

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 19 March 2021

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

PRESENT: Police & Crime Commissioner – Katy Bourne (KB)
Chief Executive Officer – Mark Streater (MS)
Chief Constable – Jo Shiner (JS)
Deputy Chief Constable – Julia Chapman (JC)

Digital Content Officer – Sammi Carwardine (webcasting)
Head of Performance – Graham Kane (minutes)

REASSURANCE TO SUSSEX COMMUNITIES – SARAH EVERARD VIGILS

Following the shocking and deeply saddening death of Sarah Everard, a number of vigils were held around the country over the weekend.

A. How have you reflected on the events of last weekend in Sussex?

B. What is the difference between a vigil and a protest?

C. How will any complaints received by Sussex Police from members of the public about the policing response to the vigil be managed and addressed?

JS began by stating that she was "sickened and appalled" at the recent death of Sarah Everard and recognised that the circumstances surrounding her death – with a serving police officer charged with her murder – has sent "shockwaves" through the policing community because it is the role of the police to serve, help and protect.

This incident has started an important debate, both locally and nationally, around the pervasiveness of male violence and the right for women to feel safe. The Chief Constable recognised the active role that she has to play in this, as both a woman and senior policing leader, in terms of listening to and responding positively to the experiences that are currently being shared by individuals and victims. It was also acknowledged that this is an issue that goes far beyond policing and the wider criminal justice system.

The Chief Constable recognised that the events of the weekend in Brighton presented a Sussex Police with a "wicked" problem. England is still in the midst of a pandemic and the police are required to take a prominent role in the enforcement of the restrictions currently in place to prevent the further spread of coronavirus. This has to be balanced against the rights of individuals to gather, express their views and protest.

In respect of the events at Valley Gardens, Brighton on 13 March 2021, JS confirmed that Sussex Police took no action as individuals gathered peacefully to pay their respects to Sarah, nor when the crowds grew much larger in numbers for the vigil. However, a decision was made at the point it was judged that the large group was getting closer together and had evolved to become a protest (with offensive and vitriolic shouting and chanting towards officers) to engage with those present and to encourage them to comply with the restrictions, before directing them to disperse. This was in line with the consistent approach to policing that has been demonstrated throughout the pandemic in Sussex and was a request that the vast majority of those individuals present complied with. Where enforcement activity was necessary, this was undertaken as a last resort – when individuals refused to engage – in a fair, reasonable and proportionate manner.

Public order policing is recognised to be a "precarious balancing act" for the police to manage in terms of finding an appropriate equilibrium between the legislation and the rights and views of those in attendance. JS recognised that the pre-engagement to any planned public order event is a fundamentally important element to consider and can be used by the police to facilitate the sharing of plans and the provision of guidance.

This can include the use of Protest Liaison Officers (PLOs) to listen, negotiate and communicate effectively between both sides in order to minimise police involvement and the policing response required. However, it was also acknowledged that not all groups want to engage with or have any contact with the police service prior to an event taking place, as was the case in Brighton last weekend.

The Chief Constable explained that she has a duty to protect all police officers and staff and recognised that these individuals have been responsible for policing the pandemic for almost a year now. This has, understandably, presented significant challenges for the workforce – something that has been embraced with humility, resilience, patience and professionalism throughout, despite the obvious COVID-related risks apparent.

It was highlighted that there were six vigils held for Sarah Everard across Sussex in the past week, with a number of these escalating into protests over time. However, only two arrests were made by Sussex Police and 9 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued at these events. This was recognised to have been a proportionate response to an "incredibly difficult" week for the Force. It was also emphasised that in order to police these types of events safely, police officer resources have to be taken away from performing other roles and duties – including investigations into crimes reported against women and girls.

On reflection of the feedback received, it was acknowledged that the Force could have policed the events differently and more sensitively. It was also recognised that the vast majority of individuals in Sussex were supportive of the police response. JS explained that she was unable to personally criticise the actions of any of the frontline police officers present at the event but understood the differing perceptions held by others.

The Force has internally reviewed the circumstances around the events and a summary of the findings is anticipated to be made available shortly, recognising both good practice and any organisational learning that could be adopted to improve the policing response, approach and style moving forward. Sussex Police would also welcome any further independent scrutiny that might be forthcoming in respect of the policing response. It was highlighted that any complaints received by Sussex Police in respect of the policing response to the vigil would be managed through the formal processes set out within the Professional Standards Department. This will include an initial assessment of each complaint, followed by an investigation and response, as appropriate.

KB thanked JS for the honest, sincere and comprehensive explanation provided at the meeting. The Commissioner also expressed her own thanks to the frontline officers and staff for the policing response that has been delivered throughout the pandemic and over the course of the events of the past week, in particular.

The Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police continues to work towards three priorities: protecting our communities; catching criminals and delivering an outstanding service to victims, witnesses and the public. A further commitment to work with communities to build confidence and encourage anyone who feels unsafe to engage with the police, charities and victims' services available in Sussex was stated, including an aspiration for improved reporting of crimes and incidents to support safeguarding.

Further gratitude was expressed by KB to Assistant Chief Constable Jayne Dando and Temporary Chief Superintendent Steve Rayland for their attendance on a video call with key victims' services providers in Sussex last week. The individual organisations present on the call recognised the "enormous strides" that Sussex Police has taken in the area of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the past year, with a view to delivering on the action plans in place to support the Pan Sussex Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Framework. This activity has been supported by £3.4 million of funding – secured by the Police & Crime Commissioner – to deliver VAWG initiatives in Sussex across 42 different organisations in 2020/21.

JS provided a summary of some of the positive actions and initiatives that Sussex Police has progressed in the past 12-months in support of the commitment to tackle VAWG and to improve the safety and/or perceptions of safety for individuals in Sussex, as follows:

Local Resolution Team – *Through the precept investment in 2020/21, Sussex Police introduced a Domestic Abuse Local Resolution Team (LRT) to respond to low-risk, non-urgent reports of domestic abuse. The team comprises of 39 specialist officers who have each been trained to respond exclusively to domestic abuse crimes and incidents. Following triage, the LRT endeavour to make contact with a victim of domestic abuse within 24 hours and to make an appointment within 48 hours of initial contact, either in person or via a phone app (which leaves no trace on the mobile telephone). The team will then investigate the allegations, provide safeguarding advice and signpost individuals to specialist agencies, as appropriate. The victim survey is already demonstrating high levels of satisfaction for the LRT and the dedicated approach in Sussex.*

Operation Hope – *Sussex Police has invested in the development of data analytics to inform a proactive approach to tackling domestic abuse. Operation Hope provides an enhanced policing response at times when, historically, domestic abuse incidents are anticipated to increase. This operation will continue to run as the lockdown restrictions are eased further and will involve proactive policing patrols and joint visits between the Force and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates to individuals at high-risk of harm.*

Sussex Perpetrator Intervention Programme – *The programme commenced on 1 March 2021 and aims to provide a tailored intervention for persistent perpetrators with multiple complex needs to support them in recognising and addressing their abusive behaviours. The programme has involved the formation of a Complex Domestic Abuse Unit, comprising dedicated and specialist resources, who will work with a cohort of the most active and highest harm domestic abuse perpetrators in Sussex to deliver behavioural change interventions. These resources include: two police officer offender managers, independent domestic violence advisor, mental health worker, drug and alcohol worker and two domestic abuse intervention coordinators. The programme is voluntary and should any of the individuals identified decide not to take part, Sussex Police will continue to use the robust disruption opportunities available to them. To complement this high-harm provision, a rolling 12-week programme of perpetrator intervention for medium-risk individuals and other agencies to 'self-refer' onto in order to seek support with challenging behaviour will also be delivered by Cranstoun.*

Stalking Protection Order Behaviour Change Programme – *Sussex Police continues to lead on the response to stalking in partnership with bespoke victim advocacy services and a newly designed Perpetrator Programme for those with Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs). The programme is designed to be delivered by trained professionals from SEETEC Justice and provides 12 intensive 1:1 therapy sessions, focusing on compulsive and obsessive behaviour intervention (COBI). Perpetrators will be considered for the intervention through the 'positive requirement' element within any planned SPO application. Veritas Justice – a community organisation providing support, advocacy and advice for individuals affected by stalking – will support any victims taking part.*

Super-Complaint Police Perpetrators – *As well as conducting its own internal review, Sussex Police has carefully considered the super-complaint submitted to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) by the Centre for Women's Justice and remains committed to addressing the issues raised. In response, the Force has launched the Sussex Police Domestic Abuse Pledge, setting out a commitment to improve the response to domestic abuse involving serving police officers and staff, together with providing an enhanced offer of support for those affected by any such abuse. Sussex Police has an established and robust process for overseeing and scrutinising these domestic abuse investigations, including independent scrutiny from individuals with expertise in this field. The Force has also been proactively engaging with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) to support their inspection work which will inform part of their response to the super-complaint.*

Victim Hub – On 1 April 2021, Sussex Police will introduce the Victim Hub which will transform the support that is provided to victims of all types of crime. Central to this will be further improving the service delivered to victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence, ensuring that they are given support from the most appropriate agency and preventing individuals from having to engage with multiple support workers. The Victim Hub will also provide the Force with an opportunity to enhance support for partnership arrangements in relation to the management of domestic abuse cases and to increase the capacity of the police staff responsible for providing direct support to these victims.

Operation Lilly – Again, using data analytics, Sussex Police is proactively identifying repeat suspects who have been subject of no further action on two or more occasions in the past five years. Each subject is reviewed for further investigative opportunities and, if none exist, a problem-solving approach is used to respond to any vulnerabilities identified. Each subject has a bespoke risk management document created to manage this risk and vulnerability, with the net result seeking to protect better members of the public, including a significant proportion of women and girl victims.

Operation Denver – This is an initiative created to ensure that individuals who are identified as suspects in multiple reports of sexual abuse against children are assessed and, where necessary, ancillary orders are sought to mitigate the risk of future offending. Specifically, where an investigation is concluded and it has not been possible to secure a prosecution, the suspect can be referred to the Violent offender and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR) team to consider the viability of applying for a Sexual Risk Order. These orders can be issued, without a conviction, providing the court is satisfied that the subject has engaged in a sexual act and that the order is necessary to protect individuals or members of the public from the risk of future sexual harm.

Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO): Early Advice Pilot – Sussex Police is part of an early advice pilot with Kent Police, Surrey Police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) which seeks to create a prosecution-focused mindset from the outset. This approach requires the collation and submission of the Achieving Best Evidence (ABE), suspect account and case file to the CPS within 42 days of the initial report, before a face-to-face meeting with a named lawyer is triggered to discuss case progression. Sussex Police has submitted the greatest number of cases within the pilot area to date – this is anticipated to generate increases in the number of cases charged and reductions to investigation times, with the overall aim of bringing more offenders to justice, reducing the length of time taken for rape investigations and delivering swifter justice for victims.

RASSO: Sexual Offences Investigation Team – There are 30 specially trained individuals within the Sexual Offence Investigation Team (SOIT) of the Public Protection Unit to support better victims of sexual offences. The SOIT provide victim-focused support that is separate from the investigations for all victims of rape and penetrative offences (over 14-years-old). This enhanced support is offered to victims throughout the initial response, investigation and court process and seeks to build trust and confidence in reporting through a dedicated provision for sexual violence.

Lockdown Engagement – The Force has sought to maintain a physical policing presence within the communities of Sussex throughout the enforced lockdown period introduced in response to the pandemic. Sussex Police recognise that staying at home is not a safe place for all and has made a physical presence available in public places, such as supermarkets, to facilitate engagement, raise awareness and support those individuals who are experiencing domestic abuse or violence. This approach has been further supported by television and radio interviews, active social media campaigns and printed articles in local newspapers.

REASSURANCE TO SUSSEX COMMUNITIES – CORONAVIRUS

Last week, the first step on the ‘road map’ to ease the lockdown restrictions in England was achieved when children returned to schools on 8 March 2021.

A. What impact, if any, has the return of pupils to schools had on Sussex Police? And, how is this being managed?

B. With more than 25 million of the population in the United Kingdom now having received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination, I am aware of an increase in reports from shops and retailers raising concerns about the number of individuals who are now refusing to wear face masks. How is the Force responding to these reports?

C. What does the de-escalation of the ‘major incident’ status previously declared by the Sussex Resilience Forum mean for Sussex?

D. How much of the additional £2 million funding made available to increase the enforcement of coronavirus restrictions at the border will be made available to Sussex Police? How will this funding be used to manage financial pressures and maintain enforcement activity at Gatwick Airport?

E. Last month (25 February), the National Police Chiefs’ Council confirmed that provisional figures indicated that the year-on-year increases in assaults on emergency service workers had continued. Is this increasing trend apparent in Sussex too? How is the Force supporting these individuals? And, how many individuals have been arrested in Sussex for threatening to infect officers with the virus and/or by coughing and/or spitting at them?

F. What is the total number of FPNs issued by Sussex Police to date? Are there any trends apparent in the ‘reasons for issuing’ FPNs?

JS confirmed that the return of some pupils to schools earlier this month has not presented Sussex Police with any significant issues. It was recognised that this has been assisted by a tiered return to schools in Sussex, with all pupils set to have returned by the end of next week. This approach has been assisted by the Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) increasing their local patrols and the School Liaison Officers (SLOs) supporting the schools and other educational establishments in this process. The Chief Constable thanked the schools, parents, children and young people for the thoughtful and sensible way they have each embraced the return.

It was highlighted that Sussex Police typically receives between 500 and 1,000 reports of COVID-19 related offences each day, including a number of reports of individuals not wearing face coverings inside. Sussex Police is continuing to use the 5Es – engagement, explanation, education, encouragement and enforcement – to respond in a consistent, fair and proportionate manner. This has included issuing FPNs for contraventions of the ‘requirement to wear face coverings’ in shops, working in partnership with Trading Standards and Environmental Health.

The Chief Constable reiterated that the ‘road map’ for easing the lockdown restrictions safely in England is evidence-led. This means that individuals need to wait for the key dates to arrive before they can start to increase their activities. Members of the public were reminded that they can report any breaches of the measures and restrictions currently in place to Sussex Police directly either by telephone to 101, email to 101@sussex.pnn.police.uk or online via the following link: <https://www.sussex.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about/c19/v7/tell-us-about-a-possible-breach-of-coronavirus-covid-19-measures/>

JS confirmed that a decision was taken to de-escalate the ‘major incident’ status previously held by the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF) on 17 March 2021. The rationale for this decision was based on a number of considerations, including improved positions in respect of reductions in infection rates, reduced hospital admissions and death rates, encouraging progress made by the vaccination programme and risks relating to the adverse weather previously forecast not materialising.

The wider impact on education, emergency services and other partner agencies is also not being felt as acutely as it was previously. KB was reassured to note that the decision to rescind the major incident status will not result in any tangible change to the approach in Sussex. The SRF remains committed to responding to the pandemic as an emergency and is still treating this as a critical incident. The command structure in place through Operation Apollo – the joint Sussex and Surrey Police response to COVID-19 – will continue to keep this position under review.

The Chief Constable explained that the Sussex allocation of the £2 million of additional funding made available from the Home Office to increase the enforcement of coronavirus restrictions at the border, for those police force areas with ports and airports, is still to be determined for Gatwick Airport. KB agreed to follow this up with the Home Office directly.

JS recognised that "any assault against a frontline member of the emergency services is one assault too many" and represents "completely unacceptable and abhorrent" behaviour against those individuals working hard to protect and support local communities. It was confirmed that there had been an increasing trend in the number of assaults recorded against police officers and staff in Sussex. This was recognised to be a combination of an increase in actual offending, together with better encouragement, management and recording of the offences reported by individuals. Accurate recording of all assaults was acknowledged to be particularly important because it enables the Force to improve its awareness of any issues and to make informed adjustments to training and operational procedures, as required, to prevent this from reoccurring in the future.

In particular, it was highlighted that 15 of the 18 individuals charged with offences of assault against officers and staff in Sussex pleaded guilty to the charge, during the month of February 2021. However, KB was disappointed to learn that only two of those individuals were given custodial sentences, with a further three individuals awarded suspended (custodial) sentences. The Chief Constable stated that Sussex Police would continue to take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of assaults to the workforce.

Sussex Police has issued a total of 2,544 FPNs between 27 March 2020 and 15 March 2021. The most common types of FPNs issued in Sussex related to contraventions concerning 'restriction of movement' and 'participation in public gatherings'. The Force compares favourably to the number and different types of FPNs issued by the other police force areas in England and Wales (positioned mid-table) which was recognised to demonstrate an appropriate balance and proportionate use of the 5Es in Sussex.

It was emphasised that Sussex Police has already developed extensive plans with partners through to January 2022 to ensure that Force is able to manage the anticipated increased demand locally and support its mutual aid requirements at both a regional and national level. This has included the introduction of some embargoed annual leave dates for the workforce throughout the summer months, in line with the dates set out within the Prime Minister's 'road map'.

The Chief Constable concluded by reminding individuals of the importance of taking a sense of personal responsibility for their own actions and behaviours, particularly when under the influence of alcohol, in order to reduce any unnecessary demand on the Force, as the lockdown restrictions continue to be eased.

ACTION: KB to contact the Home Office and ask when the Sussex allocation of the £2 million of additional funding made available to increase the enforcement of coronavirus restrictions at the border will be determined.

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime sets out a number of key entitlements that all victims of crime are entitled to in England and Wales. A new version of the Code is set to be introduced on 1 April 2021.

A. How prepared is Sussex Police for these changes taking effect?

B. How will Sussex Police ensure compliance with these new requirements?

C. What impact has the pandemic had on the Force's ability to support victims of crime in Sussex?

JC confirmed that Sussex Police is well-prepared for the introduction of the revised version to the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime next month.

It was emphasised that the Code has been simplified and restructured to ensure that victims of crime remain the primary audience. This includes listing the 12 overarching rights so that victims understand and are aware of the level of service they can expect to receive from all criminal justice partners. The most significant change is that victims of crime now need to 'opt out' – rather than 'opt in' – should they not want to receive the key entitlements set out in the revised Code of Practice. This will enable the Force to proactively refer individuals to the most appropriate specialist support services available, unless otherwise stated, providing them with enhanced opportunities to support victims of crime.

The Deputy Chief Constable also confirmed that the revisions provide greater flexibility and more discretion as to when victims should be offered the opportunity to make a Victim Personal Statement (VPS). This approach has been extended to include the ability for all victims to request a copy of their VPS to refer to at a future date too. Any witnesses that experience significant physical, mental or economic harm from witnessing a crime will also now be afforded the same rights as victims under the Code of Practice. This approach recognises the significant trauma that witnessing a crime can have on an individual, as well as being directly impacted by it.

In addition, Sussex Police will start to carry out individual needs' assessments, tailored specifically to the victim or witness, that will be continuously reviewed throughout the course of the investigation to ensure that it remains appropriate. This approach will be supported by a new digital facility available on hand-held Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) which links directly to Niche – the crime recording system used by Sussex Police – and means that individuals will only need to provide the information once, rather than having to repeat it multiple times to different stakeholders.

Further information about the new requirements and a copy of the revised Code of Practice for Victims of Crime can be viewed through the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936239/victims-code-2020.pdf

KB was informed that there will be formal measures set by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to monitor compliance against the Code of Practice. In the interim, Sussex Police will continue to use an internally created assessment system which follows the victim service assessment set by HMICFRS. The compliance against this assessment will be monitored and scrutinised through the internal Police, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. Reality testing and victim satisfaction surveys will also be undertaken by the Force to understand better whether victims (and witnesses) are feeling the benefits of the improved approaches adopted by Sussex Police.

It was highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a positive impact on the ability of Sussex Police to support victims of crime. The seasonal demand predicted for large periods of 2020 was below the projected average as a direct result of the 'stay at home' measures in place and enabled officers to carry out more proactive, high-visibility patrols and to progress and reduce the backlog of caseload enquiries more expeditiously than they might otherwise have been able to.

However, the pandemic has also generated a significant backlog for the courts and criminal justice system. This is particularly critical for victims of sexual offences where the specialist counselling therapy available to individuals cannot commence until after the conclusion of the criminal trial. Any backlog and/or delays in the criminal justice process was recognised to be a concern because it impacts on the ability of the Force to provide the most appropriate level of support and assistance.

The Deputy Chief Constable concluded by stating that Sussex Police has made significant investment in victim and witness care, including the provision of volunteers to support that function and the longer periods of interaction required with victims and witnesses, due to the increased waiting times for cases to progress through to trial.

ROAD SAFETY

Sussex Safer Roads Partnership

The Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) aims to create a safer environment for all road users, significantly reduce life-changing injuries and eliminate fatalities.

- A. For the benefit of the viewers, what is the primary function of the SSRP? Which organisations are members of the SSRP? And, how is the SSRP funded?**
- B. How does the SSRP support the work of Sussex Police to tackle and prevent the main causes of serious injuries and deaths on the roads in Sussex?**
- C. As a collaborated unit, how involved is the Force in the decision-making of the SSRP?**
- D. How is the effectiveness of the SSRP measured?**

JS confirmed that the SSRP was established in 2007 and brings together Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, Highways England, Sussex Police and West Sussex County Council (including West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service).

The primary aim of the Partnership is to reduce the number and severity of road related casualties in Sussex by working together to tackle the most significant causes of serious collisions and their effect. This includes specifically targeting the fatal five: excessive speed; drink-and-drug-driving; using mobile phones when driving; not wearing a seatbelt and careless or dangerous driving. Further information about the SSRP can be viewed through the following link: <https://www.sussexsaferroads.gov.uk/>

Funding for the SSRP is maintained through the cost recovery mechanism which supports the delivery of the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) diversion courses – better known as speed awareness courses – and through any cashable efficiency gains that may occur in the delivery of them.

The SSRP supports the work of Sussex Police to tackle and prevent the main causes of serious injuries and deaths on the roads in Sussex through the delivery of road safety campaigns and interventions, including:

- ✓ Support for National Police Chiefs' Council road safety campaigns through the provision of educational resources and information.*
- ✓ Support for localised enforcement activity and policing operations through mobile safety camera van deployment.*
- ✓ Joint working to reduce road casualties and deliver an appropriate response to road safety concerns through a combination of education, engineering and enforcement.*
- ✓ Liaison with other groups and bodies to improve road safety (including Road Safety GB, Road Safety Support and Road Safety Action Groups) and share learning with Sussex Police and partners.*
- ✓ Attendance at large public events (including the Goodwood Festival of Speed) to deliver road safety messaging and education to Sussex communities.*

It was emphasised that Sussex Police is one of the lead partner agencies for the SSRP and, as such, is involved in the decision-making for the Partnership. Assistant Chief Constable Dave Miller is responsible for chairing the Directors Board strand of the SSRP.

KB was informed that the effectiveness of the Partnership is measured through a number of different ways, including reductions in the number of individuals killed or seriously injured (KSIs) on the roads of Sussex; numbers of NDORS courses delivered, number of prosecutions made, reductions in the number of FPNs issued for offences relating to the fatal five; number of educational interventions delivered and the number of interactions with individuals through the various strands of the SSRP.

Operation Crackdown

Operation Crackdown is joint initiative run by Sussex Police and the SSRP which provides members of the public with the opportunity to report specific instances of abandoned vehicles and anti-social driving on the roads in Sussex.

A. How is Operation Crackdown funded?

B. How many reports were received by Operation Crackdown in 2020? What interventions took place as a result of these reports? And, how does this compare to the number of reports received/interventions made in 2019?

C. How does Sussex Police use the intelligence received from reports made to Operation Crackdown to tackle anti-social driving in Sussex? And, how is any action taken by the Force fed back to those who reported it?

D. How do you measure the success of Operation Crackdown?

E. What systems do other police forces use to receive feedback and intelligence about anti-social driving in their areas? Are there any plans in place to improve Operation Crackdown further still or to adopt a different approach in Sussex?

JS confirmed that Operation Crackdown is jointly funded between the SSRP and the local authorities to provide a coordinated response. It was highlighted that there were 52,303 reports made to Operation Crackdown in 2020, which resulted in 44,495 interventions. This represented 13,804 fewer offences reported than the 66,107 reports submitted to Operation Crackdown to consider in 2019, which resulted in 55,760 interventions, although the proportion of interventions made was recognised to be greater last year.

The Operation Crackdown response is an escalating one. After submitting a report, the details of the allegation are recorded onto the database, before the system checks whether the vehicle has been the subject of any previous reports and automatically obtains the details of the registered keeper. Sussex Police use the intelligence received from the reports made to Operation Crackdown to consider and decide on the most appropriate response based on a number of different factors, including the seriousness of the incident reported; whether the vehicle has been the subject of any previous reports and whether the driver can be categorised as someone who poses the greatest risk of causing a collision on the roads of Sussex. A letter of advice would usually be sent to the registered keeper initially, followed up by a visit from a Police Community Support Officer and the potential for further police action and/or delivery of a capability assessment, if any additional reports are received.

Operation Crackdown can also be used to report abandoned vehicles. These requests account for approximately 10% of all submissions made through this forum and, after the necessary checks for road tax, insurance and registered keeper are undertaken, these are passed to the relevant local authority to arrange removal.

JS explained that Operation Crackdown was first established in Sussex in 2001 as a platform for reporting abandoned vehicles, before it was updated in 2007 to enable reports of anti-social driving. As such, the system has started to become outdated and is currently under review. Sussex Police is looking at the systems, technical solutions and approaches used by other police force areas in England and Wales, including Operation Snap (an online portal that allows members of the public to submit digital footage showing potential traffic offences) and greater use of the Single Online Home (a national website using standard templates, including the Road Traffic Incident Service) with a view to modernising the tool used in Sussex to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

The Chief Constable concluded by stating that Operation Crackdown remains fully functional and encouraged individuals to continue to report incidents of anti-social driving and abandoned vehicles. This information enables Sussex Police to develop intelligence regarding repeat offenders, vehicles, times and locations which can then be used to plan, target and deploy police resources. This information can be shared via the website (www.operationcrackdown.org) or by telephone to 101.

Excessive Speed and Speed Cameras

Driving at excessive or inappropriate speed presents a significant threat to road safety. It is estimated that 10–15% of all collisions and 30% of all fatal crashes are the direct result of speeding or inappropriate speed (European Road Safety Observatory).

- A. What is the plan to address excessive speeding on the roads in Sussex?**
- B. How effective do you consider the Force response to excessive speed to be?**
- C. How many speed, average speed and red-light cameras are there in Sussex? And, how are the locations for these cameras selected?**
- D. How do Sussex Police use speed awareness courses to educate and raise awareness of the dangers of speeding and to positively influence driver behaviour to stay within the speed limit? How many of these courses were offered in 2020? How does this compare to the number offered in 2019? And, what impact has the pandemic had on the delivery of these courses?**

JS stated that almost all road traffic collisions are caused by, or involve, human error and highlighted the importance of continuing to positively influence the behaviour of all road users in Sussex.

It is recognised that the most effective approach to reduce road casualties is through a co-ordinated strategy of education, engineering and enforcement. These three strands continue to remain the key areas of focus for the SSRP:

- ✓ **Education** – to provide road users with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to choose to use the roads in a safe and responsible manner.
- ✓ **Engineering** – to physically affect the way road users behave through the introduction of speed reduction measures, including speed bumps, to ensure that average speeds are kept low.
- ✓ **Enforcement** – to support and complement education and engineering measures by investigating and targeting irresponsible, dangerous and unlawful behaviour that puts other road users at risk and taking enforcement action, where appropriate.

It was highlighted that it is difficult to quantify any positive change or influence in driver behaviour and attitudes because much of the preventative work is intangible. This makes it particularly difficult to benchmark against other police force areas, measure trends and understand the overall effectiveness of any police and partner activity in this area.

To ensure that the Force is as effective as possible, Sussex Police engages with regional and national road safety forums to compare plans and tactics against those used by other forces, together with seeking guidance from the Roads Policing Academic Network (RPAN) and the Department for Transport (DfT). Speed management plans have also been created in partnership with the local authorities in East Sussex (including Brighton & Hove) and West Sussex to monitor speeding hotspots and consider whether any improvements or enhancements could be made to mitigate the position at each location.

The Chief Constable confirmed that there are 13 fixed speed cameras in operation in Sussex at any one time, rotated around 56 different speed camera housings. There are also two red-light cameras (rotated around 24 camera housings), two average speed camera areas and six mobile laser camera systems.

The mobile safety camera vans, Road Policing Unit (RPU) and Specialist Enforcement Unit (SEU) resources provide further proactive, visible (both marked and unmarked) and targeted enforcement activity on the road network in Sussex – expanding the capacity and capability of the Force in this area further still.

The locations of the 'active' speed cameras in Sussex and any other engineering solutions that may be available are reviewed and selected based on KSI, collision and casualty data. It was also emphasised that the education and engineering elements are equally as important as the enforcement strand in order to positively influence and change driver behaviours and attitudes on a long-term basis.

It was highlighted that 32,666 speed awareness courses (NDORS) were offered to individuals in 2020, of which 85% of these courses were accepted and attended. This represented 5,136 fewer courses than the 37,802 courses offered the year before. The pandemic (and the social-distancing measures currently in place) has prevented individuals from attending this classroom-based learning in person, with amendments made to the course content to ensure it remains suitable for online delivery and participation. The shorter duration of the virtual courses and improved willingness of individuals to complete a course without the requirement to travel to a classroom venue are recognised to be potential contributing factors behind the increased completion rates, with course attendance increasing last year from the 74% recorded in 2019.

The Chief Constable also confirmed that there are plans in place to review the approach and individual thresholds in place for speeding offences in Sussex and Surrey with a view to considering whether to align these between the two police force areas.

Cyclists

Safer roads and communities can be created by working together and sharing the roads responsibly.

A. For the benefit of the viewers, what is the 'Safe Pass' scheme? And, how is this being used to raise awareness and to influence driver behaviours positively, instead of through enforcement action?

B. Cycling on the pavements is often a significant local issue and causes much concern, particularly to the most vulnerable road users, such as the elderly, disabled and visually impaired. What action has Sussex Police taken to target cyclists using the pavements in Sussex?

C. How many FPNs were issued for cycling on the pavements in Sussex in 2020? And, how does this compare to the number of FPNs issued in 2019?

The Chief Constable explained that Safe Pass is the Sussex adaptation of the national 'Close Pass' scheme. The scheme was introduced by the Force in June 2018 to identify drivers who pass cyclists too closely, and to provide them with the opportunity to receive educational information to raise awareness and to influence driver behaviour positively, instead of enforcement action.

The aim of the Safe Pass scheme is to deliver the following objectives:

- *Preserving life and preventing serious injury to road users.*
- *Working in partnership with stakeholders (including the media) to support road danger reduction and increase community confidence.*
- *Using information and intelligence to target problem locations.*

JS confirmed that the Safe Pass scheme will be reintroduced by the Force on 14 April 2021 and will include plain clothes police officers riding bicycles equipped with body worn video. This initiative will also be proactively promoted to cycling groups and forums to maximise its promotion. Further information about the scheme in Sussex can be viewed through the following link: <https://www.sussexsaferroads.gov.uk/news/give-me-some-space>

Sussex Police work in partnership with the local authorities to respond to offences of cycling on the pavements by providing a visible presence, engagement and education in locations where this has been highlighted as a risk and/or where complaints have been received. The importance of signage to raise awareness of the danger of this practice and to encourage further compliance was also highlighted. Whilst enforcement is a tactic, high visibility engagement and education is recognised to be a more effective tool to positively influence rider behaviour.

Cycling on the pavements and cycling without lights (at night) are both offences that are punishable through the issuing of FPNs. It is the responsibility of individual officers to use their discretion regarding any decision to issue FPNs for any cycling offences observed based on the individual circumstances involved. The Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police issued 26 FPNs for both of the offences in 2020 – an increase of 189% from the 9 FPNs issued in 2019 with this now representing a greater focus for the Force.

JS recognised that the use of electric (E) scooters is a complicated area and that there are clear legal requirements for the use of E-scooters. The importance of using these scooters in a responsible and considerate manner was emphasised, taking all other users individuals into account. It was also emphasised that there are dedicated pilot areas taking part in a Government trial around the use of E-scooters [EDIT: Sussex is not one of the pilot areas taking part]. Further information about the trial, advice about traveling safely, licensing guidance and the rules of the road can be viewed through the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-users>

Community Speed Watch

Community Speed Watch (CSW) is a national initiative where members of communities use detection devices to monitor local vehicle speeds, in partnership with the police.

A. How many CSW teams are currently operating in Sussex?

B. How many warning letters were sent out by the CSW teams in Sussex during 2020? How does this compare to previous years? And, what, if any, impact have the lockdown restrictions had on the number letters sent?

C. How is the effectiveness of the CSW scheme measured?

JS confirmed that the primary role of CSW is to act as a visual deterrent and to educate drivers to slow down with the aim of reducing the number of deaths and injuries on the roads; improving the quality of life for local communities; reducing the speed of vehicles to the speed limit and to increase public awareness of inappropriate speed. This activity is undertaken by volunteers monitoring drivers exceeding the speed limit and reporting these offences to the police.

It was highlighted that there are currently 266 registered CSW groups throughout Sussex, with 256 of these enabled and able to deploy. Sussex Police work in partnership with the CSW groups and, following feedback from the volunteers themselves, regularly join the volunteers to assist them in this monitoring activity in the local communities. The Chief Constable encouraged any members of the public who are interested in getting involved in CSW to take part. Further information about joining an established CSW or registering a new group can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/wsi/watch-schemes-initiatives/speedwatch/community-speedwatch/>

It was highlighted that 42,347 speeding offences were identified by the CSW groups during 2020 – this resulted in 38,623 letters sent out to motorists. This was 9,109 fewer offences recorded than the 51,456 reports passed to the Force to consider in 2019 and was attributed to fewer members of the CSW groups able to carry out speed detection activity because of the restrictions in place to prevent the further spread of coronavirus. KB asked for a breakdown of the different letters sent out by Sussex Police, including the proportion of these letters that were first or second letters issued. [EDIT: The number of letters sent out to speeding motorists was not recorded by Sussex Police in 2019].

The Chief Constable recognised that measuring the success of the CSW scheme can be challenging because, like many other preventative models, there are a number of intangible factors that are difficult to quantify. JS concluded by agreeing to look at the funding of the CSW groups in Sussex moving forward.

ACTION: KB requested a breakdown of the letters sent out by Sussex Police following reports of speeding offences received from Community Speed Watch volunteers, including the proportion of these letters that were first or second letters issued.

NEXT UP:

The next PAM is on Friday, 16 April 2021 at 13:00. Further information can be viewed on my website through the following link:

www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/watch-live/