

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 21 February 2014

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

PRESENT: Police & Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne (KB)
Chief Finance Officer John Eagles (JE)
Temporary Chief Constable Giles York (GY)
Chief Superintendent Nev Kemp (NK)
Policy Officer Graham Kane – minutes
Communications Manager Rosie Gooch
Administration Clerk Sarah Tibbott

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Q. 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 provided KB with an update regarding the temporary Chief Officer team following the retirement of Chief Constable Martin Richards in February 2014.

Temporary Chief Constable – Giles York

Temporary Deputy Chief Constable – Robin Smith

Assistant Chief Constable – Stuart Cundy (Surrey Police)

Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Stephen Barry

Director of Finance – Mark Baker

Interim Head of Human Resources – Adrian Rutherford

In addition, Olivia Pinkney will become Temporary Deputy Chief Constable when she returns from a secondment at HMIC with Robin Smith reverting back to Assistant Chief Constable.

GY explained that recent operational highlights for Sussex Police have included overcoming the high winds, storms and flooding, the swift arrest and charge of a suspect following an attack on a woman in Horsham and reassurance to the communities of Crawley following the suicide bombing in Syria.

MAJOR CRIME INVESTIGATION

Q. Sussex Police and Surrey Police have already collaborated in a number of areas, including Major Crime. There have been a number of notable murder investigations across Sussex and Surrey in the past six months. How is the new joint Major Crime Unit faring in response to this demand?

A. How has the collaboration with Surrey impacted on resilience?

B. What are the main challenges for both forces in developing this model?

GY confirmed that the Major Crime Unit have shared a Joint Command for the past few years and are well established in terms of day-to-day operations.

It was highlighted that the period immediately after an incident is the most critical time for an investigation. This is supported by the ability of Sussex and Surrey to draw on central resources from both forces without having to take officers away from Neighbourhood Policing Teams. Interchangeable access to shared systems and buildings also assists with this area of collaboration.

The challenges for both forces in terms of developing this model include negotiating different computer systems, access and maintaining resilience in the rest of the organisation, particularly for those individual officers on call at higher ranks. GY concluded by stating that the initial collaborative successes have set a good precedent for future working between Sussex and Surrey.

SUSSEX RESILIENCE FORUM

Q. The recent severe weather and flooding have put additional pressures on all of the emergency services. The Home Secretary's Strategic Policing Requirement identifies the national threats that all police forces must have sufficient resilience and capacity to prevent and respond to, including civil contingencies. What has the Sussex Police response looked like to date?

A. How have Sussex Police supported Surrey Police colleagues?

B. What is the Force's role in the Sussex Resilience Forum?

GY confirmed that the recent severe weather and flooding has had a marginal impact on Sussex with isolated incidents across the county. However, reassurance was provided that resilience has been maintained locally. It was recognised that the flooding in Surrey had placed an additional demand on local resources, of which the Sussex Police response to date had consisted of 653 officer days (12 hour shifts). These abstractions have been backfilled via overtime to maintain local resilience and this position has been reviewed daily, according to need. The Sussex Police Specialist Search Unit is the only one within the region and has been assisting Surrey in their response.

The role of the Sussex Resilience Forum is to plan for emergency risks, including flooding and severe weather, under the remit of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and is chaired by GY.

HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE

Q. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary has recently consulted on their proposed Inspection Programme for 2014/2015. In particular, it was emphasised that there is a national under-reporting of honour based crime and that further work is required to empower victims to report these crimes. Can you clarify what honour based crime is?

A. How many honour based crimes and incidents have been recorded in Sussex?

B. What work is the Force currently doing with partners across this crime type?

C. What are the challenges and opportunities for Sussex Police in terms of better understanding this particular area of crime?

GY confirmed that Sussex Police define honour based violence as a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community. Examples of crimes committed in the name of 'honour' were provided and included domestic abuse, sexual or psychological abuse, assault, forced marriage and being taken and held against your will.

GY stated that in the period 1 October 2011 to 30 April 2013 (nineteen months) there were 104 reported incidents of honour based violence in Sussex, of which 30 were recorded as crimes. It is recognised that this remains an under-reported crime locally and nationally and that further work is required to increase the number of reported incidents and crimes.

It was highlighted that Sussex Police are working with partners to capture honour based violence through existing work around domestic abuse and safeguarding. It is also recognised that closer working with health is required moving forward. An honour based violence plan is in place to discover more criminality (increase reporting), improve support available to victims and to bring more offenders to justice. A guide to honour based violence is also available to officers and staff via the Force Intranet.

GY concluded by making a commitment to improve awareness of honour based violence amongst Sussex Police officers and to increase the consistency of response from the Force.

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Q. Tackling violence against women and girls is, and will remain, a high priority for me in my role. I was pleased to be able to support the recent International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). FGM remains a hugely complex area with very harmful and illegal practices. What are the key issues for Sussex Police around FGM?

A. Is Sussex Police linked into the local Children's Safeguarding Boards/Chairs on this issue?

B. Is Sussex Police aware of the work of the Children's Commissioner around this issue?

C. Is there any work being progressed through the Schools Liaison Officers on this?

GY confirmed that FGM is a hugely under-reported crime, which is recognised nationally by HMIC and emphasised by the zero reports of FGM in Sussex.

It was highlighted that Sussex Police are engaged with health on this but no Memorandum of Understanding regarding the legitimate sharing of confidential information has been developed. The Neighbourhood Policing model that exists within Sussex Police will enhance this and ensures that they can continue to invest in meaningful community engagement around FGM to target and reach specific areas and communities of risk.

GY acknowledged that raising awareness and learning of FGM amongst officers is an issue and appropriate training, skills and tools to do this need to be provided. This understanding will be quantified by the Force starting to receive reports of FGM as strength and trust in the police is improved.

In addition, Sussex Police are proactively targeting Gatwick airport to profile target offenders of FGM as part of an ongoing intelligence programme. The Force is also linked in with the Metropolitan Police to share learning and best practice in this particular area.

VEHICLE CRIME IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

Q. Vehicle crime in Brighton & Hove has increased by 27% from 2012/2013 which equates to an additional 389 recorded crimes. In particular, there has been a 30% increase in the number of thefts from a vehicle. What are Sussex Police doing to address these increases?

A. What more can Sussex Police do to raise awareness of this particular crime type to residents in Brighton & Hove and the rest of Sussex?

NK reassured KB that the recorded number of vehicle crimes in Brighton & Hove is reducing. Previous good performance in 2012/2013 and significant monthly increases across September, October, November and December 2013 (average of 240 per month) were attributed to the increased number of vehicle crimes across the Performance Plan Year. In particular, the increases related to thefts of high value vehicles (stolen to order by Organised Crime Groups), thefts from vehicles and thefts of mopeds.

NK confirmed that targeted effort from Brighton & Hove officers has resulted in the recorded numbers of vehicle crime reducing to 110 for the month of January 2014 and this downward trend has continued into February.

Sussex Police have raised awareness of vehicle crime in Brighton & Hove by providing crime prevention packs to victims, installing covert cameras and utilising a super-cooing tactic that has previously been used to tackle burglary spikes in the City.

In addition, NK stated that Sussex Police have created a Manhunt Team in Brighton & Hove to identify where difficult to find offenders are. This team is predominantly made up of Special Constables and this additional policing capacity ensures that those offenders identified can be arrested faster. In particular, it was emphasised that the Manhunt Team was responsible for 135 arrests in January 2014). The Metropolitan Police took the lead for introducing this team and Sussex Police are looking to build on this success by creating similar teams on East and West Sussex divisions. It was also emphasised that Sussex Police are working with the College of Policing to develop best practice around this area of work.

Action: KB to attend an all team 'Station Briefing' at Brighton & Hove Division

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

INDEPENDENT POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

Q. I recently met with the Head of the Professional Standards Department to review Quarter three performance. I was made aware that the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) had expressed concern regarding an apparent increase in the number of upheld appeals. What assurances can you provide me that accurate data is made available to the IPCC?

GY was able to provide KB with some reassurance regarding the concern expressed by the IPCC in terms of an apparent increase in the number of upheld appeals. It was explained that internal processes have changed the way that Sussex Police handle appeals which were not reflected in the IPCC figures. Revised figures confirmed that, contextually, Sussex Police are broadly similar to the number of complaints upheld in other forces.

GY explained that Sussex Police meet with the Independent Police Complaints Commissioner on a quarterly basis to review complaints, working practices and overall performance. It was highlighted that increased public confidence can be attributable to the knowledge that an independent body (IPCC) exists to oversee and monitor the police complaints system in England and Wales.

GY reiterated that the Professional Standards Department have a wider remit than simply discipline and punishment which involves looking at improving and developing performance and standards by which the police should handle complaints.

POLICING PRECEPT DECISION

Q. Following a recent government announcement about Council Tax Referendum Limits, I have decided, with the support of the Police & Crime Panel, to increase the policing part of the Council Tax for 2014/2015 by 1.95%. This will fund future investment in areas such as reducing serious sexual offending, tackling child exploitation, strengthening the fight against cyber crime and increasing the visibility of frontline policing. How will a precept rise of 1.95%, instead of the preferred 3.6%, affect delivery of these investments?

GY confirmed that the investment that Sussex Police requested for the above areas was all deemed essential. However, owing to the reduced investment that will be generated from a 1.95% increase in the policing part of the Council Tax it was recognised that the timing of this investment would need to be re-evaluated and maintained over a longer period of time.

In particular, GY highlighted that the commitment to increase the numbers of frontline policing would be maintained as originally planned by looking closer at mobile capabilities which will free-up more police officer time. The safe guarding funding is an area that Sussex Police will phase delivery of over three years and further consideration will be made regarding the potential to use existing savings from reserves. It was also established that the investment to strengthen the Force's capacity against cyber crime would be maintained by increasing collaboration with Surrey Police.