

Minutes

Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Friday 11 March 2016, in Council Chamber Wokingham Borough Council Civic Offices Shute End Wokingham Berks RG40 1BN, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 1.15 pm.

Members Present

Councillor Julia Adey (Wycombe District Council), Councillor Patricia Birchley (Buckinghamshire County Council), Councillor Robert Courts (West Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Chiltern District Council), Councillor Trevor Egleton (South Bucks District Council), Julia Girling (Independent Member), Councillor Sabia Hussain (Slough Borough Council), Councillor Kieron Mallon (Oxfordshire County Council), Curtis-James Marshall (Independent Member), Councillor Iain McCracken (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Tony Page (Reading Borough Council), Councillor Bob Pitts (Wokingham Borough Council) and Councillor Quentin Webb (West Berkshire Council)

Officers Present

Clare Gray

Others Present

Romy Briant (Reducing the Risk Charity), John Campbell (Thames Valley Police), David Carroll (Deputy PCC), Paul Hammond (Office of the PCC), Teresa Martin (Buckinghamshire County Council) and Anthony Stansfeld (PCC)

Apologies

Councillor Margaret Burke (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor Jesse Grey (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor Angela Macpherson (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Councillor Chris McCarthy (Vale of White Horse District Council), Councillor George Reynolds (Cherwell District Council), Councillor Dee Sinclair (Oxford City Council) and Councillor Ian White (South Oxfordshire District Council)

30. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

31. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 January 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

32. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

33. Themed Item - Domestic Violence

Members of the Panel received an update on what is being undertaken in the Thames Valley to tackle domestic violence (Strategic Objective 2 and 3 of the Police and Crime Plan) including local initiatives in the Thames Valley. Romy Briant CBE provided a provider perspective (voluntary sector) and Teresa Martin (Community Safety Manager Bucks County Council) provided a commissioning perspective.

The following information was presented on the commissioning side:-

The Community Safety partners in Buckinghamshire work at the local level with the district based Community Safety Partnerships and County level through the Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Board (SSBPB). The SSBPB is the key partnership for promoting safer and stronger communities and crime and disorder reduction at the County level and provides the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner with a single point of contact and engagement in relation to Buckinghamshire wide issues.

The SSBPB is supported by the Safer and Stronger Bucks Co-ordinating Group (SSBCG) and sub-groups, including one for Domestic and Community Violence.

Bucks has an approximate population of over 520,000, and this is expected to continue increasing which will impact on the number of households vulnerable to domestic abuse. A planned expansion of housing across parts of the county will also put pressure on services due to the increasing population.

13.6% of the population (68,000 people) came from a non-white ethnic background. The child population is considerably more ethnically diverse than the older population, at 21.4%. It is interesting to note that a Needs Assessment of Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) carried out in 2014 found that all minority ethnic groups were over-represented in those seeking support in Buckinghamshire, especially Asian ethnicities in Wycombe, while slightly under-representing white victims. This potentially reveals a very good minority group service and is thought to be primarily due to the specialist Asian Outreach Service in Wycombe. These findings were replicated in follow up analysis in 2015. Similarly, there is currently an over-representation of BME victims at the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), with 37 BME cases referred into MARAC 1 April 2015 – 31 December 2015. Ongoing monitoring will take place to pro-actively pre-empt any major changes and fluctuations. Buckinghamshire is also seeing other changes in community types, with a large settled traveller-community and a growing Polish community. These specific community types join the increasing groups of people who have bespoke needs and vulnerabilities.

The gender split for the County is similar to national and regional averages, with 50.9% females and 49.1% males. The age profile for the County is similar to the national average at most ages.

Data and performance

Although believed to be still significantly under-reported, reports of DVA continue to increase year on year.

7,687 cases of domestic abuse were reported to the police in 2014/2015, an increase of 3% over the previous year. It is believed that this trend is due to increased awareness raising and training of professionals resulting in increased confidence to report. Focus groups with service users have also indicated an improved response from the police may have positively impacted on reporting repeat incidents.

Demand for support services also continues to increase. A total of 123 women and 140 children were accommodated in refuges in Bucks in 2014/2015, with a further 161 families being refused refuge due to lack of space. 515 women were worked with on an outreach basis and 754 clients were supported by the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (IDVA), both services seeing significant increases over the preceding year of 12% and 18% respectively. (Women's Aid, 2015).

Using the Home Office Ready Reckoner toolkit, over 16,500 women and girls aged 16-59 are estimated to have been a victim of domestic abuse in the last year.

The Government definition of domestic violence was widened in April 2013 and analysis was undertaken in Buckinghamshire in 2014 to determine the impact that this change in definition had on reports to the police of domestic violence to victims aged 16 to 17 years old. It was found that there were 119 reports to the police regarding a domestic incident in 2012/2013 where the victim was aged 16 or 17 years old and this increased to 160 reports in 2013/2014, representing an increase of 34%. During the same period, reports of domestic violence to the police overall increased by 1% (7349 to 7422). The widening of the DVA definition to include coercive control is also likely to have a further impact on the number of incidents reported.

Current and On-going Projects/Interventions

- **DV Integrated Commissioning** - DVA services have historically been commissioned by three different service areas within Buckinghamshire County Council (Community Safety, Public Health and Children & Young People). A new delivery model has been developed to join up the commissioning of DVA services across the Council and has recently gone out to competitive tender for integrated DVA services, with the successful applicant being Aylesbury Women's Aid who will be working in collaboration with Wycombe Women's Aid to deliver services across Bucks from 1 April 2016.
- **Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs)** continue to support the Multi Agency Referral and Assessment Conferences (MARACs) and following their intervention, the assessed risks experienced by those high risk victims managed by the MARAC has improved. A total of 709 clients engaged with the IDVA service in 2014/2015, and the service achieved a 75% reduction in risk category for these clients. The number of clients engaging with the IDVA service continues to rise and based on Quarter 3 data for 2015/2016. It is projected that the number of clients engaging will be in the region of 825. The Buckinghamshire service supports both female and male victims and is atypical in that it works with both medium and high risk clients.
- **DV Perpetrators** – Fresh Start delivers a programme of 121 sessions to perpetrators of DVA to address their unacceptable behaviour and also provides support to the partners and ex-partners. Analysis is being undertaken seeking to ascertain evidence of effectiveness and value for money. Perpetrator work is notoriously difficult to evidence effectiveness of and value for money, and could potentially be better sitting at a Thames Valley level, with a Thames Valley Perpetrator Programme Co-ordinator who would be able to co-ordinate and promote all the programmes and have responsibility for ensuring and monitoring good practice. The benefits of this of this approach would be to have a larger dataset which could help with evidencing effectiveness.
- **DVA Youth Worker** – A pilot is currently taking place for a DVA Youth Worker to work with 11-17 year old girls and boys in Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks with the principle aim being to provide a specialist service for young people who have experienced domestic violence, either within the family home or within their intimate relationships. Funding was secured to extend

the project until March 2016. For the period October 2015 to December 2015, 15 young people have been referred so far, with 14 (93%) of them engaging in 121 work. 11 young people have exited the service in this period, all of whom have had a reduction in risk category. In addition, awareness raising sessions have been held in local schools which have reached 448 young people. Funding is being sought to continue this service from April 2016.

- **DVA In-Reach Worker** – A pilot within 3 GP surgeries in Chesham (New Surgery, Gladstone Surgery and Chess Medical Centre) aiming to train GPs and practice staff in identification and referral procedures and to directly support and respond to DVA victims subsequently referred to them with clients being seen within the GP setting for their initial appointment, with follow-up appointments according to client needs.
- **DVA Engagement Co-ordinator** – A pilot project whereby a worker was based within Thames Valley Police to pro-actively engage over the telephone with victims of reported standard risk DVA in Chiltern and South Bucks to provide information and signposting/referral to specialist agencies with the aim of earlier intervention which would lead to a reduction in the number of domestic related call outs to the police. Interim 6 month analysis demonstrated an impact on reporting of clients when compared to a control group. Follow up analysis was planned, however due to a gap in service provision this was not possible. This has highlighted challenges around single workers and the potential impact on the ability to gather robust data to evaluate a project. A recruitment process is currently taking place.
- **DVA Specialist Workers** – Buckinghamshire County Council commission 2 specialist workers (1 based in Aylesbury and 1 based in Wycombe) who sit within the First Response Team. They work with families to prevent or reduce the need for statutory services by providing support to the non-abusing parent and work in an advisory capacity with the Children In Need Unit. They also support the MASH and ensure BCC is supported at multi-agency meetings where DVA is a focus.
- **DVA Champions** – Buckinghamshire has focused on the revival of the Champions Network over the past year with the aim of reducing the number of clients going to different agencies before finding appropriate help and to ensure earlier intervention. Reducing the Risk was commissioned to deliver a ‘train the trainer’ session to a pool of 10 professionals. The training pool has subsequently delivered 6 DVA training sessions to a total of 82 champions, and there has been an increase in the network of an additional 78 champions, bringing the total in Bucks to 146 DVA Champions at the end of January 2016. Quarterly network events with guest speakers are also held.
- **LGBT Task and Finish Group** – Work to improve engagement with the LGBT community in terms of DVA has included a survey about promoting and providing more inclusive services which obtained 295 responses. These are currently being analysed to inform evidence base and commissioning need. Buckinghamshire has also been working with TVP to improve the response to LGBT victims of crime which includes trialling a Third Party Reporting Centre with Victim Support. Broken Rainbow were commissioned to deliver training sessions to 25 professionals (including police, health, social care, housing, Women’s Aid) and a professionals guidance pathway has been drafted. From 1 May 2016 a co-location with Terence Higgins is due to commence where LGBT victims will be able to get tested at the sexual health drop-in centres in Aylesbury and Wycombe and also disclose DVA to staff who have been trained by Broken Rainbow and who are DVA Champions. Following disclosure they will be given an appointment with the specialist DVA services who will meet with them at the drop-in centre. There will also be a police LAGLO (Lesbian and Gay Liaison Officer) scheduled weekly at the drop-ins in order to support the LGBT community, including domestic abuse, hate crime and other issues. Enhanced publicity is also taking place, including the development of LGBT DVA specific posters and leaflets, a social media campaign linked with ‘National Coming Out Day’ in

October 2015 and the imminent launch of the Bucks LGBT independent website. This will include specific information for the LGBT community in Bucks on DVA, help and support/how to report, housing, sexual health, fostering and adoption, civil partnerships, as well as promoting the work which has taken place to support provision for LGBT victims of domestic abuse. The website is being funded by the PCC via the funding granted to the Buckinghamshire Partnership.

- **Disability Task and Finish Group** - A DVA Disability Task and Finish Group has been set up and is currently working to improve the engagement of those who have a disability and are victims of DVA as well as educating professionals to spot signs of DVA and react positively in terms of either signposting or risk assessing and referral to MARAC. Health Watch are going to consult with disability organisation service users to understand and alleviate gaps and barriers, feedback on draft versions of the DVA disability publicity (available in different format suitable for those who are physically disabled or people with learning difficulties) and how to engage better and what would encourage them to report DVA. For people with learning difficulties information will be obtained via a different method in order to safeguard in case they are being abused by a carer. Both approaches will inform future work. Work is taking place with a local radio station to produce and air a DVA and Physical Disability advert, with a web tile available on the station website during the campaign which will direct them to further information. National research has highlighted radio as a key piece of publicity as it reaches those isolated at home. There was an increase of 42% in reporting over the White Ribbon week of 2014 following a pro-active campaign, and much of this increase is attributed to radio advertising. RESPOND are also being commissioned to train 15 professionals how to address issues that particularly affect people with learning difficulties in relation to domestic abuse, with these participants then cascading the training to their own organisations.
- **Males:** Male specific posters and leaflets are in production and will be printed by the end of March 2016. They are currently consulting with a male victim as to his thoughts on the visuals and overall conveyance of the messages of what domestic abuse is and how to seek help.
- **Other DVA Projects** – Includes closer working between DVA and substance misuse agencies in Chesham, Sanctuary Scheme, Freedom Programme, Helping Hands, children's work in the refuges.

Additional Areas of Focus for 20 16/2017 include:

- Continuation of work on identifying DVA at an earlier stage as it is anticipated that this demand management approach will reduce the instance of repeat domestic abuse incidents.
- Continuation of work to increase reporting from groups with unrepresentative reporting.

Romy Briant then provided the provider perspective on Domestic Violence and the main points were noted:-

- Romy Briant chaired the charity Reducing the Risk of Domestic Abuse in Oxfordshire until January 2016 which was established to support partnership working to tackle abuse. The voluntary sector is a service provider but works with a number of agencies and their service is commissioned by the PCC. Romy Briant identified a need in the area of Domestic Abuse of aligning information across agencies to address abuse and for agencies to work better together and share good practice by having a multi-agency strategy and one stop shop with a core focus on safety.
- The County Domestic Abuse Strategy Group, of which Oxfordshire County Council and District Councils and the charity are members, together developed Oxfordshire's Domestic Abuse Champions' Networks. The network of front-line staff from a range of agencies,

including District Councils, police, children and health services, were trained together and met to share practice and expertise across multiagency settings. They acted as a source of knowledge for their work colleagues and as a resource to those affected by abuse – responding safely, offering advice and support, risk assessing and safety planning and providing links to the services victims needed.

- The over-arching aim of the Domestic Abuse Champions' Networks is to keep adults and children safe through working together and developing effective multi-agency practice. Champions also encourage victims to seek help early and reduce the number of agencies a victim comes into contact with before accessing the advice and support they need.
- The Oxfordshire networks now comprise over 800 active Champions, and the scheme has won regional and national awards. The networks include staff based in over 150 schools across Oxfordshire, supporting and safeguarding children. The IDVA is also part of the network and provides risk management advice.
- A survey of the Champion approach found that 95% of professionals feel that as a result of being a Domestic Abuse Champion they are well supported and equipped to work with domestic abuse victims. Many regard the Champions' Network as professionally empowering and a collaborative, practice based approach to keeping victims safe.
- Once a referral has been made there is contact with the victim in one day and a risk assessment is undertaken and trust built so show a 'safe pair of hands'. Some victims are provided with refuges or helped along a path to remove themselves from their partners and to take control of their lives and lead independent lives e.g support with going to college.
- It was important for the police to respond quickly to reports of domestic abuse and for safe accommodation to be provided. It was essential that the Criminal Justice System prioritised keeping perpetrators away through the use of DVPO's etc. The increase in reporting was welcomed.
- Following its success, the Champions scheme is now established as a social enterprise. Reducing the Risk has to date delivered training, advice and support to establish Champions networks in Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Havering and West Berkshire, with requests for advice and consultancy from other local government areas across the Thames Valley and Norfolk.
- During the commissioning preparation the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) commissioned a Domestic Violence needs assessment report to inform the future service commissioning strategy. A report by Karen Morton (Commissioning Domestic Abuse Services) highlighted the need for further support for Domestic Abuse victims with complex needs (e.g. mental health problems, self-harming, and substance misuse). Taking into consideration the findings of the report, the PCC agreed to grant fund 3 x county-based Domestic Abuse pilot projects for 18 months, to support Domestic Abuse victims (both male and female) with complex and/or specialist needs. The service is being delivered in:-
 - Oxfordshire by Reducing the Risk which includes a new initiative consisting of three consecutive groups running for six months each to work more effectively with victims whose fragile mental health and associated behaviours put them at additional risk; a wider scoping initiative with the aim of liaising and working more closely with mental health services in Oxfordshire; identifying important 'gateway' services to establish referral pathways and explore more effective ways of working together including links with primary care; further development of the domestic abuse champion training within mental health services to help promote greater awareness and capacity to support victims of abuse and strengthen early intervention pathways.

- Buckinghamshire by Smart
SMART run an outreach service to best meet the needs of complex clients experiencing domestic abuse with two dedicated Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) working across Buckinghamshire. The IDVA's case-manage complex needs clients at all risk levels, coordinating a multi-agency approach, working in close partnership with Women's Aid, structured drug and alcohol treatment services, mental health services, MARAC's and police across the region.
- Berkshire by Berkshire Women's Aid
This project is for domestic abuse victims with complex needs providing face to face support. This new, more structured approach to outreach enables some clients, who need more support, especially in the initial crisis stages, a more intensive outreach support service.
- With the commissioning process it is important to ensure that the Victims Fund is aligned to ensure value for money is obtained to achieve common and shared pathways. Three important components were children's services, the police and the voluntary sector and if one of these areas were missing the effectiveness of the other two agencies would be compromised. It was crucial to have enough funding to ensure that the victim could be supported through to the end where hopefully they could achieve a good outcome. Funding was required long term and also to help chaotic lifestyles. If any new services were introduced it was important to ensure that they were aligned to existing processes and did not confuse victims. As funding was often only confirmed year by year it was very difficult to plan and provide reassurance in services. One of the areas that could be looked at was national commissioning for areas such as domestic violence.
- There was a BBC Programme called 'Behind Closed Doors' which would be shown on Monday 14 March 2016 which looked at the Thames Valley and particularly focused on the criminal justice system.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- The PCC referred to the HMIC report which stated that the public can have confidence that generally Thames Valley Police provide a good service to victims of domestic abuse and help keep them safe. They achieved a good rating.
- Cllr Birchley commented that domestic violence can have profound consequences on the family and it was difficult for the victim who was worried about losing their family. Romy Briant reported that it was important to discuss choices with the victim and if they chose to stay at home to look at how to safeguard themselves. Some victims chose to return to perpetrators of their own accord which could relate to loss of confidence and being isolated from friends and family. It was important to provide help to keep the victim as safe as possible. Teresa Martin reported that domestic violence was often complex and it was important to challenge behaviour at an early stage and use local champions to help find the right solutions. Romy Briant commented that some perpetrators enjoyed domestic violence whereas others had sought help. Some perpetrator courses had been held but they were expensive to run and there was not enough funding for these courses in Oxfordshire.
- Cllr Pitts asked about the percentage of male victims and whether the support from Women's Aid was as robust to males as females. Romy Briant reported that there were male refugees but it was harder for men to get help. 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will suffer domestic abuse during their lifetime. Teresa Martin reported that Women's Aid helps all victims and there was also an IDVA for male victims who will give the same support. There were challenges around males engaging with services and they were using a joined up approach to address this.

- Cllr Webb referred to the funding problems and having lots of small organisations working on domestic violence. Romy Briant emphasised the importance of working together as some small organisations had a core of expertise and larger organisations needed to ensure they met local needs. Funding was always a concern which was why it was important for all services to be fully commissioned. Funding could come through the PCC, through grants from the Home Office or through Community Safety Partnerships or through fund raising. Most funding is given a year at a time and allocated late and often at high risk of being cut. The Trustees look at risk factors around funding.
- Cllr Webb also asked a question about information from GPs and schools. Teresa Martin reported that they had been talking to schools and funding free sessions. There were youth workers and also the Local Authority Designated Officer. There are DVA workers in a number of schools in Bucks (19) giving help to approximately 400 children. Work was also being undertaken with Barnardo's 'Are you Safe' around Domestic Violence and Child Sexual Exploitation. There was engagement with GPs and GP champions with particular emphasis about early intervention.
- There were other issues linked to Domestic Violence such as CSE, modern slavery and Female Genital Mutilation. Training was being undertaken with professionals and agencies on these specific issues and raising awareness.
- Julia Girling asked what percentage of cases go to court. Members noted that the HMIC report stated that Thames Valley Police has one of the worst records in the country for the number of domestic abuse prosecutions that fail to result in a conviction. Romy Briant reported that she was unable to give specifics on the prosecution process but that this process had improved through the use of body worn cameras. The court process was incredibly difficult for victims who had left relationships and had to revisit their experience at court. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that of 11,000 offences 3,000 had resulted in a charge or caution and there had been a 20% increase in calls. 19% was repeat victimisation. The PCC referred to the definition of crimes and domestic violence in ethnic communities which could relate to forced marriage. This was an area where further work was required. Julia Girling emphasised the importance of specially trained officers who could make a real difference to supporting a victim through the court process.
- Cllr Courts referred to the report which stated that as at 14 January 2016, 16.4% of the 9,886 domestic abuse investigations, recorded between 1 April and 31 December 2015, had an outcome attached where no offender had been charged or summonsed for the offence. This compares with 57.3% last year. He asked the reason for the downfall. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that this was due to an increase in reporting volumes and that the police need to improve on recording crime and also to ensure that the case goes through the court system as soon as possible as it has a better chance of succeeding. In terms of third party reporting a police officer will attend the incident and take a record from the victim but the victim may not want to proceed. This was often the case for sexual violence. Cllr Courts expressed concern about the number of victims who did not want to take the case to court and the skills required now to work with historic abuse and the impact on victims.
- Cllr Hussain referred to victims being moved away from their locality which included their only links and friendships and what plans were put in place to help victims who have lost their local network. The PCC reported that if Victim Support refer a particular case this would be funded by the PCC of that particular area and that it was important to work seamlessly and provide the right support. Romy Briant reported that the voluntary sector have a part to play in this and look at relationship networks and support and all the agencies working together to achieve a good outcome.

Recommendations

1. That the PCC ensures that there is a consistent approach to tackling domestic violence across the Thames Valley:-

- Consider further integrated and wider partnership working – there are discussions planned with Oxford and PCCs office. It is important to maximise the benefits of closer working across the Thames Valley and to consider proposals regarding setting up a meeting of commissioners and follow-up meeting with providers. This should help to ensure that services the PCC commissions support and enhance but do not duplicate with existing provision.
- To help spread good practice across the Thames Valley on successful local in initiatives (the HMIC report states that the Force would benefit from a system to share local initiatives to other areas of the Force)
- .As perpetrator work is notoriously difficult to evidence effectiveness of and value for money, to consider whether there should be a Thames Valley Perpetrator Programme Co-ordinator who would be able to co-ordinate and promote all the programmes and have responsibility for ensuring and monitoring good practice. The benefits of this of this approach would be to have a larger dataset which could help with evidencing effectiveness.
- Consideration of one or two targets across the TVP for key areas of work, eg use of IDVA or to support benchmarking

2. As the PCC has recently taken over chairmanship of the Local Criminal Justice Board that he will be able to monitor and influence the following:-

- Promoting strong enforcement measures and ensuring use of DVPNs/DVPOs and enhanced evidence gathering to support cases where the victim is not able to support the court process.
- Improved victim and witness journey through the court system.

3. That the PCC give further consideration on how to influence or provide stable long term funding for domestic violence to help the provision of services and to give further consideration to the closure of refuges and accommodation for people with complex needs.

4. Future monitoring of areas for improvement from the HMIC report:-

- Inconsistency in compliance with the Victim's Code
- Frontline officers responding to domestic abuse need to focus more on listening rather than paperwork
- Comparatively low use of Domestic Violence Prevention Notices
- Improving the police response to Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage
(See page 83 of the PCC Policy Performance and Planning agenda on 6 April for the Thames Valley Police response to the HMIC report)

34. Review of the Police and Crime Plan and Monitoring Reports

The purpose of this item was to look at how the PCC has addressed his six strategic objectives in his current tenure of office:-

Cutting Crime

The PCC reported that all crimes have gone down considerably and overall crime has reduced by 8%. For example there has been a reduction on the level of violence against the person but there has been an increase in the number of sexual offences which can be related to better reporting. Burglary has decreased significantly and decreases year on year – the best example is Reading where burglary has been cut by 50%. The PCC expressed concern about integrated offender management and the need for GPS tagging for those offenders who are released early from prison. He commented that he wished that this had been included in the new Policing and Crime Bill.

Protecting Vulnerable People

The PCC referred to the setting up of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs in the Thames Valley which appeared to be working well, although he expressed concern about the number of MASH in Berkshire and the ability to resource them effectively. He also referred to the development and implementation of the local Mental Health Concordat. During 2015/16 the PCC has used the Police Property Fund to award £240,000 to 54 different organisations to help cut crime and protect vulnerable people.

Putting Victims and Witnesses at the Heart of the Criminal Justice System

This is part of the PCC's commissioning function and in October 2014 the PCC became responsible for commissioning new emotional and practical support services for victims of crime in the Thames Valley. He was responsible for commissioning both a 'non-specialist' overarching victim referral mechanism including onward support and more 'specialist' services for victims of crime, including Restorative Justice services.

Ensure Police and Partners are visible and act with integrity and foster the trust and confidence of communities

The PCC reported that he had set up the Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel which was working well. When looking at complaints against the Chief Constable out of 11 complaints 10 had not been upheld by the IPCC. Some of these complaints were of a vexatious nature. They were also ensuring the adoption and implementation of recommendations from serious case reviews and looking at recruitment of special constables.

Communication with the public

There was an increase in the number of people engaging in Thames Valley Alerts and they had increased the level of targeted consultation and engagement activity. He had 'Meet the PCC' sessions and also had a public meeting called the Policy, Planning and Performance Meeting. A Neighbourhood Policing Review had also been undertaken to ensure that they were making the best use of resources for local policing.

Protect the public from Serious Organised Crime, terrorism and cyber crime

In the South-East, Thames Valley, Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire are coming together to purchase police ICT. Fraud, terrorism and cyber-crime were a major issue and there were international border issues which presented major threats.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- Cllr Mallon referred to hidden crime amongst ethnic communities and expressed concern that in some communities the perpetrator was supported because of historical and cultural beliefs. Some victims who were moved to a different area could be subject to a 'witch hunt' and the victim could be bought back into the same position. The PCC also expressed concern about girls

who were sent abroad and were not safe and led into forced marriages. He commented that this was an issue for national policing rather than for local police forces.

- Cllr Webb asked what the PCC would like to change in the OPCC Delivery Plan. The PCC reported that the Thames Valley was a huge area and it was sometimes difficult to provide input at every local level. He specifically mentioned Health and Wellbeing Boards of which there were nine in the Thames Valley which were difficult to attend. He commented that if he was re-elected he would consider setting up regional offices to address local issues more effectively and also areas for collaboration. The PCC reported that he could see a tremendous change in policing over the next four years, particularly with having 42 police forces all different in size. There were only four police forces bigger than the Thames Valley. He could see the advantage of having a regional centre to look after firearms and police dogs etc with neighbourhood policing controlled more locally.
- Cllr Hussain asked about how he communicated to 'non English' speakers and what strategies he was using. The PCC reported that he visited every Council in the Thames Valley and attended many events across the region but very few public turn up to these meetings and events to question him. He has visited specific communities where concerns have been brought to his attention. He also receives lots of email and looked at any complaints which may be referred to the Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel.
- Cllr McCracken asked the PCC about financial pressures for the next four years. The PCC reported that a considerable amount had already been cut from the budget and pressures had been increased with a change in taxation and pension laws. He also expressed concern about cuts to the public sector in particular Local Authorities which would impact on policing such as CCTV, Police Community Support Officers and Youth Clubs. This would put further pressure on the police as the place of last resort.
- Cllr McCracken asked what he thought the Panel should look at in the future. The PCC referred to the rise in 'modern crime', the loss of frontline police, changes to the formula grant which may radically impact on the Thames Valley and the reduction in magistrates courts which means that victims will have to travel further.
- Curtis James Marshall referred to the police ICT strategy and plans for the future to link in with other agencies to improve policing. A National ICT Company had been formed to help ensure consistency in systems and it was important for forces to work together. However this was proving quite difficult and the next area to address would be bringing together the police and emergency services.

Members noted the report.

35. Verbal update on proposed changes to national funding formula

The PCC reported that with the initial proposals for the changes to the national funding formula set out in Autumn 2015 Thames Valley Police would have been a significant loser. In terms of putting new proposals forward for 17/18 it was hoped that there would be engagement with the police community before agreeing changes. No further decisions have been taken and it would take time to look at the options available. A further update would be given at the June meeting.

36. Report of the Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation Sub-Committee

Cllr McCracken presented the report of the CSE Sub Committee on 4 March 2016 and the following points were made:-

- Cllr Webb asked if there had been any response from the Berkshire Leaders particularly about engagement with Slough Borough Council. The Berkshire Leaders had responded that this issue should be raised informally with the Council itself.
- Cllr Mallon referred to the Bullfinch recommendation which had not yet been implemented particularly looking at perpetrator profiles. He had been disappointed with the police focus on lone offenders rather than organised crime groups. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that when looking at the perpetrator profile ethnicity was not seen as significant. Research was currently being undertaken by Oxford University on this area. It was important to look at the profiling and to understand the motivation behind it. Cllr Hussain commented that there was exploitation regardless of ethnicity and it was important to eradicate all forms of exploitation.

There was a site visit to the Oxfordshire MASH on 21 March 2016 and Members were invited to attend.

Members would be informed of the date of the next CSE Sub Committee which would be held in the Autumn. The recommendations and report were noted.

37. Update on Complaints Integrity and Ethics Panel

The Annual Assurance Report 2015 from the Complaints Integrity and Ethics Panel to the PCC and Chief Constable was noted.

38. General Issues

The general issues report was noted.

Cllr Hussain asked about the current backlog to DBS checks. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that they were now back on track with national targets.

Cllr McCracken asked about the progress on the Emergency Services Network Programme and the Chief Executive of the OPCC agreed to provide a written response to Members.

39. Work Programme

The Work Programme was noted.

40. Date and Time of Next Meeting

17 June 2016 at Aylesbury Vale District Council

CHAIRMAN