OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR THAMES VALLEY

Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley to the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel meeting on 10 September 2021

Update on Community Speedwatch

BACKGROUND

Community Speedwatch has operated in Thames Valley in the past, however historically it has not been well supported by the police. If a local Neighbourhood Team showed an interest they were excellent at helping volunteers, but the coverage was patchy and many groups felt neglected and unsupported.

Speeding is an issue for almost every community in the Thames Valley and Community Speedwatch can make a significant contribution to addressing it. However poor support in the past and lack of promotion has, in some places, damaged the brand of Community Speedwatch.

The Police & Crime Commissioner has driven the relaunch of Community Speedwatch and the PCC has committed funding to support the project through the OPCC and led the work with the police and partners to prepare for the new scheme.

AIM OF THAMES VALLEY COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

Community groups will be empowered to educate road users about safer speeds and will also be providing valuable data to the police.

By relaunching Thames Valley Community Speedwatch the intention is to overcome some of the poor performance issues of the past and to provide a consistent approach to speedwatch across the Thames Valley. The new scheme is more than just a revamp of the old one. There are some notable differences and a more ambitious aim to integrate more fully with Roads Policing.

NOTABLE DIFFERENCE/IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SCHEME

Below are some of the key differences that will make this new scheme stand out:

- Day to day operation will be supported by Community Speedwatch Online, a non-for-profit organisation set up in 2012 which provides a bespoke online platform for registration, training, session planning, data entry and analysis.
- Clearer promotion of the scheme with a single point of contact.
- Speed detection devices and other equipment can be provided to start-up groups on a loan basis and funded by the OPCC (subject to demand and ongoing funding availability).
- For groups that choose to purchase (or already have purchased) their own device, a clear list of approved devices will be available, along with a black-list of devices that are not approved by the police.
- Regular communication with volunteers – volunteer newsletter due to go out in September
- Improved training.
- Improved processes to provide for better enforcement by police for persistent offenders.
- Better use of data to assist with police enforcement.
- Improved training for neighbourhood teams to support Community Speedwatch

PILOT PROGRAMME
Thames Valley Police are currently operating a pilot of the new scheme with the support of Community Speedwatch Online. This is was launched in April 2021 having been postponed on two occasions due to coronavirus. 25 groups are currently operating under the new pilot scheme in Wycombe and South & Vale LPAs. The response so far is very positive and so – barring any last minute problems – it is hoped that the next stage of the roll out can begin in early October.

ROLL OUT
From October onwards the remaining existing speedwatch groups will be migrated to the new system. Capacity inevitably means that not all groups can be moved over in one go, and the timescale will depend on a number of factors, but it is hoped to have completed the move of all existing groups to the new system by the end of the year.

EXPANDING THE SCHEME
Priority will be given to those groups that already exist, but the ambition is to significantly increase the number of groups operating in Thames Valley. As the migration of existing groups will take some time, combined with the winter weather, widespread promotion of Community Speedwatch will not be launched until Spring 2022. In the first instance those interested in taking part will be directed to existing groups if they exist, and if setting up a new group then support, including equipment can be provided.

Office of the PCC for Thames Valley
1 September 2021