

REPORT OF THE SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY

The Sussex Police Authority met at Sackville House, Lewes, on 13 October 2011

Attendances:

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

1. Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

- 1.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 received Royal Assent on 15 September 2011 and the date for the first elections across England and Wales for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) for each police force area has been confirmed as 15 November 2012.
- 1.2 The Authority faces a number of challenges over the coming months and the Chairman and the Chief Executive are determined that police accountability in Sussex will remain at the highest standard with the momentum of the Authority carrying into the early days of the PCC tenure of office. There is a commitment to achieving business as usual whilst ensuring a professional transition and handover. A Transition Programme has been established which will be overseen by a Governance Board, chaired by the Chief Executive and including the Treasurer, Solicitor and Chief Constable, reporting to the Authority's Corporate Governance Committee on a quarterly basis. The Police Authority is also working closely with local authorities and other agencies across Sussex regarding the role of PCCs particularly in respect of the Police and Crime Panel, community safety and the criminal justice system.

2. National Police Air Support Proposal

- 2.1 The National Police Air Support (NPAS) project commenced in 2009 following a review of the National Air Strategy by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). The aim in developing a national strategy is to harness air assets across the country to provide a coherent, effective and national service that is not limited by traditional police boundaries and makes the best use of these expensive assets. Locally the proposal would see a change from the existing two helicopter capability provided by South East Air Support Unit (SEASU) to coverage being provided by four aircraft which would be based at Bournemouth (Dorset), Dunsfold (Surrey), Benson (Thames Valley) and Southend (Essex).
- 2.2 The Police Authority expressed major concerns in relation to the level of coverage into the east of the county of East Sussex. The Authority has made it clear to ACPO that it cannot accept the current proposal which would deliver a service which did not meet

the current standards delivered by the existing helicopter coverage. The new national proposals would base the helicopter provision at Dunsfold aerodrome rather than the current arrangements at Shoreham Airport. The Authority expressed its reservations as to the level of air support and the costs associated with the air support that would be provided by one aircraft based at Dunsfold to cover the Hampshire, Surrey and Sussex with support for the west of Sussex from Bournemouth and in the east from Southend. Whilst continuing to support the principle of an NPAS service, the Authority stressed there should be no significant reduction in the current level of response times and aircraft coverage to Sussex. The final determination of NPAS will be brought back to the full Authority for consideration.

3. Budget Planning Update – Medium Term Financial Forecast and Review of Reserves 2011

- 3.1 The assumptions included as part of the budget agreed by the Authority in February 2011 indicated a funding shortfall in the region of £50m by 2015. The latest Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) indicated a slightly improved position of £47.8m, but still with a greater weighting of savings required up to 2013 with some remaining uncertainty on key assumptions for 2013-15.
- 3.2 The Authority carefully examined the level of reserves which it would be appropriate for the Authority to hold. The Authority's Reserves Policy was last updated and approved in October 2010, and the importance of considering the Authority's reserves at the same time as the budget was acknowledged. The review of reserves included the scope for reducing the annual contributions to general reserves within the current reserves policy. A reduction in the annual contribution to general reserves of £0.675m would enable a lower precept increase of 1.75% for 2012-13 whilst maintaining the current level of funding shortfall and savings requirement.
- 3.3. The Resources Scrutiny Committee had drawn attention to the level of investment reserves (capital and revenue) of which up to £11m including the current budget surplus could be available over the MTFF period. Proposals will be presented to the Committee at its next meeting on 1 December 2011. The minimum prudent level of reserves is a matter of judgement rather than prescription and the Reserves Policy approved by the Authority includes a target level for the General Reserve of 4% of net budget requirement. In the light of the above the proposed changes to the reserves and the revised Reserves and Provisions Policy were approved.

4. Chief Constable's Update

- 4.1 Operation Maxim was the Sussex Police response to disturbances which took place around England. As part of the response Sussex Police provided an increased neighbourhood policing presence, prepared for instances of disorder and provided mutual aid to other forces. At the height of the disorder, Sussex provided a minimum of three Police Support Units to the Metropolitan Police Service per day. The Force has received a high number of messages of support and gratitude from members of the public and partners. The Authority congratulated the Chief Constable and his officers and staff for the success of Operation Maxim.
- 4.2 The South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) has been in operation now for almost 12 months and has had many successes during this time. It has arrested

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around 75 individuals for investigations affecting all the regional forces. Assets recovered from Organised Crime Groups (OCG) have an estimated value of around £2.5m which includes cash, property and other proceeds of crime.

- 4.3 Community Resolution has been rolled out across the Force area. The estimated figure for resolutions to take place in the first year was 1132 pro rata and so far the estimate has been exceeded by 682. The quality of Community Resolutions continues to be monitored, and the use of them reviewed during the year.
- 4.4 The satisfaction rates of victims with service delivery is split into two measures; with action taken by the police standing at 80.2%, and with being kept informed at 73.4%. Whilst not hitting the current target, both are showing continued improvement since March 2011 when the figures were 79.6% and 71.8% respectively. The satisfaction of victims of vehicle crime is also improving and now stands at 77.8%, within 5% of the target of 80% and up from 77% in March 2011. There is a focus on understanding the customer experience and translating this into actions for the Force to undertake so that satisfaction can be improved further.
- 4.5 The Police Authority has been informed that the national non-emergency police telephone number - 101 - has now been introduced by several forces across the country. Sussex went live with a soft launch on 27 June along with other phase one forces. Sussex had originally planned to go live in November 2011 but took the opportunity to begin testing early so that full quality of service could be delivered to the public on the number by November. From a customer perspective, an automatic menu of options will be made available when the call is answered. The first option is to be connected automatically to the local force as identified from the caller's location. If the caller's location is recognised as being close to a force boundary they will be given menu options to determine which force they wish to contact. The Sussex Police Contact Centre (PCC) receives around 60 calls daily via the 101 number although other forces, which launched with more publicity, are showing a much higher call volume. On average the PCC receives over 1,500 non-emergency calls a day.

STEVE WAIGHT
Chairman
October 2011

