

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee of
Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils**

Gordon Room, Worthing Town Hall

07 February 2019

*Roy Barraclough (Chairman)
Keith Bickers (Vice Chairman)

Adur District Council:

Carol Albury
Catherine Arnold
Kevin Boram
Stephen Chipp
*Paul Mansfield
Andy McGregor
Joss Loader
Lavinia O'Connor

Worthing Borough Council:

Rebecca Cooper
Karen Harman
Charles James
*Sean McDonald
Bob Smytherman
Steve Waight

*Absent

JOSC/18-19/61 Declarations of Interest

JOSC/18-19/62 Substitutions

Councillor Ann Bridges declared her substitution for Councillor Paul Mansfield

Councillor Nigel Morgan declared his substitution for Councillor Sean McDonald

Councillor Jane Sim declared her substitution for Councillor Roy Barraclough

JOSC/18-19/63 Public Question Time

A member of the public asked the following question: Over the last few years the relationship between the police and people monitoring fox hunts to try and prevent illegal hunting activity has deteriorated and we are often treated with disrespect or disdain. At a meeting last year the officer with overall control for policing hunts in this area (Gold Command Chief Superintendent Neil Honnor) openly stated that he believed hunts are staying within the law and legally trail hunting. Since police officers are only in attendance to keep the peace and not to monitor hunts for any illegal hunting and since Chief Supt Honnor has, to the best of our knowledge, not been out to monitor hunts on a regular basis, how can he state with such confidence that they are staying within the law? Clearly he is taking the word of hunts. We have collected evidence over the years to show their disregard for the

law. Why is our word not taken at face value? The meeting was told that the Chief constable was challenged by the Police and Crime Commissioner at a meeting every month. The issue of Hunts was raised at the meeting of the 19th October and there was a recording of that meeting on the PCC website. The PCC told members that the policing of hunts presented a number of challenges balancing the rights of hunters against the right of the Hunt saboteurs. Police had to remain impartial in difficult and emotive circumstances. Police met with both side regularly.

The following question was asked from a member of the public through the Chairman: *Are there going to be more police present on our Adur streets in 2019? I think and many others believe this will help deter crime. The police need to build relationships with our communities more.* The PCC told the Committee that the recent rise in the precept would pay for an extra 200 Police (50 officers, 100 PCSOs and 50 special operations officers). The Police Commander told members that he was passionate about visible policing but explained that this had to be balanced against policing crimes that took place behind closed doors such as abuse.

The following question was asked from a member of the public through the Chairman: *Can the police help. Create Neighbourhood Watch groups to help look after our communities and our vulnerable neighbours.* The PCC told the meeting that she was supportive of neighbourhood watch schemes and would encourage volunteers to come forward. Volunteers set up their own groups and should contact the police for information.

The following question was asked from a member of the public through the Chairman: *Operation Crackdown is valued as a service offered by Sussex Police. The public appreciate how, by collecting information about anti-social driving, the police can learn more about problems on our roads, even if prosecution is not possible on every occasion. Among the driving issues that cause distress and danger on our roads is speeding - particularly in built-up residential areas. However, a recent change to Operation Crackdown's policies makes clear that reports of speeding - unless corroborated by camera footage - will not be accepted. As most people - particularly pedestrians - are unable to provide such footage, does the PCC accept that this now leaves a 'gap' in speeding reporting, with many instances not reportable through Operation Crackdown? If, for other forms of anti-social driving (such as mobile phone use), police and public both accept that prosecution is not the only goal, and that non-evidenced reports are valued and welcomed, why has the ability to report speeding in this way been removed? Will it be reinstated, in order to provide a more accurate picture of the extent of the problems caused by speeding drivers?* The meeting was told that road safety was under the auspices of the Safer Sussex Road Partnership. The issue of the questions was raised at a recent crime panel and it had been related that speeding needed to be corroborated with camera evidence.

The following question was asked from a member of the public through the Chairman: *What are Sussex Police doing to stop the recent spike in moped crime, mainly including theft of motorcycles as there have been so many incidents recently*

and just as many cases dropped due to officers taking so long to do anything that they "can't find any evidence" when they don't even bother looking? The committee was told that the police looked for patterns in theft and when these occurred they set up operations to detect and prevent. The Police would investigate theft.

The following question was asked from a member of the public through the Chairman: *Several motorcycles & cars that have been modified (& so possibly uninsured) with noisy exhausts are being driven in excess of the 50mph speed limit on the A2032 every night. It's within a quarter of a mile of Centenary House, Worthing's main police base, yet these drivers are seemingly able to speed with impunity. Could you please do something to stop this, possibly even by reducing the speed limit on the A2032 to 40mph maximum?* The Police Commander told members that the information would be shared with the relevant authority.

JOSC/18-19/64 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items.

JOSC/18-19/65 Interview with Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Communities, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 5. This report before members provided background and guidance to assist the committee (JOSC) in interviewing Katy Bourne, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) on Police and crime issues covered within her remit. The Adur and Worthing District Police Commander accompanied the PCC at the meeting to answer any related operational matters.

A Member asked the following question: *Looking back, the 2017/2018 rise in precept for Adur residents, saw a further £3 million. Of the 4 areas of extra police officers identified to benefit from these funds in the 2017/2018 precept document. Can you tell me, have they been recruited please and if shortfall in some areas can you explain why please?* The PCC told Members that 270 had been recruited and explained that the process of recruiting Police Officers took between 9-12 months and that about 20% of applicants were successful over that period. It was planned that an additional 800 Police Officers be recruited by 2022.

A Member asked the following question: *The PCC's plan for 2017-2021 lists "Strengthening local Policing" as one of its four key priorities. Please can you rationalise how this sits alongside public disquiet about the perceived move away from local policing - including lack of high visibility patrols (officers on the beat); the reduction in community police stations and reduced opening hours, particularly*

during the evenings and at weekends; the radical reduction in schools liaison officers over the years; officers covering much larger areas than before, inevitably diluting local knowledge and intelligence? The PCC disagreed with the premise of the question and told members that there had not been a reduction in the number of police stations. With regards to local knowledge, modern technology meant that police had access to local information on personal devices. The Police Commander told members that there was an 'Operation Minster' in Adur and Worthing which focused on maximising Visibility and Engagement.

A Member asked the following question: *Between 2017 and 2018, Council Tax funding for Sussex Police rose by £4.4m. Your budget proposes a further substantial increase in 2019 from the council taxpayer. How long will local taxpayers be expected to continue to bear this burden?* The PCC told members that the county had the 5th lowest precept in the country and that the Police received the 7th lowest amount from the Government in the Country. The public were happy to pay provided they could see where the money could make a difference. There had been a series of focus groups to highlight this.

A Member asked the following question: *With the extra funding coming from the Police funding component of the Council Tax next year, will you be looking to rebuild the community policing in Worthing that was cut when funding was cut in previous years?* The PCC told the meeting that it would be increased

A Member asked the following question: *As well as Brexit, the news has been covering the impact of harm that social media can cause, particularly on our younger community. What is your policy on this matter and what practical steps are the police taking to safeguard the more vulnerable of our community from the potential and actual harm from this source?* The PCC told the Committee that she didn't set Government Policy. Prevention youth workers in schools talked to children about social media. The Police Commander told members about the work undertaken with NSPCC and Safe Space.

A Member asked the following question: *How do the Expert Youth Team officers dovetail with the work of social services/youth workers?* The Police Commander told members that this was done on a case by case basis and youth officers would work with missing persons and other teams where necessary.

A Member asked the following question *Two other key objectives are "Working with Local Communities and Partners to keep Sussex Safe" and "Improving Access to Justice for Victims and Witnesses". Please can you explain how the 101 telephone reporting system delivers these, given that it is difficult to get through to the call-handlers at key times and my residents regularly report delays of between 45 minutes to one hour. Many residents say they give up.* The PCC told the Committee that contact with the Police was fundamental and that 101 was key to providing that. The poor handling times had been frustrating and the PCC had challenged the Chief Constable on the issue in September and December 2018.

Part of the precept had been committed to funding for the centre and a new website had been implemented and reporting online had been made easier.

A Member asked the following question: *The Sussex Police Workforce has been cut by 13% since 2010. Spending on Police Officers fell by £5.6m from 2017 to 2018. Spending on Police Community Support Officers fell by £3.3m in the same period. What has been the actual reduction in both the number of Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers from 2017 to 2018?* Members were told that the reduction had been 11.5% of full time equivalent officers from 5102 in 2013 to 4516 at the end of 2017

A Member asked the following question: *The PCC is on record as saying that it is her duty "to consult with members of the public on policing and how safe they feel in their area and to ensure their concerns are appropriately acted upon." Could you indicate where and when you have consulted with the public in Worthing and what changes in policing the area have resulted.* The PCC told members that officers widely attended local Community Safety Partnerships. There had been a county wide consultation on the precept and a further 13 focus groups. There was also wide engagement through Social Media.

A Member asked the following question: *How many arrests have been made in Adur & Worthing using the Vagrancy Act since you became Police & Crime Commissioner and do you agree that this Act is no longer fit for purpose as part of policing in the 21st Century?* Members were told that the Vagrancy Act was only used in the most extreme of circumstances sometimes it was used for drug/alcohol rehabilitation.

A Member asked the following question: *How you can be sure that reported crime figures are accurate, given the problems identified with the 101 telephone reporting system?* Members were told that the quality and accuracy of figures provided by the police were checked and the last inspection identified sussex police as the most accurate in the country.

A Member asked the following question: *In Worthing, we have orders to control anti-social behaviour such as aggressive begging, alcohol consumption etc. No formal action is ever taken under these orders - do you think that it is worthwhile continuing with them?* Members were told that the police regularly used street drinking powers to good effect. The existence of the powers was enough for the Police to ask drinkers to surrender alcohol.

A Member asked the following question: *Is it true, that the Force plans to scrap the telephone 101 system and ask residents to report all non-urgent crime (not justifying a 999 call) online? If so, how does this comply with accessibility legislation as not everybody has online access and/or feels comfortable reporting crimes online. It also creates problems for the partially sighted and those with literacy issues and/or special educational needs.* Members were told that there were no plans to scrap 101 only to improve it.

A Member asked the following question: *Looking back over the past 12 months, what do you consider to be your most significant achievements for Adur and Worthing, and the County as a whole?* The PCC told the Committee of work involving County Lines, Justice Programs moving into police stations, improvements in custody and mental health suites, and the victim funding network.

A Member asked the following question: *Is the Sussex Police and Crime Panel always held during the day, on a Friday morning and in Lewes? If so, why aren't alternative venues offered at more accessible times to encourage greater public participation? How many people access the panels via the online recordings posted by ESCC?* The PCC told members that she had no influence on the setting of the Police and Crime Panel.

A Member asked the following question: *To relieve the financial burden of all in West Sussex, including Adur and Worthing, what representations have you made to Central Government for fairer funding for police services in this area?* The PCC told members that the national association of PCC's had been lobbying Government on a number of issues as had Political groups.

The PCC left the meeting at this point to attend another engagement the Adur and Worthing Police Commander remained to answer operational questions

A Member asked the following question: *Early intervention plays an important role in keeping our youngsters from embarking into areas of crime. In our schools, particularly our secondary schools, how much time do Police officers have to talk to the youth and actually play a substantial part in their education.* Members were told of the work of prevention youth officers in secondary schools

A Member asked the following question: *As a Lancing Councillor I regularly receive reports of properties in Lancing and Sompting where drugs are being sold. Also, I regularly smell cannabis when walking in Lancing, especially in the evening during the summer. So I conducted a survey. Here's the key findings;- three in ten residents say they can tell me the actual address where drug dealing is happening in Lancing and Sompting- more than nine out of ten residents think the police are not doing enough to combat drug crime in Lancing and Sompting - only 2.9% think the police are doing enough to combat drug dealing and drug abuse in the area. - six out of ten residents say they regularly smell Cannabis with only one in every forty saying they never smell cannabis.*

My conclusion is that a police officer could stop ten people in Lancing and be given the addresses of at least three places where drugs are being sold. I also conclude that a police officer could walk around Lancing on a warm evening and follow their nose to find people smoking cannabis - let's not forget this is still an illegal, controlled, drug! Just conducting this survey has resulted in members of the public giving me five addresses where drugs are sold, two locations of parked cars where drugs are sold and the nickname of one local dealer and their supplier in London plus the promise of the dealer's 'phone number for his pay as you go phone!

Bearing in mind that drugs are dealt and used so openly, can the PCC tell us what has been done in the last year to combat drug crime in Lancing? With such open sale and usage can the PCC tell us why there aren't more arrests and prosecutions and why drugs are still being sold so openly? Finally, can the PCC tell us if there are any plans to deal with this drug crime in any way she thinks will make a REAL difference to drug crime in Lancing and Sompting? Members were told that there were big successes targeting drug dealing across the District and any intelligence regarding drug dealing should be shared with the Police. Members were told of the Police's success in dealing with the problem of County Lines, cuckooing and subsequent reductions in associated violent crime.

A Member asked the following question: *Could you outline the campaign on "modern slavery" and whether this is yielding results?* Members were told about the work done to identify vulnerable women through focused work with other bodies and resultant investigations and operations. The campaign worked through a number of different strands including awareness promotion.

A Member asked the following question: *According to the Police UK website, in my ward of Southlands from 2017 to 2018,: Violent Crime and Sexual Offences rose by 440%, Burglary rose by 500%, Possession of Weapons rose by 600%, Anti-Social behaviour rose by 775%, Criminal Damage and arson rose by 1300%. Those figures are clearly worrying and are a cause of deep concern to the residents suffering from criminality in my ward. What do you intend to do to provide those residents with a safe and secure environment?* The Police Commander demonstrated for members that hard figures showed that there had been only 12 burglaries in the previous year and Southlands had the lowest levels of crime when compared to 15 similar wards throughout the County. The district of Adur was a safe place.

A Member asked the following question: *What initiatives are there to work with retailers (ie alert "thief in area" systems) - regarding crime hotspots.* Members were told that the business community was very important and there was a very active shopwatch team.

A Member asked the following question: *What are the figures for drug dealing arrests in Adur, particularly breaking down into Lancing Sompting , Shoreham and Southwick.* Members were told that there had been 63 arrests for possession, 19 intent to supply, 11 Lancing, 2 Sompting, 6 Shoreham, 0 Southwick

A Member asked the following question: *Worthing has a changing demographic and the needs and requirements of the population are changing accordingly. How has the police approach changed in response to this?* Members were told that Police made assessments based on threat, harm and risk. It wasn't just

demographics that were changing but also the nature of crime and vulnerability (such as the rise of internet crime). The Police would go to where threat, harm and risk existed.

Members questioned further on drug legislation, cybercrime and visible policing. When asked what Councillor could do to help the Police members were told that Councillors could get involved through contacting the Crime Safety Partnership representatives.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.00pm it having commenced at 6.30pm.

Chairman