

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 16 May 2014

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

PRESENT: Police & Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne (KB)
Chief Executive Mark Streater (MS)
Temporary Chief Constable Giles York (GY)
Temporary Deputy Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney (OP)
Assistant Chief Constable Robin Smith (RS)
Policy Officer Graham Kane – minutes
Communications Manager Rosie Gooch
Administration Clerk Sarah Tibbott
Detective Chief Inspector Emma Brice

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 confirmed that recent operational highlights for Sussex Police have included the policing of the March for England protests in Brighton & Hove (Operation Henton). It was estimated that between 700 and 800 officers were deployed to the event which passed "as well as could have been expected" with few incidents of note.*
- *On reflection, the Force was able to facilitate a peaceful protest and received positive feedback in the manner in which this was achieved. Extensive planning, preparation and engagement were attributed to this success, together with a shift in tactics to make better use of police resources.*
- *GY also expressed his gratitude for the support that Sussex Police received from other police forces nationally.*
- *A recent lowlight for the Force was the tragic domestic murder of a female in Worthing for which a suspect has now been arrested and charged.*

CRIME & COMMUNITY SAFETY

ACTION FRAUD

The Home Secretary announced the closure of the National Fraud Authority in December 2013 and confirmed that the responsibility for Action Fraud would transfer to the City of London Police from April 2014. This move has strengthened the national response to tackling serious and organised crime in a time where advances in technology have transformed the threat and risk of fraud and cyber crime.

A. How will Sussex Police continue to work with Action Fraud to tackle fraud following this change in responsibility?

B. What percentage of fraud reports are referred to Sussex Police?

C. How are these reports investigated in Sussex?

D. What assurances can you provide me with that the Force is proactively raising awareness of fraud to the residents of Sussex?

- *GY stated that the transferring of responsibility for Action Fraud from the National Fraud Authority to the City of London Police is a positive move towards the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau. In particular, this will enable intelligence to be developed around the national picture.*
- *It was highlighted that fraud is an emerging problem to which a national response is required because it is not a local crime. Sussex Police work with Action Fraud in terms of both crime recording and investigation.*
- *GY highlighted the importance of members of the public reporting incidents of fraud. Approximately, a third of all reports to Action Fraud are referred back to Sussex Police and allocated to officers for investigation. It was also emphasised that in some cases of fraud an investigation for theft is appropriate too.*
- *GY assured KB that Sussex Police are proactively raising awareness of fraud through Operation Signature and Public Engagement Officers working locally across the districts. This has resulted in reports of fraud doubling between January and April 2014.*

ACQUISITIVE CRIME – DETECTION RATES

Acquisitive crimes are those in which an offender acquires or takes items from another person, and cover a number of different types of offence, including burglary, theft and robbery.

Whilst there were reductions in the recorded numbers of these crimes across the previous Performance Plan Year 2013/2014, I am concerned to note that the detection rates across most areas of “acquisitive crime” are low, and have demonstrated a reduction from last year.

A. Can you describe the difficulties that Sussex Police are currently encountering around this particular area?

B. How do the detection rates in Sussex compare against the Most Similar Group of forces nationally?

C. Are you satisfied that Sussex Police have sufficient plans in place to improve these detection rates and catch more criminals?

- *GY acknowledged that the detection rates for acquisitive crimes are low and highlighted that Sussex Police need to get better at investigating these crimes (which has also been identified by HMIC and at the Performance and Accountability Meetings within Sussex Police which is responsible for measuring service delivery).*

- *The introduction of Niche in May 2013, which replaced four systems (the crime reporting, intelligence, custody and case preparation systems), was also attributed to these low detection rates because a number of crimes have been recorded and resolved by the Force but detections have not been updated. As a result Sussex Police compare poorly with their Most Similar Group of forces and nationally throughout England and Wales.*
- *KB highlighted particular concerns relating to the detection rates for burglary dwelling. OP emphasised that the risk of these crimes in Sussex remains low compared to other police force areas and confirmed that there have been positive reductions in the recorded numbers of burglary dwelling crimes in comparison to the previous performance plan year. Some of these reductions were directly attributed to Operation Magpie.*
- *However, OP stated that she remains concerned with the detection rates in Sussex and explained that an immediate improvement is expected because the Force have been concentrating on developing intelligence, prolific offenders and linking crime series more efficiently. OP concluded by emphasising the importance of Sussex Police improving their response to investigations to ensure that the public maintain confidence in the criminal justice system.*

Action: KB to revisit acquisitive crime detection rates in August PAM

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – STREET DRINKING

At the March PAM, I raised the issue of anti-social behaviour, and those who drink in town centres and public spaces, in particular. Attendance at meetings across the Sussex and correspondence received by the OSPCC has confirmed that tackling street drinking remains a priority for local businesses, residents and communities which is expected to be exacerbated in the summer months.

A. What specific powers do Sussex Police have to deal with street drinking?

B. What are dispersal orders and how can they be used to tackle street drinking?

C. How is the Force proactively working with partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and street drinking?

- *GY acknowledged that street drinking is exacerbated in the summer months and emphasised that the policing response needs to be balanced and proportionate together with providing support to vulnerable street drinkers.*
- *It was highlighted that the following powers are available to Sussex Police in terms of tackling street drinking: Designated Public Place Orders (this provides the police with additional powers to confiscate alcohol in certain public place areas), s.27 (the power to make individuals leave a public place area for 24 hours because of alcohol related disorder) and s.40 (the power to make an individual leave a public place area for 48 hours).*

- *GY confirmed that Sussex Police are proactively working closely with partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and street drinking through Community Safety Partnerships, encouraging local retailers not to sell high-strength alcohol and using pop-up hubs to target vulnerable members of the street drinking community.*
- *Members of the public are encouraged to engage with local Neighbourhood Policing Teams and local authorities to work towards developing long-term solutions to tackle street drinking.*

VICTIM FOCUS

MISSING PERSONS (MISSing PERsons)

Every year there are around 327,000 reports of missing people made to the police in the UK, which is the equivalent of nearly 900 reports a day. Missing persons naturally have a significant impact on police time and are resource intensive.

A. How many reports of missing people do Sussex Police received each year?

B. What proportion of these missing people relate to children and young people?

C. How are cases of missing people prioritised by Sussex Police?

D. How do Sussex Police work with the UK Missing Persons Bureau and other partner agencies to find missing persons?

- *GY confirmed that Sussex Police receive approximately 12,000 reports of missing people each year (which is the 5th highest nationally). It was emphasised that 80% of these reports relate to children and young people and that a risk matrix is used to prioritise missing people.*
- *Sussex Police use the following definitions in relation to missing persons: Absent - not at a place where they are expected or required to be. Missing - not at the place they are expected to be but the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests they may be subject of a crime or at risk of harm to themselves or others.*
- *It was highlighted that missing people have a significant impact on police time and are resource intensive despite there often being no associated crimes. Sussex Police work with Ofsted, local authorities, other police forces, UK Missing Persons Bureau and Missing People to find missing persons.*

RE-VICTIMISATION

Victim Support is an independent charity who provides support and practical assistance to anyone affected by crime following referrals by individual police forces. I am aware that the number of referrals to Victim Support in Sussex and Surrey across the 4th Quarter of 2013/2014 demonstrated a decreasing trend.

A. What do you attribute the reductions in the number of referrals to Victim Support to?

B. What processes are in place within Sussex Police to ensure that the correct contact information (both an address and telephone number) is taken from a victim to ensure that Victim Support are able to progress a referral to a case?

- *OP attributed the reductions in the number of referrals to Victim Support across the fourth quarter of 2013/2014 to both Sussex Police and Victim Support implementing new systems.*
- *The Force introduced Niche in May 2013 and Victim Support changed their system in November 2013 which resulted in problems aligning data and caused a backlog which required manual intervention. However, this technical difficulty has now been resolved and performance is being monitored on a daily basis to reduce this backlog.*

Action: KB asked for a weekly update regarding the backlog reduction

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

RESILIENCE OF CID IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

The Argus reported this week that serious crimes in Brighton & Hove are being investigated by unqualified officers due to a “critical shortage of police officers”. It has been claimed that officers are being drafted in to Brighton & Hove CID without having passed their detective exams.

A. How are Sussex Police managing these concerns raised around resilience?

B. How long has this been going on for?

- *OP stated that the concerns about unqualified officers being drafted into the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on Brighton & Hove Division do not pose a risk to public safety or the quality of the investigations.*
- *It was confirmed that a small number of police constables are currently working in CID because they are aspiring detectives. All of their investigations are overseen by detective sergeants and detective inspectors and the experience of working in CID provides them with the knowledge and practical skills required to pass their detective exams.*
- *OP was “totally dismayed” in response to claims that a member of staff in CID was “close to tears because of the stress caused by workloads”. Sussex Police work closely alongside the Police Federation to monitor the health and wellbeing of staff. OP acknowledged that it was the role of supervisors to keep a close eye on staff and ensure that any necessary referrals are made regarding staff welfare.*
- *OP concluded by stating that employee satisfaction is also monitored through sickness levels, Forcewide surveys and leaving questionnaires.*

CODE OF ETHICS

The College of Policing has launched an Integrity Programme for policing in England and Wales, to embed an effective, professional and consistent approach to integrity. Part of this Programme includes the recently launched Code of Ethics which sets out the policing principles and standards of professional behaviour expected by every member of the policing profession in England and Wales.

A. What are you doing to embed the Code of Ethics into day-to-day policing in Sussex?

B. How will you measure that the standards and expectations set out in the Code of Ethics are being met in the delivery of service?

- *GY welcomed the College of Policing's (CoP) national Code of Ethics (a first for policing in England and Wales) and confirmed that Sussex Police were active in terms of developing the content. The Code of Ethics is based on nine policing principles and ten standards of professional behaviour that will help everyone in policing to do the right thing, in the right way.*
- *OP stated that a transitional plan is in place within Sussex Police to embed the Code of Ethics. A Professional Standards & Integrity Board will oversee this transition and will make use of the self-assessment guidance that has been provided by the CoP to enable police forces to identify gaps and develop action plans, as necessary.*
- *This Board will also focus on unsatisfactory performance (before misconduct intervention is required) and will ensure that the Code of Ethics forms part of professional development within the Force in terms of recruitment and promotions.*

OPERATION MANSELL

Hertfordshire Constabulary and Essex Police have recently presented their observations and findings to Sussex Police following a peer group review into Operation Mansell, the Force's response to the anti-fracking protests in Balcombe last year.

A. What is your overall reaction to the findings of the review?

- *RS stated that it was good practice for Hertfordshire Constabulary and Essex Police to review the delivery of Operation Mansell (the Force's response to policing the anti-fracking protests in Balcombe last year).*
- *The peer review identified 31 recommendations, including improvements to intelligence development, resourcing challenges, communication with the public, engagement with stakeholders and better use of s.14.*
- *Sussex Police have already started using some of the learning from Operation Mansell in the policing of other public order events in Sussex, including Operation Henton (March for England protests). Good practice has also been shared with other police forces nationally.*
- *It was highlighted that Operation Arena is the new Sussex Police operation for any future anti-fracking protests.*

- *GY confirmed that 126 individuals were arrested during last year's protests, of which 43 resulted in positive actions (14 were cautions and 29 were convictions following guilty pleas or criminal trials).*
- *A number of reasons were attributed to the low conviction rates including the fact that this is a complex area of law for the police and Crown Prosecution Service, with criminal law closely interplayed with human rights legislation. It was also confirmed that Sussex Police sought legal advice throughout the protests with regards to s.14 and obstruction of the highway.*
- *GY stated that arrests were not made to criminalise the protests at any stage and reiterated that the Operation was a difficult balance between facilitating a peaceful protest and ensuring public safety.*

VALUE FOR MONEY

JOINT PROCUREMENT SERVICES

A Joint Procurement Service between Sussex Police and Surrey Police has been live since September 2012. Under this arrangement, both forces have a single set of contract standing orders and authorisation levels.

A. How effective has the creation of this Joint Procurement Service been?

B. What level of scrutiny is in place to measure success in this particular area?

- *GY confirmed that the creation of a Joint Procurement Service between Sussex Police and Surrey Police has been very effective and full annual savings of £1.4m have been achieved between both forces.*
- *The Joint Procurement Service are now actively involved in projects at an earlier stage and any procurement over £50,000 is now considered by a Joint Sussex and Surrey Scrutiny Panel to assess whether force requirements are being met. A Joint Procurement Board meets six-weekly to oversee the decisions of the Panel.*
- *It is anticipated that the National Police Procurement Hub will have a positive impact on the ability of Sussex Police and Surrey Police to achieve greater savings given the associated economies of scale that can be realised on a national scale.*