
Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

Chairman: Cllr. Kieron Mallon

Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel Secretariat

Democratic Services
South Bucks District Council
Capswood, Oxford Road
Denham UB9 4LH
(01494) 732725

2 September 2019

Dear Anthony

At the Panel Meeting on 21 June 2019, Panel Members considered your Annual Report and I am now writing to formally respond in accordance with Section 28 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Panel would like to thank you and the Chief Constable for your continuing attendance at Panel meetings and for your officer support for the Panel's Sub-Committees and Task and Finish Groups.

The Panel welcomed your Annual Report and congratulated you on the Report and noted the comments you made, namely:

- That equal weight was given to all five strategic priorities contained in your Police and Crime Plan; however, the key threads of Vulnerability, Prevention and Re-Offending were particularly highlighted in the report.
- 2018/19 had been a notable year for Thames Valley Police (TVP) as it represented the very best of British policing in the eyes of the world. Thames Valley Police ran the largest operations in its history: the Royal Wedding in Windsor in May 2018 and the visit by the US President to four locations within Thames Valley in July 2018.
- Throughout these operations the officers and staff of Thames Valley Police showcased the excellence of the force and for British policing generally.
- In July 2018, Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Constabulary launched a new website, which now shared the same platform as the Metropolitan Police. This would eventually be a 'single online home' for all police forces.
- That you had expressed your pleasure that the Government had recognised the need for additional resources for the Police to help tackle serious violence and knife crime. Whilst the Thames Valley had not seen the large increase in knife crime as had some parts of the country, the Thames Valley was seeing an increase in violent crime which was a concern. Reference was made to TVP working proactively and in partnership to tackle the problem

and this additional funding would provide a significant boost.

- In 2018-19, Thames Valley saw offences involving more serious violence significantly decrease, with 35% fewer GBH (section 18) offences than the same time last year. The Force also saw positive reductions in theft from person (down 23%) and house burglaries (down 2%). Particularly pleasing was that domestic burglary had reduced by 21% over the past 7 years, with rural crime being given much greater priority over the same period. Overall crime levels in the Thames Valley were lower compared to ten and fifteen years ago, which as one of the less well funded police forces, was a testament to the good work of the Force.
- Your office had effectively managed its Ministry of Justice grant funding to provide a range of victim and witness support services, and had introduced the 'Victims First' service, which offered support through a single point of contact for victims and witnesses of crime, including affected family members. Since its launch, Victims First had dealt with 5,194 referrals with 2,000 having gone on to receive specialist support from other services which the PCC fund.
- Other highlights included providing community safety grants totalling £2.7m to County and Unitary Councils in the Thames Valley area to help them to support the PCC in delivering Police and Crime Plan strategic priorities.

The Panel during discussion on your report raised the following points which were responded to:

- In relation to vulnerability, you were asked for an update on the appointment of the Single Point of Contact for Taxi-Licensing which you had previously agreed to fund. You reported that there had been problems recruiting to this post, but that update would be provided to Panel Members, which subsequently was.
- In relation to Prevention, a request was made for an update on the performance of TVP dealing with '101' calls. The Deputy Chief Constable reported that 999 calls had increased by 9%, with a resultant increase in 101 calls. Last year, 101 calls took an average of 6 minutes to answer. For June, 2019 this was now down to 2.4 minutes which was a big improvement. The Contact Management platform and more call handlers would improve the performance further.
- In relation to Prevention and Early Intervention, you were asked, how successful has TVP's use of "stop and search" powers been in the fight against knife crime. The Panel was informed that "stop and search" was an effective tool in the fight against knife crime and naturally resulted in higher rates of detection of both knife and drug crimes. You commented that knife and drug crimes were often connected.
- Reference was made to the use of social media, particularly Twitter, by TVP, in highlighting uninsured motorists and whether this practise was having an effect in terms of awareness. The Deputy PCC praised the work of the Roads Policing Team in providing the public with up-to-date information relating to road closures and motorists caught for offences etc.; all of which engaged with the public and increased awareness.
- In relation to the reporting of Hate Crimes, you were asked what priority Hate Crimes were given. Your response was the reporting of Hate Crimes was given the highest priority. Hate Crimes were often down to perception, but all reported were fully scrutinised and investigated. Reference was made to the 2017 Inspectorate report which found that Thames Valley Police were inadvertently not recording all crimes correctly. This had now been rectified and all Hate Crimes, regardless of types were recorded.

- In relation to the Police response to fraud, the Panel asked about the Police response to fraud committed against local charities as this was on the increase and whether low level fraud such as this was given sufficient priority. You reported that it was estimated that there was £38 billion of fraud a year. There were not enough resources put into fighting fraud at a national level and only a small number of fraud cases were investigated due to lack of Police resources.

The Panel did not make any recommendations as some of the issues raised are in the Panel's work programme for 2019/20 and include:

- Victims First - To look at the first year of operation of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Victims First Scheme which was established in April 2018.
- Continuing review of the Local Policing Model – An update would be provided, together with details of funding.
- The implications on the Criminal Justice System of the increase in Crime rates and falling number of prosecutions, together with the restructuring of Courts.
- Update on the work and structure of the Thames Valley Road Safety Working Group / Safer Roads Strategy
- Exploitation - Preventing CSE/Modern Slavery/Forced Marriage/Hidden Harm/ FGM

The Panel noted your Annual Report 2018/19 and looks forward to revisiting these areas at future meetings of the Panel.

Yours Sincerely

Kieron Mallon
Chairman, Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel