

Minutes

Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Friday, 14 February 2020 in Paralympic Meeting Room, Aylesbury Vale District Council Offices, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 8FF, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 12.55 pm

Members Present

Councillor Kieron Mallon (Oxfordshire County Council) (Chairman), Councillor Trevor Egleton (South Bucks District Council) (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Bill Bendyshe-Brown (Buckinghamshire County Council), Councillor Robin Bradburn (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor David Carroll (Wycombe District Council), Councillor Neil Fawcett (Vale of White Horse District Council), Councillor Norman MaCrae (West Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor John Harrison (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Andrew McHugh (Cherwell District Council), Phillip Morrice (Independent Member), Councillor Mohammed Nazir (Slough Borough Council), Councillor Barrie Patman (Wokingham Borough Council), Councillor David Rouane (South Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor John Tanner (Substitute - Oxford City Council), and Councillor Jonathan Waters (Chiltern District Council).

Officer Present

Khalid Ahmed (Scrutiny Officer).

Others Present

Matthew Barber (Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner), John Campbell (Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police), Paul Hammond (Chief Executive Officer of PCC), Anthony Stansfeld (Police and Crime Commissioner), Ian Thompson (Chief Finance Officer of PCC) and Vicki Waskett (Head of Governance and Compliance, Office of PCC).

1/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nigel Chapman (Oxford City Council) (Councillor John Tanner substituting), Councillor Steve Good (West Oxfordshire District Council) (Councillor Norman MaCrae appointed as replacement representative) and Councillor Howard Woollaston (West Berkshire Council).

2/20 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 22 November 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman).

[In relation to Minute No. 30 – Report of the Complaints Sub-Committee – it was agreed that Councillor Trevor Egleton, Councillor Andrew McHugh and Mr Phillip Morrice be appointed to the vacancies on the Complaints Sub-Committee.]

REPORT OF THE BUDGET TASK AND FINISH GROUP

As in previous years, the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel formed a Budget Task & Finish Group to assist in discharging its statutory duty to scrutinise the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Thames Valley's proposed Council Tax precept for 2020/21.

Councillor Barrie Patman, the Chairman of the Budget Task and Finish Group presented the report. He thanked Ian Thompson and Linda Waters for attending the Group and updating Members on the PCC's draft budget proposals.

The Panel was informed that in normal circumstances the PCC would notify the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel of his proposed council tax precept by 1st February 2020. However, this had not been possible this year given that the Police Grant Settlement for 2020/21 was not announced until 22 January 2020 making a formal proposal to the Panel before 1st February not possible.

This lateness of the preparation of the draft budget and proposed council tax precept had meant that the Budget Task and Finish Group had only had one meeting to consider and scrutinise the proposals.

The Chairman particularly referred to the following points:-

- The proposed increase to the police element of the Council Tax was by £10 per annum for 2020/21 (for a Band D property).
- Overall the settlement announcement was good news with an additional grant and increased flexibility in council tax precept enabling the addressing of some service and performance issues by increasing resources, both police officers and police staff, alongside the investment in technology to improve productivity.
- Reference was made to the expected increase in demand for services over the next four years, particularly in relation to increases in terror related incidents, County Lines, cybercrime, increased reporting of complex crimes such as general sexual exploitation and Domestic Violence (DV).
- The increase in police officer numbers nationally of 6,000 by the end of March 2021 and a further 14,000 by March 2023 would result in around an additional 183 officers in the Thames Valley in the coming year. It was noted that the impact of this would not be felt immediately.
- The funding settlement allows for the full funding of these officers in the financial year and provides an uplift to allow for additional infrastructure and support costs for the full uplift of officers over the next three years. Estimated infrastructure funding needs for the future years from the current year's settlement needed to be set aside.
- There was a focus on increasing productivity by investing in technology and ensuring the appropriate process and cultural change flows from that investment to improve effectiveness.
- Reference was made to the assumption being made that for 2021/22 and beyond, that there would be full funding for additional officers under the national uplift programme, but there would only be a 1% increase in core grants and a return to the 2% council tax precept rise.

- For the next 4 years in compiling the MTFP the following assumptions were made:
 - General inflation will be applied at 2.0% in each of the next 4 years; specific inflation rates are based on sector led rates, e.g. Premises at 5.7%,
 - Fuel at 7.0% and Utilities at 4% per annum;
 - specific inflation has been applied to the facilities contracts to allow for wage uplifts in relation to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and recruitment issues (9.1%),
 - pay inflation has been included at 2.5% per annum for both Police Officers and Staff,
 - future increases in Council Tax precept at 2.0% per annum;
 - Council tax billing base to increase by 1.66% in 2020/21; with following increases at 1.5% per annum;
 - General police grants to rise by 7.5% in 2020/21; with following increases at 1.0% per annum over the period.
 - The use of reserves to support the MTFP & MTCP, but these will be significantly committed by the end of the four-year period.
 - The future investment in technology, whether direct capital purchase or revenue service contracts will need to be funded by revenue given the diminishing level of reserves and the very low level of annual capital grant. This final assumption continues to reflect the increasing demand for investment in technology and the expectation that this will continue with the rollout of national programmes to address the Policing Vision 2025, against declining reserves and minimal capital grant. The provision within the MTFP for the direct funding of capital has increased to provide an annual fund of £11m by 2021/22. This is seen as a sensible approach to future financial sustainability.

Details of the necessary items needed to maintain the current levels of service within Thames Valley were reported and were contained in paragraph 25 of the report.

Items of growth to improve performance and meet demands were reported and were detailed in paragraph 26. Particular reference was made to the reduction in capital receipts which would mean the growth areas would have to be funded from revenue accounts and reserves.

There were two areas of significant investment which would increase officer numbers: - Operation Uplift which gave TVP the allocated 183 additional officers from the first allocation of 6,000 officers nationally. The uplift in officers had come with additional funding in the current years settlement and would cover the full additional costs of salaries and associated on-costs.

The other area was Strategic Investment Funding (£4.2m) - Council tax flexibility which has enabled the identification of several investment opportunities as detailed in paragraph 27 of the report.

In relation to the Force Productivity Strategy, reference was made to cash savings of £106m having been taken out of the base revenue budget over the last nine years

and that it was now becoming difficult to identify further efficiency savings. Those new and changed initiatives were outlined which would bring about further efficiencies.

In relation to reserves and balances, based on assumptions, general revenue balances would stay slightly above the approved 3% target level throughout the next 4 years. Earmarked reserves were forecast to reduce from £24.5m on 1 April 2019 to just £3.5m by 31 March 2024, including £1.4m in the Conditional Funding and SEROCU reserves which are not available to support general operational policing.

The Optimism Bias reserve which was created in 2018/19 with the transfer of £12m from the Improvement and Performance reserve would be fully utilised by the end of 2021/22. This reserve had been used to fund unexpected cost pressures on the Contact Management Platform and the joint ERP solution with Surrey and Sussex (Equip).

Particular reference was made to the Improvement and Performance reserve which was now only £1.7m. This would mean that future growth proposals would have to be funded from either council tax or by offsetting savings elsewhere in the budget.

The Capital Programme consisted of schemes costing £38.401m in 2020/21, which includes £1.062m of projects previously identified in the 2019/20 capital plan but which are now re-phased to allow for planning and tendering procedures, and a total of £84.416m over the 4-year period.

The level of investment resulted in a funding surplus over the 4-year period of £3.948m. However, this included plans to borrow £20.32m for Reading Police Station, the SEROCU western hub and Maidenhead Court in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

A recommendation had been put forward which was debated during the next item as follows:-

That the Panel approve the Police and Crime Commissioner's precept for 2020/21 as set out in the OPCC report 'Revenue Estimates 2020/21 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24' subject to satisfactory responses to the questions raised and any other supplementary questions asked at the Panel meeting.

4/20

SCRUTINY OF THE PROPOSED PRECEPT - QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The PCC responded to the following written questions:-

1. Will this budget mean that you are in a better position to deliver the key objectives in your Police and Crime Plan, particularly in relation to the reduction of crime and higher detection and conviction rates?

[Yes, the budget enables the Chief Constable to recruit up to full current establishment. In addition, we have already started to recruit the additional 183 police officers and, provided everything goes to plan, we should have these in place by late summer.

Although it will take a while before these extra officers are ready for operational deployment I am confident that, together with the additional investment included in the budget, I will be able to deliver my Police and Crime Plan objectives and also leave a good legacy for my successor.]

2. What rationale will be used to decide where the extra 183 officers will be deployed across the Thames Valley?

[The PCC reported that the initial 183 officers are being deployed to LPA Incident and Crime Response (ICR) teams as this is the area where changing levels of demand are felt to be impacting most severely and also an area that has previously seen a reduction of officers because of funding challenges. As officers begin their service in ICR, there are clearly also practical reasons which would prevent us from increasing the establishment of other teams – not least, it would leave a very inexperienced group of officers in the ICR teams and make it difficult for us to maintain minimum resource levels as a result of the abstractions that student officers will have as part of the new entry routes.

The distribution of those resources across LPAs has been determined through a refresh of our resource modelling. As the remit of ICR teams is primarily reactive, this modelling was based on:

- *The volume and type of crimes and incidents that take place in each LPA;*
- *The time spent dealing with those types of crimes and incidents;*
- *The travel time involved in attending those crimes and incidents, taking into account the geographical and demand profile of each LPA*
- *The time required to investigate these crimes;*
- *Travelling time to custody in each LPA;*
- *Travelling time to conduct enquiries in each LPA.*

To ensure that we didn't unfairly prejudice any LPA, we also reviewed the level of neighbourhood resourcing based on such factors as population, indices of deprivation, geography and volumes of ASB, and made adjustments to the allocation where an LPA was felt to be under-resourced. It is also important to note that the impact will be felt not only by the direct uplift that each LPA is receiving but also from the reduced need to abstract officers to cover elsewhere in the force. Over time the demand in some areas has increased more than in others, the rapidly expanding Milton Keynes being an example, and as a result it is increasingly common for officers to have to move from their LPA to cover otherwise unsustainable pressure. So, by applying a robust assessment of relative demand, and matching resources in the same relative proportions, we anticipate a significant reduction in LPA to LPA abstraction - communities will always be best served by local officers working locally.

The Chief Constable commented that professional nous and experience, together with logic formed part of the reasoning behind where deployments would be made.]

3. Historically, the recruitment and retention of Police Officers in the Thames Valley has been a challenge. What new initiatives are being considered to ensure TVP are competitive in the market?

[In order to improve our Employer Brand and attract candidates in a very competitive market, both locally and now nationally as a result of "Uplift" we have introduced the following initiatives:

- *Invested in an in-house Employer Marketing Lead, which has been more cost effective than outsourcing to expensive advertising agencies.*
- *Developed our own TVP Careers Microsite to promote all careers opportunities within TVP, to include a Talent Bank for potential candidates to submit Expressions of Interest.*
- *Increased focus on social media to enable a more cost effective targeted approach to advertising.*
- *Refresh of our branding/marketing materials to improve our image and be more reflective of our communities.*
- *Invested in a Positive Action Engagement Team, who are tasked with directly engaging with members of the communities who are from BAME backgrounds.*
- *Providing support to BAME to provide help and coaching through the recruitment process.*
- *Aspiring to achieve a 25% BAME recruitment target of all intakes.*
- *Streamlined the recruitment process to reduce bureaucracy and eliminate barriers to joining the police.*
- *Establishment of the Workforce Board, chaired by the Director of People, who has oversight of Recruitment & Retention.*
- *New initiative to address our Detective Resources is to recruit Specialist Entry Detectives as part of our DHEP programme and also a Police Now Detective cohort.*

RETENTION & PROGRESSION

- *Established a Retention Project Board which incorporates wellbeing (to identify why people are leaving and what can be done to address issues which impact on retention) and reports into the Workforce Board.*
- *Commitment of £500,000 to deliver wellbeing initiatives.*
- *£1,000 wellbeing fund for each LPA, OCU and department*
- *Approval to establish a career break scheme for police staff*
- *Extension to the health surveillance provision for staff and officers*
- *Menopause workshops and cafes*
- *Provision of flu vouchers for all staff and officers*
- *Support to increase the skills around mental health in terms of training of mental health first aiders*
- *Review of Operating Model and shift pattern following feedback from officers.*
- *Review of the promotion process to provide a more streamlined and less bureaucratic process.*
- *Review of the PDR process to reduce bureaucracy.*
- *BAME Professional Action Learning Sets to support development and progression.*

The PCC referred to areas such as Devon and Cornwall which were cheaper areas to live with affordable housing. It was frustrating for Thames Valley Police who trained

Officers who then sought jobs elsewhere. Reference was made to a report which had been submitted to the Home Office recommending that training costs should be reimbursed to the Police Service who had trained officers, should the officer leave to join another force.]

5. In view of past delays with the implementation of IT projects such as the Contact Management Platform and the resultant increased costs, what lessons have been learnt which can be applied to other IT projects which are planned?

[The Panel was informed of the actions taken in the last 12 months to address the lessons learnt from previous IT projects:

- A standardised project process and governance has been embedded across TVP, HC and Joint ICT (JICT).*
- This includes formal stage gates at proposal and Business Case stage – tied to the release of capital funding*
- Additional scrutiny at the proposal and business case gateways to ensure all enabling departments have been consulted – built into process and template*
- Change governance boards now routinely challenge project proposals and business case that make assumptions about what can be carried out as part of an existing role vs. what dedicated resource is necessary*
- A number of “big bang” proposed project business cases have been rejected as too high risk (Single Instance Records Management System) or modified to deliver in smaller, lower risk stages (Digital Evidence Management Project)*
- Post business case approval, all projects are required to go through a project initiation gateway and monthly programme reporting once in-flight*
- The Joint ICT Project Management Office conducts regular health-checks and stage gate reviews for all projects providing internal assurance over compliance with the project process for all projects involving JICT*
- A Project Portfolio Management (PPM) tool has been adopted by JICT and TVP Change Delivery team so that all in-flight project data is stored in one shared database*
- Resource modelling is now carried out routinely by JICT against key technical resource types and tracked against the PPM tool to inform decisions on resource allocation, pipeline planning and annual planning*
- The standardised project process has been incorporated into relevant DCC’s governance boards for TVP and Joint Projects – holding Senior Responsible Officer’s to account for the performance of their programmes*
- A Joint Portfolio Meeting (chaired by the two Heads of Change) is now held monthly with programme managers of all joint programmes including those led by JICT*
- Portfolio level risks and issues are tracked via the joint portfolio meeting and escalated to the DCC Collaboration Board as necessary*
- End of project and programme lessons learnt and now formally reviewed at governance boards and routinely shared with all project and programme managers*
- The DCC’s collaboration board now includes a remit to commission external project/programme assurance as and when it is considered necessary (an external health-check carried out during 2019 for the Digital Evidence*

Management System project and external reviews for Equip (new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system) were commissioned via PCCs

- *Change management training has been undertaken by key members of the Change Delivery Team and People Directorate Innovation and Change Team and incorporated into TVP leadership training courses*
- *A joint internal audit on Force Project Lessons Learnt and Benefits Realisation (including ICT projects) was carried out in the first quarter of 2018/19 and identified actions which were progressed and monitored in a follow-up independent audit report in the first quarter of 2019/20.*

[The PCC reported that with IT schemes, expert advice is taken on costings of schemes, however, on a national level, these schemes invariably ended up more expensive. Reference was made to the Contact Management Platform which had gone live with the Hampshire Force and had been well received. It was due to go live in Thames Valley at the end of the month.]

6. Police Community Support Officers are an important resource for local policing throughout the Thames Valley. Why have vacancies been frozen, particularly when they are a useful addition to visible front-line policing?

[The PCC reported that in recent years there has been a steady turnover in PCSOs as many individuals have taken the opportunity to join the force as police officers. This means we have not operated at full capacity for some time. I can reassure you that PCSOs remain an important part of the policing family in Thames Valley. Reviewing vacancies as they arise will enable us to operate at current capacity whilst we take stock and review overall PCSO numbers and deployments in light of the significant increase in police officer numbers. Posts funded with partnership monies will not be affected by this temporary hold on vacancies; that will only apply to 100% funded TVP posts.

The Chief Constable added the Government funding could not be used to fund PCSOs. The freeze would be reviewed.]

7. With efficiencies aimed at back office staff in the Police, what work has taken place on collaborations or sharing such services with other organisations?

[The PCC reported that TVP already shared a number of functions with other forces. For example, ICT, Joint Operations Unit and Information Management are all provided jointly with Hampshire. Our new Contact Management Platform is now live in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Provided there are no significant problems with the new system, we will go-live in a few weeks' time.

Fleet management is provided by the Chiltern Transport Consortium which also includes Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridge, BTP and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary. We are in the process of implementing a new joint ERP system with Surrey and Sussex Police (called Equip). Counter terrorism policing and organised crime is delivered on a regional basis across the South East. All of these joint units have been tasked with finding efficiency savings and millions have been taken out of the TVP budget in recent years as a result of savings from these collaborated units.]

8. What plans are there for the use of £2.8m which the PCC will receive from the Ministry of Justice to fund victim and witness services?

[The PCC reminded the Panel that Thames Valley PCC had taken victim support in-house. The money provided by the Ministry of Justice was used to ensure that all victims of crime received the support they needed to cope and recover from the impact of their crime. We care about those affected by crime and work continuously to improve services and support for victims.]

Reference was made to the Victims First hub which had been established to act as first point of contact to coordinate the support provided to all victims and witnesses of crime, as well as family members of victims. It was available across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire and provided help regardless of whether or not the crime had been reported to the police.

Reference was made to the following services which had been commissioned for victims of crime for 2020/21:

- A new adult specialist service which will begin on 1st April for victims of crime who require longer term or more complex interventions due to the high level of harm experienced. The service will also provide family support in partnership with the young victim service, some operational support to TVP where exploitation is suspected, and restorative justice when this type of intervention is sought by victims. This new service will be called the Victims First Specialist Service and it will be provided by Thames Valley Partnership and a network of specialist providers based in 3 multi-specialist integrated teams – with one team per county.*
- A young victims service provided by SAFE. An emotional support and advocacy service dealing with clients with shorter term or lower level needs.*
- A therapeutic counselling service for all victims.*
- DV medium risk safety planning.*
- DV complex needs service.]*

9. From a recent newspaper article which found that nationally only one in 200 officers was dedicated to investigating fraud, what plans was the PCC making to improve this resource in TVP?

[In terms of dedicated staff investigating fraud as their main role then in TVP, the economic crime unit (ECU) has a Detective Inspector and 45 dedicated staff (plus a Detective Inspector, Sergeant and 6 Detective Constables for cyber investigation).

The Economic Crime Unit is one of the few in TVP to receive recent growth in recent years and has grown by 6 staff in the last financial year. Four of these were new posts created through additional funding (£208,000) and 2 were posts reinvested from elsewhere in FISO following the Efficiency & Effectiveness (E&E) review.

A restructure has taken place to ensure all areas of Economic Crime are tackled not just fraud. There was a clear strategy to pursue investigations into the frauds that affect the most vulnerable people of Thames Valley and target the money laundering OCGs that sit behind the fraudsters.

There are 2 dedicated ECU investigation teams and a newly formed Criminal Finance Team to cover this area of business and also increase our capability to identify early and safeguard vulnerable victims of frauds and exploitation through increased use of the Suspicious Activity reports (SARS) database. In addition to investigations these teams provide support, advice and training to LPA staff in order to upskill the wider workforce in Fraud and Criminal Finance Investigations.

There was also a strong prevent strategy led by the Action Fraud Team. We have fully embedded Operation Signature force-wide and this ensures all vulnerable victims of fraud receive enhanced safeguarding and support to prevent them becoming repeat victims. This team also has 2 dedicated fraud prevention officers who carry out force-wide proactive prevention campaigns and events (recently Op Radium - raising awareness of courier fraud).

The ECU are also working closely with learning and develop to embed fraud money laundering training into the new Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme (ICIDP) and Initial Police Learning Development Programme (IPLDP) training programmes. ECU will deliver input on each of these courses going forward and fraud investigation master classes will be held later this year. The aim is to seek improvements in fraud investigation across the force.

Strategically there was now published Force Fraud and Criminal Finance Strategies and an 'ECU oversight board', chaired by the Head of Specialist Operations and attended by the Thames Chiltern CPS lead to ensure good governance in this arena.

The PCC commented that the true cost of fraud was bigger than the cost of the NHS. Fraud was not confined to any one area and the Police did not have the capacity to deal with it. Reference was made to the Lloyd's case, whereby after a costly investigation by Thames Valley Police, the fine incurred by Lloyds went to the Treasury and none of it came to Thames Valley Police.]

10. With diminishing capital receipts available to TVP, how confident is the PCC that the use of revenue for future capital schemes is sustainable, particularly when there are no certainties regarding future Police Settlements?

[Annual capital grant has recently been cut from £1.5m to just £0.4m. In the knowledge that capital receipts are also drying up we have increased our annual revenue contribution to capital expenditure (DRF) to £11m. In addition, we have also started to borrow for long-term estate projects such as Reading, SEROCU western hub and Maidenhead, if that bid is accepted by HM Courts, but this requires ongoing revenue funding for debt charges.

We acknowledge that £11m is unlikely to be sufficient, by itself, to fund an acceptable level of capital investment in future years but it is a good start. This is an area of the overall budget that will require close scrutiny by my successor in future years. The PCC commented that with interest rates so low an option could be to borrow money as £11m was not enough.]

The following additional questions were also asked:

- What was the rationale used for the purchase of Maidenhead Magistrates Court?

[The Chief Constable explained that this was a prime site which could be utilised for a number of business uses. There were partnership opportunities with the site having a large footprint. Reference was made to accommodating the expanding CID, or sharing with other emergency services.]

- With the extra 183 officers being allocated to TVP, how short was the Force from full establishment?

[The PCC replied that recruitment was constantly taking place with officers who were leaving being replaced so the number of officers was always changing. Reference was made to the imbalance of Police numbers in the country and that the Force in Merseyside for example, had more officers per head of population than the Thames Valley. Thames Valley was coming from a low base and there was the need for more officers.]

The Chief Constable commented that the 183 extra officers was a good start, however, there needed to be further pushing for more officers.]

- The PCC was asked about fraud, particularly local fraud, such as that committed against charities. With burglaries reducing local criminals were now targeting other crimes such as those against charities where substantial amounts of funds were stolen. What level of resource from the extra 183 Officers will be available to investigate this crime?

[The PCC agreed that this type of local fraud was often overlooked and referred to a Conference he had attended at Portsmouth University where it was reported that around £2.3 billion was lost from charities through fraud and this was a major problem. It was acknowledged that presently Thames Valley did not have enough officers but this would be rectified with additional resource made available for the fraud squad and part of the local CID.]

Reference was made to finance and fraud investigators working with specialist fraud accountants.]

- Reference was made to neighbourhood policing and concerns that neighbourhood police were being taken away and deployed and supplemented into other policing areas. This was causing resentment amongst officers.

[The PCC replied that due to a lack of officer numbers resources had been stretched and officers had to be deployed where the demand was. The Chief Constable commented that 95% of their time was spent as neighbourhood police.]

- Could the PCC provide details of how much of the precept increase is to fund the Police & Crime Commissioner's office? Are there any plans to

increase efficiencies in the office as is being done in TVP's "back office" services?

[The Office of Thames Valley PCC was one of the lowest funded in the country, per head of population. Savings were made and reference was made to all police precept funding being allocated to policing and not to the Office of the PCC.]

- Without a consultation process having taken place on the proposed precept increase, has the PCC received any public reaction to the proposed increase in precept?

[The PCC reported that because of the lateness of the Police Settlement Funding announcement there had been no time for a public consultation exercise on a proposed increase in the Police precept. There had been no negative reaction to his knowledge.]

- With crime levels generally increasing, but the number of prosecutions reducing, will extra funding be provided to improve the outcomes for victims of crime?

[The PCC reported that rising crime and reduced prosecutions was a national issue and if there was a reduction in Police Officers, crime would increase. In relation to a reduction in prosecutions, this was a collective failure of the Crown Prosecution Services, Local Criminal Justice Boards, Prison Service and the Police.]

Reference was made to crime recording which had changed and which did not accurately reflect crime figures. An example was given of recording a burglary where there were five victims who had been traumatised. "Harder" crimes had reduced but there had been an increase in internet-based crimes such as cybercrimes.]

- What significant savings can be achieved from further TVP collaborations?

[The PCC referred to the possibility of looking at sharing facilities with the Fire Service such as a co-terminus but explained collaborations were difficult with the Fire Service in the Thames Valley as there were three Fire Authorities. This would be something for the future.]

The Chairman commented that a future themed item for the Panel could be to look at the possible TVP collaborations with partners, such as the Fire Service with a view to sharing services such as buildings and vehicle maintenance costs, public utilities etc.

- In relation to making TVP an attractive proposition in terms of recruitment, has there be any discussions with housing authorities regarding the provision of affordable or key worker housing?

[The PCC replied that there would be difficulty with this as there were 18 local authorities in the Thames Valley and it would be difficult to get all of them signed up for this. It would be wrong to have only parts of the Thames Valley area agreeing, whilst other parts did not.]

- Reference was made to the recent terrorism attack in Streatham and the problems the Police had in relation to surveillance of terror suspects. The PCC was asked if TVP would have to pick up the surveillance bill if terror suspects were residents of Thames Valley.

[The PCC referred to the poisoning attack in Salisbury which TVP investigated and that counter terrorism was centrally funded. The Chief Constable reported that policing of this nature came out of a national budget which TVP contributed to.]

- The representative of Slough thanked the PCC for the continuing funding of Community Safety Partnerships which had carried out excellent preventative work in Slough. The Chairman echoed the comments made and thanked the PCC for being one of the only PCCs to provide funding to local CSPs.

[The PCC reported that funding would continue for this year and possibly in the future as CSPs provided an important role in the prevention of crime and disorder.]

- How can the PCC improve the public's confidence in the Police to justify this proposed increase in the Police precept?

[The PCC commented that confidence would improve by continuing to carry out the job as effectively and efficiently as possible. The lack of resources and police numbers in certain areas had proved testing but the increase in officers would reinforce the public's confidence in the Police. The Chief Constable commented that a key aim was to improve outcomes for victims of crime. With a 73% increase in "stop and search" aimed at preventing certain crimes, the public can be confident that the Police were increasing their efforts to keep people safe.]

RESOLVED – (1) That the Panel approved the Police and Crime Commissioner's precept for 2020/21 as set out in the OPCC report 'Revenue Estimates 2020/21 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24' having received satisfactory responses to the questions raised.

(2) That the Panel noted:

- **Subject to final tax base notifications, the Council Tax requirement for 2020/21 be set at £198.84m.**
- **That any variation in the final amount of Council Tax income be appropriated to or from General Balances.**
- **That the police element of the Council Tax for 2020/21 be set at £216.28 for properties in Band D. This represented an increase in the Band D precept of £10, or 4.8%.**

ANNUAL ASSURANCE REPORT 2019 FROM THE JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE TO THE PCC FOR THAMES VALLEY AND THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF THAMES VALLEY POLICE

The Panel was provided with the Annual Assurance Report for 2019 from the Joint Independent Audit Committee which explained how the Committee has complied with each of its specific responsibilities, during the last twelve months covering the period December 2018 to December 2019.

The PCC reported that the report provided an assurance opinion that the risk management and internal control environment in Thames Valley Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner was operating efficiently and effectively.

Reference was made to the uncertainty around the budget for 2021/22 and the potential £2m shortfall. The PCC commented that the Police funding review was expected later in the year and at this stage the PCC did not know what funding would be received.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and the Panel offered their congratulations to the PCC and the Force for such a good report from the Joint Independent Audit Committee.

6/20

POLICE AND CRIME PLAN STRATEGIC PRIORITY - VULNERABILITY - PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Police and Crime Commissioner informed the Panel that his Police and Crime Plan set out the following aims for addressing vulnerability:

- Improved recognition across the criminal justice system of mental health distress experienced by both victims and offenders leading to, (a) referral pathways into appropriate support agencies and (b) Improved access to mental health care from those in contact with the criminal justice system
- Better understanding by police and partners of the extent and nature of elder abuse, followed by positive actions taken to address the issues uncovered
- Improved police awareness and robust prosecution of those practising 'more hidden' forms of abuse, including coercive control, stalking, harassment, honour based abuse (HBA) and forced marriage
- Improvements in criminal justice experience and outcomes for victims of domestic and sexual abuse
- Ongoing assessment by police of the benefits arising from Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs), including the current arrangements of 9 MASHs serving Thames Valley.

Details of the TVP delivery plan action points which support and complements the PCC's Police and Crime Plan were detailed in the report.

Reference was made to the development of operational guidance to ensure officers and staff were aware of how to refer victims into the Victims First service.

An update was requested on the review into MASHs, which included the benefits of having 9 MASHs serving Thames Valley. The PCC reported that a review had taken place and it had found that there was competence across different field areas (omni-competence). They would continue to operate as they were, although it was not entirely satisfactory across the Thames Valley. It was reported that engagement

would continue with Berkshire local authorities regarding the number and effectiveness of their small MASHs.

Reference was made to the plight of armed forces veterans with an estimate of 10% of the prison population consisting of veterans and 20% of the homeless being veterans. The PCC was asked what was being done to support these vulnerable people. The PCC agreed that more should be done to support veterans. The Chief Constable reported that those veterans who had fallen into crime and were taken into custody blocks, were often diverted to charities who supported veterans.

RESOLVED

That the report and update provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner be welcomed and noted.

7/20

POLICE COMPLAINTS REFORMS

Head of Governance and Compliance at the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner provided the Panel with a presentation on recent reforms made to the Police and Complaints and Discipline process.

The Panel was informed of the options which would be available to the PCC and that Thames Valley PCC would be taking on Model 1 which was to take on reviews of police complaints (previously known as appeals) whilst the Professional Standards Department (PSD) would continue to deal with most incoming complaints.

Members were informed that the new complaint reforms came into operation on 1 February 2020 and Model 1 would ensure that the PCC would be more customer service focused when receiving complaints. Reviews would be sent to Office for the PCC via workflow on Centurion. These would be signed off by the Head of Governance and Compliance with recommendations to Head of PSD. The Office of the PCC would provide data on reviews to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

With the reforms there would be increased focus on learning and improvement (focus on forces – not individuals), local accountability would be enhanced and PCCs would have statutory oversight of complaints system within their force area.

Reference was made to the new way of working which would help tackle some of the issues faced from the old process, ensuring clarity, less bureaucracy and more flexibility to deal with complaints to the public's satisfaction. The reforms also included a move towards a more reflective practice, focusing on learning outcomes for both individual police officers and staff, and the Force.

Improvements with the new system included:

- Forces must be reasonable and proportionate – reducing need for unnecessary investigations.
- Threshold for misconduct increased to promote reflective practice in policing.
- More control for line managers.
- Focus on organisational learning.

- Improvement on investigation timeliness.
- Legally Qualified Chairs (LQC) – greater flexibility for pre-hearing conferences.
- Fair and transparent process.
- PCCs to make recommendations.
- PCC taking on responsibility for appeals.

However, reference was made to the negatives to the reforms:

- There was no power to enforce recommendations, although this would not be an issue in Thames Valley.
- There was variance in ‘reasonable and proportionate’ terminology.
- Accepting reflective practice.
- Minor complaints recorded with potential to be reviewed.

As the reforms would allow individuals the right to request their complaints were recorded, this would also allow more individuals the right to review. This would increase the number of reviews. Also if the complainant was unhappy with the response of their review from the Office of PCC, it was thought there could be more complaints against the PCC, and potentially more complaints for the PCP Complaints Sub-Committee to hear.

Reference was also made to complaints now being able to be made via social media platforms but that these had to be directed to the Force.

Discussion took place on the implications of the reforms on the Panel’s Sub-Committee and its officers and the Chief Constable commented that it could be helpful if the Panel received a presentation from the PSD on the likely impact on the Complaints Sub-Committee’s workload.

RESOLVED –

That the Head of Governance and Compliance at the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner be thanked for the informative presentation and the detail provided be noted.

8/20

CHAIRMAN, POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER UPDATES AND TOPICAL ISSUES REPORT

The Scrutiny Officer for the Panel provided a report which presented details of topical policing issues since the last meeting of the Panel.

In relation to Child Sexual Exploitation offences, the PCC was asked whether the number of these offences had increased in the Thames Valley. The Chief Constable reported that numbers were down in the Thames Valley (-6%).

Reference was made to retention of Police Officers and the Panel was informed that there was a Retention Project Board which looked at proposals to improve retention, however, around 20-25 officers left every month.

The representative from Milton Keynes asked the PCC about the cost of the funding of the community engagements events held by ROC which would be taking place

across the Thames Valley. Subsequent to the meeting, the PCC reported that the cost was £7,000 for each location they were held in. There would be four in locations in Milton Keynes and one each in Reading and Oxford City (£42,000 in total).

Reference was made to the allocation of resources for counter terrorism and whether it was reasonable that Extinction Rebellion was on the counter terrorism police list group as an 'extremist' group. The Chief Constable responded that they should not be on the list group.

The report and comments made were noted.

9/20

WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel agreed that for the November meeting, the themed item should be on Property/Assets – Looking at shared facilities between TVP and other “blue light” emergency services.

The work programme was noted.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing