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Sussex Police and Crime Panel

13 March 2026 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Lewes.

Present:

Cllr Czolak	Brighton & Hove City Council	Cllr Warne	Hastings Borough Council
Cllr Birch	Arun District Council	Cllr Bangert	Chichester District Council
Cllr Khan	Crawley Borough Council	Cllr Ballard	Eastbourne Borough Council
Cllr Ian Hollidge	East Sussex County Council	Cllr Bob 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 Mitchell	West Sussex County Council	Cllr Cooke	Mid-Sussex District Council
Mr Napthine	Independent Co-opted Member	Mrs Scholefield	Independent Co-opted Member
Cllr Raby	Horsham District Council		

Substitutes:

Cllr Raby, Horsham District Council

Apologies were received from Cllr Baynham (Horsham District Council), Cllr Sluman (Adur District Council), Cllr Hogan (Brighton & Hove City Council) and Cllr Whorlow (Worthing Borough Council)

Also in attendance: Mrs Katy Bourne, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr Mark Streater, OSPCC, Mr Iain McCulloch, OSPCC, and Mr Mervin Dadd, OSPCC.

Part I

80. Declarations of Interest

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

Panel Member	Personal Interest
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Cllr Ballard	Cabinet Lead for Community Safety at Eastbourne Borough 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 Birch	Chair of Housing and Wellbeing Committee at Arun District Council.
Cllr Cooke	Cabinet Member for Communities at Mid-Sussex District Council.
Mrs Scholefield	A serving magistrate.
Cllr Sluman	Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing at Adur District Council.
Cllr Whorlow	Vice Chair for Adur and Worthing Community Partnership. Cabinet Member for Safety, Equalities, and Inclusion at Worthing Borough Council.
Cllr Williams	Cabinet Lead for Public Health and Asset Management at Wealden District Council.

81. Urgent Matters

81.1 With the agreement of the Chair, Mr Mark Streater delivered a statement from the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, addressing the vote of censure passed by the Panel at the previous meeting and putting forward her response and the actions she planned to take in reply (A copy of the full statement is available online).

82. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

82.1 The Panel is asked to approve the draft minutes of the previous meeting on 30 January 2026 as an accurate record.

82.2 Cllr Cooke requested that the minutes be amended to reflect her attendance at the previous meeting, and the amendment was agreed.

82.3 Resolved – that the Panel approved the minutes of the previous meeting on 30 January 2026 as an accurate record and have been signed by the Chair.

83. Panel Correspondence since the last Meeting

83.1 The Panel was asked to note the correspondence sent and received on behalf of the Panel since the previous meeting on 30 January 2026.

83.2 Resolved – that the Panel noted the correspondence sent and received since the previous meeting on 30 January 2026.

84. Public and Panel Questions to the Commissioner

84.1 A summary of questions from the Panel to the Commissioner, with accompanying answers, follows:

1. Question: 'Many of the residents of Bexhill, and around the county, have been complaining about noisy vehicles disturbing and causing a nuisance. There have been issues determining who is best placed to deal with these complaints, between environmental health and the police, with a campaign championed by Boris Johnson in 2022 to tackle this issue. Is it the Commissioner's policy to encourage the police to stop this blight on our residents?'

Answer: The Commissioner explained that the aforementioned campaign was not piloted outside of London, she was not aware of the outcome, and she has not seen it rolled out anywhere else in the country. Further, she informed the Panel that the Fatal Five Unit had been rolled out in January, its remit including issues raised by the public such as vehicle noise complaints.

2. Question: 'We are talking about criminality where vehicles exceed the 80-decibel legal limit, with council environmental health officers not having the capacity to enforce, while the police do. Could this be something the police prioritise as it is causing a lot of concern for our residents?'

Answer: The Commissioner reminded members that currently, noise was still considered a civil matter, with little opportunity for the police to enforce, however she would always encourage residents to report noise concerns via Op Crackdown, the non-emergency 101, and online.

3. Question: 'In Hastings recently, there have been two deaths and a number of traffic accidents with pedestrians. Has the Commissioner noted a rise in serious traffic accidents since the end of the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and the introduction of the Fatal Five roads unit?'

Answer: The Commissioner said that she did not have the data to hand today however this could be checked via the Op Crackdown portal as they would hold some of the data.

4. Question: 'The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, Claire's Law, was launched in 2014 to provide information within 28 days that could protect someone from being a victim of an attack i.e. whether a current or ex-partner has a violent or abusive past. Is the Commissioner satisfied that Sussex Police is meeting its duties under the law?'

Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that she regularly checked Clare's Law in her performance and accountability meetings with the Chief Constable, and she would be happy to provide that information to members if requested. **ACTION: For the OSPCC to provide more information on Clare's Law and Sussex Police's performance in meeting its duties under the Law.**

5. Question: 'At the last meeting, the Commissioner said she would be applying for extra funds to cover the costs of extra policing requirements around Crowborough. Have you had any success in getting some funding from central government to offset the cost of policing so it does not fall on local residents?'

Answer: The Commissioner informed the Panel that her office was engaging with the Home Office and the process for this was ongoing.

6. Question: 'Given the turmoil in the world currently, can Sussex residents be reassured that Sussex Police has robust plans and adequate resources in place to handle a major incident?'

Answer: The Commissioner told members that the current threat was considered to be substantial, and she was reassured that Sussex Police has plans in place, assessed by the local Sussex Resilience Forum, and in liaison with the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC). She then informed members that this topic would be on the agenda for the next performance and accountability meeting with the Chief Constable.

7. Question: 'In a recent report, it was reported that 41% of crime was recorded as fraud. In Arun, residents have lost £1.6 million through fraud, with one resident losing £200,000. With a large population of elderly residents who are susceptible to this kind of crime, and with 54% of victims being recorded as 75 years-old or over, what is the Commissioner doing to hold Sussex Police to account to address this and ensure criminals are held to account?'

Answer: The Commissioner informed the Panel that Sussex Police had instigated Operation Signature, as the first of its kind in the country and now adopted by other police forces, where they target specifically those groups most at risk from fraud. The Commissioner explained that she raises this regularly, most recently at the last performance and accountability meeting on 19th February, and her office provides two fraud caseworkers via Victim Support. Finally, she informed the Panel that she was very reassured that Sussex Police is working to address this issue, as

well as the various other initiatives that have been put in place to combat fraud.

8. Question: 'How is success on this going to be monitored and measured, considering we still have this high level of crime?'

Answer: The Commissioner explained that fraud is dealt with at the national level by the City of London Police, where they collate information via their Report Fraud website, which is then disseminated down to each police force, at which point Sussex Police will assess that information, identify those most at-risk, and then make contact with those individuals under Operation Signature. The Commissioner assured the Panel that she was constantly reviewing this, and through her performance meetings with the Chief Constable.

9. Question: 'Another sort of fraud that we are seeing locally is sextortion, especially among younger people. Is there anything being done to address that and to reassure young people if they find themselves in that situation?'

Answer: The Commissioner assured members that work was ongoing, both within Sussex Police and nationally, with support for victims available via Victim Support in her office.

10. Question: 'Is the Commissioner, in her oversight role, satisfied that Sussex Police has been acting even-handedly in dealing with various issues that have arisen as a result of the Crowborough demonstrations?'

Answer: The Commissioner indicated that she was satisfied with how Sussex Police handled the various issues indicated.

84.2 A point of order was raised after a member's question, due to ongoing legal process around the motion of censure tabled at the previous meeting, and as the Commissioner and Chair were not aware of the correspondence referred to by the member, the question was withdrawn.

11. Question: 'Southbourne has the only military base in West Sussex at Baker Barracks, with a tri-service population, many of whom are or soon will be overseas. Does the Commissioner work to engage with and support the military on Thorney Island?'

Answer: The Commissioner indicated she was not aware of anything specific.

12. Question: 'On the topic of the Right Person, Right Care health initiative, whereby healthcare professionals take the lead rather than police officers in cases of mental health concerns, how does the Commissioner feel the initiative is going, is it a success, and has it reduced the number of hours officers spend dealing with those experiencing mental health issues?'

Answer: The Commissioner indicated that she had previously brought a report on this to the Panel, and while she had not been convinced that the initiative would be the solution others promised, she understood it was moving forward. The Commissioner asked that the report be sent on to interested members. **Action: to send the OSPCC's report on Right Person, Right Care to panel members.**

13. Question: 'Does the Commissioner think that the situation is better or worse now for people with mental health crises?'

Answer: The Commissioner said that she would prefer not to give an opinion off the top of her head but provide facts and data to the Panel through the report.

14. Question: 'The HMICFRS Peel Assessment report, published by the Inspectorate in July 2025, found that in addition to one 'Good' and seven 'Adequate' findings, Sussex Police required improvement at investigating crime. Is the Commissioner satisfied that sufficient progress has been made in addressing this findings?'

Answer: The Commissioner informed the Panel that they covered the full Peel report at their performance and accountability meeting in September 2025, where they looked at the recommendations made, and is available at the PCC's website for review.

15. Question: 'E-bikes seem to be picking up a certain notoriety in the press currently, following the death of an elderly man. Strategically, in Sussex, what is the current situation around the illegal upgrades that are being applied to these bikes, especially considering the difficulties the police are experiencing in enforcing the law around E-bikes?'

Answer: The Commissioner indicated that she was not aware of the current strategic local position in regard to E-bikes and that there was ongoing work at the national level.

84.3 Members commented that, during their visit to the call centre at Sussex Police HQ, they were impressed by the patience and professionalism of call handlers and expressed their wish that the Commissioner pass their remarks back to the Chief Constable. The Commissioner informed the Panel that their comments were noted and would be passed on to the Chief Constable.

85. The outcomes and organisational learning arising from the Sussex PCC's role as the review body for Schedule 3 complaints

85.1 The Commissioner introduced a report by her office. The Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Mark Streater, then presented the report to the Panel.

85.2 A summary of questions from panel members and answers follows:

1. Question: 'Under Section 5.21 General Administration, letters of dissatisfaction are sent to the Commissioner, following the outcome of police decisions being shared. What do you then do with those letters, how are they reviewed, and do you use them to hold the Chief Constable to account?'

Answer: The Commissioner explained to the Panel that her team reviews all complaints, with around 15% of complaints being upheld, and assured members that they then go back to the police to review the complaints and offer a written apology or other remedies.

Supplementary: The Chief Executive Officer further explained the complaints procedure available to Sussex residents and the right to review the investigation process by the OSPCC and indicated that they always encourage complainants to submit their letters to the OSPCC even when a formal appeals process has not been instigated. The Commissioner added that they hold regular governance and integrity meetings where any trends can be identified and addressed.

2. Question: 'On the topic of trends, does the Commissioner have any insight on current trends over the past five years? Has there been an increase in the number of complaints?'

Answer: The Commissioner explained that they only see letters of dissatisfaction so it is difficult to assess trends, and these can vary year-to-year, and she would be concerned if no complaints were ever upheld.

3. Question: 'Is the Commissioner satisfied that the public are aware of the complaints process?'

Answer: The Commissioner assured the Panel that she was sure the public were aware due to an increase in the number of complaints and reviews recently, however the percentage of complaints that were upheld has remained largely the same.

4. Question: 'Have there been any specific complaints around the use of technologies such as facial recognition and gait analysis?'

Answer: The Commissioner explained the complaints are specifically around conduct and against individuals, not more general issues, but assured members that technology such as facial recognition is being looked at nationally. She also added that higher-level complaints tend to go to the IOPC rather than to her office.

86. Sussex Police's Progress in recruiting to maintain the Home Office's baseline headcount

- 86.1 The Commissioner introduced a report by her office. The Chief Finance Officer, Mr. Iain McCulloch, then presented the report to the Panel.

- 86.2 A summary of members' questions and answers follows:

- 86.3 Panel members indicated their congratulations on Sussex Police's success in recruiting more police officers and the positive effect this was having on the visibility of police officers on the streets.

1. Question: 'How successful has Sussex Police's use of apprenticeships to drive recruitment been?'

Answer: The Commissioner explained that she did not have the information to hand on apprenticeships, but her office would be

happy to share with members. **ACTION: For the OSPCC to provide more information on the successful use of apprenticeship programmes in increasing and maintaining police officer recruitment.**

2. Question: 'Is there difficulty with the PCSOs using their roles as a through-route into policing and the need to constantly backfill with PCSOs?'

Answer: The Commissioner confirmed her pride in the work done by Sussex Police PCSOs and added it was important to keep all avenues of recruitment open, including the route from PCSO to full-time police officer.

3. Question: 'What are the current retention rates for police officers and is any planning done around age and retirement?'

Answer: The Commissioner gave the Panel her assurance that she regularly reviews retention rates and holds the Chief Constable to account on this issue.

4. Question: 'Do we have assurance that the community safety partnership is to be retained, as it's seen as an extremely useful way of working by local councils?'

Answer: The Commissioner explained to members that she had just written to community safety partnerships across Sussex to assure them that CSP monies for this coming year will be maintained but she could offer no guarantees for subsequent years.

87. Independent Member Term of Office

87.1 At the invitation of the Chair, the Senior Advisor to the Panel explained the proposal to members to agree to waive the constitutional term limits and role re-recruitment requirements for independent members of the Panel due to the coming abolition of Police and Crime Panels.

87.2 The Chair then called for the Panel to agree or reject the proposal.

87.3 The Panel unanimously agreed to the proposal.

88. Quarterly Report of Complaints

88.1 The Panel noted the report and that there have been no complaints received as of 3rd March 2026.

89. Date of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates

89.1 The Chair noted the next meeting of the Panel will take place on Thursday 2nd July 2026, at 10:30am at County Hall, Lewes.

Future meeting dates have been proposed as:

- 9th October 2026
- 29th January 2027
- 22nd February 2027 (Provisional)
- 12th March 2027

The meeting ended at 11.20 am

Chairman

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