

Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel



Annual Report 2015/16

The Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel is currently hosted by South Bucks District Council on behalf of all 18 local authorities in Thames Valley.

It is a joint committee of all 18 local authorities, consisting of a representative from each and two independent co-opted members.

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Chairman's Introduction

I am proud to introduce the fourth annual report of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel. Since the Panel's inception in November 2012 I feel that we have made substantial progress in the way that the Panel works to both challenge and support the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley. This is largely due to the hard work and dedication of my fellow Panel Members.

This will be the fourth year of the Panel's operation and also the end of the first tenure of office for the Police and Crime

Commissioner. Having established good working relationships amongst Panel Members, with the new Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner and with robust procedures in place the Panel have demonstrated their part in the accountability structures for policing and community safety. Commissioners are here to stay for the immediate future and are powerful elected figures who are accountable to their communities. They have provided an impetus to reform, innovate and deliver policing more efficiently and will focus relentlessly on the job of cutting crime and keeping people safe. The Panel will continue to ensure that there is robust scrutiny of the Commissioner on his performance and effectiveness. The Panel will also continue to support the Commissioner by encouraging Local Authorities and partner organisations to work with him for the benefit of residents of the Thames Valley.

I feel that we have achieved a lot in this past year. At a recent national conference this Panel was highlighted for the work they have carried out on the scrutiny of a series of themed items and for the work of our Budget Task and Finish Group which looks at the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed budget and Council Tax precept. The Panel utilised their scrutiny skills to ensure that the Commissioner's proposed council tax precept increase of 1.99% was required to deliver a balanced budget and maintain frontline services.

The themed items that have been explored with the PCC included Victims Commissioning, Cyber Crime, taxi licensing and domestic violence. External witnesses were invited to speak at the Panel to gain an understanding of partner views on performance from across the Thames Valley. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their input into the Panel's work. A new Sub-Committee was set up last year to support, monitor and scrutinise the PCC on preventing and taking action with regard to child sexual exploitation and to provide assurance to Panel Members.

There are still challenges for the Panel in relation to its limited powers and resources, particularly in dealing with increasingly difficult issues such as cyber crime, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. There is still some further work to do in terms of engaging with residents and key stakeholders and the Complaints Sub-Committee continues to consider non-criminal complaints against the PCC and his Deputy. However the Panel continues to build on the healthy, effective and challenging relationships with the PCC which is essential for local communities who rely on fair accountability for excellent police services. This fourth annual report highlights the work and achievements of the past year and draws out some of the key areas of work that the Panel will be examining over the forthcoming year.

Cllr. Trevor Egleton



The Police & Crime Commissioner

The Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley, Anthony Stansfeld, has formally been in post since 22 November 2012.

The Police & Crime Plan

The Police & Crime Commissioner sets out in a Police & Crime Plan his objectives for his four year term of office. This document is of great importance to the Police & Crime Panel as a point of reference in fulfilling its duty to scrutinise and review the actions and decisions of the Police & Crime Commissioner.

The Thames Valley Police Delivery Plan

The Delivery Plan is Thames Valley Police's operational plan. It describes how the Force will address its objectives. It is of interest to the Panel because it is a reflection of the Police & Crime Commissioner's Police & Crime Plan. The Delivery Plan should be clearly aligned with the objectives of the Police & Crime Plan.

The PCC's strategic objectives

The Police and Crime Commissioner Strategic Objectives are set out below :-

- Cut crimes that are of most concern to the public and reduce reoffending
- Protecting vulnerable people.
- Work with partner agencies to put victims and witnesses at the heart of the criminal justice system.
- Ensure Police and Partners are visible, act with integrity and foster the trust and confidence of communities.
- Communicate with the public to learn of their concerns, help to prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime.



Anthony Stansfeld, Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley

- Protect the public from serious organised crime, terrorism and internet based crime.

The PCC Annual Report 2014/15 highlights a number of achievements as follows:-

- Reductions in overall crime
- Domestic burglary now at a 40 year low
- Rural crime has reduced by 19% (National Farmers Union Mutual Figures)
- Allocated £1.9m to support victims and witnesses in 2014/15.
- Local Mental Health Crisis Care Concordats have been signed throughout the Thames Valley.
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs have now been set up in the Thames Valley.
- Awarded grants worth over £187,000 from the Police Property Act Fund.
- Delivered £13.1m of planned cash savings in 2014/15.

The Role of the Police & Crime Panel

The Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel examines and reviews how the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley carries out his responsibilities to ensure that Thames Valley Police runs efficiently and effectively. In addition to this the Panel has a role to play in supporting the Commissioner in his work.

This year the Panel has:-

- Set up a Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation Sub Committee which is attended by the PCC, Force and external witnesses. Members have particularly focused on the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs and have visited the MASH in Oxford.
- Handled non-criminal complaints against the Police and Crime Commissioner through regular meetings of its Complaints Handling Sub-Committee and receives updates from the PCC's Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel.
- Reviewed the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed Council Tax precept for the financial year and the PCC's Annual Report .
- Held themed meetings and looked in detail at Victims Commissioning, Cyber Crime, Taxi Licensing and Domestic Violence.



- Held a Confirmation Hearing for the extension of

the contract for the Deputy PCC, had a presentation from the Chairman of the Joint Independent Audit Committee and the Programme Manager of the Local Criminal Justice Board.

Members of the Panel

In the Thames Valley, there is one councillor from each of the councils in the area, meaning that there are eighteen on the Panel. They are joined by two independent co-opted members, recruited through a competitive process. The independent co-opted members have the same status and rights as the other Panel Members.

Each of the 18 councils below has its own process for appointing its representative on the Police & Crime Panel and the representatives for 2015/16 were:-

- Aylesbury Vale District Council— Angela Macpherson
- Bracknell Forest Council—Iain McCracken
- Buckinghamshire County Council— Patricia Birchley
- Cherwell District Council— George Reynolds
- Chiltern District Council—Emily Culverhouse
- Milton Keynes Council— Margaret Burke
- Oxford City Council— Dee Sinclair
- Oxfordshire County Council—Kieron Mallon
- Reading Borough Council—Tony Page
- Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Council - Jesse Grey
- Slough Borough Council—Sabia Hussain
- South Bucks District Council—Trevor Egleton
- South Oxfordshire District Council—Ian White
- Vale of White Horse District Council—Chris McCarthy
- West Berkshire Council— Quentin Webb
- West Oxfordshire District Council—Robert Courts
- Wokingham Borough Council—Bob Pitts
- Wycombe District Council— Julia Adey

The two independent co-opted members were:

- Curtis James Marshall
- Julia Girling

Reflections of our Panel Members

Each Panel member was asked about what they felt the biggest successes and challenges were over the course of the past year for the Police and Crime Panel. Their reflections on the year can be viewed over the coming pages:



Councillor Angela Macpherson

Success and challenges—The challenge is to really ask probing scrutiny questions at the Panel and to have actions from each agenda item that we can monitor. If resources are an issue we need to be very careful about how many Sub-Committees are being set up.

Councillor Iain McCracken

As Chairman of the Budget Task and Finish Group I would like to thank my Panel colleagues and the Officers of the OPCC and TVP for the information they have provided and responding to our detailed questioning. Our recommendation to the full Panel was to approve the proposed precept. I am pleased to say that the work of this Group has been highlighted as good practice at a recent national conference for Panels. One of the challenges has been supporting the PCC when dealing with the new Funding Formula to ensure there is no adverse disproportionality to the Thames Valley. As Chairman of the new CSE Sub Committee my comments are included on page 10 of this report.



Councillor Patricia Birchley

Successes— Thames Valley Police is taking an important lead in revealing the extent of cyber crime which affects business and individuals alike. Children too can be victims and we need the public to be warned against this activity.

Challenges— The PCC work on prevention of terrorist activity is also vital if we are to keep our country safe for future generations.



Councillor George Reynolds

Successes— We continue to scrutinise the PCC and he is always very willing to attend the meeting and explain his and the Forces actions

Challenges— To ensure Members continue to attend and ensure that the PCC is open and willing to explain any problems regarding police and crime issues and the solutions to them.



Councillor Emily Culverhouse

Successes - As a new Member the work of the Panel has been a steep learning curve which I have enjoyed, particularly being Chairman of the Complaints Sub-Committee. As well as considering non-criminal complaints against the PCC we have submitted a response to the Government on the recent consultation on complaints against PCCs. In terms of the Panel I am eager to look into the prevention cyber crime in more detail. **Challenges** – One of the challenges of the Sub-Committee is the number of vexatious complaints that are still being received and for the Panel as a whole the amount of information and paper is rather onerous. Ways to receive information are being explored to make digesting the information more manageable enabling more effective scrutiny on targeted areas.



Councillor Margaret Burke

I am interested in the Government's post legislative scrutiny of the Act in relation to the powers of the Panel as I feel that currently it is difficult to challenge the PCC effectively and not stray into operational areas which is required in order to understand if the PCC is effectively holding the Chief Constable to account.



Reflections of our Panel Members



Councillor Dee Sinclair

Successes— The themed meeting on Taxi Licensing was well received and informative with recommendations for the PCC and all TV authorities to consider

Challenges— The continuing reduction in funding will remain challenging particularly in urban areas with the highest crime levels. Following the PCC elections it is clear there remains no clear understanding of the role for many and we need to improve that.



Councillor Kieron Mallon

Successes—The successful introduction of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs and reducing the risk of domestic abuse whilst giving victims the confidence to report crimes of violence

Challenges The potential rise of radicalism within the Thames Valley and the un-reporting of so called 'honour' based crimes



Councillor Tony Page

Successes and Challenges—At a time of increasing cuts to police and local government budgets the Panel will have an important role in holding the PCC to account in protecting front-line and neighbourhood policing.



Councillor Jesse Grey

Successes—Maintaining the support for the Community Safety Partnership

Challenges—That the level of support for Community Safety Partnerships and community policing may be challenged in difficult financial times.



Councillor Sabia Hussain

As I am still a new Member appointed at the end of this year I am learning about the role of the Panel. However I believe it has an important influence in sharing good practice in partnership across the Thames Valley region and an example of this was visiting the MASH and using this learning for the benefit of others and my own Council. One of the challenges is the difficulties of addressing modern crime with limited resources and the importance of supporting and challenging the PCC to ensure that he and partners achieve the best outcomes for local communities.



Curtis James Marshall Independent Member

Successes and Challenges—Coming together as Members and working with the PCC to consider what the best outcomes might look like in times of austerity and doing more with much less has been a challenge, but ultimately I think has worked.



Julia Girling Independent Member

Successes—Bringing key topics such as Child Sexual Exploitation, Rural Crime, Female Genital Mutilation and Taxi Licensing to the table, and voicing the concerns of the public.

Challenges— Convincing the general public that the panel is effective.

Reflections of our Panel Members



Councillor Ian White

Successes and Challenges—Since first taking office, the PCC has brought innovation resulting in major improvements in our Policing against a background of significant cuts. The introduction of the Multi Agency Support Hubs (MASH) has greatly enhanced child safeguarding and this will develop further. Our role as Panel Members provides support through scrutiny and challenge on behalf of members of the public and I am proud to represent them on the Panel. Looking to the future, there will be challenges and we will work with the PCC to meet these ensuring that the right priorities are set whilst maximising value for money."



Councillor Chris McCarthy

Successes – One of the successes of the Panel is its themed item which scrutinises the PCC on his wider community safety and local resilience responsibilities and does this through questioning the PCC and external witnesses and obtaining a Thames Valley wide view which is of benefit and learning to all Councils. **Challenges** – One of the challenges is engaging the public across such as a wide area such as Thames Valley. We have been criticised in the past for looking at operational issues but it is important to look behind the Strategy sometimes in order to effectively scrutinise and to look at items in a way that engage the public.



Councillor Quentin Webb

Successes- Having a very good working relationship with the Commissioner and good engagement with the Chief Constable. The co-operation of effective partnerships.
Challenges- Raising public awareness of the role of Commissioner, cyber-crime needs higher profile and resources and making the Panel as effective as possible within the current legislative framework



Councillor Robert Courts

Successes— the close and effective working relationship between the PCC and the Panel is apparent. We work not only to hold the PCC to account, but to ensure that information is fed from us to him and from him down to the communities we represent.
Challenges— ensuring that the public understand the role of the PCC and the value the role brings to policing, as well as ensuring that the PCC works with the Community Safety Partnerships in tackling areas of emerging concern, such as cyber crime.



Councillor Bob Pitts

Success and challenges—As a new member of the panel, I have been impressed with the way it works and also how they bring themselves up to speed with an ever changing set of events. I believe one of the most important things this year has been the setting up of the CSE Sub Committee together with a themed item on Cyber crime . The challenge is keeping on top of these issues. CSE seems to appear regularly in the news and Cyber crime has no physical boundaries.



Councillor Julia Adey

Successes—Themed meetings and particularly the visit to the Oxford MASH in raising members awareness for working within their own Councils.
Challenges— Keeping down expenditure whilst still achieving best results

Achievements 2015/16

Budget—The Panel undertook its annual review of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s proposed budget and Council Tax precept on 29 January 2016. In the build up to this meeting a small Task and Finish Group chaired by Iain McCracken met on two occasions to discuss the budget papers in detail and in so doing identified a number of questions for the Commissioner. The whole Panel then accepted the Task and Finish Groups report and following discussions agreed the precept. The impact of a new Funding Formula is of concern but updates will be given to the Panel from the OPCC at each Panel meeting.

Child Sexual Exploitation—Two meetings have been held since the Sub-Committee was set up in July.



The Chairman Iain McCracken has commented ‘this has been the first year of operation where Members have met with the PCC and the Force from which a series of suggested recommendations have been made aimed at spreading good practice across the Thames Valley . This is a difficult subject because of the a wide range geographical area that is Thames Valley and the different forms that CSE can take so it was important to take a general approach at the start and to develop a focussed/investigative approach as the work develops. CSE needs to remain a priority and one of the areas the Sub-Committee has looked at is effective MASH models, identifying good practice from those already operating in the area. Members visited the Oxfordshire MASH and the Kingfisher Unit as part of this work. Most of the MASH in the Thames Valley are now well established and are experiencing an increase in workload and the Bucks MASH has now

expanded their services to help adults”.

Themed Meetings as follows:-

Victims Commissioning the PCC now has responsibility for local commissioning of victims services including Restorative Justice. The Policy Manager and the PCC answered questions on a number of areas including governance, consistency of service and engagement with the public and hard to reach groups. There was a discussion about witness support and the correlation that good police support often meant the evidence given by witnesses at court was better. This was raised when the Programme Manager for the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) attended a Panel meeting.

Cyber Crime—representatives from the Force gave a presentation on cyber crime. Panel Members asked questions to the PCC and the Force about reporting cyber crime, building expertise to address cyber crime in the Force and using every opportunity to raise awareness of cyber crime. The Panel would like to set up a Working Group in this area but this is dependent on resources. www.getsafeonline.org

Taxi Licensing — Licensing Managers from Oxford City, Chiltern & South Bucks and Reading attended this meeting and the discussion centred around regulation, information sharing and safeguarding. A number of recommendations were made including part funding a dedicated officer, further improvements to information sharing and for the PCC to use his influence to change national standards of regulation.

Domestic Violence - Romy Briant MBE (Reducing the Risk Charity) and the Community Safety Manager (Bucks County Council) attended the Panel to discuss areas of good practice across the Thames Valley. Recommendations included ensuring a consistent approach to Domestic Violence and protecting and looking at long term funding for the service. As the PCC was now the Chairman of the LCJB he would have further influence on improving the use of Orders and Notices to help protect the victim.

Looking to the Future 2015/16

Following elections, the PCC will be working towards his new Police and Crime Plan which will be a priority for the Panel to scrutinise as this impacts directly on residents. The Panel also will be continuing to have themed meetings and will be looking at the relationship between the PCC and Partnerships, including collaboration with other services. One themed item will be to look at illegal traveller sites to ensure there is a consistent approach across the Thames Valley.

Association of PCC 's wordle



There is a **Policing and Crime Bill** which will have a big impact on the role of the PCC which includes closer collaboration with the emergency services and other areas such as playing a greater role in the handling of complaints and also in the wider criminal justice system.

The Panel responded to two consultations this year which will have an impact in the future. The first consultation was the Committee for Standards of Public Life looking at the leadership, ethics and accountability in policing who made recommendations to improve governance issues. The Panel will need to ensure that these recommendations are implemented. The second consultation was on the complaints process for Police and Crime Panels which may give them more powers in dealing with non-criminal complaints.

This will be a challenging year with possible changes

from the Bill and also looking at any proposed changes with regard to the national funding formula and the impact this will have on the Thames Valley. Some of the challenges still remain the same but we are trying to find ways to improve these areas. The Chairman and Scrutiny Officer have attended two Conferences in 15/16 to look at good practice and will also be visiting Panels in other areas to observe how they undertake scrutiny.

Engaging with residents and key stakeholders- The Thames Valley is the largest non-metropolitan police force area in England, which provides difficulties in terms of the public accessing Panel meetings on a regular basis although there is a public question time.

- **Complaints-** The Panel, through it's Complaints Sub-Committee is responsible for all non-criminal complaints directed against the Police and Crime Commissioner, including conduct matters. A number of the complaints the Sub-Committee receives are still historical but hopefully the Government will propose a new and improved process. The Sub-Committee has met four times this year.

- **Access to timely performance information-** The Panel has six-monthly performance reports and question the PCC on any areas of concern. The Chairman and Scrutiny Officer also attend the PCC's Policy, Planning and Performance meeting and report back to the Panel. The HMIC reports also provide invaluable information.

For further information on the Panel
<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/about-your-council/scrutiny/thames-valley-police-and-crime-panel/>

For Panel Meetings
<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=751>

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