

Minutes

Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Friday, 6 September 2019, in Aylesbury Vale District Council Offices, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP19 8FF, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 12.45 pm.

Members Present

Councillor Kieron Mallon (Oxfordshire County Council) (Chairman), Councillor Trevor Egleton (South Bucks District Council) (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Robin Bradburn (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor David Cannon (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor David Carroll (Wycombe District Council), Councillor Nigel Chapman (Oxford City Council), Councillor Steve Good (West Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor John Harrison (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Andrew McHugh (Cherwell District Council), Councillor Mohammed Nazir (Slough Borough Council), Councillor Barrie Patman (Wokingham Borough Council), Councillor Ian Snowdon (Substitute - South Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Mark Winn (Aylesbury Vale District Council) and Councillor Howard Woollaston (West Berkshire Council).

Officers Present

Khalid Ahmed (Scrutiny Officer).

Others Present

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

Apologies

Councillor Bill Bendyshe-Brown (Buckinghamshire County Council), Councillor Neil Fawcett (Vale of White Horse District Council), Councillor Sophia James (Reading Borough Council), Curtis-James Marshall (Independent Member), Phillip Morrice (Independent Member), Councillor David Rouane (South Oxfordshire District Council) and Councillor Jonathan Waters (Chiltern District Council).

MURDER OF PC ANDREW HARPER

At the start of the meeting, Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner, the Chief Constable for Thames Valley Police both paid tribute to PC Andrew Harper who was tragically murdered whilst on police duty at Sulhamstead, Berkshire.

The Panel stood for a moments silence to remember PC Andrew Harper.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Andrew McHugh declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 6 – Victims First Scheme as he was involved in restorative justice in the Health Service.

16 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 21 June 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

[In relation to Minute No.11 – Annual Review of Panel’s Rules of Procedure, Panel Membership, Appointment to Sub-Committees/ Task Groups and Budget, the Panel was provided with additional information relating to the future location and webcasting of future Panel meetings.

It was **RESOLVED** – That future meetings of the Panel take place at Aylesbury Vale District Council Offices in the Oculus meeting room, and meetings be webcast. This arrangement would be reviewed after 12 months to assess the cost effectiveness of this arrangement.

Complaints Sub-Committee – It was **RESOLVED** – That Councillor Steve Good be appointed as a Member of the Complaints Sub-Committee for 2019/20.]

17 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE / PCC UPDATE / TOPICAL ISSUES

The Panel considered a report prepared by its Scrutiny Officer on Topical Policing and Crime issues. Areas which were covered in the report included:-

Recruitment of 20,000 extra Police Officers and Crown Prosecution Service to receive an extra £85m over the next two years to deal with rise in violent crime

The Police and Crime Commissioner welcomed the announcement by the Prime Minister to fund the recruitment of 20,000 new police officers in England and Wales. The Panel was informed that these additional officers would bring police numbers back to the levels of 2012. For Thames Valley Police an increase in the number of police officers would improve even further an efficient Police Force.

Reference was also made to the increased funding for the CPS which would help the Criminal Justice System deal with the increase in violent crime.

Panel Members asked the following questions:

(1) Has there been any indication at this stage what the rationale will be for where the reported extra officers (400-800) for TVP may be deployed?

[The PCC reported that the extra officers would be allocated across the 18 Local Police Areas of the Thames Valley with the vast majority deployed as front line police officers. Reference was made to the challenges of recruitment within Thames Valley because of the cost of housing and the cost of living.]

(2) Reference was made to all Police Forces losing experienced Police Officers and the PCC was asked what could be done to improve recruitment and retention?

[The PCC reported that the Government had launched a national recruitment campaign aimed at the recruitment of 20,000 Police Officers. The PCC stated that an issue with the recruitment was the requirement from 2020 that all new Police Officers in England and Wales would have to be educated to degree level. This would impact on how quickly officers could be recruited and would delay the appointment process. The Panel was informed that recruitment would not be easy because of the cost of living and high house prices in the Thames Valley.]

The majority of the extra Police Officers would be put into neighbourhood front line policing but with extra officers being put into specialist units such as the Serious Organised Crime Unit to tackle serious crimes such as “County Lines”.

The Chief Constable informed the Panel that Thames Valley Police ensured that quality officers were retained as far as possible and there would be a recruitment drive to ensure Thames Valley was at the forefront of the recruitment process.

The PCC reported that he would have more information on possible numbers and when the recruitment process would commence by the time of the next Panel meeting].

(3) In view of the increased number of assaults on Police Officers, would the PCC offer all front-line Police Officers Tasers, as other Police Forces have done?

[The PCC acknowledged the increasing number of violent assaults on Police Officers and that some Police Forces had issued officers with Tasers for protection. The PCC said that he was looking into the use of Tasers for the Force and referred to a three day training course which had to be undertaken for officers to use Tasers.

In response to a comment regarding the safe secure storing of Taser equipment, the PCC reported that the storage of Tasers around Thames Valley was an issue and referred to the closure of a number of police stations which had reduced storage space.

The Chief Constable reported that 12 months ago, Thames Valley Police had agreed to increase the use of Tasers by Police Officers and that they were a very useful bit of kit for officers. The protection of Thames Valley Police Officers was very important and the use of Tasers would be kept under review, subject to a threat and risk assessment.]

Thames Valley Police: Crime Data Integrity re-inspection 2019

The Panel was provided with details of the Crime Data re-inspection results which found that Thames Valley Police had improved its crime recording arrangements since the 2017; however, it was found that still more needed to be done.

The PCC reported that there was clearly more work to be done to improve crime recording in response to the HMICFRS re-inspection of Crime Data Integrity and it was a concern that some of the issues raised at the last inspection were not yet satisfactorily remedied. Reference was made to how crime was recorded which meant certain crimes had to be recorded multiple times.

Panel Members asked the following questions:

(1) Could the PCC indicate to the Panel how is he holding the Chief Constable to account regarding the processes which are being put in place to address the issues raised in the report relating to training of frontline officers in the use of NICHE and to Contact Management Centre staff for recording crimes correctly?

[The PCC reported that greater training would be taking place and improvements would be made. Meetings took place every two weeks where issues were discussed to improve processes. The Chief Constable said that improvements would take place on recording crime when the public first contacted the Police and first calls would be recorded. A review and further training would take place to improve performance on this.

Reference was made to other Police Forces also having poor reports and Chief Constables questioning the process for recording crimes. A meeting would be taking place with the Home Secretary to discuss the issue.]

(2) What was the impact of reporting on the Victims First scheme, particularly around crimes relating to Domestic Violence, sexual assault which from the report, were not always being recorded properly. In addition, reference was made to those crimes which were not always reported at the time they were committed.

[The PCC reported that victims wanted to see justice being done. Crimes were on the increase and yet prosecutions were down. The PCC continued that all crimes which were reported were investigated and the Chief Constable reported that all sexual assault and domestic abuse crimes were investigated consistent with national risk assessments. There was a duty to protect victims. Reference was made to needing to act quickly in relation to Domestic Violence to ensure a speedy court appearance and the CPS had an important role in this respect.]

(3) A Member enquired about the impact of the reporting of crimes on national systems and whether there was enough resource to deal with this.

[The PCC made the point that the Police Force with the best recording of crime arrangements had the worst outcome rates. The Chief Constable reported that reporting was a very complicated process and that systems did not help. An example was given of stalking, which used to be recorded just the once, but under the new system, this has to be recorded by the number of instances, which was challenging.]

(4) A comment was made regarding the increase in the crime of possession of knives which had occurred because of the increased recording of the crime and the efficiency of the Police.

[The PCC in response said that the success in terms of knife crime was due to the effective and efficient use of "stop and search" powers. The same applied to drug related arrests. These type of outcomes were not reflected in the inspection report.]

(5) Are other Police Forces struggling with the recording of crimes or is this a unique situation to the Thames Valley? Is there liaison with other Forces who are performing better in terms of Crime Data to ensure lessons and best practise can be shared?

[The PCC referred to West Midlands and Kent who received similar reports. The Chief Constable explained that the background to this area of inspection was that there had been allegations that the Police massaged crime figures. The Panel was informed that 17 Police Forces were rated inadequate in terms of crime reporting with 3 Police Forces classified as good. Reference was made to the introduction of on-line reporting which was a good facility.]

RESOLVED – (1) That the updates provided and the topical issues contained in the report be noted.

(2) That the PCC be requested to provide an annual update to the Panel on Recruitment and Retention within Thames Valley Police, which would include further information on the impact and benefit of the additional Police Officers, once the process to recruit them has been completed.

(3) That the PCC be requested to provide an update to the Panel in six months' time on progress made by TVP in making improvements to Crime Data Integrity.

18 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions submitted.

19 THEMED ITEM - VICTIMS FIRST SCHEME

Shona Morrison, Head of Policy and Commissioning at the Office of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner attended the meeting to provide a presentation on the first year of operation of the Victims First Scheme.

The Panel was informed that Victims First was the overarching brand name for all of the PCC's activity aimed at improving the post-offence experience of victims of crime. The 4 main strands of activity were:-

- Support: Ensuring appropriate services for victims exist across the policing area;
- Accessibility: Raising public awareness of services and improving ease of access;
- Awareness: Campaigns to improve knowledge about specific types of victimisation and encourage people who need support to seek it;
- Rights: Improving the overall standard of services for victims across the Criminal Justice System and beyond.

Support

Victims Needs Assessments have been carried out in 2014 and in 2017. Specialist reviews also have mapped services or identified needs in relation to Domestic Violence (2015 and 2016), Counselling Support (2016 and 2017), Young Victims (2015 and 2017) and Rape Support (2019).

Since 2015, the Thames Valley OPCC has delivered around 22 market engagement events involving around 250 providers; 3 bid writing workshops; 6 'developing consortia' workshops and made consultants available to emerging consortia/agencies to support them to 'think outside the box'.

Some of the standout statistics around support were:-

- Around 20% of victims want support (Crime Survey England and Wales, Apr 2019);
- Around 60% of those who want support require a short-term, supportive intervention which can be provided by many non-specialists;
- Around 40% (or 8% of all those needing support) access 'specialist support' (i.e. services involving highly skilled and experienced staff).

Around 60% of those needing 'specialist support' have their needs reasonably well met (mainly by Domestic and Sexual Violence Services). Many victims have crime types or complex/multiple needs which do not fit the present arrangements and are not being well met. These include stalking/harassment, cybercrime (e.g. sextortion, fraud), ASB, Exploitation/Modern Slavery, DV/SA victims who do not fit 'traditional services' (e.g. inter-familial, male victims, historical, medium risk victims, LGBT+), Hate Crime victims, very young victims, witnesses (e.g. murder victims), family members (e.g. parents of victims of sexual abuse/CSE), traumatised couples or families.

Reference was made to sometimes the issues being compounded by mental health problems or other vulnerabilities.

Since 2016, the OPCC has implemented a Victims Service's Re-design Project:-

- To bring to an end several existing contracts and posts.
- To commission a multi-disciplinary Victims First 'Adult Specialist Service' to provide 'specialist support' to all who need it regardless of crime type by 1st April 2020.

In Thames Valley in 2015, PCC funding for 'specialist' support versus 'non-specialist' support was

around 50:50. From April 2020, funding from the OPCC for 'specialist' support compared to 'non-specialist' will be approximately 80:20.

Accessibility

The Panel was informed that sometimes it was difficult to make contact with victims. There had been the creation of an internet-based victim's portal www.victim-first.org.uk. There was an on-line Referral Form for public and professionals.

The Victims First Hub was established in March 2018, with Freephone number 0300 1234 148. A new referral mechanism had been established for TVP officers and staff directly from the police CMS.

In 2018-19, Victims First Hub received around 22,000 referrals and details of these were reported.

Members were informed that around 4 in 10 victims cannot be contacted or no longer want support. Support Services funded by the PCC received around 8,000 'valid' referrals (where contact has been made and support still required). The majority referred from the Victims First Hub are to the Victims First Emotional Support Service (low level support), followed by the Sexual Violence Service, followed by the Young Victims Service.

Reference was made to the use of social media to increase awareness <https://www.facebook.com/victimfirstTV> and campaigns such as 'Lets Hate Hate', #KnowThisIsntLove (coercive control)

Members were provided with details of Victims First Connect which will consist of localised, community based Victims First information points. This would allow support to be accessed at a community level which will make it easier for those who have not reported the crime to the police. Victim First Connect points will provide:

- Information on Victims First and what services are available;
- Provide crime prevention/ safety advice
- Information on hate crime
- The ability to make a third party report of hate crime
- Someone to make a referral to Victims First on the victim's behalf

Rights

Infographics to explain the Victims Code of Practice, the Criminal Justice process and Restorative Justice. Use of social media, a Victims Information Pack has been produced which would be used by TVP.

A recent development would be the PCC holding to account other agencies via the Local Criminal Justice Board and other forums. This was to ensure that victims were receiving rights in accordance with the Victims code of practice. This would happen through the chairmanship of the Deputy PCC who was Chairman of the Local Criminal Justice Board.

In response to a question relating to monitoring the analytics (number of "hits", the time spent on items) of the Victims First website, the Panel was informed that the Communications Team of the PCC monitored this. However, the time users "hovered" on items on the website, would be looked at to see if any changes or amendments needed to be made.

A Member asked a question relating to restorative justice and how successful would this be. Members

were informed that it was recognised that it was a difficult offer to fulfil; some victims and offenders did want to take part in the scheme. Under the new scheme this would be promoted.

RESOLVED – That the Head of Policy and Commissioning be thanked for the presentation and Members of the Panel were asked to forward the Victims First Scheme information onto their constituent authorities.

20 POLICE AND CRIME PLAN STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 - SERIOUS ORGANISED CRIME AND TERRORISM

Consideration was given to a report of the PCC, which summarised the progress to date (Year 3, 2019/20) on the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan Strategic Priority 4 – Serious Organised Crime and Terrorism.

The PCC reported that Thames Valley headed Serious Organised Crime and Terrorism for the South East which consisted of Surrey/Sussex/Hampshire/ Thames Valley. Kent attended meetings as observers, with meetings taking place every three months.

Reference was made to the successes which had taken place on “County Lines, working across other Police Force boundaries. The Prevent Strategy was being implemented across the Thames Valley with an officer from the PCC delivering Prevent training to organisations.

The Panel was informed that there had been a number of successful results in relation to cases of exploitation and modern slavery. Incidents of rough sleepers/begging continued to cause problems in certain parts of the region with some of these being “professional beggars”.

Discussion took place on elements of the report and reference was made to the large number of low-level crime such as ATM Crimes, illegal cigarettes etc. The PCC referred to lenient sentences for such crimes, with offenders back out on the streets committing crime again. The Thames Valley needed to be an unattractive place for these criminals.

In relation to rough sleepers and beggars, the PCC commented that there was a shortage of local authority housing provision. Reference was made to young people being drawn into crime and discussion took place on what could be done to change this. The PCC referred to cuts to youth services reducing activities for young people to do. Action for Youth was an organisation in Aylesbury which worked very well.

RESOLVED – That the information contained in the report be noted.

21 POLICE AND CRIME PLAN STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5 - POLICE ETHICS AND REFORM

Consideration was given to a report of the PCC, which summarised the progress to date (Year 3, 2019/20) on the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan Strategic Priority 5 – Police Ethics and Reform.

The PCC reported that there were three major IT programmes, with the Contact Management Platform almost completed. This system would record and manage police contact with the public and would be used to control operational responses to crimes and incidents.

Body worn video, Automatic Number Plate Recognition and CCTV were working effectively. The Data Enablers Programme which was a Thames Valley collaboration with Hampshire, aimed to implement a structured approach to data management.

Reference was made to the aim of clarification of processes on issues which sit best with other authorities, particularly in relation to the Police dealing with people with mental health issues. The PCC reported that there had been changes to detention in the Mental Health Act which gave the Police power to remove someone from a public place to a place of safety. This had led to a reduction in the number of unlawful detentions in police custody. Improvements had been made with triage nurses working on patrol with the Police.

RESOLVED – That the information contained in the report be noted.

22 THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS

RESOLVED – (1) That approval be given to Oxfordshire County Council carrying out the function of Host Authority for the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel, and that the function would be transferred on a date to be agreed between South Bucks District Council and Oxfordshire County Council once the TUPE arrangements have been finalised and transition arrangements are in place between South Bucks District Council and the new Host Authority.

(2) That the Panel arrangements be amended accordingly to reflect that the Host Authority would be Oxfordshire County Council from the date agreed between South Bucks District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

(3) That meetings of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel continue to take place at Aylesbury Vale District Council offices.

23 WORK PROGRAMME

Noted.

24 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Panel noted that the next meeting would take place on 22 November 2019 at 11.00am at Aylesbury Vale District Council offices.

CHAIRMAN