

## Report to the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

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**Title:** Topical Issues  
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### **NPCC and College of Policing pledge to improve officer and staff safety following largest ever survey of police workforce**

<https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/npcc-and-college-of-policing-pledge-to-improve-officer-and-staff-safety-following-largest-ever-survey-of-police-workforce>

### **Rural Crime during the Pandemic**

<https://www.fwi.co.uk/news/crime/poll-has-rural-crime-worsened-during-the-pandemic>

Almost three-quarters of people living in the countryside (74%) think rural crime is on the increase, according to a poll carried out by the Countryside Alliance (CA).

More than 8,000 people who live or work in the countryside were surveyed about the effects of crime and the policing of rural communities.

### **Police to tackle rural crime in Oxfordshire as problems rise in lockdown**

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/18857824.police-tackle-rural-crime-oxfordshire-problems-rise-lockdown/>

Landowners and farmers saw a rise in rural crime since lockdown and Thames Valley Police have been asked to continue to tackle these problems. The NFU and CLA have encouraged Thames Valley Police to continue working closely with farmers and landowners when tackling all forms of rural crime.

A meeting was held before the latest lockdown, on a farm in Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire on October 29. The meeting considered the force's approach to policing, focusing on results and examining ways that farmers and landowners can work in partnership with police.

Current problems include thefts from farms, especially GPS kits, trespass and hare coursing. Also discussed were livestock worrying, when dogs chase or attack sheep and cattle, and fly-tipping which escalated during the first lockdown earlier this year.

CLA south east regional director Michael Valenzia said: “We welcome the work of Thames Valley Police’s rural crime team; rural areas experience complex issues and we would encourage the force to resource them accordingly using PCSOs or police constables, as well as using ANPR and other technology to catch and deter criminals.

“Many farmers and landowners have seen a rise in issues since lockdown, especially around livestock worrying linked to increased access and a lack of knowledge of the countryside among a minority of visitors.

“The CLA has been actively promoting the Countryside Code and has called on the Education Secretary to reintroduce it onto the school curriculum. We ask that the police play their part and prioritise fighting rural crimes such as dog and equipment theft, fly-tipping, hare coursing and poaching across Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire.”

## **Car Cruising – Police warn they are breaking the law**

<https://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/news/crime/police-warn-car-cruises-milton-keynes-they-are-breaking-law-3029651>

## **Prevent strategies and domestic abuse cases under lockdown are ‘being looked at’ by Buckinghamshire Council**

<https://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/18708210.prevent-strategies-domestic-abuse-cases-lockdown-being-looked-at-buckinghamshire-council/>

Online radicalisation, domestic violence, and the rate of burglaries in the county are just some of the criminal activities being monitored more closely by the council in light of lockdown.

Prevent strategies, victim safeguarding, and residential break-ins emerged as “key themes” of concern for councillors, according to findings published additionally to the Safer Buckinghamshire Plan 2020-23.

The plan’s main purpose is to uphold community safety through close assessment of criminal activity in Buckinghamshire and its causes, while also identifying “emerging trends and issues”. The Safer Buckinghamshire Plan 2020-23 five priorities:

- Community resilience – targeted support for communities with “greater levels” of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Protecting vulnerable adults and children – reducing exposure to and commitment of crime or exploitation
- Drugs, alcohol and poor mental health impact – reducing crime and harm linked to these factors
- Domestic abuse – early intervention and improving victim services
- Dealing with offending – preventing first time offending, bringing offenders to justice, and stopping re-offending

In the report itself, which surveyed 2,379 people, some of the top crime concerns in the county included burglary, fraud, scams and vehicle crime.

## **Victims First introduce live chat to support victims of crime across Berkshire**

<https://www.readingchronicle.co.uk/news/18708118.victims-first-introduce-live-chat-support-victims-crime-across-berkshire/>

Victims First, which is managed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will introduce a Live Chat will be staffed by trained Victims First Officers during Victims First opening hours.

It offers free support to any victim or witness of crime in the Thames Valley regardless of the crime, when it took place or whether or not the crime has been reported to the police.

## **Thames Valley, Sussex and Surrey Police's software could be scrapped**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-54093816>

Software that three police forces, including Thames Valley Police hoped would make them more efficient could be scrapped before it is rolled out. Thames Valley, Sussex and Surrey Police said they have paid £3.3m in total to accountancy firm KPMG since 2016 for the new program, Equip.

The Thames Valley's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) said the forces' internal costs were "very considerable" and exceeded the total paid to KPMG. The three Forces' Chief Constables may recommend the project is ditched within weeks.

A joint implementation team working across the three forces has 47 staff.

The software would be used for financial management, human resources and recruitment and was meant to save the forces valuable time and money

The Thames Valley Police Authority's annual accounts for 2019-20 state the forces' total commitment to KPMG is £9.4m.

## **Banking and Serious Organised Crime - Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner**

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-8749265/JOHN-HUMPHRYS-todays-bank-robbers-ones-suits-not-masks.html>

## **Over £970,000 awarded to help keep streets safe**

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Thames Valley has successfully bid for £970,000 to help make communities safer.

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.”

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley has received £972,264 across two bids which initially focus on East Oxford and the Iffley Road area of the city. This work will feed into a bigger project which will evaluate crime reduction as a result of these bids and what investments can be made across the rest of Thames Valley.

## **Over £807,000 awarded to support victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence**

The Ministry of Justice funding has been awarded to 26 organisations across the Thames Valley. Anthony Stansfeld said: “During lockdown, organisations across the Thames Valley have worked tirelessly to ensure they continue to support victims. Many have adapted the way they work and invested in technology to reach people remotely. Some have also lost income through their inability to raise funds.

“I am delighted to be able to award this funding to help them support victims during this time. As restrictions begin to ease, it is likely we will see a rise in the number of people seeking support from domestic abuse and sexual violence services and it is vital that this support remains available and accessible to those who need it.”

Organisations will spend the funding across a range of areas including utilising technology to enable remote working, PPE and cleaning supplies to help deliver face-to-face working as restrictions ease, as well as new programmes of support and staffing costs.

## **PCC on the latest police officer recruitment figures**

The latest figures from the Home Office show that the Thames Valley is ahead of recruitment targets for 2020. Anthony Stansfeld said: “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.”

## **Youth Drug Diversion Scheme to be rolled out Force wide**

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Thames Valley Police and partners are rolling out a drug diversion scheme for under 18's force wide as part of work being delivered by the Violence Reduction Unit.

The scheme aims to reduce the harm caused by the use of drugs and drug related offences. It gives those young people found in possession of small quantities of illegal drugs the opportunity to take part in a tailored diversion to address their drug use as an alternative to facing prosecution.

This specialised support aims to prevent the cycle of reoffending and long term demand upon police and judicial services.

If a young person has engaged with the scheme and is found to be in possession of a small quantity of drugs again, they will still have the opportunity to take part in the diversion - allowing for the reason for the possession to be explored and further support provided.

If a young person is found to be in possession of larger quantities of drugs, are suspected of supplying illegal substances, or does not engage in the diversion support offered, they will face arrest and prosecution.

The youth drug diversion scheme is being rolled out across all Thames Valley Local Policing Areas in co-ordination with the Youth Offending Teams following the success of two pilots. In November 2018, the force launched a pilot scheme in West Berkshire. Then, in January this year, a second pilot scheme was launched in Windsor and Maidenhead.