

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL** held at 10.30 am on 18 April 2023 at Woodhatch Place, Reigate, Surrey.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Panel at its next meeting.

Members:

(*Present)

- *Keith Witham
- *District Councillor Paul Kennedy
- *Borough Councillor Victor Lewanski
- *Borough Councillor Valerie White
- *John Robini (Chairman)
- *Mr Martin Stilwell
- *Borough Councillor Hannah Dalton
- *Borough Councillor Ellen Nicholson
- *Cllr Richard Morris

Apologies:

- Satvinder Buttar
- District Councillor Mick Gillman
- John Furey
- Borough Councillor Barry J F Cheyne

21/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from John Furey, Barry Cheyne, Satvinder Buttar and Mick Gillman.

22/23 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 3 FEBRUARY 2023 [Item 2]

1. A Member queried the accuracy of the minutes (13/21) in respect of an anticipated year end transfer of £150,000 from reserves to support the OPCC budget for 2022/23. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that at the date of the meeting the intention was indeed to make the transfer at the year-end based on the information available at that time. The fact that this requirement had changed subsequently did not change the accuracy of the original minutes.
2. The minutes were then agreed.

23/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None were declared.

24/23 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4]

None were received.

25/23 101 SURVEY FEEDBACK AND ACTIONS [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner

Damian Markland, Head of Performance and Governance

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) explained that the Force had struggled with the 101 service for several reasons and in particular staffing. The PCC visited call centre staff on a number of occasions and learnt that many trained staff had decided to become Police Officers. This was good for the individuals concerned and was to be encouraged but had put pressure on staffing levels within the Contact Centre. This was being addressed by five staff intakes of 50 starters with 28 in training.
2. A Member asked what the performance measures for call handling are and what the PCC's ambition for the service was. The Panel was told that the PCC wanted a service that would answer as many calls as possible and direct people to the right channels thereby increasing public confidence. There were no specific targets and the Head of Performance and Governance advised the panel that the call handling

measure of three minutes was only for management purposes rather than a target.

3. The PCC was asked about the survey results that made two mentions of alternative digital methods for contacting the Police, with one mention each of "live chat" and social media, and whether there were plans to promote the digital contact method to the same extent as the telephone access? The PCC commented that staff were trained to answer contacts from any method and confirmed that live chat was as effective as the telephone for contacting the Force and would be grateful if the Panel would reiterate this message when engaging with residents.
4. The survey did not specifically target those that had recently contacted 101 and was publicised through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's usual channels. There were no measures to prevent staff responding to the survey but there was no reason to think staff within the Contact Centre would seek to influence the results. A Member of the Panel commented that they were contacted for a survey as a Surrey resident and their eligibility was checked by the call handler.
5. The PCC was asked if the survey reached a cross section of the population or just those who were digitally savvy. As a follow-up the Member asked how accessible the PCC's website was. The Head of Performance and Governance explained that the OPCC had launched a new redesigned website with the aim of ensuring it was compliant with accessibility standards.
6. A Member asked about reward and recognition for call centre staff. It was explained that there had been increases to the unsocial hours allowance, improved support to staff and more flexible recruitment procedures to make it easier to attract applicants. Whilst it would take time to assess whether these changes were having an impact on recruitment and retention, the PCC continued to receive regular updates.

26/23 SURREY POLICE GROUP FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE 10 MONTHS ENDED 31 JANUARY 2023 [Item 6]

Witnesses:

Kelvin Menon, Chief Finance Officer

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A Member questioned the impact of an underspend on police officers and capital on service levels to the public. The CFO replied that as far as he was aware there were no adverse impacts in the short term.

2. A Member questioned the ICT project delays noted in the report, such as the implementation of the Emergency Services mobile network (EN), Surrey DCS upgrade and the Joint Service Management Platform. The CFO stated that IT projects were difficult to plan for citing resourcing and capacity issues as well as more urgent operational matters taking priority. Sometimes delays were also the result of national policy delays such as ESN.
3. A Member asked about key decision 69 in the OPCC Decision Log which showed a £7.9m underspend and how this figure impacted on the precept rate. The CFO explained that the underspend had only a one-off benefit and consisted not only of savings but also budgets to be carried forward into the next financial year. Precept setting took a longer term view of funding pressures and the ongoing delivery of services. The CFO also said that all reserves were owned and under the control of the PCC and hence any decision on them had to be approved by the PCC.

27/23 PROGRESS AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner
Damian Markland, Head of Performance and Governance

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The PCC was asked about the decrease in public confidence from 86% to 84% and efforts to improve this score. The PCC considered this to be important and commented that it may have been influenced by the national experience of policing including newspaper headlines on Police forces and the criminal justice system. More work was required to improve victim confidence in Surrey Police and this had been a growing area of focus in recent years.
2. A Member asked about barriers in engaging partners in efforts to reduce violence against women and girls. The PCC said this was an important question and could not be tackled by the Police alone and partners were integral. The PCC referenced the statutory duty to collaborate across the public sector and recent work with schools to support the PSHE curriculum. There were some emerging areas of work that would likely involve work with partners that had not historically had a close relationship with the police, and this would need to be managed through appropriate governance processes.
3. A Member highlighted the plateauing trend for victim satisfaction. What should the Panel expect to observe over the next six months given the planned initiatives and what support there is for victim support? The PCC reiterated her earlier response regarding Surrey Police's recognition of this issue and that victims were being contacted and crimes being resolved but often victims were not being kept updated through the process. The Head of Performance and Governance stated that there was a Victims and Witnesses Group in Surrey that

reviewed performance. The force's internal Victim and Witness Care Unit also worked closely with victims of crime to provide appropriate support and guidance. The unit also made use of volunteers to help support individuals. There was also a dedicated website, where residents could find out about all local support services available in Surrey.

4. A Member asked for any headlines from the survey into anti-social behaviour. The PCC highlighted five issues: anti-social driving and speeding, littering, anti-social parking, people using and dealing drugs and fly tipping. The PCC noted that not all of these were policing issues.
5. A Member reflected on recent issues in Woking where residents had been harassed by groups and asked how this would be affected by a new ruling on police not intervening in verbal neighbourhood disputes. The PCC thought that this was difficult, wanted to avoid criminalising neighbours and that there were other agencies that could help de-escalate situations before the police needed to become involved.
6. A Member raised the increased number of Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) collisions in the county and asked what proportion of KSI collisions are, in fact, caused by young drivers, and whether there any measures to encourage safer driving for older drivers. The PCC did not have any figures at the meeting, but these were available online and a rise was expected post-pandemic. The PCC agreed there was a need for lifelong learning and there might be a good case for re-testing in later life.
7. The PCC was asked whether she was concerned that domestic burglaries were not in decline. The PCC felt this was always a challenge in Surrey owing to the number of wealthy residents and recognised there were hotspots for this crime. But outcome detections were up and campaigns and education on safety remained a priority for the PCC.

28/23 UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Panel queried whether the PCC would work with Surrey County Council to progress the development of transit sites and did the PCC have confidence that these sites would be created in the short-term. The PCC reported having numerous conversations with Surrey County Council on this topic and advised that if funding from the OPCC was required for the transit site to progress then she would consider contributing. The PCC explained that although the OPCC and Force was a stakeholder in this area it was not a decision-maker, this rested with the local Councils and their planning departments, but the PCC

would work continue to work with partners where appropriate to end the uncertainty and deliver a transit site.

2. The PCC advised that as encampments were not automatically a policing issue, when it came to eviction that was the responsibility of the landowner - that could be Surrey County Council, which meant Police involvement was low. The PCC told the Panel that for the year 2021 out of 80 incidents only four involved the use of Police powers and only 7 in 2022.

Action/Further information to be provided:

- OPCC to provide a briefing paper on the detail of legislative changes for policing unauthorised encampments.

29/23 SURREY POLICE UPLIFT & WORKFORCE PLANNING [Item 9]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner

Damian Markland, Head of Performance and Governance

Key points raised during the discussion:

Figures on staffing were tabled at the meeting and are appended to these minutes.

1. A Member highlighted the current low conviction rates for domestic violence against women and children and asked how the PCC would hold the Chief Constable to account. The PCC said that the new Chief Constable's background in this area provided confidence to her, and things should improve however she also referenced challenges in the criminal justice system such as court delays which did not help. That said the PCC reminded members that they must be mindful of the language used in this area to ensure that victims remain confident in coming forward with allegations to the Police.
2. The Panel requested further information on the survey on misogyny within the Force. The PCC advised that this work had been underway with an external provider for a year. This would commence with an anonymous survey for members of Surrey Police followed by a tailored programme based on the analysis of this feedback. The PCC offered to come back to the Panel with a further update on this work. The Head of Performance and Governance added that staff at the OPCC had much more access to information concerning conduct and vetting processes within Surrey Police and were actively monitoring this area in light of national developments.
3. A Member followed up with a question about recruitment safeguards. The PCC explained how Surrey vets all officers that transfer from one police force to another rather than relying on what's been done before

and how it was not unheard of for transfers into Surrey Police to fail its high bar for vetting.

4. A Member asked how many live cases Surrey Police had of allegations of sexual violence and/or domestic violence of serving officers within the force and also the status of carrying out investigation and of those being investigated, how many were still in an active policing role. The PCC did not have numbers available so agreed to write to the Panel.
5. The Panel asked about staff attrition rates and whether officers from minority groups were disproportionately leaving the service. The Head of Performance and Governance advised that this data was collected and would be provided to the Panel.
6. The Panel queried what constituted “specialist crime”. The PCC gave examples of the Paedophile Online Investigation Team, work on serious offences such as child abuse and rape.
7. The PCC was asked about the establishment figures for Police Community Support Officers. The PCC advised that they were recruiting for these roles, but it was challenging in Surrey with not only many current PCSOs becoming Police Officers but also those recruits who may have become PCSOs in the past now opting to become Police Officers instead.
8. A Member queried a recent quote from the Chief Constable that the new non-degree route into policing does not lead to a formal qualification; does this indicate that there are existing officers in Surrey Police who are not qualified. The PCC clarified that it meant that it does not lead to a degree qualification, but all officers are required to complete a formal training program to become fully trained officers.

Action/Further information to be provided:

- OPCC to share the Surrey response to the national HMIC inspection report on misogyny in the Police Service.
- OPCC to write to the Panel on the numbers referenced in paragraph 4 above.
- Breakdown of the demographics of those leaving the service.
- Clarify establishment and strength figures

30/23 PERFORMANCE MEETINGS [Item 10]

Witnesses:

Damian Markland, Head of Performance and Governance

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The information was noted.

31/23 PCC FORWARD PLAN AND KEY DECISIONS [Item 11]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A Member noted that the Joint Audit Committee's papers were only available up until July 2022 online. Could this be checked.

32/23 COMMISSIONER'S QUESTION TIME [Item 12]

Witnesses:

Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner

Damian Markland, Head of Performance and Governance

Kelvin Menon, Chief Finance Officer

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chair asked the Commissioner: Surrey Police were said to have the lowest charge rates for rape. Using your figures can we discuss the reasons for this and what is the Commissioner doing to improve the outcome rate for rape cases in Surrey and their alleged victims. A response was tabled and appended to these minutes.
2. The Chair asked a follow-up on why the charge rate was so low when domestic abuse perpetrators are often known to Police and the PCC's view on the current charge rate. The PCC was talking with Ministers and the Crown Prosecution Service about the charge rates. It was added that the new Surrey Chief Constable had previously held the national brief for disclosure. The PCC considered that rape may not be the charge that a victim wished to go forward as the main charge. The PCC concluded that the area was complex and felt that aspects of the criminal justice system were unaccountable for low rates.
3. A Member asked how many charges converted to convictions. The Head of Performance and Governance would check the data as this was not part of the original question.
4. A Member asked about progress towards carbon net zero and whether the reserve of £1.7m was indicator of how much resource was required. The Chief Finance Officer considered this amount to be the beginning of the cost given the future challenges with infrastructure such as the Police's fleet of vehicles. Work was still being done to ascertain how to meet the challenge. The PCC felt the progress

toward net zero must be balanced against the Police's core purpose to prevent and protect the public from crime.

Actions/Further information requested:

- Response to Cllr Paul Kennedy's questions
- Number of convictions made a result of charges.

33/23 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST MEETING [Item 13]

Witnesses:

Alison Bolton, Chief Executive – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Ross Pike, Scrutiny Business Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Panel noted an error in the report that stated the complaint had been considered by the Sub-Committee in November 2022. This should have read 4 April 2022.
2. A Member requested a summary of the complaints against the current and previous PCCs considered by the Complaints Sub-Committee and the outcome of its hearings. Members were advised that the Committee's decisions were reported to each meeting so it would be possible to review previous papers to establish this information should it be required. The Chief Executive of the OPCC also reminded the Panel that it had delegated its powers to her to consider whether a complaint was repetitious as part of its complaint handling process. However, where there were new points raised in a complaint, even where it would otherwise seem similar to others that had been considered by the Sub-Committee, the Chief Executive was required to refer the complaint back to the Sub-Committee for informal resolution.

Actions/Further information requested:

- Panel Support to provide a summary of complaints made against current and former Police and Crime Commissioners.

34/23 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 14]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Panel noted the tracker and forward work programme.

35/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 15]

The Panel's next meeting would be held on Thursday 29 June. This would be the annual meeting of the Panel. The Chair thanked everyone for their support.

Meeting ended at: 12:36

Chairman

SURREY POLICE VACANCIES APRIL 2023

Staff - as at 31.03.23

	Establishment	Strength	Vacancies	Vacancy Rate
Eastern	38	34.98	3.02	7.9%
Northern	39	37.88	1.12	2.9%
Western	40.5	39.16	1.34	3.3%
Operations	128	106.67	21.33	16.7%
Public Protection	81.55	77.92	3.63	4.5%
Specialist Crime	274.08	235.71	38.37	14.0%
Regional	14	1	13	92.9%
People Services	131.41	103.78	27.63	21.0%
SBSC	43.29	44.94	-1.65	-3.8%
Contact	437.34	377.89	59.45	13.6%
Corporate Comms	31	28.36	2.64	8.5%
CJ & Custody	233.06	200.81	32.25	13.8%
DCC Portfolio	38	27.58	10.42	27.4%
Prevent, Specials & Volunteers	21	20.39	0.61	2.9%
Corporate Development	106.36	92.21	14.15	13.3%
Finance	112.9	91.92	20.98	18.6%
DDaT	104	103.17	0.83	0.8%
PSD	25	25.6	-0.6	-2.4%
ACPO	6	9.06	-3.06	-51.0%
Office of the PCC	0	20.27	-20.27	-

PCSOs - as at 31.03.23

	Establishment	Strength	Vacancies	Vacancy Rate
PCSO Epsom and Ewell	8	4.12	3.88	48.5%
PCSO Mole Valley	4	6.24	-2.24	-56.0%
PCSO Reigate and Banstead	14.71	11.9	2.81	19.1%
PCSO Tandridge	5	8.39	-3.39	-67.8%
PCSO Spelthorne	10	3	7	70.0%
PCSO Elmbridge	9	2.61	6.39	71.0%
PCSO Runnymede	8	8.39	-0.39	-4.9%
PCSO Guildford	14	8.89	5.11	36.5%
PCSO Surrey Heath	8	5.94	2.06	25.8%
PCSO Woking	7.71	4.96	2.75	35.7%
PCSO Waverley	8	4.83	3.17	39.6%
Total	96.42	69.27	27.15	28.2%

SURREY POLICE VACANCIES APRIL 2023

Officers - as at 31.03.23

	31/03/2023
Establishment	2216.66
Strength	2278.37
Vacancies	-61.71
Vacancy Rate	-2.8%
Probationers without IP	249
All Probationers	570
Probationers (2 year probation)	225
Probationers (3 year probation)	345

Question:

Surrey Police were said to have the lowest charge rates for rape. Using your figures, can we discuss the reasons for this, and 'What is the Commissioner doing to improve the outcome rate for rape cases in Surrey and their alleged victims?'

Response:

It's important to recognise that the reported rape figures include both intimate and non-intimate crimes – that is, when the offence of rape is committed by someone known to the victim, or by a stranger. The former is far more common and will often be disclosed as part of a wider investigation, such as in cases of domestic abuse.

During the investigation of abuse against an adult or a child, the police will always seek to ascertain if an individual has ever been forced to engage in sexual activity against their wishes. If disclosed, this can lead to an additional recording of rape.

Rape is an extremely traumatic crime and understandably an individual can find it extraordinarily difficult to talk about their experience. For many, the thought of pursuing a charge and giving evidence in court can be a daunting prospect, and this can result in victims not feeling able or ready to support progression of the case. Sadly, the evidential difficulties this creates greatly reduce the likelihood of a charging decision and this is reflected in national data.

However, both Surrey Police and the OPCC have a clear duty to provide victims of these horrific crimes with the best support possible, to help them cope and recover from their experience whilst creating an environment in which they feel empowered to seek justice.

The data referenced in the question relates to 2021/22, and 2022/23 has seen an improvement in the number of charging decisions made, as per the table below.

Year	Rape Charge Rate
2021/22	4.9%
2022/23	5.2%

The 'lowest charge rates' previously reported in the media relate to a small selection of data provided to the Home Office in support of the Criminal Justice Scorecards.

A like-for-like comparison is provided above based on the full data for the respective periods, but more recently published data from iQuanta provides a wider, more detailed view. This shows that Surrey has the lowest number of reports for both rape and serious sexual offences across England and Wales (0.69 and 1.69 per 100,000 population respectively). The current national ranking for solved outcomes is 22nd for rape offences and 23rd for serious sexual offences (5.56% and 7.27%).

These improvements are part of significant and ongoing work taking place within the Sexual Offences Investigation Team (SOIT). This takes evidence-based good practice to improve working practices, victim care, timeliness of investigations and solved outcome rates. Actions taken include:

- Investing in more dedicated investigators, with specialist training and supervision within our SOIT.
- Embedding good practice from the national programme known as Op Soteria within SOIT.

- Incorporating feedback from the child and adult survivors voice feedback group into our working practises.
- Sharing information and intelligence held across agencies through RASSO (Rape and Serious Sexual Offences) to identify offending patterns, repeat offenders, and locations of risk and initiate suitable preventative measures and targeted interventions.
- Supporting victims throughout the investigation and criminal justice processes through dedicated specialist SOLOs (Sexual offence liaison officers).
- Specific training to improve the initial response to sexual offences for first responders. This has been delivered to response teams and is currently underway with staff and officers from Contact.
- Closer working with the Crown Prosecution Service to seek early advice on investigations to improve the quality of cases presented for charging decision.

None of these charges would have been possible without the bravery and determination of the victims and survivors.

More generally, Surrey Police continues to progress its Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, helping to harmonise and develop a consistent approach across multiple areas including domestic abuse, sexual offences, peer-on-peer abuse in schools and Harmful Traditional Practices. The full document can be downloaded here:

<https://www.surrey.police.uk/police-forces/surrey-police/areas/au/about-us/priorities-and-direction/>

In terms of my office, we continue to commission dedicated services for adult and child victims of rape and sexual assault, including a helpline, counselling and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs). ISVAs can often be key to helping victims understand their legal options whilst empowering them to make informed choices. In cases where individuals progress with a case, ISVAs will also attend court with them to provide ongoing support. During 2022/23 my office has invested over £700,000 into support for victims of rape and sexual assault.