

# Minutes

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**Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Friday, 28 January 2022 in Paralympic Meeting Room, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 8FF, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 1.05 pm**

## Members Present

Councillor Barrie Patman (Wokingham Borough Council – Vice-Chair – In the Chair), Councillor Balvinder Bains (Slough Borough Council), Councillor Adele Barnett-Ward (Reading Borough Council), Councillor Robin Bradburn (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor David Cannon (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye (South Oxfordshire District Council – attended remotely), Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Buckinghamshire Council - Co-Opted Member – attended remotely), Liz Jones (Independent Member – attended remotely), Councillor Andrew McHugh (Cherwell District Council), Phillip Morrice (Independent Member), Councillor Richard Newcombe (Buckinghamshire Council - Co-Opted Member), Councillor Dr Louise Upton (Oxford City Council) (attended remotely), Councillor Richard Webber (Oxfordshire County Council) and Councillor Mark Winn (Buckinghamshire Council - Co-Opted Member).

## Officers Present

Khalid Ahmed (Scrutiny Officer).

## Others Present

Matthew Barber (Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner), John Campbell (Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police - attended remotely), Paul Hammond (Chief Executive Office of PCC - attended remotely), Catherine Marriott (Head of Partnerships and Community Safety, PCC - attended remotely) and Ian Thompson (Chief Finance Officer – Office of PCC).

*If you have a query please contact Khalid Ahmed, Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel Scrutiny Officer (Tel: 07990 368048; Email: khalid.ahmed@oxfordshire.gov.uk)*

## 1/22 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillor David Carroll (Buckinghamshire Council), Councillor Marilyn Davies (West Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Simon Rouse (Co-Opted Member Buckinghamshire Council) and Councillor Claire Rowles (West Berkshire Council).

## 2/22 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 19 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

*[In relation to Minute No. 45/21 – Themed Item – Violence against Women and Girls, the PCC was asked to respond to the Panel’s request that Violence against Women and Girls be added as a sixth key priority in his Police and Criminal Justice Plan.*

*The PCC reported that consideration had been given to the Panel’s request, however, at this present time he would not be amending his Plan. The PCC reiterated that there were several areas in his Plan where Violence against Women and Girls was covered, and whilst Violence against Women and Girls was not a specific named key priority, he considered that the issue was important to the PCC and to TVP.*

*The PCC said he would continue to monitor his Plan and reference was made to the forthcoming Violence against Women and Girls Conference for partners which the Office of the PCC had organised to look at dealing with this increasing crime.*

*In relation to Minute No. 45/21 - Themed Item – Violence against Women and Girls, the PCC was asked whether he had raised the issue with the Local Criminal Justice Board of making improvements to bring perpetrators of these crimes to justice in a timelier fashion. The PCC reported that he had not yet done this but would be doing so.]*

3/22

## **REPORT OF THE BUDGET TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

As in previous years, the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel formed a Budget Task & Finish Group to assist in discharging its statutory duty to scrutinise the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Thames Valley’s proposed Council Tax precept for 2022/23.

Councillor Barrie Patman, the Chairman of the Budget Task and Finish Group presented the report. He thanked Ian Thompson and Linda Waters for attending the Task and Finish Group which met on 19 January 2022 and updating Members on the PCC’s draft budget proposals.

Members were provided with details of where the additional funding from the proposed precept would be invested and this included:

- Forensics would be improved which would improve most investigations across the force, speeding up processing times which would result in bringing offenders to justice quicker and increase victim satisfaction.
- The improvement of technology and mobile data collection, through in-car Automatic Number Plate Recognition and camera recording.
- The development of a Specialist Rape and Sexual Offences team.
- Improvement to custody management including capacity. The creation of dedicated teams to fast-track cases which would reduce delays for victims.
- More investment in the Contact Management Platform and the Pronto system which would improve outcomes for residents. Roll out of digital 101 and improving and maintaining call handling capacity-by converting temporary staff to permanent staff.
- Enhancements to public protection units with additional officers and improving data analytics and reporting.

- Investment in essential ICT infrastructure and, system developments which would improve service delivery.
- The recruitment of more officers in addition to Home Office funded uplift programme.
- The continuation of projects such as the Rural Crime Taskforce and the Drug Focus Taskforce by ensuring sustainable funding for frontline operational policing.
- Plans to increase the number taser-trained officers to better protect police officers and tackle violent criminals.
- Purchasing additional storage space for increasing quantities of digital evidence including specially body worn video footage.
- Improving training in line with recommendations from the centre.
- Violence against Women and Girls requires additional investment.
- The monitoring of sex offenders.
- Additional capacity to deal with the proliferation of stalking.
- Improvement in intelligence capability for murder and murder prevention strategies.
- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of police vetting.
- Review and improving the activities of the Central Redaction Unit.
- Upgrading Armed Response capability sufficient to meet projected threat. This will include upgrading of weapons and vehicles.

The Panel was provided with the following comments and observations of the Task and Finish Group:

- The proposed £10 increase would protect front line police service and provide the Force with the resources to carry out all the increased additional policing responsibilities brought about by the changing face of policing and technology changes.
- The proposed £10 increase flexibility for each year could not be deferred and carried over in part or full to future years.
- Inflation was difficult to predict, although it had been included at 4.0% for 2022/23. Inflation and pay award inflation had a big impact on the budget and this was a reason for the preferred £10 increase.
- Discussion took place on the increasing use of reserves, and Members were assured that TVP reserves were in a healthy position and would stay above the 3% guideline level for the next three years.
- Collaborations would continue to be sought with rationalisation of the TVP estate taking place with further opportunities explored. Reference was made to the workforce working more flexibly with advancements in technology and the shared facilities, particularly with the Fire Service (dual stations).
- Another area of collaboration could be around a joined-up CCTV network with local authorities, a theme the Police and Crime Panel would be reviewing at a future meeting. There would be benefits in terms of reducing operational costs and the advantages in terms of crime prevention and detection.

- Reference was made to Police and Crime Commissioners having three-year settlement whereas local authorities, as a whole, again had to deal with a one-year settlement. This with many PCCs proposing to take the full £10 increase did have a negative effect on Council Tax bill payers. Members were informed that the increase being sought was such that the benefits for the residents of the Thames Valley area far outweighed the burden. It was noted, that hopefully through the increased recruitment of Police Officers, there would be improved policing for the whole area.

A recommendation had been put forward which was debated during the next item as follows:-

**That the Police and Crime Panel approve the Police and Crime Commissioner's precept for 2022/23, (Option 3), to increase the council tax precept by £10 (Band D), as set out in the OPCC report 'Revenue Estimates 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25', subject to satisfactory responses to the written questions raised at Appendix A and any other supplementary questions asked the Panel.**

4/22

## **SCRUTINY OF THE PROPOSED PRECEPT - QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

The PCC responded to the following written questions: -

1. What are the early indications of the implications of the McCloud/Sergeant and Matthews rulings on pensions costs for TVP and how will this additional cost be funded?

*[The PCC reported that he was not yet in a position to estimate the financial implications, however, the Home Office have stated that central government will provide additional funding.]*

2. Why was Option 2, to increase the council tax precept by 2.00%, which would have generated an additional funding of £4.3m not the preferred option? What would have been the implications on the service and to residents?

*[The PCC replied that although cuts would be avoided it would not provide any opportunity for investment so the gap between performance and expectation would increase. Also, it would not provide base funding for the significant known commitments in 2023/24 e.g. full year effect of additional Police Uplift Programme officers and 2022 pay awards, and it would not deliver key improvements in priority areas in his Police and Criminal Justice Plan.]*

3. What will the implications of this budget be in terms of delivering the key objectives in your Police and Criminal Justice Plan and how will the success of this extra funding be measured?

*[The PCC reported that there were many implications:*

- *Improvements in forensics which will improve the majority of investigations across the force, speed up the time it takes to process samples and evidence, enabling offenders to be brought to justice quicker, increased victim satisfaction and improve public safety.*
- *Development of a Specialist Rape and Sexual Offences (RASO) team which will help to bring more offenders to justice.*
- *Improving custody management and capacity, including the creation of dedicated teams to fast track cases thereby reducing delays for victims and creating capacity for frontline officers.*
- *Improving technology and mobile data collection, through in-car ANPR and camera recording, to help identify and disrupt criminal networks, bringing more offenders to justice.*
- *Enhancing our public protection units with additional officers and improving data analytics and reporting to support investigations will deliver more effective management of sex offenders reducing the likelihood of reoffending, more rapid identification and targeting of offenders and better protection for vulnerable people and children in society.*
- *Additional investment in the Contact Management Platform and the Pronto system will provide improved communications with the public reducing waiting times, enhanced identification of vulnerable individuals and quicker response and deployment to emergencies, faster and more accurate information for frontline officers, improving public safety and ensuring incidents are dealt with efficiently and quicker.*
- *Improving service delivery by investing in essential ICT infrastructure and, system developments to provide enhanced protection of police data, improve the interoperability with partners and improve frontline communications.*
- *Recruitment of more officers beyond the Home Office funded uplift programme, from 2023/24 onwards.*
- *The continuation of projects such as the Rural Crime Taskforce and the Drug Focus Taskforce by ensuring sustainable funding for frontline operational policing.*
- *Plans to increase the number taser-trained officers to better protect police officers and tackle violent criminals.]*

4. In relation to the transfer of £12m from the Improvement and Performance reserve to help fund the aborted ERP solution with Surrey and Sussex (Equip), how can the Panel and residents be assured that future TVP IT projects be more successful and not waste financial resource?

*[The Panel was informed that £12m was transferred from the I&P reserve into the Optimism Bias reserve in 2018/19. It was used to fund many projects, including CMP and Equip.]*

*In future TVP will not seek to implement bleeding edge technology, particularly across multiple forces. Business cases will need to be improved before being signed off, particularly in terms of costs, benefits, risks and the level of skilled resources to deliver them. The PCC was currently developing a new process for improved OPCC oversight of significant investment projects and programmes.]*

5. How does Thames Valley fare in relation to other Forces on Police Funding and does the PCC agree with his predecessor that Thames Valley does not receive a fair settlement?

*[The PCC reported that TVP net revenue expenditure in 2021/22 is £194.69 compared to the England average of £205.82 (22nd highest out of 39). However, in TVP council tax funds 44.8% of NRE, compared to the English average of 38.4% (9th highest out of 39).]*

*The Police funding formula is currently being reviewed with proposals being made to the Ministers in late Spring, early summer. There was no information on when new formula will be implemented, or how (i.e. transitional arrangements).*

*All PCCs believed they are under-funded but many also fear that they will lose out under the new arrangements. The senior sector group are not considering allocating funding on a population only basis, the method favoured by the previous PCC.]*

6. Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are an important resource for local policing throughout the Thames Valley in terms of visibility to the community. What more can be done to recruit this useful resource?

*[The PCC replied that the Chief Constable and he were committed to PCSO recruitment and retention and the value they bring to neighbourhood policing. There was a PCSO page on the careers site that is well populated with the stories of a number of PCSOs; live roles in Berks, Bucks and Oxon are being advertised on there.]*

*Stories have been shared across social media channels but probably need to ramp this up a bit because of the focus on Police Officers / Uplift in recent weeks.*

*In a very competitive employment market TVP are looking at career progression opportunities for PCSOs. Many PCSOs apply to become Police Officers, in recent times this has increased as a result of Uplift, and has therefore opened up more opportunities to recruit new PCSOs.*

*A survey was being developed to send out to those candidates who have shown an interest in the PCSO role on Oleeo (i.e have looked at the application) but not converted into applying. This will provide an evidence base to the blockers between interest and actually applying so that we know where to focus any activity in changing*

*process/entry route or marketing etc to ensure more people who are interested actually go on to apply.*

*Targeted paid-for and organic social media adverts are planned, with targeting aimed mainly at the southern areas of the force, especially Slough.*

*Exploring opportunities for localised posters/radio advertising also being considered. There was potential to run some PCSO Information events to complement the advertising.]*

7. In relation to the identified risk of TVP failing to recruit and retain the additional 231 police officers (and 13 for SEROCU), as part of the National Police Uplift Programme (PUP), and the resultant loss of part of the grant, how optimistic is the PCC of the Force achieving this target?

*[Current recruitment plans include a contingency should wastage increase. Significant work has been undertaken over the last couple months to ensure the process is streamlined to ensure no recruits are unnecessarily lost due to delays in the process.*

*Police Now intakes have been increased as an alternative route to recruitment and IPLPD courses have been introduced to allow an increase in recruitment.]*

8. With almost £1.3m in the revenue budget for the Office of the PCC, how does this budget cost, compare to other PCC offices?

*[The Panel was informed that 35 out of 43 police forces/OPCCs completed the CIPFA Police Estimates return for 2020/21. The results showed that Thames Valley's PCC office has the lowest cost per head of population at £0.51, compared to the mean average of £1.16, (highest £3.56, GMP) and the 2nd lowest cost when expressed as a percentage of net revenue budget (0.27%, average 0.53%, MOPAC lowest at 0.24%, GMP highest at 1.6%)*

*Reference was made to Offices of PCCs all being structured slightly differently with varying roles and responsibilities].*

**The Panel also asked the PCC the following additional questions on the Precept Proposal:**

1. In relation to the extra funding requested and the extra burden on Council Taxpayers in Thames Valley, together with the cost of living crisis, will the PCC continue to lobby the Home Office for Thames Valley's Police funding not to be as reliant on the Council Tax element of the funding?

*[The PCC reported that there was an argument to bring this forward, however, being realistic this would be difficult as the Home Office had a lot of detail to consider.]*

2. Reference was made to the three-year Police settlement which did not correlate with the one year settlement which local authorities were given. The Police precept created extra pressure on Council Taxpayers. There should be a fair funding

policy for all public authorities. In Milton Keynes for example, there had been two murders in the last month, crimes such as the theft of catalytic converters were increasing, and some residents were not receiving an adequate Police response.

*[The PCC agreed that local authorities should receive better funding.]*

3. How confident is the PCC of recruiting and retaining the additional officers and could he provide a progress report to the Panel in six months' time on progress made?

*[The PCC acknowledged that there were challenges. For the end of March, the Home Office target was an extra 4,615 officers nationally and this was on track to be delivered. Year 3 TVP was in a strong position, however, there were challenges such as the volume of recruitments. Covid had had an impact with a number of officers choosing to stay in the Force as they felt the Police needed them because of the Pandemic.]*

*The PCC was confident of reaching recruitment targets and receiving funding for extra officers.*

*The Initial Police Learning Development Programme, the Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP), Non-Degree entry and apprenticeships would all improve recruitment.*

*A supplementary question was asked in relation to the Force establishment and the PCC clarified that as of June 2021, TVP had 4,525 officers and were on target to reach the 4,615 target.]*

4. Police Community Support Officers are an important resource for local policing throughout the Thames Valley in terms of visibility to the community. What are the PCC's plans to recruit to this service?

*[The PCC referred to a survey which had taken place to find out PCSOs why they wanted to become Police Officers. An area which was being looked at was looking at tying PCSOs into longer contracts, however, this could make the job of a PCSO less attractive.]*

5. Reference was to the Metropolitan Police where officers receive £3,500 London weighting which helps with the cost of living and housing costs. The PCC was asked whether there could be a Thames Valley weighting as housing costs were high in the region.

*[The PCC replied that ideally Police Officers should receive higher pay rises but that would come at a cost. There was a real challenge around a South East weighting but the PCC did not underestimate the problem of housing costs which made Thames Valley prohibitive for potential applicants. However, officers also left the Force for career changes or for operational reasons.]*

*All Thames Valley Police officers did currently receive South East Housing Allowance on top of national pay scales which currently stands at £2,000 per annum.]*



6. What will be the improvements made to technology and mobile data collection which will help the Police and how will their success be monitored?

*[The PCC said he would bring this information back to a future meeting, however, in relation to the Sexual Offences Team, for example, there would not be a numerical target, but there would be other factors which would indicate its success.]*

*For 101 calls there had been investment and there was performance statistics. Pronto, the IT infrastructure would look at usage by officers, Tasers would be measured around its use by the Force.]*

7. What is the reason for the low levels of promotion of officers from a BAME background in TVP and why did applications take too long to process?

*[The PCC replied that there had been improvements in the diversity of intakes in the police force. However, there was a challenge around diversity within the Inspector ranks. There was no bias around the recruitment process.]*

*There were difficulties on a national level regarding the speed of processing applications. TVP was not in control of this as there was no local control of the process. Vetting did take time but in view of recent events, it was important that vetting was thorough and was right.]*

*In relation to a comment about Special Constables, the PCC acknowledged their importance and the skills they brought to policing. It was proposed that they would undertake driver training and taser training to increase their skill base.]*

8. With the public's perception of a lack of policing, what justification can the PCC give for requesting a £10 increase on Band D for Council Tax when local authorities across the Thames Valley are looking to limit Council Tax increases on residents because of the rise in the cost of living? Could funding by Local Police Area be provided?

*[The PCC replied that there was an Option 2 available which would still require an increase in Council Tax precept. The proposed £10 increase was because of lack of funding from the Home Office and increased dependency on Council Tax contributions. Any funding broken down by Local Police Area would be misleading, and reference was made to the shared Roads Policing service with Hampshire and how difficult it would be to work out LPA share of this. The PCC said, subject to whether the information could be broken down, he would provide this to Members. **(ACTION: PCC)**]*

9. What will the PCC do to allay residents' fears that they are not getting value for money from the Police, particularly in rural areas?

*[The PCC replied that it was a challenge, and that visibility was important to residents. There was a Rural Crime Taskforce which consisted of a team of dedicated officers working with other units to tackle rural crime. Of course, this would*

*not show for each LPA. The night time economy required visible policing in towns, but the point was noted.]*

10. Is there any cause for concern that reserves are forecast to reduce from almost £21m to around £10.4m (including £1.8m to SERCU which is ring fenced) by 2025?

*[The PCC replied that some Forces had built up their reserves, but Thames Valley was not in a position to do that, but it was made sure that there was the minimum level of reserves. The PCC said that the proposed £10 Council Tax increase would not be used to replenish reserves. Reference was made to the transfer of £12m from the Improvement and Performance reserve which was allocated to several IT projects.]*

11. Reference was made to the recent news reports that Police Forces across the UK have ordered officers to avoid high-speed chases in certain BMW models, and the PCC was asked for the impact this would have on TVP, particularly with an elderly fleet of vehicles?

*[The PCC replied that the issues around a particular model of BMW were a concern. TVP procured its vehicles through the Chiltern Transport Consortium where good rates were procured through economies of scale.]*

12. What funding will be provided to deal with Violence against Women and Girls, particularly in relation to training for specialised officers to deal with the trauma?

*[The PCC reported that trauma training was provided for all teams. An example was given of a recent rape case and the specialised trained officer who supported the victim.]*

13. There are increases in budgetary provision to improve the Criminal Justice system could the PCC briefly outline some of his plans to achieve this?

*[The PCC informed the Panel that one improvement had been the funding of in-house testing capability for example drugs, which was presently sent off for analysis. There had been 25 cases taken to court in the first six weeks of this change. There had been challenges regarding accreditation.]*

*Reference was made to the difficulties officers had with redacting sensitive personal information from material, which was officer intensive and caused delays to case files. The PCC said there was a proposal for a central redaction team which would improve efficiency.]*

**RESOLVED – (1) That the Police and Crime Panel approve the Police and Crime Commissioner’s precept for 2022/23, (Option 3), to increase the Council Tax precept by £10 (Band D), as set out in the OPCC report ‘Revenue Estimates 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25’.**

**(2) That the Panel received the PCC’s proposed precept for 2022/23 and noted:**

- I. That, subject to final taxbase notifications, the Council Tax requirement for 2022/23 be set at £226.286m.
- II. That any variation in the final amount of council tax income be appropriated to or from General Balances.
- III. That the police element of the Council Tax for 2022/23 be set at £241.28 for properties in Band D, with the charge for other bands as set out below. This represents an increase in the band D precept of £10, or 4.3%.

**Council tax 2022/23**

Property Band	Relevant Proportion	PCC Element of the Council Tax £
A	<sup>6</sup> / <sub>9</sub>	160.85
B	<sup>7</sup> / <sub>9</sub>	187.66
C	<sup>8</sup> / <sub>9</sub>	214.47
D	<sup>9</sup> / <sub>9</sub>	241.28
E	<sup>11</sup> / <sub>9</sub>	294.90
F	<sup>13</sup> / <sub>9</sub>	348.52
G	<sup>15</sup> / <sub>9</sub>	402.13
H	<sup>18</sup> / <sub>9</sub>	482.56

5/22

## HATE CRIME

The PCC submitted a report which set out the issues and processes around Hate Crime and Hate Issues.

There were lots of challenges around separating Hate Crimes from Hate Issues. Reference was made to the changing face of such crimes which also occurred on-line, crimes which were enabled by technology.

A Hate Crime was any criminal offence which was perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and if the person is transgender.

A Hate Incident was defined as any non-crime incident perceived by the victim to be motivated by race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, or transgender.

The Panel was informed that with limited resources, there were lots of offences which possibly should be investigated by the Police, however, there were some incidents which were a challenge. For example, social media such as Twitter, Facebook etc.

### Members' Questions

1. In the Hate Crime Outcome Types in the report and in the prosecutions presented, there were no crimes under S29 – S32 of the Crime and Disorder Act. These were classed as crimes such as Hate Crimes on Social Media.

*[The PCC replied that these were offences in their own right. Threats to Kill would be taken seriously but this was a real challenging area. There needed to be a better triage system.]*

*There were some horrific harassment on social media and it was a difficult area to police. Reference was made to those who serve in public life who do receive "hate" mail. There needed to be system put in place to protect the real victims and to give the Police the option to say no to certain incidents. There could be a system where investigations would take place and words of advice could be issued which could be placed on an individual's record.]*

2. What does the PCC see the impact of misogyny on policing being added as a hate crime?

*[The PCC replied that there could be difficulty identifying misogyny, such as in Domestic Violence cases and it would be difficult to police and recording such crimes / incidents could be problematic.]*

3. How does social media/technology impact on the number of incidents of hate crimes or incidents? Is there specific training given to officers for this?

*[The PCC replied that this was a difficult area and, in his opinion, social media should not be policed by the Police. However, training was available to officers including call handlers.]*

4. Reference was made to Non-Hate Crimes or Incidents which were recorded but which were not classed as being a criminal record.

*[The PCC replied that Hate Incidents were recorded but they did not constitute a person having a criminal record. The importance of education and schools having a part to play, in instilling into young people acceptable standards of behaviour.]*

5. The PCC was asked for a breakdown of faith-based Hate Crimes as this would be useful information for local authorities to have.

*[The PCC said he would check whether there was a breakdown on faith-based Hate Crimes and if there was, he would circulate the information.]*

**RESOLVED - That the report of the PCC, together with the responses to the issues raised by the Panel be noted.**

6/22

## **UPDATES FROM THE CHAIR OF THE PANEL AND THE PCC AND THE TOPICAL ISSUES REPORT**

The Panel received a report from the Scrutiny Officer which provided details on topical issues on policing and crime.

The PCC was asked whether the Office of the PCC was cyber resilient to any possible cyber-attack in view of recent world events. The PCC said there was a significant amount of work which has gone into cyber security at both local and

national level, and he was as confident as he could be, that Thames Valley could cope with a threat.

Reference was made to the item on delays in prosecuting suspected criminals having hit a record 708 days for the average time it takes to go from offence to completion of a case at a magistrate's court. The PCC was asked for reassurance that the time span within Thames Valley was reducing. The PCC said he did not believe there had been an increase in the time taken from a date of an offence to sentencing.

Reference was made to the item on Thames Valley Police warning farmers not to go out patrolling the streets after a spike in crime in rural areas. The PCC was asked whether there was a disconnect in relation to communication as rural communities were not aware of this.

The PCC replied that the statement was more a sensationalist press statement, than an actual communication from TVP. The PCC informed Members that the Rural Task Force was working with rural communities and offering reassurance, engaging with NFU and Farmers Weekly to get the message out there. In the first few months there has been some good work carried out in rural communities such as the recent campaign checking trailer vehicles because of an upsurge in recent thefts etc.

The PCC was asked whether there would be any communications regarding the recent changes to the Highway Code and were there plans for enforcement. The PCC replied that there were plans in place to produce a Road Safety Strategy and he expected officers to take a common sense approach to the changes in the Highway Code.

The PCC was asked about the increase in the BAME representation which had increased to 6.2% and what more could be done to increase this representation. The PCC referred to the ethnic mix across the Thames Valley which was changing. TVP were looking at where recruitment was carried out and would look at strategies to engage more with the BAME communities to increase applications.

7/22

## **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel noted the work programme and it was agreed that an update on Community Speedwatch be added as an item to a future meeting.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing .....