

Minutes

Minutes of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel held on Friday, 20 April 2018, in Olympic Room Aylesbury Vale District Council Gatehouse Road Aylesbury Bucks HP19 8FF, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 1.00 pm.

Members Present

Councillor Julia Adey (Wycombe District Council), Bill Bendyshe-Brown (Buckinghamshire County Council), Councillor Margaret Burke (Milton Keynes Council), Councillor Trevor Egleton (South Bucks District Council), Julia Girling (Independent Member), Cllr Tom Hayes (Oxford City Council), Councillor Angela Macpherson (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Councillor Kieron Mallon (Oxfordshire County Council), Curtis-James Marshall (Independent Member), Councillor Chris McCarthy (Vale of White Horse District Council), Councillor Tony Page (Reading Borough Council), Councillor Barrie Patman (Wokingham Borough Council), Cllr Emma Webster (West Berkshire Council) and Councillor Ian White (South Oxfordshire District Council)

Officers Present

Clare Gray

Others Present

Matthew Barber (Deputy PCC), John Campbell (Thames Valley Police), Francis Habgood (Thames Valley Police), Paul Hammond (Office of the PCC), Anthony Stansfeld (PCC) and Ian Thompson (Office of the PCC)

Apologies

Councillor Derek Sharp (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Councillor Emily Culverhouse (Chiltern District Council), Councillor Pavitar Mann (Slough Borough Council), Councillor Iain McCracken (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Carol Reynolds (West Oxfordshire District Council) and Cllr Barry Wood (Cherwell District Council)

155 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Hayes declared an interest as a trustee for a charity providing services for victims of modern slavery.

156 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 February 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

157 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

158 HMICFRS - CRIME DATA INTEGRITY INSPECTION (30 MINUTES)

The Chairman welcomed the Deputy Chief Constable who was attending the meeting for this item to give a

presentation on crime data integrity. The PCC introduced the item reporting that he had made some comments about the format of the inspection and was disappointed with the inadequate rating, particularly bearing in mind that they had been graded outstanding for efficiency and good for effectiveness. He felt that this latest rating did not tie up with the other reports.

The Deputy Chief Constable gave his presentation and made the following points:-

History of Crime Data Integrity

- Disconnect between British Crime Survey and Police Figures. The report commented that TVP had made efforts to improve crime-recording accuracy which have led to some improvements since the 2014 report, which include the introduction of a dedicated team to undertake crime-recording audits, providing training to Contact Management staff and developing an understanding of modern slavery offences among officers and staff
- Performance culture across Public Sector
- Integrity of Police Figures – An audit showed process issues leading to the incorrect classification of a statistically significant proportion of crimes and incidents, exacerbated by some knowledge gaps regarding the detail of the National Crime Recording Standards and the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime outside the Contact Management Centre. Understanding of the Niche crime-recording system and adequate supervision of crime-recording decisions were also contributory factors. It was recognised that process and recording issues could impact on the service and support provided to the victim, as well as public confidence.
- ‘TVP fully accept the findings’

Inspection Process

- Review Incidents on Command and Control
- 2000 Command & Control reports + 500 direct entry Crimes – Command and Control record incidents and then deploy officers. Information is then transferred from the crime recording to NICHE, which is another system and there is some complexity around this transfer of information, which should hopefully be addressed with the new Contact Management System.
- Compare that with Crime System - If not a crime why not?
- Third Party reporting – this could be from another organisation such as Social Services, dealing with a vulnerable person. In some of these cases, a crime is not recorded but action will still be taken by TVP.
- Multiple reports – these are always recorded the first time they are sent through but may not be recorded every time. The report found that the Force is failing to ensure it adequately records all reports of rape, other sexual and violence offences, including domestic abuse crimes and crimes reported directly to its public protection departments.

Context:

- 1.3 million calls (pa)
- 300,000 999 calls (pa)
- 1m 101/Switchboard calls
- 17 Forces Requires Improvement/Inadequate
- HMIC Effectiveness in March : ‘Good’ for operational effectiveness, which does not tie up with the inadequate rating.
- With the increased demand arising from 999 calls many Forces are finding this challenging, including the consistency in response.

Findings

- 80% compliance = ‘35,000 *potentially* under recorded’
- **TVP 4/5 – Inadequate ; Durham 4.5/5 - Good**
- No issues of Integrity or ethics – there is no suggestion that the Force is ignoring or neglecting calls for service, or failing to attend and deal with incidents and crime. The inspection report found evidence of a strong and ethical culture, with officers and staff acting with integrity.
- Satisfied that safeguarding had been done even though the crime had not been recorded. The previous HMIC report regarding domestic abuse had received a good judgement.

- Good leadership – TVP had employed an ex HMIC Inspector to help develop the Action Plan
- Lack of understanding amongst the workforce – crime recording can be complex. An example of this was ‘sexting’ and being sensitive to how this should be recorded. Another example was where a vulnerable lady in a care home becomes distressed and pushes or shoves staff. This could be recorded as an assault against a member of staff but is this appropriate in all cases?
- Good Audit team and structures/ No ‘Criming’ Good – however, with limited resources it is important to maintain the right balance between audit staff and operational frontline staff.
- ‘Potential’ failings.
- Over recording in Modern Slavery

HMIC Zoe Billingham:

*“I am satisfied that the force works very hard to ensure that victims of crime, especially vulnerable victims, are safeguarded. It now needs to ensure that it records crimes at the **earliest opportunity**, and that there is proper supervision of crime-recording decisions.*

Since our inspection in September 2017, I have been in close contact with Thames Valley Police and I am encouraged by the immediate steps that the force has taken in response to our findings. Since our inspection, Thames Valley Police have developed a plan to address our concerns, and set up a group chaired by the deputy chief constable with strong oversight of progress. HMICFRS will re-visit the force later in 2018 to assess progress.”

As referred to earlier the new Contact Management System should help resolve crime recording issues. The new system provides an opportunity to increase recording at the point of call, as well as an adjustment to internal audit processes to provide additional governance and oversight. The Force will be re-inspected in a year and should show the benefits of the new system

Easy’ solutions:

- Officer discretion v first point crime recording
- Training all in crime recording v Few
- Increase Audit teams

‘Under record’ V Mis-record

Demand assessment – there will be a robust approach to demand management.

Governance

- DCC Gold Group- Delivery plan – progress against the Action Plan is being governed through a Gold Group structure, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable and a newly introduced Tactical Group, chaired by the Force Crime Registrar and attended by practitioners of an appropriate level.
- Strategic Governance Silver Group
- Reporting in Chief Constable Management Team
- Reporting into PCC/OPCC - there will be representation from the OPCC on this group to report progress
- Re-inspection in 12 months.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- Cllr Bendyshe Brown asked when the new contact management system would go live. The Chief Constable reported that he hoped this would be the end of June 2018.
- Cllr Macpherson referred to the point made about the Audit Committee and concern about putting too many resources in this area as this impacted on frontline services. She also asked if there was any breakdown of information on local areas in terms of crime data integrity recording. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that the audit team had been checking compliance before the report was published and the feedback was 90/91% compliance. They did not really want to increase resources in the audit team because of resource implications elsewhere but they had adjusted internal audit processes to provide additional governance and oversight. In terms of Thames Valley areas the recording of

crimes/incidents would be geographical but in terms of management information this would be difficult to break down but they could look at developing this in the future.

- Julia Girling asked why all the areas for improvement recommended in the 2014 report had not been carried out and only limited progress had been made. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that TVP had made progress which had been included in the Delivery Plan. However, they would now report back to HMIC in a more structured way. The Chief Constable referred to the delay in the implementation of the Contact Management System which would have addressed some of the issues raised in the report. Julia Girling asked if crime had been recorded differently whether crime figures would have increased. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that it could increase figures but that any changes in figures should stabilise.
- Cllr Webster asked about the timeliness of response in terms of referring a victim to a support agency, particularly for areas such as violent and sexual offences. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that in this area, it didn't matter how the crime was recorded, a specially trained officer would still meet the victim and refer them for relevant support. She then referred to the report which commented that improvements needed to be put in place for recording practices for reports of rape and ensure the correct use of rape classification N100. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that before recording it as a rape there was some sensitivity around 'possible mis-recording' as they have to be careful about permanent records but safeguarding was a priority. With domestic abuse cases an officer will visit the victim and undertake a risk assessment which is then referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. There would be a record on the command and control system, which helps maintain intelligence and present a developing picture, but it may not necessarily be recorded as a crime.
- Cllr Macpherson asked whether any extra resources were required? The Deputy Chief Constable reported that they were reluctant to put any further resources into audit, particularly with the reduction in policing numbers. They needed to look at their processes including call handling to ensure that the right areas for improvement were addressed.
- Cllr Bendyshe Brown asked whether any good practice could be learnt from Durham. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that they were part of the National Crime Registrars Group which were looking at how to deal with demand management. Durham was a smaller Force area and a different police environment so it was not always easy to compare. The PCC commented that if the Thames Valley had the same amount of funding as Durham they would be able to afford 1500 additional police officers, which was why it was important to look at the police formula grant to ensure fair funding across the Country. He also commented that Bedfordshire had far less funding than Durham which was interesting considering its proximity to London. The funding issue was being discussed with the Home Office.
- Cllr Egleton asked whether this situation was unique to the Thames Valley and whether each Force area was taking a consistent approach to crime recording so that comparisons are valid? He also asked whether the PCC needed to re-evaluate how he scrutinises the Chief Constable performance. The PCC commented that he had argued for a more consistent approach to crime reporting and referred to the Crime Survey for England and Wales. He was raising this issue with the Association of PCC's. In terms of scrutiny his Office could not add any further scrutiny to that carried out by the HMIC as they have the resources and training to undertake these investigations. The Deputy PCC reported that they would be monitoring TVP's Delivery Plan and that there would be an OPCC representative on the Gold Group to inform of progress. Cllr Egleton asked how the Panel and the public could be assured that progress was being made? The PCC referred to the Level 1 meeting which he held in public, where he held the Chief Constable to account. Cllr Egleton commented that this was a useful meeting to be updated on reports but that the OPCC would benefit from the skills of a scrutiny officer to ensure that the Chief Constable was effectively held to account.

Members thanked the Deputy Chief Constable for the report and emphasised to the PCC, the need for more effective scrutiny of the Chief Constable (through the Gold Group) and to look at best practice from other Force areas. They also commented that it would be helpful to have a breakdown of data information across the LPA areas.

159 CHAIRMAN/PCC UPDATE (10 MINUTES)

The PCC reported that there has been an upturn in crime nationally. The PCC expressed concern that many of these deaths related to crime fuelled by drugs such as heroin and cocaine and this was becoming a worrying

trend for the Thames Valley. He commented that he felt stop and search was being underused and hoped that this was being addressed nationally.

The PCC expressed concern about funding and the year on year reductions to the budget whilst having to deal with complex crimes such as Child Sexual Exploitation, Domestic Abuse, cyber-crime (particularly fraud) and the number of historical cases. There were then further pressures generated by HMIC inspection reports incorporating recommended areas for improvement, and further cuts to partners (which impacted on the Force) including Local Authorities, Ministry of Justice and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Cllr Page referred to page 21 of the agenda in relation to the Force being 98 officers below strength and said that he agreed with the PCC's comments about the lack of funding. He asked for an update on the number of vacancies and to which areas they related in the Thames Valley. He also referred to page 23 of the agenda and the Government review of council powers for unauthorised encampments and what work had been progressed by the TVP Rural Task and Finish Group. He asked the PCC whether he would respond to this consultation and commented that the Panel should also respond. From a process point of view it took a long time to secure eviction notices and go through the court hearing process

Action: Scrutiny Officer

The PCC reported that they were recruiting officers but explained that one of the issues is that police officers were leaving the Thames Valley because of the cost of living. The Chief Constable reported that they had a number of applications through and also 84 requests for transfers. He reported that the problem was that other Forces were recruiting and taking officers away from the Thames Valley (who had a good reputation for well trained officers). He also reported that civilian case investigators were being used to replace police officer posts and that they were developing a career pathway for investigators (as police staff). The underspend in police officer posts was being used to recruit police staff.

The PCC reported that he would respond to the unauthorised encampments consultation. This was a complex issue and distressing for residents particularly when they 'trashed' the site and often at vast expense to the landowner. The PCC commented that he would liaise with the Chairman and Scrutiny Officer when he drafted a response. Cllr Egleton reported that unauthorised encampments were a real concern and it was important that Local Authorities respond to the consultation as well. Last year there had been a number of forced entries with resulting criminal damage. In some cases there was reluctance by the police to take action and it needed to be dealt with swiftly. The Chief Constable asked whether there was sufficient evidence to take action in those cases. Cllr Egleton reported that in one case they had CCTV evidence but that the investigating officer did not want to pursue it. In terms of eviction notices, the Chief Constable reported that they were having an issue with court time slots at the moment but they were meeting with the Judges next week and will raise this issue. This also related to what priority was put on each case. Cllr Mallon referred to the previous themed meeting where the Panel had made a recommendation that a consistent approach on authorised encampments be made by Local Area Commanders and following this training had been put in place. The Chief Constable referred to a meeting with Chief Executives from each Local Authority where a draft protocol on unauthorised encampments had been submitted. This would be circulated to Members.

Action: PCC/Scrutiny Officers

Cllr Bendyshe Brown asked about recruitment for Police Community Support Officers as they should have two and only had one currently who was retiring. Another Member also made reference to the Community Speed Watch project and the fact that their police constable had been taken away and that further support from the Force would be appreciated. The PCC reported that quite a few PCSO's had become police officers. The Chief Constable reported that they had a number of vacancies for PCSO's and that there were also training capacity issues. They were looking at other ways to help support Local Police Areas and also to make the Community Speed Watch self-sufficient. It currently required a high level of support so was not sustainable.

Cllr Hayes expressed concern about the reduction in PCSO's and referred also to the reduction in budgets for Local Authorities. He asked how TVP were tackling the drugs issue, how police officers were being retained and commented that he would rather have a police officer than a case investigator. The PCC referred to £100 million that had been cut from his budget in the past years which had impacted on community policing. He commented that case investigators were very experienced and referred to some work they had carried out in Reading to catch burglars. The Chief Constable reported that it was important to get the right balance between case

investigators and police officers and that they were attracting good people into these posts because of the career pathway being offered. Investigators do not require full police powers but have the confidence and skills to assist with police work. The Chief Constable commented that he could not compete with a better quality of life elsewhere which was why police officers were leaving and case investigators were providing the necessary skills and experience. They could offer increased salaries but at some point those salaries would become the norm again and officers would leave to move to other areas, so they still would have the same problem with retention. This was happening across the public sector with social workers and teachers.

Julia Girling referred to the increase in housing and asked whether developers were contributing to policing. The Chief Constable reported that they were not providing houses for police officers but they were applying and benefitting from the community infrastructure levy and Section 106 funding. They would also get the benefit from the council tax element from new residents. The PCC referred to the potential amount of building in Oxfordshire relating to the Oxford – Cambridge expressway and commented that it would be worth looking into this issue in more detail.

160 COMPLAINTS INTEGRITY AND ETHICS PANEL (20 MINUTES)

The Panel received the Annual Assurance Report 2017 from the Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel. Under the Police Reform Act 2002 the Chief Constable is the appropriate authority responsible for dealing with complaints and misconduct matters raised against TVP police officers and staff below the rank of Chief Constable. In practice the Chief Constable delegates this statutory responsibility to his Professional Standards Department (PSD). Similarly, the PCC has a duty to hold the Chief Constable to account in monitoring the adequacy and effectiveness of the arrangements made by the Chief Constable for dealing with complaints made against the Force. To help discharge their respective responsibilities the PCC and Chief Constable jointly established the Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel.

The PCC reported that they had an Independent Chairman, Mark Harris. He commented that the Panel's scrutiny of complaint cases had revealed no serious procedural failures. The Panel were satisfied overall that the procedures comply with the requirements of the national police complaints system and appear fit for purpose, and the management of complaint handling overall by PSD is considered by Members to be of a high standard.

The PCC expressed concern about the amount of time taken up by vexatious complaints and that the equivalent of one officer was dedicated to historical complaints, some of which had not been completed because the complainant continued to contact the OPCC.

Matters of concern that were raised by Members have either been satisfactorily considered or explained at meetings and include the following:-

- Time taken by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (now called the Independent Office for Police Conduct) to deal with complaints and their perceived inconsistency in terms of what complaint cases they decide to take on.
- Significant increase in 'discreditable' conduct cases
- A need for greater focus by the Panel on 'discrimination and equality' complaints cases
- The high proportion of complaints that were subjected to local resolution rather than by investigation.

The Panel feel that the positive relationship and degree of trust that has developed with the Chief Constable, the PCC and senior staff has enabled the Panel to contribute constructively and objectively to the ongoing review of the adequacy and effectiveness of the arrangements for handling complaints, and the testing of operational policies and practices from an external, independent, professional standards, integrity and ethics viewpoint.

Members welcomed the report and commented that they looked forward to further guidance from Government on vexatious complaints.

161 POLICE AND CRIME PLAN - PERFORMANCE (20 MINUTES)

The Panel received the report from the PCC on Strategic Objective 3 of his Police and Crime Panel on reducing reoffending. The PCC reported that the report referred to a number of commissioning activities with voluntary organisations who helped reduce reoffending.

Cllr Page referred to the last page on the report which said that there would be an opportunity this year for partner agencies to apply for grant funding for projects that would help the PCC to deliver against areas within the Police and Crime Plan which are currently identified as gaps. This related to his first three key aims in the Plan. He asked for further information on the process. The PCC reported that this initiative would be launched shortly with a deadline of the end of May. The amount of funding involved was £400,000. The Chief Finance Officer commented that he could let Local Authorities know of this process but he would inform Community Safety Partnerships in the following week.

Action: PCC

Cllr Mann referred to the fact that many offenders had complex needs themselves and how this was being addressed. The PCC reported that this was being dealt with by Health and Wellbeing Boards and the Health Service who were very active in dealing with mental health policies. The Chief Constable reported that there were many good examples of helping offenders with rehabilitation schemes to stop them reoffending in the future. He commented that he would make sure that this information is included in future reports to the Panel. The Chief Executive, OPCC also reported that there was a cross over with this priority and the first priority in the Police and Crime Plan relating to vulnerability. One of the key aims in Strategic Objective 1 was improving recognition across the criminal justice system of mental health distress experienced by both victims and offenders.

In relation to the OPCC Delivery Plan (page 46 of the agenda) Cllr Page asked for further information relating to Camden Council's coercive control campaign which is being utilised by the OPCC in June 2018.

Action: PCC

Cllr Hayes asked about how concerned the PCC was in relation to the increase in drug trafficking and knife crime relating to serious organised crime? The PCC referred to county lines and the major drug dealers who operated in London and Birmingham who were now targeting the Thames Valley. He expressed concern about stop and search and referred to the pressure of putting under 18's in police cells. Children were being exploited to 'run' drugs to other towns and cities but there was a safeguarding issue as some of these children were victims themselves and could be being blackmailed. He commented that this was a real concern and referred to the recent murder in Oxford which was gang related. Cllr Egleton referred to the special operation in Oxford. The Chief Constable commented that they were trying to dismantle and disrupt groups and reported that some children were being 'cocooned' and exploited for drugs and sex. They had some successful operations but as soon as one group had been dealt with another reappeared. They were working very closely with neighbouring regions and the National Crime Agency and in addition there was the new Serious Violence Strategy being developed by Government. Cllr Hayes also asked about the home grown drugs trade. The Chief Constable commented that there were a number of local drug groups who operated a 'turf war' and that some gang violence was armed but it was not at the scale being experienced by London. However, as the incidents in Oxford showed, they were not being complacent. There was a lot of preventative work being undertaken on knife crime.

Cllr Bendyshe Brown referred to page 48 of the agenda where there was a red rag status relating to TVP victim referral pathways into PCC funded victims services to replace Automatic Data Transfer by the end of March 2018. The Chief Executive, OPCC commented that this related to IT issues and that currently information was being uploaded manually onto a spreadsheet, until an interim IT solution was developed pending the implementation of the new Contact Management System was in place (this would have an automated referral process). This should be in place by the end of June.

162 REPORT OF THE PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION SUB-COMMITTEE (20 MINUTES)

Cllr Mallon, Chairman of the Preventing CSE Sub Committee presented the report and the recommendations were agreed by the Panel as follows:-

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Panel Members have asked that the PCC consider whether he is able to help the Oxfordshire Children's Safeguarding Board CSE Sub Group on developing their research on perpetrator profiling as follows :-**

To consider commissioning a new piece of academic research to expand on the work presented to the Sub Group on perpetrator profiling and look at some additional hypothesis. Given the clear potential strategic benefits of this work, approaches could also be considered to the other Local Authorities and Health providers within Thames Valley to broaden the research and available resource further.

2. **That the Panel be kept updated on the review of the Berkshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs**
3. **That an update be given to Panel Members on the new regulations for Multi Agency Safeguarding (Children and Social Work Act 2017) which has to be put in place by May 2018 and how this is being addressed in the Thames Valley.**
4. **The Deputy PCC to look at a pilot Scheme (for having a logo/kitemark for the Hotelwatch Scheme) and whether there could be some match funding from Councils as currently the Hotelwatch Scheme was not operationally consistent across the Thames Valley and this could help ensure that there was a standard approach across all areas and that the % of hotels signed up to the Scheme could be monitored.**
5. **That the PCC/Deputy PCC agree the final details for the Single Point of Contact Post (taxi licensing)**
6. **That Members use any links with schools to help open the pathway for CSE Awareness including the promotion of healthy relationships**

Update

A number of related issues were raised under this heading:-

- Developing conversations with closed communities such as travellers and ethnic minority groups.
- Developing work with primary schools on CSE issues and whether this can be available to all children rather than requiring parental permission. Getting the right access to school children was crucial.
- Following the success of Chelsea's Choice whether a similar production could be used to highlight Honour Based Abuse, Forced Marriage and FGM targeted at areas of high risk.
- Concern was raised about different ethnic groups not mixing at school and whether more work needed to be undertaken with the education sector. Reference was made to the Louise Casey report which had been published in December 2016 and that after a year nationally concern was being raised that nothing was being done with regard to community cohesion and that there needed to be an integration oath. The PCC was asked to provide an update to this meeting on what they were doing as an organisation.

6.1 That the PCC/Deputy PCC provide an update on what he and TVP are doing in response to the Louise Casey recommendations and to provide an update on what actions can be taken to address the other points raised above.

7. **For the PCC/Deputy PCC to consider whether it would be helpful to give a more specific presentation at Annual Council Meetings to help raise awareness of key issues that need to be addressed such as Hidden Harm.**
8. **That the Deputy PCC consider whether these documents could add value and report back to the Panel.**
<https://www.staffordshire-pcc.gov.uk/cse-framework/>

163 REPORT OF THE COMPLAINTS SUB-COMMITTEE (5 MINUTES)

Members noted the report.

164 WORK PROGRAMME (5 MINUTES)

Members noted the Work Programme and were asked to submit any future items for consideration to the Scrutiny Officer. Cllr Hayes commented that he had sent in some proposals for the Work Programme and asked for them to be considered.

Action: Scrutiny Officer

165 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

22 June 2018 – 11am - Aylesbury Vale District Council

Members who were not returning to the Panel following their Annual Council Meetings in May were thanked for their enormous contribution.

CHAIRMAN