

## REPORT OF THE SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY

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The Sussex Police Authority met at Sackville House, Lewes, on 26 May 2011

Attendances:

Mr S Waight (Chairman), Mrs C Shaves MBE JP , Mr L Barnard, Mr P Bratton, Prof G Bull, Dr L Bush, Ms E Daniel, Mr G Daniel JP, Mr B Duncan, Mr P Evans, Mrs S Knight, Mr A Price JP, Mr A Smith, Mr B Tidy 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](http://www.sussexpoliceauthority.gov.uk)

### 1. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

1.1 The Authority has appointed Mr Steve Waight as its Chairman and Mrs Carole Shaves MBE JP as its Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

### 2. Membership of the Police Authority

2.1 The Joint Committee, comprising members of Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council, met on 23 May 2011 to appoint the local authority members of the Authority. The following appointments were made for the ensuing year:

Brighton & Hove City Council	Mr B Duncan
East Sussex County Council	Mr G Daniel, Mr P Jones and Mr R Tidy
West Sussex County Council	Mr L Barnard, Mr P Evans, Mrs S Knight, Mr A Smith and Mr S Waight

The Authority has appointed the following members to answer questions on policing matters at meetings of the principle local authorities:

Brighton & Hove City Council	Mr B Duncan
East Sussex County Council	Mr P Jones
West Sussex County Council	Mr S Waight

### **3. Chief Constable's Report**

3.1 The Authority has received a comprehensive report from the Chief Constable which sets out the key issues, highlights and work undertaken by Departments and Divisions of Sussex Police since the last meeting of the Police Authority.

3.2 The Authority was advised that between April 2010 and March 2011 there were 3800 fewer victims of crime in Sussex; a reduction of 3.8%. This puts Sussex in the top half of the safest force areas in the country. Criminal damage also fell in this period, as a result there were 2280 fewer victims of this crime type - a reduction of 10.9%. Injury violence also fell, there were 628 fewer victims a reduction of 7.7%. In this category Sussex is the fifth safest force area in England and Wales.

3.3 The way Sussex Police respond to calls from the public is critical to performance and the target for answering 999 calls was exceeded by a significant margin with over 95% of the 235,000 calls answered within 10 seconds, ensuring that those who need to contact Sussex Police urgently are able to do so. The follow-on performance is demonstrated by high level of victim satisfaction rates with action taken by the police standing at 79.4% and with being kept informed at 72.2%. Sussex Police performance aim is still higher and the Authority has set a satisfaction target of 80%.

3.4 The number of adults (849) and children (63) killed or seriously injured (KSI) on Sussex roads is still a matter of concern and working with partner agencies Sussex Police aims to reduce the level of deaths and injury. In the coming year each district council area will have a Road Policing Unit sergeant with whom to work on local campaigns targeting KSI and anti social driving related priorities. The Authority will continue to carefully monitor this important area of work.

3.5 The Authority has welcomed the fact that during the policing plan year Sussex Police obtained 173 court confiscation orders valued at £3,006,055; the highest ever total for Sussex. Individual confiscation orders ranged from several thousand pounds up to £450,000. The Force obtained 25 civil forfeiture orders valued at £188,643 following cash seizures from suspected offenders. This compares favourably with last year in which 179 court confiscation orders valued at £2,388 million, were obtained. The money confiscated is ploughed back to support further financial investigations and also into the wider community through worthwhile local projects.

3.6 Since the turn of the year there has been an unusually high number of murders in Sussex. Of the 11, two were apparent cases of murder followed by suicide, and all the others have resulted in arrest. There is no connection between any of them but in every case the alleged offenders and the victims were known to each other. It is not possible to attribute this current trend, which may change again, to any particular cause. Such tragic events are usually unpredictable and often arise, without discussing current cases which are before the courts, from breakdowns in personal relationships in which mental health issues, and drink or drugs often play a part. Trends in criminality change over time. Ten years ago there were on average 18 murders a year in Sussex, but during the past decade the annual figure has fallen to as low as 12. Consistently over that period

in eight out of 10 murders the victims and offenders have been known to each other. Sussex is still one of the safest places in the country to live and work.

3.7 Community Resolution was launched in Sussex on 14 January 2011. This initiative gives officers an alternative option for dealing with lower-level offending and empowers them to use their discretion and put victims of crime back at the heart of the criminal justice system. It also means first time low-level offenders are diverted from the courts system as well as resulting in increased victim satisfaction and confidence. The initiative is also an opportunity to reduce bureaucracy and reduce officer time spent in court. In the first few months of implementation resolutions are being monitored so that any further training needs can be identified. Since the launch in January 1056 resolutions have been delivered in Sussex. The Authority will continue to carefully monitor the implementation of community resolutions.

3.8 A full copy of the Chief Constable's update report can be accessed on the Authority's website [www.sussexpoliceauthority.gov.uk](http://www.sussexpoliceauthority.gov.uk) by clicking on the "Authority Meetings" link.

#### **4. Serving Sussex 2015**

4.1 The report to the Authority in October 2010 recognised that, while there were tough choices ahead, the impact of any changes on the service delivered to the public was, and remains, the Authority's most important consideration. The Authority continues to look at how to 'do things differently' in order to maintain or improve policing in Sussex, in spite of the financial challenge the Force has to meet. The aim of the Authority is to build a policing service that will work for 2015 and beyond, protecting the service that the public values, but being prepared to make changes in the way it is delivered. The Authority is committed to a model of policing which keeps policing at the heart of local communities and is responsive to their needs of the community. Indeed, the Authority has made clear its commitment to retaining Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and neighbourhood policing long before the Government announced its decision on the continuation of funding. The Force has pledged to protect its presence in all communities across Sussex; rural as well as the major urban centres.

4.2 The most important way to establish how the public wish to access police services is to ask them. Sussex Police has, therefore, surveyed (online and face-to-face) over 2000 people specifically about alternative ways of contacting Sussex Police. The Authority recognises that the way people want to access policing has changed, and is now much more varied. This has been demonstrated by a year-on-year decrease in the use of front counters in police stations: only 8% of crime victims surveyed stated they had visited a police station to report a crime. Of those surveyed face to face in neighbourhoods, 42% already prefer accessing crime information online. Of those surveyed nearly half would consider using the internet to make an appointment with a local officer (47%) or to report lost or found items (49%) and over half would consider reporting minor crime or suspicious activity online.

4.3 However accessibility and privacy is still important to people. The public does have an appetite to engage with the police face-to-face via a wide range of locations (with public authority buildings such as council offices or libraries preferred options) apart from police station front offices. However, preferences for alternatives differ across Sussex, reinforcing the need for local provision to be

based on an understanding of local community needs. By 2015 there will be a range of ways that people can contact Sussex Police, again reflecting local needs. The Force will be more accountable to all the diverse communities across Sussex by publishing much more of its data and by giving local people a range of ways to make their voices heard and shape local policing priorities.

4.4 Sussex Police is increasingly pursuing general contact and crime and incident reporting through the website. Online crime and incident reporting was launched in late 2010, with a limited number of crime types supported. Following the pilot, it has been simplified significantly with reporting opportunities given prominence on the website homepage. Over 2,000 crimes have already been reported online and the Public Contact Centre (PCC) are noting significant reductions in the amount of time needed to deal with online reports compared to traditional telephone reports.

4.5 Local people will experience and be able to access Sussex Police in new and innovative ways. Quick and easy online crime reporting, fast-paced communication with the public rapidly develop. By 2015 the workforce of Sussex Police and the public will be utilising mobile and GPS-enabled technology extensively, whether accessing information on the policing activity in their area or sharing real-time information on emergencies.

## **5. Collaboration with Surrey**

5.1 Collaboration opportunities with Surrey in relation to specialist crime and operations activities offer: enhanced interoperability; the opportunity to build resilience and capability; while also making savings. Sussex Police is projected to achieve a net budget saving of £1.769m which, over 5 years, will realise total net recurrent revenue savings of £7.18m.

5.2 The Authority and Sussex Police have made good progress in the plans to collaborate with Surrey in the area of Protective Services. This has focused on making faster progress in a small number of areas to pave the way for greater collaboration in the future. Collaboration business cases covering Scientific Support, Major Crime and Firearms have been developed. Implementation plans are being drawn up in preparation and, should the new shared protective service proceed a Section 23 Collaboration Agreement will be put in place between the two forces and Authorities. A second wave of business areas, including counter terrorism, dogs and crime reviews will be developed by the end of 2011. A new senior team, including a shared Assistant Chief Constable for joint protective services, has been appointed and is drawn from both forces. The way major crime is dealt with will see a blended team approach with officers and staff from Sussex and Surrey Forces working alongside each other. Retaining strong local connections will help ensure that local impacts and priorities are well understood and addressed.

5.3 Good progress has been made towards achieving savings required for 2011-12 and identifying the level of on-going savings estimated to be required by 2015. The Authority and Sussex Police are well placed to meet the considerable challenges ahead whilst staying true to the principles of Serving Sussex into the future.

## **6. Regulation A19 – Compulsory Retirement of Police Officers**

6.1 Difficult decisions are being made by the Authority to achieve the necessary savings required by 2015. Regulation A19 of the Police Regulations 1987 provides for the compulsory retirement of officers up to and including the rank of Chief Superintendents on the grounds of the general efficiency of the Force. The Regulation applies to officers with 30 years of pensionable service.

6.2 The Authority has delegated the powers to the Chief Constable in relation to Regulation A19 in recognition of the financial imperative and changing turnover trend. The delegation will be for a period of three years, subject to an annual review by the Authority as part of the Local Policing Plan and Budget Process.

STEVE WAIGHT  
Chairman  
June 2011