

# Minutes

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**Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Friday 29 January 2016, in Diamond Room, Aylesbury Vale District Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury Bucks HP19 8FF, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 2.20 pm.**

## **Members Present**

Councillor Julia Adey (Wycombe District Council), Councillor Patricia Birchley (Buckinghamshire County Council), Councillor Margaret Burke (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Chiltern District Council), Councillor Trevor Egleton (South Bucks District Council), Julia Girling (Independent Member), Councillor Angela Macpherson (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Councillor Kieron Mallon (Oxfordshire County Council), Curtis-James Marshall (Independent Member), Councillor Chris McCarthy (Vale of White Horse District Council), Councillor Iain McCracken (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Bob Pitts (Wokingham Borough Council), Councillor George Reynolds (Cherwell District Council), Councillor Dee Sinclair (Oxford City Council), Councillor Quentin Webb (West Berkshire Council) and Councillor Ian White (South Oxfordshire District Council)

## **Officers Present**

Clare Gray and Nathan March

## **Others Present**

Julian Alison (Oxford City Council), David Carroll (Deputy PCC), David Colchester (Local Criminal Justice Board), Francis Habgood (Chief Constable Thames Valley Police), Paul Hammond (Office of the PCC), Dr Louis Lee (Joint Independent Audit Committee), Clyde Masson (Reading Borough Council), Jacob Rickett (Office of the PCC), Anthony Stansfeld (PCC) and Ian Thompson (Office of the PCC)

## **Apologies**

Councillor Robert Courts (West Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Jesse Grey (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor Sabia Hussain (Slough Borough Council) and Councillor Tony Page (Reading Borough Council)

## **17. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **18. Minutes**

The Minutes of the two Meetings held on 27 November 2015 were agreed as a correct record subject to recording Cllr Burke's apologies.

## **19. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

## **20. Themed Item - Taxi Licensing**

Nathan March (South Bucks and Chiltern District Council), Julian Alison (Oxford City Council) and Clyde Masson (Reading Borough Council) Licensing Managers attended for this item. The purpose of this item is to look at standardisation of taxi licensing across the Thames Valley and how partners can work together to ensure that the public can travel as safely as possible.

These main points were covered as part of the presentation:-

- Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle legislation is primarily concentrated in the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The legislation provides a broad framework for the licensing of drivers, vehicles and operators but the detail of how this is done, including standards and conditions, is the responsibility of individual councils.
- There is also the Deregulation Act 2015 which consolidates and updates the laws governing both taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs). Section 10 of the Bill extends the standard duration of a taxi or PHV licence to three years to reduce paperwork. Section 11 allows minicab firms to subcontract bookings to firms licensed in a different district which could be a concern on the public protection/enforcement side.
- The difference between a taxi and PHV is that a PHV unlike a taxi cannot ply for hire or wait on ranks, which means all journeys must be pre-booked in advance through a licensed operator. It is an offence for PHVs to pick up passengers from any location unless pre-booked.
- Local Authority core functions include setting the local framework, considering licence applications and undertaking inspection and enforcement activities.

A series of questions were then asked by Members with the following responses:-

### Regulation

- If there is an incident driver conduct can be investigated. There are regular checks and policies and procedures in place which are constantly reviewed and also looked at by Scrutiny Committees. Policies take into account safeguarding issues.
- The majority of the trade have high standards but there is a small percentage which the Council keeps under review.
- Councillors are fully trained – no councillor should be permitted to sit on a Licensing Committee without having been formally trained.
- A Licensing Authority must not grant a taxi or PHV driver's licence unless it is satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold the licence.
- A Council may only take action against a vehicle or driver that it has licensed which means that there is nothing a council can do if a vehicle or driver licensed elsewhere is operating in their area (unless officers have delegated powers from other Councils to enforce those drivers/vehicles). That is why the issue of cross border hiring is perhaps the most acute problem facing many Councils today.
- For example a driver applied to a council for a licence only to be refused after the police presented concerns to the Licensing Committee; the driver then applied to the neighbouring council, who had the same information but chose to licence the driver. The driver now operates in the area of the first Council who refused their licence. This poses a risk to communities everywhere. In many areas there are disparities in conditions or licences because there are lower standards in driver testing, cheaper licence fees or less rigorous/fewer pre-licence checks.
- A Member commented that there had been recent examples where licences had been revoked but they had appealed to court and the licence had been given back. Other examples included concerns about taxi drivers but there was not enough evidence to prosecute and the taxi driver carried on working. It was important that the Local Criminal Justice System treated these issues seriously to protect the public.

- However, it is recognised that a pressing social need still has to be present when considering licencing. The concept of a 'pressing social need' has been used by the ECHR as a basis for assessing whether or not an interference with a qualified right is necessary in a democratic society. So in certain circumstances public authorities can interfere with the private life of an individuals if there is a pressing social need for doing so.
- In terms of enforcement Councils carried out spot checks on vehicles but there was a discussion about whether this was regular enough. There were usually two vehicle enforcement checks a year. The checks often included the Licensing Authority and the Police. It was difficult for taxis to avoid the spot checks as they were undertaken in prime areas. A taxi driver could be immediately suspended on the spot. General enforcement operations occur much more frequently in some Districts – especially urban ones – in order that officers have a presence within the night time economy to uphold public safety and address any driver non-compliance.
- In Oxford City there was a taxi marshal scheme and it was helpful if the police could be involved in assisting the Licensing Officer with undertaking enforcement work particularly during evening shifts when they were not involved in other duties.
- The PCC expressed concern that there was no commonality of fees across the three Counties as currently there is no inclination to stop people seeking a licence outside of the area that they predominantly work.

#### Information Sharing

- It was good practice for Councils to meet or communicate regularly with Licensing Committees and officers in neighbouring councils to ensure that critical information is shared and that there is a consistency and robustness in decision making. Taxi Forums are also held with the trade although as many of them work part time it is difficult to get full attendance. It was important to have no geographical boundaries in terms of consistent policies and shared information.
- There is no replacement for the Notifiable Occupations Scheme, which was a formal ability to share information. This has been challenged and is no longer used by many police forces. A replacement is being developed, but in the meantime all licensing authorities are using their local relationships to continue the flow of information.
- A recommendation was made that there should be a national information sharing protocol between Councils and the Police so that if a driver was arrested their licence could be suspended or revoked. The PCC was asked whether he could raise this issue with the Home Secretary.
- Another recommendation put forward was having a regional database to show any licences that had been refused so that they could not get a licence elsewhere.
- A proposal was put about having a dedicated licensing expert in the police (akin to the Force Licensing Officer) to take the TVP lead in taxi licensing to provide consistency across the Thames Valley area rather than leaving it to local command structures.

#### Safeguarding

- There are regular meetings on safeguarding between Licensing Authorities, Police and the Local Authority Designated Officer (Safeguarding).
- There was representation from the Thames Valley on the Home Office Licensing Safeguarding Working Party.
- County Councils are responsible for Home to School Transport and work closely with Licensing Authorities.
- Bullfinch was a 'wake up' call on the issues of safeguarding and the use of taxis. Regular meetings are held and there is a Joint Operation Framework to maintain standards in Oxfordshire. This ensures that the same vetting process is used in the County and also mandatory safeguarding training. If drivers do not undertake the required training then their licence would not be renewed. If there is a complaint about a driver carrying out school transport services then the County Council will ensure that the driver concerned does not take children as passengers. However, this does not stop that driver continuing to carry out his normal taxi duties, unless the County Council informs the District Council of the original issue.

- Training for taxi drivers was mandatory and Barnardo's and other agencies provide training on CSE and vulnerable people. Some training sessions can have 70 drivers per session and there are also knowledge tests about being a taxi driver. The driver has to pass the test. However, training will not stop drivers committing criminal acts. It was important for the trade to understand safeguarding issues and that they discuss them within the taxi community. Training also should be face to face rather than online.
- There have been some excellent examples of taxi drivers taking girls to hospital or taking them home and being community minded.
- In terms of safeguarding the other area that needed to be addressed was Home to School Transport to ensure that safeguarding was paramount. School runs represented only a small % of drivers work overall.
- There was also an issue about sub-contracting and inconsistencies about whether an adult accompanies a child and this needed to be addressed with the principal contractor and monitored regularly.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. **That the PCC/Chief Constable be asked to consider looking at Council funding / part-funding a dedicated Police Taxi Licensing Officer specifically to ensure prompt information sharing about incidents, drivers, arrests, charges, convictions – so that Police Licensing becomes the central point for information sharing.**
2. **a) That the PCC be asked to discuss the possibility of having a national information sharing protocol with the Home Secretary and that in the meantime local Councils harmonise their policies as far as possible.**  
**b) That consideration be given to having a regional database (possibly held by the Police Licensing Officer) to show drivers who had been refused licences.**
3. **That the PCC be also asked to discuss the possibility with the Home Secretary to consider setting national standards for drivers, vehicle operators, a national standard of vetting, and nationally set fees and charges – these would reduce concerns re: public safety, and remove the inclination for people and vehicles to seek a licence outside of the area within which they predominantly work.**
4. **That the PCC be asked to raise the issue at the next Local Criminal Justice Board regarding licensing appeals to gain an understanding of why licences were given back to drivers after they had been refused by their Local Authority.**

## **21. Annual Assurance Report**

Members received the Annual Assurance Report from the Chairman of the Joint Independent Audit Committee, Dr Louis Lee. The JIAC is a key component of the PCC and Chief Constable's arrangements for corporate governance and provides an independent and high level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards. This is the Committee's third Annual Report.

Dr Louis Lee presented the report which highlighted the following:-

- The JIAC has to date been operating since its formation in March 2013 with only three Members, the minimum requirement under legislation. The size of the Committee was increased to five Members in January 2016 to ensure the meeting is quorate should any one Member be unable to attend.
- The external auditor gave an unqualified audit opinion and value for money conclusion for both the PCC and Chief Constable. TVP were the first local policing body in 2014/15 to have their accounts formally closed and signed off. Members were satisfied that the OPCC and TVP had the necessary capability and capacity to ensure the proper administration of their financial affairs.
- The Corporate Governance Framework within Thames Valley is operating efficiently and effectively
- Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel – Members of the JIAC can now attend this meeting as observers and are satisfied that the new oversight arrangements are operating effectively in practice.
- Corporate Risk Management – Members have regular quarterly updates on this area. Some concerns were raised regarding ICT issues and providing information in written reports which have been resolved

but Members will continue to retain a close scrutiny of the transformation of ICT systems which are recognised as being business critical.

- Business continuity management processes are operating efficiently.
- Internal audit – resources were reallocated to provide assurance on the Shared Infrastructure Platform programme. The Committee has 10 audit days to draw upon for its own specific use. Of the completed 20 audits one has received full assurance, 18 majority assurance and 4 limited assurance.
- Health and Safety – Compared with other Forces TVP performance was better than average which is good but leaves room for improvement.
- Equality and Diversity – TVP provides a policing service to diverse communities and efforts are being made to change the composition of the workforce to more accurately reflect the communities that it serves through recruitment and retention initiatives.
- Inspection and Review – HMIC reports are considered by the PCC at his regular meetings. No reports have been specifically referred to the Audit Committee on assurance on the internal control environment or governance issues.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- Cllr Pitts asked whether the Chairman of the JIAC was regularly briefed and how the Work Programme was set. The Chairman is regularly briefed by the Chief Constable and the PCC on the full range of activities and is invited to internal Force meetings and informed about legislative, policy or operational initiatives that are relevant to the Committee's remit. He also has private meetings with the internal auditor. The Work Programme covers the areas listed above and focuses on financial and risk management and delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.
- Cllr Webb asked with transformation and increasing collaboration how the Committee assured themselves that they had full oversight of significant activity. The Chairman reported that the PCC and Chief Constable kept him fully briefed on these areas and this was included in the risk register.
- Cllr Birchley asked the Chairman about the Audit Committee relationship with the Police and Crime Panel. He responded by saying he was clear about their respective roles and he received regular information about the operation of the Panel. The Audit Committee had a different focus in terms of receiving reports from the auditors and looking at formal governance issues.
- Cllr McCracken asked about the Audit Plan. The Chairman reported that they had looked at the structure of the Plan and put forward a revised model. The Audit Committee takes risk management very seriously. As a result of concerns raised in March 2015 additional reports were requested for June 2015 and officers were asked to make improvements in the quality of future written reports. Members were now happy with this area.
- Cllr Sinclair referred to Equality and Diversity and that it was difficult to change the composition of the TVP workforce to reflect new and emerging communities, particularly in urban areas.

The Chairman of the Panel thanked Dr Louis Lee for his report and welcomed this on an annual basis.

## **22. Budget Task and Finish Group**

As in previous years, the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel formed a Budget Task & Finish Group to assist in discharging its statutory duty to scrutinise the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Thames Valley's proposed council tax precept for 2016/17. Cllr McCracken, the Chairman of the Budget Task and Finish Group presented the report. He thanked Ian Thompson and Linda Waters for attending the Group and updating Members on the PCC's draft budget proposals and also Members of the Group for their work. A recommendation had been put forward which was debated during the next item as follows:-

1. That the Panel approve the Police and Crime Commissioner's precept for 2016/17 as set out in the OPCC report 'Revenue Estimates 2016/17 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 to 2019/20' subject to satisfactory responses to the questions raised at Appendix B of the report and any other supplementary

questions asked at the Budget Task and Finish Group on 26 January and the Panel meeting on 29 January 2016.

2. That the Panel add, if necessary, its support to the PCC's representations to the Home Secretary with regards to the setting of the revised Funding Formula.

### **23. Scrutiny of the Proposed Precept - Questioning of the Police and Crime Commissioner**

The following questions were raised in relation to the proposed precept of the PCC:-

1. You say you are assured that the pledges outlined in the Police and Crime Plan are fully funded by the proposed budget but have you any concerns about some aspects of it becoming compromised or undeliverable?

The PCC reported that his main concern was the cuts to Council budgets and the impact this would have on communities. He had only reduced Community Safety Partnership Funds by 1% and was worried that this would be subsumed by Council cuts.

2. What further information is awaited before the budget can be finalised ?

The PCC was waiting to hear about the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Project (para 24) which should be funded by Government but the costs for implementing this Project would inevitably impact on his budget and it was difficult at this time to say how much and how easy it would be to control.

3. Please could the PCC provide an overview of the Force Productivity Strategy and Priority Based Budgeting Review process?

The Force Productivity Strategy has been in place since 2010 and has been used successfully to identify and remove over £72m of revenue savings from the base budget. It is a carefully planned and controlled process to review all areas of force activity. The Productivity Strategy summary report is reproduced on pages 87 to 89 of your agenda papers; the main areas of focus are:

- Collaboration: ICT, JOU, Business Support, see Q 13
- Structure & process reviews: These tend to be focussed around a service or function. For example the review of processes within CJ. Priority Based Budgeting (PBB) will predominately replace these reviews.
- VFM reviews: These reviews look across the organisation, for example, transport costs or workforce modernisation programme which was initiated from the HMIC VFM profiles.
- Review of remuneration & conditions: this strand included all of the Winsor elements but has also included, for example, our own review of shift allowances
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The PBB process undertaken by Thames Valley Police has challenged the majority of the organisation to identify the resources required to deliver priority services. A series of Panels were chaired by the Chief Constable or his Deputy. The first Panel looked at the baseline of each service level, the second Panel method and service level changes and the third, prioritisation of services. Areas looked at included providing services at a bronze standard rather than gold, the minimum legal requirements and whether the police were providing a service which should not be their responsibility. There were four work groups:-

- Demand – understanding the causes of demand and hence how we respond including mitigation e.g. appropriate police resourcing for mental health issues (triage project), whether shoplifting offences should be a lower priority, rape is a high priority complex crime but now is a bulk crime due to significant increased numbers and reporting and requires significant resources to investigate.

- Investigations – whether crimes require a local knowledge and hence a local level response (e.g. rape) or is a more centralised specialist investigation required (e.g. cyber crime).
- Governance and Service Improvement – how the Force deliver operational and organisational strategy.
- Business Innovation – the work is focussed around a new Enterprise Resource Planning System in collaboration with Surrey and Sussex police forces.

The four work groups are now developing the new operating model for Thames Valley Police against which a saving of £16 M has been identified to date but this will be refined at a later stage. There were also 15 work streams covering more discrete areas such as the night time economy and custody and prisoner handling. Forces are now considering how to improve productivity of their officers by identifying and analysing demand on their time.

How confident are you of the ability of the Force's productivity strategy and Priority Based Budgeting to keep on delivering the savings you need and are you concerned that this will impact on the objectives of the Police and Crime Plan including the Chief Constable's annual delivery plan objectives? [£15.61m savings expected in 2016/17 and a further £20.41m in the following three years (Executive Summary)]? For example the new Contact Management Programme (para 72), which is a significant element of the savings programme has slipped due to technical delays which has reduced savings in 2016/17 by £1.9m

I accept that the challenge is becoming ever more difficult but I am very confident in the Force's ability to continue to deliver the necessary level of financial savings to balance the annual revenue budget and medium term financial plan. In terms of the impact on policing priorities and operational policing I am a pragmatist and understand that the force cannot continue to deliver more, or the same with fewer resources and the next iteration of my police and crime plan will be drafted accordingly.

In October HMIC released the results of their first PEEL inspection. In answer to the question 'How sustainable is the force's financial position for the short and long term?' Thames Valley was graded 'outstanding'.

4. A FOI request recently revealed that the Force paid Noonan Services Group £2,556,960.66 for security services between the start of this financial year and November 30. Do Forces normally spend this amount of money on private security companies and what is the reason for this spend?

<http://www.maidenhead-advertiser.co.uk/News/Areas/Maidenhead/Police-pay-private-security-companies-more-than-18m-since-2012-14122015.htm>

The PCC reported that this related to custody suites and it was important that this was operated efficiently and effectively but it was not appropriate to use police officers for this purpose. This has been outsourced for several years and provides good value for money.

5. 'Investment decisions need to support the long term development of the Force as the PCC has a cash-limited opportunity to continue to shape the Force to be able to operate effectively in an increasingly hostile financial environment' (para 27 of the Capital Plan report) – what sort of investment decisions are being made and how are they being assessed?

The PCC referred to the ICT Strategy and expressed concern that it was easy to overspend on some ICT Systems in order to get the right functionality. They were working with Hampshire Police Force and were monitoring it closely.

6. How are you planning to influence the new funding formula so that it includes the full range of drivers on demand for policing, not just crime? The Panel would welcome verbal updates on the proposed changes to the funding formula.

The PCC commented that six PCCs had objected strongly to the last Home Office police funding formula proposals and the Force could have lost up to £44 million. They were originally thinking of taking this to judicial review. However, independent analysis had shown that errors had been made and therefore the Government

had deferred the implementation of the new formula. In addition, the PCC was also concerned that the new formula had not taken into consideration the size of the Force area and one part of the formula included the number of bars divided into the force area. The number of motorways in a Force area was not also considered and had resource implications for TVP. It was crucial that the formula had the right criteria to be fair to all Forces.

7. Can you provide more information about the Force's value for money reviews (Appendix 5) – including PCSO's/use of agency staff (and consultants)/review of CCTV provision and the benchmarking tools you use to demonstrate VFM? Will these reviews involve key external stakeholders?

There are 10 VFM reviews that contribute towards financial savings over the next 4 years. They are:

- PCSOs - this removes the TVP contribution from part funded PCSOs when the partners withdraw their funding.
- Carbon management savings. This work is focussed on reducing the level of energy we use and hence the overall cost. Examples include voltage optimisation units, solar panels and motion detector lights.
- Review of income budgets to ensure that all income is appropriately recognised and budgeted for.
- Review of all estate costs through the Asset Management Plan. Surplus assets are being disposed of generating capital receipts and revenue savings
- Review of roles not requiring police powers. The HMIC VFM profiles were used to inform this review.
- A holistic review of transport costs. This review considers the most efficient mix of transport costs from fleet, hire and grey.
- Review of future contracts to ensure that best value is derived from all procurement activity
- Review use of agency staff to ensure they are only recruited when it is a more efficient option.
- Review the Minimum Revenue Provision policy to ensure it remains prudent and affordable

Stakeholders are consulted as and when required for individual reviews

In terms of benchmarking data HMIC publishes a VFM profile for each force in the autumn. This is an extensive benchmarking exercise which uses force level performance data, Police Objective Analysis (POA) and CIPFA Police Estimate statistics as its source data. We use the output from these VFM profiles to identify areas for further budget scrutiny i.e. we investigate all areas where we are shown to an outlier in terms of cost and/or performance

8. Do you have much slippage on capital schemes? What is your new capital monitoring process? What is the likelihood of there not being enough capital income in the event of a negative balance? (para 11 of the Capital Plan report)

On average over the last eight years the annual capital programme has been under spent by £6.2m or 24% of the approved annual capital programme. In the main this has been due to slippage of expenditure arising from delays in planning approvals, sale of linked property, and the issuing and acceptance of tenders for ICT schemes, which have inter-dependencies with other capital schemes or revenue projects.

A new capital monitoring process was introduced earlier this financial year whereby only live schemes and schemes in preparation are included in the annual capital budget. A formal request has to be submitted before a new scheme from the medium term capital plan is included in the annual capital budget.

Please have a look at the capital monitoring reports on my website <http://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/Transparency/Agendas-and-Minutes.aspx> - - to see how this process works in practice.

The likelihood of there not being enough capital income to fund capital investment is very low.



9. Should there be contingency arrangements for material reductions in Government funding whether from formula change or overall new reductions?

The PCC reported that the expected 25-40% cuts expected from Government had not happened and therefore major cuts to policing were not required which meant that the budget was reasonably stable depending on the impact of the new formula.

10. Has any consultation been carried out on the budget?

The PCC reported that there had been some internal consultation. The Government had encouraged PCC's to put their precept up by 2% which they had done and therefore no formal consultation with the public was required.

11. Community Safety Partnership Funding (Appendix 4 Current service) - could you provide further clarification and detail about the future funding for Community Safety Partnerships across the Thames Valley? Can you also provide an update on the bidding process for the grant being issued under the Police Property Act Fund ?

The PCC reported that he was one of five PCC's who directly allocated Community Safety Partnership Funding to local authorities. He would not amend the process this year but the process could change the following year but there would be a consultation process before this was undertaken.

12. What do you think of communities paying for their own police – is this something you would endorse?  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/11980510/Frinton-the-seaside-town-paying-for-its-own-police.html>

The PCC reported that he had written to the Home Secretary on this issue and had endorsed the principle of this. He was also in favour of centralising all major services such as roads policing and then having a separate function for local neighbourhood policing where funding was raised by a local precept. Therefore if the precept is increased by 5% then more police officers could be recruited and local forces could see the impact of their investment.

13. How are you pursuing opportunities to deliver services in collaboration with public and private sector partners? For sensitive areas such as Mental Health and Child Sexual Exploitation what are the proposals for engaging with the relevant Boards?

From a policing perspective we already collaborate very closely with Hampshire on a range of activities such as ICT, joint operations and information management. Counter terrorism and regional organised crime are delivered regionally across the south east. Our fleet management is delivered collaboratively with Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary. In March we are hoping to sign a joint contract with Surrey and Sussex for a new Enterprise, Resource Planning system which covers finance, HR, duties planning and Learning & Development. We have an MOU with the three Fire & Rescue services in TVP.

Operationally there is significant work with partners across all areas of the business. In terms of mental health we have implemented the street triage project in Oxford and are looking to roll this initiative out across the force area. For CSE we now have multi agency safeguarding hubs in all areas (or planned) across the Thames Valley.

14. How is your programme of commissioning [services for victims, etc.] impacted by the budget proposals for 2016/17? Is the level of grant still unknown ?

The PCC reported that there was a slight rise in Government grant which therefore had not impacted on their plans for commissioning services.

15. What systems does the Force use for tracking demand and how are changes made to ensure resources are used effectively?
16. Is the Force concerned about their capacity and capability to deal with cyber crime and CSE and new and complex crime? Are you being provided with more information in financial reports about the costs of various police activities and how will this information be developed going forward?

(Answered together)

The PCC reported that there were a number of systems for reporting crime. As reported previously the Force is undertaking a priority based budgeting review to ensure resources were target to the right areas, particularly as crime was changing and different specialisms were required e.g cyber experts. There were hidden sexual crimes and of which a number were historical investigations and serious organised crime which was a priority. The PCC was fully briefed.

17. Do you have a more detailed risk register relating to changes in the budget eg impact of reducing police officers?

There is a detailed risk register of which the Joint Independent Audit Committee has oversight.

18. How will the Force work closely with partners to deliver cost savings when there is likely to be a withdrawal of partner funds. Headlines include 'police officers are concerned their work won't get picked up by other struggling public services. Is there a partnership risk register to flag up impacts of cost savings from all partners?

The PCC reported that cuts to council funding was a real concern e.g part funded Police Community Support Officers being reduced and a reduction in wardens who were a real asset to communities and improving housing estate environments. Without them residents would lose pride in their area which had an adverse impact on crime levels.

19. A question was asked at the Budget Task and Finish Group about whether most of the savings that have been made are tactical or efficiency savings rather than service transformation? E.g reorganising Neighbourhood policing teams or closing under used police stations. The response was that this was a mix of both. A previous question on investment referred to the Force having a cash limited opportunity to continue to shape the Force – do you think you are being radical enough with your transformation?

The PCC reported that they were making major changes to policing and were being radical enough.

20. The last HMIC report said that the Force's current efficiency is hampered by the lack of investment in IT. What improvements have been made in ICT efficiency since the report was written and how is this being developed? What are the key objectives of the ICT Strategy?

The 5 year ICT strategy was developed early last year to deliver an enhanced policing capability. The additional investment in ICT will support better policing outcomes by increasing the amount of data that can be transferred across the network and stored. This will support frontline delivery through increased use of smart phones, body worn video, digital case files, predictive policing and increase opportunities for better interaction with the public.

These enhancements will improve the quality of evidence that can be gathered and transmitted, with the intention of increasing the quality and speed of investigations and criminal justice outcomes, providing a better service to victims, witnesses and the general public.

Thames Valley is considered to be a Force that is at the forefront of finding innovative ways to improve policing services in a challenging financial environment. This investment in IT will ensure we can maximise the benefits that can be achieved through better use of technology. In particular, this proposal is enabling a number of critical

business change programmes such as Contact Management, Command and Control and Digital Policing to proceed.

We are also working closely with the new Police ICT Company, which is owned by the PCCs, to ensure that our ICT strategy and individual policies tie in and dovetail with national strategies and policies.

- 21 We appreciate the joint working on service delivery with Hampshire on both back office and frontline services. Does the Chief Constable anticipate extending these services to other Forces to drive further efficiencies and economies of scale?

The PCC reported that they were working with Surrey and Sussex on the Force wide Enterprise Resource Planning System and future collaboration works have led to savings of £1.8m. Kent were planning to collaborate but have now partnered with Essex.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the Panel approve the Police and Crime Commissioner's precept for 2016/17 as set out in the OPC report 'Revenue Estimates 2016/17 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 to 2019/20' having received satisfactory responses to the questions raised at Appendix B of the report and supplementary questions asked at the Budget Task and Finish Group on 26 January and the Panel meeting on 29 January 2016.**
- 2. That the Panel add, if necessary, its support to the PCC's representations to the Home Secretary with regards to the setting of the revised Funding Formula.**

## **24. Local Criminal Justice Board**

David Colchester Programme Manager for the Local Criminal Justice Board was welcomed to the meeting. This item was to provide Members with information on the work of the Board and key issues being addressed relating to the PCC Strategic Objectives in the Police and Crime Plan. A handout was tabled on the governance, structure and priorities for 2015/16.

During his presentation the following points were noted:-

- The purpose and vision of the Board was to reduce crime, harm and risk by increasing the efficiency and credibility of the Criminal Justice System. The Board is committed to delivering a high quality of service to the communities of Thames Valley, focussing on the needs of the individual, irrespective of background.
- The Board promotes innovation and local freedoms and flexibilities, highlights barriers and analyses performance data to ensure that it is working as efficiently as possible.
- The constitution of the Board is wide ranging with a number of agencies including the PCC and representation from Victim Support, Local Authority Chief Executives and Public Health.
- The Board meets five times a year and also has an Annual Planning Day which is usually held in January.
- There is a rotating chair and the PCC will be the next Chairman with a two year tenure.
- The priorities of the Board are set out within the handout and are reviewed on an annual basis which includes reducing reoffending and supporting victims and witnesses. There has been a slight change of focus looking at magistrates and crown court and the quality of case files.
- The Board has several delivery groups, consisting of strategic and operational agency leads. The groups will be responsible for achieving the priorities in their area of business through leadership, management and supervision.
- In terms of victims and witnesses this Autumn they looked at the new Victim Code of Practice and also ensuring they were properly supported through the court process and able to provide good evidence.

They were working on 'digital technology' so that vulnerable people did not have to go to court and evidence was given through a remote video link.

- Another area being looked at was health inequalities of offenders and links with drugs and alcohol and access to primary and secondary health care. Work was also being undertaken making sure that Looked After Children were not criminalised and not at a disadvantage because of their background. There was also 'Working in Step' where local multi-agency partnerships have been established in a number of complex areas of public policy, such as crime reduction and public health, in order to determine and work towards shared local priorities; oversee services which are provided jointly; and manage the risks and interdependencies between work carried out on a single agency basis.
- The Criminal Justice Board was in a healthy position and was well supported by agencies with clear direction and management.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- Cllr Pitts asked a question about the Early Guilty Plea Scheme CPS. These cases are fast tracked so that plea and sentence can be dealt with at one hearing which reduces the need for case preparation and allows the court to focus on contested cases. It also reduces the victim's anxiety. The Programme Manager reported that they have robust management of the Scheme. Better Case Management is a new initiative in the Crown Court which will reduce delay which can often weaken the prosecution and have a negative impact on the victim and witness. There has been a positive improvement in the management of cases.
- Cllr Macpherson asked whether there was a website for the LCJB as this would be a good vehicle to promote public confidence and show what they are doing about reoffending rates and the work of the Youth Offending Team. The Programme Manager reported that they did need to improve transparency but it could be sometimes difficult to show outcomes for the Thames Valley. Information was put on the police.uk website. They were hoping to develop an information portal by the beginning of the new financial year, working with the Office of the PCC.
- Cllr Culverhouse asked what technology was being used within the Thames Valley to help the criminal justice system e.g. digitalised court rooms, offender tracking system and the online case tracking service for victims? The Programme Manager reported that the current use of ICT systems was a challenge particularly in a court environment e.g. Aylesbury Crown Court was difficult because it was in an old building with a traditional structure. Court rooms were however becoming more digitalised. Tablet devices had also been used for two years by the CPS. Offender tracking devices are being used for certain offenders who are at high risk of re-offending.
- Cllr Birchley asked about work being undertaken on reoffending. The Reducing Re-offending Delivery Group had established strategic alliances and provides leverage to increase the support for Integrated Offender Management among partner agencies including the new Community Rehabilitation Company. This is part grant funded and part payment by results. The CRC is a commercial enterprise works with partners such as housing, health, drug and alcohol teams and education to prevent reoffending once a person has been released from prison.
- Cllr Sinclair reported that she was aware that probation services had been struggling to manage case loads and also asked about domestic abuse victims and how many appear in court to give evidence. The Programme Manager reported that domestic violence trials were fast tracked but still take between 4-8 weeks. The early guilty plea had increased significantly and less victims had to go trial.
- Julia Girling asked about volumes of work for the witness service and also 'track my crime'. She expressed concern that very few victims knew about the Code of Practice. She also commented that victims gave better evidence the more they were supported by the police and given pre trial visits. She gave an example where one elderly gentleman gave evidence and had to wait three hours for a taxi after being in court. The Chief Constable reported that Track my Crime was associated with the Contact Management Programme and he could not currently give a go live date for this. Regarding victims and witnesses the Programme Manager commented that so many agencies were involved that it was difficult to ensure a consistent approach in terms of victims being told their rights. Witness Care made contact with the victim once a case has been set. The Board were looking at case outcomes and the reasons why cases failed. It was important also that victims and witnesses engage proactively with the

different agencies to achieve a good outcome. Julia Girling reported that the need for the victim to feel confident and in control was paramount in order to perform well in court.

- Cllr Burke asked whether the system was fair in the Thames Valley as there is concern that poorer members of society suffer? The Programme Manager reported that this was part of their leadership statement to focus on the needs of the individual irrespective of background.  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-33230552>

The Programme Manager was thanked for his contribution to the meeting.

## **25. Consultation on Complaints against the PCC**

In December 2015 the Home Office issued a consultation document regarding complaints about PCC's. This consultation focuses on the complaints process for Police and Crime Panels when seeking to resolve non-serious (i.e non-criminal) complaints made against a PCC. Legislative changes would be required to implement some of the proposals.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/complaints-about-pccs>

The Government is committed to building on the success of the PCC model by further strengthening their role and feel that the time is right to amend the system for complaints against the PCC as follows:-

1. Clarifying through non-statutory guidance, what constitutes a complaint ensuring that Police and Crime Panels (PCP's) take forward complaints about a PCC's conduct rather than their policy decisions.
2. Providing Panels with greater investigatory powers to seek evidence pertinent to a complaint.
3. Clarifying, through non-statutory guidance, the parameters of "informal resolution" and setting out that, where agreement cannot be reached, it is open to Panels to make recommendations on the expected level of behaviour of a PCC, and that they have powers to require the PCC to respond.

Cllr Emily Culverhouse commented that the role of the independent investigator should be fulfilled by a national body who applies a consistent approach to complaints and it was important to show independence to the complainant otherwise there would be a perception of bias.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the draft response to the questionnaire be sent to the Home Office**

## **26. Police and Crime Review 2015**

The Panel received a report from the Office of the PCC on the Police and Crime Panel Review. A mapping and review exercise was undertaken to enable the PCC to take an informed decision as to whether the current Police and Crime Plan remained fit for purpose or needed to be refreshed. The PCC decided that a refresh of the Plan was not required at this time and to carry out a review exercise on an annual basis as part of the PCC's statutory responsibility to 'have regard to 'the priorities of Community Safety Partnerships' and to ensure that the Plan continues to reflect the policing needs of local people.

The Panel noted the report.

## **27. General Issues**

The general issues report was noted by Members.

Mr Marshall asked a question relating to volunteers and how their skills can be utilised. The Home Secretary has undertaken a consultation into proposed changes to powers held by police staff and volunteers in policing looking at reforming their roles so that they can play a greater role in policing communities e.g. using cyber

specialists as volunteers. The Chief Constable reported that they were looking at powers and how they could be used to work more effectively. He gave an example of a volunteer PCSO who had not been given full powers as he did not want their role being deployed in that way. He would be looking into this area more closely once the legislation had been introduced.

CLlr Burke asked a question about the closure of police counters. The Chief Constable reported that the public very rarely used police stations and that it was important to use resources effectively. He was therefore investing in mobile technology and ensuring that police were protecting the streets rather than sitting behind a desk at a police station.

**28. Work Programme**

The Work Programme was noted.

**29. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

11 March 2016 at 11am at Wokingham Borough Council Council Chamber.

**CHAIRMAN**