

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 19 October 2018

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

PRESENT: Police & Crime Commissioner – Katy Bourne (KB)
Deputy Chief Constable – Bernie O'Reilly (BO'R)
Assistant Chief Constable – Nick May (NM)
Digital Content Officer – Sammi Carwardine
Head of Performance – Graham Kane (minutes)

POLICING OF HUNTS

The policing of artificially laid trails remains a difficult balancing act for the police.

A. Can you outline the key challenges for the Force to maintain this balance?

B. Operation Rush is the dedicated Sussex Police response to the policing of hunts. I understand that this has recently been reviewed and refreshed. What impact will the revised Operation Rush have on the policing of hunts?

C. How has the introduction of dedicated Hunt Liaison Officers and Protest Liaison Teams, to build and develop relationships and single points of contact with all parties, improved the policing response in Sussex?

BO'R explained that a number of challenges exist for Sussex Police in terms of balancing the rights of the hunting community to hunt, within the confines of the legislation, with the rights of those against hunting to protest.

These challenges include protecting individuals and property from harm in a proportionate and sensible manner, and remaining impartial in what can often be difficult and emotive circumstances. It was also highlighted that the same policing response is in place across Sussex and Surrey Police. This means that the methods and tactics employed by both force areas are interoperable and transferable. Superintendent Howard Hodges is the Sussex Police lead officer for the policing of hunts.

It was highlighted that Operation Rush has been revised to improve the Force's response to the policing of hunts. This has included adding a dedicated 'App' to the Mobile Data Terminal (MDTs) that are provided to all frontline police officers and staff. This App contains information about The Hunting Act 2004, the preferred policing approach in Sussex and Surrey, and the policing tactics that can be deployed. This approach ensures that all officers and staff have access to the same consistent information they need, as and when they need it.

Sussex Police has improved its overall response through increased engagement with the hunting community and hunt monitors, including more widespread use of Hunt Liaison Officers and Protest Liaison Teams to build trust and develop effective relationships with both sides. It was, however, acknowledged that this engagement is less developed with the hunt saboteurs and that more still needs to be done in this area.

Sussex Police reflect on the success of their policing operations after each hunt has taken place to understand better how the tactics worked and whether there are any areas for improvement. KB agreed to monitor performance in this area throughout the remainder of the hunt season.

COUNTY LINES – DRUGS GANGS

Last month, the National Crime Agency (NCA) launched a *County Lines Coordination Centre* to develop a national intelligence picture of drug-dealing networks.

- A. What will the County Lines Coordination Centre mean for Sussex Police?**
- B. Can you provide me with an update regarding performance in this area, including the number of active lines in Sussex and recent disruption activity?**
- C. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) has previously “commended” the Force for its “ground-breaking work” to tackle county lines crime in Sussex. How are you continuing to develop and improve this local response?**
- D. How is the Force proactively working with partners to tackle county lines?**

BO’R began by explaining that county lines crime relates to the supply of Class A drugs, primarily crack cocaine and heroin, from urban cities to market towns, coastal areas and rural locations by young people, using a branded mobile telephone line. There are also links to gangs and criminal networks using increasing levels of extreme violence and intimidation to establish and maintain markets.

It was emphasised that the most recent national assessment of county lines, compiled by the NCA, suggests that there are more than 1,000 lines in operation nationally, for which there are already 200 active investigations underway.

The County Lines Coordination Centre is a new multi-agency team comprising of 38 experts from the NCA, police officers and Regional Organised Crime Units that will work together to develop the national intelligence picture. The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police has a good relationship with the NCA and the introduction of the Centre will ensure that significantly more intelligence is shared. This local information about particular individuals or county lines will then be overlaid with the intelligence received from other police force areas across England and Wales to provide a much clearer picture. This coordinated activity will enable the Force to make better informed decisions about enforcement, safeguarding and disruption activity.

There are over 50 active county lines in Sussex and police activity has focussed on: disrupting county lines; stopping gangs from becoming established locally; targeting addresses selling drugs; and enforcement activity. It was highlighted that whilst the Force has safeguarded a significant number of victims it is difficult to provide a tangible number because individuals are often vulnerable across more than one area and are not recorded specifically for county lines. The Force has disrupted 72 county lines and made 40 arrests for county lines offences, including two for modern day slavery, since August 2018. Earlier this month (8 to 14 October 2018) Sussex Police supported the NCA with a week-long county lines identification campaign too.

The Force is also keeping a record of both the intelligence submitted to the County Lines Coordination Centre and the number of times Sussex Police is tasked to take activity locally to be able to understand better the impact this is having on police resources.

Sussex Police is continuing to develop and improve the local response and recently reviewed their strategy for targeting county lines, both in terms of prevention and enforcement.

*The Home Office launched a £13 million **Trusted Relationships Fund** in February 2018 to help foster relationships between frontline professionals and young people at risk of sexual exploitation. KB would like to know how Sussex Police is linked into this Fund.*

ACTION: KB would like to know how Sussex Police is linked into the Trusted Relationships Fund with partner agencies.

GRADE 1 AND 2 RESPONSE TIMES

Response times to grade 1 calls (within 15 minutes) and grade 2 calls (within 60 minutes) reduced by 10% and 12%, respectively, across 2017/18, in comparison to 2016/17. This is clearly of concern to me and the public relying on this emergency service and response.

- A. Can you provide me with an update regarding performance in this area?**
- B. What impact has the Local Policing Programme had on the response times?**
- C. How are Sussex Police continuing to monitor, review and improve these response times?**

NM began by explaining that Sussex Police now only use the grade 1 and 2 response time targets (within 15 minutes and 60 minutes, respectively) as a guide. This is because the Force does not want to drive perverse incentives.

It was emphasised that the Force dispatches police officers to calls using the Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) decision-making model based on the information that is made available at the point of contact.

The Deputy Chief Constable acknowledged that performance has deteriorated in this area and confirmed that the Force is working hard to improve this. The highly complex nature of the calls received and an improved understanding of vulnerability and safeguarding was attributed to these reductions. This is resulting in some crimes and incidents taking longer to investigate and resolve at the scene, contributing to a reduced number of officers available to dispatch.

The protection of police officer numbers in Response teams through the Local Policing Model was expected to maintain response times at the levels of performance demonstrated previously. However, the changing nature and complexity of crime and society over time is having an impact on the ability of the Force to respond. It was also emphasised that this is a national issue throughout England and Wales and is not simply a localised concern in Sussex.

Sussex Police is continuing to monitor, review and improve these response times through a number of different initiatives including:

- heightened supervision and management of calls to ensure that officers are being dispatched appropriately;*
- increased recruitment to and maintaining of staff within the Force Contact Command and Control Centre;*
- developing and evolving the training provided to officers and staff; and*
- maximising the number of police officers available for dispatch by improving the efficiency of single and double crewed vehicles.*

All of these developments to the workforce are being evaluated by an Oversight Board, chaired by Assistant Chief Constable Steve Barry.

KB concluded by agreeing to revisit this area again in three months time.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

I have continued to seek an increase in the reporting of under-reported crimes to ensure that vulnerable victims identified can be fully supported and the offenders brought to justice. I am pleased to note that there has been an 18% increase in the reporting of domestic abuse crimes (+2,419) in the 12 month period to 30 September 2018, in comparison to the same period a year earlier.

A. How does Sussex Police use the Police National Database (PND) to protect victims of domestic abuse in Sussex?

B. At April's PAM, it was highlighted that the arrest rate for domestic abuse offences had increased significantly and is projected to increase to approximately 50%. Has the Force continued to demonstrate increases in the number of offenders charged, in line with the number of crimes?

C. Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) provide protection to victims putting in place protective measures for victims. How is the Force measuring the effectiveness of the use of both of these?

D. Clare's Law provides individuals with the opportunity to request specific information about another individual for the purposes of protecting potential victims from domestic violence. What is the process for making an application to Sussex Police under Clare's Law?

E. How many applications have been made under Clare's Law in Sussex and what percentage of all data requested has been disclosed?

NM is reassured that the increased number of recorded crimes for domestic abuse can be attributed to an improvement in public trust and confidence in policing. The PND is available to all Call Handlers within the Force Contact Command and Control Centre and these individuals are expected to consider using this resource for any calls relating to domestic abuse in order to protect victims in Sussex. It was emphasised that a good awareness of PND exists within Investigation teams too.

KB explained that Sussex Police has the fifth highest use of PND of all 43 police force areas in England and Wales even though they carry out less than 6,000 checks each year compared to the 30,000 PND checks undertaken by the highest performing force. The Assistant Chief Constable explained that plans to amend business processes to increase the Force's use of the PND are set out in the Domestic Abuse Improvement Plan.

It was highlighted that the arrest rate for domestic abuse offences is currently between 42% and 43% in Sussex, having improved in the past few years. In particular, each of the three policing divisions also has a process in place when an arrest is not made in a domestic abuse case to ensure that no opportunities have been missed.

It was, however, recognised that whilst the Force has continued to demonstrate an increase in the number of offenders charged, the percentage charge rate has reduced because of a greater number of domestic abuse crimes being recorded. The Assistant Chief Constable emphasised that charges and solved rates are just two of the outcomes that are available to Sussex Police. There are also a number of other disposals that could be just as appropriate in different circumstances.

NM is confident that Sussex Police is using DVPNs and DVPOs appropriately. In the past 18 months, 157 DVPNs have been made by Sussex Police, of which 144 DVPOs have been ratified by Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service. This equates to a conversion rate of 92% and is in line with the performance demonstrated by the Most Similar Group (MSG) of police forces to Sussex. It was acknowledged that the Force could use more DVPNs and DVPOs and highlighted that plans exist within the Improvement Plan to increase these numbers further still through enhanced training and the use of Domestic Abuse Mentors.

Clare's Law – otherwise known as the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) – provides individuals or a third party with the opportunity to request specific information about an individual for the purposes of protecting a potential victim from domestic violence. This consists of two elements: 'right to ask' and 'right to know'.

An application can be made under the Scheme by either telephoning 101 or attending a local police station and asking to make a DVDS application. An application can also be made by completing a copy of the Minimum Standards Form and emailing it to: 101@sussex.pnn.police.uk.

Anyone applying to the DVDS will initially be asked to provide information about themselves and the individual they are making the application about. If the application meets the Scheme criteria, a face-to-face visit will be arranged with a Domestic Abuse Caseworker to obtain further information. Relevant research is then conducted before the application is referred to a local Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), where a decision about disclosure is made. Any information disclosed under the DVDS must be treated as confidential and cannot be shared with anyone else. Further information about the process is available [here](#).

It was highlighted that 191 applications were made as part of the DVDS in Sussex throughout the past year. 100 applications were made under the 'right to ask', of which 30 disclosures were made (30%) and 91 applications under the 'right to know', of which 41 disclosures were made (45%). This disclosure rate is again similar to the average for the MSG.

NM confirmed that Sussex Police currently promote the DVDS via the Force website and through the provision of leaflets in General Practitioner (GP) surgeries and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) locations. Further openings are also being considered to maximise opportunities for wider promotion of the Scheme.

ACTION: KB would like to know whether non-molestation orders can be added to the Police National Database.

SOLVED CRIME RATES

Sussex Police has solved 14,437 of the 114,581 crimes recorded across the rolling year period to 9 October 2018. This equates to a solved crime rate of 12.6%.

- A. Can you provide me with an update regarding performance in this area?**
- B. Are there any solved rates that you are particularly concerned about?**
- C. What does the Force plan look like to catch more criminals and to improve these solved crime rates?**

The Assistant Chief Constable began by emphasising that there is a huge difference between the severity, harm and complexity of a range of different crimes. As a result, Sussex Police and other police force areas in England and Wales have generally moved away from simply looking at the headline overall solved crime rates. This is because the level of investigation and time that is required to investigate crimes thoroughly varies significantly depending on the severity of the crime type.

The Force will always look at how they are performing in the areas of significant harm including: rape and sexual offences; serious violence; burglary dwellings; and drug offences. A commitment to put resources into the areas of most harm was reiterated. This approach reflects the Local Policing Model in place in Sussex.

It was emphasised that whilst the solved rates are not as strong as the Force would like them to be across all areas, there are some specific areas of harm where Sussex Police is performing better than other police force areas, in comparison to the overall solved crime rate.

KB recognised that there has been a reduction in the number of sexual offences solved by the Force. NM confirmed that 20 new Sexual Offence Investigation Trained (SOIT) officers have now commenced work within the Safeguarding Investigations Units at locations throughout Sussex. There is an expectation that solved crime rates will improve in this area with better support being provided to victims throughout the criminal investigation process.

The reduction in total drug offences is another area that Sussex Police continues to monitor closely. It was emphasised that the Force regularly conducts a number of proactive, complex and sophisticated policing operations against drug dealers in Sussex, including those that tackle county lines crime, with very good results being achieved. It was also recognised that there are other ways of "artificially" increasing the solved rates in this area that would not necessarily contribute towards reducing the harm.

CHILDREN IN CUSTODY

The recently published *Howard League for Penal Reform* report confirmed that **68% fewer child arrests were made across England and Wales between 2010 and 2017. Sussex Police demonstrated a 67% reduction across the same period.**

- A. How have you reflected on the findings of this report?**
- B. What are the continued year-on-year reductions in child arrests since 2010 attributed to in Sussex?**
- C. Have the recorded arrests for girls in Sussex fallen at a faster rate than it has for boys since 2010, in line with national trends?**
- D. What more can Sussex Police do to maintain this trend and reduce these numbers further still?**
- E. How has the introduction of Youth Ambassadors assisted the Force to promote child-centric policing in Sussex?**

NM explained that the Force is "proud" of the work that has been undertaken in Sussex in respect of children and young people to reduce child arrests by 67% between 2010 and 2017. In particular, the number of child arrests in Sussex has reduced from 5,779 in 2010 to 1,893 in 2017. It was also highlighted that the recorded arrests for girls has fallen at a faster rate than it has for boys since 2010 in Sussex, in line with national trends. The Howard League for Penal Reform report can be viewed in full [here](#).

The year-on-year reductions in the number of child arrests were attributed to the Force doing all it can to reduce the criminalisation of children and young people. The importance of understanding that "children should be treated as children first" and promoting child-centred policing are two elements that have been included in the training packages delivered to all new police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). It was also emphasised that an arrest should be the last resort after a range of other practical alternatives are considered first.

The Force has introduced 121 Youth Ambassadors made up of police officers and staff from across the organisation, who are readily identifiable by a specially designed pin badge, and are tasked with challenging colleagues and changing perspectives in respect of children and young people.

Sussex Police has also recently established an External Reference Group for Young People to understand better their experiences, how Sussex Police is perceived by children and young people, and what the Force can do to improve performance in this area.

The Assistant Chief Constable confirmed that he is now the South East regional lead for Children and Young People. Sussex Police is recognised as being one of the leading police force areas in England and Wales for their work around children and young people. The Force has an aspiration to continue to work hard to keep young people out of the criminal justice system in order to maintain this trend and reduce these numbers further still.

POLICE OFFICER AND PCSO RECRUITMENT UPDATE

I was pleased to be able to use the additional funding raised by the precept uplift and the use of reserves to open the recruitment processes for police officers and PCSOs in 2018/19 to modernise and strengthen local policing in Sussex.

A. Can you provide me with a progress update for both of the recruitment campaigns?

B. When do you anticipate these individuals will be visible on the streets of Sussex?

*BO'R reiterated that the **Sussex Police 2018/22 Transformation Strategy** sets out how the Force will use the additional funding raised by the precept in 2018/19, combined with the use of £17m from reserves to: strengthen local policing; improve ways for the public to make contact with the Force; and further modernise the service to meet new and increasingly complex demands. This is predicated on an increase of £12 in 2018/19, with further anticipated increases of £12 in 2019/20, £5 in 2020/21, and £5 in 2021/22.*

The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police has already started to recruit some of the 800 police officers planned over the next four years to provide a net increase of 200 more officers than the Force was originally expecting to have by 2021/22, taking anticipated retirements and leavers into account.

It was highlighted that more than 150 new police officers and staff started with Sussex Police in the last few weeks. This comprised of an intake of: 70 police officers; 34 PCSOs; 24 contact handlers; 12 investigators; and 12 police officer transferees from other police force areas.

A further intake of 36 police officers is planned in the next few weeks, with a total of 220 officers anticipated to be in Force by the end of 2019. In addition, another 24 PCSOs; 24 contact handlers; and 12 investigators will be in post in the next six months.

The 70 police officers and 34 PCSOs are currently in the process of completing their classroom-based training. This takes approximately 15 weeks for police officers and 10 weeks for PCSOs, and means that these individuals will be visible in Sussex in December and January, respectively.

KB asked the Deputy Chief Constable whether he was confident that a sufficient number of tutor constables exist across the Force to deliver this training to the new recruits. BO'R confirmed that the intakes have been amended to ensure that sufficient capacity exists.

In conclusion, it was emphasised that the new police officers and PCSOs will strengthen local policing and improve the visible policing presence by being put into both Prevention and Response teams throughout Sussex.

BREXIT

The United Kingdom is scheduled to leave the European Union on 29 March 2019.

A. How has the Force been preparing for Brexit?

B. What impact do you anticipate Brexit will have on Sussex Police?

BO'R explained that the uncertainty and speculation that continues to surround the United Kingdom's scheduled departure from the European Union on 29 March 2019 makes planning for Brexit very difficult.

*It was highlighted that the Force has been preparing for Brexit through the **Sussex Resilience Forum** (SRF). This is a multi-agency partnership, chaired by Assistant Chief Constable Steve Barry, whose members have statutory responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, to work together to prepare, respond to and recover from emergencies and major incidents.*

Reassurance was provided to KB that the SRF is continuing to communicate and engage with the Government around proposed plans and national infrastructure. KB also explained that Police & Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables are in regular contact with the Home Office in respect of Brexit and the potential implications this could have on policing services.