Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

Minutes

Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Friday, 20 November 2020 in virtual, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 1.30pm.

Members Present
Councillor Kieron Mallon (Oxfordshire County Council) (Chairman), Councillor Bill Bendyshe-Brown (Buckinghamshire Council) (Vice Chairman), Councillor Julia Adey (Buckinghamshire Council – Co-Opted Member), Councillor Adele Barnett-Ward (Reading Borough Council), Councillor Robin Bradburn (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor David Cannon (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor Merilyn Davies ((West Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Neil Fawcett (Vale of White Horse District Council), Councillor John Harrison (Bracknell Forest Council), Elizabeth Jones (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 Claire Rowles (West Berkshire Council), Councillor Ray Sangster (Buckinghamshire Council – Co-Opted Member), Councillor Dr Louise Upton (Oxford City Council) and Councillor Mark Winn (Buckinghamshire Council – Co-Opted Member).

Officer Present:
Khalid Ahmed (Scrutiny Officer).

Others Present:
Matthew Barber (Deputy Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner), John Campbell (Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police), Paul Hammond (Chief Executive Officer of PCC), Supt. Colin Hudson (Thames Valley Police), Peter Smith (Strategy & Assets Manager, Thames Valley Police), Anthony Stansfeld (Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner) and Ian Thompson (Chief Finance Officer of PCC).

If you have a query please contact Khalid Ahmed, Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel Scrutiny Officer (Tel: 07990 368048; Email: khalid.ahmed@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

29/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Co-Opted Member – Buckinghamshire Council).

30/20 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 4 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

[In relation to Minute No. 19 – Minutes - Taxi-Licensing Coordinator Single Point of Contact Post - the PCC undertook to report back to the next Panel on progress made

on raising the issue of the introduction of legislation standardising taxi licensing, with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

In relation to Minute No.21 - Themed item - Exploitation - Preventing CSE/Modern Slavery/Forced Marriage/Hidden Harm/Female Genital Mutilation and Honour Based Crime/People Trafficking- Reference was made to Thames Valley's Independent Trauma Advisors project and the PCC was asked to clarify and provide further details on the cost benefit analysis as detailed on page 57 of the agenda. The PCC was asked for clarity and more detail on the figures.

The PCC referred Members to the full cost-benefit analysis report which was published on the PCC's website https://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/victims-first/modern-slavery/

In relation to Minute No. 22 - Police and Crime Plan Strategic Priority 4: Performance Report - Serious Organised Crime and Terrorism and the request from the Panel on how the PCC measured the success of initiatives he funded to reduce re-offending and to reduce serious organised crime, the PCC provided a full written answer which was distributed to Panel Members.]

31/20 **THAMES VALLEY POLICE - ESTATE COLLABORATION WITH 'BLUE LIGHT' EMERGENCY SERVICES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

Peter Smith, Strategy & Assets Manager of Thames Valley Police attended the meeting and provided the Panel with a report which contained details on progress made by TVP on estate collaborations with 'Blue Light' and Local Authority partners.

The Panel was informed that there was a legal requirement under the Crime and Disorder Act 2017 to consider collaboration. In the last five years there had been an increasing degree of stated intentions between partners to collaborate.

There was a Memorandum of Understanding for 'Blue Light' estate collaboration, although this only covered the three Thames Valley Fire Services and TVP as South-Central Ambulance Service involvement was minimal.

Reference was made to county level One Public Estate (OPE) programmes initiated regionally by the Cabinet Office and the Local Government Association (LGA). These had broadened the estates conversation across a wider local partnership base including Councils, Blue Light, LEP, numerous Health Trusts and some central Government departments.

The Panel was informed TVP's Asset Management Plan was refreshed every 2 years, although the 2020 Plan had been delayed because of COVID and the current Effectiveness & Efficiency review, which was expected to result in an expansion of estate rationalisation plans, to address increased budgetary pressures.

Reference was made to the impact which COVID had, with a shift to a more home-based working model for a range of functions, and greater ICT capability for operational teams which would have implications on future estate requirements for the Force.

The Panel was informed that there were 14 disposal projects at various stages of development. The most significant current project was the new Tri-Service Blue Light hub (BLH) at West Ashlands, Milton Keynes, which would enable the sale of Bletchley Police Station. There was a smaller scale new Tri-Service hub underway at Theale, Berkshire where a TVP Neighbourhood Base would be established.

Members were informed that TVP monitored housing plans by Local Authority area and engaged with the planning system where necessary. Reference was made to developer contribution commitments in excess of £3.2m which had been legally secured since 2010, with £1.2m paid to TVP to date.

There were a number of new Neighbourhood Police office requirements identified in large strategic growth areas, which would typically be small offices and mainly located within new Community Centres and hubs.

Members' Questions

(1) In relation to future projects, what is the current situation regarding proposals for Reading Town Centre? Are there still plans to close Reading Police Station in the town centre and relocate to Atlantic House in south Reading?

[The Panel was informed that Atlantic House required refurbishment and would be ready for occupation between July 2021-March 2022. There was ongoing dialogue with Reading Borough Council and the Fire Service. The Deputy PCC reiterated the commitment strategically to the proposals. Atlantic House would have the "front counter" presence for Reading with discussions taking place on what the Town Centre presence would be.]

(2) Reference was made to the impressive Blue Hub in Milton Keynes and that there had been some public resistance because of the closure of fire stations. Residents in the northern part of Milton Keynes were worried about these closures. With expansion in the eastern part of Milton Keynes towards the M1 Motorway, were there any plans for there to be a Police presence?

[The provisional plans for Eastern Milton Keynes were for a Police presence at the Neighbourhood Offices at Broughton Fire Station. Engagement was taking place with planning, for funding to be provided by developer funding.]

(3) A comment was made about the several pauses of estate plans in the last five years and that COVID had contributed to putting projects on hold, such as the project at Princes Risborough. Police officers were having to work in accommodation which was in poor condition. Could the PCC/TVP ensure that existing facilities were kept up to date to ensure officer morale was maintained?

[The Strategy & Assets Manager of Thames Valley Police replied that the sites which were available for use were very finite, with uplifts taking place. On 3 December there was a Strategic meeting taking place where discussion would take place on projects which had been put on hold and hopefully decisions would be made.]

The Chairman referred to a number of properties around Oxfordshire and Cherwell and referred to north east of Oxfordshire where there was a major fire station and police station, on opposite sides of the road. This was an opportunity for the police and fire services, with the two local authorities to work together and produce a solution which would be beneficial to all, including residents. It was agreed that discussion regarding this would take place between the Chairman and the PCC outside the meeting. **ACTION: CHAIRMAN/PCC**

RESOLVED – (1) That the reports and information provided during the witness session be noted.

(2) That the Police and Crime Commissioner be requested to submit a report to a future meeting on how successful "Blue Light" collaborations have been in meeting the priorities of the PCC's strategic objectives, together with details of opportunities for collaborations with local authorities in the future. ACTION: PCC

32/20 UPDATE ON ROAD SAFETY WORKING GROUP

The Panel was reminded that at a previous Panel meeting held in April 2017, consideration was given to an item on Roads Policing, a core part of policing.

As a result of a recommendation of the Panel, a Road Safety Working Group was set up and it was asked to consider the following:

- Transparent documentation on TVP's strategy on roads policing
- Consideration of a business case for average speed cameras
- Improved dialogue between police and local authorities on the siting and decommissioning of speed cameras and the need for a Deployment Strategy
- Consideration of the most effective way to ensure better co-ordination of information across the Thames Valley and ways to improve partnership working.

Supt Colin Hudson from Thames Valley Police attended the meeting and Members were provided with a report which provided an update on the progress made in considering the recommendations.

The Panel was informed that in relation to more transparent documentation on a roads policing strategy, the current JOU Roads Policing plan was based on the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) 5-year strategy 2015-2020 of policing the roads in partnership. There were four key objectives, Safe, Secure, Effective and Efficient roads.

Reference was made to monthly Tasking and Co-Ordination Group (TCG) meetings which were held, which identified the highest risk locations and offenders on roads. Roads policing resources would be tasked with attending the locations or tackling offending.

This meeting also identified casualty trends in relation to vulnerable road users and links this with road safety campaigns at a national and local level.

The Safer Roads Team deployed mobile speed camera vans to areas identified as a having a high rate of KSIs, personal injury collisions, community concern or non-compliance of speed.

It was acknowledged that in relation to the HMICFRS report which reviewed roads policing, there was a need for improvements to be made, although TVP was not one of the Police Forces inspected.

The Panel was informed that regarding a business case for average speed cameras; the Thames Valley did not currently have police funded average speed camera sites. Supt Hudson commented that they were an effective deterrent, however, historically the cost of the systems had precluded the use of this technology.

With an improvement in the technology and a reduction in costs, consideration could now be given to review this position. An example was given of a pilot taking place in Hampshire and if feasible would be looked at for Thames Valley.

In relation to the siting and decommissioning of speed cameras, Members were informed that TVP was currently in the process of upgrading roadside cameras as part of a digitalisation programme. Existing fixed camera locations have been rated in order of priority using collision and offence data over a 5-year period, the weighting being 60% collisions and 40% offences.

Each location had been individually assessed taking into consideration site environment and Roads Policing were working jointly with the nine local and unitary authorities to identify suitable locations for upgrade.

Siting of fixed cameras was governed by the Department of Transport. For consideration of a new fixed camera site all other measures would have had to be tried, evidenced and exhausted. A full risk-based assessment would be made considering, collision and casualty data, any available speed data, any available Community Speedwatch data and any specific local road layout or hazards.

Enforcement could only be used in certain situations, road markings and layout etc. Reference was made to local authorities being able to consult with the police in relation to areas that they felt should have an increased level of enforcement. There was recognition that there should be better communication with partners and it was reported that the work of the Working Group needed to be communicated across the whole of Thames Valley as it was clear that the messages were not getting out to all local authorities.

Questions from Members

(1) Has TVP spoken to other Police Forces such as Avon & Somerset who do enforce 20 mph speed zones in residential areas, which TVP do not enforce? Also does the PCC and TVP support the decriminalising of speeding offences such as 20 mph zones, to enable local authorities to carry out the enforcement?

[The Chief Constable responded that 20 mph speed zones were an issue. The Police had to be around and have the capacity to enforce these zones, but of course if the

Police were around and an offence was committed, enforcement would take place. Regarding the sharing of enforcement, TVP was always open to looking at how enforcement and encouragement efforts could be shared and would be supportive of local authorities acquiring such powers.

Supt. Colin Hudson said he would look at what Avon and Somerset Police were doing in relation to enforcement of 20 mph zones.

The Deputy PCC commented that regarding local authorities acquiring enforcement powers, he was researching whether local authorities had existing powers which could be used for enforcement or whether there was a case for campaigning for local authorities to be given the powers to enforce. TVP would be supportive of another agency being involved in enforcement. Discussions were taking place with Reading Borough Council and the Deputy PCC said he would update the Panel on the outcome of these discussion.] **ACTION: DEPUTY PCC**

(2) How was the PCC holding TVP to account in relation to road safety partnership working with local authorities. Local Councils collected lots of speeding data from cameras and reported this data to the Police which on occasions did not get actioned.

[The Deputy PCC reported that it was hoped that Community Speedwatch programme could be improved. This included support to the volunteers as this support had been sporadic. TVP were looking to use an on-line Community Speedwatch system which was used in Sussex. This was due to start in the Thames Valley with trials in Buckinghamshire, however, this had been delayed because of COVD 19. This was due to begin on 1 November 2020 with the system rolled out over Thames Valley in the new year. The key to the system was engagement with residents and the gathering of huge amounts of data which was invaluable for Police enforcement of traffic offences.

The intention was to have a strategic approach by enhancing Community Speedwatch and using the data to task Roads Policing to carry out enforcement. In turn, this enforcement data would be fed back to local authorities to enable better road design. He was optimistic that all this would improve partnership working for communities and the Police.

The PCC commented that 20 mph speed zones were effective, however, they were difficult for the Police to enforce. Reference was made to many serious speeding crimes occurring outside working hours, which again were difficult to enforce due to Police resources prioritising the night time economy.

The Chief Constable informed Members that TVP's dedicated Roads Policing Unit issued 156,000 tickets last year for speeding, drink driving and using mobile phones, so considerable effort was put in with regards to enforcement.]

(3) With the formation of the ambitious new 'Vision Zero' partnership, such as that in Cambridgeshire, which involved local road users and communities, what vision does the PCC have for an effective, evidence-led roads policing function within the Thames Valley and what targets would be appropriate for casualty reduction by 2030?

[The PCC responded that there were a number of national PCC led initiatives, with Devon and Cornwall coming up with a number of proposals. Casualty rates in Thames Valley were very low and had reduced year on year. There would be an Association of PCC led programme on speeding in 2021, however, Thames Valley did not have anything such as "Vision Zero" in place now.]

(4) On the siting of speed enforcement cameras, how is the balance struck between education and prevention with enforcement?

[The Chief Constable reported that speed cameras were on fixed sites or mobile enforcement sites. The mobile enforcement sites were based often on a combination of public concern on speeding through villages and towns. An assessment was then done by Roads Policing in consultation with communities, on where they should be sited.

On education, there was a programme of education on speeding for young people which was a very powerful programme which raised awareness of the consequences of speeding. These involved working with other emergency services and their experience of dealing with road accidents, together with victims and victims' families and the consequences of speeding. This was a very powerful programme. First time speeding offenders were eligible for speed awareness courses which were about education and prevention and were a positive means of engaging with speeding offenders and reminding them of the law relating to road safety.]

(5) Reference was made to Councillors often being passed from the highway authority to the Police when asking questions on road safety matters and that there should be clarity on roles and responsibilities to help Councillors and the public understand who was responsible for what. In addition, what is Roads Policing's rural strategy?

[The Chief Constable agreed that there was uncertainty on roles. TVP primarily was an enforcement agency but would work with other agencies. There was a requirement to know what each agency was responsible for with a clear understanding of remits. Highways Authorities were concerned with road safety. This information should be shared with Councillors.

Supt. Colin Hudson reported that he had not been in post that long, but that he would attend the Working Group to ensure participants were listened to and joint working took place. In relation to a rural strategy, Members can be reassured that the Police do look at speed profiles and collision data and make a risk assessment on speeding in rural areas.

The PCC endorsed the comments of the Chief Constable that the Police were an enforcement agency who offered advice. Speed limits were put in place by local authorities. The Police did not have the resources to enforce everything such as 20 mph zones and policing enforcement had to be prioritised as Thames Valley was a big area. TVP got the balance right between education and enforcement.

The Chairman commented the partnership working was a two-way process and Highway's Authorities were not blameless in the lack of communication. Collaboration was important as expectations were high from the public. Top level collaboration was needed at the top level of Highway Authorities and the Police to ensure road safety schemes were feasible and realistic to manage the public's expectations.]

(6) In relation to cyclists on the road and the increasing conflict between the cyclist and the motorist, reference was made to the Close Pass protocol which had been implemented in the West Midlands. A video had been sent to Panel Members on the scheme. Oxfordshire County Council for example had made available £5m as part of Active Travel, to get more people cycling. The PCC was asked whether there had been any prosecutions for close passing of motor vehicles to cyclists in Thames Valley?

[The PCC replied that he was not aware of any prosecutions for this. The Chief Constable commented if evidence was provided, the process for prosecution could be taken.

The Chairman referred to the problems caused by some cyclists in pedestrian schemes and that enforcement did not take place against come cyclists who endangered pedestrians.]

Reference was made to speed reduction measures such as VAS signs, particularly outside schools, which were a good speed deterrent. In relation to Average Speed Cameras, it was recognised that they were expensive, although they were a good deterrent. Members noted the improvements which were to be made to Community Speedwatch with an on-line system being introduced.

The PCC was asked to update the Panel at a future meeting on the timescales for introducing Average Speed Cameras in Thames Valley and on introducing an on-line Community Speedwatch system. **ACTION: PCC**

RESOLVED – (1) That the update provided by TVP be noted.

(2) That the PCC be requested to report back to the Panel on the outcomes arising out of the recommendations contained in the HMICFRS report on Roads Policing as they are applied to Thames Valley Police. ACTION: PCC

33/20 **POLICE AND CRIME PLAN STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 - PERFORMANCE REPORT - PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION**

The Panel was provided with a report which detailed progress made (Year 4, 2020/21 to end of quarter 2) on delivery of the following four-year Police and Crime Plan key aims for addressing Prevention and Early Intervention:

- Coordinated efforts by police and partner agencies to improve public awareness of measures to protect themselves from cybercrime, particularly targeting those most at risk (such as those at either end of the age spectrum).
- Increased focus by all agencies on preventing and tackling 'peer on peer' abuse.

- A coordinated strategy between police, health and local authorities to tackle FGM in Thames Valley, leading to improved reporting of FGM and evidenced approaches on prevention.
- Improved reporting and understanding of the prevalence and nature of hate crime across Thames Valley.
- Police and partners address road safety concerns, especially amongst vulnerable groups such as younger people, cyclists and pedestrians.
- Improved use of technology by police, in order to prevent crime and support earlier intervention with known offenders.

The PCC referred to the first key aim on Cybercrime which particularly affected the elderly and those less skilled with technology. An Economic Crime Unit and Finance Team have been set up to deal with the problem.

Reference was made to the increasing number of email scams which had resulted in huge financial loss to people which was a major issue. The PCC reported that not enough was being done on this at a national level, although the law had changed which meant he was able to “lift” unexplained money from the bank accounts of convicted people and assign those funds to charities and organisations that dealt with this type of crime.

In relation to peer on peer abuse, this was aimed at the young community and centred on gangs and the pressure put on young people to join gangs and the crime which can result from this activity. A Member referred to Domestic Abuse and the PCC said that this was separate major issue. The Chief Constable reported that Domestic Abuse had increased by 21% from last year which had mainly been due to COVD 19 and lockdown.

Proactive visits had been made to vulnerable people under lockdown, offering reassurance. Domestic Abuse outcomes, justice for victims had gone up 35%.

Reference was made to TVP’s Radicalisation website and the PCC and Chief Constable were congratulated for the work on this.

Discussion took place on hidden crimes such as FGM and the PCC was thanked for the support he gave organisations who tackled this.

The Chairman praised the work which was taking place on Hidden Crimes but reference was made to the PCC’S Strategic Priorities and it was asked that in future Police and Crime Plans, Abuse should include those hidden crimes, such as Caste Discrimination, Honour Based Abuse, Forced Marriage and Coercive Control.

The PCC referred to the figures on Hate Crime which had showed this had gone up. It was difficult to know whether this was because it was on the increase or because of better enforcement or people being able to report it easier.

The PCC reported that TVP were adopting a number of new technologies and referred to the increasing use of drones. TVP IT systems were improving.

Members Questions

(1) What was the reason for hate crime figures going up, but the incidents having gone down in the same period? Was this due to the increase in confidence in reporting various types of hate crime?

[The PCC reported that people were less frightened to report Hate Crimes which was obviously a good thing and perhaps the bar had been lowered in terms of the threshold to report. The level of serious incidents had gone down.]

(2) What was the success rate for the prosecution of Faith related Hate Crimes which had gone down?

[The PCC did not have the figures but commented that you could prosecute on incitement when a hate crime was committed. It was difficult to know the success rate as the figures were hidden.]

(3) How much interagency and collaborative work is carried out by TVP with other Police Forces?

[The PCC replied that collaboration and interagency work took place through Regional Counter Terrorism, Serious Organised Crime Unit and South East Regional Organised Crime Unit. Reference was made to the shared IT systems used which mainly worked well and the PCC commented that it would be interesting to see how this would work once the UK had left the EU and how effective systems would be across national boundaries.]

(4) In relation to the use of technology and the Police use of Body Cameras to protect the public and the Police, why was there a reluctance to share Body Camera footage when the Police were accused of harassment?

[The Chief Constable reported that it depended on circumstances and it was a complex issue. The privacy of the other person had to be considered but the Police would consider this in the future.]

RESOLVED – That the report and information be reported.

34/20 **PROFESSIONAL & ETHICAL STANDARDS PANEL'S ANNUAL ASSURANCE REPORT 2019**

The Panel noted the Professional & Ethics Standards Panel's Annual Assurance Report.

The Chairman referred to the Assurance Statement in the report, "the Panel can provide an assurance to the PCC and Chief Constable that the complaints handling and management arrangements in place within Thames Valley Police are operating efficiently and effectively."

35/20 **REPORT OF THE COMPLAINTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

The report of the Complaints Sub-Committee was noted.

36/20 **CHAIRMAN AND PCC ANNOUNCEMENTS AND TOPICAL ISSUES**

The Topical Issues report was noted.

37/20 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Noted.

38/20 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded during this item because its discussion in public would be likely to lead to the disclosure to members of the public present of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person as detailed in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended):

It is considered that in this case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information in that such disclosure would infringe the rights of the individual to privacy contrary to the general law and the duty of the authority to respect human rights and to comply with that law and contrary to the authority's duties as a fair employer.

39/20 **EQUIP ERP PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The PCC updated the Panel on the Equip ERP Programme.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing .....