

SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY – 15 APRIL 2010

REPORT OF PROTECTIVE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

Introduction

1. This report informs the Police Authority on matters considered by the Protective Services Scrutiny Committee (PSSC) on 16 March 2010. The meeting was attended by Mr L Barnard (Chairman), Dr R Walker (Vice-Chairman), Mrs C Shaves MBE JP, Mrs S Knight and Mr B Tidy.
- 1.2 The full agenda and reports for this Committee are available on the Authority's website, and the webcasting of the meeting can also be accessed via the website.

Local Policing Plan 2009-10 Performance

- 2.1 The Committee reviewed the progress against the Local Policing Plan (LPP) 2009-10 targets for the Keeping People Safe section which depicts the position for the months of October, November and December 2009.
- 2.2 The Keeping People Safe section of the LPP covers the majority of performance measures relating to crime. During the reporting period overall crime rates have reduced, contributing to a reduction equating to 3,526 fewer crimes and achieving the target of a reduction of 4.3 per cent against a target of 3 per cent reduction.
- 2.3 The Committee had previously expressed their concerns with regard to the domestic burglary crime rate which had seen a further increase to 7.3 per cent against a target of 3 per cent for the previous reporting period (July, August and September 2009). The Committee was pleased to note that performance through to December 2009 had now shown a reduction of 1.5 per cent whilst achieving the target for domestic burglary detection rates.
- 2.4 The target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on Sussex roads remains a concern.
- 2.5 The Committee will continue to review and challenge all LPP targets within the Keeping People Safe section of the Plan.

Protective Services Minimum Standards and Threat Assessment Model

- 3.1 At the request of the Chairman of the Committee (PSSC) an update from the Chief Constable was received on the current position of Sussex Police in meeting the national timelines for compliance with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Protective Services Minimum Standards (PSMS). The Chairman of PSSC and the Acting Deputy Chief Executive represent the Authority on the Keeping People Safe Board where these matters are monitored within the Force.

- 3.2 The current PSMS are broken down under ten strand headings. HQ CID owned strands are: counter terrorism, domestic extremism, major crime, protecting vulnerable people and serious organised crime. Operations Department owned strands are: civil contingencies, critical incidents, firearms, public order and road policing. Under each heading a number of high level descriptions of the service to be provided are given and these are known as Standards. Standards outline the minimum standard Sussex Police must achieve. Sitting below each standard are varying definitions and these describe how a force might measure its performance against the Standard.
- 3.3 The strand owner updates the sheet with evidence, progress or an action plan to answer the question posed by the definitions which in turn satisfies the Standard.
- 3.4 The Keeping People Safe Board has agreed that strand owners or their representatives meet monthly with their co-ordinator to provide updates on progress made towards compliance.
- 3.5 The strand owner uses a regionally derived product, Protective Services Threat Assessment Model, which enables a strategic overview of capabilities against a number of probable events.
- 3.6 The Committee noted that Sussex Police had achieved 99.5 per cent of the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) target for high risks to be reduced by 31 December 2009 and that total compliance would be required by April 2011.

Regional Forensics Collaboration Programme

- 4.1 The opportunities to extend collaboration activities within Forensic Services are considerable and the Committee welcomed the fact that the scope of the South East Region Forensic Collaboration project is significant. No other national forensic collaboration project has progressed to a point where a recognised model now exists for significant changes to structures.
- 4.2 The collective spend on forensic services by the four South East Region Forensic Collaboration forces is approximately £30m which includes £15m spent on outsourced forensic laboratory services. Early scoping work has identified as much as a 15 per cent may be saved from this combined spend. Examples of standardising systems and processes and the associated financial advantages were explored.
- 4.3 The Committee will continue to oversee the proposals and supporting rationale for a phased approach to the preparation of option papers, business plans and subsequent implementation of any programmes of work within the South East Region Forensic Collaboration project. The Authority is represented on the Oversight Board by the Chairman and Chief Executive.

The Police Role in the Sussex Resilience Forum Response to the Swine Flu Pandemic

- 5.1 The Committee received a report explaining the role of the Force in the multi-agency response to the H1N1 Pandemic, often referred to as Swine Flu.
- 5.2 In April 2009 the World Health Organisation declared that the outbreak of H1N1 Influenza, first identified in Mexico, had become a pandemic. Colleagues within the Health Protection Agency (HPA) raised the issue and asked that the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF) Executive meet and consider moving to a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) particularly as Gatwick Airport had flights to and from Mexico. The Cabinet Office was involved from the outset and information concerning any aspect of the pandemic was issued simultaneously via the Government Office for the South East to all Category 1 and 2 Responders (in effect all emergency services).
- 5.3 At an early stage both Police and other partners within the SRF recognised the potential for the pandemic to have a serious and detrimental effect on the ability to continue to provide a high degree of service to the people of Sussex.
- 5.4 In the second week of the pandemic it was agreed by all parties that the response would be long-term so the SCG evolved into the SRF Executive Flu Meeting and three sub-groups were formed: SRF Pandemic Flu Group which would update the countywide Flu Pandemic Plan in line with advice from the Department of Health, Gold Communications Group which would be tasked with warning and informing colleagues and the public with key messages and Mass Fatalities Group which would consider all possible eventualities should the pandemic cause widespread death. Initially meetings were held daily and then weekly as the risk became more managed.
- 5.5 The Committee acknowledged the role of the Force as lead partner in dealing with the possible Swine Flu pandemic and that Sussex Police should continue to be ready to co-ordinate the response in any future major incident.
- 5.6 The Committee suggested that Authority involvement be considered for any future response to a major incident.

Sussex Response to Severe Weather Conditions January 2010

- 6.1 The Committee received a detailed report on Operation Luge, the Force level response to the heavy snow that fell in early January 2010 and the multi-agency working that took place. This snowfall brought severe disruption to road, rail and air travel. During this time large numbers of Force employees were unable to get to their normal place of work.
- 6.2 Acting on Met Office information a Police Gold Group was formed (contributors included Divisions, Departments, Sussex Resilience Forum and multi-agency partners) in order to assess the impact on Force Continuity and as a result a list of objectives was created as well as key communication messages. The initial response was to: preserve life and minimise risk to all people; respond to call for assistance; maintain public reassurance; maintain contact and accessibility; and maintain strategic contact with partner agencies regarding deterioration and requirement for the Strategic Co-ordinating Group. This was the same strategy used for Operation Sledger, following the snow in December 2009, which had worked well.

- 6.3 Sussex Police staff were advised to attend their normal place of work but if this was not possible to take their uniform and personal protective equipment home with them and report to their nearest police station for duty. Tactical considerations were agreed including suspension of Force training.
- 6.4 The impact of the snow highlighted the importance of having plans and arrangements in place. The Sussex Resilience Forum will write a Snow and Ice Plan through the Weather and Environment Standing Group. This Plan will be considered at a future meeting of the PSSC.
- 6.5 The Committee endorsed the records of thanks that have been communicated to staff regarding the considerable efforts made to attend their normal place of work in order to provide a near normal service to the people of Sussex during this difficult time. Additionally, the Committee suggested that the use of volunteers be considered for any future severe weather response.
- 6.6 The Committee requested that the Lead Member for Road Policing be briefed following the findings of the review of 4x4 responses and requirements.

Audit Commission Thematic Review on Road Safety

- 7.1 Local Highway Authorities have a statutory duty for road safety delivery but this cannot be achieved in isolation. The recently published Audit Commission Thematic Review on Road Safety identifies key issues, the first being that highway authorities need to work closely with the Highways Agency, Police, National Health Services and Fire and Rescue services. The associated framework outlines improving road safety through improved analysis of data, targeting action on locations and people, engaging the public and evaluating value for money.
- 7.2 In Sussex, the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) promotes and delivers road safety. The SSRP brings together all the agencies and bodies identified in the Audit Commission Report. The SSRP has two tiers and the Authority is represented on the Strategic Level Board by the Lead Member for Road Policing.
- 7.3 The Committee recognises the important role of media in shaping public opinion and appreciates the publicity capabilities within the SSRP that make a difference in educating and promoting campaigns. Police enforcement and the way this is portrayed is an area that requires development. The Committee congratulated those involved with 'Embrace Life', a short film about road safety that has received global acclaim.
- 7.4 Community responsibility is key and there is a number of speed watch sites across Sussex as well as community contracts entered into to maintain speed limits. Operation Crackdown, launched in 2007, is the first scheme in the UK that allows the public to report what they find of concern on the roads and has been presented nationally.
- 7.5 The Committee endorses the continuing work of the Force in delivering parts of the national intelligence data picture relating to killed and seriously injured to the Road Policing National Intelligence Forum and recommends that the

Authority commits to the SSRP as the key partnership in Sussex focused on casualty reduction.

Operation Otter

- 8.1 The policing operation to support the Conservative Party's Spring Forum held in Brighton on 27-28 February was known as Operation Otter. The Force was informed of this event in September 2009 and a small team of planners with the recent experience of planning the Labour Conference were brought together and led by Chief Inspector Lawrence Hobbs.
- 8.2 Overall the operation was considered a success with no significant incident or impact upon Sussex Police. The Committee thanked all those involved with the operation and for forming excellent relationships with partner agencies.
- 8.3 The Authority's Deputy Treasurer performed an active oversight role in the preparation by Sussex Police for a special grant bid to the Home Office to recover the policing costs for this operation, which were assessed as costing £140,000. The Treasurer will actively pursue the bid to recover these costs.
- 8.4 The Authority will continue to scrutinise the preparation for the policing of high profile events in the future and that the model of member involvement in the scrutiny of high risk policing events continues as policy for the Authority in the future.

Section 44 Update

- 9.1 The Committee received a report on Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000. Section 44 provides constables with the power to stop and search persons and vehicles without the need for reasonable suspicion. Officers must be in uniform to use this power and the power can only be used when an authorisation is in place. Authorisation under this power may only be given by officers of at least the rank of Assistant Chief Constable. Authorisations are forwarded to the Home Office for ministerial oversight and approval which must take place within 48 hours of the initial force authorisation.
- 9.2 The Force remains focused on the requirement to review the authorisation and use of the power. The use of Section 44 stop and search powers have formed a regular part of counter terrorism protective security policing in Sussex since 2005.
- 9.3 Sussex Police provides a dedicated security operation at Gatwick Airport which includes the deployment of firearms officers and dogs trained to search for explosives. The use of Vehicle Check Points is a daily activity at the airport. The availability of Section 44 powers enables random stopping and searching of vehicles at identified check points on the arterial roads leading to the airport terminals.
- 9.4 The 2008 National Policing Improvement Agency Guidance on Stop and Search in relation to terrorism makes clear reference to the importance of community impact assessments and their review.

- 9.5 The Committee supports the conclusion to the report that the Force continues to remain cognisant of current issues and developments in respect of Section 44 powers and reviews its use of the powers accordingly. The Committee recommend that the Lead Member for Gatwick Airport and the Lead Member for Counter Terrorism have specific oversight in relation to their lead member responsibilities.
- 9.6 A further report on the number of Section 44 authorisations and the resultant police actions will be considered at the Autumn meeting of the PSSC.

Operation Peel

- 10.1 The policing operation for the Lewes Bonfire celebrations on 5 November 2009 was planned and delivered under the operational name Operation Peel.
- 10.2 A review of bonfire policing issues in 2008 was carried out, which culminated in a seminar which was attended by other emergency services, local authorities, bonfire societies and Members of the Authority.
- 10.3 It was agreed by all partners involved in Lewes Bonfire that the best way to improve the safety of this event was to reduce the number of people who attended the event as spectators and so reduce the risks associated with large crowds. In order to do this the various agencies took lead roles in delivering this objective. For example, a wider road closure plan was agreed with all the statutory agencies to reduce the number of visitors arriving in Lewes by private transport. Road delivery was initiated by East Sussex County Council and supported by Sussex Police Road Policing Unit.
- 10.4 The significant co-operation with partners in developing the plan for Lewes bonfire celebrations and the arrangements to form a Safety Advisory Group to oversee the development of public safety was welcomed by the Committee.
- 10.5 The Committee supports the continuing partnership and recommends that the Authority should encourage further steps to be taken to ensure public safety at future bonfire celebrations.

Risk Management

11. The Committee received a report on Risk Management which is exempt under paragraph 14 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Recommended – that

- (1) the Authority commits to the Sussex Safer Road Partnership as the key partnership in Sussex focused on casualty reduction;
- (2) the Lead Member for Gatwick Airport and the Lead Member for Counter Terrorism have specific oversight in relation to their Lead Member responsibilities; and
- (3) the Authority should encourage further steps to be taken to ensure public safety at future bonfire celebrations.

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Chairman

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