

Minutes

Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held virtually on Friday, 4 September 2020, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 1.05 pm.

Members Present

Councillor Kieron Mallon (Oxfordshire County Council) (Chairman), Councillor Julia Adey (Buckinghamshire Council – Co-Opted Member) (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Adele Barnett-Ward (Reading Borough Council), Councillor Bill Bendyshe-Brown (Buckinghamshire Council), Councillor Robin Bradburn (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor David Cannon (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Buckinghamshire Council – Co-Opted Member), Councillor Neil Fawcett (Vale of White Horse District Council), Councillor Dorothy Hayes (Bracknell Forest Council) (Substitute Member), Elizabeth Jones (Independent Member), Councillor Norman MacRae (West Oxfordshire District 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 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

Kate Agha (Oxford against Cutting), Matthew Barber (Deputy Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner), John Campbell (Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police), Paul Hammond (Chief Executive Officer of PCC), Catherine Marriott (Office of PCC), 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)

17/20 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor John Harrison (Bracknell Forest Council) (Councillor Dorothy Hayes substituting).

18/20 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN TO THE PANEL**

Councillor Bill-Bendyshe-Brown was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the rest of the municipal year.

19/20 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

[The Panel was informed that in relation to Minute 15/20 – Taxi-Licensing Coordinator Single Point of Contact Post -the Panel's decision on requesting that the LGA consider taking forward the standardisation of taxi licensing was sent. The response was that the Department of Transport has produced statutory guidance on taxi licensing but there was still no legislation standardising licensing. Further discussions would take place with the LGA on taking this forward.

The PCC undertook to take this forward and update the Panel.]

20/20

REVIEW OF PANEL RULES OF PROCEDURE, PANEL MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINTMENT TO SUB-COMMITTEE AND TASK GROUPS

The Panel received a report which provided details of the Panel's Rules of Procedure and Panel Arrangements. A number of minor amendments were agreed which would update the documents.

Reference was made to the last meeting of the Panel held on 19 June 2020, where Members were informed that Buckinghamshire Council had made Co-Opted Member appointments to the Panel, which were subject to interview. It was reported that the four Co-Opted Members were interviewed by the Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel, Councillor Bendyshe-Brown and Councillor Patman and their appointments were confirmed.

It was also reported that Buckinghamshire Council had appointed Councillor David Carroll as a Standing Deputy Member, for the appointed full Member, Councillor Bill Bendyshe-Brown.

The Panel was asked to consider the memberships of the Panel's Complaints Sub-Committee and the Budget Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Panel's Rules of Procedure and Panel Arrangements be noted, subject to the amendments made.

(2) That ratification of the following appointments of the 4 Buckinghamshire Council Co-Opted Members be made:

Councillor Julia Adey (co-opted)
Councillor Emily Culverhouse (co-opted)
Councillor Ray Sangster (co-opted)
Councillor Mark Winn (co-opted)

(3) That approval be given to the memberships of the following:

Complaints Sub-Committee (7)– Cllr Julia Adey, Cllr Bill Bendyshe-Brown, Cllr Emily Culverhouse, Cllr Andrew McHugh, Cllr Kieron Mallon, Cllr Norman MacRae and Phillip Morrice.

Budget Task and Finish Group (5) – Cllr Robin Bradburn, Cllr Andrew McHugh, Cllr Barrie Patman and Cllr David Rouane. (1 vacancy)

21/20

THEMED ITEM - EXPLOITATION - PREVENTING CSE/MODERN SLAVERY/FORCED MARRIAGE/HIDDEN HARM/FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION AND HONOUR BASED CRIME/PEOPLE TRAFFICKING

The Panel was provided with a report on its wide-ranging themed item of “Exploitation”, together with additional supporting documents relating to the areas covered under “Exploitation”.

The Police and Crime Commissioner provided statistics and data for the Thames Valley to enable Panel members to receive a Thames Valley perspective on the issues of exploitation and the prevention of child sexual exploitation (CSE), modern slavery, forced marriage, hidden harm, female genital mutilation (FGM) and people trafficking.

The Panel was informed that from a PCC’s perspective, the prevention of exploitation generally related to two of the strategic priorities detailed in the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021:

- Strategic Priority 1, ‘Vulnerability’ (which includes the response by police and partners to human trafficking, forced marriages, FGM, CSE and other hidden harm such as honour-based violence, coercive control, stalking and harassment)
- Strategic Priority 2, ‘Prevention and Early Intervention’ (which includes the prevention of CSE and FGM).

The Chairman of the Panel gave Members the background to the item and referred to this Panel setting up a Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Sub-Committee as a result of the Operation Bullfinch Inquiry into sexual exploitation of children in Oxford. The PCC provided brilliant support to this to drive forward the objectives of the Sub-Committee which was to raise awareness across the Thames Valley of CSE and other exploitation related issues.

Kate Agha from Oxford against Cutting attended the meeting and provided the Panel with details of the work the organisation carried out throughout the three counties of the Thames Valley, in conjunction with other organisations.

FGM was a form of child abuse and a violation of Human Rights. Oxford against Cutting was a diverse organisation, both at Board Level and in terms of Directors and facilitators. Women of different nationalities, some of whom have been affected by the practice carry out the work of the organisation.

The organisation focused on harmful practises such as FGM, Honour Based abuses and Forced Marriages. The core work was around prevention and education with workshops facilitated by survivors of harmful practises, so they had that experience and knowledge to enable them to speak about the impact of these practises and the impact on the individual and families.

Oxford against Cutting received funding from the PCC for a two-year school project and was able to provide 60 sessions in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, which reached 2,770 people by the end of the 2 years.

FGM was a taboo subject, was hidden, was difficult to measure and hard to know how to prevent. This was a cultural issue, with people often reluctant to talk about it. There was a nervousness of teachers in school talking about FGM and Forced Marriage, particularly because of cultural sensitivity.

A consequence of the sessions has been the huge increase in confidence in talking about FGM during safeguarding. In Berkshire for example before the schools' project, 43% were not confident talking about the issue, but at the end of the training, 71% felt more confident. Poster campaigns took place, during lockdown, a web café was held, for those women who could not access community groups.

Reference was made to work carried out by the organisation, which was commissioned by PCC; the Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) project, which focused on engaging and raising awareness around such crime types/victims across the Thames Valley region.

Reference was made to some of the projects in partnership Oxford against Cutting were involved in such as with Oxfordshire County Council and the Chairman asked if this information could be sent out. In addition, the Chairman asked that details of events be shared with Panel Members and CSPs to enable messages to get out into the community.

The Panel was informed that the organisation carried out most of its work in Oxfordshire where it was based, however, schools training on FGM and Honour Based Abuse was delivered in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

In response to a question, Kate Agha reported that Oxford against Cutting did not directly receive funding from the Home Office, however, financial support came from Thames Valley PCC, Oxfordshire County Council and MK MASH.

The PCC reported that in his early days as PCC, Sexual Crimes against Children was brought to the fore by the Bullfinch Inquiry in Oxford. In relation to FGM, he had financially supported organisations who fought to eradicate this. This was well supported, particularly in Oxfordshire, but not as well in other parts of the Thames Valley. The PCC expressed concern at areas such as Slough where this hidden crime went undetected, partly because people were reluctant to speak to the authorities. Educating people that this practise was unacceptable in the UK was important.

The Chairman referred to the importance of schools, and particularly teachers making the authorities aware of children who were being trafficked abroad for FGM and for Forced Marriages. The PCC was asked to encourage greater coverage of the Thames Valley in relation to combatting these issues as Berkshire and Buckinghamshire did not have the same level of coverage.

Questions

(1) Recent reports have indicated that there have been a record number of child sex abuse crimes reported to TVP, with over 2,000 in the last 12 months up to June 2019. What more can the PCC do to ensure that he is meeting his Strategic Priority 2 objective of prevention and early intervention, which these figures on CSE indicate he is not?

[The PCC reported that Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs throughout the Thames Valley were there for the public to report such crimes, although he recognised that they were reactive. He reiterated the role which schools and teachers had in preventing such crime. It was not always the case that teachers reported these crimes. The problem was not just a Police issue, local authorities and other agencies had a role to play in terms of early intervention and prevention.]

The Panel was informed that the reporting of such crimes had improved which meant the statistics were misleading. The greater the promotion of reporting these crimes, the more cases there would be, therefore it was difficult to determine whether child sexual abuse had gone up. The Chief Constable explained that there had to be caution regarding whether these crimes had increased. There had been increased awareness of hidden crimes such as FGM, Forced Marriage, Honour Based Crimes etc, which had resulted in more reporting so an increase in the number of reported crimes was not necessarily a negative.]

(2) The representative from Oxford against Cutting was asked whether women from the affected communities were part of the organisation?

[Kate Agha replied that women from affected communities were involved in the organisation which helped in terms of reaching out to communities. Ideally it would be helpful if there were outreach workers in each county, although Oxford against Cutting did cover the whole of the Thames Valley. The Chairman stressed the importance of Members of the Panel being conduits on these issues through their local authorities and to look at ways of providing possible funding.]

(3) Reference was made to Thames Valley's Independent Trauma Advisors project and 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 undertook to provide clarification on this to Councillor McHugh.]

(4) Could the PCC explain why in relation to Modern Slavery was the rate of referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (2016-17) increased in the Thames Valley by 122%, compared to a national average of 63%? Have the referral figures for Thames Valley got better?

[The PCC replied that making something a priority would result in figures going up. The Chief Constable referred to a significant training programme which officers undertook which raised everyone's awareness to Modern Slavery, Hidden Harm etc, which resulted in greater reporting.]

(5) In relation to FGM, there is a lot of very good educational work taking place across the Thames Valley, however, to ensure consistency of approach, would the development of a Thames Valley FGM strategy help in tackling the problem? Also, what more can be done for the Police to get prosecutions on FGM and Forced Marriage.

[The PCC reported that this was often very difficult as do you want to take the children away from the parents. There were no easy answers, but facilitators needed to be prosecuted. The Chief Constable reported that in 2019/20 in the Thames Valley there were 9 offences of Forced Marriage, but there were no prosecutions. This was a complex area with offences committed behind closed doors and with communities staying silent. Kate Agha added that if the Police and authorities were heavy handed, certain communities would feel alienated. There was a difficult line to tread.]

The Chairman thanked the PCC, the Chief Constable and Kate Agha for their excellent contributions to the themed item and commented that he was heartened at the work and the funding provided by the PCC into this area.

Reference was made to other areas of exploitation which the Panel should look at which included Modern Slavery; particularly in relation to car washes, agricultural work and building work and Forced Marriage and Honour Based Crime. Within Honour Based Crime, there was also a hidden crime of homosexual men being forced into marriage.

It was agreed that these issues comprise another themed scrutiny item and be included in this Panel's work programme for a future meeting.

RESOLVED – That the information provided by the PCC and Oxford against Cutting be noted and the Panel will continue to monitor this area.

22/20

POLICE AND CRIME PLAN STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: PERFORMANCE REPORT - SERIOUS ORGANISED CRIME AND TERRORISM

Consideration was given to a report of the PCC, which summarised the progress to date (Year 3, 2019/20, quarter 4) on the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan Strategic Priority 4 – Serious Organised Crime and Terrorism.

Questions

(1) Could the PCC provide details of where improvements needed to be made in relation to the management of organised crime groups and county lines drug gangs and would this involve CSPs?

[The PCC reported that in relation to Serious Organised Crime there had been recent major operations led by the National Crime Agency which produced results. Reference was made to Major Fraud which the National Crime Agency estimated amounted to around £190 Billion; bigger than drug related crime.

Serious Organised Crime gangs were very organised and operated via sophisticated encrypted IT. In relation to county lines, this was ongoing national problem, which

during Covid 19, had been easier to deal with. However, since the easing of lockdown with more cars on the road and trains running, this had increased. County lines emanated from major cities and TVP only had the ability to stop once the activity came into the Thames Valley.

The Chief Constable provided details of how the Police nationally and locally dealt with Serious Organised Crime, including county lines. There was lots of Police disruptive work taking place, but the problem was huge. There was lots of casual use of drugs as well as addict use, and a campaign had taken place to highlight the issue. A hostile environment was needed to disrupt the trade, together with a multi-agency approach including CSPs to disrupt the trade in drugs.]

(2) The Member from Reading Borough Council wished to place on record her thanks to the Chief Constable and to Thames Valley Police for the work they had carried out during and post the recent terrorist attack in Reading.

The PCC was asked, with the recent terrorist attack in Forbury Gardens Reading what work is he doing to ensure there is increased vigilance from residents of the threat of terrorism in Thames Valley?

[The PCC acknowledged that it was difficult to get over to the public that there was always the threat of terrorism. The public needed to look into their own communities at times as there were extremists from the far right and far left and from religious groups. From initial investigations the Forbury Gardens attacker was a lone operator. Counter Terrorism Police had information on 30 – 40,000 persons of interest and it was impossible to place all of these on permanent surveillance. It was very difficult for the Police if someone suspected a person of being a terrorist unless there was firm evidence.

The Chief Constable referred to Prevent which was the Government's counter terrorism strategy which aimed to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting them. The strategy aimed at providing practical help and support to stop individuals being drawn into terrorism. The Police and other agencies worked very closely in an attempt to divert those identified people away from extremism and terrorism.]

(3) With the funding the PCC provides to organisations to reduce re-offending and to reduce serious organised crime how does the PCC measure the success of this initiative?

[The PCC reported that officers did monitor the performance of organisations who were funded by the PCC. They had to provide quarterly reports which provided information on how the money was spent. The Victims First Hub monitored the spending on victim services. The PCC agreed to provide a full written answer to this question which would be circulated to Panel Members.]

RESOLVED - That the report of the PCC and the progress made on the delivery of the Police and Crime key aims in relation to Serious Organised Crime and Terrorism be noted.

POLICE AND CRIME PLAN STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5 - PERFORMANCE REPORT - POLICE ETHICS AND REFORM

Consideration was given to a report of the PCC, which summarised the progress to date (Year 3, 2019/20, quarter 4) on the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan Strategic Priority 5 – Police Ethics and Reform.

Questions

(1) How was the PCC trying to improve the perception of the Police amongst young people, particularly with increases in the use of stop and search tactics?

[The PCC reported that the Police were not receiving complaints in relation to stop and search which seemed to be effective and fair. There had been increases in knife crime because of the use of stop and search. This practice had to be watched carefully and had to be used fairly and proportionally.]

(2) In relation to the safety of all Police staff, will the PCC be providing the necessary support and funding to TVP to enable the recommendations of the recent National Police Chiefs' Council review into Police Safety to be implemented? Reference was made to the use of body worn cameras which caused less confrontation which was welcome.

[The PCC informed the Panel that it was unclear what the costs would be, although a big cost would be in relation to the increased provision of tasers. Funding for this would come from the Home Office. Police safety was very important in light of the tragic circumstances in PC Andrew Harper's killing.]

The use of body worn cameras was very useful, particularly in relation to the night time economy.]

(3) Could the PCC provide an update on the implementation of the Contact Management Platform, particularly around crime recording? Has this been successful?

[The PCC replied that the implementation of the Contact Management Platform had been a long and difficult process and he was not satisfied at the delays of implementation. The system would transform the reporting processes in one shared platform for Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Constabulary.]

(4) With the Covid 19 Pandemic changing the way organisations provide services, what impact has the pandemic had on the Police as a service? Reference was made to officers of neighbourhood policing teams being diverted into Response Teams.

[The Chief Constable reported that during the Covid 19 Pandemic, Policing had to be prioritised so policing teams had to be merged to ensure that Police numbers were available for priority operational needs. Officers had now returned to neighbourhood teams.]

RESOLVED - That the report of the PCC and the progress made on the delivery of the Police and Crime key aims in relation to Police Ethics and Reform be noted.

24/20

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

Members received the Annual Assurance Report 2019 from the Joint Independent Audit Committee of the PCC and Chief Constable. The Joint Independent Audit Committee was a key component of the arrangements for securing effective corporate governance and provided an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpinned good governance and financial management and reporting standards.

The PCC reported that the Chairman of the Joint Committee, Dr Louis Lee, had retired and the membership had changed.

The PCC was asked to provide information on the Tri-Force Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system which the External Auditors had expressed concern at the financial and operational risks. The Panel was informed that this was a complex issue and it was agreed that an update be provided to the Panel before the next Panel meeting.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the PCC and Chief Constable be asked to provide an update on the ERP system to Panel Members.

25/20

UPDATE ON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION WITHIN THAMES VALLEY POLICE

The Panel was provided with a report which provided details of Police recruitment and Retention within Thames Valley.

The Chief Constable summarised the key parts of the report:

- In the year 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020, TVP appointed 470.3 new officers. 376 of these were recruits and 31 officers transferred in from other forces.
- Year to date (1st April 2020 to 31st July 2020) TVP have appointed 149 new student officers. 7.4% of these recruits are from a BAME background, 28.2% are female. The Panel congratulated the Chief Constable on these figures.
- This year police officer leavers have significantly reduced from a predicted average based on the last two years of 26 per month to 17 per month. This was due to officers delaying plans to retire, transfer out or resigning due to the uncertainty caused by Covid 19. Transfers out were predicted to increase to previous yearly averages but resignations were likely to remain lower.
- Recruitment had not been significantly affected by Covid 19. Processes had been adapted to enable TVP to continue on bringing people into TVP e.g. online assessment centres. The recruitment pipeline was very healthy with enough candidates to fill intakes through to the new year. There were a further

10 intakes/courses of 19 students each planned for this year. (Total for year 20 courses).

- Operation Uplift - In September 2019 the government announced an uplift of 20,000 officers over 3 years across the country. In year 1, TVP were awarded 183 of that number and TVP were on track to exceed that number by 31st March 2021. Numbers for years 2 and 3 had not yet been announced by the Home Office but it was predicted that TVP would get a further 150 officers in each year.
- Officers from the 1st Uplift tranche were all being posted to the frontline ICR teams.
- **Detectives** - Forces across the country had been experiencing a shortage in detectives. At the end of July TVP had 24.3 vacancies - but this was a reduction of 18.9 on the months before and represented a significant improvement. There were an increased number of officers taking the National Investigators Exam (96 enlisted for Sept) and there were increased numbers applying to become DCs.
- TVP had undertaken a number of initiatives to encourage applications, including increased exam support and the process that enabled PCs to join CID before they took the National Investigators' Examination, alongside the recruitment events which were held for DCs.
- Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire DC establishments were forecast to be close to 100% of establishment over the next three months.
- TVP were currently open for recruitment for the Specialist Entry DHEP programme which started in early 2021. There was also a Police Now detective cohort starting in January. This was a combined total of 48 new aspiring detectives.
- Police Community Support Officer numbers were 60.1 under their establishment of 413. This was partly due to a significant number joining to be police officers.
- There was a high turnover of staff within Contact Management. There were currently 30.34 under their establishment of 521.47. Planned intakes had been significantly reduced due to Covid 19 and it was predicted that they would finish the year 39.22 under establishment.

In relation to positive engagement and Action Team, a dedicated team of officers had been set up to work on the recruitment, development and retention primarily of BAME officers. Reference was made to the last recruitment phase where 24% of applicants were from a BAME background; this was encouraging.

The team had been reaching out to BAME communities and supporting BAME individuals who had expressed an interest in joining TVP. Their work had been constrained by Covid 19 which meant that face to face events/meetings had to be cancelled. However, they were able to carry on their work online e.g. Facebook Live events and by telephone with individuals.

The team had put together a mentoring scheme for new officers so that they had someone to support them once they join TVP. There had been a positive action development scheme developed to support BAME officers from PS to Chief Inspector.

For new Entry Routes, in November this year the current recruit programme, would be replaced by two new entry routes: the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship and the Degree Entry Holder Programme. Both these routes were being run in conjunction with Bucks New University.

Recruits joining would not need to be a degree holder but, if they were not, they would join through the PCDA route. This was a three-year programme at the end of which the officer would have a practical policing degree.

The TVP People project aimed to improve the retention of officers and certain groups of police staff where turnover is high e.g. Contact Management.

Issues discussed included the targeting of ex-servicemen and women for recruitment; the shortfall in Police Community Support Officers, particularly in Milton Keynes, and the repercussions this had for community policing.

The Chief Constable reported that in relation to Contact Management, he was pleased to report that the average time to answer a 101 call was now 100 seconds, which was a vast improvement.

In response to a question about attracting more women to the Police, the Chief Constable reported that women were well supported in the staffing numbers; with 56% of the whole Police Force (staff and police officers) being women and 37% being Police Officers.

RESOLVED – That the report of the Chief Constable be noted and the Force be congratulated on the positive news in relation to recruitment and retention.

26/20

REPORT OF THE COMPLAINTS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Panel noted the report of the Complaints Sub-Committee.

27/20

CHAIRMAN/PCC UPDATES/TOPICAL ISSUES

A Member asked the PCC about the recent announcement that all crime had fallen by a third during the Covid 19 crisis but drug crime had risen nationally in April by 20%, and in May by 40%. How did these figures compare with Thames Valley's figures? The Panel was informed that overall in the Thames Valley during lockdown, some crimes had fallen dramatically, however with the movement of people restricted, detection rates had risen which may have accounted for the increase in these figures.

A number of Panel Members raised the issue of the problem of car cruising clubs and the impact this had on local communities. The PCC and Chief Constable were asked for the Police policy on these gatherings. The Chief Constable referred to the use of Open Space Orders which had worked, although this often displaced the activity.

The Chairman referred to often different approaches from Local Area Commanders and that there should be a common approach/policy across the Force area. A

comparison was made with the different approaches by local authorities to illegal traveller encampments because Traveller legislation did not provide consistency.

The report of the Scrutiny Officer on topical issues was received.

28/20

WORK PROGRAMME

Noted.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing