

REPORT OF THE SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY

The Sussex Police Authority met at County Hall, Chichester, on 10 February 2011

Present: Dr L Bush (Chairman), Mr L Barnard, Mr P Bratton, Prof G Bull, Ms E Daniel, Mr G Daniel JP, Mr B Duncan, Mr P Evans, Mr F Faiz, Mr P Jones, Mrs S Knight, Mr A Price JP, Mrs C Shaves MBE JP, Mr A Smith, Mr R Tidy, Mr S Waight (Vice-Chairman) and Dr R Walker.

The Police Authority considered a wide range of policing issues at the meeting including the following matters. The full set of reports to the Police Authority can be accessed on the Authority's website www.sussexpoliceauthority.gov.uk

1. Local policing plan 2011-2014

1.1 The Authority has approved the Local Policing Plan (LPP) 2011–14 which sets out the strategic vision for policing Sussex over the next three years, specific investments in key priority areas and specific actions to be undertaken in 2011-14 to meet the demanding targets set by the Police Authority. The Authority has worked closely with the Chief Constable to input the views of the local community, following public consultation, into the development of the LPP. The Authority was represented on the LPP Development Board by the Chairman of the Authority, the Chairmen of the Authority's three Scrutiny Committees and the Deputy Chief Executive. This ensures that the Authority plays a vital role making sure the communities of Sussex receive an efficient and effective policing service. There is a strong working relationship between Sussex Police and the Authority, which enables the Authority to shape the strategic direction of the Force on behalf of Sussex communities.

1.2 The LPP has been developed in conjunction with the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2011-12 as a fully developed and integrated package which will deliver an agreed Plan with targets. The Authority determined at the start of the programme that the Plan should be structured around a clear set of priorities which have been closely aligned to scrutiny committee business areas thereby enabling effective oversight of performance through the established Authority structure. As part of the drive to reduce bureaucracy the number of targets has been reduced from the previous year and is also a strong commitment to closely focus on what is important and de-clutter the performance agenda.

1.3 Neighbourhood policing continues to be a key priority for the Authority and Sussex Police and the foundation upon which policing in Sussex had been developed over recent years. The Authority has been clear throughout the development of the Plan that effective analysis of Force performance around the management of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), is to be a key part of the LPP which reflects community concerns.

1.4 The investment options within the approved budget are aligned to the three strategic priorities of the Authority contained in the LPP namely: neighbourhood

policing, keeping people safe and best use of resources. The objectives and demanding targets in the LPP seek to balance the continuing aspiration to provide high quality policing and the cost of the service to local tax payers. This is particularly important in the current economic environment with reduced resources. Members welcomed the continuous striving for improved performance on a significantly reduced budget.

1.5 The Authority and Sussex Police are key contributors to partnership working at various levels throughout Sussex and work closely at a strategic level with East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council, and with other partner agencies across Sussex. The Authority and Sussex Police are also working closely with other regional police authorities and forces, and are specifically developing preferred partner arrangements with Surrey Police and Police Authority.

1.6 For the first time, the Plan becomes primarily internet based which allows for a more efficient, up-to-date and accurate product with direct links to other sites such as local policing districts and the Authority's own website. The Authority welcomed the fact that by being online, the performance information within the plan can be updated throughout the year. In addition to the internet version, a printable option will be available which can be accessed via Sussex Police.

2. Revenue budget and capital programme

2.1 The Police Authority approved its revenue and capital budgets for 2011-12 and capital programme for the three year period to 2014. The revenue budget and capital programme has been prepared to deliver the Local Policing Plan approved by the Authority (paragraphs 1.1 to 1.6 refer). The revenue budget seeks to ensure that Sussex Police continues to deliver a good policing service. Over the last few years, Sussex Police has continued to deliver a high level of performance and achieved significant efficiency savings, all against a background of low grant funding and one of the lowest levels of precept for policing.

2.2 While Sussex Police has a strong record of delivering improvements in performance, and in the efficient use of resources, the Authority continues to face a very difficult financial outlook over the period beyond 2011. The need to invest further in measures to tackle serious and organised crime, to support the continuing development of neighbourhood policing, and protect vulnerable people is set against a significant cut in government funding. Both the Authority and Sussex Police are particularly anxious to ensure that there is no negative impact on neighbourhood policing. However, for local policing to flourish, investment must continue to be made in the provision of protective services. These include provision for major and cross border crime, roads policing, forensic investigation and counter-terrorism activities. The Police Authority and Sussex Police are collaborating with other police authorities and forces to achieve the best use of resources.

2.3 The budget proposal has been through a rigorous process of review within the Force, through the three Force Strategic Boards and members have considered detailed reports on budget proposals, capital programmes and reserves

at Resources Scrutiny Committee in November 2010 and January 2011, the Police Authority in October and December 2010.

2.4 The Chief Constable's assessment of the budget proposal is that, taken as a whole, it provides the resources necessary for the delivery of Local Policing Plan priorities and will enhance further the Force's ability to keep people safe and develop neighbourhood policing. Considerable work has been undertaken to achieve efficiency savings across the Force. This work has identified savings of at least £16m in 2011-12 and a further £28m beyond to ensure a sustainable funding base is maintained to 2015. Serving Sussex 2015 is the programme of work to develop the right model of policing for Sussex in the future, within a context where significant budget savings need to be made. Savings identified as part of the programme will be used to close the projected funding gap.

2.5 The Authority has approved a revenue budget for 2011-12 of £261.995m inclusive of a pay and price contingency provision of £0.585m which will result in a 0% increase in the policing element of the Council Tax. The police element of the precept for a Band D property will, therefore, remain at £138.42 per annum. The Police Authority believes this budget represents the best balance between maintaining the improvements in policing in Sussex and the poor budget settlement, and government guidance on council tax and budget increases.

2.6 The Authority approved a three year capital programme of £20.428m, which includes a proposed capital budget for 2011-12 of £9.869m.

3. Police reform and social responsibility bill

3. The Authority was advised that the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill started its passage through Parliament on 30 November 2010 and it was anticipated would be confirmed as an Act of Parliament by summer 2011 leading to the direct election of the Police and Crime Commissioner in May 2012. The changes to the future structure of police accountability will inevitably bring challenges and opportunities, with the principle of continuing strong police accountability having longevity, and reinforcing the importance of continued engagement scrutiny and challenge of the next 17 months and beyond. The Authority endorsed the commitment to continue to ensure the transitional period is focussed and productive whilst ensuring a smooth handover to the Police and Crime Commissioner post-elections.

Dr Laurie Bush
Chairman

February 2011

