

SCRUTINISING PERFORMANCE

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Background

Following the tragedy of the Pilkington case in Leicestershire, the way that anti-social behaviour is responded to by police forces and partner agencies came under the national media spotlight. The Authority were keen to ensure that effective scrutiny of Sussex Police handling of anti-social behaviour matters was in place.

The Authority adding value

The Authority considered the necessity for the appointment of a Lead Member for anti-social behaviour. The Lead Member roles in Sussex are well developed and offer a good opportunity for more detailed understanding of the issues relating to specific parts of the business, and thereby ensuring improved position for scrutiny support or challenge. However, upon analysis of the existing arrangements to monitor anti-social behaviour within Sussex, it was decided that the most appropriate way was to ensure that the monitoring of Force performance relating to anti-social behaviour and incivility was dealt with in a mainstream part of every day business.

Sussex Police Authority has geographically aligned members who regularly meet with Divisional, District and Departmental Commanders. It was emphasised to these members the importance of the monitoring of anti-social behaviour in the delivery of effective neighbourhood policing. The Authority were well placed in their engagement with the Force performance management structure, including Divisional Accountability meetings.

The Authority's new governance structure created a Neighbourhood Policing Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Policing Scrutiny Committee plays the lead role for neighbourhood policing within the Authority, including membership of the Neighbourhood Policing Programme Board within Sussex Police. Anti-social behaviour forms an integral part of the policy development undertaken by that Board.

As a direct result of this review, the Professional Standards Committee were asked to undertake a thematic consideration of complaints relating to the police involvement in sustained anti-social behaviour cases. At its inspection of the complaints register on 28 October 2009, the Authority requested a themed inspection relating to complaints following police involvement in anti-social behaviour incidents. The Committee were satisfied that there were no issues of major concern, although specific details were explored with the Professional Standards Department until members were satisfied that there was not a cause for concern.

Outcome

The Authority has responded to national concerns relating to the policing response to anti-social behaviour. It is confident that the consideration of anti-social behaviour is embedded as a thread through the way that the Force and the Authority consider the delivery of neighbourhood policing within Sussex. The Authority are not complacent and will be routinely reviewing the way that we view complaints from the public who have been victims of anti-social behaviour, and will be ensuring, particularly through the oversight of the delivery against the Policing Pledge, that this remains a key focus for Sussex Police going forward.

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