



**POLICE  
& CRIME**  
COMMISSIONER  
THAMES VALLEY



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# Introduction

It has been my honour to serve as your Police and Crime Commissioner since 2021, and I am deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in me. As I reflect on the past year, I am proud to share with you the progress we have made in keeping our communities safe and secure.

Over the past year, we have faced numerous challenges, from the ongoing effects of the pandemic to the persistent threat of crime in our neighbourhoods. Despite these obstacles, I am pleased to report that our collective efforts have achieved significant results.

Since taking office, I have worked tirelessly to strengthen the Thames Valley Police Force, appointing a new Chief Constable and overseeing the recruitment of record numbers of police officers. Our commitment to bolstering law enforcement has led to a significant increase in the number of officers serving our communities, with over 5,120 officers now dedicated to keeping Thames Valley safe - more than ever before in the history of the Force.



# Introduction

Furthermore, our efforts to combat crime have not gone unnoticed. By working closely with law enforcement agencies and community partners, we have achieved notable reductions in key crime categories. Knife crime, residential burglary, robbery, and vehicle crime have all seen significant declines compared to pre-pandemic levels.

I am particularly proud of the strides we have made in addressing specific criminal activities. Through targeted initiatives and collaborative strategies, we have successfully doubled the number of neighbourhood police officers, increased charges or shoplifting offences, and maintained a stringent stance on knife possession, resulting in harsher penalties for offenders.

In my tenure as Police & Crime Commissioner over the last three years, I've spearheaded initiatives that have significantly impacted our communities, demonstrating my commitment to enhancing public safety and tackling crime head-on. Here are five key achievements:

## ► **Operation Deter: Cutting Knife Crime**

Through Operation Deter, I've championed a zero-tolerance approach to knife crime, leading to a 12% reduction in knife-related incidents in Thames Valley. This initiative focuses on swift action against knife possession, ensuring offenders are swiftly brought to justice. Additionally, a pilot programme, soon to be expanded, ensures rapid response and intervention for under-18 offenders, demonstrating our proactive stance in addressing youth involvement in crime.



# Introduction



## ▶ Record Numbers of Police Officers and Neighbourhood Teams

I've advocated for increased police presence and resources, resulting in record numbers of police officers and a doubling of neighbourhood police teams. This strategic investment has not only surpassed national recruitment targets but has also led to a 42% increase in officer numbers, significantly higher than the original Home Office plan. My Crimefighters strategy, launched last year, emphasises the importance of bolstering neighbourhood policing, a vision that is being realised through decisive action and funding allocation.

## ▶ Improving CCTV Partnership

Addressing long-standing challenges, I've spearheaded efforts to enhance the CCTV infrastructure across Thames Valley. The establishment of a CCTV partnership, with increased financial contributions from local councils and operational oversight by the police, has led to improved camera functionality and crime detection rates. The successful implementation in Milton Keynes and Slough sets the stage for further expansion, with plans to extend this model to other regions in the near future.



# Introduction

## ► Combating Retail Crime

By engaging with retailers and implementing a comprehensive plan, we've witnessed a significant increase in charges for shoplifting offences, demonstrating greater confidence in reporting incidents. A new reporting app being rolled out will further facilitate reporting, contributing to our efforts in tackling retail crime. This collaborative approach, driven by the voice of the public, has been recognised nationally for its effectiveness and exemplifies our commitment to building safer communities.



# Introduction

## ► Rural Crime Taskforce

Recognising the unique challenges of rural policing, I've established a dedicated rural crime taskforce, equipped with advanced technology and additional resources to combat crime in remote areas. This proactive approach has yielded tangible results, with a 20% reduction in rural crime and the recovery of stolen property worth millions of pounds. The increased funding and support for this taskforce underscore our commitment to safeguarding rural communities.

While these achievements represent significant progress, I acknowledge that there is still much work to be done. I've outlined clear priorities for the future, focusing on continued collaboration with the police, community engagement, and proactive crime prevention measures. Together, we can build on these accomplishments and create safer, more resilient communities across Thames Valley.


Thank you for your ongoing support.



**Matthew Barber**

Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley





# Our force in numbers 2023-2024

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In the midst of evolving challenges in modern policing, including adapting to changing crime trends and ensuring efficient resource allocation, Thames Valley Police remains steadfast in its commitment to serving the community. From public engagement to crime reduction efforts, dedication to upholding safety and security in the Thames Valley is evident in the following statistics and achievements:



**Public Engagement:** Received over **984,280** contacts from the public, marking a **2%** increase from the previous year.

**Arrests:** Made more than **33,000** arrests, reflecting a **6.8%** increase compared to the previous year.

**Incident Response:** Attended **160,127** total incidents, averaging **438** incidents per day throughout the year.

**Victim Support:** Implemented the Victim's Portal, allowing victims to track case progress and communicate with the investigation team.

**Mental Health Response:** Assisted **1,139** individuals experiencing mental health distress, showcasing a **23%** decrease from the previous year.

**Missing Persons:** Handled **5,701** missing persons cases, with a slight decrease from the previous year.

**Missing Children:** Managed a **6%** increase in missing children cases, totalling **2,785** cases.

**Sudden Deaths:** Responded to **1,560** sudden deaths,

indicating a **10.2%** decrease from the previous year.

**Road Traffic Collisions:** Attended **8,328** collisions, focusing on safety and congestion reduction.

**Driving Offences:** Saw a **7.5%** increase in arrests for drink & drug driving, totalling **4,303** arrests.

**Crime Reduction:** Responded to over **1,600** incidents of drug trafficking, showing a **25.5%** increase, and made **755** arrests for knife-enabled crime, a **12%** decrease from the previous year.

**Domestic Abuse:** Accounted for **9,253** arrests, constituting **28%** of overall arrests.

**Sexual Offences:** Saw a **13.6%** increase in charges for sexual offences (excluding rape) and a **17.4%** increase in charges for rape.

**Project Vigilant:** Deployed **284** times, targeting predatory behaviour in public areas

# Progress in meeting the Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025

(2021-2024, with considerations for the PCC Election)

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: APRIL 2023 – MARCH 2024

My Police & Criminal Justice Plan outlines the five priorities I have focused on during this term of office. With victims at its core, this plan emphasises the importance of crime prevention and reducing reoffending to safeguard our communities.

Aligned with my local priorities are National Priorities for Policing. The Home Secretary has developed some key measures to support the strategic priority for cutting crime

## The six priority areas are:

- Reduce murder and other homicides
- Reduce serious violence
- Disrupt drugs supply and county lines
- Reduce neighbourhood crime
- Tackle cybercrime
- Improve satisfaction among victims – with a particular focus on victims of crime

A high-level performance summary of the national measures is provided in the table below. The broader context is reflected across each section of the priorities and in the 'Thames Valley Police in numbers' section of this annual report. A more detailed breakdown of year-end performance figures, linked to my plan, was scrutinised at my [Performance and Accountability Meeting \(PAM\)](#) and is available on my website.

# National Crime and Policing Measures

Priority Measure	National Metrics	Baseline (Jul-18 to Jun-19)	Latest 12 months (Apr-23 to Mar-24)	% Change compared to baseline
Reduce Murder and other Homicides	Homicides	13	13	0%
	HHospital admissions of u25s for assault with a sharp object	NHS data		
Reduce Serious Violence	Offences involving a discharge of a firearm	39	70	+79%
	Drug-related homicides	1	3	+200%
Disrupt drugs supply and county lines	Police referrals into drug treatment	UK Health Security Agency date (formerly PHE)		
	Burglary (residential), robbery (personal), theft of and from a vehicle, theft from a person	29,441	23,300	-21%
Improve satisfaction among victims, with a particular focus of domestic abuse	Satisfaction with the police among victims of domestic abuse	CSEW		
	Victim satisfaction with the police	CSEW		
Tackle cyber crime	Confidence in the law enforcement response to cyber crime	Cyber Aware Tracker		
	Percentage of businesses experiencing a cyber breach or attack	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport survey		

◆ The following section contains highlights of progress towards delivering my Police and Criminal Justice Plan in 2023/24. There are many examples of where grants and funding have supported projects within my priorities.

A full breakdown of all commissioned activities that have applied Community Safety or Ministry of Justice funding is available on my website through the [Annual Statement of Accounts](#). A full list of allocations to the [Community Fund](#) (formerly the Police Property Act) is also published on my website.



## ◆ Strategic Policing Requirement National

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) sets out those threats which, in the Home Secretary's view, are the biggest threat to public safety and must be given due regard by PCCs when issuing or varying Police and Crime Plans. It supports PCCs as well as Chief Constables to plan, prepare, and respond to these threats by clearly linking the local response to the national, highlighting the capabilities and partnerships that policing needs to ensure it can fulfil its national responsibilities.

A revised version of the SPR was published in 2023, providing strengthened detail around the action required from policing at the local and regional level to the critical national threats. The revised SPR sets out seven identified national threats. These are as follows: Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG); Serious and Organised Crime (SOC); Terrorism; Cyber; Child Sexual Abuse; Public Disorder and Civil Emergencies.

As Police and Crime Commissioner, I am confident that I have duly considered the seven threat areas identified in the SPR within my Police and Criminal Justice Plan, as well as in my role of holding my Chief Constable to account. My understanding is informed through oversight of a variety of governance activities conducted at national, regional, and local levels.

At the local level, this oversight extends to my Performance and Accountability Meetings (PAM), monitoring key force meetings, and through my own Strategic Delivery Plan. Additionally, my Internal Audit Department conducts a rigorous ongoing review program of thematic areas directly linked to the SPR. This process provides a comprehensive risk and assurance assessment of key SPR-related functions. The findings from these audits, combined with my oversight of the force's strategic risk report, which may contain links to SPR-related activities, are reported to the [Joint Independent Audit Committee \(JIAC\)](#) and subsequently published on my website.

At the last JIAC meeting in March 2024, the force outlined plans to update its Force Management Statement (FMS) for 2024/25. The FMS is a self-assessment tool used by the force to evaluate and manage its operational capabilities and resources, detailing how resources like officers and equipment will be used to address community needs such as crime reduction and public safety. All areas of the Policing Strategic Requirement are considered in the FMS. I anticipate that the force will continue to meet its duty to consult with the PCC on the FMS by considering the new PCC's Police and Crime Plan after the May 2024 Election.





## Strategic Priority One Strong local policing

### Progress in 2023/24

**Retail Crime:** Retail crime presents a significant challenge in the Thames Valley region, impacting both communities and businesses. From shoplifting to violence against retail workers, these activities undermine public safety and confidence in local retail environments. Addressing this issue requires a partnership approach involving collaboration between law enforcement agencies, retailers, and local communities. Through targeted strategies and partnerships, I've made notable progress in combating retail crime and enhancing security:

- ▶ **DISC Platform Implementation:** Introduced DISC platform, an online reporting tool, to streamline retail crime reporting and improve information sharing among retailers and law enforcement. Collaborated with HWBIDCo (High Wycombe Business Improvement District) and other business groups to promote DISC, facilitating efficient crime reporting and response. Enhanced security measures, boosting business confidence and enabling a more targeted policing response.

- ▶ **Retail Crime Strategy Development:** Developed a comprehensive Retail Crime Strategy in collaboration with retailers, business groups, and police. Established a dedicated Business Crime Team within Thames Valley Police to enhance investigations and identify repeat offenders. Strengthened partnerships with businesses and communities for a coordinated response, ensuring safer retail environments.

### **Initiatives Supporting Domestic Abuse**

**Survivors:** Domestic abuse remains a significant concern, impacting individuals and families across the Thames Valley. As the Police and Crime Commissioner, I have prioritised initiatives aimed at supporting survivors and combating domestic abuse.

- ▶ **BRAVE Programme Recognition:** The BRAVE (Building Resilience and Valuing Emotions after domestic abuse) programme, supported by my office, has been nominated for a



## Strategic Priority One Strong local policing

### Progress in 2023/24

prestigious national award. This recognition underscores the effectiveness of the programme in aiding adult survivors of domestic abuse in Berkshire. Over a 12-week period, survivors participated in therapeutic sessions focused on emotional recovery, fostering resilience and coping mechanisms.

- ▶ **Extended Support:** Graduates of the BRAVE programme receive extended support through the BRAVE EMBRACE group for two years. Additionally, a new programme, BRAVE Too, has been introduced to address the needs of male victims of domestic abuse.
- ▶ **Collaboration with Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust:** The success of the BRAVE programme is attributed to collaborative efforts with Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. By partnering with healthcare professionals, we ensure that survivors receive comprehensive support tailored to their needs.

- ▶ **Impact on Mental Health Innovation:** BRAVE's recognition in the Mental Health Innovation of the Year category highlights its significant impact on mental health support for domestic abuse survivors. This recognition underscores the importance of investing in programmes that address the emotional well-being of survivors.

**Funding Allocations and Grants:** In fulfilling my commitment to enhancing community safety and addressing key priorities outlined in my Police and Criminal Justice Plan, significant funding allocations and grants have been directed to support various initiatives across the Thames Valley region. These investments aim to bolster local policing efforts, tackle organised crime, and provide vital support to vulnerable individuals and communities.

- ▶ **Community Fund Initiatives:** In November, 51 organisations out of over 180 applicants



## Strategic Priority One Strong local policing

### Progress in 2023/24

received funding ranging from £300 to £10,000. This funding supported key priorities outlined in my Police and Criminal Justice Plan, benefiting Thames Valley communities through projects such as youth crime prevention, reoffending reduction, enhanced CCTV infrastructure, and support for victims of domestic abuse.

- ▶ Safer Streets Fund: My office secured £1 million in funding from the Home Office's Safer Streets Fund in October 2023. This funding will be deployed until March 2025 to address key issues such as anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood and rural crime, and violence against women and girls. Targeted interventions in Newbury, West Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire, Vale of the White Horse, Slough, High Wycombe, and Oxford aim to enhance community safety.
- ▶ Support for Search and Rescue (SAR) Organisations: An additional £30,000 was allocated to support Thames Valley's five

SAR organisations—Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue, Berkshire Search and Rescue Dogs, Bucks Search and Rescue, Lowland Rescue Oxfordshire, and Search Dogs Buckinghamshire. This funding aided in locating vulnerable and missing individuals, ultimately benefiting the community.

- ▶ Support for Street Pastors: £46,000 from the PCC's Community Fund supported 13 Street Pastors across the Thames Valley. This funding facilitated recruitment efforts and expanded the presence of Street Pastors, vital for ensuring community safety.
- ▶ Boost in Partnership Funding: Councils in the Thames Valley saw a 15% boost in partnership funding, thanks to my role as the Police & Crime Commissioner. I allocated £11.4 million over the next four years to Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) across the region, significantly increasing the Partnership Fund to address crime and anti-social behaviour. This funding supplemented ongoing support





## Strategic Priority One Strong local policing

### Progress in 2023/24

to Thames Valley Police and other agencies in our joint efforts to tackle crime and enhance community safety.

**Intensifying Efforts Against Rural Crime:** Under my leadership, Thames Valley Police is intensifying efforts to combat rural crime, aiming to make the countryside a challenging environment for criminals. We've launched the first rural crime strategy, outlining plans to reduce offences and improve cooperation until 2026. Partnering closely with communities and agencies, we're committed to creating a hostile environment for rural criminals and ensuring swift justice. The Rural Crime Taskforce is expanding with the recruitment of 10 additional officers. Launched in March 2022, the taskforce aims to deter rural crime in the region. Comprising dedicated officers and intelligence support, it collaborates with partners and communities to combat serious organised rural crime. Since its inception, the taskforce has seized over £5 million worth of property and

supported numerous investigations. Recognising its impact, I allocated additional funding to the 2024/2025 policing budget to strengthen its efforts. This expansion reinforces our commitment to providing a visible and robust response to rural crime, ensuring the safety of farms, rural industries, and isolated communities across the Thames Valley.

**Enhancing CCTV Provision:** Under my leadership, Thames Valley Police collaborated with local authorities to strengthen CCTV provision across the region for crime detection and public safety. The Thames Valley CCTV partnership, led by me, aimed to bolster surveillance capabilities and improve responses to criminal activities. In the initial phase, CCTV ownership was transferred from Milton Keynes City Council and Slough Borough Council to Thames Valley Police, with significant investment and funding from local authority partners. This partnership underscored our commitment to sustainable CCTV provision.



## Strategic Priority One Strong local policing

### Progress in 2023/24

Early benefits included equipment upgrades and increased CCTV operators, contributing to more effective police interventions in serious crimes. Upgrading public space CCTV cameras in Milton Keynes and Slough to digital systems enhanced investigation capabilities. My involvement ensured prudent staffing decisions, resulting in positive benefits for crime detection and public safety. Maintenance contracts were established to ensure equipment longevity, with plans to merge control centres in Oxfordshire for streamlined operations. I remained dedicated to supporting local authorities in joining the partnership, ensuring a collaborative approach to enhancing public safety through CCTV surveillance.

### **Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations:**

I welcomed the National Partnership Agreement, a transformative initiative aiming to revolutionise the response to mental health calls.

The collaboration between the Home Office and Department of Health and Social Care introduces the Right Care, Right Person model, estimated to save one million hours of police time annually in England. This proactive strategy emphasises redirecting individuals in crisis toward specialised services, marking a significant departure from reliance on the police. Locally, Thames Valley Police and the PCC are collaborating with various stakeholders, drawing insights from the successful implementation of Right Care, Right Person in Humberside. Recognising the potential to enhance crisis care and alleviate the strain on police resources, this national agreement aligns with our commitment to prioritising crime prevention.



## Strategic Priority One Strong local policing

### Progress in 2023/24

#### **Annual Residents' Surveys and Governance**

**Reviews:** Under my leadership, Thames Valley Police and I unveiled plans to enhance community engagement, aiming to build trust and confidence in policing. This included commissioning an annual residents' survey to gauge public attitudes and trust in Thames Valley Police, alongside a comprehensive Governance Review to strengthen independent scrutiny and governance. We emphasised the importance of community engagement in enhancing policing and ensuring accountability. The sentiment snapshot survey revealed key insights, including high willingness to contact the police but significant concerns about crime. Implementation of the proposed changes occurred over the following year, supported by the appointment of a Trust and Confidence Support Officer.





## Strategic Priority Two Fighting serious organised crime

### Progress in 2023/24

#### Knife crime - Operation Deter

- ▶ **Challenges and Commitments:** As I reflect on the challenges and successes in our ongoing battle against knife crime within Thames Valley, it's imperative to acknowledge the profound impact this issue has on our communities. From heart-wrenching tragedies to the persistent threat it poses, the fight against knife crime demands not just proactive measures but a steadfast commitment to protecting our communities and nurturing safer environments for our young people.
- ▶ **Thames Valley Knife Crime Conference:** Over the past year, we've taken significant strides forward, propelled by strategic initiatives and collaborative efforts. One such milestone was the Thames Valley Knife Crime Conference, held in April 2023. This pivotal event underscored our collective dedication to combatting knife crime, bringing together diverse stakeholders, from grieving parents to community leaders, to confront the issue head-on. Their voices echoed a shared sentiment: the urgent need for comprehensive strategies and unified action to stem the tide of violence plaguing our streets.
- ▶ **Operation Deter: A Force-Wide Initiative:** At the forefront of our response stands Operation Deter, a testament to our unwavering resolve in tackling knife crime. Under my strategic leadership, Operation Deter has evolved into a force-wide initiative, employing a zero-tolerance approach to swiftly address knife carrying. Since its inception in July 2022, this initiative has yielded promising results, with 774 adults arrested for simple possession. Of these, 37% were charged and remanded, sending a clear message that knife possession will not be tolerated in our communities. The recognition of Operation Deter in the national report by the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners reaffirms the effectiveness of our approach in combating serious violence.



## Strategic Priority Two Fighting serious organised crime

### Progress in 2023/24

- ▶ **Preventative Measures:** Furthermore, our commitment to preventative measures was exemplified through initiatives like the Tags Restoration Project in Slough. This poignant art installation, born from the legacy of the Knife Angel's visit, serves as a powerful symbol of our community's resilience and resolve. Its mobility for educational purposes ensures that the conversation around serious violence remains alive and relevant, fostering a culture of awareness and vigilance.
- ▶ **Operational Successes: Operation Sceptre:** Our proactive stance was further demonstrated during Operation Sceptre, the national week of action in October, where nearly 1,200 high-visibility patrols were conducted, resulting in significant arrests and seizures. These operational successes, coupled with our ongoing evaluation of Operation Deter's impact, underscore our unwavering commitment to safeguarding our communities and eradicating the scourge of knife crime.
- ▶ **Future Initiatives: Expansion of Operation Deter Youth Programme:** Looking ahead, I'm proud to announce the expansion of the Operation Deter Youth Programme across Thames Valley, marking a significant investment in our youth's safety. With £900,000 committed to addressing knife carrying among young people, we're poised to extend our reach and amplify our impact. Through close collaboration with local authorities and stakeholders, we're determined to replicate the success of our pilot programs and create a safer, more resilient future for generations to come.



## Strategic Priority Two Fighting serious organised crime

### Progress in 2023/24

#### Early intervention projects

Throughout the year, I have actively supported a number of early intervention projects to prevent young people from becoming either perpetrators or victims of crime. These initiatives include:

- ▶ **Adventure Plus - Adventure Impact (AIM):** Adventure Plus, situated in Clanfield, West Oxfordshire, annually serves about 9000 young people through adventure activities, notably the focused initiative Adventure Impact (AIM) for those aged 8-21 facing chaotic lifestyles, additional needs, or at risk of exclusion or criminal behaviour. With a £5000 grant from the PCC's Community Fund, Adventure Plus is better equipped to offer inspiring experiences and promote personal development, contributing to positive outcomes and addressing vulnerabilities in the lives of the youth they serve.
- ▶ **Aylesbury Youth Motor Project (AYMP):** The Aylesbury Youth Motor Project (AYMP) is a charity providing vocational training to at-risk

youth aged 12-16. Functioning as a traditional garage, AYMP offers hands-on learning in car repairs, servicing, and MOTs. With a focus on practical skills, 75% of the training occurs in the workshop and 25% in the classroom, resulting in an industry-approved qualification. A £10,000 grant from the PCC's Community Fund enabled the acquisition of new workshop equipment, enhancing the students' educational experience.

- ▶ **No5 - "Reducing the Risk of Permanent Exclusion from School":** No5, based in Reading, delivers essential mental health support to young people aged 11-25, specifically targeting the prevention of permanent school exclusion. With a £9,930 grant from the PCC's Community Fund, the initiative, "Reducing the Risk of Permanent Exclusion from School," deploys dedicated counsellors to work intensively with identified young people in Years 7-9. The funding contributed to supporting an additional 25 young people during the 2023/24 academic year.



## Strategic Priority Three Fighting cybercrime and fraud

### Progress in 2023/24

This section highlights ongoing efforts to combat cybercrime and fraud in the Thames Valley. It looks back at the strategies and operational activities that we're employing to safeguard our communities from these evolving threats.

#### ▶ **Combatting Economic Crime and Cyber Offences**

The Economic Crime Unit continues to be at the forefront of combating a diverse range of criminal activities within the Thames Valley region. Through strategic investigations and collaborative efforts, the unit has achieved significant success in disrupting criminal networks and safeguarding the community.

In July, the Investigations Team of the Economic Crime Unit actively managed thirteen cases, resulting in successful outcomes in five cases and ongoing investigations in eight others. These cases encompassed various forms of fraud, including investment fraud, targeting professional enablers, and addressing offences committed by serial fraudsters. Additionally, the unit dismantled an Organised Crime Group involved in insurance and financing fraud, showcasing its effectiveness in

tackling sophisticated criminal enterprises.

Furthermore, the Criminal Finance Team within the Economic Crime Unit successfully forfeited six Account Freezing Orders amounting to £182.5k, demonstrating their impact on money laundering associated with serious crimes. Their efforts have played a crucial role in disrupting illicit financial flows and preventing criminals from profiting from their illegal activities.

Simultaneously, the Cyber Crime Unit has been actively disrupting cybercrime through successful operations such as Twilight and Python. These operations have led to arrests and asset seizures, contributing to the disruption of cybercriminal activities in the region. Additionally, the unit has been proactive in providing support to individuals targeted by cyber offences and offering cybersecurity advice to businesses. Collaborative initiatives with the South East Cyber Resilience Centre have further enhanced community safety by raising awareness and building resilience against cyber threats.



## Strategic Priority Three Fighting cybercrime and fraud

### Progress in 2023/24

The success of Operation Millie TVP in dismantling cannabis factories and addressing large-scale criminal activities, such as the £4.2 million robbery, underscores the proactive approach of the Economic Crime Unit. By collaborating with partners and engaging with the community, the unit has achieved success in combating economic crime and protecting the interests of residents and businesses.

#### ▶ **Strategic Initiatives and Collaborative Efforts**

Operation Sphere exemplifies the effectiveness of collaborative initiatives in addressing specific issues within Local Policing Areas (LPAs). Leveraging the expertise and resources of Specialist Operations, FISO, and SEROCU, Operation Sphere was designed to disrupt criminal activities over an 8-10-week period. In Milton Keynes, this initiative successfully dismantled a well-established drugs line, resulting in significant custodial sentences, seizure of assets, and confiscation of illicit substances and firearms. The operation not only disrupted criminal networks

but also increased community awareness about the impact of drugs, knife crime, and gang membership.

The success of Operation Sphere highlights the value of collaborative efforts between the police and local communities in addressing local challenges.

#### ▶ **Continuous Vigilance and Enhanced Response**

In November, the Economic Crime Unit's Investigations Team continued to address complex cases involving multi-million-pound investment fraud, international money laundering, and serial fraudsters operating across the region. Their efforts have contributed to the disruption of criminal networks and the safeguarding of vulnerable individuals from financial exploitation

The Criminal Finance Team within the Economic Crime Unit has also been instrumental in tackling money laundering associated with Organised Crime Group activities and serious acquisitive crime. By handling Account Freezing Orders





## Strategic Priority Three Fighting cybercrime and fraud

### Progress in 2023/24

and supporting investigations across Local Policing Areas, the team has played a vital role in disrupting illicit financial flows and preventing criminals from profiting from their illegal activities.

The Cyber Crime Unit achieved its national targets by ensuring the investigation of all cases disseminated by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) and providing Protect advice to all victims. Successful cybercrime prosecutions, such as Operation Havana, demonstrate the unit's commitment to holding cybercriminals accountable and protecting communities from online threats.

Operation Millie's success in addressing large-scale crimes, such as the £4.2 million cash robbery in Slough, highlights the proactive approach of the police in tackling serious organised crime. By collaborating with partners and leveraging intelligence-led operations, the police can disrupt criminal networks and safeguard the public from harm.

### ▶ **Enhancing Capabilities and Collective Initiatives**

In January 2024, the TVP Central Fraud Unit (CFU) became fully operational, with a focus on investigating fraud cases and providing support to victims. With an establishment of 43 officers and staff, the CFU has handled 160 live investigations and enabled the recovery of £597,380.72 of fraud losses to victims. Operation Signature, the force's response to vulnerable victims of fraud, has been re-launched alongside a bespoke fraud protection toolkit, aimed at empowering victims to protect themselves from fraud. Additionally, the CFU has actively participated in the national fraud intensification period, Operation Henhouse 3, aimed at pursuing outstanding fraud suspects and enhancing the force's response to fraud-related crimes.

The integration of Surrey, Sussex, and Hampshire Cyber Crime Units under a regional collaboration, South East Cyber, represents a significant milestone in enhancing the collective capabilities

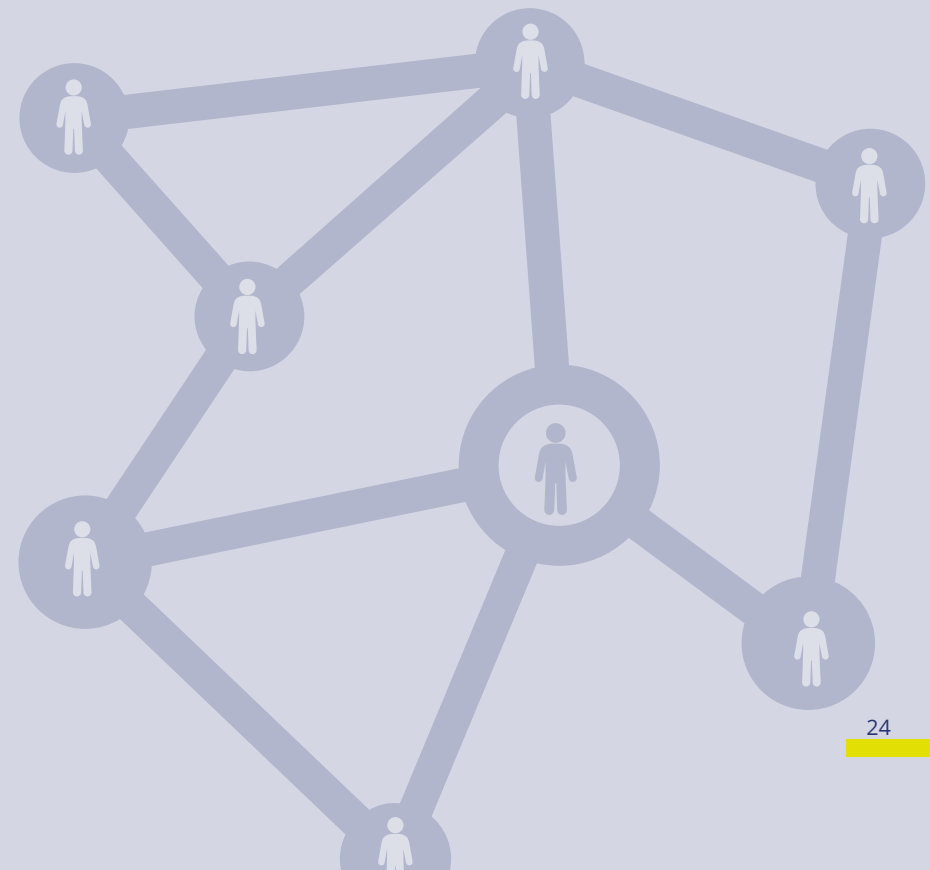


## Strategic Priority Three Fighting cybercrime and fraud

### Progress in 2023/24

of law enforcement agencies in combating cyber threats. By pooling resources and expertise, the regional collaboration aims to strengthen cyber resilience and respond effectively to cybercrime across the South East region.

With ongoing operational initiatives, strategic collaborations, and enhanced capabilities, the police remain committed to disrupting serious organised crime, including fraud and cybercrime, to safeguard communities and uphold the rule of law. Through proactive interventions and community engagement, the police continue to achieve meaningful outcomes in combating criminal activities and enhancing public safety and security.





## Strategic Priority Four Improving the criminal justice system

### Progress in 2023/24

This section explores our ongoing efforts to enhance the criminal justice system within the Thames Valley region. From tackling domestic abuse and stalking to supporting victims of sexual offences, I am committed to driving meaningful change and ensuring justice for all.

#### Projects and Collaborations

Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions Fund: The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner, in partnership with Thames Valley Police and South Central Probation, secured £2,809,737 from the Home Office's 'Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions Fund' for two projects over the next two years:

- ▶ Drive Project: This initiative focuses on disrupting and changing the behaviour of high-risk domestic abuse perpetrators across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes, and Oxfordshire. The project has received £1,604,868 in funding.

- ▶ Compulsive and Obsessive Behaviour Intervention (COBI) Project: Designed to address stalking and reoffending, the COBI Project offers intensive 1:1 sessions aimed at curbing stalking behaviours and addressing emotional triggers. It has been allocated £1,204,869 in funding.

#### Victim Support Initiatives

- ▶ Thames Valley Stalking Service: I introduced the Thames Valley Stalking Service, delivered by Aurora New Dawn, providing specialised assistance to stalking victims in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire. This service offers emotional, practical, and advocacy support, extending beyond stalking by ex-intimate partners. With an annual award of £120,000 until March 2025, Aurora New Dawn collaborates with Victims First to manage referrals and deliver Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker support, marking a significant advancement in long-term assistance for stalking victims.



## Strategic Priority Four Improving the criminal justice system

### Progress in 2023/24

#### Minister of Justice Visit

The Chief Constable and I hosted a visit from the Minister of Justice to discuss supporting victims of rape and serious sexual offences. The visit showcased successful initiatives, addressed challenges, and explored avenues for systemic improvement in the criminal justice process.

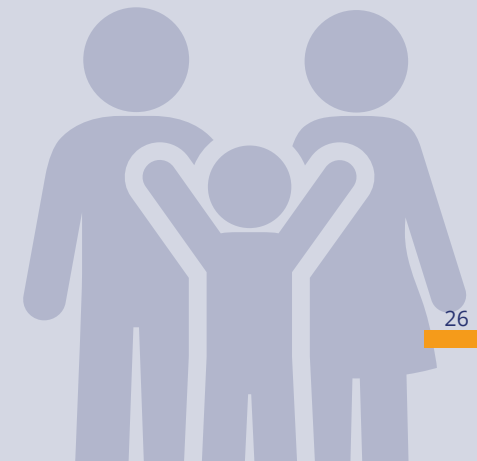
#### Campaigns and Initiatives

- ▶ White Ribbon Day: On White Ribbon Day, I voiced strong support against violence targeting women and girls (VAWG). Collaborative initiatives with Thames Valley Police, such as Project Vigilant and interventions funded by the Home Office's Safer Streets Fund, aim to prevent sexual violence and address VAWG in specific areas. Having secured £2.8 million for projects addressing domestic abuse and stalking, I established a specialist service for stalking victims. The "Do the Right Thing" campaign encourages intervention against abusive

behaviour, and Victims First provides crucial support to VAWG victims.

#### Community Engagement and Support

- ▶ Support for Windsor Street Angels: During the year, I joined Windsor Street Angels on patrol in the town centre. The Windsor Street Angels operate the Windsor Safety Hub at Windsor Baptist Church, offering essential support, including first aid and a safe waiting area. I'm proud to have supported their efforts with a £5000 grant from the PCC's Community Fund to aid the Safety Hub's running costs.





## Strategic Priority Four

### Improving the criminal justice system

#### Progress in 2023/24

##### Rehabilitation and Reintegration

- ▶ Sorrell Road Allotment Project: During my visit to the Sorrell Road Allotment Project, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Community Payback scheme. This sustainable initiative showcased the power of community collaboration. Utilizing reclaimed wood, the project crafted storage spaces, shelters, and outdoor furniture, illustrating the scheme's commitment to practical rehabilitation. All food produced by the project was donated to the local food bank, highlighting its dedication to supporting those in need while providing opportunities for offenders to contribute positively to the community.

##### New Victim Support Services

- ▶ I was excited to announce the launch of three new victim support services in April. Victim Support was selected to provide an Adult Service, while Hope After Harm oversaw a Sexual Violence Service. Additionally, SAFE! was recommissioned to manage a Children and Young People's Service. These contracts, worth £10,016,588 over five years, commenced on 1 April 2024, under the umbrella of Victims First. These services aimed to offer tailored support, including emotional and practical assistance, to victims across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Milton Keynes.



## Strategic Priority Four Improving the criminal justice system

### Progress in 2023/24

#### Community Fund Allocation

- ▶ Pilot Project by Citizens Advice Cherwell and West Northants: I allocated nearly £8000 from my Community Fund to support a pilot project by Citizens Advice Cherwell and West Northants. This initiative assists individuals leaving Bullingdon Prison by offering in-person drop-in sessions on housing, benefits, and resettlement services. Targeting those resettling in the Cherwell area, the project also supports their families. This effort aligns with my commitment to reducing reoffending rates and complements existing initiatives like the RESTART program.
- ▶ Support for C2C Social Action in Milton Keynes: I supported C2C Social Action in Milton Keynes, exploring their assistance for women in the criminal justice system. The hub, launched last autumn, provides various services from emotional support to workshops like "Habits to Happiness" and budgeting courses. With over 60 local women already supported since its start, C2C received £6755 from my Community Fund for a cookery course, teaching basic skills and budget-friendly recipes. Supporting initiatives like this is crucial for breaking the cycle of offending and fostering community safety.



## Strategic Priority Five Tackling illegal encampments

### Progress in 2023/24

Addressing unauthorised encampments is an ongoing challenge that requires strategic planning and collaboration between Thames Valley Police (TVP) and local authorities. In the following update, I outline the key initiatives implemented by TVP during the reporting period and their impact on tackling this complex issue.

#### **Initiatives Implemented:**

**Understanding the Challenge:** To address this issue effectively, it's essential to comprehend the full extent and consequences of unauthorised encampments. Through data analysis and engagement with local communities, TVP gained valuable insights into the underlying causes and areas affected by this issue.

**Strengthening Internal Processes:** TVP has introduced the Force Performance Group and Force Demand Management Meetings to enhance internal oversight and accountability. These measures ensure that resources are allocated efficiently and operational responses to unauthorised encampments are optimised.

**Community Engagement and Empowerment:** Equipping officers with the necessary tools and knowledge is key to fostering positive interactions with communities affected by unauthorised encampments. Through workshops and guidance, TVP empowers its officers to engage effectively and proactively address this challenge.





## Strategic Priority Five Tackling illegal encampments

### Progress in 2023/24

#### **Collaboration with Local Authorities:**

Regular meetings with representatives from all Thames Valley Local Authorities promote collaboration and shared learning. By working closely with local partners, TVP ensures a coordinated approach to tackling unauthorised encampments across the region.

#### **Transparent Communication:**

Enhancements to the public-facing unauthorised encampment webpage and policy updates have improved communication and clarity. These measures facilitate better engagement with the community and stakeholders, ensuring that concerns are addressed effectively.

#### **Positive Impact:**

These initiatives have led to positive outcomes, including a significant reduction in unauthorised encampments and increased responsiveness to community concerns. Looking ahead, TVP remains committed to ongoing improvement and collaboration with local authorities to address this complex issue effectively.





# Looking ahead to 2024/25

This annual report was produced prior to the May 2024 PCC Elections, and therefore further information on a new Police & Crime Plan will become more apparent in due course. There are a number of key areas that a new incumbent PCC will need to be mindful of over 2024/25 and beyond:

## ▼ **Building a Stronger OPCC**

In the upcoming year, the OPCC is poised for a transformative restructure, guided by its commitment to operational efficiency and effectiveness. This overhaul aims to strengthen the organisation, enhance accountability, and streamline operations. Key initiatives include empowering leadership, aligning strategy with performance, integrating essential services such as the Victims First Hub, and fostering improved internal communication. Through investments in team development and governance enhancement, it aims to forge stronger partnerships with stakeholders like Thames Valley Police. Its objective is to chart a course towards a safer, more resilient community. Additionally, the OPCC is exploring opportunities

for a whole-system leadership programme to boost collaboration and effectiveness across agencies.

## ▼ **Strengthening Policing Services with OPCC Oversight**

The Force is undergoing significant restructuring into five Local Command Units (LCUs) to optimise local policing, spearheaded by the Chief Constable's Management Team and supported by the OPCC. This initiative aims to enhance accountability, improve service delivery, and align with community needs. Key components include introducing Harm Reduction Units (HRUs) for better community service and operational efficiency. Simultaneously, the OPCC oversees an Enabling Services Review, focusing on critical departments to align services with organisational goals. Throughout these changes, the OPCC maintains its commitment to collaboration with stakeholders and community partners for seamless transitions and continued high-quality service provision. This transformation positions both the Force and the OPCC to better serve the community.

### ▼ **Victims Service Commissioning**

In the coming years, the focus remains on enhancing victim support services in Thames Valley. Plans include continuing the automatic referral process for all crime victims to the Victims First Hub and ensuring compliance with upcoming legislation like the Victim and Prisoners Bill. Additionally, commissioned specialist services will adapt to meet evolving needs, particularly for victims of high-harm crimes like sexual violence and domestic abuse. Grant funding from the Ministry of Justice, confirmed until March 2025, will sustain and possibly expand support programs for victims, ensuring ongoing assistance and care for those affected by crime in the region.

### ▼ **Violence Prevention Partnership**

The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) will transition to the Violence Prevention Partnership (VPP) on 2nd April 2024, following consultations to improve collaboration in tackling serious violence. The VPP will focus on community engagement, multi-agency collaboration, data analysis, and evidence-based interventions to reduce violence. It will receive approximately £1.51 million for 2024/25. Notably, the VPP manages the Serious Violence Duty at the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) level across Thames Valley, ensuring data

sharing and compliance. Initiatives like ActNOW target under-18s involved in knife-enabled offences, connecting them with support services. Additionally, the VPP allocates funds for the Family Drug and Alcohol Courts (FDACs) project and explores whole-system leadership programmes for enhanced collaboration.

### ▼ **Complaints Oversight for Greater Accountability**

The OPCC is reviewing the complaints model within Thames Valley Police to enhance scrutiny and standards. Three models are being evaluated, aiming to boost accountability and public trust. Exploring options for increased involvement, potentially transitioning to Models 2 or 3, the OPCC seeks to hold the Chief Constable accountable and strengthen public confidence. However, this transition requires careful consideration of resource implications. The recommendation is to conduct thorough consultation and research, engaging stakeholders and assessing resource needs, to make an informed decision aligned with the OPCC's commitment to accountability. If viable, implementation of Models 2 or 3 would be targeted for 2025/26.

# Crimefighters

## Strong local policing

