

## COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2021

PRESENT: Councillors John Bowden (Chairman), Greg Jones (Vice-Chairman),  
Gurpreet Bhangra, Jon Davey, Del Campo, Lenton and  
Parish Councillor Pat McDonald

Also in attendance: Councillor Clive Baskerville, Councillor Maureen Hunt, Councillor  
Donna Stimson, Councillor David Cannon, Councillor Christine Bateson, Councillor  
Gerry Clark, Councillor David Coppinger and Councillor Andrew Johnson

Officers: Shilpa Manek, David Scott, Andrew Durrant, Emma Duncan, Nikki Craig,  
Alysse Strachan and Andy Aldridge

### WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Price. Councillor Davey was substituting.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

### MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: that the minutes of the last meeting on 15 June 2021 were a true and accurate record.**

This was proposed by Councillor Bhangra and seconded by Councillor Greg Jones.

### ANNUAL PRESENTATION BY CHIEF CONSTABLE OF THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Matthew Barber, Police and Crime Commissioner gave a presentation to the Panel and the Cabinet.

Councillor Johnson commented that it had been a challenging few weeks for the police force, not just in the Thames Valley area but all over. As a councillor, the confidence in the force was very strong. Councillor Johnson was very happy to hear the increase in officers and to hear where the police were concentrating their efforts such as cyber-crime and environmental crime. The Council were happy to assist in any way. Councillor Johnson made mention to a crime summit, bringing together all of the issues.

Matthew Barber commented that on three of the points raised by Councillor Johnson, firstly, special constables and the potential specific for local authorities to consider and this would be something that Matthew Barber would write to all councils about which was that local authorities had the ability to provide council tax relief for special constables and some authorities had done this up and down the country. There was a challenge in Thames Valley area as there were thirteen billing areas in the Thames

Valley area and all thirteen would need to sign up. There would need to be a consistent approach. Secondly, neighbourhood crime, there was a challenge for the Chief Constable and the force but it was hugely important because of the confidence in policing. For most people it was about how the force responded to the everyday incidents such as car crime, antisocial behaviour and how quickly you could get through to 101. The final point around confidence in the forces, there were several strands of work in this area including the vetting and reviewing the process that took place to accept officers into the force. Matthew Barber commented that getting the culture right in the organisation was very important and work was being carried out in this area too.

Councillor Jon Davey commented that residents were being asked to pay more and more in precepts and it would be interesting to understand where these monies went. Councillor Davey continued that the community speedwatch had been taken away from the police as they were not building confidence. Matthew Barber commented that the operational work would still be carried out by the force and the PCC office would oversee some of this by funding the move to the new organisation. The PCC's role was to support the force where they needed it. Councillor Davey continued that he understood that this was now that a resident could come forward with measurements and submit them and if it was found that too many people were speeding down then the force would get involved. The PCC was taking responsibility and putting more funding into the process.

Councillor Jon Davey commented that it would be interesting to understand why officers were leaving the force. Matthew Barber commented that we were not struggling, the numbers fluctuated, and the biggest number of leavers were retirees. The discussion of maintaining recruitment and retaining staff occurred on a fortnightly basis with the Chief Constable and one of the issues were that of cost of living and the Royal Borough being a very expensive part of the world so officers left the area to join another area that was cheaper to live in.

Councillor Catherine Del Campo asked why the borough had missed out on the round of safer streets funding and what could be done better next time. Matthew Barber informed all that this was a competitive process and applications were received from all over the country and only the best bids had been selected from the Thames Valley. His team were working with other teams to make the bids a lot stronger. There would be future rounds of funding.

The Chief Constable gave a presentation to the Panel and Cabinet.

The Chief Constable and the Windsor and Maidenhead Local Police Area Commander - Supt Mick Greenwood answered the pre submitted questions. These were as follows:

1. With the lockdown, drug dealers have devised more sophisticated routes to market. Residents are concerned that drug dealing is taking place openly in residential areas which previously was not. What can be done to come down hard and fast on drug dealing in a way that residents can see action? The Chief Constable responded that it had been a concern, but Thames Valley Police had been successful recently which had been driven by community assistance. Of the 70% stop and searches, 36% had been positive.
2. Due to staffing shortages the police have to prioritise which crimes they enforce/investigate. Doesn't that make the law enforcers the law makers?

Thames Valley Police had had to prioritise based on the greatest threats on the public.

3. Acknowledging that public finances are tight, RBWM has cut back significantly on its Community Wardens and thus residents are turning to the police as the first port of call. But we're told you're still short staffed. Residents pay a precept as well as national taxes, but the service level is not what the public expect in terms of response times and willingness to tackle law breakers speedily. When will the service match residents' expectations? Thames Valley Police were trying to fill the gaps. Currently they were better off by two than in 2017. Thames Valley Police were agile about where they were deployed, filling gaps for better coverage and visibility. They could also utilise other officers and teams to provide additional support.
4. One of the impacts of the pandemic is that some people are choosing to retire earlier than they originally planned. Do you anticipate that there will be an exodus of experienced staff over the next five years, so that new recruits will only keep police numbers static, not increase them? There were 4500 officers in Thames Valley Police and approximately 23 staff were lost in a month including retirement and moving. Only three officers had been lost to the Met.
5. Given the reduction in community wardens what reassurance can you give to residents of outlying villages that they will see more than just reactive policing. Thames Valley Police were trying to fill the gaps. Currently they were better off by two than in 2017. Thames Valley Police were agile about where they were deployed, filling gaps for better coverage and visibility. They could also utilise other officers and teams to provide additional support.
6. Have you got a robust, quick and effective plan to deal with any protestors who may attempt to block roads or cause other disturbances in the Borough? There had been no protests yet in the Thames Valley area. Officers were on standby and commanders were ready. Thames Valley had assisted other forces and if required the reserve forces could come together from the three counties.
7. We have seen recent increase in car theft and attempted thefts around the Royal Borough notably in my ward of Boyn Hill. What are Thames Valley Police doing to combat this especially reference to the rise in keyless car thefts. Thames Valley Police had been increasing the messaging. It had been recognised that organised crime was a big problem all over the country, nationally and regionally and lots of work was being done.
8. Anti-Social Behaviour - i.e Motorbike and Car racing late night into the early hours is an issue. What are Thames Valley Police able to plan to deal with this regular occurrence in West Maidenhead. The process had been recognised and the police were dealing with the offenses.
9. Given the major reduction in PCSOs and now the reduction in Community Wardens, what plans have you to cover the large gap in policing our Neighbourhoods? Thames Valley Police were trying to fill the gaps. Currently they were better off by two than in 2017. Thames Valley Police were agile about where they were deployed, filling gaps for better coverage and visibility. They could also utilise other officers and teams to provide additional support.

10. There have been a number high-profile murders of women by strangers recently. Sarah Everard was murdered by someone whose job it was to protect her; PCSO Julia James was murdered in broad daylight whilst walking her dog; and sisters Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman, murdered while celebrating Ms Henry's birthday. Another case in the news recently is still being investigated. Yet, we know that women are most likely to be murdered by somebody known to them, and the toll of 'domestic' murders grows unabated. Too many women feel unsafe on the streets and in their homes. My questions are:
- What do you plan to do to help women reclaim the streets and parks, and feel safe in their homes? There were a number of teams that dealt with this intelligence that was as robust as possible. The two important points were Intelligence and Investigation. These were considered under public space safety on the Googlemap facility. This needed to be shared with the public more widely. The lighting and many other things were being improved.
  - Will you be implementing the recommendation of the Zoe Billingham report for the Home Office that violence against women be given a priority akin to counter-terrorism and county lines? This was already being done.
  - And why do you think murders of white women often seem to receive much more coverage than those of women of colour? This was not for Thames Valley Police to comment on.
11. Anecdotally, I am hearing that TVP is losing officers to the Met as they pay more. Is this true and if so, what are you doing to retain officers, including PCSOs? There were 4500 officers in Thames Valley Police and approximately 23 staff were lost in a month including retirement and moving. Only three officers had been lost to the Met.
12. Finally, we are receiving more and more casework around antisocial behaviour and speeding, and this seems to be a particular issue in our more rural wards, where there doesn't seem to be a very visible police presence. At the same time, the number of community wardens in the borough has been reduced by two thirds, and the remaining six are stretched much more thinly. What is your message to residents in the borough who have had enough of antisocial behaviour? The process had been recognised and the police were dealing with the offenses.
13. Community concern about the use and disposal of Nos Cannisters in both rural and urban communities is on the rise, especially with nightly discovery of large quantities of used canisters scattered around, especially in car parks and similar at the weekend. Whilst we are aware that this is a policing priority and that police have very limited powers around this subject, RBWM are considering a Public Spaces Protection Order to make possession of these items (without a legitimate reason) an offence, giving the council and police the powers to take action against people found in possession of them on the street or in vehicles and the associated ASB. Whilst not creating an expectation that police would mount operations against this issue, it would give them an additional tool in their tool box, when they come across such issues. This has already been implemented in Spelthorne (in Surrey) and there is a perception of displacement of this problem, due to the publicity, into the bordering TVP/RBWM Wards. The public message given by police support for us taking this action, would assist in addressing community concerns.

Would TVP be in support of this proposal? The Chief Constable informed all that the offense was not with the possession but with the actual selling of the cannisters. Thames Valley Police were happy to keep this under review and look at any hotspot activity. It would be interesting to see what Spelthorne had done.

14. As a community at the extremity of both the Borough and the Force area, Datchet, Wraysbury and Horton Villages are often sighted on Surrey Police's Social media. Whilst this is an excellent tool to engage with their community, it does raise a concern in our area when the Police Force bordering TVP/RBWM, is publicly promoting their activity against their own community's concerns of Nos cannister usage, E scooters, parking enforcement and obstruction/pavement parking. All these issues are of great concern to the community at the edge of RBWM but these examples of Surrey Police, just across the border, proactively addressing these issues, that all appear to be too low a priority with TVP to justify action, is causing dissent. This in turn further reinforces the perception in the villages, on the borders, that they are not sufficiently policed or that police resources are focused elsewhere, to their detriment.

Can TVP reassure residents where Community concerns fit in local policing priorities and can the use of TVP Social media be increased, to highlight locally the good work being done in these rural communities. Further work needed to be done. Thames Valley would look at how actions could be taken but needed to know where this was happening.

The Chairman asked if Slough Thames Valley Police divisions could be called upon for assistance if required and was informed that Berkshire was split into five areas and there was flexibility, and all would support each other if an incident was to occur. There were lots of coworking with detectives for very serious crimes too.

Councillor Rayner thanks the police saying that there had been issues during covid lockdown and in the Windsor night-time economy, but real progress had been made and achievement engaging with residents.

Councillor G Jones asked is the cycle of crime for people had been broken. The Chief Constable informed all that some crime would return after covid. Some structural changes had been made in the force.

Councillor G Jones asked why 101 calls were taking longer and was informed that it was a non-emergency number. The 999 calls needed to be taken first. There was a fine balance between speed and quality.

Councillor Davey asked was the Good Sam, an app that residents could download? The Crime Commissioner commented that he had seen this function recently demonstrated in a control room. It was not a piece of software that residents needed to download as some may choose not to. The way it worked was whilst someone was on the phone to 999 or 101, the operator could send a text message to that phone and they would get a simple text message with a link that would open their browser. The operator would ask them to share location and as long as the GPS was on, they could just say yes. That would then be seen in the control room and they could share a

video. Councillor Davey commented that this seemed a great facility but the person in the situation would need to respond quickly.

Councillor Davey continued and asked if car manufacturers could do more to make car crime harder. The Chief Constable said there was a lot more the manufacturers could do. There had not been any particularly high spikes that had recently been noticed.

The Chairman thanked all for attending.

## Q1 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

David Scott presented the Q1 Performance Management report.

David Scott clarified a couple of contextual points and remind the panel of or explain for the that as a council, we had adopted an interim strategy last year as we settled into the impact of the pandemic and the reports in the quarterly update were still being reported against the priorities that were identified in that interim strategy and the council was in the process of developing its new corporate plan which would succeed the interim strategy and the reporting of the performance for the quarter one and two would be against the interim plan. The other point of note was that what had previously been reported under the headings of commissioning and infrastructure and communities was now being reported under the neighbourhood services.

For quarter one, four of the seven measures were meeting or exceeding the targets, three out of the seven were short and set within the tolerances and there was a bit more detail. In summary in terms of the reflections on quarter one, there were a number of points in relation to covid and covid related activity and everyone would appreciate that had been an ever-changing activity and indeed some of the narrative that had been included and articulated in the quarter one report now felt very old.

The contact tracing service continued and in early June, which was the end of the quarter, some new elements were introduced. This included texting and part of the focus that had been done since then was moved to an even greater local emphasis on local contact tracing to try and ensure that we had been able to be responsive to those people who had been identified through positive testing to then have a follow-up call and indeed we entered something called local xero which you'll hear more about in future performance periods but there was a reference to it in the report in terms of the lateral flow device tests.

Of the decision to start local testing through lateral flow devices using the two main leisure centres as a very significant part of our response at Braywick and at Windsor and we had continued to support that testing for supervised testing's and it had also been complemented through the introduction of various mobile response type arrangements which have been adjusted and flexed to reflect where there had been higher cases identified through the testing programmes and that had continued to evolve and adapt over the quarter two period from the details in the leading on the quarter one in addition to the supervised testing through the pop-up sites or the static operations. We had also been supporting the home-based arrangements either through the distribution of community collect kits from the static sites or through the pop-up arrangements.

During the last quarter that had evolved further in that home testing through online requests had grown significantly and had now taken over as the greatest supply element in terms of home self-testing and the ongoing work in relation to the visits to centre had declined and the number of hours that had been used this was being kept under review.

Mr Ed Wilson, resident, asked about parks and open spaces. Alysse Strachan commented that things had moved on. Alysse Strachan was in discussions with Tivoli. The Clerk informed all that there was a scoping document for all to comment on as part of the work programme item and there would be a meeting solely for the ground's maintenance contract with Tivoli.

Councillor Davey made comments about the statistics in the report on flytipping and also commented on the libraries and how well they were doing and but also worth noting that half the audience had been lost which could be because of covid. Alysse Strachan commented said she would look into the figures with the performance team.

Councillor Del Campo commented that the leisure centre attendance figures were good and getting better, but Councillor Del Campo asked if the people with disabilities and the Disability Forum were shown the report to comment on. David Scott commented that the report was not presented at the Disability and Inclusion Forum. However, Leisure Focus, at the leisure centres, were working with many of the groups that had attended SportsAble and working with them and the feedback had been very positive as a number of succession arrangements had been put into place. The team always work hard to raise the numbers. For people with disabilities, who were more vulnerable and where there had been a greater hesitancy to return to activity, this was being addressed over the next year as part of the response the ongoing response to trying to get more people more often across the borough.

Councillor Del Campo continued that she had received queries from residents swimming at Braywick Leisure Centre and the information on the website. David Scott had discussed this with the manager and Kevin Mist about this and had requested that this was made clearer. Residents could still pay and play, but government guidelines were being followed especially with respect to numbers.

Councillor Del Campo commented that on page 15, it referred to the closure of Stafferton Way refuse site had impacted. Councillor Del campo asked if the refuse was not taken to the tip and was not collected, where did it go? Alysse Strachan responded that some would have ended up as fly tipping and some in domestic waste.

Finally, Councillor Del Campo asked about libraries and whether the targets needed to be revisited. David Scott commented that he was certain that Angela Huisman and Louise Freeth would be looking at the targets as part of ongoing performance and the Performance Team were scrutinising the targets set before the start of the year in light of progress after quarter one and there would probably be further progress after quarter two.

Councillor Greg Jones asked how many fixed penalty notices had been issued for fly tipping in quarter one and had any hidden cameras been introduced in fly tipping hot spots? Alysse Strachan would check and get back to Councillor Jones.

**ACTION: Alysse Strachan to respond to Councillor Jones question**

## COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS REPORT

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

Councillor Del Campo commented that one of the issues for residents was lack of action, how was this reacted to and how was this fed back? Nikki Craig responded that the reasons for the complaints are self-selected by the complainant, the selected options with the high-volume complaints are relooked at to see if there were any patterns, were they upheld, partially upheld or not and then looking at these in more detail and then going forward there would potentially be some improvement.

Councillor Davey commented that it would be good to proactively encourage residents to get positive solutions to make sure that they made a positive cost.

Parish Councillor Margaret Lenton commented that there was a lot of concern about Tivoli in Windsor and that many residents, especially in the villages had no access to computers and found themselves more and more disadvantaged. Parish Councillor Pat McDonald agreed with comments raised. Nikki Craig commented that if residents called the customer services, they were happy to make a note and log it for the resident and agree for the compliment and complaints team to get back to the resident with a response.

## APPOINTMENT OF PARISH REPRESENTATIVES FOR NORTH & SOUTH PARISHES

The clerk informed the Panel that the co-optees on the Panel, from Parish Councils, one from the north area and one from the south area. Both areas to also have a deputy, if there was more than one person interested. Any interested parties would need to send a statement of why they were interested. The clerk would send out something soon. The Cox Green clerk, Stephen Hedges, would also assist in the process.

## WORK PROGRAMME

The clerk requested that the Panel look at the Tivoli scoping document and that Alysse Strachan and Andrew Durrant were online to assist and answer any questions. The Panel were only given the document recently, so it was still a work in progress document. The issue was raised by the Panel, Councillor Bhangra and Councillor Davey. This was being taken forward in the new way by preparing a scoping document and after the corporate plan, this was the second one.

The clerk asked that Panel Members study the scoping document and send any comments/questions to the clerk by the following Friday. The scoping document would be amended and finalised and then a specific meeting would be had for the Tivoli performance and Grounds Maintenance work. A new date for the meeting would have to be found. The clerk suggested switching the items from the 9 November meeting to the 26<sup>th</sup> October date and having the Tivoli meeting on 9 November. The Panel unanimously agreed.

Councillor Davey requested that existing data be looked at and included. Alysse Strachan agreed that this would be fine.

The clerk asked Andrew Durrant for an update on the Maidenhead Gold Course. Andrew Durrant requested more direction around what aspects they wanted to know. A revised offer had been offered to the golf course and all Members were aware of this. The Chairman asked the Panel if a further update was required. Councillor Del Campo commented that the item should stay on the agenda as it was an item of huge public interest.

The clerk reminded the Panel that item that Panel Members wanted on the agenda, now required a scoping document. The briefing notes were no longer part of the scrutiny process. If items could be addressed in another way then that would be preferred.

The clerk went through all items on the work programme. Andrew Durrant commented that there was nothing to scrutinise on the Alexander Gardens car park so the item should be taken off. The Panel agreed to take this off the work programme.

The clerk asked if a scoping document could be done for the waste management strategy and Alysse Strachan commented this could be taken forward. The Panel would be required to prepare a scoping document. The minerals element would need to be looked at separately. The clerk could check with Councillor Price.

The Monitoring Officer commented that the scrutiny committee needed to add value to the work of the council and the scoping document would be really focussed on what difference the



work would make to that particular item. Outcomes and the difference the discussion would make would be very important.

Councillor Del Campo commented that some items were time limited and needed to be considered in a timely manner.

The clerk suggested inviting the Lead Officer to the December meeting to discuss and give further information on Norden Farm and The Old Court. The Panel agreed.

Councillor Del Campo suggested that she would prepare the scoping document for the Climate Strategy item. The Panel agreed with that.

Andrew Durrant suggested bringing SERCO in the new year after the changes had occurred.

Andrew Durrant commented that for Boulters Lock car park, the borough had gone out to get costings to improve the car parking area. The team had to go out again to the market for quotes and costs because the original quotes that had been received were higher than the budget that had been set aside. The new quotes had now been received and these were being reviewed.

Councillor Del Campo was happy for this to come off the work programme, but Councillor Jones felt it needed to stay on to get further progress. The parking was very bad in the area.

Andrew Durrant thought it was a good idea to look at Leisure Focus and the Sports Strategy.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 10.30 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....