

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

11 October 2013 – at a meeting of the Panel held at 10.30 a.m. at County Hall, Lewes.

Present:

David Simmons	Adur DC
Paul Wotherspoon	Arun DC
Warren Morgan	Brighton and Hove CC
Eileen Lintill	Chichester DC
Nigel Boxall	Crawley BC
Chris Dowling	East Sussex CC
Rosalyn St Pierre	East Sussex CC
John Ungar	Eastbourne BC
Godfrey Daniel	Hastings BC
Sue Rogers	Horsham DC
Andy Smith	Lewes DC
Christopher Snowling	Mid Sussex DC
Robin Patten	Rother DC
Claire Dowling	Wealden DC
Brad Watson	West Sussex CC
Tom Wye	Worthing BC
Graham Hill	Independent

Apologies for absence were received from Dr James Walsh (West Sussex CC) and Sandra Prail (Independent).

In attendance: Katy Bourne, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner; Mark Streater, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer of the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (OSPCC); John Eagles, Chief Finance Officer of the OSPCC and Ninesh Edwards and Matthew Evans (Host Authority - West Sussex CC).

Chairman Introduction

38. The Chairman opened the meeting and the Panel noted the report of the current membership of the Panel (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes).

Declarations of Interest

39. In accordance with the code of conduct members of the Panel declared the personal interests contained in the table below.

Panel Member	Personal Interest
Andy Smith	Chairman of Lewes Community Safety Partnership
Brad Watson	Member of Horsham Safety Partnership
Robin Patten	Chairman of Rother Safety Partnership
Graham Hill	Member of Horsham Safety Partnership Senior Service Delivery Manager for Victim Support charity Member of Crawley Community Safety Partnership Board
Christopher Snowling	Member of Mid Sussex Safety Partnership

Paul Wotherspoon	Member of Safer Arun Partnership
Claire Dowling	Chairman of Safer Wealden
Eileen Lintill	Chairman of Chichester Safer Community Partnership
Chris Dowling	Member of East Sussex Safer Community Partnership
Dave Simmons	Chairman of Safer Communities Partnership, Adur and Worthing
Nigel Boxall	Chairman of Crawley CDRP
Sue Rogers	Chairman of Horsham Safety Partnership
Tom Wye	Member of Adur and Worthing Safety Partnership

Minutes

40. Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel held on 28 June 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.
41. The Panel requested an update on the call-handling performance for the call centre since the previous meeting of the Panel. The Commissioner reported an improvement in performance due to the new systems but further improvement was required to reach the performance target. The Commissioner confirmed that it was difficult to compare the performance of forces across the country due to the variation in systems used. The level of staffing at the call centre and the impact on call-handling times was also raised and it was confirmed that a full report would be provided to the annual meeting of the Panel in 2014 regarding call centre performance and staffing levels.
42. The Panel requested an update on any help the Commissioner was able to provide to ensure that Local Area Teams (LATs) would receive statistics relating to crime in their area in the future. The Commissioner confirmed she would report back to the Panel on the matter.
43. The Panel raised the issue of cross border crime and work with adjoining areas regarding the positioning of ANPR cameras and the potential for the broader use of the technology. The Commissioner explained that more information would be available by the next meeting and it was confirmed that ANPRs were utilised for a range of purposes including searches for missing persons.

Half-Year Monitoring Report 2013/2014

44. The Panel received a report by the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided an update on performance against objectives in the Police and Crime Plan 2013/14 (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes). Mark Streater, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer of the OSPCC, introduced the report and informed the Panel that, under the Crime and Community Safety priority in the Plan, concerns had been raised with the Chief Constable about the performance of Operation Magpie, an initiative to reduce burglary rates.
45. Mr Streater advised the Panel that under the public confidence priority in the Plan a recruitment exercise had been undertaken during the year and that new Special Constables would be in place by the end of 2014. An increase in serious sexual offences was attributed to increasing rates of reporting historic allegations following high profile cases nationally. There had also been an increase in the level of reporting of hate crimes.

46. Under the Victim Focus priority it was reported that Sussex Police had received the White Ribbon Award in recognition of work undertaken on domestic violence and the Panel complimented the Commissioner on the receipt of this award. The Panel was informed that the Ministry of Justice was currently investigating methods of revising how victim services were commissioned. The Commissioner sought to consult with the Panel regarding the commissioning of victims' services.

47. Under the Value for Money priority it was reported that the Commissioner's Estates Strategy was intended to improve the visibility of policing and that individual contracts and the custody contract were being reviewed to identify potential savings.

48. The Panel raised the following points with the Commissioner:

- The inconsistent period dates used to measure and compare performance did not allow for a direct like-for-like comparison in the report. A proper like-for-like comparison was required to understand performance and assess the potential seriousness of increasing reporting rates;
- The Panel asked whether statistics relating to the reporting of hate crime included third party reporting and noted that the increase in reporting rates was not proportionate across Sussex. It was felt that if the statistics for the reporting of serious sexual crimes and hate crimes did not include third party reporting the increase could be a significant issue. *The composition of the hate crime reporting statistics would be confirmed and it was confirmed that the level of hate crime reporting had increased in East and West Sussex but decreased in Brighton and Hove.*
- The Panel raised concerns about the impact of the proposed closure of a refuge in East Sussex and the slow prosecution rates in domestic abuse cases; this raised the likelihood of on-going contact between victims and the accused before potential court cases. *The Commissioner was aware of the proposed refuge closure and had discussed the issue with East Sussex County Council. The local Chief Inspector had written to the County Council in support of retaining the facility. The Commissioner explained that she would respond to the issues of swifter prosecutions and children's safeguarding.*
- The Panel raised a query regarding the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and when the framework to assess the success of CSPs would be available. Concern was expressed that CSPs were tasked with working toward the priorities in the Plan and funding could be reduced if new targets were missed despite success under previous aims. It was suggested that the emerging framework could be looked at by the Police and Crime Plan working group. *The intention of the framework was to ensure that the public was aware of how money was spent by the CSPs and that they provided value for money. CSPs would be assessed against the emerging framework and work would be undertaken with the Chairmen of CSPs to coordinate work towards common outcomes. The work to develop a framework for the CSPs represented an intelligence-led approach to assess and define what constituted success. A further report would be provided to the Panel on the emerging framework.*
- The comparable level of contact between CSPs in East and West Sussex and the Commissioner was queried. The quarterly Sussex Police performance statistics presented to CSPs were felt to be incomplete and it was requested that information should be broken-down by district/borough area rather than

county. *The Commissioner agreed that the information should be made available by Sussex Police on request from the CSPs.*

- The prospect of a reduction in the level of funding for CSPs in future was raised and concern that funding would be used to support underperforming CSPs to the detriment of successful Partnerships. *The Commissioner confirmed that indications from Government suggested future reductions in funding. The framework would ensure a fair distribution of funding and provide reassurance that funding would not be withdrawn from successful CSPs.*
- The Panel commended the Commissioner for realising savings of £1 million through the PFI custody contract.

49. The Clerk to the Panel provided a summary of the discussion and issues for the Police and Crime Plan working group to consider; statistics relating to reporting rates and the inclusion of third party reporting figures and the identifications of trends from reporting statistics. The Clerk confirmed that an initial meeting date for the Police and Crime Plan working group would be confirmed.
50. Resolved – that the Panel notes the monitoring report and agrees that the Police and Crime Plan working group will take forward those issues identified in paragraph 49.

Medium Term Financial Forecast and Budget Timetable 2014/15

51. The Panel received a report by the Police and Crime Commissioner which provided the latest Medium Term Financial Forecast and the proposed approach and timetable for the 2014/15 budget (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes). The Commissioner introduced the report and provided a presentation (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes) which outlined: the background to financial planning; the Commissioner's investment needs; and three options for the precept in the medium term. The Commissioner's investment needs in the forthcoming year included visible policing, serious sexual offences, cyber-crime and mobile technology.

52. The Commissioner outlined three projected options for the precept in 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17. Option 1 was a 0% freeze in all three years. The Commissioner would be able to claim the council tax freeze grant of £800,000 during the first two years but the provision of this grant in 2016/17 had not been confirmed. Option 2 outlined a 2% increase in the precept across each of the years which would enable the Commissioner's investment plans. Option 3 proposed an increase of 3.6% in 2014/15 which was the highest increase possible without precipitating a referendum and a 0% freeze in 2015/16 allowing for receipt of the freeze grant and a 0% freeze in 2016/17.

53. The Panel provided the following comments during the debate:

- It was felt that the area of licensing would be an area for investment due to the impact of alcohol upon hate crime and domestic abuse;
- Not all administrative areas across Sussex contained properties that were on average Band D;
- A 0% freeze would be a disadvantage, despite the tax freeze grant, as the baseline would not increase and diminish any future precept increases. A freeze was not felt to be sustainable but it was felt that the Commissioner

should investigate all possible sources of savings before an increase in the precept was proposed;

- Families were currently experiencing a number of increases in costs and bills which required consideration during the preparation of the precept for 2014/15. *The Commissioner acknowledged that circumstances were difficult and that there was a need to consider all viable options. It was confirmed that the Council Tax rate for Band D properties in West Sussex was the fourth lowest in the country.*
- The Panel acknowledged that investment needs would require an increase in the precept. The role of the Panel would be to consider if the investment needs presented value for money and if they were achievable when considering the proposed precept.
- The Panel raised the notion of collaborative working with Surrey and the fire service. *The Commissioner confirmed that work was on-going with the Commissioner in Surrey to investigate ways in which the two forces could increase collaboration. Work had also been undertaken with Fire Authorities in East and West Sussex to look at potential forms of collaboration.*
- The Panel requested clarification of the consequences of CSP funding becoming part of the general fund. *The Commissioner confirmed the framework for allocating funding to CSPs was currently being devised and decisions about funding would be made in due course.*

54. Resolved – That the Panel notes the report and calls on the Commissioner to investigate all possible sources of savings before proposing any increase in the precept.

Safer in Sussex Community Fund

55. The Panel received a report by the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding the Safer in Sussex Community Fund which would provide funding to community projects in Sussex. The fund for the remainder of the current year was £200,000. Mr Streater introduced the report and advised the Panel that bids under the Fund would be restricted to £5,000 and be considered on a quarterly basis.

56. The Panel made the comments below in the debate that followed:

- It was suggested that the money be devolved to CSPs for distribution. *Funding could be applied for by CSPs and it was hoped that a broader range of organisations involved in community projects would make bids.*
- Costs associated with the administration of the Fund would be significant. *The administration costs had been assessed by the OSPCC and were not felt to be prohibitive.*
- A query was raised regarding accountability for the outcomes of the projects funded and it was felt that CSPs should be consulted in the allocation of funding. *It was confirmed that the OSPCC would be accountable for the outcomes of the projects funded and that consultation would be undertaken with CSPs to ensure that projects were coordinated within local priorities.*
- The Panel encouraged the Commissioner to consider methods to evaluate the outcomes of projects to ensure that allocated funding had been spent legitimately and effectively.
- It was felt that the terms and conditions of the fund should stipulate: applicants should be properly constituted organisations; applicants needed to formulate clear objectives; what would not be funded e.g. revenue funding; applications required proof of long term sustainability of a project or that the

project was realisable within funding allocated. It was felt that funding should be allocated for pump-priming of projects rather than on-going revenue costs.

- Concern was expressed that the Fund was money that would have previously been allocated directly to the CSPs. *It was confirmed that during 2013/14 the funding from CSPs had been ring-fenced. In the 2014/15 financial year Community Safety funding would be part of the general fund and the framework would determine how money was distributed to local CSPs. It was intended that the Fund would be reviewed on an annual basis.*
- Support was expressed for the Fund which would allow the Commissioner to engage with the public and allow for a visible demonstration of outcomes that the Commissioner was trying to achieve in Sussex.

57. Resolved – That the Panel notes the report.

Victim Services Working Group

58. The Panel received a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner which outlined the new responsibilities of the Commissioner to commission victims' support services from October 2014 (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes). The report called on the Panel to establish a working group to assist in an assessment of the victims' services commissioning process. The Panel was supportive of the formation of a working group and 4 members of the Panel volunteered to take part in the group.

59. Resolved – That the Panel agrees to establish a working group and that the following members are appointed to the working group:

- Graham Hill
- David Simmons
- Rosalyn St Pierre
- Warren Morgan

60. Warren Morgan left the meeting at 12.25 p.m.

Quarterly Report of Complaints

61. The Panel received and noted a quarterly report by the Clerk to the Panel of complaints received by the Monitoring Officer over the course of the last quarter (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes). The report outlined the initial handling of complaints received and provided an update on complaints previously reported to the Panel.

62. There was a brief adjournment at 12.29 p.m. and the meeting reconvened at 12.36 p.m.

63. Andy Smith left the meeting at 12.36 p.m.

Written Questions

64. The Panel received and noted a written question received prior to the meeting and the response provided by the Commissioner (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes).

Questions for the Commissioner

65. The following issues were raised by the Panel under Commissioner's question time:

- The absence of a dedicated investigative team into attacks such as rape and the traumatic experience of victims in dealing with a number of different officers involved in investigations. *The Commissioner confirmed that such issues highlighted the importance of the victim services working group and explained that the investment need relating to serious sexual offending would assist Sussex Police to address such concerns within one safeguarding unit.*
- The delay in money provided to the CSPs which was usually received shortly after the end of the financial year. *In the current year there had been changes in arrangements for CSP including the direct provision of funding to the Commissioner. As a result of a lack of detail regarding onward allocation of funding the OSPCC had been required to resolve a number of issues before passporting the money to the upper tier authorities for disbursement. Systems would be put in place to ensure that a similar situation did not arise next year.*

66. David Simmons left the meeting at 12.42 p.m.

- The Panel commended the Commissioner regarding the policing operation at the Balcombe protest and asked whether the Commissioner would be able to recoup any expenditure from Cuadrilla or Central Government. The Panel asked what impact the protests had had on day-to-day policing in Sussex. *The Commissioner confirmed that an application had been made to the Home Office for financial assistance as the operation at Balcombe concerned an issue of national importance over energy security. Day-to-day policing had been unaffected by the operation.*
- The Panel asked if the Commissioner had an intention to appoint a replacement Deputy Commissioner. *The Commissioner explained that she had established a strong team since the appointment of the Deputy and had no immediate plans to appoint a replacement.*

67. Paul Wotherspoon left the meeting at 12.51 p.m.

- The Panel referred to inaccurate media coverage which claimed the Chief Constable had advised Cuadrilla to scale-back drilling during the protests. It was felt that the Commissioner should have responded more robustly to the reports.

68. Paul Wotherspoon returned to the meeting at 12.54 p.m.

Date of next meeting

69. The next meeting of the Panel would take place on 24 January 2014.

The meeting closed at 12.57 p.m.

Chairman