

Report to the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

Title: Local Policing

Date: 17 November 2017

Author: Clare Gray, Scrutiny Officer,
Thames Valley Police & Crime
Panel



Future of Policing

The Home Affairs Select Committee has been undertaking an Inquiry into current and future challenges of modern policing with Chief Constables from West Yorkshire, Staffordshire, West Midlands and the Chair of the National Police Chiefs Council (Sara Thornton). This information is useful for informing the public not only about the demands on police forces (and local policing) but also in terms of pressures on the budget leading up to budget scrutiny.

The main points made at the Select Committee were as follows:-

- Police recorded crime has increased by 5% in the year ending June 2015, by 7% in the year ending June 2016 and by 13% in the latest year. This rise in recorded crime can include continuing improvements to recording processes and practices or genuine increases in crime. Comparably, the Office for National Statistics estimates 5.8 million incidents of crime in the year ending June 2017 which is a 9% reduction compared with the previous year. However these estimates do not include fraud and computer misuse offences.
- The Country has been on two critical alerts for terrorism in the last six months.
- The Police have received a flat rate settlement despite increases in crime and the increased threat of terrorism which has impacted on the service to the public. There have been real term budget cuts despite PCCs using their maximum 1.99% precept but also consideration needs to be given to 3% rise in inflation and the pay settlement. There are less resources to undertake increasingly pressurised and complex work which is also impacting on the stress levels of the police force. Some Police Officers are frustrated that they cannot provide the quality of service they want to victims because of pressure on resources. PCCs will need to make difficult decisions in the future. There had been discussions about whether PCCs should be given flexibility over their precept rather than having it capped. However, if the precept was increased then the public would expect this additional funding to be used on volume/traditional crime rather than the Chief Constable/PCC's priorities. The public need to take on board that the police can no longer fulfil certain localised roles in all areas due to the financial reality they currently face.
- Chief Constables have also commented on the increase in online threats, serious organised crime, protection of the vulnerable balanced against the need to deal with

traditional/volume crimes such as theft and burglary. Rape and serious sexual offences have increased by 65% in some areas.

- Funding for Local Authorities and public sector agencies have also been significantly reduced (by 40% or more) which impacts on preventative work such as youth offending. There is an increase in violent crime and a number of young people are involved in knife crime which needs to be addressed in preventative work such as education and youth engagement.
- All Chief Constables emphasise the importance of preventive work and early intervention and the need to problem solve.
- There was no urban/rural split required in terms of police funding
- One Chief Constable reported that 83% of calls related to mental health issues, missing people and helping the vulnerable. Some police officers were becoming uniformed social workers.
- Chief Constables were taking action through joint procurement, transformation programmes (sharing specialist capabilities) and technology. Whilst some police reserves may still look healthy it was estimated there would be a reduction in reserves of 60% whilst money was spent to technology etc to help the Force deal with demand in the future.

PCCs have generally invested in four main areas because of limited resources (bearing in mind investment has already gone into creating child abuse units and there is a national priority for modern slavery) :-

- Counter Terrorism – neighbourhood policing is essential in combatting terrorism
- Cyber Crime
- Economic Crime
- Neighbourhood Policing

Neighbourhood Policing

The Police Foundation have undertaken national research on the future of neighbourhood policing and refer to the Policing Vision 2025 which spells out a commitment to shift the focus of local policing from reactive to proactive activities, based on a sophisticated understanding of community needs, improved analytics and increased multi-agency integration. In the wake of recent terrorist incidents the case for grass roots intelligence gathered through strong community connections has gained urgency. New policing models adopted in response to emerging patterns of demand, budgetary challenges and a radically altered partnership picture, have resulted in considerable variations in the size, structure and remit of local police teams. The College of Policing are leading a process to formalise evidence-based national principles on the essential elements of neighbourhood policing.

New operating model

Thames Valley Police is viewed as being at the forefront of national thinking as to how to sustain Neighbourhood Policing within the current policing landscape.

Previously at a Panel Meeting a video was shown on local policing.

<https://youtu.be/Ek9Mt-pliwA>

“The concept behind the new operating model is to deliver more efficient and smarter ways of working whilst ensuring that resourcing matches demand and that the right person is deployed to

the right job at the right time. Pilot schemes were launched on three of the Force's Local Policing Areas – Reading, West Berkshire and Milton Keynes, focusing upon different aspects of the proposed operating model and the results have been very encouraging. Through smarter and more consistent processes, which we are calling 'Smarter Resolution' time spent investigating specific crime types through to resolution has reduced significantly by around 30%. This in turn has enabled faster response times in relation to Immediate and Urgent Graded Incidents. "

An update on the new model was given in June 2016 and the report can be found at item 47 under the following link:-

<http://sbdc-spider2.southbucks.gov.uk/democracy/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=289&MID=2386>

HMICFRS Thames Valley Police Efficiency Report 2017 quotes the following on the new operating model:-

"At the time of our inspection, the force had recently changed how it uses its frontline officers and staff by implementing a new operating model to improve efficiency. By using this model the force aims to provide the most appropriate response to calls from the public, either dealing with the incident in the control room or deploying a response and patrol officer, a member of a neighbourhood team or an investigator, as appropriate. The force's analysis of all demand dealt with by investigators, local police officers and specialists in child abuse and domestic abuse units helps it to allocate the right level of resources to these different areas. This analysis builds on information gathered during the priority-based budgeting process identifying internal demand, and assesses what future demand and predictive demand in these areas may involve. Work completed so far forms the first and second phase of the force's 11 demand analysis plans, which deal with investigative, response and patrol and neighbourhood policing demand. Further work is planned in 2017 for other areas of the force's work, such as managing dangerous offenders."

"Benefits, such as those provided through its new operating model, are tracked to ensure that they are achieved."

"During our inspection, we heard how the force was talking to local policing area staff and officers about the implementation of the new operating model. As already described, its implementation has increased the workload of some staff more than expected in certain parts of the force. The force is working with local policing areas to understand the reasons for this better and is adjusting its model to make sure that officers and staff workload is spread more evenly."

'We found that not everyone in the workforce was happy about the initial effect of the new operating model but they understood why the changes had been made.'

"There is no doubt that the leadership of the force is committed to receiving feedback from the workforce, but not all of the frontline police officers we spoke with felt that their views would be valued. This perception may have been influenced by the very recent introduction of the new operating model, but the force should make sure it continues to engage with personnel affected by change."

Increasing demand and 999/101 calls

Excerpt from HMIC Report Police Efficiency national report released 9 November

“More and more forces are using some form of risk-based analysis to inform their allocation of resources, but some remain unable to allocate adequate resources to meet the needs of their demand models. There are many examples of forces using their resources flexibly. However, not many forces have carried out sufficient analysis to be confident of their ability to predict the overall effect of moving resources from one area of operations to another. Where resources are not adequately allocated, or the consequences are not adequately understood, those working within policing usually compensate for this shortfall with their own hard work and discretionary effort. In a small number of cases, this is not sufficient and the needs of the public are not adequately met.

This is particularly true within force control rooms, which primarily deal with public 999 or 101 calls. At the time of our inspection, some control rooms appeared to be struggling to meet demand, particularly in relation to 101 non-emergency calls. Many forces have found it difficult to retain control room staff and a number of them rely too much on outdated technology. HMICFRS inspectors regularly encounter highly dedicated control room staff who are frustrated by the processes and structures within which they have to work. Encouragingly, forces are considering different ways of managing demand through online tools, although only a small number of high-performing forces can demonstrate the effectiveness of these tools. Given how important a high-performing control room is to a force’s overall efficiency, a sustained focus on the part of chief officers on improving performance in this area is vital.”

Information on Thames Valley performance in relation to 999 calls is available within the HMIC report on Police efficiency under the performance item (page 9 of the report). “During our fieldwork we obtained the data on the 999 calls received for the previous 24 hours. Of the 787 calls, 93.7 percent were answered within 10 seconds; 1.4 percent of calls were abandoned by the caller. The force’s figures for the abandonment rate for 101 calls have averaged 6.1 percent for the three months December 2016 to February 2017. More recent figures were not available.”

“During our inspection, we assessed whether the way that the force operates either suppresses, or does not deal appropriately with, calls for service from the public. Data supplied by the force indicate that it classifies a lower proportion rate of calls as ‘priority’ than many other forces in England and Wales. This might mean that the initial response from the force is not appropriate. Staff told us that their workload has increased significantly since the new operating model was introduced. We discussed this with the force, who told us that in the month before our inspection (when the new model was introduced) calls from the public had risen by around 15 percent, which the force is currently analysing. This increase has been seen in other forces. However, during our inspection we did not find any evidence to suggest that demand is being suppressed. The response to the public who call using 101 or 999 is prompt.

We also examined a sample of calls from the public that were initially graded as requiring a priority response but were subsequently graded as less urgent. In all cases a proper assessment of the required response had been made using the THOR model of risk assessment and had been endorsed by a supervisor. We were encouraged to learn from the force that it has processes in place to identify if demand is being suppressed. It monitors the speed that calls are answered, it has strong supervision in the control room and its service improvement team have reviewed its management of priority calls involving domestic abuse or racism. However, the increase in

demand at the same time as the introduction of the new operating model is a burden on the force that it should continue to monitor closely. HMICFRS will revisit this as part of the autumn 2017 PEEL inspection.”

West Midlands Police Chief Constable reported that they had an upsurge in the number of 999 calls with a number of more urgent calls that needed an immediate response. Whilst there was an influx of calls in the summer months experienced by Thames Valley and other Forces (see press links below) the Chief Constables interviewed at the Select Committee commented that this summer would not be exceptional and that this could soon be normal.

Thames Valley Police have introduced a new system to deal with contact with the public. At a Panel meeting in February 2017, the PCC reported that the new Contact Management Programme had undergone a difficult start but that this technology was required to transform the police force and eventually produce savings. It was an important programme as their capabilities grow larger and linked in with Microsoft which was key.

The new solution will provide both Forces with the enabling IT technology to record and manage all public contact, providing an improvement in service to the public by providing a single view of the customer and improving the forces ability to manage threat, risk, harm and vulnerability and providing front line officers with all the required information when deployed to ensure the best public service is being provided.

The Head of Contact Management at TVP has informed the public that a new online reporting system would be available to give people options of how they would contact the police which would also include updates and progress checks. Another area that is being looked at by TVP is the use of artificial intelligence computers which could be used to answer calls, detect crimes and identify criminals.

http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/15582175.Changing_way_police_serve_public_was_necessary_to_deal_with_demand_chief_says/
http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/15593488.Massive_surge_in_bogus_999_calls_putting_strain_on_emergency_call_centres/?ref=twtrrec
http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/15597373.Will_robotocops_be_taking_your_999_calls_in_the_future_/?ref=twtrrec
http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/15614231.iPLOD_The_way_you_report_crimes_to_police_could_be_about_to_change_forever/?ref=twtrrec

Police Foundation

http://www.police-foundation.org.uk/2017/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/kpmg_neighbourhood_policing_dinner.pdf?mc_cid=5a967f4abc&mc_eid=94035843f4

Anti Social Behaviour

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homeless-people-sleep-rough-doorway-fines-oxford-remove-possession-2500-a7859246.html>