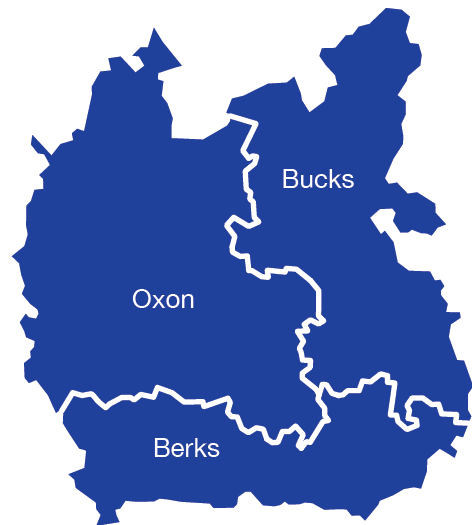


Agenda

- Date:** Friday, 24 March 2023
- Time:** 10.30 am* PLEASE NOTE THE START TIME
- Venue:** Paralympic Meeting Room,
Buckinghamshire Council
Offices, Gatehouse Road,
Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 8FF



Map and Directions

The Briefing Meeting for Members will be held at 10am. There should be sufficient space in the car park at the Council Offices.

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Minutes** (Pages 1 - 16)

To agree the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2023 as a correct record.

- 4. Public Question Time**

Anyone who works or lives in the Thames Valley can ask a question at meetings of the Police and Crime Panel, at which a 20 minute session will be designated for hearing from the public.

If you'd like to participate, please read the Public Question Time Scheme and submit your questions by email to khalid.ahmed@oxfordshire.gov.uk at least three working days in advance of the meeting.

- 5. Community Policing Strategy - Crimefighters Strategy and Community Policing** (Pages 17 - 26)

10.35am

The PCC provides two parts to this report:

- Outlining the Crimefighters Strategy being implemented in order to build confidence in policing and develop stronger local policing.
- Providing a summary of the activity that has been ongoing under the Neighbourhood Policing and Citizens in Policing portfolios in Thames Valley Police with a forward look at how Community Policing will be delivered in the future.

6. Cyber and Digital Investigation & Intelligence (Pages 27 - 34)

11.15am

The report of the PCC provides detail of a service plan which has been created to define and focus the priorities and strategies for Thames Valley Police and the Regional Cyber Crime Units (CCU). This plan seeks to align service delivery based on the key strands of the Government's National Cyber Strategy 2022 and the force priorities for Thames Valley Police as detailed within the Thames Valley Police Strategic Plan 2019/2020.

7. RESTART Thames Valley

11.50am

The PCC provides an update on the work of RESTART Thames Valley, a year-long pilot programme that started in May 2022 and which focuses on supporting people leaving prison, including women and those on short-term sentences. This update is very much a working brief that encompasses an overview of the current key issues and challenges of this programme.

8. Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs- Role of TVP (Pages 35 - 50)

12.20pm

This document provides a high-level overview of the initial implementation of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), the current landscape, emerging risks and opportunities for the future.

9. Chairman/PCC Updates/Topical issues (Pages 51 - 54)

12.50pm

To be provided with updates, if required from the Chairman of the Panel and the PCC.

To consider the Topical Issues Report.

A Member of the Panel has requested that an update be provided

from the Monitoring Officer of the Host Authority to the Panel on the failure of the Panel to hold two Confirmation Hearings for the PCC's Chief of Staff and Chief Finance Officer.

10. Work Programme (Pages 55 - 58)

13.05pm

For Panel Members to put forward items for the Work Programme including ideas for themed meetings.

Date of next meeting: 23 June 2023

Membership

Councillor Keith McLean (Milton Keynes Council – Co-Opted Member) (Chair), Councillor Eddie Reeves (Cherwell District Council) (Vice-Chair), Councillor Balvinder Bains (Slough Borough Council), Councillor Robin Bradburn (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor Peter Brazier (Buckinghamshire Council - Co-Opted Member), Councillor David Cannon (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor David Carroll (Buckinghamshire Council), Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye (South Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Buckinghamshire Council - Co-Opted Member), Councillor Neil Fawcett (Vale of White Horse District Council), Peter Gammond (Independent Co-Opted Member), Councillor Maria Gee (Wokingham Borough Council), Councillor John Harrison (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Simon Rouse (Buckinghamshire Council – Co Opted Member), Councillor Karen Rowland (Reading Borough Council), Council), Councillor Geoff Saul (West Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Diko Walcott (Oxford City Council), Councillor Richard Webber (Oxfordshire County Council), Councillor Howard Woollaston (West Berkshire Council) and one Independent Member vacancy.

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Minutes

Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Friday, 27 January 2023 in Paralympic Meeting Room, Buckinghamshire Council Offices, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 8FF, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 1.30 pm

Members Present

Councillor Keith McLean (Milton Keynes Council – Co-Opted Member) (Chair), Councillor Eddie Reeves (Cherwell District Council) (Vice-Chair), Councillor Balvinder Bains (Slough Borough Council), Councillor Robin Bradburn (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor Peter Brazier (Buckinghamshire Council - Co-Opted Member), Councillor David Cannon (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor David Carroll (Buckinghamshire Council), Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye (South Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Buckinghamshire Council - Co-Opted Member), Councillor Neil Fawcett (Vale of White Horse District Council), Peter Gammond (Independent Co-Opted Member), Councillor Maria Gee (Wokingham Borough Council), Councillor John Harrison (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Simon Rouse (Buckinghamshire Council - Co-Opted Member), Councillor Karen Rowland (Reading Borough Council), Councillor Geoff Saul (West Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Howard Woollaston (West Berkshire Council) and Councillor Richard Webber (Oxfordshire County Council).

Member not in Attendance

Councillor Diko Walcott (Oxford City Council)

Officers Present

Khalid Ahmed (Scrutiny Officer).

Others Present

Matthew Barber (Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner) and Martin Thornley (Chief Finance Officer, OPCC)

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)

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL

The Panel welcomed the new Independent Co-Opted Member to the Panel, Peter Gammond and Councillor Howard Woollaston (West Berkshire Council), who had replaced Councillor Claire Rowles.

The Panel placed on record their appreciation of the service Councillor Claire Rowles gave to the Panel during her time as a Member of the Panel.

48/23 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

49/23 **SCRUTINY OF THE PROPOSED POLICE PRECEPT - BUDGET PAPERS FROM THE PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING BETWEEN THE PCC AND THE CHIEF CONSTABLE**

The Panel was provided with the budget papers which were presented to and agreed at the Performance and Accountability meeting between the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable on 19th January 2023.

The PCC introduced the item and explained the reasoning behind the proposed £15 (Band D) increase to the Council Tax precept. There were significant pressures on budgets with inflationary pressure, rising energy and fuel costs. The increase would enable 80 additional police officers to be recruited by the end of this financial year.

The PCC responded to the following written questions:-

- (1) The risk to the budget of significant variances on key uncertain assumptions such as inflation, supply costs and pay settlements is high. It isn't clear from the budget papers how much these assumptions have been stress tested. Can the PCC outline how he has satisfied himself through scenario planning and sensitivity analyses that he can maintain the required level of police service without needing to materially impact general reserves or headcount?

[Throughout the budget setting period there has been an iterative process of considering the risk and assumptions that contribute towards building the budget. The inflation assumptions in the budget were subjected to rigorous review during preparation. Some budget versions discussed internally included higher inflation assumptions, and the impact and trade-offs are well understood. For example, the sensitivity of the budget to selected impacts is:

- Pay: 1% unfunded increase in officer & staff pay = £2.6m impact in 2023/24 (£4.1m full year impact)*
- Energy: 10% increase in energy costs (without capping mechanism) = £0.2m impact in 2023/24*
- Other costs: 1% increase in general inflation = £0.5m impact in 2023/24.*

Unfunded elements of increases would be expected to impact reserves and service levels. In the event that costs were, for example, £5m higher, reserves are sufficient to cope with increased costs in the short term. In the medium term, difficult decisions would have to be taken through a trade-off between the following factors:

- reducing costs through cancelling some of the growth plans funded from the precept increase*
- requiring the Force Review to make additional savings by reducing existing service levels*
- reducing allocation to reserves for long term property transformation and renewal*

Unfunded pay rises in line with inflation are not affordable from either reserves or cost savings. For example, an unfunded inflation-linked pay rise of 10% would cost £32m per annum, far above the realistic level through cost saving initiatives, and quickly using up available reserves. The assumption used for police pay is that included in the most recent Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). If the Home Office increase pay being the 2% set out in the CSR – which would certainly be a welcome support for police officers in Thames Valley – this will need to be funded by central government and sustained through increased grant. This position is in line with the majority of other PCCs.]

- (2) What will be the impact of the investment in additional headcount on vetting and is it sufficient to address the more recent direction to police forces on vetting of existing staff?

[Seconded staff have been made permanent to address the demand and complexity increase which continues to grow. The requirement to be fully compliant with Authorised Professional Practice before HMIC returns to the force adds to demand and complexity. The structure of the team is under review to ensure that maximum efficiency is achieved. In order to meet the requirements of the MTFP bids, priorities and demand will be monitored through a gold structure and vetting will need stakeholders to engage with them around timing proposals re: Specials' intakes. Demand from recruiting staff posts is difficult to predict so the more controlled the approach is, the better.

The recent direction to forces on vetting will form part of the Gold Group remit.]

- (3) The use of the increased precept flexibility to invest in contact management to improve 101 performance is welcome. Can the PCC provide more detail on what this additional investment will be focused on and the expected business benefits?

A fuller update on contact management improvements is included on the agenda for the Police & Crime Panel. The key points from this investment are as follows:

- Improvements to the quality and quantity of updates we provide to citizens*
- Enable two-way communication between the citizen and the forces*
- Improve our call analysis to better understand our demand*
- Improvements to our call handling and management systems such as virtual queuing and automated call diversion*
- Assess chat bot technology to reduce high volume low impact demand*

This will not only help to reduce 101 call handling times but will also help to transform the victims' journey and open up new reporting routes for the public.]

- (4) Up until December 2022, the preparation for the budget was based on a £10 Police precept increase. PCCs were then given flexibility for a £15 Police precept increase. Could the PCC provide full details of what would not be in the budget if the flexible £15 proposal had not been given?

[With a £10 precept increases we were looking at some very difficult choices with regard to how we could support our priorities, make reasonable provision for inflation and for the longer term financial sustainability of the force. The final decisions had not

been made, we were continuing to work on the various competing demands whilst waiting for the draft Police settlement but those items under threat could have included additional resources to support Public Contact, Local Policing and preventing crime. Much of the increase in the cost is driven by inflation or essential growth which cannot be mitigated. The difference in the level of precept increases revenue by £4,783,068 which allows further discretionary growth which would otherwise not have been possible. Without the additional income, the areas most likely to be at risk would include:

- 80 additional officers above PUP*
- Providing a robust infrastructure to improving the use of and number of specials to support local policing*
- Additional resources for Violence Against Women and Girls to continue to strengthen our agenda for the VAWG priority*
- Increasing resources for POLIT (Police Online Investigation Team)*
- Investment to facilitate the development of a CCTV estate to help prevent and detect crime*

(5) What are the indications of the implications of the McCloud judgement on pensions costs for TVP and how will this additional cost be funded?

[The McCloud Judgement on police pensions could have a serious future impact on the costs falling to forces although the Government has confirmed they will support these additional costs. This is unlikely to hit until 2024/25 at the earliest due to the tri-annual review of pension provisions.]

(6) Police Community Support Officers are an important resource for local policing throughout the Thames Valley in terms of visibility to the community and there has previously been a commitment to recruiting PCSOs. However, the budget papers indicate that vacancies have increased to 11.5% which is saving £12.6m. What will be the strategy for PCSOs which are vital for local communities?

[The total vacancy saving of £12.6m relates to all police staff, not just PCSOs.

The vacancy factor is a reflection of the difficulty the force is experiencing in recruiting police staff including PCSOs not a desired direction of travel. Work is underway to improve our recruitment process as well as our retention, to reduce our vacancy levels and move closer to full strength, realistically this will take some time with the current market conditions, hence the financial reflection in the budget. Unfortunately, we are disadvantaged compared to private sector, by our vetting requirements and hence the consequential delay as well as pay levels.

The difficulties experienced in recruiting PCSOs is an area under active discussion between the incoming CC and the PCC in support of the neighbourhood policing priority. The workforce mix between officer, police staff and PCSO will be considered throughout the Force Review. The establishment of PCSOs remains unchanged and the Force is currently advertising to fill these vacancies.]

(7) Reference is made to Citizens in Policing with £600k supporting the recruitment of volunteer officers. What work will volunteer officers be carrying out and are these to supplement local policing and to substitute for the PCSO vacancies?

[Special Constables play an incredibly important role and are a valuable part of the workforce mix. Although unpaid, Special Constables (and other volunteers) require and deserve support, resource, training and equipment, hence the need for this increase in the budget. The ambition is to create a Special Constabulary that is around one-tenth the size of the regular force. As our numbers reach nearly 5,000 police officers, this means we should aim to have around 500 Special Constables over time.]

They will carry out a range of roles, as they do currently, be it response policing, community policing or indeed specialisms such as roads policing. The planned increase is a great opportunity to provide additional support for local policing.

As mentioned in answer to other questions, the Force is currently recruiting PCSOs and I am committed to maintaining the establishment over time. Therefore, whilst Special Constables will be a welcome additional element of visible policing, they are not intended to replace PCSOs.]

(8) How does the proposed force review which will involve reducing Police numbers correlate with the Home Office's drive to increase Police numbers?

[Phase one of the force review has not concluded yet hence it would be inappropriate to pre-empt the recommendations of the force review. The Force review is designed to deliver effectiveness and efficiency to support the force to deliver its priorities in the medium to longer term. Meeting both of these objectives is extremely challenging.]

The Police Uplift Programmes will conclude 31 March 2023 and TVP is anticipating being approx. 80 officers over our target and funding is provided within the MTFP to retain those officers. The requirement to maintain our PUP numbers continues until at least 31 March 2024. Alongside this short term requirement to maintain officer numbers the Home Office is very clear about the continued need to identify and deliver efficiency and productivity savings.

As PCC, one of my areas of focus in scrutinising the Force review will be maintaining the resources for local policing.]

(9) The saving of £250,000 on collaborative initiatives is welcome, however, after this year there are no planned savings in the budget. Collaborations between forces, other "Blue Light" services and local authorities are an efficient and more economical way of working so will TVP be carrying out further work in this area?

[TVP is actively engaged in collaborative activities bi-laterally, regionally and nationally these activities will continue and where new opportunities present themselves these will be considered and adopted where beneficial. Frequently the benefits of collaboration are in sustainability of service provision or cost avoidance. Where these activities identify cashable savings they will be included in future years of the productivity strategy. The £250,000 saving reflects the savings on licenses within the collaborative ICT function.]

Members' Questions

- (1) How does the proposed increase in the Police precept of Council Tax translate into front line neighbourhood policing?

[The PCC replied that generally there was a difference in residents' attitude to an increase in the Police precept to local authorities raising the Council Tax as the sum was a small increase. There was a commitment for 80 officers to enable additional resource to be put into the community.]

- (2) The PCC was thanked for the clarity of what the additional £15 (Band D) was funding in his written answers to questions. However, there was a risk to assumptions. What engagement did the PCC have before the budget as there was now an additional financial burden with the required vetting of existing staff?

[The PCC replied that the work on the preparation for the budget began at the back end of the summer between himself and the Chief Finance Officer. In November/December the pace quickened with internal scrutiny and national comparisons taking place to see what other Forces were proposing. Assumptions were shared. The inflation forecast was based on the Bank of England's assumption. Prudence has to take place because of the impact on Council Taxpayers. Energy prices were built into contracts.]

The PCC acknowledged that in relation to vetting, this was potentially an added burden and would involve checking all existing Force officers against the Police database. This would be an automated robotic task which the PCC understood would be carried out by a national body, therefore it was envisaged that this would not be a significant financial burden.]

- (3) The £249,000 in the budget to prevent violence against women and girls is welcomed. Could the PCC provide some detail on what these measures will be?

[The funding was for a variety of things with part towards a continuation of work which was already taking place and would continue. Funding would be provided for support of teams policing against rape and assault to enable investigations to be brought forward in more timely fashion.]

- (4) Reference was made to the property expenditure for Atlantic House which had seen an increase of 50% because of a contractor going into liquidation and the PCC was asked for an explanation for this.

[The PCC reported that the previous contractor for Atlantic House had gone into receivership. There had been no financial loss to TVP and the procurement process for a new contractor was fine. However, the tender process two years later, saw the cost-of-living crisis, with rising inflation, energy costs which caused the additional costs for the project.]

- (5) The PCC was asked about the proposal to decrease Local Police Areas from 11 to 5, and the impact this would have on neighbourhood policing.

[The PCC replied that the Force review presented an opportunity to review community policing, the whole of TVP estate etc. Domestic Abuse Teams would be formed with Police Officers available to be mobilised on demand.]

In response to a question whether the reduction of LPAs was driven by costs, the PCC replied that it was not. It created an opportunity in the future and discussions would take place with the new Chief Constable when he was in post. There were no concerns from the Police Federation in relation to the service review.]

(6) £600,000 has been included in the budget for Citizens in Policing. Could the PCC provide some detail on the Citizens in Policing scheme?

[The Panel was informed that this related to volunteers who supported TVP training and more widely, around Special Constables which amounted to around 10% of the Force (5,000). The volunteers may not be paid, however, there were still costs associated with the role such as vehicles, training and equipment. TVP was looking to have a central core of volunteers with specialised roles.]

(7) The PCC was asked about the spend for Investment and Upgrade to CCTV Services throughout the Thames Valley area.

[The PCC informed the Panel that funding was being put aside in the capital programme for the Thames Valley wide partnership for CCTV. This was an ambitious programme which would require the participation and finance support from local authorities. The proposal was for 3 or 4 control rooms in Thames Valley with Police staff. There were benefits bringing CCTV within control of TVP but there were costs associated with it.]

Reference was made to discussions which had been taking place with Slough Borough Council about moving control of CCTV to TVP and Milton Keynes Council because of financial problems.

The PCC reported that Reading Borough Council used CCTV network heavily, particularly with traffic management and discussions would have to take place on how the proposed operation of CCTV would impact Reading.

The representative from Slough Borough Council asked that the PCC consider the plight which the Council found itself in, particularly as TVP's use of CCTV was important. The PCC replied that it was a wider ambition for TVP to monitor and hold CCTV, but there needed to be contributions from local authorities.

Slough were planning on turning off their CCTV in April 2023 and it was the PCC's plan to transfer Slough to the Milton Keynes control room in January 2024.

The PCC said that this was challenging financial position for Slough, but they should not turn off their CCTV as this would be a risk. CCTV should be a priority and other alternatives should be sought and perhaps the PCC Community Safety funding could be used for CCTV.

In response to a point made about the importance of local knowledge for CCTV control rooms, the PCC assured the Panel that control room personnel would build up that knowledge. The local knowledge has been built up by the control room which covers the Oxfordshire County wide CCTV service.]

(8) A risk outlined in the budget is productivity savings of £20m, which includes a high proportion from the proposed force review. What implications will there be on local communities in terms of neighbourhood policing?

[The PCC reported that £20 million of productivity savings were having to be found and it was a risk. The situation was not helped by the vacancy situation. The issue was not just about productivity savings, but savings generally. In relation to the service review there were no savings in the final year. This provided flexibility. Other savings would ease pressure on the £20 million productivity savings.]

Reference was made to the National Police Air Service and the increasing use of drones which drove costs up which had to be factored into the budget.

The PCC referred to having the ability to use reserves over 4 years. Energy savings would have to be made and reference was made to Atlantic House which would be made more energy efficient.]

(9) The residents wanted to see front line Police on the streets and the PCC was asked how this was to be achieved.

[The PCC replied that the allocation of officers to their policing roles was an operational decision of the Chief Constable, however, he was committed to increase community policing.]

(10) The MTFP included £15.2m savings out of the £20m total productivity savings coming from the Force Review, The PCC was asked for his assurance that this was realistic.

[The PCC reiterated that the Police Federation had expressed no concerns at the Force Review. There were no firm proposals and as already stated, these decisions were operational decisions made by the Chief Constable. There were no firm proposals at this stage which could be scrutinised on an item basis.]

(11) The proposed £15 increase in the Police precept added further to the cost of living increases for residents which made their lives more financially difficult. Had there been any push back to the Government from the PCC about this?

[The PCC replied that lobbying had taken place prior to the settlement and the final settlement had been more generous than expected. There was a good argument that Thames Valley should receive better funding per head of population.]

A Member commented that in the last six years, the Police precept of Council Tax has increased by £86. Council Tax is a regressive tax and there should be more pressure put on the Government about providing more police funding rather than using more Council Tax to subsidise the shortfall in funding.]

RESOLVED – (1) That the Police and Crime Panel approve the Police and Crime Commissioner’s precept for 2023/24, to increase the Council Tax precept by £15 (Band D), as set out in the OPCC report ‘Four Year Medium Term Capital Plan 2022/23 to 2026/27’.

(2) That the Panel received the PCC’s proposed precept for 2023/24 and noted:

- (i) That, subject to final taxbase notifications, the council tax requirement for 2023/24 be set at £245,160,938.**
- (ii) That any variation in the final amount of council tax income be appropriated to or from the Improvement & Performance Reserve.**
- (iii) The revenue estimates for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 1.**
- (iv) That the police element of the council tax for 2023/24 be set at £256.28 for properties in Band D, with the charge for other bands as set out in Table 1, for comparison appendix 2 shows the comparison band D precept across all forces.**

Property Band	Relevant Proportion	PCC Element of the Council Tax £
A	6/9	170.85
B	7/9	199.33
C	8/9	227.80
D	9/9	256.28
E	11/9	313.23
F	13/9	370.18
G	15/9	427.13
H	18/9	512.56

50/23

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 2023/24.

Councillor Simon Rouse, the Chairman of the Budget Task and Finish Group presented the report. He thanked Martin Thornley, Chief Finance Officer, Office of PCC and Linda Waters, Director of Finance, TVP for attending the Task and Finish Group which met on 19 January 2023 and updating Members on the PCC’s draft budget proposals.

Reference was made to the concerns expressed by the Budget Task and Finish Group at the lateness of receiving the budget reports which gave Members little time to scrutinise the budget proposals. A statutory responsibility of the PCP is to scrutinise the Police Precept and Members asked that in future the PCC ensures that the Budget Task and Finish Group be given sufficient time to ensure effective scrutiny takes place.

The Panel was informed that the Budget Task and Finish Group had been assured from the scrutiny of the proposals that due to the challenging economic climate with high inflation, rising energy and fuel costs, that the PCC request for a £15 increase in the Police precept for 2023/24 was reasonable.

The recommendation of the Budget Task and Finish Group was to approve the Police and Crime Commissioner's precept for 2023/24, to increase the Council Tax precept by £15 (Band D), as set out in the OPCC report 'Four Year Medium Term Capital Plan 2022/23 to 2026/27'.

51/23

PROGRESS ON CONTACT MANAGEMENT

The PCC provided the Panel with a report which provided details of progress made in relation to improvements to the Contact Management platform.

Reference was made to the CM101 programme in collaboration with Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Constabulary which had been approved to improve working practices and performance.

The Panel was informed that to meet current 999 and 101 targets, an extra 195 staff on top of the agreed establishment for the department was required at an additional £6.8 million which was not a viable option. The programme had identified a range of process improvements and new technologies, such as Robotic Process Automation, which alongside a significantly smaller staff uplift, could improve demand management and help achieve 101 average speed to answer times of less than 4 minutes. These improvements over the next 21 months would be at a cost of £1.5 million.

Members' Questions

(1) Reference was made to the data which showed that there were 24% of calls to 101 which were answered over 10 minutes. The PCC was asked whether there was data on those waiting longer than 10 minutes?

[The PCC replied that usually callers would abandon their calls where options were provided, and these were usually reported on-line. It was acknowledged by the Panel that there were over 71,000 on-line reports.]

(2) The PCC was asked whether the extra recruitment included officers to Contact Management?

[The PCC reported that generally the recruitment was for other police areas as Robotic Process Automation would replace the need for extra staff. However, there would always be recruitment to Contact Management due to the challenges on retention of staff. This was an issue for all organisations.]

The report of the PCC was noted.

ARREST DATA BY ETHNICITY, INCLUDING STOP AND SEARCH AND THE POLICE RACE ACTION PLAN

The Panel was provided with a report which showed TVP's arrest data by ethnicity. The report also included information on stop and search, and progress made on the Police Race Action Plan.

The Chair of the Panel thanked Chief Superintendent Sarah Grahame, Superintendent James Hahn and DCI Quoc Vo for providing a detailed and excellent report.

The PCC reported that the report sets out a complex picture with a changing landscape. There were many scrutiny bodies which included community groups that looked at this data.

In response to a comment from a Panel Member, the PCC reported that this report did not specify about gender. The data provided for the report was on ethnicity and was on all genders.

Members' Questions

- (1) The PCC was asked whether there was any data on who victims identified as perpetrators of crimes and motivated stop and searches?

[The PCC commented that he understood the point being made. The data does not necessarily show for example, repeat stop and searches. Reference was made to policing during the period of covid restrictions, where data had been skewed by repeat offenders. There was a challenge of how to record these incidents. The Pronto app which officers used made it easier, however, it was acknowledged that the raw numbers may not show the reality.]

Communities needed to be reassured over the disproportionate arrests and stop and searches of certain ethnicities, which sometimes depended upon the environment, for example, the night time economy where there were younger people and a mix of races, which was disproportionate to the population of an area.]

- (2) Reference was made to the governance alignment between the Race Action Plan and the legitimacy board, and the PCC was asked what the consequence was of not having that and what would be benefits be. In addition, in relation to stop and search, 88.3% were based on reasonable grounds, however that meant that there were around 1500 that did not have reasonable grounds. The PCC was asked whether this figure was disproportionate and whether there was data on ethnicity on these.

[The PCC replied that he would have to check if there was such data on whether there was ethnicity data on the 1500 incidents where there had not been reasonable grounds to stop and search. There was a requirement to record these, and it was about not recording, rather than not having grounds.]

Regarding alignment, it was about not being distracted by other activities. There will be national measures which will be imposed on policing, which TVP will need to do. It was important to be aligned nationally but attempting to drive that national picture.]

- (3) Some of the work and recommendations are recent. The point was noted that there was disproportionate data in urban areas for example. The PCC was asked to come back to the Panel in a year's time to look at the impact of some of the actions being taken such as the setting up of Board set up, in a years' time, have something back, follow up to look at impact of these actions.

[The PCC said, subject to the Panel's work programme, he would report back. The Boards would have to carry out work to assess.]

- (4) A Member made a general comment regarding systemic racism which existed in organisations, different ethnic propensities to going to prison, different motivations for reporting, the possibility of investigating more crimes if reported by white people, interpretation of behaviours and those crimes may be reported more, if there was a reasonable reason for arrest. The data was not good, and the Police needed to look at what was influencing stop and searches.

[The PCC replied that TVP is not systemic racist, although he acknowledged that the comment made was a general one. The stop and search data for TVP was good compared to other forces and he had not seen any data which suggested TVP investigated more crimes reported by white people.]

- (5) The PCC was congratulated for TVP being an Icebreaker force for the National Race Action Plan and being Race Equality Matters Trailblazer. The PCC was asked to bring back regular progress reports on the improvements and progress made with the impact of these.

Reference was made to the composition of the Panel, which was mainly white, male and middle aged, with only one Member from a BAME community. The Panel had a duty to be a critical friend to the process and to acknowledge that systemic racism affected all agencies. Could the PCC provide information on how would the independent scrutiny and oversight board be formulated and how was he getting out to all communities to enable them to understand that he was taking this issue seriously and aiming to reduce this disproportionality in relation to arrests and stop and search?

[The PCC said he did not have details of the membership or terms of reference of the ISOP as it was an independent body, and they would decide on this. The PCC can update on this when the decisions have been made.]

In terms of communication on recruitment, there was a positive engagement team made up of representatives from the BAME community and contact was made with individual community groups. During the Black Lives Matters protests, TVP engaged with communities and tried to recruit some individuals to take part in some of this work. Community scrutiny panels will be asked to participate and help the police to reach out.]

(6) The PCC was asked if there was any data which proved that stop and search worked.

[The PCC said that stop and search was a valuable tool and generally had widespread public support. Stop and search was predominantly used for weapons and drugs and its purpose was to prevent criminality, particularly around the use of weapons such as knives. There was no way of knowing whether a crime was to be committed but it was a preventative measure.]

A Panel Member referred to the statistic which indicated that a black person in Thames Valley was four and a half times more likely to be arrested and it was important that an analysis take place on why this was happening and that there should be no complacency on this. Reference was also made to the investigations of crimes and the PCC commented that there was no evidence that some black crimes were not investigated.

RESOLVED – That the report and the information provided by the PCC be noted and an update report be submitted to a future Panel meeting.

53/23

UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS

The PCC provided a report which contained a briefing on Force and LPA Unauthorised Encampment Performance data, training, and the response to Unauthorised Encampments (UE) in Thames Valley Police. The report also contained an overview of how TVP were working with Local Authorities in the Thames Valley to provide a consistent response to Unauthorised Encampments.

The PCC informed the Panel that the issue of concern was the initial assessment made by the Force at an early stage on encampments.

Members' Questions

(1) In 2022, there were 386 reported unauthorised encampments and of those, there were only 16 Section 61s used. What was the status of those other reports?

[The PCC reported that the data did not show when local authorities and landowners took their own action, or the travellers moved on their own accord. Section 61 is only used when proportionate action is required.]

(2) A Member referred to the solution of unauthorised encampments which was finding sites and asked why this was being reported to the Panel.]

[The PCC replied that unauthorised encampments had been in the Panel's work programme since Tackling Illegal Encampments was included as one of his priorities in his Police and Criminal Justice Plan.

In response to a query regarding the difference between illegal and unauthorised encampments, the PCC replied that it was semantics, as any encampment was a civil breach and if the encampment was unauthorised, it was illegal.]

- (3) Reading accounted for 50% of Section 60s used, with the Council working with other Councils in looking to create spaces and sites for permanency. There was planning approval for a temporary site. The PCC was asked where was the tipping point for issuing Section 60s?

[The PCC replied that the challenge was what was classed as significant, which could vary. Officers were allowed to make reasonable judgements which created a challenge around managing expectations. The Force's use of these powers was used proportionally and appropriately. Training for Inspectors required strengthening.]

- (4) A joint working protocol in relation to unauthorised encampments was established between TVP and local authorities in 2018 but has been updated after a series of consultations. Could the PCC provide the Panel with a copy of this?

[The PCC reported that the protocol provided clarity on responsibilities on the process and agreed to circulate the updated protocol.]

- (5) The PCC was asked to reappraise the priorities in his Police and Criminal Justice Plan in view of the higher crimes of violence against women and girls and domestic abuse, compared to the number of unauthorised encampments.

[The PCC reported that there was a huge amount of work being carried out in relation to violence against women and girls and domestic abuse and there was a strong emphasis through his Police and Criminal Justice Plan. The tackling of illegal encampments caused concern for residents and was not a major priority as such but was an issue that many residents wanted tackling. It did not take much resource.]

RESOLVED – That the report of the PCC and the information report be noted and the updated joint working protocol in relation to unauthorised encampments be circulated to Panel Members.

54/23 **RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT CO-OPTED MEMBER TO THE PANEL**

The Panel was asked to agree that the one vacant position for an Independent Co-Opted Member be advertised on each of the Panel's Constituent Authorities' websites.

It was agreed that the shortlisting and interview Panel consist of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel, Councillor Robin Bradburn, Councillor Simon Rouse and Councillor Karen Rowland.

55/23 **REPORT OF THE COMPLAINTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Panel received a report from the Complaints Sub-Committee on a recent complaint which was upheld against the PCC.

56/23 **UPDATES FROM CHAIR OF THE PANEL AND PCC AND TOPICAL ISSUES REPORT**

Vetting of officers

In response to a question regarding the recent announcement on vetting in Police forces, the PCC informed the Panel that the vetting would consist of rechecking all officers, not just new recruits.

Confirmation Hearings

A Member of the Panel raised the issue of the failure of the Panel to hold Confirmation Hearings for the PCC appointed Chief of Staff and Chief Finance Officer and the advice he had received from the Home Office. The PCC replied that he had given the PCP the required three weeks' notice for each appointment as required under legislation, however, due to the failure of the PCP to appoint a Chair at its annual meeting, the PCP was unable to confirm the appointments.

Resignation of Police Officers in TVP

The PCC was asked what affect the resignation in the last 12 months of the 160 new Police Officer recruits had on recruitment targets in TVP. In response the PCC replied that TVP was on track to meet targets, although there were challenges. There were always Police Officers who left early in their career as they realised that a career in the Police was not for everyone.

Reference was made to measures to retain staff which included providing flexibility for women or enabling the taking of sabbaticals. The PCC agreed with this.

The Panel noted the topical issues report.

57/23

WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel noted the work programme and agreed that the item for the next meeting on the **PCC's Case Management system** be referred to the Panel's Complaints Sub-Committee.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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Report to the Police and Crime Panel

Report title: Community Policing – Crimefighters Strategy

Date: 24 March 2023

Author and contact: Matthew Barber

Purpose of the report: At the request of the PCP

Recommendations: Information only

Executive Summary

This report outlines the Crimefighters Strategy being implemented in order to build confidence in policing and develop stronger local policing.

Improving Public Contact

Most people will hope to have little or no contact with the police in their lifetimes. They will generally only deal with policing when something has gone wrong, in their lives, the lives of their loved ones, or in their communities. The initial and ongoing contact with the police is crucial in delivering public confidence. This includes:

- Reducing 101 waiting times
- Automating feedback
- Enabling better digital contact

Community Policing

Now is the time to revive true Community Policing. Capitalising on the record number of police officers in Thames Valley; giving a clear focus and recognising the benefits of prioritising community policing. This will include:

- Increasing and stabilising the workforce
- Standardisation and common purpose
- Improving communication and engagement with the public

Crimefighting

Crimefighting is not just about bringing to justice those who have transgressed our laws - vitally important though that is. It is about crime prevention. A significant amount of police time is taken up with issues that are not crimes. Some of this work, often life saving, will always be inevitable. The Force needs to be more robust however in protecting its workforce from having to deal with excessive workloads that do not relate to the core purpose of fighting and preventing crime.



Report to the Police and Crime Panel

- Greater community intelligence
- Focus on hotspots and known offenders
- Reduce emergency and mental health demand

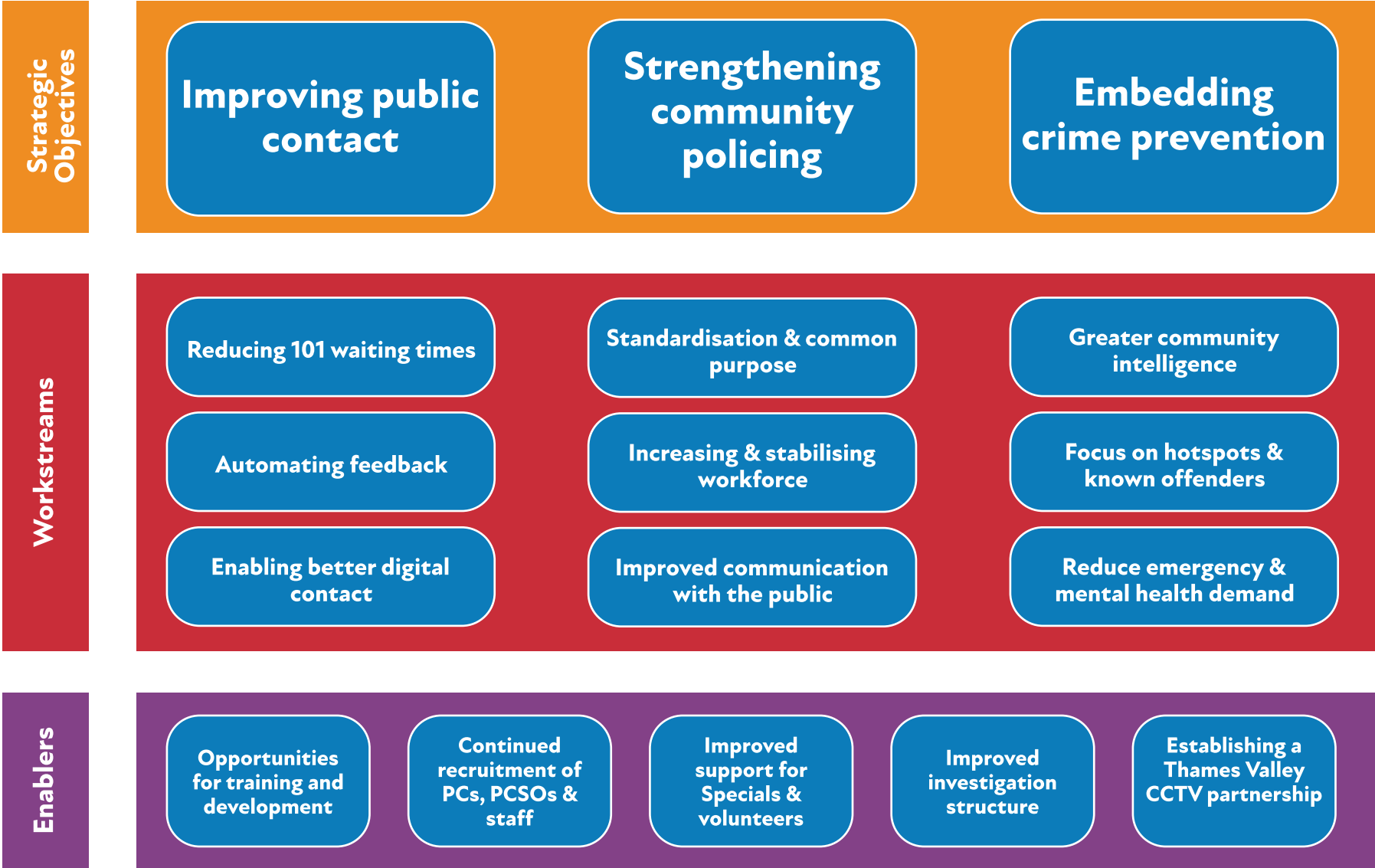
Enablers

This strategy encompasses a wide range of organisational activity within Thames Valley Police and is ambitious within its own terms. There are, however, a number of other areas of work vital to the success of this project and the wider organisation.

- Opportunities for training and development
- Continued recruitment of PCs and PCSOs
- Improved support for Specials and volunteers
- Improved investigation structure
- Establishing a Thames Valley CCTV Partnership

Implementation

Details of how this strategy can be implemented operationally are currently being developed. More details will be published after Easter which will be provided to Police & Crime Panel Members.





Report to the Police and Crime Panel

Report title: Community Policing

Date: March 2023

Author and contact: Chief Superintendent Katy Barrow-Grint

Purpose of the report: At the request of the PCP

Recommendations: Information only

Executive Summary

This is a summary of the activity that has been ongoing under the Neighbourhood Policing and Citizens in Policing portfolios in Thames Valley Police with a forward look at how Community Policing will be delivered in the future.

Neighbourhood Policing Portfolio

Neighbourhood Policing emphasises a local approach to policing that is accessible to the public and responsive to the needs and priorities of communities. Neighbourhood Policing provides communities with a visible presence. Delivered fairly and effectively, Neighbourhood Policing builds public confidence, encourages compliance with the law and secures police legitimacy. Public confidence and perceptions of legitimacy are vital to effective, efficient and fair policing. Community Engagement and proactive policing by Neighbourhood Officers and PCSO's has ensured that Thames Valley Police has had an excellent history of delivering effective Neighbourhood Policing across the 11 Local Police Areas.

Officer Uplift and Impact on Neighbourhood Policing

Over the course of the last year, there has been an impact on how Thames Valley Police have delivered Neighbourhood Policing due to our delivery of the Police Uplift Programme and the associated entry routes. Additional recruitment in line with our officer uplift target, will have seen an increase the number of Thames Valley police officers by around 700 by the end of this financial year. As a force we have placed all new officers on Incident and Crime Response (ICR) – this is absolutely the best way for them to learn their role. As part of the new entry routes, each student officer is committed to essential protected learning time for classroom and academic learning. This means time away from the front line, on top of expected abstractions for annual mandatory training for all officers, operational support, any sickness and annual leave.

These abstractions from our ICR teams meant without additional support our ICR response would have been regularly under-resourced and so we have had to adjust how we organise ourselves through this period. It's critical that when someone calls 999, we can respond.



Report to the Police and Crime Panel

It's essential that we resource to meet our grade one commitment, to protect life first and foremost, of all in our communities in their moment of need, and of our own officers when they need support. To do this, we drew on resources across the force to support this critical function throughout these exceptional periods, and our neighbourhood PCs were essential in this support at various points throughout this period, meaning we did not have capacity in neighbourhood policing as we did in previous years, as we navigated these additional pressures.

However, throughout this period our PCSOs have remained available and out on patrol in order for us to still be able to provide coverage for our local communities, and key areas such as violence against women and girls and knife crime remained the focus of our work.

As we reach the end of Uplift, the Government has now changed the police officer entry routes and we seeing a significant reduction in the abstraction of Neighbourhood officers who are now able to be more focussed on tier community policing work.

Despite these challenges, Thames Valley Police has continued to seek to improve Neighbourhood Policing activity and support the staff engaged in this work through the following:

Training

We have developed a one day training input focussed on community engagement, partnership work and safeguarding, supplemented by an online package for Problem Solving training. This has been piloted and will be delivered shortly for all NHP officers and staff. This is the forerunner to a 5 day course which will be designed once resourcing allows for abstractions, mirroring national steer to professionalise and accredit training of NH officers.

Problem Solving

We continue to focus on consistency of problem solving and embedding it within other policing functions. We have seconded a police inspector to be the dedicated lead for Problem Solving which is having a very positive impact. We are meeting with HMICFRS in late February to review our outstanding Area For Improvement around Problem Solving and anticipate that TVP will demonstrate it has achieved aims. We have introduced a new professionally recognised Problem Solving award this year named after, and with the support of, Professor Gloria Laycock.

Tactical Plans



Report to the Police and Crime Panel

All LPAs have created localised tactical plans to cover engagement and problem solving with an emphasis on those communities who are harder to reach, especially Black communities in line with Race Action Plan.

Outcome and Performance Criteria

We will be introducing new criteria around outcomes and performance once they are signed off by the College of Policing. This will allow NHP to quantify outcomes relevant to the force strategy and also qualify the work linked to engagement and problem solving that can be difficult to measure. These criteria will inform local health checks that will ensure work is prioritised in line with tactical plans.

Prevention and Problem Solving Analysts

We have introduced 11 new Problem Solving Analysts who are now embedded within each LPA and are providing targeted and preventative advice to LPAs, working with partners across all Community Safety Partnerships. This has already seen some fantastic results with clear evidence of partnership working/problem solving.

TVP external website

The introduction of the '**Your Area**' element of our website went live in late July 2022 and provides every resident the same route of access into their local NH team. All Teams have been briefed and understand the expectations in terms of managing the demand from the contacts.

Local policing savings

We realised £200K of savings from a number of anomalous roles, some of which had shared partnership funding. All partners are aware as are affected staff (this does not affect the use of TV Alerts and other key processes which have been maintained and handed over to other staff).

PCSOs

We have set up a working group to look at the PCSO role from recruitment all the way through to Advanced Practitioner/PCSO Supervisor role. We currently sit at over 25% below FTE and the recruitment market is extremely challenging at this time.

It was the 20th anniversary of PCSOs in policing this year so we have celebrated that with a number of press releases and also an individual award that was given to all PCSOs toward the end of last year by the Chief Constable.

NH Policing conference

We introduced a NH Policing Conference. This was fantastically well received in October 2022 and delivered to nearly 200 operational officers and staff, both in persona and online, as well as partners via the OPCC. Planning has started for 2023 conference which will focus on community engagement, a joint day between TVP and the OPCC.



Report to the Police and Crime Panel

Citizens in Policing (CiP) portfolio

The national Citizens in Policing vision states that policing should provide opportunities to all citizens with the enthusiasm and skills to support the Police Service in making communities safe. Officers and staff should routinely consider involving volunteers when planning and delivering services. Volunteer support should become a key method to address local police priorities, improve services and links to the community.

In Thames Valley Police the CiP Portfolio covers our Special Constabulary, our Cadets and our Volunteers.

The CiP Governance structure has, since January 2022, been evolving the delivery of CiP within TVP, resolving issues, identifying opportunities and developing a strong platform from which to significantly expand the CiP portfolio in both size and capability with a principal aim to provide support to frontline Policing whilst engaging with our communities.

What we have achieved over the last year;

Special Constabulary:

- CiP business vision, aims and objectives established.
- Digital Equipment Enhancements; radios, Body Worn Video, mobile devices, laptops.
- Training and Accreditation processes streamlined and greater operational support provided.
- Leadership training plans including revised role profiles for Special Sergeant and Special Inspector ranks with implementation of PDR process for supervisors.
- Reward and recognition processes.
- Peoplesoft/Dutysheet data cleansing and updates.
- Social media presence increased, raising profile of TVP Special Constabulary.
- Public Order training increasing capacity for Force and mutual aid events.

Police Support Volunteers:

- Reward and recognition, communications sent to all PSV's from Force leads.
- Data cleanse and update of in excess of 800 personnel records.
- Force wide role profiles established and streamlined, role commissioning and advertising process under review, reducing bureaucracy and valuing volunteers.
- Vetting requirements reviewed and refreshed guidance being drafted.
- PSV handbook and Role Supervisor briefings reviewed/created.
- Scoping for communications system to ensure improved communications with PSV's



Report to the Police and Crime Panel

Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC):

- Restarting of VPC units across TVP following the relaxing of Covid-19 restrictions.
- ICT provision for all units
- Creation of unit bank accounts and provision of funding for local activities.
- Safeguarding focus including full training refresh, vetting review and DBS process

Plans for the CiP portfolio – 2023 onwards:

- Implementation of a full management and co-ordination team with enabler resources to deliver a new CiP project to improve and enhance our CiP provision over the next 5 years.
- Recruitment of Special Constables with a target establishment of C500 officers over the next 5 years.
- Through improved training, accreditation, integration and reward and recognition our Specials will be better equipped and better engaged, providing a significant contribution to TVP's frontline Policing capacity (75 FTE equivalent delivering 13,000 operational hours per month)
- A diverse group of volunteers, representative of our communities, will feel more valued and supported by the organisation, improving engagement and public trust and confidence.
- Specialist roles, through focussed recruitment of both Special Constables and PSV's, filling skills gaps and improving retention.

The Future of Community Policing

As we move into 2023-2024 the focus of the organisation will be on Community Policing which will incorporate both Neighbourhood Policing and Citizens in Policing portfolio's.

This will see a central Community Policing team providing senior leadership and tactical support for both areas, as well as the Rural Crime Team and Unauthorised Encampments.

Under the NH policing portfolio, thanks to support from the PCC, we will increase by 80, the number of Neighbourhood Police officers across the force.

We will continue to recruit PCSO's (a number of forces have removed PCSO's due to funding cuts recently).

We will introduce NH Tactical Advisors who will provide expert advice for problem solving, targeted activity, schools engagement and bespoke training for example with ASB legislation.



Report to the Police and Crime Panel

We will increase the number of dedicated Schools Officers to ensure better engagement and preventative work with young people,

We will introduce 10 dedicated Mental Health Officers to reduce demand on our response officers, and ensure excellent partnership relationships to solve long term issues around the policing of mental health incidents.

We will standardise processes, particularly in relation to problem solving, in the community policing portfolio.

We will deliver the new Citizens in Policing project to increase the numbers in our Special Constabulary to 500 in the next 5 years, and ensure our Volunteers and Cadets are appropriately supported and developed.

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Report to the Police and Crime Panel

Report title: Cyber and Digital Investigation & Intelligence

Date: 24th March 2023

Author and contact: D.Supt Andy Richardson (SEROCU) and Detective Inspector Sally Russell (TVP)

Purpose of the report: At the request of the PCP

Recommendations: For noting only

Executive Summary

A service plan has been created to define and focus the priorities and strategies for Thames Valley Police and the Regional Cyber Crime Units (CCU). This plan seeks to align service delivery based on the key strands of the Government's National Cyber Strategy 2022 and the force priorities for Thames Valley Police as detailed within the Thames Valley Police Strategic Plan 2019/2020.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Matthew Barber in his Thames Valley Police & Criminal Justice Plan 2021-2025 underpin this force plan.

The Government's National Cyber Strategy has 5 Pillars;

- Pillar 1: Strengthening the UK cyber ecosystem, investing in our people and skills and deepening the partnership between government, academia and industry
- Pillar 2: Building a resilient and prosperous digital UK, reducing cyber risks so businesses can maximise the economic benefits of digital technology and citizens are more secure online and confident that their data is protected
- Pillar 3: Taking the lead in the technologies vital to cyber power, building our industrial capability and developing frameworks to secure future technologies
- Pillar 4: Advancing UK global leadership and influence for a more secure, prosperous and open international order, working with government and industry partners and sharing the expertise that underpins UK cyber power
- Pillar 5: Detecting, disrupting and deterring our adversaries to enhance UK security in and through cyberspace, making more integrated, creative and routine use of the UK's full spectrum of levers Bringing this to a more local level this strategy reinforces the 4P framework of Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare

Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Constabulary also have a joint digital strategy covering the wider forces digital portfolio. Alongside this strategy is a Joint Digital Investigation and Intelligence (DII) Governance Structure where the Joint Governance Board makes strategic decisions about developing DII capabilities and acts as a senior reference group to champion DII capability and capacity building, linking to the Digital Board, Joint DCC's Governance Board and JCOG where necessary.

The Board identifies any issues in delivering DII capabilities across the forces and takes responsibility for developing tactical plans and delivering operational outcomes and improvements for the benefit of frontline policing which are delivered through the respective in force DII coordination boards.



Report to the Police and Crime Panel

Detailed overview

The Thames Valley Police CCU is aligned and line managed by the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROUCU) with a local focus but is also positioned within the National Cyber network. The UK Cyber network aims to deliver the cyber strategy within the four key objectives:

- Pursue: Prosecuting and disrupting people engaged in serious and organised criminality,
- Prevent: Preventing people from engaging in serious and organised crime,
- Protect: Increasing protection against serious and organised crime, and
- Prepare: Reducing the impact of this criminality where it takes place.

The Regional & Thames Valley Police Cyber Pursue team is made up of a team of Detectives working from SEROCUs Western Hub operating as part of a collaborated capability under the Regional Organised Crime Unit.

There is also a collaborated TVP and SEROCU Cyber Protect and Prevent team that works remotely across the South East as well as a Regional Dark Web Unit and works closely with the Regional Digital Forensic Unit.

The DCI, DI and DSs are required to participate in the National Cyber on-call function for Team Cyber UK. This requirement is a week covering the hours of 1600- 0700 covering the entire UK working closely with the NCA Duty Officer network and this requirement is performed four times year.

A Cyber Regional Coordinator at DS level ensures a close working relationship with Hampshire and Surrey/Sussex CCU's. This brings consistency and mutual support running from the National, Regional to Force.

As part of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between SEROCU and Thames Valley Police, the TVP CCU provide the TVP Major Crime Unit with Detectives to assist with homicide investigations.

The majority of the Thames Valley Police CCU time and resource is committed to supporting the investigation and disruption of serious crime. They take ownership and investigate offences under the Computer Misuse Act and other cyber dependant crimes (crimes where devices / computers are both the tools to commit the crime and the target of the crime).

In order to obtain national funding, the CCU must review and form an investigation strategy for all cyber dependant crimes referred to the force by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) which are crimes reported to Action Fraud.

These referrals include offences such as Hacking/Network intrusion, Denial of Service attacks, Data breach, Malware attack and typically the following factors are present;

- Small to medium business enterprise, public authority, government agency/department,
- Sophisticated methodology requiring detailed knowledge of malware, IT infrastructure, IT networks, IT Security, Hacking or Denial of Service methods,
- High value loss of data or impact due to loss of service,



Report to the Police and Crime Panel

- High risk of significant reputational impact to the victim or to Thames Valley Police.

Other cyber enabled crime (traditional crimes that have a high degree of digital involvement) such as mandate fraud, fraud, blackmail, and sextortion are generally investigated by area teams or by the Economic Crime Units with support provided by the CCU or the TVP DII Team.

The TVP CCU will however lead serious cases of cyber enabled crime which involve cryptocurrencies owing to the complexity of these investigations and a strategy has been developed to increase the necessary skills within the TVP Economic Crime Units to assist in some of this work.

The Regional CCU pursue team has a similar commitment to supporting the investigation and disruption of serious crime. They take ownership and investigate offences under the Computer Misuse Act and other cyber dependant crimes.

The Regional CCU pursue team is tasked by the National Cybercrime unit (NCCU) and form part of the wider NCCU and Regional Cybercrime network. The tasking process involves the NFIB and the National Cyber Security Centre and is directed by a monthly National Cyber Prioritisation and Tasking Meeting (NCPT) which is jointly chaired by the Deputy Director of the NCCU and the D/C/Supt Cyber NPCC lead. This process uses data collated from APMIS and the SOC Master List to assess the threat/harm and risk and allocate resources and investigations accordingly.

The Regional Dark Web team is tasked in a similar format and form part of a regional network under the title of Dark Web, Intelligence Collection & Exploitation (DICE).

A very recent success, which also shows how long some cyber investigations can take, is the conviction of a Dutch national of stealing more than £2 million of cryptocurrency which resulted in people losing their businesses and their inheritances.

Following a five-year investigation by the SEROCU CCU the man pleaded guilty to theft at Oxford Crown Court. The case centered around the IOTA cryptocurrency, which required users to have an 81 character 'seed' made up of capital letters and the number 9, to control their 'tokens'.

In January 2018 there were numerous reports of the transfer of Iota tokens which had been taken out of the control of Iota owners around the world, without their knowledge and consent.

What the victims of these thefts had in common was that they all used the same website – iotaseed.io – to generate what they believed to be a random string of 81 characters. However these were predetermined, allowing the thefts to take place. The tokens were then transferred to a number of different cryptocurrency trading accounts and the amount stolen was valued at £2,156,000 from more than 100 victims.

SEROCU officers arrested the suspect in Oxford in January 2019 and then charged him after extraditing him from the Netherlands in April 2021 where he returned there when released on bail.



Report to the Police and Crime Panel

The Judge recognised the complexity of the investigation and gave commendations to a number of officers and staff who work on it and the next stage is returning the stolen money back to the victims as it was traced and seized.

The Regional Prevent team work in collaboration with the South East Regional Forces to support and enhance the capabilities for an effective regional response to the National Prevent strategy led by the National Cybercrime unit (NCCU).

All public messaging around Cyber Prevent is now branded as 'Cyber Choices' to highlight the positive intentions and separate the programme from other cyber prevent programmes. They aim to deter individuals from getting involved in cybercrime in the first place, moving deeper into cybercrime and/or from reoffending by targeting UK-based individuals with interventions proportionate to the risk they pose. The risk relates to both the risk of reoffending and the risk of causing serious harm.

They work with all the South East Force CCU's in delivering regional Cyber Prevent activity (with ROCUs taking the lead and NCA coordinating and/or supporting) which includes:

- Outreach to strategic partners including education, probation and youth-offending services to ensure they have knowledge of the Cyber Prevent (aka 'Cyber Choices') and are able to identify subjects as early as possible,
- Tactical intervention activity with identified Cyber Prevent subjects based on assessed risk,
- Delivering the Cease and Desist tactic with authority from NCCU
- Post-conviction offender intervention and diversion in support of statutory risk owners (IOM, MARSOC, National Probation Service, Youth Offending Services),
- Subject debriefs, intelligence development and identification of potential covert human intelligence sources for cyber

The Regional team deliver this on behalf of the South East Forces in support of the national performance requirement of 100% of identified Cyber Prevent candidates (by the Force CCUs) will receive intervention activity proportionate to the presented risk.

The Regional and TVP Cyber Protect team work in collaboration with the South East Force CCU's to support and enhance the capabilities to ensure an effective response and to support the delivery of the National Cyber Protect strategy led by the City of London Police (CoLP).

Their role is to provide expert advice to external organisations to reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim of cyber-dependent crime, as well as supporting them in the mitigation of and recovery from those attacks, which do occur.

They deliver presentations to small/medium businesses and organisations to raise awareness of the current cyber threats that they face, as well as providing a direction to improve their cyber safety within their companies.

Smaller businesses are less likely to have the capability and resources that larger organisations may have, and therefore it is a key part of the role to include this type of support and this proactive approach aims to reduce the likelihood of a cyber-related crime happening, but also provides advice and support to reduce the impact on a business if a cyber-attack were to happen.



Report to the Police and Crime Panel

The Cyber Protect team also support all national and local cyber campaigns through a variety of different avenues. This includes social media campaigns, events in the community, Neighbourhood Watch channels and working with Local Authorities on community engagement events. Examples including live stream events to allow the public to ask questions about their cyber security or physical events where the public can speak to the team directly to take advice.

A Regional & TVP Cryptocurrency Unit has recently been formed who will lead on all cryptocurrency seizures for the Region and TVP. This includes the technical element of the seizure, the secure storage of the cryptocurrency and eventually realisation.

They will provide a specialist knowledge advice and guidance to all reactive cryptocurrency investigations and proactively seek to use intelligence to target those using cryptocurrency as a means to launder their criminal proceeds or conduct criminality as well as use current legislation and new legislation to deprive criminals of their assets.

As part of the Prepare strand the Thames Valley Police and Regional CCU's deliver training and presentations both internally and externally to individuals and businesses. Whilst they do not provide IT support to victims affected by Cyber Crime, they are able to offer comprehensive advice that, if followed, will reduce the chances of becoming a repeat victim and they are also able to escalate a situation through the Team Cyber UK network to identify an appropriate resource for more detailed advice on a case specific basis.

The Thames Valley Police and Regional CCU's promote and share any new and endorsed tools, which organisations can use to protect themselves further. An example of this is Police CyberAlarm and Police CyberAlarm 2.0, which is a free tool endorsed by the National Police Chief's Council, to allow organisations to monitor their internet traffic and firewalls for suspicious activity.

A growing cohort of Cyber volunteers in the South East also supports all elements of the 4P framework. This enables team members to access colleagues with additional skills, and often industry experience, when faced with problem solving or understand a cyber-related matter. This has specifically enhanced capability for Pursue investigations and Protect/Prepare interventions.

As part of the ecosystem to make businesses more resilience to the threat of being a victim of cybercrime, the Home Office and National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) have funded a network of nine regional Cyber Resilience Centres across England and Wales overseen by the National CRC Group.

The South East Cyber Resilience Centre (SECRC) covers the policing areas of Thames Valley, Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire & the Isle of Wight. It is police led (by T/D/Supt Andy Richardson) and is a not for profit partnership with universities and business with its mission to help businesses of all sizes (although the focus in on SME's, micro businesses and sole traders) make themselves more cyber resilient.

The SECRC works with all of the Chamber of Commerce's, Local Resilience Forums and MPs as well as local policing. The latter being very important as Neighbourhood Officers are embedded in their communities and engage with businesses all the time.

The supply chain is particularly vulnerable to criminal attacks so one initiative that is already helping Policing is that all 4 Heads of Procurement have agreed that if any company would



Report to the Police and Crime Panel

like to bid to supply services to any of the South East Forces, they have to be a member of their local CRC.

The TVP Digital Intelligence & Investigation (DII) team seeks to ensure the Force can respond better to ever-changing technological advances and their impact on public and criminal behaviours. The team are made up of a DI, DS, DC's who are Digital Media Investigators (DMI), Digital SME Trainers and Internet Investigation and Intelligence Researchers.

The team offer digital tactical advice and strategy around any investigation/incident with a digital element (which include cyber enabled crimes and fraud) and the trainers offer subject matter expertise across all areas of training from policing foundations to specialisms.

DII Strategic objectives:

PURSUE

- Recognise relevant digital opportunities to achieve positive outcomes
- Understand feasible digital lines of enquiry
- Identify early opportunities to pursue offenders
- Collaboratively work with partner agencies and other law enforcement agencies

PREVENT

- Identify and assess risks and escalation factors in offenders
- Identify digital intelligence opportunities
- Highlight relevant consequences and outcomes of successful prosecutions and investigations

PROTECT

- Identify and safeguard those most at risk of digital threats
- Maximise partnership and collaboration to ensure best service to victims in line with the Victim's Code
- Raise awareness of current threats and exploits employed by offenders
- Provide appropriate and relevant advice to victims of crime to prevent re-victimisation and further loss

PREPARE

- Ensure the efficient identification, investigation and resolution of digital incidents
- Provide the workforce with the knowledge, understanding and skills in line with current digital threat landscape
- Provide the correct resources and equipment to enable effective digital investigation

Next Steps

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) [Strategic policing requirement \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) was released on the 20th February 2023 and continues with the previous six national threats, one of which is a national cyber event.



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A paper also went to Chief Constables Council (CCC) earlier in February 2023 in response to the 2019 HMICFRS inspection into the police response to cyber-dependant crime where is made one recommendation (and a number of Areas for Improvement).

This paper proposed a revamped, consistent Regionally Managed, Locally Delivered structure that provides effective oversight and management across all areas of Pursue, Protect, Prepare and Prevent. This option would deliver the regionally managed, locally delivered model agreed at Chiefs Council in October 2017 and would allow for force teams' operational activity to be tasked, managed and held accountable by their Regional Cyber Crime Unit (RCCU).

A more integrated approach would bridge the significant gap between the local and regional response to cybercrime, improving efficiency, effectiveness, communication and joint working. This option would require some change management and changes to working practices.

This was Option 2 and was agreed at CCC however Option 3 which fully meets the HMICFRS recommendation had already been agreed and implemented by Thames Valley Police Chief Officer Group with the collaboration with SEROCU under Project Startech in 2021.

Whilst the SPR does not explicitly include Fraud in its own right, it has however been included within SOC (together with drugs and OIC) and shortly a fraud supplement will be produced providing greater detail on what is expected from forces regarding the response to fraud.

Fraud also accounts for 41% of all criminal offences in England and Wales and this proportion is increasing.¹ The overwhelming majority of these crimes are digitally enabled with victims not knowing (or caring) about the difference between cyber-enabled and cyber-dependent.

The challenge (and key) is education and following a few simple steps can reduce the chances of someone being a victim drastically.

- Use a strong password (3 random words, upper and lower case including number and special characters),
- Turn on multi-factor authentication,
- Update devices immediately when prompted,
- Back up data and keep a copy offline.

Conclusion

Thames Valley Police is very well positioned within the cyber arena as it fully meets the HMICFRS recommendation of a Regionally Managed, Locally Delivered service with its collaborated Cyber Crime Unit with SEROCU which investigate the more serious cyber dependent crimes.

In addition Thames Valley Police also has a mature Digital Intelligence & Investigation (DII) team which ensures the Force can respond better to ever-changing technological advances and their impact on public and criminal behaviours.

¹ The Strategic Policing Requirement – February 2023

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Report to the Police and Crime Panel

Report title: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH)

Date: 24th March 2023

Author and contact: Charlotte Donohoe: TVP MASH Strategic Manager

Purpose of the report: At the request of the PCP

Recommendations: For noting only

1. Executive Summary

This document provides a high-level overview of the initial implementation of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), the current landscape, emerging risks and opportunities for the future.

MASH sits within Crime, under the Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) portfolio (*appx.1*). Comprised of nine co-located hubs across Thames Valley (*appx.2*), the hubs are responsible for co-ordinating the Police response to statutory safeguarding obligations under Working Together 2018, The Children Act 1989 and 2004, Children and Social Work Act (2017) and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. MASH responsibilities extend across the child, adult and domestic abuse work streams; incorporating each of the 14 vulnerability strands recognised by the National Vulnerability Action Plan (NVAP), and features prominently in Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) as a police-related contact point.

The founding principles for MASH were to provide early identification and understanding of risk, need and harm. The Home Office (2014) report on MASH's across the UK agreed that the core functions of a multi-agency hub were:

1. Acting as a single point of entry: gather all notifications related to safeguarding in one place.
2. Enabling thorough research of each case to identify potential risk
3. Sharing information between agencies (supported by a joint information-sharing protocol).
4. Triaging referrals: exemplified in the use of agreed risk ratings.
5. Facilitating early intervention to prevent the need for more intensive intervention
6. Managing cases through coordinated interventions.

MASH has been subject to multiple internal reviews; the most significant being the MASH Process and Policy Review in 2020 (*appx.3*), commissioned to consider the long-standing challenges of demand exceeding the teams' capacity and the persistent failure to meet statutory obligations. The review proposed 17 recommendations for change and MASH was placed, and remains on the Force Strategic Risk Register. A MASH is not a statutory requirement and there is no standardised or nationally recognised model for coordinating sharing of referrals between police and partners. TVP participate in the National Police Chief Council meetings for MASH and Early Intervention, Thresholds & Referrals and the National Reviews implementation events. The networking opportunities from these groups



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are invaluable but have not led to TVP identifying an existing model that would better suit the TVP landscape than our existing arrangements

2. MASH implementation

In 2013, the four Referral Centres based in Berks x2, Bucks and Oxon transitioned to Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs, and given the appetite amongst partners to create a hub within each Local Authority (LA) area, six MASHs were established in Berkshire. The benefit of these co-located partnerships was the ability to work alongside partners, building trust and understanding of one another's roles and responsibilities, which improved the timelessness and quality of information and intelligence sharing. However, the shift required an uplift of four supervisors at a considerable cost to TVP. The current Chief Constable, Mr Campbell, then negotiated a three-year financial arrangement with Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM), Bracknell, Wokingham and West Berks to each contribute £37,500 pa to fund the additional staff member themselves, each of which has continued to pay since implementation.

The remaining police resources within the Berkshire hubs were split equally during the transition and were not necessarily indicative of local variations in demand. Consequently, localisms developed and practices were adapted to accommodate police capacity and the LA priorities creating a disparate service delivery and 'postcode lottery' for children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect. A subsequent MASH Efficiency and Effectiveness Programme highlighted insufficient detective resilience with PVP and ratified the decision to civilianise the MASH sergeant posts to Police Staff Supervisors by September 2020, saving £101,748 pa. This workforce modernisation plan was opposed by Slough Council citing the loss of investigative skills within the MASH as a potential risk. They continue to reference Detective Sergeants as their preferred model, including a written appeal authored by the Interim Chief Executive and Chair of the Slough Safeguarding Leaders Group in July 2022 and again verbally in December 2022. No rationale was provided on either occasion to justify Police officer provision over Police staff. In response, TVP explained the preferred model for police resources is to expose Police Staff supervisors to the same specialist child abuse and domestic abuse training received by detectives and maintain warranted officers in roles that require their specific skill set. Police officers within MASH would not ever be required to deploy to incidents or exercise their police powers and so the existing model makes best use of the existing skills and capabilities with the TVP workforce.

Historically, Detective Chief Inspectors (DCIs) within PVP had operational oversight of MASHs but challenges with consistency and capacity evidenced within Ofsted and Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) reports prompted a shift to a central DCI. Due to the complexities of MASH, several changes took place including a short-term second DCI, subsequently removed in early 2020, before the MASH 2020 review evidenced the necessity for a senior manager post. Today, the TVP MASH establishment is unique, comprised entirely of police staff up to Detective Superintendent level. (*appx.4*). TVP have experienced no criticality as a result of this decision and received no direct criticism arising from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) inspections. In contrast, MASH has been invited to speak at the College of Policing's Police Staff Conference in March 2023 to share the benefits of TVP's innovative staff retention and development pathways.

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3. MASH demand

The MASH Process and Policy Review 2020 was instigated due to the longevity of difficulties in maintaining the expected and statutory level of services provided by MASH, particularly within the timeliness of information sharing and police participation in statutory child protection meetings. Since implementation, the team structure within the hubs had remained largely unchanged with no significant increase in staffing despite MASH continuing to absorb a year on year increase in demand throughout all areas of business. The review assessed the range of variance between the 13 core MASH functions to identify opportunities to streamline current processes or utilise new technology. The 17 recommendations proposed did not aspire to develop a 'Gold standard' service provision; instead, it sought to find cost-negligible solutions to maximise existing resources, reduce duplication and modernise working practices.

4. Core functions

External Child Protection referrals	Domestic Abuse reports
Internal Child Protection referrals	Domestic Abuse triage process – standard risk
LADO referrals -Position of trust offences (Local Authority Designated Officer)	Operation Encompass
Police checks	Probation checks – reallocated to PPU/MOSOVO¹ MASH 2020 review
MASH enquiries	DVDS: Clare's Law – reallocated to DAIU MASH 2020 review
Initial Child Protection Conferences	NEW 2022: Strategy meeting requests (displaced from CM)
Review Child Protection Conferences	NEW 2022: Programme Hydrant (displaced from PIT, was previously Op Hydrant)
Internal Adult Protection referrals	NEW 2022: Exploitation front door (displaced from M&E hubs/VRU/MIST)

An extensive change project ensued, which included reallocating Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS - Clare's Law) checks to the Domestic Abuse units and Probation checks to the Public Protection Unit - PPU (now known as Management of Sexual or Violent Offenders - MOSOVO). A skills gap analysis was conducted on existing MASH staff followed by an extensive training delivery programme to develop omnicompetency across the remaining functions. Standardised processes were embedded, eliminating localised practices to generate consistency of service force-wide and increase resilience capability across MASH boundaries. Specialist departments and frontline teams received Vulnerability and Safeguarding training to remind them of their safeguarding responsibilities and the role of MASH to improve the quality and frequency of internal referrals. Consultation took place with partners via a Survey to elicit their views and engage them

¹ PPU – Public Protection Unit; MOSOVO – Management Of Sexual Or Violent Offenders



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in the change process and updates were communicated from the Chief Constable to the LAs in writing. By far, the most significant contributor to modernising MASH has been the implementation of Robotic Automated Processes to create capacity and manage risk appropriately.

5. MASH Robotic Process Automation

By September 2020, MASH had concluded the demand scoping and a successful Annual Planning Process (APP) bid supported by the PCC and CCMT resulted in an uplift of six MASH Support Officers force-wide. Simultaneously MASH submitted a request for 'virtual workers' proposing the use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to relieve some of the administrative demand around triaging large volumes of Domestic Abuse and Adult Protection referrals into the MASH. MASH has since been able to expand the use of robotics to incorporate five key businesses areas, and provide both a reactive research function that identifies hidden harm to prioritise those at the highest risk of harm and more recently, to proactively seek out potential escalation before an individual has been subjected to a harmful incident. The MASH establishment had evolved to include 58FTE police staff and five RPA processes, collaboratively managing 14,000 tasks per month in a unique and innovative way.

6. Reactive MASH RA processes

- **Adult Protection (AP):** RPA Prioritises each AP incident tasked to MASH (around 120 every 24hrs) by extracting the risk grading applied by attending officers. Identifies existing flags that highlight vulnerability or children named on the Police reports involvement tab. Conducts research on adults to identify any potentially 'missed' children that may be impacted by the needs, behaviour or abuse of the person at risk. Records demand based on beatcode and risk grading to assist with forecasting or identifying trends.
- **Domestic Abuse (DA):** As listed above (around 250 every 24hrs), in addition to ensuring attending officers comply with the Risk Grading Consistency Policy and upgrades incidents as required, creates or extends DA person and location flags for Niche and CMP, creates and updates Risk Management Occurrences. Tasks the Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit (DAIU) and medium risk safety planners and extracts specific answers from the DOM5 to measure the prevalence of non-fatal strangulation.
- **Operation Encompass:** (Notification of DA to schools)
Identifies children recorded within DA incidents that do not have school details recorded on Niche. Compiles a daily spreadsheet, emailed to each LA area with a drop-down selection for each school signed up to the scheme and updates Niche with the school details provided. Around 2000 notifications are shared with schools each quarter. Notifications increased by 150% immediately following implementation of RPA in to this business area

7. Proactive MASH RPA Processes

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- **Strategy meetings:** Developed to relieve demand on Contact Management (CM) (around 600 calls per month) and improve service delivery to partners by eliminating call waiting time.
LA partners email a request for a strategy meeting, police or MASH check to an allocated inbox, managed by the RPA. RPA creates a new occurrence on Niche, adds nominals, addresses, linked occurrences and uploads the request form. The RPA adds an entry to the Occurrence before tasking the appropriate MASH. The RPA will send an email response, confirming receipt and providing a police reference number or requesting further information if the form is incomplete.
- **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law):** RPA identifies current or expired high-risk DA perpetrators in new or previously unknown intimate relationships to prompt a 'Right to know' disclosure to their partner. This process is currently being extended to include repeat medium risk offenders and is the subject of a Randomised Control Trial, supported by an academic to track the impact on victims of DA.

The implementation of RPA has transformed MASH's ability to appropriately triage an ever-increasing workload, uncover indicators of harm that might otherwise be hidden and attempt to prevent future risk of harm to potential victims. In addition, an unintended positive consequence of RPA within MASH processes is the extent to which it tracks MASH demand and output, generating a reliable assessment of frequency and severity of demand, which supports horizon scanning including the ongoing force review and informs future resource planning. The interim data obtained by the DVDS process is showing potential patterns in offending behaviour, which could be used to assist future offender-targeted schemes or practices. MASH have supported wider TVP and software owners Blue Prism with disseminating working practices to other forces, at conferences and recording a promotional video.

8. Current Challenges

Maintaining standardisation

Despite the significant progress in standardising processes to provide a consistent force-wide police response to partners and the public, MASH working practices constantly evolve to accommodate local and national learning. MASH work collaboratively with Governance and Service Improvement to effect change where required and has presented at the Compendium of Learning Conferences. MASH provide inputs at the DA, Child Abuse specialist and PIP1 investigator courses and has presented bespoke inputs for CAIU, FISO and MOSOVO. Internally, MASH delivers a virtual learning session for the team every 6-weeks to discuss emerging trends and compliance issues or initiate process updates or changes. The MASH 2022-2024 Vision Statement identifies 10 areas for development and helps drive continuous improvement. It is aligned to internal and external learning and the National Vulnerability Action Plan. (*appx.5*).

A Police Staff management structure is advantageous for MASH as it provides a more stable oversight of previous iterations, which helps prevent duplication or regression. This 'legacy' knowledge is particularly useful in managing frequent LA requests to align police



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practice with their local priorities or capacity. As their largest referrer, there is continuous pressure on police to reduce demand on partner agencies, most typically those LAs under significant financial strain or recovering from an adverse Ofsted inspection. The MASH management team and wider PVP take a robust stance in maintaining the force position until an evidence-base for change is available and a force-wide resolution is appropriate.

National Picture

The National review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson (*appx.6*) recommended that child protection practices are delivered at a local level and are multi-agency end-to-end in dedicated multi-agency child protection units in every LA area. This would require a significant change in resourcing and delivery of our already stretched MASH and Child Abuse Investigation Units (CAIU). The review does not acknowledge the complexities or volume of MASH demand nor the challenge for forces serving multiple local authority areas with vastly different priorities such as TVP. The anticipated 'Expert-led, multi-agency model for child protection investigation, planning, intervention and review' will likely have profound implications for all partners and will alter Children's Social Care' expectations of police. There is a significant risk that TVP will not be able to fulfil either the national recommendations, or partner expectations.

Despite this emerging national vision, internally there is an appetite for MASH to consolidate police staff into two Berkshire hubs to improve efficiency. In 2018, TVP's Berkshire MASH Options Paper (*appx.7*) initiated a discovery project that aspired to merge the six smaller MASHs into one or two centralised hubs, replicating the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire models. From the multi-agency discussions held, it was apparent that there was no appetite from partners to change the existing model due to concerns that Reading and Slough's demand would supersede the smaller local authority areas. As previously mentioned, work following the MASH 2020 review has addressed the geographical fragmentation of resources and local variations in demand and approach, by instigating a force-wide standardisation programme. The introduction of a demand, resilience and escalation process across the three counties has allowed MASH to virtually move resources across geographical boundaries in response to risk and demand. Often a supervisor will take responsibility for two of the least complex hubs, which has resulted in some dissatisfaction from partners who feel they have 'lost' their dedicated police resource. There has been no criticality identified from cross-boundary working and MASH is transparent about the resourcing model during inspections.

Remote working

COVID-19 lockdown restrictions resulted in the six Berkshire MASHs accommodated within local authority estates closing in early 2020, displacing 26 TVP employees. After almost three years of continuous home working Reading and Bracknell were the last to return to the office, whilst Slough and Wokingham reduced the TVP footprint within their buildings, all without prior consultation. In contrast, Oxon, Bucks and MK MASHs were able to operate effectively within social distancing guidelines and maintained direct supervision of MASH staff for recruitment, training and welfare purposes. TVP MASH currently lacks the autonomy to determine where and when Berkshire team members will attend their



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workplace, which has caused considerable disruption to staff recruitment and development and will continue to have unfair implications on future hybrid working arrangements due to desk availability in Local Authority owned estates.

The 2022 RBWM JTAI and Group Based CSE inspections both exposed the continued challenges of local authority-based MASHs attempts to revert to localised, LA-led processes that dilute standardised TVP practices. Previous attempts to amalgamate TVP resources were unsuccessful due to the detrimental impact on partner confidence however; this sustained period of virtual working - instigated by local authority partners - has provided proof of concept. COVID-19 has demonstrated that TVP can fulfil its statutory obligations, maintaining effective safeguarding provisions and efficient working relationships with no reduction in service quality. Detective Superintendent Clare Knibbs wrote to partners in June 2022 (*appx.8*) to advise that TVP did not intend to revert to physical Police attendance at Child Protection conferences, as this would negatively affect our capacity to attend and undo the 30% increase in force-wide compliance since the introduction of Microsoft Teams. Despite this, Oxfordshire LA have advised that they will cease to accommodate a hybrid-style conference with Teams week commencing 23rd February 2023, with objections raised by TVP MASH and Health partners around the availability of police, teachers, GP's and health visitors in person.

Finances

Changes in the local authority's financial commitments present a further concern for MASH. RBWM and West Berks have informally disclosed that they intend to withdraw the annual contributions towards the additional Berkshire supervisors. The original financial agreement initiated by Mr Campbell in 2015 was intended to last for three years, although each has continued to fund these roles to date except for 2020/2021. The cost implication for TVP if all four disengages is a shortfall of £150,000 pa. In addition, Slough's financial issues have prompted them to consider a second relocation of the MASH, at a cost of around £40,000 to transfer TVP's ICT equipment. TVP received no contribution from Slough for the costs incurred during their last move and TVP staff are vulnerable to future disruption to their work environment.

Displaced demand

MASH is accustomed to annual increases in demand as calls for service increase and officers become more skilled at identifying early signs of abuse and neglect. As already proven, the application of RPA within MASH functions is capable of creating capacity and there are further enhancement opportunities planned, depending on the capacity of the RPA development team to progress. However, the MASH continues to absorb work streams from within the force as processes change. On 4th July 2022, Contact Management (CM) withdrew the dedicated contact number for Social Workers at short notice and MASH inherited 600 calls per month with no staffing uplift. Fortunately, MASH was able to develop an RPA workaround to protect our statutory service delivery.

CM's upcoming 'Right care, Right Person' deployment process will undoubtedly affect MASH as partners seek an escalation route for welfare concerns. Humberside, who piloted the scheme, communicated the proposed changes to their partners six months prior to implementation and utilised PVP to initially quality assure Control Room decisions,



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however, they did little to track the impact on other areas of business such MASH. An increase in requests from CM and partners is anticipated in addition to an increase in requests for police information to assist partners with their decision-making. Similarly, the newly established Assessment & Investigation Unit (AIU) in Berkshire had recommended MASH complete the filing and finalising of incidents to relieve demand on the frontline. This demand is administrative - as opposed to safeguarding-related - so does not fully utilise the skillset of the MASH but secondly, displaces responsibility for Crime Data Integrity (CDI), officer compliance and data integrity for those incidents onto MASH too. Instead, MASH have offered to be a TVP pilot for the Hampshire RPA for filing incidents to explore whether the function can be completed using technology.

Operation Encompass

This Operation is designed to ensure that schools receive information from the Police regarding police attended domestic abuse incidents that involve pupils. Implemented in 2017, the fully automated process initially required very limited police staff intervention and an upgrade made in November 2021 increased notifications to schools through utilising RPA to obtain missing school information from partners. Despite this remaining a non-statutory function, Encompass continues to be a point of reference during inspections for HMICFRS, JTAI and OFSTED.. Following the changes in DA legislation, the expectation is that TVP will extend the scheme to cover information sharing from 28 weeks of pregnancy through to early years children aged 0-5 years and will provide a context of the domestic abuse incident. The current Information Sharing Agreements completed with 94% of schools force-wide only approve the date, time and location of the incident and not the parties involved, risk grading or circumstances.

These changes present a significant challenge; there are thousands of potential settings within Thames Valley for those under 5 years and identifying the correct route for sharing information would require dedicated MASH resources. Similarly, a sanitised summary of the incident appropriate for schools would require manual input as neither Niche, nor existing officer practices could provide the appropriate level of information. MASH has received concerns from Oxfordshire, Wokingham, Reading, West Berks and Aylesbury so far regarding the pace of change in this area. If the opportunity arose to invest in modernising the Op Encompass process as described, the automated function has the potential to deliver numerous additional safeguarding benefits within MASH and Exploitation. Provided the barriers to obtaining and maintaining school details could be overcome and a process for sanitising the police information is established, the Op Encompass membership could enable fast time notifications to schools in respect of child victims of serious violence, involvement in knife-crime, child or parental arrests and missing episodes. TVP are currently voluntarily contributing to the National review of Encompass, run by Ipsos Global Market Research and Public Opinion Specialist.

9. Current Opportunities

Exploitation

Following the launch of the Missing Investigation Support Team In July 2022, the Gold Exploitation working group identified several internal challenges in the consistency of



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service delivery for exploitation across Thames Valley and the role of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) within the Governance structure..

Presenting to CCMT in September 2022, (*appx.9*) MASH proposed a new 'front door' for exploitation to improve adherence to statutory obligations and standardise the police response to partners and those vulnerable to exploitation. MASH was authorised to proceed with an uplift outside of the APP bid process for 10.5 FTE police staff members across four roles to enable MASH to manage the additional Exploitation workload. Comprised of MASH Support officers, Case Conference Attendees, Supervisors and a Manager, the new establishment will provide a consistent level of service to the public and partners, and create capacity within the frontline teams to ensure those at risk of exploitation receive the right support, from the most appropriate agency. The MASH front door will relieve local policing of some of the administrative demand around identification, prioritisation and Niche recording, allowing police officers to exercise their powers to protect those at risk and pursue those exploiting others for personal gain.

The work required to deliver the new exploitation strategy can be summarised into six elements:

- Element 1: Thresholds & Capacity
- Element 2: Team Structure
- Element 3: Demand & the Serious Violence Dashboard
- Element 4: Learning & Legislation
- Element 5: Processes & RPA
- Element 6: Tracking & Auditing

The MASH aspects within elements 1-5 will be operational week commencing 3rd April 2023. Element 6 is the development of a performance framework for Exploitation, not previously used within MASH or wider PVP. It will be used to evaluate the internal validity of the police data and the success of the uplift in reducing demand on the frontline and to evidence that crime harm committed against or by those being exploited is reducing across the force. The findings will help inform the Force Performance Group, Force Management statements and Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspections. The Local Policing aspects of elements 1-5 are in development, but will be subject to the recommendations arising from the Force review. VRU is supporting MASH to make adaptations to the existing Service Violence Dashboard and requests for RPA within the Exploitation workflow have been submitted: the progress of both is dependent on the capacity of the relevant teams and may not be available until late 2023.

Berkshire Merger

MASH are exploring the benefits of withdrawing from the six-hub model in Berkshire and delivering statutory services remotely despite the previously held belief that co-location was key, adopted by most forces nationally. Improvements in technology-enabled TVP to maintain a high level of service despite being prevented from working in their contracted locations during the lockdown. As workload in the MASH increases through natural growth and displaced demand from elsewhere in the force, external pressures to channel individual TVP resources into LA-led, non-statutory activities are becoming progressively unmanageable. Berkshire resources do not have a stable, consistent working environment; partners reduced police working space or insist on office attendance outside of TVP agreed



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hybrid working protocols, both of which reduce supervisors' ability to effectively line manage their teams.

Whilst the MASH 2020 review initially reduced the number of core functions from 13 to 11, within two years the number of functions has risen again to 14. MASH resilience can be improved by implementing a dynamic, borderless workforce to facilitate an equal, risk-based workload distribution that maintains standardised force-wide procedures. Amalgamating both the existing and Exploitation uplift resources into fewer locations would improve management oversight, eradicate the current isolated working arrangements and safeguard against local authority-driven instability or change. The preferred option is to service two Berkshire hubs, which would align more closely to the force review's proposed Operational Command Units model. Although less ambitious than a reduction to one countywide hub, this does mitigate against having to accommodate one large team and the financial implication of amending staff locations and contracts. West Berkshire has been progressive in combining some boards already, and it is possible that this transition could encourage an East Berks collaborative board. Formal views from partners have not yet been obtained and further consideration is required within PVP SMT before this opportunity is progressed.



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10. Next Steps / recommendations

The report cross-references a number of related actions, strategies or policies. Key information is detailed below and/or embedded within the appendices.

Professor Munro's report (The Munro Review of Child Protection, 2011) recognised the cross-boundary work conducted by some agencies and recommended that local arrangements consider the size and complexities of their Police partners who service several Local Children's Safeguarding Boards. In reality, MASH will continue to endure frequent challenges from partners to adapt TVP service provision in light of emerging best practice or recommendations, requiring considered and evidence-based rebuttals if a proposal is undeliverable across nine locations. MASH have received consistent support and encouragement from Crime SMT, CCMT and the PCC to maximise the use of existing resources and available technology to develop new, effective ways to manage and prioritise an ever increasing demand safely. This continued high-level engagement will assist MASH with communicating a consistent message through internal and external channels and could influence further collaboration with the Digital Development Team and Violence Reduction Unit.

The new Exploitation 'front door' will be the MASHs largest challenge and most significant staffing uplift since its implementation. Under the leadership of Gold and Silver groups, MASH will be regional outliers with a unique delivery model following a decision reached in 2020 to provide separate responses to Missing and Exploitation. Academic support via the Cambridge Policing Programme and an internal commitment from Governance and Service Improvement will enable MASH to scrutinise the new processes throughout 2023 to monitor progress, identify difficulties and inform longer-term proposals for service provision arrangements.

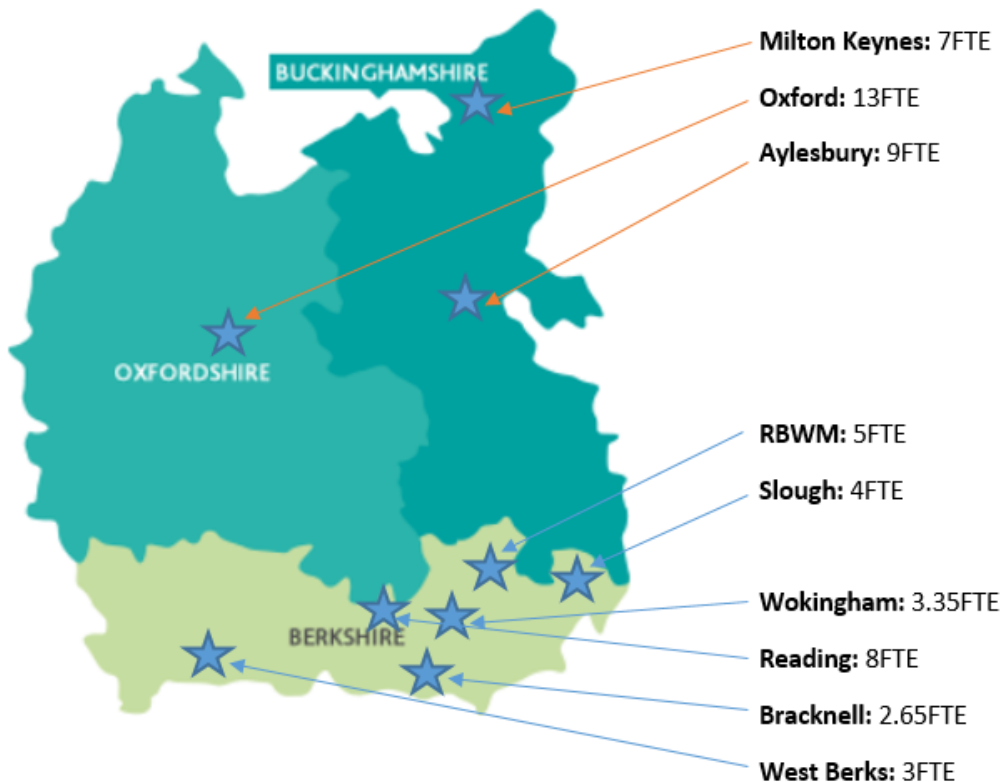
The outcome of the Force Review may help influence ongoing negotiations with the Berkshire LAs regarding funding and locations. In particular, any restructuring or reduction of the Local Policing Areas (LPAs) may provide an opportunity to introduce some uniformity to Exploitation subgroups membership and Terms of Reference. MASH will continue to engage with CM through the implementation of the 'Right Person, Right Care' project to identify emerging issues such as displaced demand or hidden harm at the earliest opportunity, and work collaboratively with internal partners to find resolutions.

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Appendix.1 – PVP structure



Appendix. 2 – MASH locations

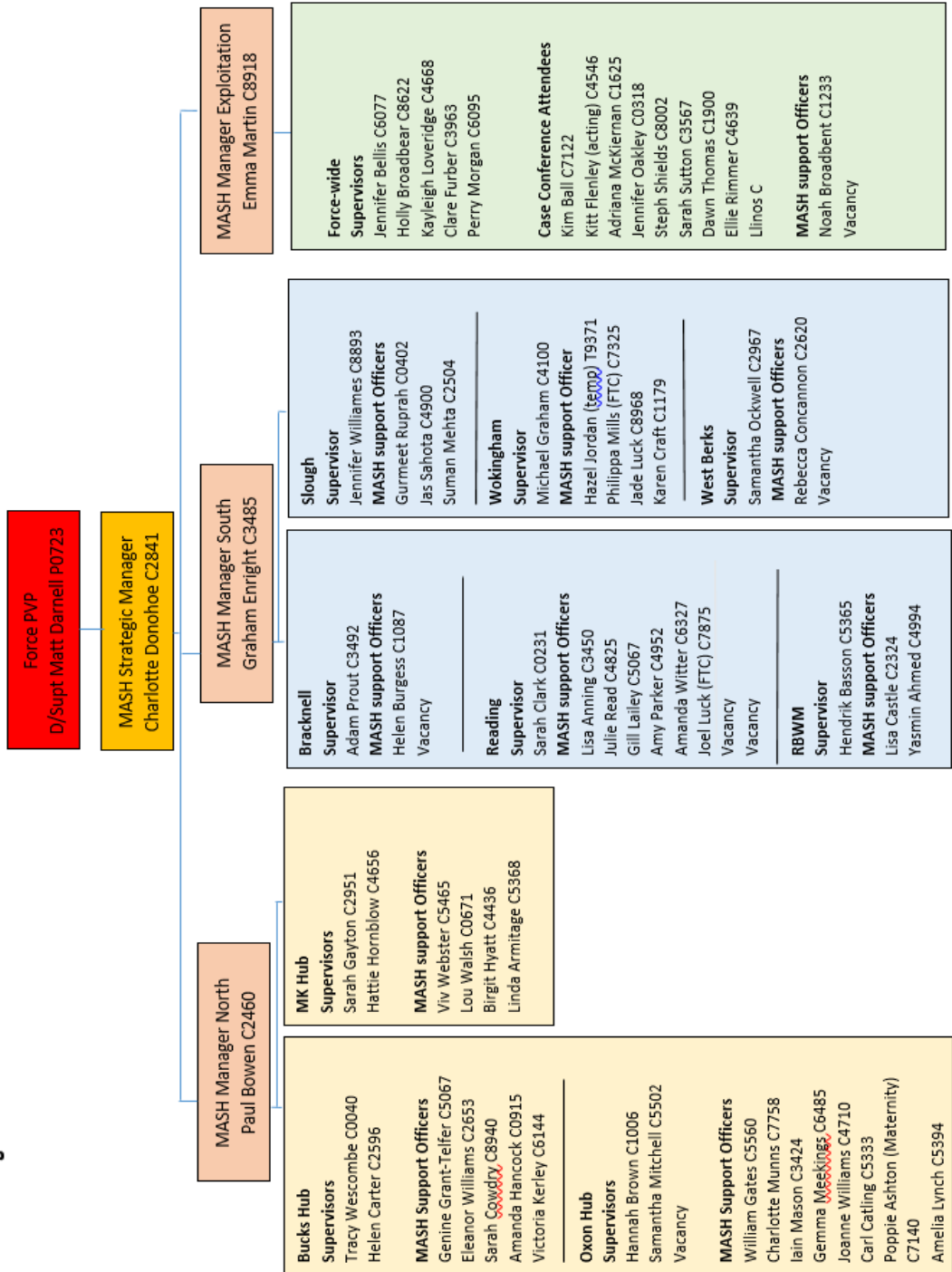




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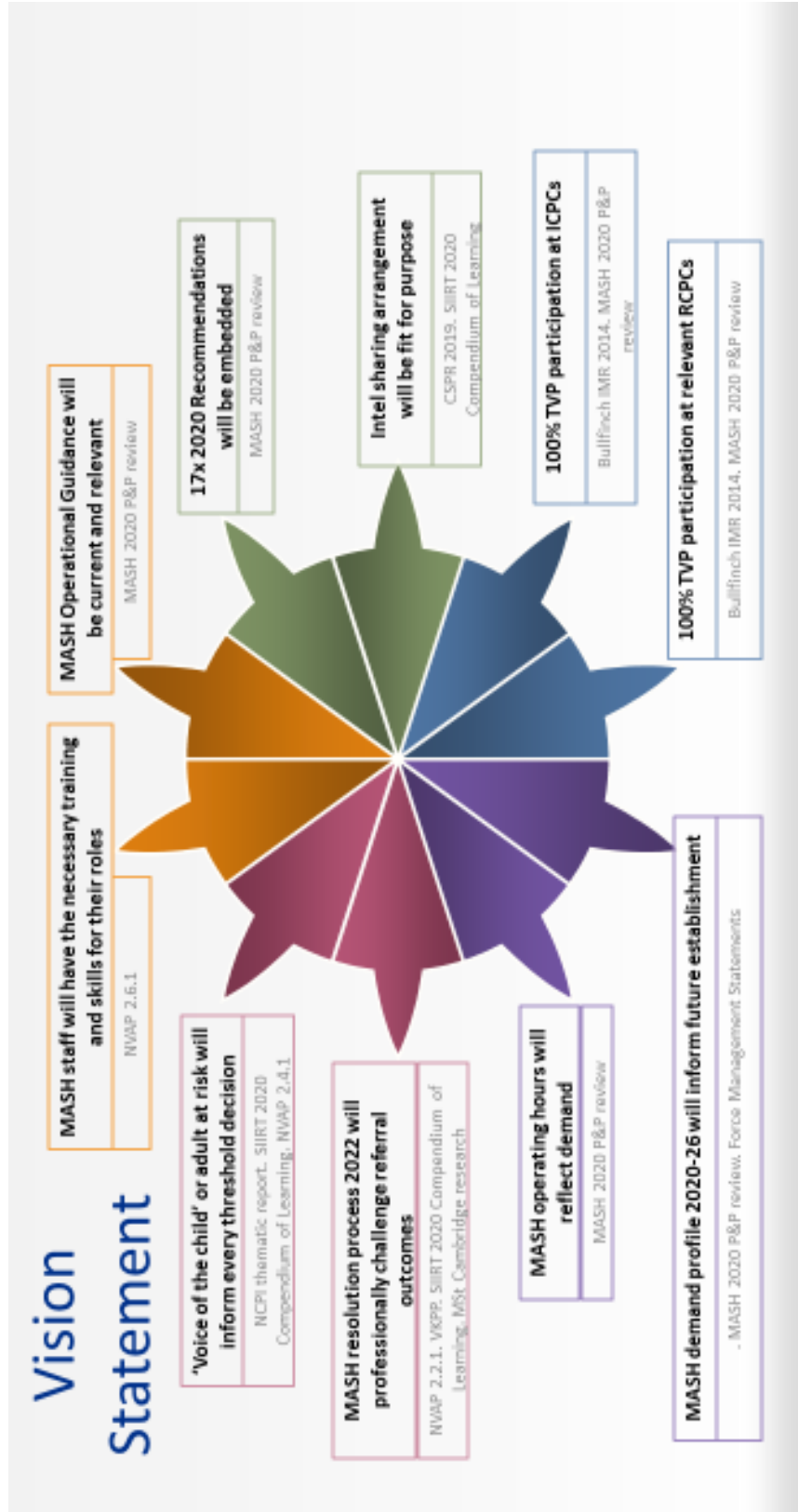
Appendix.4 – MASH Organisational Chart

Organisational Chart: MASH 2023



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Appendix.5 – MASH Vision Statement 2022-2024





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Appendix.3 – MASH Process and Policy Review 2020



MASH 2020 review
(PCC).docx

Appendix.6 – Star and Arthur review 2022



ALH_SH_National_Review_26-5-22 (1).pdf

Appendix.7 – Berkshire MASH Options paper 2018



Berkshire MASH
Options Paper 2018.d

Appendix.8 – Letter to LA partners from D/Supt Knibbs



Letter from DSupt
Clare Knibbs (MASH r

Appendix.9 – CCMT Exploitation presentation



ORIGINAL CCMT
Exploitation Presentat

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Report to the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

Title: Topical Issues

Date: 24 March 2023

Author: Khalid Ahmed, Scrutiny
Officer, Thames Valley Police
& Crime Panel



Slough Council's CCTV transfer to Thames Valley Police

<https://www.sloughobserver.co.uk/news/23356667.slough-councils-cctv-transfer-thames-valley-police-flawed/>

Slough Borough Council leader and his cabinet defended their plan for the police to take responsibility for the town's CCTV from next January.

This is part of the Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Barber's ambition to bring together all of the Thames Valley area's CCTV coverage under one roof and back into the hands of TVP.

It is said that this transfer will save the council £105,000 for this year but will bring a one-off £473,000 cost to fund the service between April and December 2023.

But the move was not welcomed by everyone. Conservative leader Dexter Smith said at a cabinet meeting that this plan was "seriously flawed" and urged senior councillors to not go ahead with it.

Speaking on Monday, February 27, Cllr Smith said there's a "great risk" that this plan won't improve community safety as staff with "no experience" will monitor CCTV covering parks, highways, and facilities, which will remain with the council.

"If we get this wrong, it will seriously go wrong," he told cabinet members, adding it could cost the council thousands of pounds to rectify this if they "rush" into this "bad plan".

Home Office data shows drastic drop in Thames Valley Police PCSOs

<https://www.bracknellnews.co.uk/news/23303035.police-see-dramatic-drop-community-policing-according-analysis/>

In an analysis of new Home Office statistics from the House of Commons, it has been found that in the past eight years there are 171 fewer PCSOs in Thames Valley. The drop is a decrease of 37.3 per cent.

In 2015, 459 community officers were employed to join the force in stark contrast to the 288 that were recorded in September 2022.

According to Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Barber, one of his main objectives this year is to improve visible policing and to ensure members of the public feel confident in their police force. However, with many community officers moving over into full-time policing, it has put a strain on the remaining dedicated patrol in different areas.

Thames Valley Police boss backs biggest ever neighbourhood watch recruitment campaign

<https://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/news/people/thames-valley-police-boss-backs-biggest-ever-neighbourhood-watch-recruitment-campaign-4054006>

Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Matthew Barber has allocated funding to a new national neighbourhood watch recruitment scheme.

The PCC hopes the initiative will lead hundreds of new Neighbourhood Watch volunteers covering the Thames Valley. Called, A Better Place to Live, the scheme was launched nationally on 6 March and is the Neighbourhood Watch's biggest recruitment drive in recent years. It is hoped if more officers are on the streets it will reduce both the fear and likelihood of crime.

Police in Thames Valley issued more than 150,000 speeding tickets over a two-year period, the third highest number issued in the country

<https://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/news/crime/police-in-thames-valley-issued-more-than-150000-speeding-tickets-over-a-two-year-period-4046136>

A quarter of knife crime offenders jailed in Thames Valley

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/a-quarter-of-knife-crime-offenders-jailed-in-thames-valley/ar-AA17hWS>

Anti-knife crime charity the Ben Kinsella Trust said further investment in the court system is needed to help it keep up with rising knife crime across the England and Wales.

Ministry of Justice figures show 136 offenders in Thames Valley were given an immediate sentence in the year to September – accounting for 24% of knife crime offenders who went through the criminal justice system.

This was in line with the proportion of offenders handed an immediate sentence in 2020-21, but below the proportion two years prior (29%).

Overall, about 21% of the 573 offenders in Thames Valley who went through the criminal justice system were cautioned, 25% were given community sentences and 21% were suspended sentences.

Across England and Wales, nearly 19,400 knife and offensive weapon offences were formally dealt with – a decrease of 5% since the year ending September 2021.

This is despite separate figures showing an 11% increase in knife crime over the course of the same period.

54 people charged in one week by Thames Valley Police during county line drugs crackdown

<https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/news/crime/54-people-charged-in-one-week-by-thames-valley-police-during-county-line-drugs-crackdown-4057086>

<https://www.bracknellnews.co.uk/news/23373807.thames-valley-vulnerable-children-involved-drug-dealing/>

Victims of stalking to receive specialist support through a new Thames Valley-wide service

The Police and Crime Commissioner has announced a new service to improve the support available to victims of stalking. The Thames Valley Stalking Service will provide specialist support to victims of stalking across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

The Thames Valley Stalking Service is being delivered by charity Aurora New Dawn. The service provides emotional and practical support and advocacy to victims of stalking, supporting victims who have experienced any stalking behaviours, not just stalking from ex-intimate partners.

The Police and Crime Commissioner has awarded Aurora New Dawn £120,000 a year until March 2025 to deliver the service across the Thames Valley.

Victims First is working with the Thames Valley Stalking Service to manage referrals into the service. Victims First Officers will work with the victim to carry out an assessment and determine the best support to meet their needs.

Berkshire's vehicle crime hotspots as 5,992 incidents reported to police in 2022

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/berkshires-vehicle-crime-hotspots-as-5992-incidents-reported-to-police-in-2022/ar-AA17APmX>

Anti-social behaviour hotspots across Berkshire as Thames Valley Police receive more than 8,000 reports

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/anti-social-behaviour-hotspots-across-berkshire-as-thames-valley-police-receive-more-than-8-000-reports/ar-AA17H0rD>

Thames Valley Police announce state-of-the-art forensics centre

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/thames-valley-police-announce-state-of-the-art-forensics-centre/ar-AA17kngO>

Thames Valley organisations awarded over £105,000 to support policing priorities

Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, and the Chief Constable, awarded voluntary and community organisations £105,520 in the first round of this year's Community Fund.

The [Community Fund](#) provides biannual funding to voluntary and community groups that help to achieve the objectives of the PCC's [Police and Criminal Justice Plan](#). The money for the scheme comes from the sale of stolen property that cannot be returned to its rightful owners.

Over 190 organisations applied to the latest round of the Community Fund, with 39 organisations successful in receiving funding to support the PCC's [Police and Criminal Justice Plan](#) priorities to reduce crime.

Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel Work Programme 2022/23 and 2023/24

24 March 2023 extended meeting	Community Policing Strategy – including Police Community Support Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber Crime • Criminal Justice System and Probationary Service - Prison Leavers • How is the PCC holding the Chief Constable to account for TVP’s role and performance in the 9 MASHs within Thames Valley (six in Berkshire, one in Oxfordshire, one in Milton Keynes and one in Buckinghamshire). • Public questions • Chairman/PCC Updates/Topical issues • Work Programme
23 June 2023	<p>Police and Crime Commissioner’s Annual Report – Monitoring of Priorities of Police and Criminal Justice Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Strong local policing 2. Fighting serious organised crime 3. Fighting cyber-crime and fraud 4. Improving the criminal justice system 5. Tackling illegal encampments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public questions • PCP Annual Report • Annual Review of Panel’s Terms of Reference, Panel Arrangements, Appointment to Sub-Committees and Task and Finish Groups and Home Office Grant 2023/24 • TVP Vetting - Update • Chairman/PCC Updates and Topical Issues Report • Work Programme

<p>15 September 2023</p>	<p>TVP Force Review - Neighbourhood Policing Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional & Ethical Standards Panel Annual Assurance Report 2021 • Contact Management – Update on performance of “101” Calls and on-line reporting • Community Safety – Update on funding provided by PCC • Update on Thames Valley wide CCTV • Operation Deter – a zero tolerance approach to knife crime – Update on successes • Race and BAME representation in TVP – Progress being made • Chairman/PCC Updates and Topical Issues Report Work Programme
<p>13 November 2023</p>	<p>Fighting serious organised crime – County Lines and the protection of the vulnerable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Assurance Report – Joint Independent Audit Committee • Race Action Plan and the work of the Independent Scrutiny Oversight Board (ISOB) – Update report • Update on TVP Recruitment and Retention including improving the number of officers from ethnic minority groups • Progress on draft budget? • Chairman/PCC Updates /Topical Issues • Work Programme

26 January 2024	PCC Draft Budget – To review and make recommendations on the proposed precept for 2024/25 and to receive a report from the Budget Task and Finish Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny of the Proposed Police Precept – Questions to the Police and Crime Commissioner • Progress on Contact Management • Chairman/PCC Updates /Topical Issues • Work Programme
15 March 2024	Victims First – The services which the PCC commissions to support victims of crime across the Thames Valley.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman/PCC Updates /Topical Issues • Work Programme

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