (OSC) is responsible for overseeing the use and conduct of covert surveillance. In particular, the OSC review the integrity of the decision making processes and procedures involved to justify the overall use of the tactic.

THREAT OF EBOLA EPIDEMIC

Q. With the Ebola epidemic threatening the UK, what measures are Sussex Police and its Local Resilience Forum partners putting in place to ensure contingency planning and response is as effective as possible?

GY confirmed that Sussex Police and the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF) have carried out significant planning and preparation in response to the threat of an Ebola epidemic.

It was also emphasised that a large amount of information in relation to counteracting this threat is already available in the public domain and that passenger screening is planned to go live at Gatwick Airport this week.

It was explained that the SRF is made up of partners from the Emergency Services, Health, Local Authorities, Government Agencies and Departments and the Voluntary Sector under the remit of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

These partners work together to ensure that emergency plans for risks including flooding, severe weather, pollution and pandemics are prioritised, written, exercised and regularly reviewed which increases the county’s resilience.

GY concluded by stating that he was confident that appropriate and proportionate plans are in place to deal with the current level of threat.

INVESTMENT AREAS FOLLOWING PRECEPT INCREASE

Q. Last year the precept was raised in Sussex to help build the capability of the Force to deal with emerging threats such as tackling child sexual exploitation and cyber crime. Can you provide a progress update on how the additional funds have been used and whether the resources being invested are adequate to respond to threat?

MB confirmed that the essential investment in front-line policing, safeguarding and cyber crime is all on track to be delivered and implemented within the financial year, as agreed as part of the 2014/2015 budget.

Front-line Policing

MB explained that the precept investment has enabled the Force to increase the proportion of visible frontline staff, including an additional 165 Police Officers, 25 Police Officer transferees from other police force areas, 38 PCSOs and 190 Special Constables.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Sussex Police have developed a plan in collaboration with Surrey Police to implement and uplift the approach taken by both forces in terms of tackling serious sexual offending and child sexual exploitation.

This has included the creation of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs) in partnership with local authorities and will also include the recruitment of an additional 22 dedicated Sexual Offences Liaison Officers (SOLOs) by March 2015 to better support victims.

Cyber Crime

GY confirmed that collaborative working with Surrey Police in this area has enabled Sussex Police to develop capacity and capability in this area despite receiving less funding from a precept increase of 1.95%, instead of the 3.6% originally requested and supported by the Police & Crime Panel.

A three year plan for tackling cyber crime has been developed by Sussex Police in response to the lead that has been taken in this area by the National Crime Agency.

The delivery of this plan will include:

- the introduction of a Cyber Crime Unit for Sussex Police and Surrey Police in November 2014;*
- enhanced cyber crime training for 280 frontline staff, across all divisions, supported by both regional and national cyber crime specialists;*
- membership of the National Cyber Security Information Sharing Partnership;*

HYBRID VEHICLES

Q. With the rapid evolution of hybrid cars, combining petrol and electric engines, what steps have Sussex Police taken to look at adopting its fleet to use such vehicles and substantially drive down fuel and running costs.

GY acknowledged that a substantial amount of the Sussex Police budget is spent on fuel and emphasised that there are two ways to reduce these costs; driving less (by being more efficient and effective in terms of vehicle placement) and acquiring more efficient vehicles.

MB explained that Sussex Police is currently in the process of trialling a number of hybrid vehicles from a variety of different manufacturers. These vehicles are being evaluated to compare the total running costs, maintenance and suitability, in terms of their practical application in a policing environment.

It was highlighted that this approach is very complementary in terms of "evidence based policing". The finalised report is anticipated to be completed by February 2015.

ACTION: MB to provide KB with a copy of the finalised report