

COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2020

PRESENT: Councillors John Bowden (Chairman), Greg Jones (Vice-Chairman), Gurpreet Bhangra, Helen Price, Catherine Del Campo and Parish Councillor Margaret Lenton

Also in attendance: Councillors Bateson, Cannon, Clark, Davy, Hilton, Johnson, Rayner, Shelim, Singh.

Public speakers in attendance: Chief Constable John Campbell, T/Supt Mick Greenwood, PCC Anthony Stansfield, Jane Corry, Julia Chester and Asghar Majeed.

Officers: Nikki Craig, Louise Freeth, Chris Joyce, Shilpa Manek, Russell O'Keefe, Suzie Parr, David Scott, Ben Smith and Adele Taylor

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting especially Chief Constable John Campbell, T/Supt Mick Greenwood and PCC Anthony Stansfield.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor Pat McDonald.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest were received.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the order of business as detailed in the agenda be varied.

ANNUAL PRESENTATION BY CHIEF CONSTABLE OF THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Chief Constable John Campbell QPM gave a presentation to the Panel.

The presentation highlighted the following points:

- Thames Valley Police (TVP) had benefitted from an increase in precept of £8.4 million.
- The key areas of investment were local policing, investigations and contact management.
- The changes in local policing included the LPA model being restructured and an increase in Patrol numbers. Arrests had increased by 13% and stop and search had increased by 58%.
- Force Crime was discussed in great detail including the New Investigative Structure, the virtual crime academy, additional investigative training for staff, recruitment of digital technicians to increase efficiency in accessing digital evidence and the technology being improved.
- The average time to answer 101 calls was discussed. This had decreased in comparison to last year to 100 seconds. The average time to answer 999 calls was 7.7 seconds.

- Online reporting was discussed and this had significantly increased compared to last year.
- The Chief Constable informed the Panel that the Court of Appeal would be considering the leniency of the sentences in the case of PC Andrew Harper.
- TVP was committed to tackling racism through policing, working closely with the communities by building trust and confidence to help keep people safe. TVP had dealt with 145 Public Order events between 3 June 2020 and 30 August 2020.
- Operation Venetic was discussed. This was targeted serious and organised crime across the Thames Valley. Over £300,000 in cash was seized, multiple kilos of Class A and Class B drugs were taken off the streets. Imitation firearms were also recovered and this all resulted in 20 arrests.
- The stabbing in Forbury Gardens, Reading was highlighted and that the suspect had been charged with three counts of murder and three counts of attempted murder. This event had received significant impact locally.
- The Panel were informed about Operation RESTORE – TVP's Covid Response.
- The number of assaults to officers had increased by 24% on the previous year.
- Officer uplift had been launched, TVP recruitment had opened between 1st and 4th June for police officers
- LPA operations were discussed.
- The Priority Outcomes 2020/21 were highlighted.

Between Chief Constable John Campbell and Local Policing Commander Mick Greenwood answered all the questions that had been submitted before the meeting as below:

Question 1: The crime concerns of villagers are at two levels – anti social behaviour by youths and scams upon the elderly. Is this borne out by statistics? How well equipped are the Police to deal with changes in crime patterns?

Answer: Anti-social behaviour, scams and fraud on the elderly were down by 2% compared to the same time last year. TVP was still utilising the ASB protection motion, protection notices and community protection notices to evoke criminal behaviour. With respect to fraud, this had a massive impact and the elderly and vulnerable were targeted the most. There had been 173 fraud referrals in the last seven months.

Question 2: There are pockets of residents who are surrounded by crime and ASB, more likely in the deprived areas. Neighbours can be very hostile to each other which engenders anxiety and fear. Residents do not want to be named or be too precise on locations for fear of reprisals. Currently I inform the social housing provider and the Community Wardens. What more can be done to make the lives of the “upstanding residents” more bearable?

Answer: This was not more likely in deprived areas, it was more pertinent in open spaces. TVP were working closely with the Community Wardens to reduce numbers. Residents could remain anonymous if they were to call in and report a crime and the confidentiality of the caller was kept.

Question 3: Windsor Town has seen an upsurge in drug dealing, fighting, public urination, ASB, sometimes spilling over into local residential streets. What more can be done to prevent this?

Answer: TVP recognises the issues. TVP were working towards this and the joint working was working well. The Goswell Hill area was being looked at specifically before the night-time economy returned again.

Question 4: Our PM says that mask wearing is supposed to be compulsory and will be enforced. We have been told by our new local Police team that they will discuss and encourage. Local evidence makes it clear that people make up their own mind as to whether this applies to them or not. Shopkeepers don't challenge as they don't want to lose business

and there is virtually no police presence in the village to "discuss and encourage". How can this issue be dealt with to protect everyone?

Answer: It was the role of the shopkeeper to encourage and explain to customers to wear face coverings. If the police were called, they would continue to encourage usage of face masks but would enforce if required for non-compliance.

Question 5: We have received, and passed on to the police, information about bike thefts and sales of drugs by a 16 year old (in the two villages of Horton and Wraysbury) who appears to be working for a couple of older men. He had involved other young adults in delivering drugs and in handling stolen goods (hiding a stolen bike for him), but they are too scared to talk to the police for fear of the repercussions from the lad. With virtually no police presence in the village this can only get worse, and more and more children will get dragged in. How do you propose dealing with this issue in Horton and Wraysbury, and quite probably in many other villages in the Thames Valley area?

Answer: TVP were aware of this and had intervened and the action was underway around individual.

Question 6: Locally there had been a high incidence of bike thefts, catalytic converter thefts, use of CO2 vials. What more can be done to prevent these?

Answer: TVP were working on bike thefts, particularly around Maidenhead railway station. There was work currently being carried out.

Question 7: What proportion of the current workforce split by PC and PCSO, admin etc represented the BAME community? Taking the recent recruitment drive what proportion of new staff represent the BAME community?

Answer: Recruitment was being encouraged more recently but there was definitely more to do to have a better visible representation. In RBWM, 13% of the workforce were from the BAME community in the local force.

Question 8: Do you feel that PCSO's are having to undertake social work and is this right? If not, what can be done about it?

Answer: PCSO's were not undertaking social work but their main responsibility was to problem solve and engage with the community with less enforcement powers.

Question 9: Has there been a negative impact on the number of PCSO's as I assume they would have applied, and probably be fast tracked, for PC roles?

Answer: There had not been a negative impact as anyone who had had another career before and was older would remain in the job as a community warden for longer. Many PCSO's had applied for the new police positions in the uplift.

Question 10: Anticipating a significant rise in unemployment over the coming months/years especially youth unemployment what additional steps are you intending to take to minimise the chances of the youth joining the crime scene?

Answer: This was always an issue for the force, not just youth crime but all crime so the trends were monitored closely.

Question 11: What was the policy on deployment of officers to rural versus urban areas?

Answer: Neighbourhood teams were segregated into geographical areas. Officers were dedicated to an area and they were dedicated to respond and patrol that area.

Question 12: Do Neighbourhood Watch schemes reduce crime or just push it on elsewhere?

Answer: Neighbourhood Watch schemes were great at raising awareness, they could also raise fear of crimes to some residents but TVP always recommended people to join the scheme.

Question 13: What clear message could we give residents to reduce crime and the fear of crime?

Answer: A lot of what had been already discussed in the questions and in the presentation.

Question 14: What permanent changes do you foresee as the result of COVID?

Answer: There were not many changes in the force but internally, the ways of working had changed very much and this may have an impact on the estate as more staff were now working from home.

Question 15: Was the high housing cost in the TV negatively impacting on recruitment and, if so, was there a way to overcome this?

Answer: TVP paid an allowance as cost of living was very high in the area. However, many good people were still applying, showing that the cost of living was not impacting people applying for jobs in the Thames Valley area.

Question 16: Has the 101 response time improved? There were residents who informed us that they had given up using this service.

Answer: Answered in detail in the presentation.

Question 17: Not all dog owners could control their pets which had resulted in the death/savaging of other residents' pets. Was there a role for the police in taking action? If not, what would you suggest residents do?

Answer: There was robust legislation for dangerous dogs. This was treated as violent crime and this was treated as priority.

Question 18: Eton Town Council very much appreciated the ongoing work done by our local police team in dealing with anti-social behaviour on the Brocas during the challenging times of the pandemic. We did however have another recurring issue in our High Street with cyclists using footways and/or travelling the wrong way down our one-way High Street and fear that this presented a serious danger to residents. Could the Chief Constable assure us that when possible, resources would be devoted to regular monitoring and enforcement as they have been in the past to such good effect?

Answer: The local Community Wardens could now issue fixed penalty notices to cyclists on pavements. The borough were working through the changes.

Question 19: Bray Parish Council have this year had a number of similar Traveller incursions onto the same piece of parish council land. In the eyes of the parish council and the residents these incursions look similar but appear to be being dealt with differently by the police. What are the criteria for immediate police action please? Was there a set of rules applicable to such incursions, or was the decision up to the senior officer at the time? On each occasion Bray Parish Council informed their bailiffs and incurred mobilisation charges. If we (BPC) knew that the police would action immediate removal, we could save public money by not employing bailiffs unnecessarily. We would like to know the police's intentions as soon as possible, so, if necessary, we could employ bailiffs without delay. We have a policy of not allowing travellers to stay longer than necessary on BPC land. Even an overnight stay can, and often does, lead to rubbish being left on site. The rubbish left after the most recent incident included human

waste and it cost BPC a considerable amount of money to have it removed in a safe (Covid 19) manner.

Answer: TVP do have the power to remove traveller incursions in certain situations, however, they have to meet certain criteria. Each one is looked at in its own merit. The primary responsibility lied with the land owner in the first instance.

Question 20: What is your target for answering 101 calls, as from recent personal experience you can wait for up to 19 Minutes to get an answer to report non-emergency 'crime in action'. The message warned of a 10 minutes delay (is that acceptable?) Is this operational failure due to under resourcing of the 101 system and how can you reassure us that performance will improve.

Answer: Answered in detail in the presentation.

Question 21: What could we do as Councillors to assist the local police e.g in my ward of Boyn Hill, Maidenhead West we have had a recent spate of anti-social behaviour and within the borough and U.K-wide there has been an issue with illegal use of nitrogen oxide.

Answer: The possession or taking of nitrogen oxide was not illegal, the supply of it was the problem. It was unfortunately easy to get hold of. Education and diversion was required. The situation had been made worse by Covid-19.

Question 22: In the current climate due to COVID-19 pandemic how had the police adapted their policing and resources to reflect the ever changing challenges in these unprecedented times.

Answer: Answered in detail in the presentation.

Question 23: Were there ways we could help the Police with local community engagement or policing recruitment.

Answer: Neighbourhood Action Groups were not working very well currently. These were being looked into to improve.

Question 24: How did you plan to adapt your operations following the recent reduction in Community Wardens? Was it your understanding that your officers would cover the shortfall to avoid an increase in antisocial behaviour?

Answer: Answered in detail in the presentation.

Question 25: This year, some councillors and community wardens had noted a sharp rise in drugs/alcohol-related littering, particularly nitrogen oxide canisters. Have your officers observed a similar rise and if so, what do you think is driving it? Could it be linked to lockdown and mental health issues?

Answer: Answered in detail in the presentation.

Question 26: If not already covered in the presentation, could you give us a brief update on the Drugs Diversion Scheme pilot scheme?

Answer: This is a scheme which is similar to the speed awareness course. Users were given an option to divert to a resilience course whilst being interviewed under caution. If they did not attend the course then they were given a formal sanction. There had been a good uptake for the course with more than 100 people attending the course. The feedback had been very good.

Councillor Del Campo asked if the call answering times figures reflected all dropped calls before being answered. John Campbell responded that abandoned calls had gone down and were heading in the right direction. The performance figures were also heading in right direction overall. The burglary figures had only gone up slightly since everyone was first at home. It was 30% less in the Thames Valley area and 3% down in this area.

Councillor Greg Jones asked for further clarification on anti-social cycling and what Community Wardens could actually do. David Scott informed the Panel that High Streets were treated as highways and therefore the Community Wardens had no powers. The devolved powers were for antisocial behaviour on the pavements and the extended delegation was still to be resolved for delegation to Community Wardens.

Anthony Stansfeld spoke to the Panel and informed them that the performance had been very good across TVP. Currently the night-time economy was non-existence as people were staying at home, hence crime was down but going forward it would increase. Most staff at TVP were working from home and the property assets were being looked at. TVP had had an uplift and extra officers were being recruited so were up on numbers again.

Thames Valley Police had been rated as the best force for the detection of crime but still not rated outstanding and this was because it was not measured on outcome of crime, it was an odd way of marking us.

Anthony Stansfeld held many other roles on a national level. The current worry was about council precept figures. This was the figure charged to the local authorities which was in-turn the council tax rates for residents. Up until three years ago this was capped at 2% but then it was increased. The first two years were only covering what was down. The last year, a little extra had been made. Anthony was supposed to retire last year but as a result of Covid-19 has remained in post till May 2021.

The Chairman thanked all for attending, the presentation, the overview and most importantly answering all the questions that had been raised prior to the meeting and at the meeting.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & ACTIONS ARISING

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Part I minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020 were a true and accurate record.

The Panel went through the actions from the previous meeting. Most of the actions had been completed.

Adele Taylor attended the meeting to reassure the Panel that all scrutiny's panels would be involved in the budget process. They would play a part in the relevant area in development, in proposals, advice and timetable. A report would be presented to Cabinet in September 2020.

Councillor Price stated that certain areas that the Panel were responsible for were not presented to the Panel last year. The Panel wanted to get involved earlier in the process.

Councillor Price asked about paragraph 3, paragraph 5 and paragraph 6 on page 10 and it was reported that for three points, the work was in progress.

Councillor Price requested a briefing note be sent to Panel Members on the Community Safety Partnership.

ACTION: David Scott to send a briefing note on the Community Safety Partnership.

NORDEN FARM - FOLLOW UP ON ANNUAL PRESENTATION AND SLA

Suzie Parr, Museum and Arts Team Leader, introduced the item alongside Jane Corry, Chief Executive and Artistic Director.

Jane Corry gave an update on Norden Farm. Some of the things they were doing included doing a lot of work with disadvantaged groups and also a lot with schools. Many projects had been created that were completed by children at school and at home. A lot of work had been done with the elderly. Norden Farm were going to be opening on Sundays for the first time with a socially distanced capacity, providing live-stream too from their website. Many activities were being launched online.

Councillor Price requested that Norden Farm would provide an update at the November meeting giving after their AGM. The Panel would then scrutinise. Councillor Price requested that the officer, Suzie Parr, added to the report for the November meeting, an analysis of KPI's and other requirements. Councillor Price was aware that Norden Farm did provide monthly reports to Suzie Parr.

ACTION: Suzie Parr to provide a comprehensive report to the Panel with an overview of all reports from the SLA period before the next meeting.

SPORTSABLE ANNUAL UPDATE - YEAR 3 SLA FUNDING UPDATE

David Scott, Head of Communities, introduced the item and thanked Asghar Majeed, Chairman of SportsAble and Julia Chester, Deputy Chair, SportsAble Board of Trustees for attending and providing the Panel with a Year 3 SLA funding update.

Julia Chester informed the Panel that things at SportsAble had changed considerably. Julia Chester would report on the questions that were asked at the previous meeting. Julia Chester updated the Panel on the following points:

- The Charity Commission report and redacted letter had been sent to the Panel Members.
- There was going to be a likely insolvency of SportsAble Ltd, which was separate in financial responsibility. An insolvency had been filed. As a result there was some trading limitations on the Charity.
- Hiring out of space – associated with objectives in raising money, the space was used to the fullest extent for weddings, parties, wakes and meetings of local charities and sports groups.
- As a charity, a bar could not be run.
- Covid-19 restrictions had had an impact on less people meeting together, having to spend more on cleaning and restrictions in raising money.
- Other concerns in the Charity Commission letter were already being addressed. SportsAble were still in contact with the Charity Commission and had received good advice about the process.
- The SportsAble charity was much stronger and in a better place.
- The number of Members and where they were based had been provided. It was a high level view and a snapshot in time using postcode analysis.
- Covid-19 had effected the membership greatly.

David Scott confirmed with Julia Chester that the figures showed that there were 252 members on 1 August and asked what category these fell into. Julia Chester informed the Panel that this included all members including carers and their family members. David Scott suggested that the figures would be more useful if they were broken down further by category.

ACTION: SportsAble to do further breakdown of figures into categories and report back to David Scott.

Councillor Del Campo asked for clarification on who owned the land and who owned the building. Julia Chester informed the Panel that the Charity had leased the land from RBWM since 1995 for 60 years and owned the building.

Councillor Price asked what support the council could give for the outreach project. Julia Chester informed the Panel that the council could help by providing signposting, to point people in the right direction, this would be helpful to both parties. Julia Chester continued that they were trying to be creative and were looking at new ways of working. SportsAble had plenty of space but there were now restrictions in place, the cost of cleaning the building was expensive, four times more than before covid-19. As a result, only one group could use the facilities every day. Councillor Price asked for suggestions on what could be done. David Scott commented that the club was facing a different world with new arrangements and a different approach. David Scott suggested that he would talk with his team to explore further ways of signposting.

ACTION: David Scott to explore new ways of signposting

Councillor Bhangra thanked SportsAble for being a great charity.

Councillor Del Campo suggested having discussions with Braywick Leisure Centre (BLC) to see if they could assist. David Scott informed the Panel that subject to the leisure trust meeting government guidelines, SportsAble would be able to resume as soon as possible. David Scott offered to explore all avenues and have discussion.

ACTION: David Scott to work with SportsAble and BLC to explore and discuss.

Julia Chester reported that the swimming coach had worked very closely with officers in the design of the pool at the new BLC. SportsAble thanked David Scott who had always been very helpful to SportsAble.

COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT

Nikki Craig, Head of HR, Corporate Projects and IT, presented the report to the Panel.

The Panel briefly discussed the report. David Scott informed the Panel that residents sometimes thought they were complaining but were actually making a request. Councillor Bowden suggested that geographical data would be useful and Nikki Craig said the report would evolve in the future.

Councillor Price pointed out that the report was very different to what was presented to Adults O & S Panel, the style was very different. Nikki Craig informed the Panel that this was due to the nature of adult services which was under a lot of external scrutiny and due to its statutory nature of the report.

BRAYWICK LEISURE CENTRE UPDATE

David Scott, Head of Communities, reported that since the last meeting the contractors were preparing well. The dates, despite Covid were progressing well. The handover date was two weeks earlier than previously planned. The centre would be open to the public on Saturday 12 September. The progress was very good.

Councillor Del Campo asked about the attendance figures on page 22. David Scott informed the Panel that the Magnet Centre had closed on 21 March 2020, however across the whole of March, there was a reduction in attendance. There had been a drop in the figures year on year comparison. David Scott invited the panel to visit the BLC on a Panel site visit or hold a future Panel meeting there.

Councillor Jones asked when the pool and fitness classes would close at Magnet LC. David Scott reported that it would be back to back with BLC opening.

Councillor Bhangra asked what measures were in place for social distancing. David Scott responded that it was the same as other leisure centres, operators met all safe measures, additional cleaning regimes were in place, there were reduced members and pre-booked activity and feedback is positive.

Q1 PERFORMANCE REPORT

David Scott, Head of Communities, presented the report.

Councillor Price asked clarification on Braywick which was mentioned in the report as BLC was not yet open. David Scott clarified that this was referring to the Braywick Gym.

WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel raised the following points:

- To include the budget discussion in a future meeting.
- Parish Councillor Margaret Lenton informed the Panel that as Chair of the Windsor and Maidenhead Society, there was anxiety amongst members as the borough had no heritage policy. Councillor Rayner informed the Panel that the borough does have a culture and heritage policy. There was currently an ongoing project and they could discuss offline.
- Councillor Price suggested that there be a task and finish group for the opening of the museum. Councillor Rayner updated the Panel that the council were working on opening up the museum and were also reviewing and presenting at the November meeting. If any changes to the museum were suggested, a consultation with residents would take place.
- Councillor Bhangra requested an additional meeting for the SERCO Contract for waste collection as there had been a terrible service. The Panel all unanimously agreed that an additional meeting as soon as could be arranged be scheduled inviting SERCO senior management to give an explanation.

ACTION: Clerk to arrange an additional meeting ASAP for the SERCO Contract waste collection discussion.

- Ben Smith, Head of Commissioning, Infrastructure, provided an update to the Panel. SERCO had increased their resources on the roads and in back office and were catching up with the task in hand. SERCO had implemented the operating model that they had put the bid in with only within the last few weeks.
- To add Battlemead Common to the work programme.
- To get further clarification on the Allotments item. David Scott informed the Panel of the scope of the item and would discuss with Councillor Del Campo offline.
- Councillor Price highlighted the opening of libraries. Councillor Price informed the Panel that a consultation had begun that ended on 30 November and requested an update be presented to the Panel after the consultation was completed.
- Councillor Davey asked the Chairman if he had written to all members to ask for topics to discuss at the Panel. The Chairman and Lead Officer highlighted that an invite had been sent to all members in the Members Update. The Chairman had also emailed Panel Members for items and all relevant items were included on the work programme.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY; That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes

place on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The meeting, which began at 6.15 pm, finished at 10.00 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....