

Minutes

Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Friday, 12 April 2019, in Olympic Room, Aylesbury Vale District Council Gatehouse Road Aylesbury Bucks HP19 8FF, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 1.10 pm.

Members Present

Councillor Trevor Egleton (Chairman - South Bucks District Council), Eric Batts (Vale of White Horse), Councillor Bill Bendyshe-Brown (Buckinghamshire County Council), Councillor Robin Bradburn (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor David Carroll (Wycombe District Council), Councillor Norman MacRae (West Oxfordshire), Councillor Kieron Mallon (Oxfordshire County Council), Curtis-James Marshall (Independent Member), Councillor Iain McCracken (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Andrew McHugh (Cherwell District Council), Councillor Barrie Patman (Wokingham Borough Council), Councillor Emma Webster (West Berkshire Council) and Councillor Mark Winn (Aylesbury Vale District Council)

Officers Present

Khalid Ahmed (Scrutiny Officer).

Others Present

Matthew Barber (Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner), John Campbell (Chief Executive, Thames Valley Police), Paul Hammond (Chief Executive, Office of PCC), Ian Thompson (Chief Finance Officer, Office of PCC) and Anthony Stansfeld (Police and Crime Commissioner).

Apologies

Councillor Derek Sharp (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Chiltern District Council), Julia Girling (Independent Member) and Councillor Tom Hayes (Oxford City Council)

42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Iain McCracken and Councillor Emma Webster both declared Interests as Members of the Berkshire Fire Authority.

43 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 13 February 2019 and the Confirmation Hearing for the appointment of the new Chief Constable held on 13 February 2019 were both agreed as correct records.

44 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions submitted.

45 THEMED ITEM - UPDATE ON LOCAL POLICING MODEL

Members were reminded that in June 2016, the Panel was informed that Thames Valley Police's 2014-15 Delivery Plan had included an action to review the approach to Neighbourhood Policing in light of best practice nationally and emerging College of Policing evidence. The strategy for the delivery of neighbourhood policing for Thames Valley Police was intended to complement the commitment of working together to make communities safer, and comprised the following four elements: Visibility - to increase public confidence and reduce crime; Engagement - to enable the participation of communities in policing at their chosen level; Problem solving - to identify, establish causation, respond and address local problems and Community Resilience - to increase public involvement in policing.

In November 2017, the Panel was provided with an update on how the new Local Policing Model was being implemented in the Wycombe Local Policing Area.

The Police and Crime Commissioner reported that unfortunately a written progress report providing details on the first year of operation of the new policing model had not been provided due to the recent change of Chief Constable and the work which had been taking place during the budget preparation for 2019/20.

The Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police attended the meeting and provided an oral update on the progress made in relation to the recently implemented new Local Policing Model.

The Panel was informed that the new model provided an opportunity for the Police to focus on how policing should be delivered, particularly on a local level, across the force and beyond geographical boundaries. Local Policing Areas were aligned to local authority areas, with local commanders being accountable to the Chief Constable and with a consistent approach.

Forces had to come to decisions as to what structures to put in place in view of the reductions in police officers. TVP were very committed to having a local policing model. The Panel was informed that some Forces have moved away from the concept of local policing, moving resources away from local areas, whereas TVP have not.

The Chief Constable reported that this new model was introduced two years ago against a backdrop of cuts, with a significant number of people being lost to the organisation, which included 100 plus police officers being lost to the Force.

The Chief Constable explained the theory of the new model was to use neighbourhood officers who were local, familiar, consistent and accessible and dealt with problem solving. There was a response function element who responded to emergency "999" calls and an investigation function whose task was to gain justice for victims.

However, with the reduction in police officer numbers, the Force had to become more resilient and adaptable, in terms of dealing with the changes in the types/complexity of crimes. Less inquisitive policing was being carried out around property theft and more police time was being taken towards 'people crime', such as assaults, domestic violence and vulnerability crimes. This changing face of policing was increasing the investigative burden.

The new operating model involved moving to smaller response teams with Criminal Investigative Detectives to deal with the increasing investigative work. These uniformed officers were also deployed

as when incidents arose.

The new operating model was operating against a backdrop of increased demand for the Police across the UK, with “999” calls having increased nationally by 10%. Recruitment and Retention in the Thames Valley continued to be challenging, with at one stage Thames Valley Police being 150 Police Officers down. These issues impacted on the staffing structure of the new Local Policing Model, however, a decision was made to maintain neighbourhood policing, in effect ring-fencing neighbourhood police officers and Police Community Support Officers, which bucked the national trend.

The Chief Constable referred to the development of smarter resolution teams which were office based, that triaged some of the investigations. Initially officers were put under stress due to the staggered shift patterns to match the demands on policing. This reduced effective supervision and having too many staggered shifts did not work. Caseloads for officers had been high, there were higher levels of sick leave and the uniformed police were being stretched.

A review took place which changed shift patterns to enable a more effective use of resources. From February, 2018, local neighbourhood officers were combined with problem solving teams which had produced some good results, such as a 13% reduction in Missing Children.

Emergency Response Teams included Criminal Investigative Detectives and student police officers which created larger teams. Stronghold Teams targeted County Lines crimes, working closely with partners. Command supervision was important under the operating model, together with the good will of staff to ensure the best local policing was provided.

The PCC and the Chief Constable acknowledged that a written report had been requested providing details of the first year of operation of the new Local Policing, and this would be submitted to the next Panel meeting.

The following questions were asked and were responded to:

1. The HMIC report stated that the benefits of the new model were being tracked to ensure that they are achieved. Could the PCC comment on how is he holding the Chief Constable to account on the new operating model and is it helping in the fight against crime?

[The PCC reported that the new model was introduced when Thames Valley Police was under pressure with having to police Royal Weddings and the President Trump visit. Thames Valley was one of few Forces that retained neighbourhood policing. Reference was made to the demographic problems of policing staff with a number of Police Officers reaching retirement age and the continuing difficulties associated with recruitment and retention within the Thames Valley region. All this was against a backdrop of rising crime and a changing face of crime. The report which would be submitted to the next Panel meeting would provide detail on how effective the new Local Policing Model was in the fight against crime“.]

2. Reference was made to the smarter resolution teams and the Chief Constable was asked how officers were selected for the Teams, particularly when a particular skill set was required for dealing with crimes such as Hate Crimes. Also In relation to commercial burglary, there sometimes was no police response to these crimes which were sometimes linked to unauthorised encampments across the Thames Valley.

[Individual Police Officer skills were matched to best deal with particular crimes This ensured that maximum empathy and understanding was given to victims of these crimes who were often vulnerable

people. The Chief Constable recognised the concerns expressed relating to commercial burglary].

3. An update was requested on the performance of handling “101” calls in view of the recent frustrations with the service from users.

{The Chief Constable reported that for March, the average waiting time was around two minutes which was an improvement on last summer’s average of 6-7 minutes. The Contact Centre was at full establishment which had improved performance. Performance statistics on “101” calls would be included in the report on the Local Policing Model which would be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel.}

4. The improvement in police visibility was praised, however, the constant changing of officers meant that sometimes local residents and Councillors did not know who their neighbourhood officers were. Could this information be communicated to local Councillors?

[It was reported that this information was known by local authority CSPs but it was acknowledged that this should be better communicated to local Councillors. This should also include who local PCSOs were.]

5. Reference was made to the positive effect of social media campaigns for missing children and it was asked whether there was any data to underpin how successful social media was in this respect?

[The Chief Constable said he would investigate if this could be done and report back].

6. What plans has the PCC in place in relation to improving the recruitment and retention of Police Officers in view of the commitment to recruit extra Police Officers to the Force?

[The PCC referred to the past difficulties of recruitment and retention in Thames Valley Police caused by the high cost of living in the Thames Valley area. There had been a number of Thames Valley trained Police Officers who had moved to Force areas where the cost of housing was lower and the standard of living was better. In addition there were a number of Police Officers who were close to retirement which would have an impact on Police numbers in the future. Pension rights for newer recruits would negate this issue in the future.

Forces across the nation would be recruiting at the same time so it would be a competitive in terms of recruitment for Police Forces, including Thames Valley Police. The Chief Constable referred to the Police apprenticeship scheme which was successful.]

7. Were there any plans to merge any Local Police areas?

[The Chief Constable responded that there were no plans to merge Local Police areas at this stage].

8. Parts of the Thames Valley Police Force area were rural; has Thames Valley Police enough vehicle resources to enable Police Officers to police these areas efficiently and effectively?

[The Chief Constable reported that visibility was a challenge in these areas. However, response teams dealt expeditiously with incidents. There was an increased resilience of patrols on rural areas. The PCC explained that there was a difficult balance with policing in the Thames Valley in terms of the level of policing required in Towns and in rural areas. Reference was made to the funding which Thames Valley Police received and that an extra £100m would fund around 200 extra Police Officers. Thames Valley Police was not as well funded as other Police Forces.]

RESOLVED

That the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable be thanked for the update and a written report be requested for the next meeting of the Panel, providing details on the operation of the new Local Policing Model.

46 ANNUAL ASSURANCE REPORT - JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Panel was provided with the Annual Assurance Report for 2018 from the Joint Independent Audit Committee, which informed Members how the Committee has complied with each of its specific responsibilities, during the last twelve months covering the period December 2017 to December 2018.

The PCC reported that the report provided an assurance opinion that the risk management and internal control environment in Thames Valley Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner was operating efficiently and effectively. Reference was made to the continuing scrutiny on force change management and the delivery of financial performance and operational effectiveness.

The Panel was informed that in relation to financial management, the report concluded that the Committee was satisfied that both the PCC's Chief Finance Officer and the Force Director of Finance had the necessary capability and capacity to ensure the proper administration of the PCC's and Force's financial affairs.

The PCC referred to the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) programme which was being developed and implemented across the three forces (Surrey, Sussex and TVP), the tri-force programme governance arrangements and recent programme audit findings. Improvements were needed with this and it was hoped the new systems implemented would achieve this.

Assurance was provided from the Committee that the corporate governance framework within Thames Valley was operating efficiently and effectively.

With regard to Complaints, Integrity and Ethics and the Force oversight arrangements, it was noted that there had been a broadening of the Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel's considerations, away from its terms of reference. This was noted and was endorsed, as long as this did not detract from the full and proper consideration of the complaint process.

The report concluded in relation to Corporate Risk Management, that this area was managed effectively and there was appropriate capability for the published goals of both the PCC and the Force, to be achieved efficiently and effectively.

Business continuity management, Internal and External Audit were all classed as operating efficiently and effectively. In relation to Health and Safety, there were concerns that the number of assaults against Police Officers and staff had continued to rise.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and the Panel offered their congratulations to the PCC and the Force for the good report received from the Joint Independent Audit Committee.

47 COMPLAINTS INTEGRITY AND ETHICS ANNUAL ASSURANCE REPORT

The Panel gave consideration to the Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel's Annual Assurance Report for 2018.

Reference was made to the matters of concern and issues raised during the year which included:

- The time taken (as in the number of days) to resolve complaints compared to other Forces together with the number of complaints rising.
- BME staff under-representation as a proportion of the workforce within TVP along with the number of BME officers being complained about.
- Use of force by officers.
- Justification and proportionality of Stop and Search powers.
- Treatment of detainees in custody with mental health issues. The Panel drafted a letter to Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice MP David Gauke in regards to these issues.
- Delay in examination of ICT equipment relating to alleged offences.
- Prioritisation of child sexual exploitation (CSE) cases.
- A desire for a greater focus by the Panel on 'discrimination and equality' complaint cases.
- Disclosable relationships with the Force.
- Ethical dilemmas.
- Abuse of authority in relation to officer relationships with victims of crime.

In conclusion, the Assurance Statement from the Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel was to provide an assurance to the PCC and Chief Constable that the complaints handling and management arrangements in place within Thames Valley Police were operating efficiently and effectively.

RESOLVED

That the Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel Annual Assurance report 2018 be noted.

48 POLICE AND CRIME PLAN STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 - PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Consideration was given to a report of the PCC, which summarised the progress to date (Year 2, 2018/19, to end of quarter 3) on the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan Strategic Priority 2 – Prevention and Early Intervention.

Discussion took place on some of the key aims:

- Coordinated efforts by police and partner agencies to improve public awareness of measures to protect themselves from cybercrime, particularly targeting those most at risk (such as those at either end of the age spectrum)

The PCC reported that cybercrime was becoming a major sophisticated crime, with cyber criminals particularly targeting vulnerable people. Increased education and public awareness of these crimes was needed to protect the public. Details of the initiatives which have been carried out to improve public awareness were reported.

Reference was made to the work which was carried out with other agencies in relation to preventative work on cybercrime and the PCC reported that the authorities struggled to tackle major cyber fraud very well and only a small percentage was investigated due to a lack of Police resources and the sophistication of the cyber criminals. The Panel was informed that cybercrime needed to be addressed at a national level.

- Increased focus by all agencies on preventing and tackling ‘peer on peer’ abuse

Reference was made to the new Domestic Violence Bill and the PCC reported that the Policy Unit would be translating the operational impact of this. A Member made reference to suicides which occurred as a result of domestic violence and that this information should be shared with CSPs. The PCC agreed to look into this.

- Police and partners address road safety concerns, especially amongst vulnerable groups such as younger people, cyclists and pedestrians

Reference was made to individual cases of road safety concerns caused by inconsiderate driving which had not been investigated by the Police. The PCC reported that the joint Hampshire and Thames Valley Road Safety Team had suffered cut-backs to the service which had resulted in less police vehicles on Thames Valley Roads.

- Improved use of technology by police, in order to prevent crime and support earlier intervention with known offenders

In relation to the TVP Delivery Plan action, the development of a collaborative approach to Automatic Number Plate Recognition with Hampshire Constabulary, the PCC reported that he would report back on the timescale for the introduction of this.

RESOLVED

That the report on progress made on Police and Crime Plan Strategic Priority 2 - Prevention and Early Intervention be noted.

49 POLICE AND CRIME PLAN STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 - REDUCING REOFFENDING

Consideration was given to a report of the PCC, which summarised the progress to date (Year 2, 2018/19, to end of quarter 3) on the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan Strategic Priority 3 – Reducing Reoffending.

Discussion took place on some of the key aims:

- Improved data sharing on gangs, with the aim of reducing exploitation of young people through gang membership and reducing and preventing violent crime, especially knife crime.

Reference was made to the 100m allocated by the Government to tackle knife crime and a question was asked about the levels of knife crime in Thames Valley. The PCC reported that with the increased use of “stop and search” it was inevitable that the statistics for knife crime increased, however, violence associated with knife crime had gone down in the Thames Valley. The PCC said he would supply knife crime statistics for the Thames Valley to Panel Members.

- Identification and Implementation of best practice in the management of perpetrators of domestic violence, particularly focussing on serial perpetrators

As was mentioned in the previous agenda item on Prevention and Early Intervention, the comments made in relation to the new Domestic Violence Bill and the need to share with CSPs, the suicides which occurred as a result of domestic violence, were noted.

RESOLVED

That the report on progress made on Police and Crime Plan Strategic Priority 3 – Reducing Reoffending be noted.

50 CHAIRMAN UPDATE / PCC UPDATE / TOPICAL ISSUES

The Panel was provided with a report which presented details of topical policing issues since the last meeting of the Panel.

Discussion took place on the work of CSPs and the Panel placed on record their appreciation to the PCC for the continuing funding of CSPs.

A Member made reference to Cadet Force Instructors who were provided with paid leave to carry out their voluntary duties. A request was made that the Leaders of these Cadet Forces be afforded the same entitlement to paid leave to carry out this useful voluntary service. The PCC was encouraged to give consideration to affording time off for these volunteers.

A Member of the Panel raised an issue regarding the relocation of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, from Bletchley Police Station to Bicester and the impact this would have on victims. There had been no consultation with Milton Keynes Council. The PCC reported that the relocation of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre was not a decision of the PCC and it was suggested that the Member take up the issue with Sexual Assault Referral Centre Board or the NHS, who were responsible for this service.

The Chairman and the Panel noted that this meeting would be the last meeting of a number of Members who may be replaced by their constituent authorities as the representative to the Panel. It was noted that Independent Member, Julia Girling, Councillors Iain McCracken and Emma Webster would no longer be Members of the Panel for the next Municipal Year. The Panel placed on record their appreciation for the support and work of the three Members during their time as Members of the Panel.

51 WORK PROGRAMME

Noted.

52 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Panel noted that the next meeting would take place on 21 June 2019 at 11.00am at Aylesbury Vale District Council Offices.

CHAIRMAN