

Minutes

Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Friday 7 April 2017, in Olympic Room Aylesbury Vale District Council Gatehouse Road Aylesbury Bucks HP19 8FF, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 1.10 pm.

Members Present

Councillor Julia Adey (Wycombe District Council), Councillor Patricia Birchley (Buckinghamshire County Council), Councillor Tony Ilott (Cherwell 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), Councillor Chris McCarthy (Vale of White Horse District Council), Councillor Tony Page (Reading Borough Council), Councillor Dee Sinclair (Oxford City Council) and Councillor Quentin Webb (West Berkshire Council)

Officers Present

Clare Gray

Others Present

Matthew Barber (Deputy PCC), Sue Brown (Bucks County Council), John Campbell (Thames Valley Police), Cheryl Evans (West Berkshire Council), Paul Hammond (Office of the PCC), Richard Owen (Road Safety Analysis), Anthony Stansfeld (PCC) and Ian Thompson (Office of the PCC)

Apologies

Councillor Margaret Burke (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor Derek Sharp (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Chiltern District Council), Curtis-James Marshall (Independent Member), Councillor Iain McCracken (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Barrie Patman (Wokingham Borough Council), Councillor Carol Reynolds (West Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Paul Sohal (Slough Borough Council) and Councillor Ian White (South Oxfordshire District Council)

98. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

99. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 February 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

HBoS Fraud

At the last meeting the PCC had referred to the HBoS fraud case and the length and cost of the investigation, which had resulted in the case taking over six years to bring to court. The PCC had commented that the cost in time and money for a police force to take on a major fraud investigation

was considerable and a judgement had to be made as to whether the £7m spent on this case, and police officer time, could have been better spent in pursuing other crimes, such as child sexual abuse, and the multitude of lower scale frauds perpetuated against smaller companies and the elderly.

He also commented that the entire annual budget for the Serious Fraud Office is just £44m and yet the overall cost of losses from fraud and cyber crime was estimated to be around £200bn.

The PCC reported he was seeking to recover the full cost incurred on the case of £7m through a special grant payment but no response had been received from the Home Office to date. The Cabinet Office was due to have a meeting after Easter to discuss serious fraud issues.

Members noted that the bank had set aside £100m to compensate 64 victims of the HBoS Reading fraud although this sum may need to be increased if there were further claims.

CSE Recommendations (attachment to the minutes)

- MASH – the PCC reported that he had visited the majority of MASH’s in the Thames Valley and he reported that the larger MASH worked well, whereas he considered that some of the smaller MASH were not sustainable. He would review the performance of MASH at the end of the calendar year. He emphasised the importance of having an education representative on the MASH and needed ‘buy in’ from schools to ensure that all MASH had access to this resource.
- Perpetrators – the PCC referred to recent cases in the press. He commented on the importance of also looking at lone perpetrators profiles as well and to share all information with partner agencies to bring all intelligence together. The Home Office were also undertaking national work on the profile of offenders to get a better picture of the scale of the issue.
- Safeguarding in language schools – the PCC reported that this was a widespread issue and that he had been discussing this with the PCC for Sussex who also had a number of language schools in her Force area. He was looking to send a joint letter with Sussex to the Department of Education on this issue.
- Hotelwatch – he would request a report from the Chief Constable. He referred to an award being presented to hotel reception staff for recognising a potential offender. He also expressed concern about the increasing amount of hotels which did not have a reception and customers could just log in with a card. The Panel also referred to the smaller guest houses and also whether there was a high turnover of reception staff and how often they were retrained.

100. Public Question Time

The following public question was put to the Panel on roads policing which would be addressed through the following item on the agenda (minute 101):-

‘From a public perspective and that of local tax payers is it acceptable that the current arrangements in respect of speed camera enforcement within the Thames Valley should operate:

1. In the absence of any published policies or standards?
2. In the absence of any published performance metrics?
3. Is not subject to any objective form of independent scrutiny?

This against and by the PCC’s own admission a wide spread public perception that cameras are used principally for income generation; moreover a local context of a rising trend in road casualty rates’.

101. Themed Item - Roads Policing

The themed item discussed at this meeting was roads policing which is a core part of policing. Thames Valley has the largest motorway network of any police force and major trunk roads such as the A34 also cross the area. One of the PCCs aims is for police and partners to address road safety concerns, especially among vulnerable groups, cyclists and pedestrians.

Sue Brown, Team Leader Casualty Reduction Bucks County Council, Cheryl Evans Senior Road Safety Officer West Berkshire Council and Richard Owen, Operations Director, Road Safety Analysis (Manager of Safer Roads Berkshire) attended the meeting.

The Officers above introduced their experiences of roads policing as follows:-

Bucks

- There is a good partnership between the Council and the police. However there have been significant cuts in funding. There used to be a Thames Valley Road Safety Partnership which was a useful co-ordinating body across the area which highlighted good practice and provided good information on roads policing issues. This had now been disbanded because of funding issues, but Berkshire are still using Safer Roads (officers who were originally part of the partnership) to help with strategic issues.
- In 2010 powers and responsibilities had been devolved to local authorities and there is now significant diversity across the UK in the approach to delivering road safety and the resources available for doing so. The loss of the Road Safety Grant has been significant as it was specific to road safety and gave Local Authorities the ability to use this funding for innovation in road casualty reduction. Now in many Local Authorities the capacity of road safety is often dependent upon accessing alternative funding streams through partnership and co-operating with other Departments.
- Road Safety is not on any Community Safety Plans for the four District Councils.
- There is a gap as there is no co-ordination across the area and they only have one link into the police (who provide excellent support). However, they would value better links between road safety and neighbourhood policing.

Berkshire

- Their main work with the police is linked to the 'fatal four', which includes not wearing a seatbelt, drink/drug driving, inappropriate speed and using a mobile phone, to educate the public around their road safety responsibilities alongside roadside enforcement.
- They undertake research using MAST which is based on STATS 19 reports looking at the contributing factors and profiling of those involved in crashes. Each campaign or initiative they are involved with includes an evaluation process to measure effectiveness but there are concerns about the lack of police support from roads policing as specialists in enforcement and the added experience they bring when working with local neighbourhood teams.
- In terms of speed cameras being installed or decommissioned there is no communication with the Local Authority when this is undertaken and no clear guidelines to why these decisions are made.
- A local version of community Speed Watch was run by West Berkshire in collaboration with Thames Valley Police but they were restricted by the internal police process and the availability of police volunteers. The police volunteer available to the Council is only available half a day a week and all volunteers need to go through a police vetting system which can sometimes be

difficult. The Community Speed Watch database is restricted in its reporting systems which have led to the police undertaking their own separate reports to evaluate local effectiveness, this requires extensive staff resources.

- They had lost their Road Safety Constable (three years ago) with the post not being filled, which was making it hard to liaise with the police on improving deterrents to speeding and other road safety concerns. The Constable played a crucial communications and training link to neighbourhood teams which means that some teams are not receiving the necessary laser gun training and getting the positive intervention support required.

PCC

- The PCC reported that whilst it was important to address the fatal four the biggest concern he had regarding road safety was in car technology and the distractions this caused to the driver. This had a significant impact on road deaths. He had written to the Minister, Chris Grayling about his concerns and asked for an analysis to be undertaken on how many deaths were caused by this as there was currently no evidence on this. He had not yet received a reply.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- Cllr Page referred to speed cameras and the comment made by the officer that they were not being consulted about decommissioned cameras. He expressed concern about the transparency around speed cameras (as referred to in the written public question). He then referred to a police document which gave an overview of police mobile and fixed camera enforcement which included that currently 190 locations had been identified by local communities as concern sites through Neighbourhood Action Groups/community complaints and expressed concern that Members has not been made aware of these. He would like to see a list of these concerns and also a list of decommissioned sites. There should be better dialogue between the police and Local Authorities about fixed and mobile camera sites as Local Authorities had good detailed knowledge about their local areas. In terms of the Road Safety Partnership this should be discussed further in terms of how a formal mechanism could be put in place to exchange information and ideas without using too much resource – his Local Authority Reading was not part of this partnership but thought that it was something that should be considered. His final comments were that average speed cameras had been shown to be an effective motorway deterrent and also commented that it would be good to have Automatic Number Plate recognition technology to monitor 20mph zones and whether the penalties could be used to offset the capital and revenue costs.
- The PCC reported that information could be distributed on speed cameras and commented that a Group could be set up to look at this area. He commented that Thames Valley Police Roads Policing Unit was a collaborated unit with Hampshire Constabulary. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that a number of Local Authorities had withdrawn funding for speed cameras. He reported that there was some data on the Thames Valley Police website where members of the public can view reported injury collision data and individual site information for all fixed and mobile camera sites. The injury collision data on Traffweb is updated every six months, and the offence data for camera sites is updated annually.

<http://www.tvphampshiretraffweb.co.uk/>

The Deputy Chief Constable also referred to Community Speed Watch Schemes which was run by local volunteers where they use a mobile speed camera. He commented that some members of the public could be suspicious that speed cameras were being used to generate income but he wanted to reassure them that all income had to be spent on road safety schemes. The Force could be more transparent in this area.

- Cllr Egleton referred to the report which stated that a press article in March 2016 had referred to TVP upgrading all fixed speed cameras in the Force area to be replaced with more advanced digital technology. He asked for an update on how many cameras had been replaced as the budget was £2.139m with £0.602m currently spent and further commitments of £0.678m. He expressed concern that the target has not been met to upgrade speed cameras. The Chairman then suggested that the PCC develop a business case on the benefits of average speed cameras. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that average speed cameras were not suitable in every location and depended on the infrastructure. The focus needed to be on better road safety and decreasing casualties. The PCC commented that it was frustrating for motorists to drive through road works with cameras particularly when no work was being carried out. He commented that average speed cameras were very expensive units and it was important to use them for maximum road safety benefit. Richard Owen reported that he had undertaken some research into this area and although average speed cameras were expensive there was a level of compliance achieved through them, although he did comment that they were not suitable in all circumstances. There were new systems now available which were slightly cheaper. The Deputy Chief Constable undertook to raise with the TVP Roads Policing Unit the issue of average speed cameras and the comments of the Panel.

Action: Deputy Chief Constable

- Cllr Sinclair asked what the PCC is doing in terms of prevention in terms of fatalities and enforcement in high risk areas and referred to a dangerous roundabout in Oxford where the traffic lights had failed and was not considered to be a police responsibility. She also said that she was sceptical about hand held devices used by Community Speed Watch. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that Community Speed Watch was a good visible deterrent and did have an impact on driver behaviour. The police would not be involved in traffic light failure but they would work with the Local Authority if there was a potential for a serious accident.
- Cllr Webb asked whether the number of road safety police officers would be cut back any further. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that he could not give any reassurance around this as the Force had to balance resources on priorities and across the Thames Valley. He commented that Thames Valley Police had six sites across the Thames Valley with 24 police officers at each one and they worked closely with Hampshire. They also prosecute more than other Forces. He commented that to put this in context some police forces had disbanded their Roads Policing Units.
- Cllr Mallon referred to collaboration with Hampshire and the fact that there was cost cutting and asked whether there were any further opportunities for financial savings. The Deputy Chief Constable referred to the changes in funding in 2010 which made it necessary to merge operational functions across Hampshire and the Thames Valley. However they still have six sites across the Thames Valley even with a £6.5 million budget reduction. Cllr Mallon commented that it would be useful to know what other areas were doing in terms of road policing.
- Cllr Mallon also asked about terrorism and how this fitted in with roads policing. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that the majority of roads policing related to road traffic matters. However, ANPR was a useful tool and could be used for information and intelligence.
- Cllr Sinclair referred to the review of shift patterns with the roads policing unit which are estimated to reduce the establishment requirement and asked whether this reduction would impact on surveillance. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that it was not just roads policing officers on patrol but also neighbourhood policing who acted as the eyes and ears of the Force. The changes to the shift pattern was to make more effective use of resources.
- With reference to the setting up of a Group, Cllr Page suggested that in advance it would be useful to obtain more information about the structure of roads policing and the amount of information on the website. He also asked for information on which speed camera sites were

being decommissioned, information on how speed cameras were deployed and also community concerns. Better liaison could lead to better deployment of technology. He commented that some Local Authorities would be willing to work more closely with the police and share resources for more effective roads policing. It would be useful to discuss how Local Authorities could work more in partnership with the police in a co-ordinated way.

- The Deputy PCC reported that in terms of governance Thames Valley had regular meetings with Hampshire involving the Chief Constables and the PCCs. They looked at efficiencies where they could and he informed Members that, for example, there were two separate ANPR systems in place, one in each force area, as Hampshire had outsourced their contract. Nevertheless, the Joint Operations Unit had been a model for further collaboration and significant savings and operational improvements had been made. In terms of re-establishing a Safer Roads Partnership it was important for all Local Authorities to buy into this concept and to consider the most cost efficient approach to improved co-ordination.
- Cllr Macpherson referred to the building of HS2 near her village and asked whether cameras could be deployed in her area to help manage traffic during the building of this significant infrastructure. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that ANPR was used during the Olympics and that this could be a good case for using the technology which could be paid for by the developers. The Deputy PCC reported that ANPR had many benefits not just relating to road safety and could be linked with other crime reduction and community safety technology.

RECOMMENDED

That a Working Group be set up to look at roads policing and that requests for information on this area be sent to the Deputy Chief Constable. Areas for consideration could include:-

- **More transparent documentation on the PCC's/Force strategy on roads policing**
- **Consideration of a business case for average speed cameras**
- **Improved dialogue between police and local authorities on the siting and decommissioning of speed cameras and the need for a Deployment Strategy**
- **Consideration of the most effective way to ensure better co-ordination of information across the Thames Valley and ways to improve partnership working**

102. PCC and the wider criminal justice system

Members noted the report and in particular that under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 there is a duty for PCC's and criminal justice bodies (including the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, youth offending teams and probation) to make arrangements to provide an efficient and effective criminal justice system for the police area.

The Deputy PCC (the PCC had to leave after the previous item) reported the following:-

- That whilst the PCC currently chairs the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), there were no formal levers for the PCC to exert power over criminal justice agencies
- The PCC and criminal justice agencies meet and discuss current issues on a regular basis e.g prison service in Aylesbury and significant issues for policy.

During discussion the following questions were asked :-

Councillor Birchley - The PCC previously expressed concern about the closure of courts and the need for victims to travel along way to court. Are the use of remote video links being used effectively so they

are overcoming the barrier of court closures ? The HMIC report says that in the Thames Valley the right to give evidence by video link rather than attend court was uncertain. Has there been an increase in failed cases due to closures?

The Deputy PCC reported that this had been raised at the LCJB and the concern around the reduction in estate and the impact this would particularly have on victims. The technology needed to be in place beforehand to compensate for the reduction in courts.

Julia Girling commented on the need to make use of video links and how crucial this was for the victim/witness and the need for support from local police officers through the trial process. She also referred to the need to reduce cracked (where a case is concluded without a court hearing) and failed trials. The Deputy PCC commented that they were always looking at how to improve taking cases to court. Cllr Egleton also referred to the fear of crime and the impact on victims and witnesses when court cases were delayed and they were not sure whether to come back when the trial restarted. He also referred to the roads policing item and the fact that the court had no further capacity to take on extra cases. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that the courts take on the maximum number of cases per day so that if one did not go ahead there were other cases that could. They obviously had to prioritise the more serious crimes and used police officers to help them with a system of familiarisation. They tried to make the best use of resources, which sometimes had its challenges.

Julia Girling commented that sometimes witnesses were asked to come back three times because of court delays and sometimes on the third request they did not attend because they had become fed up with the system. It was particularly difficult with vulnerable witnesses. 55% of witnesses when asked said they would not do it again because of court delays and their own experience. She also commented that the facilities for witnesses at courts were sometimes not great and specifically referred to Aylesbury Crown Court where the witness suite was used as a staff room. She commented that witnesses were not often prioritised and it was important to keep them engaged in the process. She asked if the PCC had visited any of the courts. The Deputy PCC reported that he had visited some of the courts but not all. He also commented that the PCC had very little direct power over these matters but he could raise this issue with LCJB partners.

Action Deputy PCC

The Deputy Chief Constable commented that there had been improvements in domestic abuse cases in terms of getting the case to court more quickly. Julia Girling commented that whilst this may be the case it was really key for domestic abuse cases whether they go to court or not for there to be a strong support network for the victim so that there were no repercussions of abuse. The Deputy PCC reported that they had recently held a conference at the Kassam Stadium on domestic abuse and coercive control which looked at long term care and support for victims and what the future held for them particularly after the perpetrator had been released from prison.

Cllr Webb - What is the PCC relationship like with the Chief Crown Prosecutor and is he responsive to the crime and safety priorities set out in your Plan. Do you scrutinise the variation in CPS performance nationally to understand how Thames Valley is doing on quality of police investigations and the conduct of local Crown Prosecutors ?

The Deputy PCC reported that there was no formal role of scrutiny in this regard. The PCC was able to raise and address issues through the Local Criminal Justice Board, which was a robust partnership, but outside of this he had no power regarding the Crown Prosecution Service. This was a failure in the system.

Cllr Birchley asked what happened if there was a long delay before a case went to court? The Deputy Chief Constable reported that those involved would be shown their statements to refresh their memory.

Julia Girling commented that in some cases sentencing was not tough enough and was not a deterrent. The Deputy PCC reported that it was undertaken on a case by case basis and that the media could often report that sentencing was lenient but it was for the court to decide with the facts in front of them. This was an area outside the jurisdiction of the PCC and rules were set by Parliament. The media also criticised judges for not being in touch with reality, however with the cases that were brought to them on a regular basis they were very aware of what was happening on the ground.

Cllr Egleton referred to a recent HMIC report which says that 'the leaders of local criminal justice agencies acting together, and in cooperation with the PCC, should undertake a fundamental review of local partnership arrangements to assess whether they are fit for purpose to lead improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of the CJS at local level. PCCs have the pivotal role in helping local partners to work together as well as introducing accountability. The outcome of the review should be a multi agency action plan with clear objectives and measurable outcomes showing what success looks like so that all organisations are working in the best interests of the whole system'. Has the PCC done this and if not what action is he taking to achieve a joined up criminal justice system as outlined in this Plan ? The Deputy PCC reported that the Local Criminal Justice Board was the forum to achieve a joined up criminal justice system and that partners were represented on the Board covering arrest to rehabilitation. They would need to work together on improving the system.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel have a themed meeting in September and that a selection of criminal justice partners be invited to attend.

103. Report on the OPCC Strategic Delivery Plan 2017/18

Within the report Panel Members noted that the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires the PCC to produce and publish a Police and Crime Plan. The Act also requires the PCC to produce an Annual Report on progress in delivering the Police and Crime Plan. There is no statutory requirement to produce and monitor delivery of the Plan but this is considered best practice since it will facilitate effective management control and delivery of the PCC's objectives and will help to demonstrate transparency, accountability and effective governance by the Office of the PCC.

During discussion the following questions were asked:-

Cllr Mallon - Do you think that you should have a Delivery Plan which shows how you will be delivering your 25 key aims in your full Plan rather than a Plan for your back office ?

The Deputy PCC reported that the OPCC 2017/18 Strategic Delivery Plan was in a different format which showed the business areas which support delivery of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan. The information in the Delivery Plan showed enough transparency around the PCC's strategic priorities.

Cllr Page re the Community Safety Fund – when will the Formula be reviewed this year and will we be consulted ? Please could you explain more about the High Sheriff PPA Fund and what it is being used for ?

The Chief Finance Officer reported that earlier this year that PCC and Chief Constable jointly agreed to give £25,000 to each of the three county based High Sheriffs to make awards to local charities and/or

community groups that support delivery of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan. This decision is available on the PCC website. He would keep Panel Members updated on any changes to the formula used to allocate the Community Safety Fund. Cllr Mallon commented that it was important that the Panel were kept informed on this area.

Action: Chief Financial Officer

Cllr Macpherson asked that the Panel review performance of the delivery plan. The Panel agreed that rather than review performance six monthly they should revert back to receiving update reports from the OPCC on particular parts of the Plan for each meeting.

Cllr McCracken (who was not present) had asked that the following question be put to the PCC:-

At your Level 1 meeting you commented that you would be writing to the Government in relation to collaboration with the Fire Service and explaining the difficulties of taking on three different models of Fire Service. What did you learn from your visit to Sussex who have a similar structure to the Thames Valley ? Will you be undertaking an initial feasibility study and what is the timescale for this?

(Guidance document for OPCC Chief Executives in relation to the Police and Fire Business Case - CIPFA are referred to as advising that any transfers should take place at the start of the financial year. It also suggests that PCC's should allow at least nine months for completing the process which amongst other things requires multiple party consultation.)

Members noted that the PCC had written to the Minister expressing his concern about looking at three different fire services and its complexity and cost. They were already collaborating with Fire Authorities regarding property but there were challenges taking forward governance issues.

Cllr Webb asked whether a feasibility study was being undertaken? The Deputy PCC commented that this project was too complex to manage in house and that as an office they would have to fund the cost of external consultants who were expert in this area. Therefore to minimise the potential for wasted costs, they would need to look at the appetite and concerns of the Fire Services in the Thames Valley before a feasibility study would be considered and commissioned. They wanted to work collaboratively with the Fire Services in taking this forward, which would have a more successful outcome.

104. Report of the Complaints Sub-Committee

The report of the Complaints Sub Committee was noted.

105. Topical Issues

The Deputy PCC gave an overview of their Engagement Strategy which was to strengthen community and stakeholder involvement and improve the quality and consistency of the Office of the PCC engagement to allow opportunities for the public and stakeholders to inform the PCC's priorities and activities. It contains the following principles:-

- Transparency
- Listening
- Inclusiveness
- Partnership

The Deputy PCC reported that there was a calendar of events on their website and that this would be updated to show all community events.

Cllr Sinclair reported that she and the Panel's Scrutiny Officer had attended the Oxford City Council Scrutiny Committee to report on the work of the Panel. They had made three recommendations to the Panel on the following:-

- To encourage more consultation on the Police and Crime Plan
- To rotate meetings across the Thames Valley to increase public engagement
- To publish outcomes where the Panel has influenced the PCC

The Deputy PCC reported that they had undertaken a large survey before putting the Plan together, which included attending a number of public engagement events to find out what the public's priorities were on police and crime. Feedback on this survey had been included in the final Plan. Each Local Authority had been consulted on the draft Plan.

The Panel Chairman commented that the Panel had previously rotated around the Thames Valley and there had been no public engagement by doing this – therefore they had decided to meet in Aylesbury which was the central point of the Thames Valley. In terms of the Panel's work, the Panel had its own website and twitter page and also produced an Annual Report in June to show the Panel's achievements. Each Member should be producing an 'outside body' report (or using the Panel's Annual Report) to inform their own Local Authority of the work of the Panel.

Cllr Sinclair referred to concerns about cross border issues in relation to taxi licensing and that taxis that were licensed in the Vale of the White Horse were working in Oxford City. The Deputy PCC declared an interest as Leader of the Vale of White Horse but responded that the cost of licensing was a matter for the individual Local Authority. However, in terms of safeguarding, Oxfordshire had a robust system in place. He referred to the event that was being organised by the Panel on safeguarding in relation to taxi licensing. He commented on the recent press release by the APCC on the need for a national taxi licensing database to provide information on where drivers had had their licence refused or revoked.

106. Work Programme

The Work Programme was noted.

107. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Friday 16 June 2017 at 11am

CHAIRMAN