



**POLICE  
& CRIME**  
**COMMISSIONER**  

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**THAMES VALLEY**

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2021-22**

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire,  
Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire



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# Introduction

It is a huge privilege to represent communities across Thames Valley as your new Police & Crime Commissioner.

I am proud of the work over the last 12 months and am determined to continue to work tirelessly to help make Thames Valley a safer place.

My 4-year Police and Criminal Justice Plan (2021 – 2025) sets out the overall strategic direction and I am pleased that this first annual report captures positive progress against those key priorities.

Since taking office as Police & Crime Commissioner in May 2021, we have achieved a great deal. Police Officer recruitment has continued, and we now have 368 more police officers that at the start of the national uplift programme in 2019, meaning that there are now more police officers than ever before in Thames Valley. Crime has fallen in some key areas such as serious violence, burglary and robbery.



# Introduction

The impact of Covid-19 on crime and policing has had a far-reaching effect across Thames Valley, but I remain positive we will see improvements, particularly in the wider Criminal Justice system.

There are of course many other challenges still to face and I will continue to work closely with the Chief Constable to deliver on my plan to get tough on crime for safer communities.

The work that is already underway to reduce reoffending by those leaving our prisons and ambitious work to tackle the culture of knife-carrying, combined with new legislation that I have helped to lobby for, will all make a difference in keeping our streets safe.

With the support of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), I have also secured a range of funding including nearly £1m for Safer Streets and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and a further £7m over three years to tackle serious violence.

I will continue to work towards my Police and Criminal Justice Plan priorities, ensuring communities remain safe across the Thames Valley:

## **Strong local policing**

Preventing crime & protecting communities

## **Fighting serious organised crime**

Protecting vulnerable people

## **Fighting fraud & cybercrime**

Fighting modern crimes

## **Improving the criminal justice system**

Reducing reoffending

## **Tackling illegal encampments**

Enforcing with partners



**Matthew Barber**

Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley

# Progress in meeting the Police and Criminal Justice Plan 2021-2025

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: MAY 2021 – MARCH 2022

My Police & Criminal Justice Plan sets out the five priorities I intend to focus on over the next four years. This Plan has victims at its heart. Bringing criminals to justice is vital, but preventing people from becoming victims of crime in the first place is even more important, both through proactive crime prevention and through reducing reoffending.

Aligned to my local priorities are National Priorities for Policing. The Home Secretary has developed some key measures to support the strategic priority for a 'relentless focus on 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 set out in the table below; the context of which is reflected across each of the priorities (excluding 'Tackling illegal encampments') in the next section of this report.

## National Crime and Policing Measures

Measured at a national level using national metrics such as CSEW minimises any administrative burden on forces and respects forces' operational autonomy.

Priority Measure	National Metrics	Baseline (Jul-18 to Jun-19)	Latest 12 months (May-21 to Apr-22)	% Change compared to baseline
Reduce Murder and other Homicides	Homicides	13	22	+69%
Reduce Serious Violence	Hospital admissions of u25s for assault with a sharp object	NHS data		
	Offences involving a discharge of a firearm	39	15	-61%
Disrupt drugs supply and county lines	Drug-related homicides	1	4	+300%
	Offences involving a discharge of a firearm	Public Health England data		
Reduce Neighbourhood Crime	Burglary, robbery, theft of and from a vehicle, theft from a person	CSEW		
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 National Outcomes framework is national and measured at a national level, the data is not broken down to, or available on an individual force basis.

All forces are developing proxy measures to understand local context of the national measures.

TVP are working with regional colleagues to align proxy measures.

The following section contains highlights of progress towards delivering my Police and Criminal Justice Plan in 2021/22. There are many examples of where grants and funding have supported projects within my priorities.

A full breakdown of all commissioned activities that have utilised 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 Police Property Act) is also published on my [website](#).





## Strategic Priority One Strong local policing

### Progress in 2021/22

- ▶ Recruitment of police officers has continued apace, and Thames Valley now has more officers than ever before. Following my contact with the Home Office during the year the Force has re-opened the non-degree entry route (IPLDP) to increase access to a career in policing. I will continue to call on the College of Policing to support this entry route for the long term.
- ▶ All secondary schools across the Thames Valley are being provided with new resources to help educate young people on the dangers of drugs. Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) commissioned the PSHE Association to develop new quality assured materials and lesson plans, ensuring teaching approaches and content are up-to-date, helping to educate young people to keep them safe.
- ▶ Through support from my office the Choices programme is being rolled out into more schools across the Thames Valley, providing greater awareness for young people of the risks they may face. This programme is specifically designed to bridge the gap between primary and secondary education.
- ▶ The Victims Code sets out clearly what is expected in communicating with victims. The application support tool 'Pronto' used by frontline officers and staff, is being introduced to facilitate much of this and more work is taking place with the operational group on victim satisfaction to improve contact with victims. The ring-fenced 'victim contact time' is now business as usual for Local Policing Areas (LPAs) to ensure officers on Incident and Crime Response (ICR) have a specific time to update their victims.





## Strategic Priority One Strong local policing

### Progress in 2021/22

- ▶ Thames Valley Police are progressing improvements around Victim satisfaction and victim contact and a new victim survey will be launched in 2023.
- ▶ The Force achieved a 40% reduction in Residential Burglary (Dwelling) when compared to the 5-year average (excluding 2020/21). The reduction was maintained throughout 2021/22. Every LPA recorded a reduction in the volume of Residential Burglary (dwelling) compared with the 5-year average (excluding 2020/21). The Force has seen an 8% increase in burglaries compared with 2020/21 however, monthly volumes remain below pre-pandemic levels.
- ▶ I welcomed two successful bids to the Home Office Serious Violence Fund. £1.16m in funding was awarded to the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to continue with its work coordinating the partnership response to serious violence across the Thames Valley, with a focus on tackling the root causes of violence.
- ▶ The second funding award of £735,000 is for the delivery of targeted policing activity to tackle serious violence in specific hotspot areas. Previously known as 'Surge' funding, it was used to fund additional activity by Thames Valley Police such as additional high visibility patrols, weapons sweeps and targeted police operations against suspected carriers of weapons.
- ▶ Thames Valley Police have trained over 3000 Officers and Staff in the Domestic Abuse (DA) Matters College of Policing Programme and have over 150 DA Champions. DA Matters is a programme of activities to enhance knowledge and skills as 'first responders and those 'champions' who advise or supervise them, to improve our response to domestic abuse.



## Strategic Priority One Strong local policing

### Progress in 2021/22

- ▶ A revised Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panel has been implemented. This quarterly meeting is independently chaired and has extensive partnership engagement. The process includes looking at areas of Domestic Abuse, including victim confidence to highlight best practice and areas of learning. The panel has some previous victims of DA so that we can hear their voices. The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategic Partnership Board has its inaugural meeting in May 2022 and will be chaired by the PCC and its membership includes key stakeholders from across Thames Valley. Two sub-groups are in their planning stages, Victims Voice and Third Sector organisations. Domestic Abuse Victim Satisfaction is surveyed by Leicestershire University. For 2021-2022, Thames Valley Police had an 86% satisfaction rate among DA victims surveyed.
- ▶ The success of Project Vigilant has led to the operation being adopted by forces across the country and it is being utilised more widely across Thames Valley to tackle predatory behaviour in the nighttime economy.
- ▶ During the summer months of 2021, the Force ran a 'Think Before You Dial' campaign that saw both digital and social media highlighting the benefits of online reporting, how and when it should be used, as well as dispelling the myths around how online reports are dealt with. The Demand Transformation Programme team is working on several projects to identify how we can effectively manage demand within the Contact Management environment.



## Strategic Priority One Strong local policing

### Progress in 2021/22

- ▶ Pressure continues to be felt on the Force's 101 non-emergency number. Whilst this picture is mirrored across much of the country it remains an area where the Force needs to improve. Progress is closely monitored in Liaison and Performance & Accountability Meetings with the Chief Constable. Some actions have already been taken to seek to improve performance, and a fuller response from the Chief Constable for a more strategic solution is expected in the summer.

A new podcast series developed by Elmore Community Services alongside other key partners was launched to meaningfully explore important issues around mental health and domestic abuse in Oxfordshire. "Empower & Enable" is a great example of how impact funding received through the Police Property Act can have on our communities.

- ▶ Following the success of a pilot scheme last year, a Community Speedwatch scheme was launched across Thames Valley in October. The pilot, which ran in small areas of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, was so successful the whole of Thames Valley can now take part with the hope of reducing speeding in our communities.
- ▶ Thames Valley Police launched its Rural Crime Taskforce to make the Thames Valley a hostile place for those who commit rural crimes. The Taskforce consists of a team of dedicated officers, as well as intelligence support, who will work tirelessly with our partners, drone units, and the Joint Operations Unit with Hampshire to tackle serious and organised rural crime. The Taskforce recovered £400,000 of stolen equipment last year.



## Strategic Priority Two Fighting serious organised crime

### Progress in 2021/22

- ▶ Recorded disruptions have significantly increased in 2021/22 compared with 2020/21 (863 in 2021/22 compared with 352 in 2020/21). This is largely down to recording practices within the Force Intelligence Bureau, including recording of disruptions attributed to LPAs. SOCU disruptions have been influenced both by the previous inclusion of Op Sword inflating figures, but additionally, court delays have impacted the recording and grading of disruptions for more recent activity.
- ▶ The Rural Crime Taskforce (mentioned above) is making progress to tackle organised crime gangs committing acquisitive crime. The force has also had some notable successes with the sentencing of a gang responsible for a series of cashpoint robberies.
- ▶ The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) provides support to young people primarily through the Early Intervention and Prevention strand. This includes TVP work in school and with pupils as well as our support for LPAs and TVP colleagues. Most of their work is based specifically on preventing violent crime and exploitation.



## Strategic Priority Two Fighting serious organised crime

### Progress in 2021/22

The VRU is currently providing the following:

- ▼ **The Compass partnership** - An Oxfordshire coalition of alternative providers supporting pupils who are excluded or at risk of exclusion, including peer mentoring, academic provision and training in preparation for employment or further education.
- ▼ **VRU schools offer** - Education resources including quality assured PSHE plans for schools on key harm topics of drugs and violence. CPD and ongoing training for school officers in classroom delivery and Restorative Justice to prevent unnecessary entry to the CJ system.
- ▼ **Operation Divan** - Providing schools with an intelligence submission pathway to LPAs leading to an officer visiting a child at risk of knife crime who has not committed an offence.
- ▼ **Data and Targeting** - The Serious Violence dashboard to map demand and provide accurate information about children at risk of exploitation. A service directory mapping all available support for children across the area that can be accessed by police and partners.
- ▼ **Op Paramount** - Oxfordshire-wide programme using HMPPS data to identify children affected by parental imprisonment and refer them for support from Children Heard and Seen.



## Strategic Priority Three Fighting cybercrime and fraud

### Progress in 2021/22

- ▶ Thames Valley Police have carried out many innovative fraud & cyber protect campaigns over the last year reaching large audiences. Of note, is the romance fraud awareness campaign, which included working with academics to produce a ground-breaking romance fraud guidance booklet. This booklet has been recognised nationally and reproduced by forces across the country.
- ▶ Following a full service improvement review, Thames Valley Police has set up a new Central Fraud Unit. This team will focus on high harm and volume fraud investigations and will consist of officers specifically trained in fraud. Thames Valley Police work closely with the City Of London Police and Action Fraud to ensure timely recording of fraud offences and subsequent outcomes.
- ▶ Thames Valley Police are the lead force for SEROCU and collaborate closely to improve the knowledge and awareness of our investigation and prevention officers. The Thames Valley Police Economic Crime and Cyber teams are now managed under SEROCU giving increased opportunities to share expertise and work jointly.
- ▶ Work has begun to coordinate the efforts of Trading Standards teams across Thames Valley, along with the Economic Crime Unit in providing support for vulnerable residents to prevent fraud and scams.
- ▶ The review of Victims First Service is considering how to provide better support for victims of fraud.
- ▶ The most recent budget has seen significant investment in technology and forensics. Part of this investment will help the Force to deal with the increasing volume of data involved with all investigations.



## Strategic Priority Four Improving the criminal justice system

### Progress in 2021/22

- ▶ We have some exceptional organisations supporting victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence in the Thames Valley. I am delighted such groups will benefit from extra support thanks to £980,000 of Ministry of Justice funding which will make a huge difference to them and ultimately the victims and survivors they work with. Increasing specialist service provision will give victims better access to much-needed support to help them recover from the harm that they have experienced. Some of the funding is dedicated to supporting particular groups who for a range of reasons can be less likely to access support such as men, disabled victims and victims within LGBTQ+ and BAMER communities. A focus of the ISVA/IDVA fund to increase tailored provision for these groups will, I hope, result in services being better resourced to meet victims' specific needs.
- ▶ My office was successful in securing two Safer Streets bids to the value of nearly a million pounds. Bid one (£513,940) focused on the ward of Chalvey, in Slough, to tackle crime including causing sexual activity without consent, sexual assault/indecent assault, unwanted sexual touching and street harassment. The second successful bid, for £426,000, focussed on Oxford City centre and places of travel to and from the centre including Abingdon Town Centre, Witney and parts of South Oxfordshire. This bid also focuses on VAWG crimes including street harassment, stalking, sexual assault, rape, unwanted sexual touching and predatory behaviour. Both bids support vital areas of work - highlighted in the worst ways in recent events - and I am very pleased this funding continues to support the good work my Office is doing with our partners in Slough and Oxford.



## Strategic Priority Four Improving the criminal justice system

### Progress in 2021/22

- ▶ As part of the Safety of Women at Night (SWAN) fund, Project Vigilant was awarded a further £297,252 to develop the project and provide bespoke training to officers to identify individuals displaying predatory behaviour. A new support pathway in partnership with Circles South East has been created whereby individuals identified as displaying predatory behaviour will be referred to an intervention programme delivered by Circles South East, a charity who are already established in their work with convicted sex offenders, to address their behaviour. Between 23 July and 4 November 2021, 117 people across Oxford, Reading, Milton Keynes and Windsor were stopped and ten arrests were made concerning predatory behaviour. Of those stopped that provided their details, 20% were found to have links to sexual or predatory offending and 21% had links to violent offending. Stops included those that were harassing women, making unwanted sexualised comments and loitering in areas where sexual offences take place.
- ▶ I have awarded £18,500 of funding to Thames Valley Police to work with first-time domestic abuse perpetrators to reduce re-offending. As part of this funding, TVP will work with the Hampton Trust on their Cautioning and Relationship Abuse (CARA) project. The project is aimed at lower risk, alleged first-time perpetrators who will attend two workshops between 4 and 5 weeks apart. The workshops aim to give perpetrators an understanding of domestic abuse and the impact of their behaviour on others, including the victim and any children.





## Strategic Priority Four Improving the criminal justice system

### Progress in 2021/22

- ▶ I am pleased to have funded a new innovative £75,000 partnership with the substance abuse charity Druglink to deliver a drug diversion programme. Funding from the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit will provide education and support to help break the cycle of substance abuse and minor offending. We need to emphasize drug diversion, education and support - not solely enforcement - if we are to break the cycle of drug misuse, drug-related crime and stop lives being devastated by addiction. We are already delivering drug diversion schemes with out of court disposal options and I am delighted we are can extend this to work to deliver a specialist education and support programme.
- ▶ I am committed to tackling sexual violence and harassment and the Do the Right Thing campaign that I promoted in partnership with Thames Valley Police, reminding men that we must all speak out against inappropriate behaviour. We all have a responsibility to speak up whenever we see bigotry, violence or abuse and the campaign offers some simple advice on what people can do to play their part to tackle inappropriate behaviour.
- ▶ In June 2021, I commissioned an independent review of the multi-agency and complex system that works to enable a person leaving prison to achieve successful outcomes (such as stable accommodation, employment, and improvements in health & support networks). This review had formed part of a Prison Leaver bid, led by my office, to the Ministry of Justice's (Moj's) Local Leadership Integration Fund (LLIF). While that bid wasn't successful, I believed it was a significant piece of work that would provide genuine value for the partnership and a robust piece of evidence for a second Moj bid, so decided to invest in it. This Whole System Review took place between June and November 2021 and involved over 50 people from around 30 different organisations. The report is richer for their engagement and I extend my thanks for the enthusiasm which



## Strategic Priority Four Improving the criminal justice system

### Progress in 2021/22

was demonstrated across the partnership at all levels. The findings from the report, workshops and consultation period with partners who had been involved were completed in April and have now been published.

- ▶ Following the Whole System Review into reducing reoffending, we were successful in our second round bid to the MoJ and are now working with key partners to launch a Thames Valley wide pilot where we hope to identify and act on opportunities for systemic improvement across the piece. This is now operating under the name Restart Thames Valley.
- ▶ To ensure that engagement with partners does not end with the review and the implementation of the pilot, I have also drafted a concordat which I hope brings together the opportunities to work together as a whole system to reduce reoffending in the Thames Valley.

- ▶ Under my chairmanship the LCJB has renewed its priorities for the year, including a focus on rape and sexual offences, particularly making use of the recently published Criminal Justice Scorecards.

During the year I have increased funding for Buddi Tags, used by Thames Valley's Integrated Offender Management (IOM) team, along with other teams within the Force. Savings have been made by bringing together various contracts to secure a single price.

- ▶ The burden of disclosure and associated redaction continues to have a significant impact on officers across the force. Investment is being made in a central redaction team, but I continue to work with the CPS and lobby the Government for structural changes to reduce this burden



## Strategic Priority Five Tackling illegal encampments

### Progress in 2021/22

- ▶ Thames Valley Police produced a 'Thames Valley Police and Local Authority Joint Protocol for dealing with Unauthorised encampments'. Part of the protocol is to meet annually with all our Local Authorities that took place in March 2022. The Protocol will be refreshed this year as we prepare for the newly amended legislation regarding unlawful trespass to be enacted in June 2022. A new protocol will be circulated later this year.
- ▶ Having lobbied the Home Office for new legislation in this area, the Police, Crime, Courts & Sentencing Act has now received Royal Assent. The provisions of the Act relating to illegal encampments come into Force on 28th June 2022.
- ▶ Training has been carried out for Inspectors across the Force to ensure better consistency in the application of police powers.
- ▶ New processes have been put in place by the Force to ensure greater oversight by duty officers, routine review of illegal encampments and a clearer link into public order resources.

# Looking ahead to 2022/23

Many of my key local priorities are aligned to the National Crime and Policing Measures, the drivers of which link to the Government's 'Beating Crime Plan'. The annual report charts progress against these priorities and demonstrate my commitment to ensuring Thames Valley remains a safe place. Knife crime, violence, and supporting victims will be particular areas of focus during 2022/23.

In early April this year, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) announced a fund for Domestic Abuse (DA) and Sexual Violence (SV) Services. PCCs have been given responsibility for administering this funding and my office is now seeking applications which will target priority areas for Thames Valley. The full funding allocation across England and Wales is £15.7m for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Services and £3.75m for an ISVA and IDVA fund to recruit additional posts in 2022/23. The funding is for 3 years from 2022/23 – 2024/25 which will assist services in future planning.

Thames Valley Police has now published its Strategic Plan for 2022/23. Over the last few years,

policing has experienced great challenges and increased demand. These factors have been incorporated into the development of this year's strategy, which will help the force to prioritise its efforts and resources and provide a clear direction for the year ahead. I am confident that the Chief Constable's continued focus will ensure the force delivers on its key areas of operational activity for the public.

Thames Valley Police will undertake a 'force review' the last time it had an in-depth look at its own make-up was in 2010. Twelve years later, the world has changed and we are working in a different environment, economically, socially and digitally. Policing is more complex than ever, with growing demand and with a greater focus on vulnerability and prevention, and our force needs to reflect that. I have been clear that I believe neighbourhood policing should remain a vital building block of Force structures in order to ensure Thames Valley Police can respond proactively to the concerns of the public. This review is due to be reported back to the Chief Constable and his management team in the early spring of 2023.