

Minutes

Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Friday 17 November 2017, in Olympic Room Aylesbury Vale District Council Gatehouse Road Aylesbury Bucks HP19 8FF, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 1.25 pm.

Members Present

Councillor Margaret Burke (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor Derek Sharp (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Chiltern District Council), Cllr Arvind Dhaliwal (Slough Borough Council), Councillor Trevor Egleton (South Bucks District Council), Cllr Tom Hayes (Oxford City Council), Councillor Kieron Mallon (Oxfordshire County Council), Curtis-James Marshall (Independent Member), Councillor Chris McCarthy (Vale of White Horse District Council), Councillor Tony Page (Reading Borough Council) and Councillor Barrie Patman (Wokingham Borough Council)

Officers Present

Clare Gray

Others Present

Kevin Brown (Thames Valley Police), Francis Habgood (Thames Valley Police), Paul Hammond (Office of the PCC), Anthony Stansfeld (PCC) and Ian Thompson (Office of the PCC)

Apologies

Councillor Julia Adey (Wycombe District Council), Bill Bendyshe-Brown (Buckinghamshire County Council), Julia Girling (Independent Member), Councillor Angela Macpherson (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Councillor Iain McCracken (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Carol Reynolds (West Oxfordshire District Council), Cllr Emma Webster (West Berkshire Council), Councillor Ian White (South Oxfordshire District Council) and Cllr Barry Wood (Cherwell District Council)

132. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

133. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 September 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

The following updates were given:-

- The Deputy PCC would respond in writing on whether the street operation in Oxford City would continue as the previous one had been very successful.

- Unauthorised encampments – the Rural Task and Finish Group had met which included a meeting with all Councils, the Force and Environment Agency. At this meeting it was agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding should be drawn up. The Chief Constable reported that one of the issues within the Force was when powers apply or not. Another issue was the response by landowners – sometimes it looked like the police were doing nothing when they were speaking to the landowner who had responsibility for this. Communication was key to keep the public informed. There were certain trigger points to lead to the use of Section 61 powers.
- OPCC office – A Panel Member asked a question in relation to the Office of the PCC and a written report being made available. The PCC commented that this particular issue was confidential and had been dealt with under the correct disciplinary procedures. Another Panel Member commented that the Panel did not want the detail of the issue but wanted reassurance that the Office was operating efficiently and effectively and that the processes that were in place were robust to ensure that a similar incident would not happen or if it did that the PCC would guarantee the smooth running of his Office, whilst investigations took place. The PCC agreed to send a report with this information.

Action: PCC

- TVP were reminded to send over the graph showing the hate crime figures.
- Action: Chief Constable**
- Cllr Hayes asked the PCC whether he had met yet with the Policing Minister. The PCC reported that he had a meeting on 29 November 2017 to meet the Policing Minister. The PCC then responded to the previous question about having a part time Deputy PCC. He commented that you could be criticised for having a Deputy or not having a Deputy. He had taken the decision that at this current time he needed a part time Deputy but if the situation changed such as taking on the responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services then he would consider a full time Deputy. He also commented that the Taxpayers Alliance had said that his office was one of the most efficient and lean offices.

134. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

135. Chairman's briefing/PCC update

The Chairman gave an update on the following:-

- As Blue Light Day it was important to honour all police officers that have fallen in the line of duty. These brave men and women have sacrificed everything so it is important to show our support.
- East of England Regional Network for Police and Crime Panels – Frontline Consulting held a meeting on 29 September 2017 which discussed current work including an update on fire and rescue collaboration and regional collaboration in the East Midlands.
- There was also a meeting of 4 area collaboration with Panel Chairmen from Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire and the Thames Valley. The Chairmen have agreed to meet quarterly to discuss joint collaboration issues and the best way of scrutinising this area.
- National Conference of Police and Crime Panels run by Frontline Consulting was held on 6 November 2017. This included speakers Cllr Alison Lowe, Chair of West Yorkshire PCP, David Lloyd Chair of the Association of PCCs and Jacqui McKinlay Chief Executive from the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

The PCC also gave an update saying that it was five years since the first PCC election in November 2012 and that there had been a huge change in policing with the role of the PCC changing fundamentally. The budget had been cut by 38% which equated to £100 million and crime was becoming more complex with cyber enabled crime and the needs of the vulnerable which led to crimes such as child sexual exploitation, modern slavery, domestic abuse and mental health issues. Traditionally crime was violence and burglary related. He also expressed concern about crime being imported particularly from Eastern Europe and South America with tourists now coming over to commit a crime then leave. PCCs have also taken on extra responsibilities such as the Chairmanship of Local Criminal Justice Boards, commissioning and delivery of victim support services and

governance of Fire and Rescue Services. The PCC also was on some national Boards such as National Fraud, Counter- Terrorism and Specialist Capabilities. He commented that he would not stand again for election.

136. Local Policing

This item related to the new operating model which had gone live in June 2017. The Chief Constable reported that this new model had gone live during a time when they had lost a number of police officers (about 100), there were four murders in the first few weeks following implementation of the model and there was increasing demand, including the terrorist incidents in June this year. He commented that the old model would also not have worked well during this high demand period.

With regard to the loss of police officers other Forces were also recruiting and officers were leaving Thames Valley to join other Forces where it was cheaper to live. They were looking at alternative ways to boost numbers such as encouraging retired officers to undertake case investigations which helped the resilience of the Force. They had recently received an 'Outstanding' HMIC inspection grade with regard to efficiency in the Force but there had been problems initially with regard to new shift patterns under the new operating model. Some police officers were finding the new patterns tiring; they were being asked to work less each day but as a consequence they had less days off. They had undertaken wide ranging consultation with officers and there was continuing debate over improvements to the model.

The high demand over the summer impacted on 999/101 calls but the number of calls has now dropped slightly. They were monitoring response times under immediate/non immediate responses but the majority of calls were being dealt with in a timely way. In terms of teams responding to calls the roll out of laptops had helped the Force. There was a dashboard of performance measures. Caseloads per officer had increased because of sickness issues. The latest HMIC report on efficiency had complimented the new operating model and the Chief Constable reported that whilst it had been a difficult change process and they were now six months into implementation, he felt that the model was an improvement and a better way of working.

The Local Area Commander for Wycombe Superintendent Kevin Brown gave an update on how the model was operating in his area. He had been moved into his post at the end of June so had no preconceived ideas of how it would operate and had not been involved in any of the planning processes. The model was not quite fit for purpose at the start of the process and in the last 3-4 months he had been looking at ways to optimise resources to meet the outcomes of the model. It was a big change management programme which included a change of culture, mindset and working patterns and there had been scepticism from officers. As the resourcing had not been ideal at the start this did have an impact on investigations and the Force had become reactive rather than proactive. Police officers had been concerned about their roles and responsibilities and struggled to manage their daily workloads.

However, a 'one team' ethos had been encouraged in the new model where individual officers each had a role to play and by sitting together this improved control and ownership. They had developed a smarter resolution function to deal with lower level crime by telephone and High Wycombe area was one of the best in the Force. They managed expectations of the public where there was unlikely to be progress. Initially there had been a time lag of 2-4 weeks in dealing with inquiries and this was now 1-4 days so services had improved. With the smarter resolution function they had decreased demand by 40% in High Wycombe and officers were now positive about the new operating model and the benefit to neighbourhood policing. The problem solving teams were working well and they were employing graduates to work on community projects as a dedicated resource. They were building community resilience to deal with issues such as homelessness and anti-social behaviour to create space for investigations to be undertaken.

The Chief Constable reported that they were currently being inspected by HMIC on the effectiveness strand of PEEL which would include feedback on the new model.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- Cllr Burke commented that if some minor crimes were not addressed then the public would not be satisfied and asked how this was prioritised. The Superintendent reported that this only related to low level incidents and that they used the THOR model to prioritise (Threat Harm Opportunity Risk) and decide whether to attend incidents.
- Mr Marshall asked what being back to normal meant in terms of minutes. The Chief Constable reported that the response times for immediate was just below 80% at 20mins and less urgent was below 60%.
- Cllr Page congratulated the Chief Constable on the 'outstanding' rating from HMIC. He expressed concern about visible neighbourhood policing being downgraded as the public do engage with local police and use the 101 service to provide information. He had a surgery last Saturday where three residents had abandoned 101 calls after 10-20 mins wait and they said that they were unlikely to try again. On page 20 of the agenda papers Cllr Page quoted the HMIC report where the Force figures for the abandonment rate for 101 calls have averaged 6.1% for the 3 months December 2016 to February 2017. This was not an encouraging figure when the public were being encouraged to use 101. The Chief Constable reported that Reading in particular had been impacted by Force vacancies including the Police Community Support Officer and there had been no back up available. The Force did have a commitment to have a geographical and visible presence and they were working with partners to address this. The Chief Constable reported that he was totally committed to neighbourhood policing and that they were not where they should be with police officer numbers currently. In terms of 101 this had significantly improved but call centres still had to prioritise 999 calls and when there was a high demand this did impact on 101. There were finite resources. The more complex calls where a vulnerable person was involved would be assessed fully using the THOR model and these calls obviously took longer. They had a high benchmark of 40 seconds, which was higher than other Forces but the vast majority are within 2 minutes. There would always be anecdotal evidence that callers had to wait a long period of time. At the start of the call if they were experiencing high demand the caller was asked to call back at another time. There was a big change in technology which would be implemented next year (Contact Management Programme) which would allow more call handling to be undertaken over the internet which would allow telephone resources to be used for the most vulnerable. The Chief Constable encouraged all residents to persevere with 101 calls. Cllr Page asked for the updated figures on abandoned calls when they became available.

Action: Chief Constable

- The PCC did comment that when other Forces also had a high demand for 999 calls these were referred to other Forces and this had happened with the Metropolitan Police. The Chief Constable reported that the new contact management system was being used by Hampshire and the Thames Valley and 101 calls would be shared when there were peaks and troughs in demand.
- Cllr Hayes referred to the stringent public finances and the need for the police to focus on priorities. Whilst the new model was welcome there had been significant concerns about the roll-out of the model and the increased demand. The Force were doing an excellent job in combatting terrorism but there were concerns about community safety issues such as drug dealing in Oxford. He had been asking questions about the biggest community safety risk and the response had been the number of injecting drug dealers; there were 10 hot spots in Oxford. The neighbourhood teams were thinly spread particularly around areas such as Blackbird Leys where there was an increasing amount of gang activity and violence. These issues were being reported on 101 and they had to wait along time for a response. Anneliese Dodds MP had also expressed real concern about community policing and the delays to non-urgent calls and the invisibility of the police. He asked the PCC to confirm whether these issues were going to be dealt with in the up and coming budget and that Thames Valley Police would address the fact that they were not sufficiently policed which was leading to concerns about community safety.
- The Scrutiny Officer then read out a question from Cllr Adey which was similar to the previous question. Since the new operating model has been put in place residents are expressing concern that there is no visible policing in Wycombe – and families are now afraid to go into Wycombe at night and are even intimidated during the day. She says there are gang, drugs and begging problems and the public safety protection orders are not working because there is no one to enforce them.
- Cllr Dhaliwal also commented that the same issues were being experienced in Slough which had been discussed at their Scrutiny Committee the previous evening.

- Cllr Sharp (Windsor and Maidenhead) asked a linked question about whether security companies should be used to address some of the gaps in resourcing.

The PCC reported that £100 million had been taken out of his budget and yet the Force was assessed as being 'outstanding' from HMIC in terms of efficiency. They would be down about 400 police officers and 100 PCSO's at the end of the year. There were concerns about the distribution of funding for Police Forces across the Country and Thames Valley received £160 Government grant per head of population whereas northern metropolitan forces received approx. £190 per head. That difference in Government funding of £30, times the population of Thames Valley (2million), would pay for a large number of police officers. Resources had also been taken away to deal with the terrorist threat. The PCC had raised the precept at just below 2% each year but to make a real difference he would have to raise it by 10%. Some PCCs had been discussing the possibility of the Government removing the cap on the increase of the police precept and he would be interested to know residents views on this. If the cap was removed the PCC would go out to consultation to look at what level the precept should be raised to. The PCC commented that neighbourhood policing was a priority but that they still had to deal with threats such as counter terrorism which limited their ability to deal with street crime. There was also imported serious organised crime which needed to be addressed together with violence and 'county lines' and it was difficult to know where to prioritise. He would see what could be done about addressing drug dealing but unfortunately once a gang had been caught and prosecuted this would be soon be replaced by another gang.

- The Chief Constable responded regarding Wycombe and reported that they were trying to disrupt drug suppliers who target the vulnerable. A large amount of resources were being put into covert operations and some operations which were undertaken could take up to 2 years. He also referred to the comment made by the PCC about gangs being replaced once they had been disrupted. In terms of making High Wycombe a safe place to live it was important to work closely with partners to share information as it could sometimes be a struggle to get up to date information. They were working closely with the Chief Executive and the Community Safety Manager of Wycombe District Council.
- The Superintendent referred back to the issues with youth violence and engagement, aggressive begging and homelessness which were problems being experience across urban areas in the Thames Valley. It was important to develop strong partnership working and identifying good practice across the Country to ensure that these issues were being addressed. The Chief Constable reported that local police areas have the proactive capability to deal with these issues such as targeting crimes such as drugs activity and protecting the vulnerable from cuckooing. They have had a number of successful operations relating to Serious Organised Crime. A number of posts were going to be released in January 2018 through the new operating model but this was before the Force experienced the significant rise in demand. Therefore the MTFP for next year does not now include the removal of these 50 posts. Thames Valley are currently undertaking a proactive recruitment campaign to mitigate the shortage of police officers which includes using staff case investigators. There were also budgetary pressures and in 2018/19 there was currently a shortfall of £3.17m which the Force will need to balance before the final proposed budget is presented to the PCC in January 2018. There was also a growth area in terms of vulnerability which was high risk and high harm such as modern slavery and county lines.
- A recommendation was put that the Panel be updated on the new operating model after the first year of operation. Cllr Page asked for information to be provided on each Local Police Area as well as an overall assessment. The Chief Constable reported that they had a performance dashboard which he would share with the PCC.

Action: PCC/Chief Constable

Budgetary Pressures

Ian Thompson, Chief Financial Officer, OPCC updated Members on the budget for next year.

- Since the Chancellor announced the results of the Coalition Government's Spending Review in 2010 local policing budgets have been reduced, in real-terms, by 38%.

- Key pressures on policing are coming from rising overall crime levels, more complex crimes being committed, a growing terrorist threat and more than ever the police being called on as a first resort when other agencies lack their own capacity.
- The amount of money top-sliced or reallocated from core police grant continues to increase.
- The date of the provisional settlement is likely to be 13 December 2017.
- Although the Government has promised to protect local force budgets in cash terms (i.e. a real terms reduction) TVP continues to be an area of rapid population growth; its population is projected to increase by 15% over the 25 year period 2014 to 2039.
- There is an increasing focus on the amount of reserves held by the police service nationally. A report was presented to the Minister in October 2017 which showed the total revenue reserves at £1.6 bn. Current forecasts indicate that revenue reserves will fall by a further 50% between now and March 2020 and capital grants and reserves are forecast to fall even faster. The situation in local force areas will vary significantly e.g Metropolitan Police have recently sold New Scotland Yard for £370million.
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jul/13/met-police-sold-1bn-of-property-to-soften-blow-of-budget-cuts>
- Pay inflation has been provided for at a 1% annual increase.
- There was to be a review of the Police Core Grant Distribution Formula and work was undertaken by a Home Office led working group where progress was sufficient that a public consultation was expected in June. However following the snap general election this has been parked whilst other priority issues are being addressed.
- There has been a Home Affairs Select Committee looking at the Future of Policing involving PCCs and Chief Constables where a comment was made that the Police Grant funding formula changes won't happen for 2018/19.
- The reduced availability of finance will clearly be a significant constraint on operational policing for the foreseeable future. Given the level of savings already made the financial challenge facing TVP over the next few years is significant, extremely challenging and will require changes in all aspects of service delivery including frontline policing.
- The Chief Constable had mentioned the shortfall in the medium term revenue budget; there was also a shortfall in the capital budget of £10 million with a capital programme of £100 million over the next 4 years, being the biggest yet to ensure that policing is fit for purpose for the future with ongoing funding restraints.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- Cllr Page asked about PCC lobbying Government to have the cap removed so that they had more flexibility over the precept. The Chief Financial Officer reported that every PCC had been encouraged to respond to the DCLG to have precept flexibility and if this was allowed then the PCC would need to undertake a quick consultation to see if communities in Thames Valley supported this increase. The PCC commented that if the precept was raised there may be a danger that the formula grant may look more skewed.
- Cllr Hayes asked whether the PCC had spoken to other PCCs and Ministers about raising the precept. The PCC commented that they already knew his views.
- Mr Marshall asked where the money would be used if there was an increase in local taxation. The Chief Financial Officer reported that they would discuss this through the consultation but the extra resources raised would help sustain policing and reduce the level of budget cuts otherwise required.
- Cllr Egleton commented that at the Home Affairs Select Committee they had discussed the need for local policing and the importance of this in building intelligence. Budgets had been top sliced for national issues.

RESOLVED

That the PCC continues to keep the new operating model under review with the Chief Constable and that the Panel be provided with a report at the end of the first year of operation.

137. Performance Monitoring of the Police and Crime Plan

Members were asked to consider general and specific performance information which included:-

- National benchmarking information
- HMICFRS Police Efficiency Report 2017
- OPCC and TVP Delivery Plans
- Police and Crime Plan – Strategic Aim 1

Police Efficiency Report

The Chief Constable reported that they were judged on the following criteria:-

- How well does the Force understand demand – TVP has an outstanding understanding of the demand for its services that is based on detailed analysis of a wide range of data, including from partner agencies such as the ambulance and fire and rescue services
- How well does the Force use its resources – it has an outstanding understanding of workforce skills and abilities through the College of Policing's competency and values framework. They make best use of finite resources and manage change programmes well.
- How well is the Force planning for the future – TVP is good with some elements being outstanding. The Force has displayed innovation, embracing and investing in technology. The Chief Constable referred to the £100million investment in the next 4 years to make sure they were fit for the future.

Strategic Priority 1 – Police and Crime Plan

The PCC introduced his report and that his objective was to manage demand on services through better working with partners, with particular emphasis on three priority areas; mental health, adults at risk and service quality. He commented on the work being undertaken with Community Safety Partnerships particularly with vulnerable people as he was one of only a few PCCs who distributed some of his funding to CSPs as he thought that this would ensure that each geographical area could prioritise this funding according to local needs. However, the OPCC monitor this funding very carefully to ensure value for money and good outcomes are achieved.

His Victims Services programme was being managed well by the OPCC Policy Manager including the complex needs service which provided specialist counselling services. The OPCC worked with a wide range of partners including prisons to ensure good rehabilitation for ex offenders.

The PCC referred to hidden forms of abuse and commented that this was a difficult area to tackle as it was embedded in some communities. It was particularly difficult to get victims to report these crimes as they would often be ostracised by their family and friends. They have still yet to prosecute any cases of female genital mutilation. Either the number of cases had been over estimated or there was a lack of reporting.

The PCC reported that he was the current Chairman of the Local Criminal Justice Board and this was being utilised to engage with key delivery groups and encourage a more joined up criminal justice system. Work was also being undertaken on domestic abuse and the OPCC had procured a Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme for a one year pilot. They were also managing an interim Domestic Violence funding arrangement and working with Local Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups and other organisations to seek future closer collaboration between all commissioners, including pooled budgets. Figures for repeat cases of domestic abuse were down slightly.

In terms of sexual offences they had increased prosecutions in relation to rape but there was still a high failure rate in the courts.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- Cllr Mallon referred to the lack of reporting with Female Genital Mutilation which was a hidden crime. There had been a recent article on this and the importance of reporting this crime with only 5% of honour crimes being reported to the CPS.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/nov/07/only-5-of-honour-crimes-reported-to-police-are-referred-to-cps>

The PCC reported that they were trying to address this issue, particularly in Reading and Slough but it was very difficult to get victims to come forward to make allegations.

- Cllr Hayes referred to page 95 of the agenda which related to the OPCC supporting victims of exploitation and modern slavery – a budget had been identified and they were engaging with modern slavery networks and exploring local providers. Cllr Hayes commented that this service had been provided by Rahab in Oxford and in two years' service they had made 50 referrals, 12 of them being made through the National Referrals Mechanism. There were real concerns about the future of this service when good pathways had taken so long to be developed and were now in place. The PCC asked that Cllr Hayes email him the details and he would look into it with his Policy Manager.

Action: Cllr Hayes

- Cllr Egleton asked about the report on the full review and restructure of the nine Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs which was aimed at providing greater resilience. The Chief Constable reported that this was more of an internal restructure where some changes had been made to job descriptions. There was a further review being undertaken of the MASHs and a report would be provided to the PCC. Cllr Egleton asked that the Panel be kept up to date on this area.

Action: PCC/Chief Constable

138. Recommendation Monitoring

The recommendation monitoring report was noted. (There had already been some discussion on this item under the minutes item). The Scrutiny Officer would write to the OPCC with regard to the Local Criminal Justice item.

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

Cllr Mallon commented that the minutes were attached to the agenda. Members noted the recommendations and that the Deputy PCC would be visiting the Staffordshire PCC to look at their CSE Outcomes Framework.

140. Topical Issues

Members noted the topical issues item.

Roads Policing

In relation the attached report on roads policing Cllr Page requested a further discussion with the Force to scope devolving functions or working in partnership on roads policing enforcement. The PCC commented that if there was scope for taking a pilot forwards he would be happy to look at Reading with the potential to extend this elsewhere in the Thames Valley if appropriate. Cllr Page commented that he would be interested to see if other Authorities would be interested in working in partnership.

The Chief Constable reported that initially local authorities had pulled out of the Safer Roads Partnership because of limited funding. The Force had been happy to host the Roads Summit in September this year to look at ways to improve partnership working in the absence of the Safer Roads Partnership.

The PCC commented that Hampshire and Thames Valley Police Forces had one of the highest rates of prosecutions because of their enforcement work. He would discuss this issue with the Chief Constable to identify if there was any scope in taking this forward.

Brexit

Reference was made to legislative changes with regard to Brexit including losing the European arrest warrant so that perpetrators would face the justice system back in the UK. The PCC was asked a question on whether this would have an adverse impact on community safety. There was also a concern about intelligence sharing with

Europol. The PCC reported that the UK had a very sophisticated intelligence system with GCHQ so it was unlikely that other countries would want to stop intelligence sharing. He also commented that one of the most important areas of community safety was to control the UK borders better to ensure that crime is not imported into this Country and Brexit should support this.

141. Work Programme

The Work Programme was noted. A Panel Member suggested looking at Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage in more detail but this may be delegated to the Preventing CSE Sub Committee. There was also a suggestion to look at violent crimes and domestic abuse.

A further item should be included on reviewing the implementation of the new Contact Management Programme.

142. Date and Time of Next Meeting

2 February 2018

CHAIRMAN