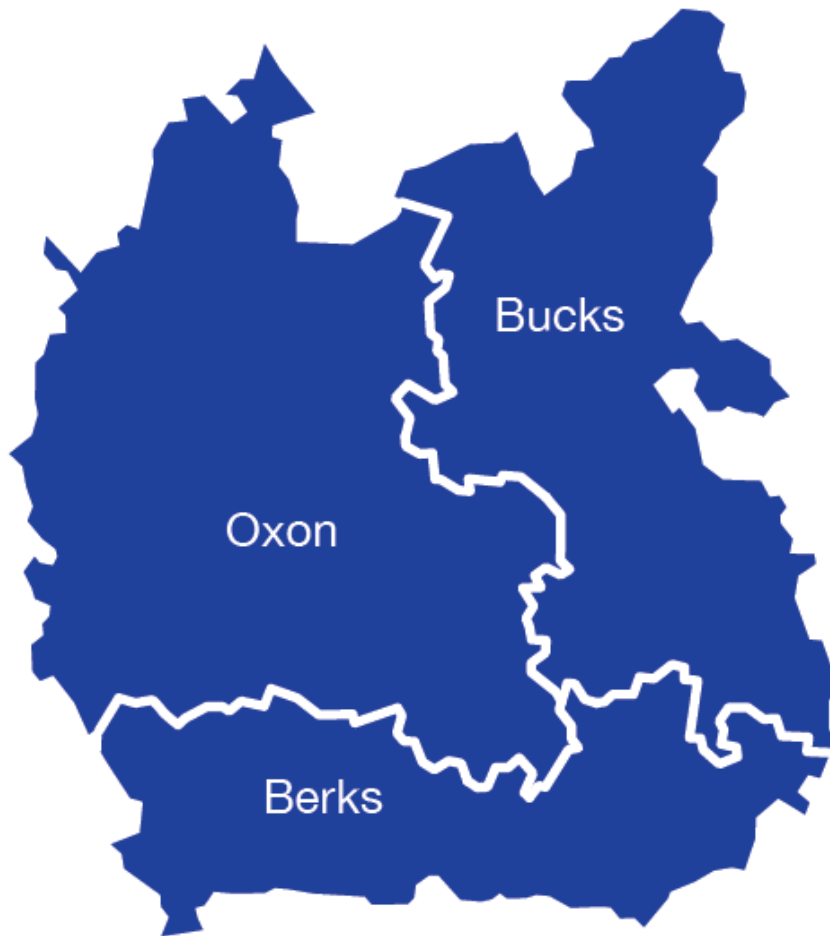


Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel



Annual Report 2021/22

MEMBERS OF THE THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

2021-22

Councillor Balvinder Bains (Slough Borough Council)
Councillor Adele Barnett-Ward (Reading Borough Council)
Councillor Robin Bradburn (Milton Keynes Council)
Councillor David Cannon (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead)
Councillor David Carroll (Buckinghamshire Council)
Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye (South Oxfordshire District Council)
Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Buckinghamshire Council - Co-Opted Member)
Councillor Marilyn Davies (West Oxfordshire District Council) (Chair)
Councillor Neil Fawcett (Vale of White Horse District Council)
Councillor John Harrison (Bracknell Forest Council)
Liz Jones (Independent Member)
Councillor Andrew McHugh (Cherwell District Council)
Phillip Morrice (Independent Member)
Councillor Barrie Patman (Wokingham Borough Council) (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Claire Rowles (West Berkshire Council)
Councillor Dr Louise Upton (Oxford City Council)
Councillor Richard Webber (Oxfordshire County Council)
Councillor Mark Winn (Buckinghamshire Council - Co-Opted Member).

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Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (PCP) is a joint committee comprising of 14 elected members (one from each of the Oxfordshire district councils (4), one for each of the Unitary Authorities in Berkshire (6), and one each for Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council and Milton Keynes Council. Buckinghamshire Council is represented by one Member plus four further local authority co-opted Members to meet the balanced panel objective.

It can be contacted via the address below:

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Website:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/our-work-communities/tv-police-and-crime-panel>

Twitter: [@ThamesValleyPCP](https://twitter.com/ThamesValleyPCP)



For 2021/22, the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Thames Valley is Matthew Barber who was elected on 6 May 2021.

He can be contacted here:

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Commissioner
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Foreword

This is the ninth annual report of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (PCP), which covers its activities during the 2021/22 calendar year.

The objective of the Panel is to maintain a 'check and balance' on the performance of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) regarding his strategic objectives contained in his Police and Criminal Justice Plan.

The Panel plays a vital role in holding the PCC to account and supporting him in the effective exercise of his duties, in particular the way he holds the Chief Constable to account.

The Panel is dependent on the dedication and commitment of its Members, both Members of Constituent Authorities in the Thames Valley and its two Independent Members.

The Panel Members ensure that the Panel carries out its statutory functions which, help to deliver an effective and efficient policing service for the people of the Thames Valley.

This was the first year of Matthew Barber as PCC. Matthew was previously Deputy PCC and the Panel have appreciated the work of him, and his officers, in helping the Panel in its work throughout the year.

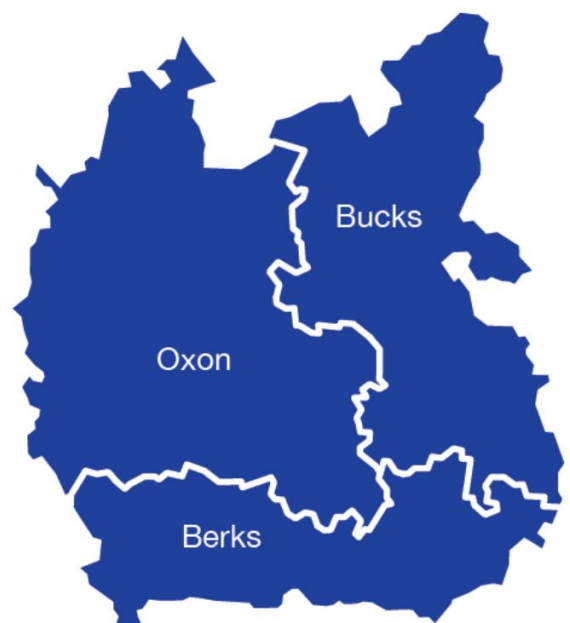
This is particularly appreciated in the support which is given to the Budget Task and Finish Group in the scrutiny of the Police precept for Council Tax.

The last 12 months has again presented unprecedented challenges due to the Coronavirus Pandemic with

some of the PCP meetings taking place "virtually". This has not affected the objectives of the Panel with a full work programme having been fulfilled.

What is very clear to Panel Members from their work carried out throughout the year is that Thames Valley police officers and support staff are very much in the front line and continue to carry out their duties to the best of their abilities for residents of Thames Valley.

For 2021/22, the Panel thanks the Chair, Councillor Marilyn Davies (West Oxfordshire District Council) and the Vice-Chair, Councillor Barrie Patman (Wokingham Borough Council). In addition, thanks also be given to Councillor Andrew McHugh, Chair of the Complaints Sub-Committee (Cherwell District Council).



The Role of the Panel

Police and Crime Panels were established in each Police Force area under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The key functions of the Panel are:

- ❖ To review the PCC's Police and Criminal Justice Plan;
- ❖ To hold the PCC to account for the delivery of the Police and Criminal Justice Plan – the panel has powers to request any necessary information from the PCC on his decisions;
- ❖ To review and report on the appointment of the Chief Constable and other senior appointments – the Panel has powers to veto the appointment of the Chief Constable;
- ❖ To review the PCC's proposed police precept – the Panel has powers to veto the precept;
- ❖ To scrutinise the PCC's annual report;
- ❖ To consider complaints against the PCC.

The Panel, through its work programme, has carried out its main statutory duties which is to scrutinise and support the PCC in his role in helping tackle crime and disorder in the

Thames Valley. The PCC was elected to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure an efficient and effective police force for the Thames Valley.

The Panel cannot directly scrutinise operational policing matters but can question the PCC on how he is holding the Chief Constable to account for policing in the Thames Valley.

The Budget Task and Finish Group of

the Panel worked with both the PCC and Thames Valley Police Chief Financial Officers on reviewing the PCC's proposed police precept before the proposed precept was submitted to the Police and Crime Panel.

The Panel agreed with the PCC's recommendation and approved the Police and Crime Commissioner's precept for 2022/23, to increase the council tax precept by £10 (Band D), to enable policing priorities to be met.



PCC'S Police and Criminal Justice Plan and the Role of the Panel



Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the PCC must produce a Police and Crime Plan which sets out the Commissioner's strategic police and crime objectives for the Thames Valley with regard to:

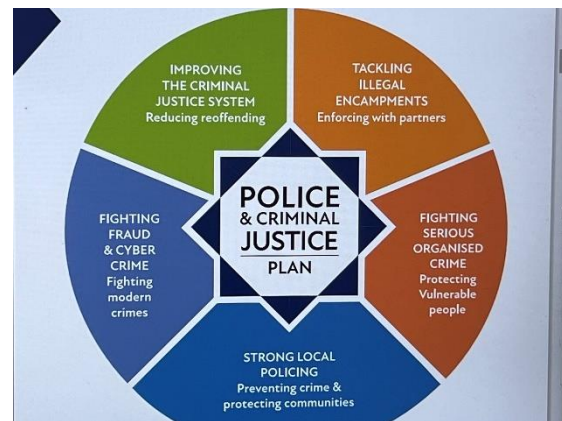
- the policing of the area;
- crime and disorder reduction, and
- the discharge by Thames Valley of its national or international functions

The Plan covers:

- The policing of Thames Valley which the Chief Constable is to provide
- The financial and other resources which the Commissioner is to provide to the Chief Constable
- The means by which the Chief Constable will report to the Commissioner on the provision of policing
- The means by which the Chief Constable's performance in providing policing is measured

- The crime and disorder reduction grants which the Commissioner is to make, and the conditions (if any) of those grants

The Plan draws upon a wide range of information from the police, community safety and criminal justice partners to ensure it reflects the police and crime issues which are affecting the Thames Valley. It also covers a much wider range of service responsibilities than any plan previously developed by the police, community safety partnerships (CSPs) or any other individual community safety responsible authority. The Plan will bring together the priorities of all agencies and authorities with a responsibility for cutting crime and improving community safety.



The Plan was presented to the Panel at its meeting in June 2021 and the Panel was informed of five broad strategic priorities contained in the Plan which were:

Strong local policing

Recruiting more police officers, supporting neighbourhood policing, and focussing on driving down the crimes that matter most to the public.

Fighting serious organised crime

Cracking down on the threat from "county lines" drugs gangs to protect children from exploitation and abuse.

Fighting cybercrime and fraud

Crime is changing and I will invest in the technology and resources the police need to protect the public online.

Improving the criminal justice system

Supporting victims of crime, bringing more criminals to justice, and reducing reoffending.

Tackling illegal encampments

Ensuring a fair but firm response to illegal encampments and reducing the effect on our communities.

25/21
26/21
27/21

Members were informed that the priorities have been kept broad to allow organisations to address concerns in different ways and to meet local needs but there are a number of key aims under each priority.

The PCC informed the Panel that other strategies would also be developed which included: - police officer and staff recruitment and retention; Community Safety Partnership funding; improving contact management; specialist capabilities; Police Officer welfare; Emergency Services Collaboration; fly-tipping and environmental crime and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR).

There were concerns expressed by the Panel at the omission of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) as a specific strategic priority, particularly in view of the recent national headlines associated with the murder of Sarah

Everard. At the next meeting of the Panel, the PCC was asked to consider

including VAWG as a sixth strategic priority, which was refused.

The Work of the Panel in 2021-22



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

SAFETY

At the Panel's June meeting, consideration was given to an update on the work of Thames Valley's Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).

The PCC had a community safety budget of £3 million, of which £2.7 million was allocated to county and unitary councils in the Thames Valley area in the form of grants, and £0.3 million is retained by the Office of the PCC (OPCC) to fund Force-wide initiatives.

The Panel was informed that a review would be taking place into the funding of CSPs as the funding formula was outdated. CSPs would be asked for clearer plans on what their spend would be and funding would be released quarterly upon delivering part of their plan.

In response to a question about achievements and performance of CSPs in relation to the funding allocated, the PCC reported that part of the review would be looking at the allocation of funding more strategically.

At the following Panel meeting, the PCC provided details on the changes to how Community Safety Funding would be allocated, which would be based on a fairer “needs based” formula, which considered data around population and crime related factors.

The new funding formula had been reworked to incorporate three factors: - Population (50% weighted), Crime (25% weighted) and non-crime demand, such as Anti-Social Behaviour and fear for welfare (25% weighted).

There was some concern at this change in funding formula as some of the larger population bases in Thames Valley had reduced funding. The PCC believed, the three-year allocation gave more certainty to local authorities and allowed for more long-term projects.

RURAL CRIME



At its meeting in September 2021, the Panel held a scrutiny session on Rural Crime and questioned the PCC on the key activity which was being undertaken or planned by Thames Valley Police to tackle the increasing rural crime in Thames Valley’s rural communities.

The PCC reported that in the last 12 months there had been a re-focus on rural crime by the force, endorsed and supported by the PCC and Chief Constable.

Key changes included:

- The introduction of a dedicated team of officers to tackle rural crime – the rural crime taskforce.
- Revised and enhanced force governance to ensure appropriate strategic, tactical, and operational oversight and direction.
- The introduction of a revised rural crime strategy
- The introduction of a revised force definition for rural crime to improve recording, data, and analysis
- Rural crime training for call centre and control room staff
- The introduction of a new rural crime communication strategy.

There was some concern expressed about the new definition of Rural Crime which did not include all crimes in rural villages such as thefts, burglaries etc.

The PCC informed Members that all crime should get the same level of service throughout the Thames Valley and that rural areas should not be treated differently to urban areas. The resources would be different, but it all evolved around neighbourhood policing.

There were particularly high levels of rural crime in areas such as Aylesbury Vale, South Oxfordshire, Chiltern and

South Bucks and it was recognised by the PCC that these areas required preventative work. There was work taking place with landowners on prevention work such as with the security of vehicles, with tagging of vehicles taking place.

The work of the Rural Task Force was praised as this created a police presence and improved police visibility.

COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH



At the Panel meeting in September, the PCC provided Members with a progress report on the implementation of Community Speedwatch in Thames Valley.

Speeding was an issue for almost every community in the Thames Valley and it was acknowledged that Community Speedwatch could make a significant contribution to addressing it. In the past

there had been poor support and promotion which had damaged the brand of Community Speedwatch.

The PCC had driven the relaunch of Community Speedwatch and

committed funding to support the project through the Office for the PCC and led the work with the police and partners to prepare for the new scheme.

The aim of Community Speedwatch was to empower community groups to educate road users about safer speeds and to provide valuable data to the police.

The improvements to the scheme would include:

- Day to day operation would be supported by Community Speedwatch Online, which provided an 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 could be provided to start-up groups on a loan basis and funded by the OPCC (subject to demand and ongoing funding availability).
- Regular communication with volunteers, 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

The Panel was informed that there were 25 groups currently operating under the new pilot scheme in Wycombe and South & Vale LPAs. It was planned to roll out the scheme in a phased approach, across the Thames Valley in Spring 2022.

There was some concern regarding enforcement, but the PCC reported that

neighbourhood teams and then Roads Policing would go out and focus on problem areas and if there was a still a problem, conversations could take place with local authorities to look at preventative measures to slow traffic down. The possession of data would act as an evidence base to enable action to be taken.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



The Panel at its November 2021 meeting held a scrutiny session on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

There was a repeated call from the Panel for VAWG to be included as a separate Strategic Priority in the Police and Criminal Justice Plan of the PCC.

The PCC reiterated that VAWG was an important issue which TVP took very seriously and although it was not one of his five key priorities detailed in his Plan, he asked that women across the Thames Valley be reassured that TVP considered the prevention of VAWG as a priority.

The PCC was scrutinised on tackling the rise in drink “spiking” of young

women in bars and nightclubs, on the improvements which will need to be made with the Local Criminal Justice Board to bring perpetrators of Violence against Women and Girls to justice and how were TVP dealing with domestic violence which occurred within “hidden communities”

There was particular attention paid to how the PCC was holding the Chief Constable to account to ensure the restoration of trust in TVP Police Officers following recent media coverage of crimes committed by Met police force officers, particularly the murder of Sarah Everard.

The Panel was given assurance that TVP’s vetting procedures on the appointment of Police Officers was robust

The Chair of the Panel made the point, that it was important to note that the overwhelming majority of Police Officers were honourable and the recent events which had diminished the public’s confidence in the Police had been demoralising for the Force.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF POLICE OFFICERS



On the request of the Panel, the PCC provided a report to the November Panel meeting on the mental health and wellbeing of Police Officers.

The PCC acknowledged that concerns about mental health conditions have been growing in society generally and the pressurised and often traumatic nature of policing led to obvious additional risks within the profession.

The PCC said the welfare of officers, both mentally and physically, was important not simply because the Chief Constable has a duty of care to officers and staff, but also to ensure the effectiveness of policing was not adversely affected by sickness absence. Significant efforts were made with the Force to ensure staff welfare, through both proactive and reactive means.

MONITORING OF CONTACT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

The Panel was provided with reports at two meetings on performance monitoring information on the Contact Management Performance.

Panel Members had expressed concern at problems residents had in contacting TVP on the non-emergency 101 number.

Improving 101 and other contact services was one of the success measures in the PCC's Police & Criminal Justice Plan and formed part of the performance monitoring regime being put in place to hold the Chief Constable accountable for delivery of the Plan.

The Panel continued to monitor the improvements which were being made to the service and noted the increase in on-lin reporting.

HATE CRIME



The PCC submitted a report to the January 2022 Panel meeting which set out the issues and processes around Hate Crime and Hate Issues.

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

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

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

The Panel was informed that with limited resources, there were lots of offences which possibly should be investigated by the Police, however, there were some incidents which were

a challenge. For example, social media such as Twitter, Facebook etc.

DOMESTIC ABUSE



At the Panel meeting in April 2022, a scrutiny session was held on how Domestic Abuse was dealt with by TVP and how the PCC held the Chief Constable to account on this.

The Panel was informed that of the operational responses of TVP to domestic abuse, together with the support the PCC provided to victims of domestic abuse through Victims First and through supporting numerous organisations across the Thames Valley.

Reference was made to: -

- Work with Thames Valley Partnership who have been involved in developing covert smart phone apps to help protect victims.
- Funding Family Drug and Alcohol Courts (FDACs) in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. Discussions continued with the judiciary in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, where it was also hoped to be able to establish similar problem-solving courts.
- Support for DA victims would feature heavily on the agenda for the Violence against Women and Girls Partnership Board,

which would be chaired by the PCC next month.

- Work continued to try to find effective perpetrator programmes to tackle those who do commit abuse and reduce instances in the future.
- The Domestic Abuse fast track programme, which was now back up and running in Aylesbury Crown Court, continued to demonstrate great benefit. The PCC reiterated that he would continue to lobby the CPS to provide this programme elsewhere in the Thames Valley

PCC GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE OVERSIGHT AND SCRUTINY OF MAJOR FORCE PROJECTS

At the April meeting of the Panel, the PCC provided a report which set out the governance arrangements by which he exercised effective oversight, scrutiny, and challenge, where necessary, of the management and delivery of major Force projects, including projects undertaken in collaboration with other forces and/or public and private sector partners.

The Panel asked the PCC what lessons had been learnt in relation to previously failed Multi-Force IT projects and how would risk assessments, the governance and the exiting of these projects be managed in the future.

The PCC agreed to take these comments away and would ensure the points would be covered in the good governance framework. however, there needed to be better governance.

REVIEW OF CCTV PROVISION AND ESTABLISHING A NEW CCTV PARTNERSHIP FOR THAMES VALLEY

At the Panel meeting in April 2022, the PCC reported that CCTV provision across Thames Valley was varied, with each Local Policing Area (LPA) and local authority working to provide CCTV as a joint approach.

There was an issue across Thames Valley regarding the ownership of the equipment, where it was housed, and who employed the staff. Reference was made to the previous Local Policing Dept. who owned the CCTV strategy and negotiated a new Funding Formula, but this was not adopted in all areas.

The PCC reported that there was no statutory requirement to provide CCTV, which meant it was discretionary for all partners.

The PCC outlined his vision for the future. The PCC recognised that CCTV existed primarily for the benefit of policing and the wider interests of community safety, however, it did not generally form part of the core function of local authorities. It was acknowledged that policing had the main responsibility for providing the CCTV capability within the Thames Valley, but this would take time to implement.

The PCC's long-term vision was for TVP to own the equipment/contracts, be responsible for maintenance and to employ staff to monitor the service. However there needed to be a Thames Valley CCTV Partnership arrangement, with contributions from participative

local authorities, both financially and in kind. This partnership would enable principal local authorities, with parish/town councils; BIDs; private businesses to contribute financially to increase coverage in their locality.

Reference was made to discussions which have already begun with Milton Keynes Council and councils in Oxfordshire. Oxfordshire was the area which seemed most likely to be able to make a change first, should all partners be willing, and this could form the model for the rest of Thames Valley.

Thames Valley Police currently has a capital budget of £472,000 available to support moves to a new model, and the PCC said he would create an earmarked revenue reserve of £1m.

BUDGET TASK AND FINISH GROUP – SCRUTINISING THE PCC FOR THAMES VALLEY PROPOSED COUNCIL TAX PRECEPT FOR 2022-23

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

The Budget Task and Finish Group submitted their report and findings to the Panel meeting on 28 January 2022, and recommended the proposed increase to the police element of the Council Tax by £10 per annum for 2021/222 (for a Band D property). This was agreed by the Panel.

The full scrutiny of the proposed precept is detailed [Here](#)

Looking to the Future / Panel's Work Programme 2022/23

There will be a new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel for 2022/23, but the Panel's work programme for the forthcoming year includes the following topic:

- Police and Crime Commissioner's – Monitoring of Priorities of Police and Criminal Justice Plan:
 - 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

- PREVENT – Was it fit for purpose
- Update on Community Speedwatch
- Update on Recruitment and Retention of Police Officers
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs
- Criminal Justice System and Probationary Service - Prison Leavers
- Contact Management – Update on performance of “101” Calls and on-line reporting
- Police Community Support Officers