

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

24 January 2014 – at a meeting of the Panel held at 10.30 a.m. at County Hall, Lewes.

Present:

David Simmons	Adur DC
Len Brown*	Arun DC
Eileen Lintill	Chichester DC
Nigel Boxall	Crawley BC
Chris Dowling	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
Nigel Peterst†	West Sussex CC
Tom Wye	Worthing BC
Graham Hill	Independent
Sandra Prail	Independent

* Substitute for Paul Wotherspoon

† Substitute for Brad Watson

Apologies for absence were received from Rosalyn St Pierre (East Sussex CC), Warren Morgan (Brighton and Hove CC), Dr James Walsh (West Sussex CC), Brad Watson (West Sussex CC) and Paul Wotherspoon (Arun DC).

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; Mark Baker, Head of Finance, Sussex Police and Ninesh Edwards and Matthew Evans (Host Authority - West Sussex CC).

Declarations of Interest

70. 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
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
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 Member of the Safer West Sussex Partnership
Nigel Boxall	Chairman of Crawley CDRP
Tom Wye	Member of Adur and Worthing Safety Partnership
Liz Wakefield	Member of Brighton and Hove Community Safety Forum
Godfrey Daniel	Member of Safer Hastings Partnership
Nigel Peters	Member of Safer Arun Partnership
Len Brown	Member of Safer Arun Partnership

Minutes

71. In a correction to the minutes it was noted that Liz Wakefield provided apologies to the previous meeting of the Panel.

72. Resolved – That, subject to the correction above, the minutes of the meeting of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel held on 11 October 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

73. Mark Streater, OPCC, clarified detail contained in the minutes of the previous meeting and explained that the role of CSPs under the Safer in Sussex Community Fund was to support local organisations applying to the Fund.

Draft Budget 2014/15

74. The Panel considered a report by the Police and Crime Commissioner which outlined the budget (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes). The Panel received the draft budget which was introduced by John Eagles, OPCC and Mark Baker, Sussex Police.

75. The Panel raised the following points:

- The level of reserves and what fiduciary duty existed to maintain a certain level of reserves. *This was not prescribed but it was felt to be prudent to maintain reserves of 4-5%;*
- The reduction in the level of funding from central government. *The second Comprehensive Spending Review had reduced the level of funding to the Police and the top slicing of the central grant for police reforms had been greater than expected.*
- The budget listed cyber crime as an investment area but the Police and Crime Plan had not been updated to include detail on this priority. More information was requested on cyber crime investment and what outcomes were sought. *Cyber crime represented a very serious threat to the Sussex community and Sussex Police was currently producing proposals to address cyber crime in Sussex. Forces across the country were in a similar position and work was being undertaken to understand how local arrangements to address this priority area would coordinate with the National Crime Agency and local organisations. The investment in the initiative would be split between the development of the framework to address cyber crime and the actual delivery of the function.*

76. Resolved – that the Panel notes the budget for 2014/15.

Proposed Precept 2014/15

77. The Panel considered a report by the Police and Crime Commissioner which set out the proposed precept for 2014/15 (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes). The Commissioner introduced the report and set out the investment priorities for the forthcoming year which would be achieved in full by a precept increase of 3.6%.

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

- Concern was expressed that an increase in the precept would impact upon residents already struggling with the effects of inflation. It was acknowledged that the public was generally supportive of funding the local police force but it was queried whether resources could be refocused from other areas in support of the priorities? *The Commissioner acknowledged that the current financial situation was difficult and confirmed that during the consultation conducted on the proposed precept, 67% of people had responded favourably to an increase. The Commissioner outlined initiatives to make more efficient use of officer time including the training of Sexual Offences Liaison Officers (SOLOs). The precept increase was required to fund the investment priorities immediately; if the funding of the priorities relied upon savings they would be delayed. The Commissioner emphasised the importance of using investment to address the critical area of serious sexual crime.*
- The Panel accepted the priorities identified by the Commissioner for investment and wanted assurance that internal efficiencies had been fully realised before supporting the proposed precept. *The Commissioner confirmed that the savings programme would realise significant efficiencies and that savings would be achieved in the future through on-going work with the Surrey police force particularly with HR and IT functions. Co-location of police facilities with local partners had also realised savings under the estates strategy.*
- There was not unanimity of opinion across the Panel members regarding the proposed precept increase of 3.6%. Support was expressed for an increase of 3.6% by the majority of the Panel but other members opposed any increase in the precept and it was also suggested that the Commissioner should propose a more modest increase of 2%.
- Those Panel members supporting a precept of 3.6% felt that the Commissioner had presented a compelling case and had clearly identified investment priorities which required this increase. Furthermore members recognised that the increase in the precept would not merely bridge the gap in funding caused by the reduction in the grant from central government but was investment for the priorities. It was recognised and supported that the savings programme would address the reduction in central government funding and that the use of savings to fund investment priorities was not viable due to the delay in realising savings and the need for immediate investment for the identified priorities.
- The Panel recognised that a referendum to agree a precept increase would be a significant and burdensome cost to the Commissioner and that the use of taxpayer's money to fund a referendum was not in the interests of the public. It was suggested that the Panel allow the Commissioner some flexibility in setting the final precept to take account of the expected announcement from central government to confirm the referendum threshold for precept increases.

79. The following motion was proposed and seconded by the Panel: *The Panel supports a precept of 3.6% or a figure up to this amount; whichever is permissible without triggering a referendum.*

80. The Panel voted on the motion contained in minute 79 above and it was agreed by a clear majority of Panel members.

81. Resolved – That the Panel supports a precept of 3.6% or a figure up to this amount; whichever is permissible without triggering a referendum.

82. There was a brief adjournment at 11.58 a.m. and the meeting reconvened at 12.10 p.m.

Police and Crime Plan Working Group

83. The Panel received a report by the Clerk to the Panel regarding the work of the Police and Crime Plan Working Group to refresh the Police and Crime Plan for 2014/17 (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes). Ninesh Edwards introduced the report and explained that the Working Group had met twice: the first meeting considered the draft Plan and agreed recommendations; and the second meeting considered the updated version of the Plan.

84. The Commissioner commented on the report to explain that Sussex Police were working in partnership with Surrey Police and that a potential merger was not part of the arrangement between the forces. The Panel confirmed that the working group had proposed a recommendation that the potential for the merger of the two forces be examined in greater detail in the future.

85. Resolved – That the Panel agrees the recommendations of the Working Group set out below:

1. That the Plan should seek and actively support residents wishing to volunteer to deliver appropriate services;
2. The Plan should encourage the public to do more for themselves;
3. Greater cooperation should be sought with Surrey Police at a faster pace than has hitherto been the case (potentially including a merger), with a view to making greater savings, sooner;
4. That the Panel, when scrutinising the draft 2014/17 Plan, recognises that the Group did not have the opportunity to scrutinise sections on:
 - Community Priority 4: Cyber Crime
 - Policing Budget and Precept;
5. That the Commissioner refines the performance framework used to demonstrate achievement of the Police and Crime Plan 2014/17, so that it provides better evidence for the Plan's successful delivery;
6. That the Panel in future identifies themes arising from the Police and Crime Commissioner's performance monitoring reports for detailed scrutiny by the Panel;

7. That the Panel agrees for the Working Group to meet in support of future budget and Plan cycles, while continuing to report its work back to the Panel; and
8. That the Panel agrees for the terms of reference for the Working Group to be broadened to include acting as a critical friend to the development of the policing budget and precept.

Police and Crime Plan 2014/15 Refresh

86. The Panel considered a report by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner which provided details of the refreshed Police and Crime Plan (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes). Mark Streater introduced the report and informed the Panel that the Plan would be circulated to the Chairmen of CSPs for their information.

87. The Panel agreed the refreshed Police and Crime Plan and asked that the Chairman write to the Commissioner to outline its approval of the Plan.

88. Resolved –That the Panel agrees the refreshed Police and Crime Plan and that the Chairman should write to the Commissioner to outline its approval of the Plan.

Victim Services Working Group

89. The Panel received and noted a verbal update on the first meeting of the working group from Dave Simmons, Chairman of the Victim Support Working Group. At the first meeting of the Group terms of reference had been agreed and the current situation regarding victim services in Sussex had been presented by the OPCC. A number of recommendations had been proposed by the working group which would be circulated to the Panel with the notes of the first meeting.

Quarterly Report of Complaints

90. The Panel received and noted the quarterly report by the Clerk to the Panel of complaints received by the Monitoring Officer over the course of the last quarter. No complaints had been received over the last quarter.

Written Questions

91. 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).

Chief Constable Update

92. The Panel received and noted an update from the Commissioner on the appointment of a Chief Constable. Following the announcement of Martin Richard's retirement there would be a recruitment exercise for a new Chief Constable. From the 7 February Giles York would become the interim Chief Constable. The College of Policing was assisting with the process to appoint a new Chief Constable and it could be up to six months before the new post holder was in position.

Questions for the Commissioner

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

- The Commissioner was asked to provide an update on the Safer Communities Fund. *It was confirmed that 12 bids had been received to date and it was known that others would be forthcoming.*
- The Commissioner was asked how she was assured that the issue of the underreporting of crime was not occurring in Sussex, which had been an issue reported in the national press. *The Commissioner confirmed that she was meeting with the Sussex Police's Crime Registrar on a quarterly basis to ensure she was content that the force had a sufficiently robust approach to the recording of crime.*

94. Andy Smith left the meeting at 12.37 p.m.

Visits to Police and Crime Panel Meetings in Other Areas

95. The Panel received an update on a meeting that took place between the Chairmen of Surrey and Sussex PCPs. It was reported that a member of the Hampshire Panel would be attending a forthcoming meeting to observe the Sussex PCP. Volunteers from the Panel were sought to attend meetings in other areas to learn best practice from other Panels.

Date of next meeting

96. The next meeting of the Panel would take place on 27 June 2014.

The meeting closed at 12.40 p.m.

Chairman