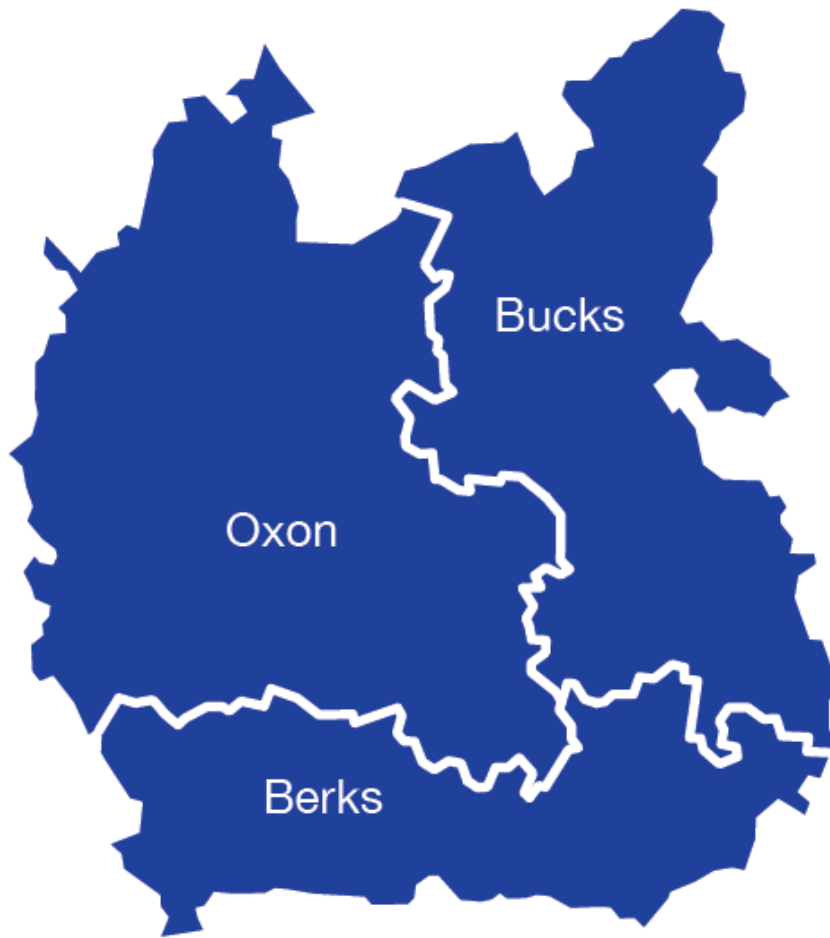


Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel



Annual Report 2019/20

Prior to April 2020, Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (PCP) consisted of representatives from 18 local authorities in the Thames Valley area (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire). With the creation of Buckinghamshire Council as the single unitary council in Buckinghamshire, this has been reduced to 14 local authorities.

The PCP is a joint committee comprising of 14 elected members (one from each of the Oxfordshire district councils (4), one for each of the Unitary Authorities in Berkshire (6), and one each for Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council and Milton Keynes Council.

Buckinghamshire Council will have one Member plus four further local authority co-opted Members to meet the balanced panel objective.

It can be contacted via the address below:

**Democratic Services
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall, New Road, Oxford,
OX1 1ND**

**Telephone: 07990368048
Email: contact@thamesvalleypcp.org.uk
k
Website: www.thamesvalleypcp.org.uk
Twitter: [@ThamesValleyPCP](https://twitter.com/ThamesValleyPCP)**



The Police & Crime Commissioner (PCCC) for Thames Valley is Anthony Stansfeld and his Deputy PCC, is Matthew Barber.

The PCC and his Deputy can be contacted via his office:

**Office of the Police and Crime
Commissioner
The Farmhouse
Thames Valley Police Headquarters
Oxford Road
Kidlington
Oxon
OX5 2NX**

**Telephone: (01865) 541957
Email: pcc@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk
Website: www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk
Twitter: [@TV_PCC](https://twitter.com/TV_PCC)**

MEMBERS OF THE THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 2019-20

Councillor Bill Bendyshe-Brown (Buckinghamshire County Council)
Councillor Robin Bradburn (Milton Keynes Council)
Councillor David Carroll (Wycombe District Council)
Councillor Nigel Chapman (Oxford City Council)
Councillor Trevor Egleton (South Bucks District Council)
Councillor Neil Fawcett (Vale of White Horse District Council)
Councillor Steve Good (West Oxfordshire District Council) (Councillor
Norman MacRae replaced February 2020)
Councillor John Harrison (Bracknell Forest Council)
Councillor Sophia James (Reading Borough Council)
Councillor Kieron Mallon (Oxfordshire County Council)
Curtis-James Marshall (Independent Member)
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 Jonathan Waters (Chiltern District Council)
Councillor Mark Winn (Aylesbury Vale District Council)
Councillor Howard Woollaston (West Berkshire Council)

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Chairman's Introduction



I am pleased to present the seventh annual report of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (PCP), and my first as Chairman of the Panel, which covers its activities during the 2019 calendar year.

I would like to thank the previous Chairman, Councillor Trevor Egleton who was Chairman since the Panel was established in 2012 in compliance with the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011.

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

The Panel plays a vital role in holding the PCC to account and supporting him in the effective exercise of his duties. I would like to thank all Panel Members for the dedication and commitment in carrying out the Panel's statutory functions which, in turn, help to deliver an effective and efficient policing service for the people of the Thames Valley.

The Panel continues to benefit from an extremely constructive and positive working relationship with the PCC and I am grateful to the PCC and his Office for their engagement at Panel meetings, Sub-Committees and Task and Finish Group meetings and for the providing information in a timely and transparent manner.

The Panel is also grateful for the attendance of Chief Constable, John Campbell at Panel meetings who is a great help in providing Members with an operational perspective to the strategic issues discussed.

2020 has presented the nation with unique challenges due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. Thames Valley Police officers and support staff are very much in the front line and are key workers in the nation's response to the impact the Pandemic has had on all aspects of everyday life. I would like to place on record my gratitude through the PCC, to the selfless work and professionalism of Thames Valley Police officers at this time of crisis and thank them for the vital service they provide.

The Pandemic also resulted in the postponement of the 2020 elections for the PCC which has meant the present PCC, Anthony Stansfeld continues to hold the office till May 2021. The Panel look forward to working with him for this extra year.

Councillor Kieron Mallon
Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel

The Role of the Panel



The key functions of the Panel are:

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

The Panel has fulfilled its main statutory duties this year which is to scrutinise and support the PCC in his role in helping tackle crime and disorder in the Thames Valley. The PCC was elected to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure an efficient and effective police force for the Thames Valley.

It should be noted that the Panel cannot

scrutinise operational policing matters, but can question the PCC on how he is holding the Chief Constable to account for policing in the Thames Valley.

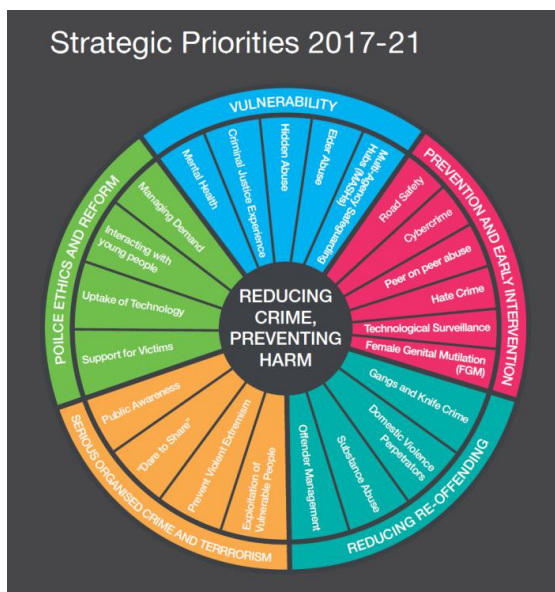
The Budget Task and Finish Group of the Panel worked with both the PCC and Thames Valley Police Chief Financial Officers on reviewing the PCC's proposed police precept before the proposed precept was submitted to the Police and Crime Panel. The Panel agreed with the PCC's recommendation of an increase in Council Tax for the Police precept, by up to £10 for a Band D property in 2020/21 to enable policing priorities to be met.



PCC'S Police and Crime Plan and the Role of the Panel

The PCC's Police and Crime Plan and the various strategic police and crime objectives continue to be monitored and scrutinised to enable the effectiveness of the Police performance in the Thames Valley to be monitored.

This document is of great importance to the Police and Crime Panel as a point of reference in fulfilling its duty to scrutinise and review the actions and decisions of the Police & Crime Commissioner.



Throughout the year, the Police and

Crime Panel receives monitoring reports on how these objectives are being met and scrutinise the PCC's performance in meeting the objectives contained in the Plan.

The PCC's strategic police and crime objectives for the Thames Valley have regard to

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

The Plan must also cover:

- The policing of Thames Valley which the Chief Constable is to provide
- The financial and other resources which the Commissioner is to provide to the Chief Constable
- The means by which the Chief Constable will report to the Commissioner on the provision of policing
- The means by which the Chief Constable's performance in providing policing is measured
- The crime and disorder reduction grants which the Commissioner is to make, and the conditions (if any) of those grants

The Plan draws upon a wide range of information from the police, community safety and criminal justice partners to ensure it reflects the police and crime issues which are affecting the Thames Valley. It also covers a much wider range of service responsibilities than any plan previously developed by the police, community safety partnerships

(CSPs) or any other individual community safety responsible authority. The Plan will bring together the priorities of all agencies and authorities with a responsibility for cutting crime and improving community safety.

The Work of the Panel in 2019-20



For 2019-20, the Panel had 6 scheduled meetings where thematic scrutiny sessions were to be held on topics which had been earmarked in the Panel's work programme for the year.

However, with the Coronavirus Pandemic, all meetings were cancelled from March onwards.

Throughout the year, The Panel considered a number of themed items, whereby scrutiny of the PCC took place.

Local Policing Model

The Panel was provided with an update on the current Local Policing model within Thames Valley Police and provided the background to the history of the model.

The original objective of the new Local

Policing Model which was to undertake a review of the structure and activity of Local Police Area level policing in view of the changing demands on the police service, with a reduced resource.

It was reported that a new operating model was developed to meet those

changing demands, with the cornerstone of the model being increased neighbourhood policing allied to problem solving. There had been difficulties in implementing the model.

Reference was made to the implementation of the new model which had coincided with increased demands on the Police, with increased calls caused mainly as a result of increased crime and recent terrorist attacks. The impact was felt on Police Officers who at the same time saw their numbers reduced by around 150.

The changes in shift patterns had affected staff welfare; with officers reporting being continually tired and unable to recuperate effectively. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that as a result, several changes were recommended to be made which included a change to the shift pattern, a review of command areas, a review of the Smarter Resolution function and the workforce mix between police and police staff. It was recognised that there was a necessity to recruit more officers to meet demand and the requirements of the new Local Model.

In the Panel's continuing monitoring role, a further progress report was given at its November 2019 meeting, where it was reported that the Force now had the right model with progress being made. Next year there would be

a move to LPA officers and staff being aligned to one of the three 'hubs' in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire or Oxfordshire.

The Panel was overall pleased with the changes which were made to the model and were satisfied that part of the increase in Police precept was being used to increase police visibility in neighbourhoods and asked that updates be provided to future meetings.



Governance of Thames Valley Police Collaborations

A scrutiny session took place which looked at how the PCC held the Chief Constable to account for the various collaborations TVP were involved in.

These included:

- Hants/TVP Bi-lateral Collaboration
- South East Region Collaboration (which included South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU), hosted by Thames Valley Police)
- Chiltern Transport Consortium
- National Police Air Service
- TVP / TV Fire and Rescue Services
- Equip (formerly ERP Project)
- Single Online Home
- National Counter Terrorism Police Services

- National Ballistics Intelligence Service (NABIS)

The PCC reported that it was estimated that there were savings made were around £100,000 year from TVP collaborations which were ploughed back into front line policing.]

A recommendation which came out of the scrutiny session was asking the Police and Crime Commissioner to consider providing a regular forward plan of key decisions and supporting information through publishing a non-confidential summary of Regional Governance Board Minutes, to enable Members to be kept informed of TVP collaborations. This recommendation would be revisited in 2020-21.



A presentation was given at the Panel meeting in September 2019 by the Head of Commissioning of the Office of the PCC on Victims First. Victims First was the overarching brand name for all PCC activity aimed at improving the post-offence experience of victims of crime.

The 4 main strands of activity were: -

- Support: Ensuring appropriate services for victims exist across the policing area;
- Accessibility: Raising public awareness of services and improving ease of access;
- Awareness: Campaigns to improve knowledge about specific types of victimisation

- and encourage people who need support to seek it;
- Rights: Improving the overall standard of services for victims across the Criminal Justice System and beyond.

The information presented to the Panel was asked to be forwarded to all Thames Valley constituent authorities to ensure the service was publicised for victims of crime.

HMICFRS - Thames Valley Police: Crime Data Integrity re-inspection 2019

At the September Panel meeting a session took place on the Crime Data re-inspection results which had found that Thames Valley Police had improved its crime recording arrangements since the 2017; however, it was found that there still needed to be improvements.

The PCC acknowledged that there was clearly more work to be done to improve crime recording, particularly as some of the issues raised at the last inspection had still not been satisfactorily remedied.

The PCC provided information on how he was holding the Chief Constable to account regarding the processes which were being put in place to address the issues raised in the report relating to training of frontline officers in the use of NICHE and to Contact Management Centre staff for recording crimes correctly.

The Chief Constable added that improvements would take place on recording crime when the public first contacted the Police and first calls

would be recorded. A review and further training would take place to improve performance on this.

The Panel was informed the reporting of crime was often a complicated process. For example, in the case of stalking, which used to be recorded just the once, but under the new recording system, this had to be recorded by the number of instances that the stalking took place. This proved challenging.

As an action, the Panel asked that an update be provided on progress made by TVP in making improvements to Crime Data Integrity.

Allocation by TVP of the additional £8.5m precept funding from 2019-20

The Panel throughout the year continued to scrutinise the PCC in relation to the 2019-20 Police Precept, which saw an additional £8.5m of precept funding. The scrutiny of the PCC's budget is an integral role of the Panel.

At the November 2019 Panel meeting the PCC updated Members on the proposals for the extra funding. There would be a total of 212 new posts, consisting of 69 Police Officers and 143 Staff (estimated £6.6m for salaries of these new posts, likely to increase to £8m for the following year). The residual funding of around £2m in the current year would be invested in technology to improve the information and communications available for officers and to improve the services provided.

The Panel was encouraged to hear that £2.5m of the extra funding would be

allocated to recruit front line Police Officers which would increase visibility for communities and respond to increasing crime.

£1.3m was to be allocated to the Contact Management system to help with the Police 101 service which had encountered problems of delays for users.

The Chief Constable reported that the Force now had the right model with progress being made. Next year there would be a move to LPA officers and staff being aligned to one of the three 'hubs' in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire or Oxfordshire.

THAMES VALLEY
CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD

Criminal Justice System: working together for the public



Why was there an increase in Crime Rates but a fall in the number of prosecutions?

A scrutiny themed item for November 2019 Panel was for the Panel to assess and understand why with an increasing crime rate in the Thames Valley and nationally has the number of convictions/ prosecutions reduced.

The Chief Constable reported that generally crime figures were higher due to improved crime recording, changes to crime-recording rules and increased confidence in reporting all which continued to have a significant impact on the levels of certain crime types.

The Chief Constable reported that compared to last year's figures and for the reasons stated above, there had

been a 33% increase in the trafficking of drugs; a 21% increase in possession of weapons and a 20% of possession of drugs (there had been a 44% increase in stop and search).

With recent increase in national knife crime, TVP had used, under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, Section 60 Orders which were used where there had been increases in knife crime. This had resulted in increased numbers of arrests for possession of weapons and of drugs.

Overall there had been an increase of crime across the Thames Valley (up 5%) with references made to increases in violence without injury (up 15%), thefts from vehicles (up 11%) and thefts of motor vehicles (up 5%). Criminal damage and violence with injury were stable.

There had been reductions in shoplifting, Burglary of dwellings (down 5%), bilking (obtaining or withholding money from someone unfairly or by deceit; cheat or defraud (down by 6%), Arson (down by 7%), Burglary of shed (down by 9%) and GBH (down by 20%).

The Thames Valley PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy programme) assessment of 2018/19 had stated that after legislation had changed the way in which police bail was applied, the TVP had not struck the right balance between the use of pre-charge bail and the released under investigation (RUI) option.

Members were reassured that greater awareness had been raised amongst officers of how to use the bail legislation which had resulted in a much greater use of bail between October 2018 and

September 2019 compared to the previous period.

In relation to court resolutions and particularly around victims of rape and sexual assault, it was acknowledged that collectively better work was required, particularly around the often-complex area of disclosure.

The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner who was also Chairman of the Local Criminal Justice Board provided information on the criminal justice system.

Improvements had been made in Police preparations for trials and that for Thames Valley between July 2019 to September 2019, there had been almost 2,500 court cases, with 73% defendants offering guilty pleas at Crown Court cases. This was proving that good work was being done, with improvements made in disclosure work.

The Deputy PCC referred to the need for more robust statistics on the falling levels of prosecutions and convictions as arrests had increased in relation to crimes such as domestic abuse; however, obtaining convictions was not always easy due to victims and witnesses not seeing the process through. Improvements in this area had to be made and greater support was required for victims of such crimes.

Thames Valley Police had restructured their investigative capability with local Detective Chief Inspectors put into localised areas with CID. There had been investment in technology with an improvement in the transfer of data to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

Concern was expressed by the Panel at the Criminal Justice System which had resulted in two thirds of magistrates' courts in Thames Valley being closed over the last decade. The implications of this on the Criminal Justice System, was felt in relation to some victims of crime and witnesses failing to attend court hearings, if the distances were too great. Reference was made to court cases collapsing because of the non-appearance of witnesses at cases.

CCTV links to Courts would overcome some problems, but until that system was up and running properly, its effectiveness could not be measured. A video conference suite being developed would improve the process.

Why did cases collapse?

This was not just due to problems with disclosure. The failure of witnesses to turn up, defence solicitors on occasion deliberately putting cases off to attempt to get cases dropped were amongst other reasons why convictions were sometimes not achieved. This was very frustrating for the Police who had worked towards bringing cases to court and ultimately getting justice for victims of crime.

A recommendation which came out of the review was asking the PCC to consider requesting the National Association of PCCs to issue a joint statement on the impact on the Criminal Justice System, of the closure of local courts.

Budget Task and Finish Group – Scrutinising the PCC for Thames Valley Proposed Council Tax Precept for 2020-21

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.

The Budget Task and Finish Group submitted their report and findings to the Panel meeting in February 2020 and recommended the proposed increase to the police element of the Council Tax by £10 per annum for 2020/21 (for a Band D property). This was agreed by the Panel.

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.

For this year, the Police Settlement announcement was made later than usual which placed extra pressure on officers and Members in terms of analysing the budget proposals. However, due to the co-operation of both Chief Finance Officers of the PCC and TVP the Budget Task and Finish Group were given all relevant information to ensure full scrutiny to take place.

Looking to the Future

The Panel will continue to scrutinise and monitor the PCC's Police and Crime Plan to ensure his five strategic priorities are being met to improve policing for residents of the Thames Valley.

The March meeting of the Panel was cancelled because of the Coronavirus Pandemic and those work programme items will be considered in meetings for 2020-21.

These would include:

- **Exploitation - Preventing CSE/Modern Slavery/Forced Marriage/Hidden Harm/ FGM**
- **Rural Crime**
- **Community Safety Partnerships Updates**
- **Update on Recruitment and Retention within Thames Valley Police**
- **Update on Local Policing Model**
- **Property/Assets – Looking at shared facilities between TVP and other “blue light” emergency services**
- **Work and Structure of the Thames Valley Road Safety Working Group/Safer Road Strategy**
- **Progress on Violence Reduction Unit**