

# REPORT OF THE SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY

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The Sussex Police Authority met at Pelham House, Lewes, on Thursday 17 April 2003.  
Attendances:

Mr D O Rogers (Chair), Mrs M G Bishop, Mr K C Bodfish OBE, Dr L E Bush, Miss J A Corcho, Miss M Dean, Mr M Dunn (Vice-Chairman), Mr R J Emerson, Mrs M D Johnson DL, Mr P Jones, Ms J Kramer, Mr J Mortimer, Mrs A Swain, Mr G T Theobald OBE, Mrs M C Turner and Dr J M M Walsh RD.

## **1 Recruitment**

1.1 The Police Authority was very pleased to note that at 31 March 2003, the number of police officers in Sussex totalled 3,098 full time equivalents which meant that the Force had come within 2 of hitting the target of 3,100 officers by the end of the Policing Plan year 2002/2003. Over the past twelve months, the Force had grown by 109 officers despite losing 72 officers during the year through transfers to other Forces, primarily to the Metropolitan Police. During the year, 27 police officers had transferred to Sussex.

1.2 The current full-time equivalent of 3,098 officers translated to 3,147 people which is significantly higher than the Force's previous highest level of officers – 3,103 in 1997.

1.3 The current year's target for Sussex Police is to have 3,140 full time equivalent police officers in post by 1 April 2004. In order to achieve that figure, and allowing for transfers and retirements, it has been estimated that the Force will need to recruit a further 350 officers during the year. The Authority very much hopes that this will be achieved.

## **2 Community Support Officers**

2.1 Following a period of training, 22 new Community Support Officers started work with Sussex Police at the beginning of March 2003. They were a very welcome addition to the extended police family providing an even more visible, accessible and familiar presence on the streets of Sussex.

2.2 A joint bid has been made to the Home Office, with the support of partnership funding from East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council, to recruit a further 50 Community Support Officers in the coming months to support frontline policing and promote public safety. The Police Authority hopes that the bid will be successful.

## **3 Joint Annual Report/Newspaper 2002/2003**

3.1 The joint Annual Report/Newspaper for the Police Authority and the Chief Constable for 2002/2003 will be published and delivered to every home in Sussex this coming August. Over recent years, this has proven to be a successful and cost-effective method of communicating the joint annual report to the people of Sussex. The Royal Mail hopes to complete delivery by 30 August.

3.2 In addition, the annual report/newspaper will be publicised and fully accessible on the Police Authority's website at [www.sussex.police.uk/authority](http://www.sussex.police.uk/authority).

## **4 Freedom of Information Act 2000 : Publication Scheme**

4.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by the Police Authority and the Force, sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on the Authority and the Force. Any person who makes a request to the Authority or the Force for information must be informed where that information is held and, subject to exceptions, be supplied with the information.

4.2 Under the Act, both the Authority and the Force must each have their own publication schemes setting out the information that is routinely made available to the public. The schemes must be approved by the Information Commissioner and they must be reviewed from time to time.

4.3 The Association of Police Authorities (APA) produced a model publication scheme for use by police authorities which has been approved by the Information Commissioner. The Police Authority has adopted the model scheme as its publication scheme and has informed the Information Commissioner accordingly. The scheme provides information about various matters such as rights and responsibilities under the Act, the Authority's role and statutory responsibilities, membership, how the Authority works and its policies and procedures.

4.4 The publication scheme is required to be in place by 30 June 2003. It will state whether the documents available under the scheme are available free of charge or whether a charge is made by the Police Authority. The scheme will be published on the Sussex Police Authority website at [www.sussex.police.uk/authority](http://www.sussex.police.uk/authority).

4.5 The Chief Constable has decided that Sussex Police will adopt the model publication scheme produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) which has also been approved by the Information Commissioner. This scheme must also be in place by 30 June 2003. It includes details of the Force organisational structure and Chief Officers, publication of corporate and local policing plans, policies, and information about Force performance against national and Force objectives/targets and Best Value indicators. The Force's model scheme will also be published on the website at [www.sussex.police.uk](http://www.sussex.police.uk).

## **5 CCTV Schemes**

5.1 The Police Authority has been informed of the latest position on the provision of CCTV across Sussex. In total, 29 Sussex towns now have operational CCTV schemes involving a total of 314 fully functional cameras. The schemes continue to be monitored by monitoring centres based at Bognor Regis, Brighton, Eastbourne and Haywards Heath.

5.2 CCTV continues to deliver a significant contribution to policing the Sussex Police Authority's area - in 2002, over 47,800 incidents were observed and recorded with 3,171 being initiated by the camera operators. These detections resulted in 1,761 arrests, an average of 55 per operator over the year. In addition, 2,017 incidents were dealt with by using the cameras to monitor situations to their conclusion. The Police Authority was provided with examples of incidents routinely addressed by CCTV resulting in the management of incidents and arrests and charging of offenders.

5.3 Initially, the CCTV operators were recruited from staff from the Remploy Interwork Agency. Following negotiations with the Agency last year and in accordance with the Authority's obligations under the arrangement, 26 former Remploy staff were transferred to the Authority's employment. In addition, funding support from Remploy was continued for a further two years enabling further staff to be recruited from Remploy. This is in addition to internal and external recruitments.

5.4 The Police Authority's budget includes a sum of £130,000 for replacing CCTV equipment in 2003/2004. A total of £248,000 is also required from Local Authority partners in 2003/2004. Six of the eleven partners have already committed £170,500 and the other authorities have confirmed that the required funding contribution is in hand. Work to replace worn out components will start as new maintenance contracts are awarded.

5.5 Operationally, local CCTV schemes continue to be effective in reducing crime and increasing detections. Of the 1,761 arrests resulting from detections from CCTV schemes in 2002, 524 arrests were for crimes involving violence on the street and 218 for car crime offences. In total, 2,017 incidents were resolved through the use of CCTV. These figures exceeded the targets which had been set for the scheme in 2002 focussing on proactive detection of crime where the measure was the number of arrests made and then breaking that target down to concentrate activity on the detection of offences which involved street violence and theft of or from motor vehicles.

5.6 The targeting focus will be continued in the current year with a target of achieving a 5% increase on the figures achieved in 2002. Activity will continue to be concentrated on contributing towards the Policing Plan priorities of reducing crime overall, but particularly violent street crime and car crime, and increasing detections.

5.7 The Police Authority has welcomed the continuing contribution that CCTV is making to reducing crime across Sussex and increasing detections.

## **6 Strategic Approach to Illegal Use of Firearms**

6.1 Following a Home Office announcement earlier in 2003, a national firearms amnesty was held between 31 March and 30 April 2003. Locally, Sussex Police established a group of officers charged with taking a strategic approach to the illegal use of firearms to ensure that the Force was in a good position to take advantage of the amnesty and to follow this up with rigorous enforcement.

6.2 In addition, the Authority was informed that the newly established Firearms Forensic Intelligence Database would greatly assist the process of acquiring forensic evidence from firearms. It was hoped that government funding would be made available to enable a greater number of firearms to be submitted for forensic examinations.

6.3 In anticipation of large numbers of firearms being surrendered during the amnesty, a scoring system was established to determine which weapons were to be submitted for forensic examination with emphasis being placed on those weapons likely to have been used for crime.

6.4 During the amnesty, police stations at Bexhill, Brighton, Chichester, Crawley, Eastbourne, Hastings, Haywards Heath, Uckfield and Worthing were designated as receiving stations for people wishing to surrender firearms. Also, arrangements were made to collect surrendered weapons by appointment.

6.5 Everyone surrendering firearms was being encouraged to help Sussex Police to publicise the benefits of the operation. Also the public were being kept fully informed with good publicity being given to the amnesty including the involvement of heads of schools across Sussex in advising children and parents of the dangers of air weapons and encouraging them to hand in such weapons.

6.6 Based on the experience from the previous firearms amnesty, it was anticipated that the number of firearms surrendered throughout Sussex could be in the order

of 700-800. Every firearm taken out of circulation would be a bonus and the amnesty would be backed up with pro-active operations. At the date of the Authority's meeting, 771 guns had been handed in across Sussex together with 9,749 rounds of ammunition.

6.7 Last year, there were 67 robberies in Sussex where a firearm was seen and many of these were likely to have been imitation or air weapons. Sussex Police are determined to keep a firm grip on gun crime. The amnesty was just one of a range of measures being taken to ensure that Sussex remains a safe place in which to live, work and visit. Further steps were being taken after the amnesty to detect and reduce still further the number of firearms held illegally in Sussex.

## **7 Clerk to the Police Authority**

7.1 The present Clerk to the Police Authority, Helmut Cartwright, will be retiring from office on 31 July 2003. After considering a detailed report on the duties and responsibilities of the role of Clerk to the Police Authority, the Authority has agreed to appoint a full time Clerk.

DAVID ROGERS

*Chair*

17 April 2003