

REPORT OF THE SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY

The Sussex Police Authority met at the Conference Centre, Sussex University on 15 October 2009. Attendances:

Dr L Bush (Chairman), Mr L Barnard, Mr P Bratton, Prof G Bull, Ms E Daniel, Mr G Daniel, 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

BUDGET PLANNING

- 1.1 The Authority, like many other public sector bodies, faces significant long term budget financing and spending pressures following on from the effects of the current economic recession. It is, therefore, important that the Authority takes steps now to identify how it can make sustainable savings in the budget for Sussex Police without compromising the high standards of policing in Sussex. In summary, the Authority is planning on the basis of a £35m funding gap to 2015, based on a reduction in income. The Authority anticipates that in 2010-11 it will face a funding gap of around £5m in its £253m annual budget with further projected annual shortfalls of £7.5m a year until 2015. In addition, it is also likely that there will be limited funding for capital investment. The Authority is considering the options which will be available for managing costs and increasing income whilst continuing delivering a Local Policing Plan which meets the needs of Sussex.
- 1.2 Sussex Police has a strong record of making efficiency savings. The culture of efficiency, and more collaboration with partners, will ensure services can better contribute to cash releasing efficiencies and improved use of resources. The cumulative efficiencies made since 2008 amount to £26m and are forecast to increase to £34m in 2011.

ALCOHOL AND CRIME

- 2.1 The cost of alcohol-related crime nationally is estimated to be as much as £7.3 billion per year. Nationally, approximately 1.2 million violent incidents (around half of all violent crimes) and 360,000

incidents of domestic violent are linked to alcohol. Nationally it is estimated that 90% of criminal damage is alcohol related, and 70% of all violent incidents are also alcohol related. In Sussex alcohol plays a part in a very high proportion of rapes, sexual assaults, and violent incidents – particularly on Friday and Saturday nights in town and city centres.

- 2.2 The Sussex Police Licensing and Public Safety Manager has recently worked with the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit looking at inconsistencies with licensing enforcement across a number of forces and making recommendations on consistency for licensing enforcement across England and Wales. Whilst the report is currently confidential, matters arising from the work are being or have already been implemented across the Sussex Police area. Work has also been undertaken with the Authority to respond to a government consultation on the Alcohol Retailing Code of Practice.
- 2.3 The Authority supports the arrangement within Sussex Police whereby each Division has a dedicated operational plan to tackle crime and disorder associated with the night time economy. Each Policing Division has strong links with its respective local authority licensing departments which has assisted local authorities in gaining both revocation and/or suspension of licences where licensed premises have contributed to crime and disorder. There have been some excellent examples of partnership working in this area. Sussex Police is highly respected nationally for the work being done in the licensing field. Sussex Police has been mentioned at national licensing and alcohol enforcement conferences as being a ‘leader’ in enforcement and this is due in no small part to the support of the Police Authority. Indeed, the Authority’s recommendations in respect of changes to the regulations governing the timescales for the issuing of Temporary Event Notices have been supported nationally. As a result the Department of Culture, Media and Sport is considering amending the time period the police are given to lodge an objection to a Temporary Event Notice from 48 hours to five days.
- 2.4 The Authority has also been advised of the fact that the airside licensed premises at Gatwick Airport are not required to be licensed under the Licensing Act 2003. This issue means that no sanction can be given to a premises/person found to be committing offences under the Licensing Act 2003, as the premises are specifically exempt under the Secretary of State’s direction. The Authority is proposing that airside licensed premises at Gatwick should be brought within the scope of the Licensing Act 2003 is working with Crawley Borough Council to seek this change in the regulations.

POLICING PLEDGE

3. The Policing Pledge nationally aims to provide services and reassurance that will, ultimately, have an impact on public confidence and satisfaction in policing. The Pledge sets out a

number of national standards that constitute a commitment from the police to their local communities. The Policing Pledge is a strong component of the Sussex Police 'Serving Sussex' commitment and complements the Neighbourhood Policing philosophy already introduced by Sussex Police with the support of the Authority. The Authority is working with Sussex Police to ensure that the Pledge is embedded across Sussex. This will involve identifying, developing and implementing ways to meet the Policing Pledge and thereby build on the existing high levels of public confidence in policing in Sussex.

PREVENT

4. The Authority has welcomed the fact that Sussex Police has made significant progress in implementing the Prevent strand of the Government's Contest strategy in tackling terrorism and extremism. Prevent is a long term engagement strategy and is closely aligned to neighbourhood policing. The Authority has proactively supported a number of initiatives by Sussex Police to help deliver the Prevent agenda. As an example the 'On the Edge' drama produced in conjunction with West Sussex Youth Theatre and Sussex Police Youth Academy, involving schools officers, has received excellent feedback from regional and national bodies. A joint partnership agreement has also been concluded with Brighton University to fund a Prevent police officer post, which has been financed by partners and which is the first in the region. This post will cover Brighton, Hastings, Crawley and Eastbourne. With partners, Sussex Police will also look at the benefits of other joint activities relating to Prevent in communities, and establish programmes and systems to identify and change the behaviour of vulnerable people subject to radicalisation.

KILLED AND SERIOUSLY INJURED

5. The number of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) on the roads of Sussex remains a concern to the Authority particularly in relation to children. Total number of KSI for 2009 currently exceeds the Local Policing Plan target for 2009-10. Sussex Police works with the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership on a range of activities aimed at casualty reduction. Operation Crackdown (telephone 01243 642222) which encourages the anonymous reporting of anti-social and dangerous driving behaviour has seen an increase of reporting. Operation Ride is aimed at motorcyclists who account for 29% of the total number of KSI and 31% of the fatal collisions in Sussex to date this year. The importance of preventative work with partners is important, particularly with regard to possible funding pressures as other agency budgets are reduced. The Authority is seeking to be represented on the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership to ensure appropriate engagement with partners to tackle this priority target.

CONFISCATION ORDERS

6. The Authority has welcomed the positive results achieved by Sussex Police in relation to asset confiscation in respect of criminal activity. Confiscation Orders for the first five months of the year have achieved a cumulative value of just over £1m. Sussex Police is, therefore, well placed to achieve the challenging Home Office target of £2m in 2009-10. As a result of the previous year's confiscations, the Authority has received a total of £333,649 from the Recovered Assets Incentivisation Fund. The return has been used to fund the costs of additional Financial Investigators employed on Divisions and, for the first time, £55,000 has been made available to Divisions for local initiatives.

DR LAURIE BUSH
Chairman

October 2009