

REPORT OF THE SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY

The Sussex Police Authority met at County Hall, Chichester, on 12 February 2009.
Attendances:

Mr L H Barnard (Chairman), Mr P Bratton, Prof G Bull, Dr L E Bush (Vice–Chairman), Mrs M Collins DL, Ms E Daniel, Mr B Duncan, Mr F H Faiz, Mr P Jones, Mr J Mortimer, Mr A Price JP, Mr D Rogers OBE, Mrs C Shaves MBE JP, Mr R Tidy, Mr G Theobald OBE, Mr S Waight and Dr R Walker.

The Police Authority considered a 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.

1. Local Policing Plan 2009–12

1.1 The Police Authority has approved the Local Policing Plan (LPP) 2009 – 12 which sets out the strategic vision for the Police Authority and Sussex Police over the next three years, specific investments in key priority areas and specific actions to be undertaken in 2009-12 to meet some demanding targets. The Police Authority has worked closely with the Chief Constable to input the views of the local community, following public consultation, into the development of the LPP. The Authority was represented on the LPP Development Board by the Vice-Chairman Dr Laurie Bush, Mrs Carole Shaves, Mr Bob Tidy and Mr Steve Waight.

1.2 The LPP has been prepared in parallel with the Budget for 2009-10 as a fully developed and integrated package which would deliver an agreed Plan with targets. The Police Authority has welcomed the fact that the draft LPP was presented to the Authority in its entirety alongside the budget. The LPP is an ambitious plan which has been developed in consultation with the Authority and has been drafted to reflect public expectations not only locally but also nationally in respect of neighbourhood policing, and tackling serious and organised crime and counter terrorism. The Plan also focuses on the local issues raised during the Authority's public consultation and engagement programme. The aim of the Plan is to sustain the strong performance of Sussex Police and to ensure that Sussex remains a safe place in which to live and work.

1.3 Neighbourhood policing continues to be a key priority for Sussex Police and the foundation upon which policing in Sussex had been developed over recent years. The aim of the Plan is for neighbourhood policing teams to continue to be visible and accessible to the community, and achieve greater confidence in policing building on the active collaboration between Sussex Police and partner agencies. The policies and targets in the LPP will seek to protect the most vulnerable people in society and to assist local communities in identifying and addressing, at an early stage, activity and behaviour which might lead to people becoming attracted to or engaged in acts of extremism.

1.4 The investment options within the approved budget are aligned to the three strategic priorities of the Authority contained in the LPP namely: neighbourhood policing, keeping people safe and best use of resources. The objectives and targets in the LPP seek to balance the need to provide high quality policing and the cost of the service to local tax payers. This is particularly important in the current economic downturn.

1.5 The Police Authority and Sussex Police are key contributors to partnership working at various levels throughout Sussex and work closely and effectively at a strategic level with

East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council.

1.6 As in previous years LPP summaries will be produced based on the principal council areas and will provide details of how policing will be delivered at the local level and will, therefore, be relevant to the public. The summaries will include the key actions that the Sussex Police will undertake to deliver in respect of both national and local priorities.

2. Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2009-10 to 2011-12

2.1 The Police Authority approved its revenue and capital budgets for 2009-10 and capital programme for the three year period to 2012. The revenue budget seeks to ensure that Sussex Police continues to deliver a good policing service, despite having fewer resources and funds than most forces in England and Wales. Over the last few years, Sussex Police has consistently delivered a high level of performance and achieved significant efficiency savings, all against a background of low grant funding and one of the lowest levels of precept for policing.

2.2 The revenue budget and capital programme had been prepared to deliver the Local Policing Plan approved by the Authority (paragraphs 1.1 to 1.6 refer). The budget is based on a renewed focus on serving the public of Sussex and delivering both national and local policing priorities, including:

- the further development of neighbourhood policing delivering a locally based visible, accessible and responsive police capability;
- the continued enhancement of protective services, particularly in tackling serious and organised crime, sharing and managing information assets across forces; and
- the provision of excellent service delivery within available resources, set against an extremely difficult national financial outlook which is likely to lead to lower levels of grant increase and a substantial requirement for further efficiency savings in future years.

2.3 The revenue budget for 2009-10 seeks to ensure that the demanding targets for serving Sussex, as set out in the Local Policing Plan, can be resourced effectively.

2.4 While Sussex Police has a strong record of delivering improvements in performance, and in the efficient use of resources, the Authority continues to face a very difficult outlook over the period to 2012. The need to invest further in measures to tackle serious and organised crime, to support the development of neighbourhood policing, and protect vulnerable people is set against the prospect of future increases in government funding that are below the rate of inflation. Both the Authority and Sussex Police are seeking to maintain investment to ensure that there is no negative impact on neighbourhood policing. However, for local policing to flourish, investment must continue to be made in the provision of protective services. These include provision for major and cross border crime, roads policing, forensic investigation and counter-terrorism activities. The Police Authority and Sussex Police are collaborating with other police authorities and forces to achieve the best use of resources.

2.5 The approved revenue budget includes improved provision for tackling domestic violence across Sussex in order to deliver the targets in the LPP to reduce domestic violence by 55%. In the context of tackling domestic violence the Police Authority has agreed funding to support the Worth Project in 2009-10, and agreed to carry out a review of resources to

tackle domestic violence across Sussex. The review will examine the potential contribution which can be made by the Worth Project countywide and the implications for future budgets. The review will include input from East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council and other relevant partner agencies.

2.6 Despite having fewer resources than most forces in England and Wales and in keeping with Sussex's strong record of delivering high level performance, the budget takes into account over £7.5m of cash-releasing efficiency savings. In addition, it builds on the performance the Force has achieved in 2008-09.

2.7 The Police Authority approved a revenue budget for 2008-09 of £253m inclusive of a contingency provision of £0.174m which will result in a 4.69% increase in the policing element of the Council Tax, which is an increase of 11.5 pence per week for a Band D property compared with 2008-09. The police element of the precept for a Band D property will, therefore, be £134.73 per annum. The Police Authority believes this budget represents the best balance between maintaining the improvements in policing in Sussex and the poor budget settlement, and government guidance on council tax and budget increases.

2.8 The Authority approved a 3 year capital programme of £39.450m, which involves expenditure in 2009-10 of £15.7m. Schemes include a replacement Lewes Police Station, additional custody capacity at Crawley Police Station, further investment in the protective services capacity and police information systems.

3. Police Authority Treasurer

The Police Authority has appointed a new Treasurer to take over from Mr Bryan Robinson who retires at the end of March 2009. Mr Richard Hornby CIPFA, the new Director of Finance for West Sussex County Council has been appointed as Treasurer of the Police Authority with effect from 1 April 2009. Mr Hornby will continue to be supported, as was Mr Robinson, by the wealth of experience and expertise on police matters contained within the Finance Department at West Sussex County Council.

4. Farewell to Chief Officers

The Police Authority has said farewell to three chief officers, namely the Treasurer Mr Bryan Robinson and Assistant Chief Constable Jeremy Paine who are both retiring, and Dr David Horne, Sussex Police Director of Resources who has been appointed as Director of Resources at the National Policing Improvement Agency. The Police Authority has placed on record its thanks to Mr Robinson, Dr Horne and ACC Paine for the significant contribution which they have made to policing in Sussex, and wishes them every success in the future.

Lionel Barnard
Chairman

February 2009