

Reappointment of Chief Constable confirmed by Panel

SUSSEX's Chief Constable is to be rehired after the panel set up to scrutinise the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner gave its backing.

Commissioner Katy Bourne asked the Sussex Police and Crime Panel to confirm the reappointment of Jo Shiner, who left the force at the end of August under nationally recognised retire and rejoin scheme.

At Friday's meeting (September 27) Mrs Bourne told the Panel: "I consider it to be in the absolute best interests of Sussex Police to retain the services of someone who is a proven leader with experience, integrity and professionalism, who is committed to delivering the highest possible policing services to our local communities and to keeping Sussex safe."

Questions from the Panel included how Mrs Shiner would ensure that the police were working with partners and the public, how she felt the policing landscape had changed since she was first appointed, and how she was addressing the findings from a recent survey which found officers did not feel valued by Sussex Police.

Mrs Shiner said her priorities of protecting communities, catching criminals and delivering an outstanding service had not changed since she joined the Force almost 32 years ago

"It has been a real privilege to be not just the chief for the past four and a half years and the deputy in Sussex before that, but a police officer", Mrs Shiner told the Panel. "I hold really dearly to me public service ... We talk about data integrity and numbers, at the end of all this is a person, a vulnerable person who has called us a time of crisis that expects a good, proportionate and fair policing service and that's exactly what I have striven to deliver."

After the hearing, the Panel recommended that the Commissioner reappoint Mrs Shiner as Sussex Police's Chief Constable on a fixed term contract until August 2027.

At last week's meeting, members were also presented with the public priorities proposed to be included in the Commissioner's new Sussex Police and Crime Plan – improve public trust and confidence, relentlessly disrupt serious violence and organised crime, and support victims, witnesses and communities.

Mrs Bourne invited Panel feedback on the priorities, highlighting the need to have high quality victim services, maintaining focus on the answering 101 and 999 emergency calls quickly, and maintaining the number of police officers in the force.

Members welcomed the priorities and agreed that police presence and prevention were vital to tackle the fear of crime experienced by many residents.

The Panel were keen to know how the Commissioner planned to measure success of work on prevention and were assured that key performance indicators would be included in the Police and Crime Plan which would be brought back to the Panel at its January meeting.

A report into how the Commissioner holds Sussex Police to account for improving the response to victims of rape and serious sexual offence was also presented to the Panel.

Referring to "frightening" statistics in the report, Panel members pressed the Commissioner on what could be done as a society to address the threat to public safety.

Mrs Bourne spoke of the need for early education and a societal change, and highlighted projects in Sussex that had attempted to address this.

Speaking after the meeting Panel chair Mark Baynham said: “The Panel was delighted to recommend the reappointment of Jo Shiner, who they agreed had done a fantastic job as Chief Constable over the past four years.

“We also had the opportunity in the meeting to scrutinise the Commissioner’s work in supporting the victims of rape and sexual offences and review the three priorities in Mrs Bourne’s new Police and Crime Plan – two very important areas which Panel members will want to keep under review.”

Ends.

Notes to editors

The next meeting of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel will be held on Friday, January 31, 2025.

Members of the public are encouraged to submit written questions to the Panel to enable it to challenge the Commissioner on issues residents feel are important. Written questions to the Panel must be submitted two weeks before the meeting and can be sent to Sussex Police and Crime Panel by email: pcp@westsussex.gov.uk

Full reports shared with the Sussex Police and Crime Panel can be found at www.sussepcp.gov.uk

More information about the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner can be found at www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk

A webcast of Sussex Police and Crime Panel meetings can be viewed www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/webcasts/