

Report to the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

Title: Topical Issues

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Author: Khalid Ahmed, Scrutiny
Officer, Thames Valley Police
& Crime Panel



Review of Police and Crime Commissioners

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/priti-patel-to-give-public-greater-say-over-policing-through-pcc-review>

A review of the role of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will help give the public a greater say over policing, the Home Secretary has announced.

PCCs are directly elected to be the voice of the people and deliver an effective and efficient police force in their area. They are responsible for the budget and performance of their force, including cutting crime.

The review delivers on the manifesto commitment to strengthen and expand the role of PCCs. The public wants to see a reduction in crime and PCCs are elected to deliver on the people's priorities.

Measures to be considered in the review include:

- raising the profile of PCCs
- giving the public better access to information about the performance of their PCC
- sharing best practice so that PCCs are delivering consistently across the country
- reviewing the relationship between PCCs and Chief Constables

The Home Secretary said: "The British people want to know the police will uphold the law and then be held to account on that basis.

"This review will help to improve accountability, scrutiny and transparency, ensuring Police and Crime Commissioners always put the law-abiding silent majority who voted for them at the centre of their decision-making."

Minister for Crime and Policing Kit Malthouse said: "We are committed to giving the police the powers and resources they need – it's why we're recruiting an additional 20,000 officers and are giving the biggest funding increase to policing in a decade.

“This review will help PCCs to deliver effective police forces who can cut crime and protect their communities.

“It will also ensure voters can hold PCCs accountable for performance – giving the public a stronger voice in matters of crime and justice.”

The review will take place in two parts. The first stage, to be conducted over the summer, will look at raising standards and improving accountability, so that all members of the public are getting a good service from their PCCs. It will also consider ways to strengthen the accountability of fire and rescue services in line with the Government’s long-term ambitions on fire governance reform.

The review’s second stage will take place following the PCC elections in May 2021 and will focus on longer-term reform. This will include looking at what extra powers PCCs need to better fight crime in their areas.

Longer-term plans, including increasing the number of mayors with responsibility for policing, will be detailed in the Local Recovery and Devolution White Paper, which are intended to publish in the autumn.

The review will not consider scrapping the PCC model nor will it review the 43 police force model.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley on the latest police officer recruitment figures

The latest figures released by the Home Office show Thames Valley is ahead of recruitment targets for 2020.

Anthony Stansfeld, Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley said: "The latest figures released today [Thursday 30th July] show that we have already exceeded our recruitment targets for this year.

“By the end of March 2021, we were due to have recruited an additional 183 police officers for the Thames Valley. However, by the end of June 2020 we have already exceeded this target by 36 officers (a total of 219 officers recruited). I am delighted to see these figures, and we continue to remain committed to the Government's police officer uplift programme.

"In recent months, we have seen the importance of the work of our officers. The new recruits will provide us with extra resilience for the future. We are keen to attract applicants to these roles from a range of backgrounds. This will not only bring different knowledge and expertise but help build stronger relationships with the public and our local communities. I am pleased to see the progress the Force is making in this area, such as the creation of a Positive Action & Engagement Team.

“We continue to have the support of both the Prime Minister and Home Secretary to make communities safer across the Thames Valley.”

Latest HMICFRS 'State of Policing' report

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has released the 'State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2019'.

Anthony Stansfeld, Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley said: "I welcome the latest HMICFRS report on the state of policing across England and Wales. This detailed assessment of the role of police services highlights the challenges facing forces across the country.

"I am pleased to see Thames Valley Police remains rated as 'Good' for Effectiveness and Legitimacy by HMICFRS. This is unchanged since their last report in 2019. We continue to focus on areas which need improvement and welcome the suggestions made in the report. We have also seen the recruitment of an additional 151 officers, since November 2019, in the Thames Valley. I am excited for the positive impact this will have on frontline policing within the region.

"Now more than ever we have seen how important our officers are and we are pleased to hear that HMICFRS continues to support the role of police forces across the country. Our priority in the Thames Valley continues to be to support our local communities through reducing crime and catching those that commit it."

Review launched into police 'race discrimination'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53359269>

The police watchdog is launching a review into whether officers across England and Wales racially discriminate against ethnic minorities.

Stop-and-search and the use of force will be among the issues examined by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

It follows criticism of the police in recent cases caught on camera. The Metropolitan Police apologised this week to athlete Bianca Williams over a stop-and-search incident.

IOPC director-general Michael Lockwood said the review's focus on racial discrimination is intended "to establish the trends and patterns which might help drive real change in policing practice".

Stop-and-search powers are nine times more likely to be used against black people than against white people in England and Wales, but Mr Lockwood said they needed to better understand how these disparities occurred and how they could be addressed.

He said the review will involve independently investigating more cases where racial discrimination may be a factor to "develop a body of evidence" and identify systemic issues.

The IOPC is currently investigating a series of cases in London, Birmingham and Greater Manchester in which it is alleged police used excessive force, and in some cases Tasers, against black men.

The IOPC would also investigate more cases where victims from BAME communities felt unfairly treated by police, Mr Lockwood said.

These could include whether the police are treating allegations of hate crime seriously, or if there are cases where police are failing to treat them as victims of crime.

The police watchdog will look at the use of stop and search to see whether a pattern of racial discrimination exists.

Last year:

- There were 38 stop and searches for every 1,000-black people in England and Wales - compared with four for every 1,000-white people. So, black people were nine times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people.
- Black people were eight times more likely to be tasered than white people
- Black people were six times more likely to be handcuffed than white people

In London, where black people make up a higher percentage of the city's population, the disparity is smaller but black people are still four times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people.

Home Office Funded Project that used Artificial Intelligence to predict Gun and Knife Crime flawed

<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/police-violence-prediction-ndas>

A flagship artificial intelligence system designed to predict gun and knife violence before it happens had serious flaws that made it unusable, police have admitted. The error led to large drops in accuracy and the system was ultimately rejected by all the experts reviewing it for ethical problems.

The prediction system, known as Most Serious Violence (MSV), is part of the National Data Analytics Solution (NDAS) project. The Home Office has funded NDAS with at least £10 million during the last two years with the aim to create machine learning systems that can be used across England and Wales.

As a result of the failure of MSV, police have stopped developing the prediction system in its current form. It has never been used for policing operations and has failed to get to a stage where it could be used. However, questions have also been raised around the violence tool's potential to be biased towards minority groups and whether it would ever be useful for policing.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley has successfully bid for £970,000 from the Home Office to help make communities safer.

The Government announced Thames Valley as one of 35 police and crime commissioner areas who will receive funding from the £25 million Safer Streets Fund.

Anthony Stansfeld, Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley said: "I am delighted my office has secured more than £970,000 funding across two bids for the Safer Streets Fund. This funding will be used to tackle crime such as robbery, theft and burglary in hotspots in our area.

"We will ensure this funding goes straight to the frontline to support and help our communities. As part of our bids, we will be looking at many areas of improvement such as supporting landlords to make their properties more secure, installing better street lighting, CCTV and dedicated cycle storage in areas of concern.

"We will also be working with local communities to engage them with crime prevention through advice and education.

"I look forward to seeing positive outcomes for our communities as my office works with Thames Valley Police and other partners to utilise this funding."

Child rape, abuse and online grooming up by 50% in Thames Valley

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/18641831.child-sex-abuse-reports-thames-valley-jump-50-per-cent/>