

Q&A session with Katy Bourne CDC Overview & Scrutiny Committee (O&S) Councillor James Vivian report For Community Affairs Meeting (4 March 2024)

The CDC Overview & Scrutiny Committee (O&S) carries out independent scrutiny of CDC's functions and projects. O&S also, on occasion, carries out scrutiny sessions of external bodies, in this case the Police & Crime Commissioner for Sussex, Katy Bourne. While it may sound a bit dry, it presents a really important opportunity for Councillors to directly ask questions to bodies or people they might never otherwise see. I would strongly encourage City Councillors to attend or watch recordings of previous & upcoming meetings, as they will be on subjects or topics of relevance.

The question session with Katy Bourne and District Commander for Arun & Chichester Will Keating-Jones was quite interesting. Katy Bourne is used to the cut-and-thrust of council meetings and I think we found it quite difficult to pin her down on several of the issues. A number of the answers given also, I think, didn't stand up to scrutiny but we should also acknowledge that Sussex Police are also having to cope with severely restricted resources. I've given a quick summary of the questions I asked and the responses I received below, but you can find a link to watch the January meeting of O&S here: <https://chichester.nucast.live/>. Do also let me know if you have any questions.

Q: The Chichester BID has deployed Ambassadors to patrol Chichester City centre, however these Ambassadors will lack any enforcement capability. But it's come to our attention that Sussex Police have been asking the BID to roll out the scheme as early as they possibly can, presumably to plug the gaps in PCSO capacity. How is it that Sussex Police are increasingly leaning on third-sector organisations to keep the public safe?

A: Not unusual for Sussex Police to work with third sector organisations - BID play a "really critical role" in keeping the public safe. Sussex Police "not reliant" on third sector organisations.

Q: Could the Police & Crime Commissioner give an update on the current recruitment strategy for PCSOs in and around Chichester, and whether there are any issues surrounding recruitment?

A: Sussex Police are experiencing issues getting adequate numbers of PCSOs - problem is that many recruits are looking to become police officers rather than PCSOs. Had used a recruitment agency for new PCSOs but not much success. But a much broader issue than just Sussex. There are (as of January 2024) 17 PCSOs for Chichester with 5 vacancies (22 total ideally).

Q: In my ward, antisocial driving and boy racers are a frequent occurrence, but the Police and Crime Plan only mentions the issue once. How is Sussex Police address the issue, and how can the District Council and its Parishes assist in its prevention?

A: Police & Crime Plan is a 'strategic document' so shouldn't read too much into it. Communities should report any issues, including via the Operation Crackdown website.

Q: An analysis of criminal charge rates by LawHive has shown that criminal charge rates in Chichester are 30% lower than the national average and are the third-lowest in the country. Why is this the case and what are the Police & Crime Commissioner, and Sussex Police desiring to ensure that there is access to
(Link: <https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/crime/chichester-among-lowest-percentage-of-criminal-cases-being-charged-data-reveals-4422577>)

A: Will look into it, but may be down to fewer crimes being reported.