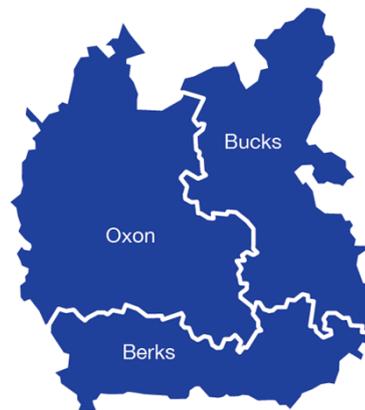


Report to the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

Title: Topical Issues

Date: 1 February 2019

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Thames Valley Police & Crime
Panel



From the Level 1 Meeting between the Chief Constable and the PCC – 22 January 2019 - PCC announces more investment in frontline policing for the Thames Valley

The Police and Crime Commissioner approved the capital and revenue plans presented to him by Chief Constable Francis Habgood. After funding pay and price rises, the increase in Council Tax agreed today enables an investment of around £8.5m in a number of priority policing areas. A commitment has been made to:

- Improve services to the public through contact management by reducing 101 call handling times
- Increase frontline policing by recruiting additional officers and staff to respond to increasing crime demand and complexity
- Improve investigative capacity and process for complex crimes
- Increase digital capability by exploiting the modern platforms which have been investing in

Anthony Stansfeld Police and Crime Commissioner said: “In December I welcomed the Government’s funding settlement which increased funding for policing and recognised the demand placed on policing nationally.

“Over £100 million has been cut from Thames Valley Police’s annual budget over the last 8 years. While the Force continues to prioritise its work and make efficiency savings, there was significant concern that budget pressures would lead to unacceptable reductions in resources which would impact frontline policing and result in a service less able to respond to increases in demand.

“The 2019/20 funding settlement has allowed us to avoid a reduction in resource and I am pleased to be able to agree a budget today which enables Thames Valley Police to invest in operational policing to help protect our communities.

“It is important to recognise, however that more than half of the funding in the Government’s 2019/20 settlement (£509m) available nationally to Police and Crime Commissioners is expected to come from local taxpayers by increasing the police portion of the Council Tax.

“Before I made a decision on the level of Council Tax, I sought views of the residents of the Thames Valley. Of the 8,031 people who completed the survey, 69.7% agreed to an increase to

fund policing. I am therefore proposing an increase in the police portion of the Council Tax in 2019/20 of £24 for the equivalent of a Band D property.

“After funding pay and price rise, the increase in Council Tax enables me to invest around £8.5m in a number of priority policing areas. These include the recruitment of additional officers to respond to increasing crime demand and complexity, improved service to the public in investment in 101 call handling, the recruitment of investigators to tackle complex crime and, investment in technology to improve productivity and efficiency.

“I am confident that the budget proposed protects our communities today and plans for the future. Over the next four years, Thames Valley Police will need to continue to make efficiency savings of over £15m with demand on services expected to continue to increase through increased reporting of complex crime and the growing challenge from serious organised crime networks”.
“The budget will now go to the Police and Crime Panel on the 1 February for final ratification.”

John Campbell chosen as the preferred candidate to be Thames Valley Chief Constable

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, Anthony Stansfeld, has chosen John Campbell as his proposed appointment for Thames Valley Police Chief Constable. John Campbell is the current Deputy Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police, a position he has held since 2015.

Anthony Stansfeld said: “After a detailed selection process I am delighted to announce that John Campbell is my preferred candidate to be appointed as the next Chief Constable for Thames Valley Police. I look forward to working closely with him in the future.”

Deputy Chief Constable John Campbell said: “I feel privileged to be chosen as the preferred candidate for the next Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police.

“I am very proud to have been a Chief Officer with Thames Valley Police for over 8 years, and look to take over from an outstanding Chief Constable in Francis Habgood. I hope to build on his successes in my tenure as Chief. “It will be an honour to lead all those who work and volunteer for us so that we can continue to deliver a police force that protects the communities of the Thames Valley and gives the public the standard of service that they deserve.”

Mr Campbell’s appointment is subject to confirmation at a Confirmation Hearing of the Police and Crime Panel.

Thames Valley launches PCSO Apprenticeships

In 2019, TVP are introducing a range of new entry routes into policing, including the newly launched Police Community Support Officer Apprenticeship (PCSOA). Applications are now open for our new PCSO Apprenticeship, with the first cohort of Officers planned to join the force in May.

Matthew Barber, Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner said; “This is a great opportunity for people to learn on the job and gain valuable qualifications. Policing is a complex business and the public rightly expect the best from Thames Valley Police. The new PCSO apprentices will play a vital role in delivering policing in our communities and transforming routes into policing.”

Thames Valley Police will not punish those caught with heroin, cocaine and ecstasy under controversial new scheme

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6500245/Thames-Valley-Police-not-punish-caught-heroin-cocaine-controversial-scheme.html>

People caught with hard drugs including heroin, ecstasy and cocaine will escape any punishment under a controversial new scheme launched by TVP. Instead of arresting those found carrying drugs, officers will recommend that they speak to an addiction service – but they will not face any sanction if they ignore the advice.

Users found in possession of Class A drugs including heroin, cocaine and ecstasy will be sent on their way without so much as an official caution under Thames Valley Police's new initiative.

The 'drugs diversion' project goes further than existing schemes in Avon and Somerset, where users are required to attend an education session to avoid prosecution, and in Durham, where addicts are arrested and must abide by a 'good behaviour' contract to prevent prosecution. In Cleveland, a handful of drug users will next year be allowed to inject heroin at a police-funded clinic.

Even if the same person is later caught again with drugs, they will escape prosecution if they are seen to be 'positively engaging' with the health service. However, if someone caught with drugs appears to be a dealer, or refuses to co-operate, they will be arrested. The same will apply if someone is caught having previously failed to attend the health appointment. Thames Valley will record the possession of drugs as a crime, but will not take the person into custody nor give them any warning, caution or conviction.

Linking Police Pay to Performance and Short Term Cyber Experts

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/11/18/performance-related-pay-short-term-contracts-cyber-experts-should/>

Radical plans to modernise the police by linking pay to performance and recruiting outside experts on short-term contracts have been proposed by the police chief in charge of standards. Mike Cunningham, who heads the service's professional body, said it was time for a "significant review" of the traditional model of policing where pay has been based on length of service. He said major reform of the UK's 125,000 police officers' pay, work patterns, recruitment and deployment would be "quid pro quo" for extra funding from the Treasury.

Sajid Javid, the home secretary, is currently locked in talks with Chancellor Philip Hammond for extra funding to help tackle a surge in violent crime and has hinted he is confident of success.

But Mr Cunningham, head of the College of Policing, warned it would not be a "blank cheque" and police would have to shift towards a performance-related model, an approach seen as controversial by many beat officers, and open up the service to outsiders.

Mr Cunningham, a former HM inspector of police and chief constable, said the shake-up would bring short-term entrants into the police which, he believed, would appeal to the millennial generation who wanted a more flexible approach to work and careers than their parents.

“Historically people came in as a police constable and stayed for 30 years until they were tipped out at the end. This model has served policing well but I think it is time for significant review”.

Police faced new demands from increasingly complex crimes, often cyber-related such as child abuse and fraud, which meant forces needed to rethink their capabilities and recruit officers and staff with the skills to tackle them, said Mr Cunningham. Mr Cunningham said ethnic minority officers and women were still under-represented: “That challenges a number of things around how people are recruited and how they are attracted to policing. The service needs to do much more.” He claimed policing was also being transformed by offering graduates and school-leavers alternative routes into the service including new apprenticeships where trainees secured a degree qualification on the job.

Operation Shire

Thames Valley Police led a series of raids that saw 250 officers targeting 10 locations making arrests and searching properties. The raid is part of Operation Shire, the ongoing operation to bring to justice the gang responsible for a series of ATM robberies across the Thames Valley in recent months. As well as locations in the Thames Valley, coordinated raids also took place in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and West Mercia.

One of the priorities of the Police & Crime Plan for Thames Valley is to tackle Serious Organised Crime and the Force have dedicated significant resources. Many of the gangs targeted by the police are responsible for a significant amount of burglary and violence across the region. Raids such as this are a major disruption to these gangs and help to bring people to justice and make our communities safer.

PCC awarded Home Office funding to tackle youth violence and exploitation

The Home Office has awarded the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Thames Valley £822,000 from its Early Intervention Youth Fund to help tackle youth violence, vulnerability and exploitation across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. The Office of the PCC is leading on the programme in partnership with a range of organisations across the Thames Valley including Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), Substance Misuse Services, Local Authorities and Secondary Schools.

The programme will include four tiers of intervention:

1. Raising awareness in all secondary schools across the Thames Valley. This may include knife crime/youth violence workshop sessions for young people and training for teachers and other professionals.
2. Support for teachers and schools in tackling school exclusions, providing specialist support such as youth workers, YOT workers and Speech and Language Therapists within approximately a third of secondary schools.
3. Detached youth work to support and provide opportunities for young people who are not in education or employment and who are not engaging in mainstream services.
4. Targeted engagement with young people already involved in gangs and knife crime, providing intensive support including access to therapies and skills training.

Operation Sceptre - successful amnesty takes knives off the streets

As part of the national week long campaign in September knife surrender bins were placed into 16 police stations across the Thames Valley. This was to prevent unwanted knives from finding their way onto the streets. In total 733 knives and bladed articles were handed in compared to 172 in February 2018.

A number of other proactive activities were undertaken across the force to tackle knife crime. This included the use of knife arches in busy train stations, educational visits to schools, colleges and local businesses, weapon sweeps in public spaces and warrants.

Officers also worked in partnership with the Police Cadets, all under the age of 18, to conduct test purchase operations at a range of local retailers. Police Cadets attempted to buy knives and during one of the operations in Oxford, a knife was sold in seven out of 10 purchase attempts. As a result, retailers were provided with advice.

Launch of new Safety Hub in Windsor

Officers from Thames Valley Police have joined South Central Ambulance Service, local charities and Councillors from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to launch a new Safety Hub in Windsor. The initiative, which is being led by Thames Valley Police, provides additional support at night for vulnerable people in and around the town centre.

Based at Windsor Baptist Church on Victoria Street, the Safety Hub will be open every Friday night into Saturday morning and Saturday night into Sunday morning between 10pm and 3am. The facility enhances the service already being provided by the Windsor Street Angels.

Lloyds Banking Group has apologised and paid an undisclosed amount in compensation to a whistleblower who produced an internal report that criticised the lender's handling of a large-scale fraud.

<http://www.cityam.com/269093/lloyds-pays-out-whistleblower-alleged-hbos-cover-up>

Brexit Agreement – Implications for Policing (Taken from BBC website)

Under the proposed transition deal, the UK will still be allowed to:

- Use the European Arrest Warrant to send criminals to face trial in the EU - and bring suspects to justice in the UK
- Use powerful EU databases to check for alerts for missing people, arrest alerts and look for matches to DNA, fingerprints and vehicle number plates. These systems are used more than a million times a day by British police
- Continue to take part in a large number of ongoing cross-border policing operations which are co-ordinated by the EU's policing agency, Europol, where the UK is one of the leading partners
- Check quickly for the criminal records of any foreign suspects arrested in the UK

Under a special caveat (Article 185), nations could tell the UK that they can no longer send suspects to face trial, because their own constitution may not allow them to do so. Germany has an explicit ban on sending its citizens to face trial outside the EU.

And once transition ends, so does the access to data. The deal includes an explicit article that will lock the UK out of all EU databases and systems at the end of 2020.

The UK will be able to temporarily continue to request access to systems that will provide intelligence on suspects - but largely only in relation to investigations that are already under way.

As for what follows, the Outline Political Declaration on the future relationship makes clear that the UK wishes to remain part of all the existing security arrangements - including a new form of extradition and database sharing. That will require a special security treaty.

But the document also acknowledges that there may be legal roadblocks that prevent the EU sharing data with the UK on anything like the current scale.

New tool developed to tackle online child grooming

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-tool-developed-to-tackle-online-child-grooming>

Engineers from some of the world's biggest tech firms, including Microsoft, Facebook, Google, Snap and Twitter, worked for 2 days at a hackathon in the United States co-hosted by the Home Secretary and Microsoft, which tasked industry experts to come up with tools to identify online child grooming. A prototype tool has been developed that can be used to automatically flag potential conversations taking place between child groomers and children.

Hackathon participants analysed tens of thousands of conversations to understand patterns used by predators. This enabled engineers to develop technology to automatically and accurately detect these patterns. Potential conversations between a groomer and their victim will be flagged so a moderator can investigate further. Further work will take place on the prototype. Once completed it will be licensed free of charge to smaller and medium-sized technology companies worldwide.

Online child sexual abuse will be the focus of the next Five Country Ministerial meeting in London in summer 2019, bringing together interior ministers and attorneys general from the UK, US, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The government announced a package of measures to tackle online CSE. This included:

- commissioning the Internet Watch Foundation to investigate how advertising is funding CSE activity
- a taskforce, chaired by the Home Secretary, bringing together representatives from ad agencies, trade bodies and brands to ensure criminals don't have access to this funding stream
- a £250,000 innovation call for organisations to bid for funding to assist them in developing innovative solutions to disrupt live streaming of abuse
- new tools to improve the capabilities of the Child Abuse Image Database (CAID) – the database used by the NCA and UK police forces to search for indecent images of children and increase the ability to identify victims

Police and Crime Commissioner's funding expands support for ex-offenders

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has awarded Aspire over £72,000 to support its 'Through the Gate' programme in Oxfordshire and expand it into Buckinghamshire. The employment charity and social enterprise has operated a 'Through the Gate' Programme in Oxfordshire for 3 years and provides holistic support for both people in custody and ex-offenders in the community.

The programme works with ex-offenders to help them gain employment by providing support such as CV writing and interview skills workshops, training and work experience on Aspire's own enterprise businesses. They also work with local employers to encourage and support them in recruiting ex-offenders. The £72,000 funding is for a one year period and is part of the PCC's Community Safety Fund, supporting the Police and Crime Plan's strategic priority of reducing reoffending. It has enabled Aspire to expand its 'Through the Gate' programme into Buckinghamshire and provide ex-offenders with specialist employment support and links to employers in Milton Keynes and High Wycombe.

£100,000 made available to community and voluntary groups

<https://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/police-property-act-fund/>

The Fund, which is jointly managed by the PCC and the Chief Constable, is created from money recovered by the police and the proceeds from the sale of items that cannot be returned to identified owners, including seizures from criminals. Earlier this year £97,950 was distributed to 20 different organisations and the PCC and Chief Constable expect to allocate around £100,000 in this grant round.

Applications were invited from local voluntary and community groups who can contribute towards two of the PCC's strategic priorities in his Police and Crime Plan, which are:

- Vulnerability
- Prevention and Early Intervention

Police and mental health

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/news/news-feed/police-cannot-fix-a-broken-mental-health-system/>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/nhs-mental-health-police-crime-uk-failings-funding-government-a8653121.html>

Police officers are increasingly being used as the service of default in responding to people with mental health problems, a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services has confirmed.

The report, 'Policing and Mental Health: Picking Up the Pieces', makes it clear that whilst the police service is doing a good job in difficult circumstances, there are concerns over whether the police should be involved in responding to mental health problems at the current level. The report emphasises that there needs to be a radical rethink and a longer-term solution to what has

become a national crisis. HM Inspector of Constabulary Zoë Billingham said: “Police officers naturally want to respond and do their best to support vulnerable people when they ask for help. And we found that police officers respond to those with mental health problems with care and compassion. “But we cannot expect the police to pick up the pieces of a broken mental health system. Over-stretched and all-too-often overwhelmed police officers can’t always respond appropriately, and people in mental health crisis don’t always get the help they need.

“People in crisis with mental health problems need expert support – support that can’t be carried out in the back of a police car or by locking them into a police cell.

“All too often, the system is failing people when they most need help. This is not a problem that the police alone can solve. Other services need to stop relying on the 24/7 availability of the police.

“We have grave concerns about whether the police should be involved in responding to mental health problems to the degree they are. Fundamental change is needed urgently in the way those with mental health problems are supported by the state. The police should be the last resort, not the first port of call.”

The report reflects that demand for police to respond to mental health-related calls is increasing. Forces tended to underestimate the number of officers sent to mental health incidents, the response to which took longer than forces realised. Some forces are more advanced at understanding and measuring demand in this area than others, but overall the police service needs to improve its understanding of the extent of mental health demand.

The scale of the problem is illustrated by findings that, in London, for example, the police receive a call about a mental health concern once every four minutes and send an officer to respond to a mental health call every twelve minutes. The top five individual repeat callers to the Metropolitan Police Service all have mental health problems and called the force a combined total of 8,655 times last year, costing the service £70,000 just to answer the calls. Welsh forces have estimated that each call takes, on average, three hours.

The report found strong leadership and governance on mental health across most forces. Also, there are strong and well-established partnerships across the country to support the most vulnerable in society, the most widespread of which is a mental health triage system to manage mental health demand and respond better to people in crisis. Additionally, police officers had a good understanding of how to respond to those with mental health problems and feedback from partner organisations recognised the empathy officers showed in supporting those with mental health problems.

Conviction rates in domestic violence and extra support to victims are to be adopted nationally by the Crown Prosecution Service.

<https://www.theguardian.com/law/2018/dec/18/cps-to-extend-effective-domestic-violence-prosecution-scheme>

Prosecution rates in some areas have improved by almost 10% using techniques developed in pilot projects over the past two years, including enabling witnesses to give evidence from behind screens. The scheme’s rollout across England and Wales is being announced at a law enforcement

conference in Birmingham on Tuesday ahead of Christmas and the new year which are traditionally the busiest periods for domestic violence.

On Christmas Day 2017, CPS Direct, the prosecution department which liaises with police, took 592 calls from officers seeking charging decisions. At peak times, 68 calls an hour were received. On New Year's Day last year, there were 914 calls from police seeking charging decisions. The call rate reached 76 an hour at its height.

Additional prosecutors, working from their homes, will be on duty on New Year's Day this year to advise on charging decisions. Domestic violence accounts for the majority of CPS Direct's workload over the holiday periods.

The new prosecution measures have been developed in CPS pilot projects in London, Nottingham and Yorkshire since 2016. They include:

- Making sure victims can visit court before trial to familiarise themselves with surroundings.
- Allowing victims, as long as the courts permit, to give evidence from behind a screen.
- Providing separate courthouse entrances for victims and offenders where possible, as well as childcare facilities.
- Better support from an independent domestic abuse advisor (IDVA) to support victims.

Known as the domestic abuse best practice framework, it is due to be introduced in domestic abuse courts across England and Wales from January.

There has been a decline in the number of domestic abuse cases referred to the CPS by the police recently, a drop linked by many to problems of police resources. In 2017-18, there were 110,562 referrals flagged up by officers as being related to domestic abuse. The overwhelming majority of victims were women.

Kate Brown, who is chief crown prosecutor for CPS Direct and the CPS's national lead for domestic abuse, said: "We are developing a clear multi-agency approach and ensuring that we have consistently trained staff. "It's always been the case that the guilty plea rate in domestic abuse cases is lower than in general crime because offenders hope that victims will not see the trial through. We want to see that [fallout rate] reduced by taking away the stress of the experience for victims."

Domestic abuse reports rise in Oxfordshire

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/17260730.domestic-abuse-reports-rise-in-oxfordshire/?ref=ebIn>

New figures released by Thames Valley Police under a Freedom of Information request revealed the rise, just as a regulator raised concerns about the safety of some domestic abuse victims in the area.

In Cherwell and West Oxfordshire districts, the number of domestic abuse crimes has risen from 1,010 in 2016 to 1,129 in 2017 and 1,349 in 2018, up 19 per cent.

In South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, 1,115 domestic abuse crimes were recorded in 2018, up 17 per cent on 2016.

In Oxford, numbers increased by 12 per cent from 897 to 943.

Figures covered the period between November and October, except in Oxford, where the time frame ran from October to September.

The HM Inspectorate of Probation, which investigates youth offending and probation services, rated that in the Thames Valley 'requires improvement'. It awarded its second-worst rating to the Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), which is responsible for supervising about 4,000 convicts serving community and prison sentences, and promoting rehabilitation following release. One concern was weaknesses in work to keep victims safe, including in domestic abuse cases.

County Lines – “Line 18: £3m per day county lines drugs business fuelling knife crime”

<https://news.sky.com/story/line-18-3-million-per-day-county-lines-drugs-business-fuelling-knife-crime-11566109>

County Lines – “Cuckooing”

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-46738016>

Random Forensics inquiry – 40 drug driving offences quashed

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-46466710?intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/c008ql151m5t/policing&link_location=live-reporting-story

Special Grant Funding to be received for the Policing of the wedding of the Royal Wedding and the visit from The President of the United States

Thames Valley Police has policed a number of internationally significant events, including the wedding of Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Sussex in May and the visit from The President of the United States in July. The effective policing of these events has been widely praised and ensured the safety and security of all involved.

In November the PCC submitted an application for Special Grant Funding to the Home Office for the full cost of both these operations. The application was considered by the Home Office who have confirmed we have been successful in our application and will award us 100 per cent of our direct costs for both these operations.

The total recovered for the policing operation surrounding the wedding of Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Sussex is £2,364,690. The total recovered for the policing operation surrounding the visit from The President of the United States is £5,476,205. This covers all the additional costs incurred by Thames Valley Police and does not cover internal costs such as the deployment of our own resources.