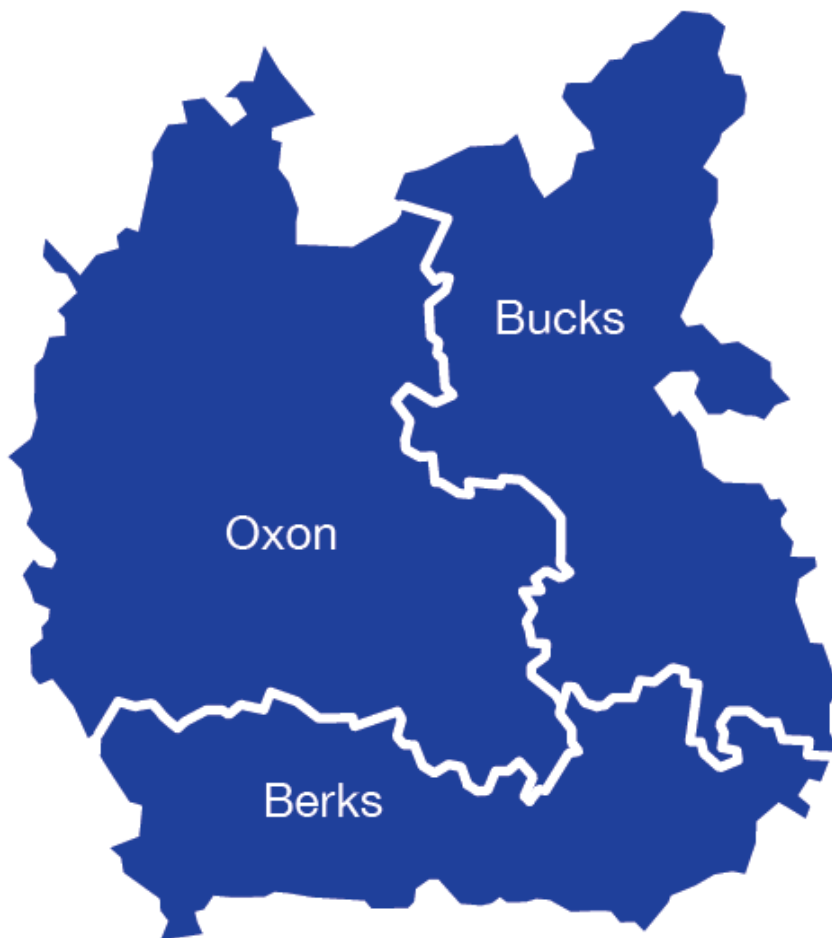


Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel



Annual Report 2016/17

The Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel is currently hosted by South Bucks District Council on behalf of all 18 local authorities in Thames Valley.

It is a joint committee of all 18 local authorities, consisting of a representative from each and two independent co-opted members.

It can be contacted via the address below:

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Chairman's Introduction

I am proud to introduce the fifth annual report of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel. Anthony Stansfeld was elected in May 2016 and has now completed the first year of his second term. The Panel continues to both challenge and support the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for the Thames Valley and I would like to take this opportunity to praise the hard work and dedication of my fellow Panel Members.



The Panel has fulfilled its main statutory duties this year and set a new Working Group to scrutinise and make recommendations on the PCC's new Police and Crime Plan for his four year period. Other statutory duties include the work of our Budget Task and Finish Group which looks at the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed budget and Council Tax precept. The Panel utilised their scrutiny skills to ensure that the Commissioner's proposed council tax precept increase of 1.99% was required to deliver a balanced budget and maintain frontline services. The Panel has also asked questions about the new operating model for neighbourhood policing which is viewed as being at the forefront of national thinking as to how to sustain local policing with the current policing landscape. The Panel have also scrutinised and made recommendations on the PCC's Annual Report, held a confirmation hearing for the new Deputy PCC, Matthew Barber and considered non-criminal complaints against the PCC through the Complaints Sub-Committee.

The themed items that have been explored with the PCC included Community Safety Partnerships, collaboration, unauthorised encampments and roads policing. External witnesses were invited to speak at the Panel to gain an understanding of partner views on performance from across the Thames Valley. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their input into the Panel's work. The Sub-Committee which was set up to support, monitor and scrutinise the PCC on preventing and taking action with regard to child sexual exploitation also met with Safeguarding Board Chairmen across the Thames Valley to provide assurance to Panel Members on the PCC's performance.

The Panel will also continue to support the Commissioner by encouraging Local Authorities and partner organisations to work with him for the benefit of residents of the Thames Valley. The Panel being unique in having such a large Member representation want to help each County area share good practice and maximise good communication across borders. The Panel therefore hosted an event with Buckinghamshire County Council to help develop a common approach to cyber crime for Community Safety Partnerships across the Thames Valley in order to produce a strategic action plan, which should directly benefit residents.

There are still challenges for the Panel in relation to its limited powers and resources, particularly with the new Policing and Crime Act 2017. However, the Panel continues to build on the healthy, effective and challenging relationships with the PCC which is essential for local communities who rely on fair accountability for excellent police services. This fifth annual report highlights the work and achievements of the past year and draws out some of the key areas of work that the Panel will be examining over the forthcoming year.



Cllr. Trevor Egleton

The Police & Crime Commissioner

The Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley, Anthony Stansfeld, has formally been in post since 22 November 2012 and was re-elected in May 2016.

The Police & Crime Plan

The Police & Crime Commissioner sets out in a Police & Crime Plan his objectives for his four year term of office. This document is of great importance to the Police & Crime Panel as a point of reference in fulfilling its duty to scrutinise and review the actions and decisions of the Police & Crime Commissioner. The Thames Valley Police Delivery Plan will describe how the Force will address the objectives of the PCC's Plan.



Anthony Stansfeld, Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley

The PCC Annual Report 2015/16 highlights a number of achievements as follows:-

- Five successive years of budget cuts but performance still remains high with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary rating the Force as being good at police effectiveness.
- With his Victim's grant funding, victims of crime now benefit from new services providing emotional or practical support.
- Annual Community Safety Grants worth over £3million.
- Further reductions in household burglary, increase in the reporting of sexual and violent crime, increase in the volume of rape investigations which result in prosecution and increase in the volume of domestic abuse investigations which result in a charge or caution.

The PCC's Strategic Objectives

The Police and Crime Commissioner Strategic Objectives are set out below :-

- Vulnerability—managing demand on services through working together.
- Prevention and early intervention—improving safeguarding in physical and virtual spaces .
- Reducing reoffending—targeting and managing harm and risk.
- Serious organised crime and terrorism—improving the local response.
- Police ethics and reform— increasing the pace of change

The Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner



The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley, Matthew Barber, was appointed after a confirmation hearing held by the Panel in December 2016.

The Role of the Police & Crime Panel

The Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel examines and reviews how the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley carries out his responsibilities to ensure that Thames Valley Police runs efficiently and effectively. In addition to this the Panel has a role to play in supporting the Commissioner in his work.

This year the Panel has:-

- Held a Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation Sub Committee which is attended by the PCC, Force and external witnesses. Members have particularly focused on understanding the work of Safeguarding Boards across the Thames Valley and setting up a Thames Valley wide event on safeguarding in taxi licensing following feedback from Panel Members and Serious Case Reviews.
- Handled non-criminal complaints against the Police and Crime Commissioner through regular meetings of its Complaints Handling Sub-Committee.
- Reviewed the Police and Crime Commissioner's new Police and Crime Plan, proposed Council Tax precept for the financial year and the PCC's Annual Report.
- Hosted a Cyber Crime event led by Buckinghamshire County Council. This information is now being developed by Bucks with CSP's into a Thames Valley wide action plan.



- Held themed meetings and looked in detail at Community Safety Partnerships, collaboration, unauthorized encampments and roads policing.
- Held a Confirmation Hearing for the Deputy PCC and had a presentation from the Chairman of the Joint Independent Audit Committee.

Members of the Panel

In the Thames Valley, there is one councillor from each of the councils in the area, meaning that there are eighteen on the Panel. They are joined by two independent co-opted members, recruited through a competitive process. The independent co-opted members have the same status and rights as the other Panel Members.

Each of the 18 councils below has its own process

- Aylesbury Vale District Council— Angela Macpherson
- Bracknell Forest Council—Iain McCracken
- Buckinghamshire County Council— Patricia Birchley
- Cherwell District Council— Tony Illott
- Chiltern District Council—Emily Culverhouse
- Milton Keynes Council— Margaret Burke
- Oxford City Council— Dee Sinclair
- Oxfordshire County Council—Kieron Mallon
- Reading Borough Council—Tony Page
- Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Council - Derek Sharp
- Slough Borough Council—Paul Sohal
- South Bucks District Council—Trevor Egleton
- South Oxfordshire District Council—Ian White
- Vale of White Horse District Council—Chris McCarthy
- West Berkshire Council— Quentin Webb
- West Oxfordshire District Council—Carol Reynolds
- Wokingham Borough Council—Barrie Patman
- Wycombe District Council— Julia Adey

The two independent co-opted members were:

- Curtis James Marshall
- Julia Girling

Reflections of our Panel Members

Each Panel member was asked about what the Panel could do better and their reflections are as follows:-



Councillor Angela Macpherson

Keep working hard to communicate our agenda and inquiries to the public via multi media channels, and encourage engagement and questions about our work from members of the public. There is always a chance for public questions at our meetings and the Police and Crime Commissioner attends regularly so it's a chance to hear what he has to say. I would like to see more people at our meetings, this is an area for improvement.



Councillor Iain McCracken (Chairman of the Budget Task and Finish Group and Preventing CSE Sub-Committee)

With Members of the Panel being there as representatives of the local authorities arranging meetings is often difficult, particularly over such a large area and with the competing pressures on the PCC's office. Forward planning is essential in ensuring that attendance can be maximised and that meetings can be as effective as possible to provide a good service to the residents of the Thames Valley.



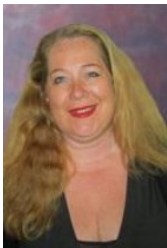
Councillor Patricia Birchley

There is a lot of paperwork for the Panel to digest and whilst detailed research is important I think it would be helpful to have a summary of the key issues on which to hold the PCC to account. I would support the PCC having a flexible approach to the Panel's limited powers and using the resource of Members from across the Thames Valley, meeting as one body from three County areas (which is quite unusual) to influence positive outcomes for the residents in this area.



Councillor Tony Ilott

I have been on the Panel for a year and feel that the Panel supports and holds the PCC to account effectively. One of the challenges is that the Panel is limited in its powers in looking into operational issues of the police which is sometimes important in understanding the strategic direction of the PCC. This also has an impact on public engagement as the public are more likely to be interested in the operational side rather than strategy. So if more public engagement items are included on the agenda this may cover borderline operational issues and it would be helpful to have the PCC's support on this area.



Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Chairman Complaints Sub Committee)

The Panel is working well within its limited powers – it would be good to see more positive outcomes coming out of the recommendations we put to the Police and Crime Commissioner. I also chair the Complaints Sub Committee which looks at complaints against the PCC and the Deputy PCC and it would be interesting to see how much the new Policing and Crime Act 2017 will have an impact on our work in the future. This will depend on which option the PCC takes forward and government guidance on 'super complaints' – it is crucial that effective training is put in place for any new responsibilities the Sub-Committee undertakes.



Councillor Margaret Burke

I still feel that it is difficult to challenge the PCC effectively at meetings as I am not given responses to my questions at the meeting and written responses are sent a long time after the meeting has taken place. These responses need to be given as soon as possible in order to understand if the PCC is effectively holding the Chief Constable to account and for us as a Panel to hold the PCC to account.

Reflections of our Panel Members



Councillor Dee Sinclair

I have valued, themed meetings particularly around taxi licensing issues which has brought forward a day conference to discuss concerns raised.

There is still a way to go on encouraging public engagement and would press the Panel to reconsider rotating venues.



Councillor Kieron Mallon (Vice Chairman)

The Panel has to adapt to different challenges that are presented to us and to address these within our limited powers and resources to ensure that we continue to scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner effectively for the benefit of residents of the Thames Valley.



Councillor Tony Page

Given the Panel's powers to scrutinise the PCC were deliberately constrained by the original legislation and the resources at the Panel's disposal are also very limited, the Panel has done well to mount a number of scrutiny exercises. These have assisted Members in their role of holding the PCC to account.



Councillor Derek Sharp

Being a Berkshire Councillor it is very interesting to see the different approaches across the Thames Valley to particular police and crime issues and it can be a challenge in some areas to look at standardising policies across such a large area. The Panel is in a good position to do this but also must recognise the need for policies to be geared towards local needs and addressing local challenges.



Councillor Paul Sohal

One of the strengths of the Panel is that Members are not political when holding the PCC to account and their key lines of enquiry are used to probe the Commissioner on specific areas in his Police and Crime Plan. However, there is always a concern that in times of austerity where public authorities have resource constraints that these lines of enquiry become resource rather than policy focused with competing demands. However I feel that the Panel gives a good balance of support and challenge to the PCC.



Curtis James Marshall Independent Member

Public services in general are experiencing incredibly challenging times, and policing has not been an exception to this. Austerity measures has meant doing much more with a lot less, resulting in the bringing together of many different services. This has been immensely challenging, but hugely satisfying for me personally. Ultimately, both elected and independent members on the Panel have come together, bringing our knowledge and experience from across many sectors, to work with the PCC in order to deliver the best outcomes for the people of the Thames Valley.



Julia Girling Independent Member

As a Panel we could be more effective at picking up on the latest 'trends' in crime and scrutinising the PCC accordingly.

Reflections of our Panel Members



Councillor Ian White

In the present climate where major crime has focused on cyber-crime, child and adult sexual exploitation and radicalised terrorism in addition to the traditional areas, it is important that Police and Crime Commissioner's have the support of a critical friend who will challenge approach and financial decisions. Having completed my second year on the Panel I have learned more and more about the challenges facing policing and I hope that I have been able to support our Commissioner's work effectively



Councillor Chris McCarthy

Whilst the Panel is there to support and scrutinise the PCC I think it is important for us to continue our proactive scrutiny and also to be able to influence decisions, where possible, before they are made. In this regard we appreciate the PCC sharing information with us on his response to the new Policing and Crime Act 2017 and how he will take those legislative changes forward.



Councillor Quentin Webb

The good relationship with the PCC and Chief Constable is providing a harmonious and constructive debate at panel meetings. Good themed meetings are providing insight in service delivery. One of the challenges is to engage with the public, integration of the Fire service to the Office of the PCC and attempt to reduce the long Panel reports and general information items to an executive summary report .



Councillor Carol Reynolds

Being a newly appointment Councillor to this panel, It is good to have a diverse selection of Councillors who all bring added value to the meeting held. There is more to do and I am looking forward to be able to contribute further in the forthcoming year.



Councillor Barrie Patman

We need to find improved ways of collecting the public's view on Policing in the Thames Valley. There is a danger that we can get too remote. We should find ways of producing themed topics that the public can respond to.



Councillor Julia Adey

Themed meetings continue to prove useful having instigated Thames Valley wide events, hosted by the Panel, on both Taxi Licensing and Cyber Crime. The meeting on unauthorised encampments proved enlightening and hopefully will lead to more standardised working across the Thames Valley. Challenges include ensuring the Panel receives timely responses to questions with good follow up and finding ways for more engagement with residents.

Achievements 2016/17

Budget—The Task and Finish Group undertook its annual review and following this the Panel agreed the Police and Crime Commissioner’s proposed budget and Council Tax precept on 3 February 2017. The Chairman thanked those who participated in this Group for asking and responding to detailed questions. The work of this Group has been highlighted as good practice at national conferences.

Plan - A Working Group met in November to discuss the new draft Plan and made recommendations to the Panel in December 2016.

Cyber Crime—The Independent Member/Panel Lead on this project Curtis James Marshall has commented ‘With the approach to cyber crime the Panel wanted to be proactive and do something different to their normal scrutiny meetings. Community Safety Partnerships stated that cyber crime was one of the biggest changes in criminal behaviour and there was a need for clarity about the best way to approach this across borders. Following liaison with CSP’s about where value could be added it was agreed that a Thames Valley wide cyber crime event should be held with the aim of developing an action plan to ensure that there was a consistent approach to cyber crime across the Thames Valley’. The Panel hosted the event which was led by Buckinghamshire County Council.



Child Sexual Exploitation— The Sub-Committee met in November but planning is underway for a Thames Valley wide event on taxi licensing. The Chairman Iain McCracken has commented ‘this has been the second year of operation where Members have met with the PCC and the Force. A very productive meeting was held in November with Safeguarding Board Chairmen representing Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire where a series of suggested recommendations have been made

aimed at spreading good practice across the Thames Valley’.

The Panel have decided to take a proactive approach to Panel recommendations and the outcomes of Serious Case Reviews holding a Thames Valley wide event, with Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils bringing together all the Licensing Authorities to discuss whether taxi licensing policies can be standardised and the possibility of having a regional database to improve safeguarding.



Themed Meetings as follows:-

Community Safety Partnerships—officer representatives attended the meeting from Oxfordshire, Berks and Bucks. There was a strong link between Panel Members and CSPs and it was agreed that this should be looked at annually where Panel Members would feed back on their own local areas to identify any issues that need to be raised with the PCC.

Unauthorised encampments—representatives from the Countryside and Gypsy and Traveller Services attended to provide evidence of how the police and local authorities were working together to respond effectively to unauthorised encampments including consistent interpretation of legislation.

Collaboration — the Government expect that collaboration will help Forces meet the pressures of financial constraint and the ability to meet new policing demands. Thames Valley is more advanced than other Forces in terms of their collaborative work and have a regional unit for Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism. The Panel asked the PCC key lines of enquiry on his collaborative work in particular with Hampshire Constabulary.

Roads Policing - The Panel held the PCC to account on roads policing which has led to the recommendation that a Working Group should be set up (see next page for details).

Looking to the Future 2017/18

The PCC will be working towards his new Police and Crime Plan which will be a priority for the Panel to scrutinise as this impacts directly on residents. The Panel also will be continuing to have themed meetings and will be looking at the criminal justice system. The PCC and criminal justice bodies must make arrangements to provide an efficient and effective criminal justice system for the police area.

The Panel have also agreed at their April meeting to set up a Working Group on Roads Policing to see if there is any benefit in having a Road Safety Partnership in the Thames Valley and also to look at whether there are any initiatives that the PCC could implement to improve roads policing.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 was introduced by the Government to introduce greater transparency and accountability for PCCs which include the ability to drive efficiency and better value for money by closer working with the emergency services and an increased responsibility for police complaints. The Panel will continue to ensure that there is robust scrutiny of the Commissioner on his response to this new legislation.



The Panel continue to develop the way they are operating and have visited Hampshire Police and Crime Panel and the West Midlands to look at their pro-active scrutiny sessions and some of this learning will be used by our Panel.

Engaging with residents and key stakeholders- The Thames Valley is the largest non-metropolitan police force area in England, which provides difficulties in terms of the public accessing Panel meetings on a regular basis although there is a public question time.

Complaints- The Panel, through its Complaints Sub-Committee is responsible for all non-criminal complaints directed against the Police and Crime Commissioner, including conduct matters. The PCC will need to comply with the changed responsibilities regarding police complaints resulting from the new Act, which is likely to impact on the Panel.



Access to timely performance information- The Panel has regular performance reports and question the PCC on any areas of concern. The Chairman and Scrutiny Officer also attend the PCC's Level 1 public meetings. The HMIC reports also provide invaluable information.

For further information on the Panel

<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/about-your-council/scrutiny/thames-valley-police-and-crime-panel/>

For Panel Meetings

<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=751>

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