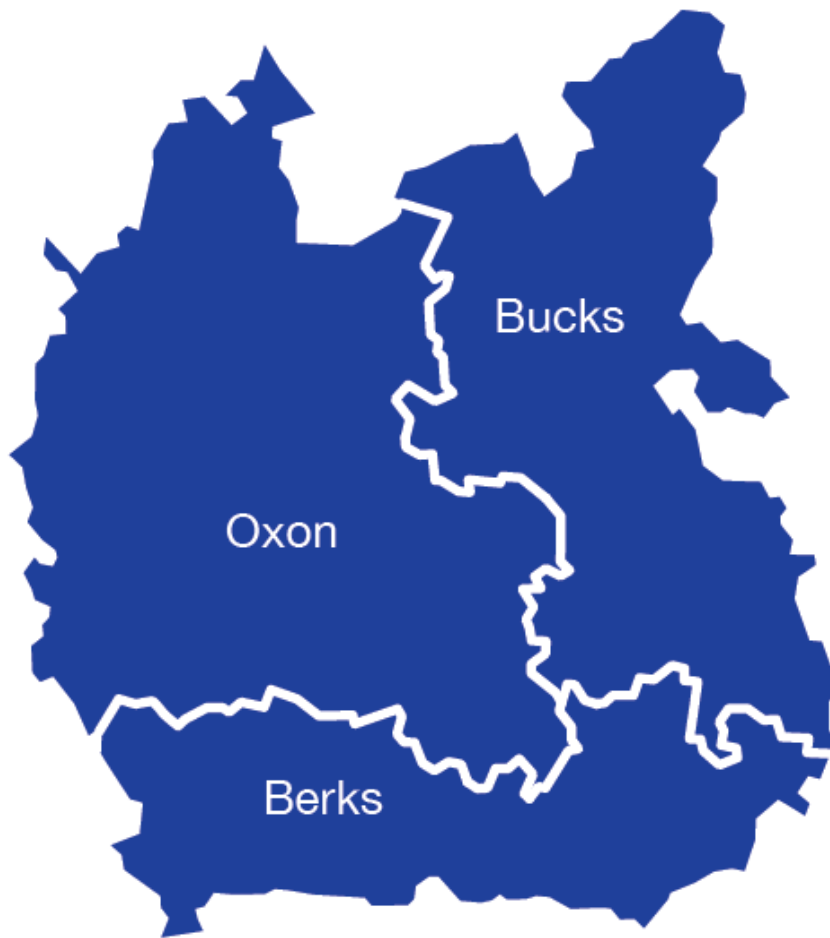


Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel



Annual Report 2022/23

MEMBERS OF THE THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

2022-23

Councillor Balvinder Bains - (Slough Borough Council)
Councillor Robin Bradburn - (Milton Keynes Council)
Councillor Peter Brazier - (Buckinghamshire Council - Co-opted Member)
Councillor David Carroll - (Buckinghamshire Council)
Councillor David Cannon - (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead)
Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye - (South Oxfordshire District Council)
Councillor Emily Culverhouse – (Buckinghamshire Council - Co-opted Member)
Councillor Neil Fawcett – (Vale of White Horse District Council)
Peter Gammond - (Co-Opted Independent Member)
Councillor Maria Gee – (Wokingham Borough Council)
Councillor John Harrison – (Bracknell Forest Council)
Councillor Keith McLean – (Milton Keynes Council – Co-opted Member)
Councillor Eddie Reeves – (Cherwell District Council)
Councillor Simon Rouse – (Buckinghamshire Council - Co-opted Member)
Councillor Karen Rowland – (Reading Borough Council)
Councillor Geoff Saul – (West Oxfordshire District Council)
Councillor Diko Walcott – (Oxford City Council)
Councillor Richard Webber – (Oxfordshire County Council)
Councillor Howard Woollaston (from 1 December 2022) (Councillor Claire Rowles until 1 December 2022) – (West Berkshire Council)

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Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (PCP) is a joint committee comprising of 18 elected members from each of the 14 first tier local authorities (three co-opted councillors from Buckinghamshire Council and one co-opted councillor from Milton Keynes Council and two independent co-opted members,

It can be contacted via the address below:

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<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/thames-valley-police-and-crime-panel/>

Twitter: [@ThamesValleyPCP](https://twitter.com/ThamesValleyPCP)



For 2022/23, the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Thames Valley is Matthew Barber who was elected on 6 May 2021.

He can be contacted here:

**Office of the Police and Crime
Commissioner
The Farmhouse
Thames Valley Police Headquarters
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Website:

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Chair's Foreword

This is the tenth annual report of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (PCP), which covers its activities during the 2022/23 calendar year.

The objective of the Panel is to maintain a 'check and balance' on the performance of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) regarding his strategic objectives contained in his [Police and Criminal Justice Plan](#)

The Panel plays a vital role in holding the PCC to account and supporting him in the effective exercise of his duties, in particular the way he holds the Chief Constable to account.

The Panel is dependent on the dedication and commitment of its Members, both Members of Constituent Authorities in the Thames Valley and its two Independent Members.

The Panel Members ensure that the Panel carries out its statutory functions which, help to deliver an effective and efficient policing service for the people of the Thames Valley.

The Panel has appreciated the work of Matthew Barber, the PCC and his officers, in helping the Panel in its work throughout the year and producing excellent, informative reports for the Panel to scrutinise.

This is particularly appreciated in the support which is given to the Budget Task and Finish Group in the scrutiny of the Police precept for Council Tax.

Panel Members in carrying out its scrutiny work throughout the year acknowledges that Thames Valley police officers and support staff are very much in the front line and continue to carry out their duties to the best of their abilities for residents of Thames Valley.

For 2022/23, the Panel would also like to thank the work of its Complaints Sub-Committee, which deals with non-criminal complaints against the PCC and his office. Councillor Emily Culverhouse is the Chair of the Complaints Sub-Committee.

The Panel has been ably assisted in its work by Khalid Ahmed, in his role as Scrutiny Officer, now working for Buckinghamshire Council.

Councillor Keith McLean (Chair of the Panel)

The Role of the Panel

Police and Crime Panels were established in each Police Force area under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The key functions of the Panel are:

- ❖ To review the PCC's Police and Criminal Justice Plan;
- ❖ To hold the PCC to account for the delivery of the Police and Criminal Justice Plan – the panel has powers to request any necessary information from the PCC on his decisions;
- ❖ To review and report on the appointment of the Chief Constable and other senior appointments – the Panel has powers to veto the appointment of the Chief Constable;
- ❖ To review the PCC's proposed police precept – the Panel has powers to veto the precept;
- ❖ To scrutinise the PCC's annual report;
- ❖ To consider complaints against the PCC.

The Panel, through its work programme, has carried out its main statutory duties which is to scrutinise and support the PCC in his role in helping tackle crime and disorder in the Thames Valley. The PCC was elected to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure an efficient and effective police force for the Thames Valley.

The Panel cannot directly scrutinise operational policing matters but can question the PCC on how he is holding the Chief Constable to account for policing in the Thames Valley.

The Budget Task and Finish Group

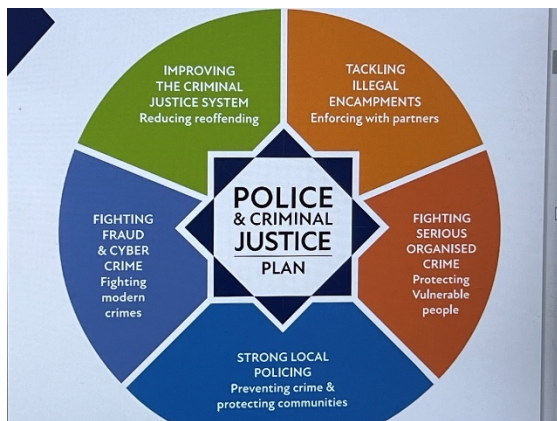
Members of the Panel worked with both the PCC and Thames Valley Police Chief Financial Officers on reviewing the PCC's draft police precept before the proposed precept was submitted to the Police and Crime Panel.

The Panel agreed with the PCC's recommendation and approved the Police and Crime Commissioner's precept for 2023/24, to increase the Council Tax precept by £15 (Band D), as set out in the OPCC report 'Four-Year Medium-Term Capital Plan 2022/23 to 2026/27'.

The Work of the Panel in 2022-23

Throughout the 2022/23 Municipal Year, the Panel held scrutiny sessions on several policing and crime matters and questioned the PCC on these areas.

Progress in meeting PCC'S Police and Criminal Justice Plan



The PCC presented his Annual Report to the Panel which provided details of progress which had been made in the financial year in meeting the objectives contained in the PCC's Police and Criminal Plan.

The objectives were: -

- **Strong local policing**
Preventing crime & protecting communities
- **Fighting serious organised crime**
Protecting vulnerable people
- **Fighting fraud & cybercrime**
Fighting modern crimes
- **Improving the criminal justice system**
Reducing reoffending
- **Tackling illegal encampments**

Enforcing with partners

The PCC reported that the Plan had victims at its heart. Bringing criminals to justice is vital, but preventing people from becoming victims of crime in the first place is even more important, both through proactive crime prevention and through reducing reoffending.

The PCC reported that aligned to his local priorities are National Priorities for Policing. The Home Secretary has developed some key measures to support the strategic priority for a 'relentless focus on cutting crime'.

The six priority areas are:

- Reduce murder and other homicides
- Reduce serious violence
- Disrupt drugs supply and county lines
- Reduce neighbourhood crime
- Tackle cybercrime
- Improve satisfaction among victims – with a particular focus on victims of crime

The scrutiny session covered areas which included: -

- There was a reduction in neighbourhood policing resources when strong local policing was a priority
- How was the PCC to ensure that the public would get strong local policing, which was paid for through the police precept
- Response to the Metropolitan Police recruitment drive to attract officers from other forces
- Performance of response to 101 calls
- Knife Crime and Operation Deter
- The importance of TVP attendance at Community Forums
- The importance of Police Community Support Officers to local policing and the need to bring them up to full establishment.

- The fear of crime and the increase in anti-social behaviour and the need for better Police performance
- Violence Against Women and Girls was not one of the six priorities, although there were elements throughout the Plan which covered this area. TVP carried out lots of work around Domestic Abuse, the Night-Time economy and there was soon to be a Safety of Women and Girls in Public Places scheme, which would come to the Panel for comment.
- The implementation of a Thames Valley partnership for CCTV
- The effectiveness of Schools given talks on organised crime
- On Improving the Criminal Justice System, a deterrent to crime should be an appropriate sentence.

Prevent - Was It Fit for Purpose?



The PREVENT Duty is part of CONTEST, the United Kingdom's counter-terrorism strategy. The Prevent Strategy has specific strategic objectives:

- respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it
- prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they

are given appropriate advice and support

- work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address.

Section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on certain bodies ("specified authorities" listed in Schedule 6 to the Act), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

Guidance is issued under section 29 of the Act. The Act states that the authorities subject to the provisions must have regard to this guidance when carrying out the duty.

The Home Office oversees Prevent activity through the Prevent Oversight Board, chaired by the Minister for Immigration and Security.

Counterterrorism is a Strategic Policing Requirement and in extremes, the Home Secretary can direct a PCC to take specific actions to address a specific failure.

The PCC provided the Panel with details on how he holds the Chief Constable to account in complying with the duty that police should engage and where appropriate disrupt extremist activity, in partnership with other agencies.

The police were expected to prioritise projects to disrupt terrorist and extremist material on the internet and extremists working in this country.

During the scrutiny section, the Panel noted that this was a national scheme.

The PCC informed the Panel that from a TVP perspective, he was confident that data was shared across police force boundaries and with other public agencies. There were challenges with general data sharing across boundaries, not just relating to counter terrorism.

In the Thames Valley, relationships on the ground were good with Community Faith Groups, although these could be improved. Reference was made to the community tensions and unrest which had occurred in Leicestershire and that contact had been made with community groups in Milton Keynes and Reading to alleviate the threat of this being replicated. Local neighbourhood groups had contact and good relationships with Faith Groups.

The Panel noted that there was an increase in Extreme Right-wing radicalisation which was higher than those for Islamist radicalisation. Was the PCC happy that this was working with the Channel programme and what engagement was taking place with Extreme Right-Wing groups?

COMMUNITY SPEED UPDATE



The Panel was given with an update on the successful Community Speedwatch scheme in Thames Valley. Members

were reminded that the new Community Speedwatch scheme was launched by the PCC in October 2021 in conjunction with Community Speedwatch Online and was managed by Roads Policing.

The Panel noted that there were 217 groups across the TVP footprint, comprising of over 1200 residents/volunteers, and the system has been set up so that Councils can access information on all schemes in their LPA/jurisdiction areas.

A Panel Member referred to the frustration of some Speedwatch volunteers who saw a disconnection between the collection of speeding data and enforcement.

The PCC said that he agreed with this, however, Community Speedwatch was about educating motorists. Previously, the data which was used to be collected on paper on a voluntary basis, which did not enable a proper analysis of the data.

The Panel was informed that a motorist could receive 3 letters over a rolling 6-month period with any further transgressions leading to a visit by a Roads Policing Officer to discuss driving behaviour. There could be further escalations should the behaviour continue and ultimately could lead to enforcement. Local Neighbourhood Policing Teams could be tasked to carry out an enforcement package.

Reference was made to sites where there were persistent offenders. This could be an issue caused by the roads design which may need redesigning the road to mitigate the speed.

The PCC reported that the resources used were primarily based on crash records and the need to look where the danger and speeding was on roads.

The whole point was to build up the data and work on solutions for problem sites.

The PCC reported that interactions took place with local authorities on sites where it was determined that roads required speed being designed out. There was a network of TVP officers and Council Highways and Road Safety officers who met regularly at a Thames Valley Road Safety Working Group to discuss road safety issues.

The PCC said there needed to be a new structure with a strategic team overseeing the work of the working group to enable the work to be carried out.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF POLICE OFFICERS



The PCC provided the Panel with an update on the recruitment and retention of police officers within Thames Valley Police Force.

Reference was made to there now being more police officers in Thames

Valley than ever before, mainly due to the Uplift programme with the headcount of warranted officers standing at 4,772.

The Panel was informed there was still an issue of officers who were leaving the Force due to retirement, resignation, or dismissal.

At the end of March 2023, the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme would be coming to an end. This was the strongest officer recruitment, and the latest news was that a degree was to be no longer compulsory for new recruits.

The PCC reminded the Panel that newly recruited Police Officers had to previously obtain a degree qualification within 2 years as a recruited Police Officer. Apprenticeships for a period of three years, also had to obtain a degree qualification within this period.

The report provided for the Panel included updates on retention measures and how to increase application levels from BAME and female applicants. There were encouraging progression in this respect.

The PCC informed the Panel that an engagement team had been established to improve engagement with BAME and female applicants. There were a variety of reasons for BAME applicants dropping off during the recruitment process (22% applications, to only 14% joining).

The PCC said that the engagement team would talk to the individual to find out the reason for their dropping out of the process.

In relation to recruitment and retention problems with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), the PCC referred to PCSOs who had progressed to Police Officers and who had become PCSOs to assess the attractiveness of a career in policing. Work was taking place on recruiting to the PCSOs vacancies.

Reference was made to the recent convictions of Metropolitan Police officers and the problems with police vetting. The PCC was concerned at those Police Officers who transferred between Forces, who had slipped through the vetting procedures.

The Panel was assured that there was a strong culture within TVP where concerns regarding officers would be highlighted by their colleagues.

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners would be discussing vetting to ensure that there was consistency across forces, however, vetting is not always the issue, as any officer may fall foul of disciplinary or criminal issues in a few years. The culture of the Force was very important in terms of identifying problem officers.

BUDGET TASK AND FINISH GROUP – SCRUTINISING THE PCC FOR THAMES VALLEY PROPOSED COUNCIL TAX PRECEPT FOR 2023-24

The Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel formed a Budget Task & Finish Group to assist in discharging its statutory duty to scrutinise the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Thames Valley's proposed Council Tax precept for 2023/24.

The Budget Task and Finish Group submitted their report and findings to the Panel meeting on 27 January 2023, and recommended the proposed increase to the police element of the Council Tax by £15 (Band D), as set out in the OPCC report 'Four-Year Medium-Term Capital Plan 2022/23 to 2026/27'. This was agreed by the Panel.

The Panel was provided with the budget papers which were presented to and agreed at the Performance and Accountability meeting between the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable on 19th January 2023.

The PCC introduced the item and explained the reasoning behind the proposed £15 (Band D) increase to the Council Tax precept. There were significant pressures on budgets with inflationary pressure, rising energy and fuel costs. The increase would enable 80 additional police officers to be recruited by the end of this financial year.

PROGRESS ON CONTACT MANAGEMENT PLATFORM



The Panel was provided with a report which provided details of progress made in relation to improvements to the Contact Management platform.

Reference was made to the CM101 programme in collaboration with Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Constabulary which had been

approved to improve working practices and performance.

The Panel was informed that to meet current 999 and 101 targets, an extra 195 staff on top of the agreed establishment for the department was required at an additional £6.8 million which was not a viable option. The programme had identified a range of process improvements and new technologies, such as Robotic Process Automation, which alongside a significantly smaller staff uplift, could improve demand management and help achieve 101 average speed to answer times of less than 4 minutes. These improvements over the next 21 months would be at a cost of £1.5 million.

COMMUNITY POLICING STRATEGY - CRIMEFIGHTERS STRATEGY AND COMMUNITY POLICING



The Panel was provided with a report which outlined the Crimefighters Strategy being implemented in order to build confidence in policing and develop stronger local policing.

Included in the report was a forward look at how Community Policing in Thames Valley would be delivered in the future.

Reference was made to the strategy improving public contact which would involve reducing 101 waiting times, the automation of feedback and enabling better digital contact.

The PCC acknowledged the frustration that residents had with the 101 service and commented that the £6m cost associated with increasing call handlers was not realistic. Technology would improve the service. Timescales were on track and work was taking place with technology partners. There would be improvements on feedback to victims of crimes and technology to be used would include webchat, WhatsApp and social media.

The PCC referred to the need to improve Community Policing and to capitalise on the record number of police officers in Thames Valley.

With regard to neighbourhood policing, the PCC referred to the Royal Borough of Windsor Council who had invested in four additional police officers to support community safety. Neighbourhood Policing emphasised a local approach to policing that was accessible to the public and responsive to the needs and priorities of communities.

The visibility of police officers was important in terms of building public confidence and encouraging the compliance with the law.

The Panel raised the issue of TVP officers dealing with incidents which involved people with mental health issues which took up police time. The PCC reported that TVP covered many areas and that partnerships with mental health partners were complex.

There were four Integrated Care Systems which covered the Thames Valley and there were complexities with mental health trusts in Thames Valley.

Reference was made to the recent directive from the Department of

Health, “Right Care, Right Person”, which was a model designed to ensure that when there were concerns for a person's welfare linked to mental health, medical or social care issues, the right person with the right skills, training and experience would respond.

This would enable police officers to deal with policing matters.

There were challenges around mental health and more was needed to be done to provide the right care for people.

In response to a point raised that the PCC's commitment to neighbourhood policing was contrary to the reduction of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO), the PCC acknowledged PCSO numbers were down. Recruitment of PCSOs was taking place and it was hoped that in the next 3-4 years, PCSOs would be back to full establishment.

The PCC stated that PCSOs were the bedrock of neighbourhood policing and that they needed more powers. However, the more powers they were given, the less they were PCSOs, so it was important that the right balance was found. Increased responsibility and powers would mean more paperwork and less time spent out in communities.

There had been an impact of the retention of PCSO's, with many being appointed as police officers. This was not just a Thames Valley issue. The retention of PCSOs was a national issue, although some forces have taken the decision to reduce numbers.

In Thames Valley there was a commitment to increase the numbers and get back to full establishment.

ARREST DATA BY ETHNICITY, INCLUDING STOP AND SEARCH AND THE POLICE RACE ACTION PLAN



Race Action Plan
2023-2025



The Panel was provided with a report which showed TVP's arrest data by ethnicity. The report also included information on stop and search, and progress made on the Police Race Action Plan.

The report presented local data in the context of race disproportionality in the use of police powers, and looks at the developing governance structure and HMICFRS

The headline information was that current disproportionality rates indicated that a Black person is 3.3 times more likely to be arrested than a White person, per head of population.

By contrast, the likelihood of an Asian person being arrested is exactly equal to that of a White person.

The PCC reported that the report sets out a complex picture with a changing landscape. There were many scrutiny bodies which included community groups that looked at this data.

UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS



The Panel asked that the PCC provide information on one his objectives contained in his Police and Criminal Justice Plan, Tackling illegal encampments.

The PCC provided a report which contained a briefing on Force and LPA Unauthorised Encampment Performance data, training, and the response to Unauthorised Encampments (UE) in Thames Valley Police. The report also contained an overview of how TVP were working with Local Authorities in the Thames Valley to provide a consistent response to Unauthorised Encampments.

The Panel was reminded that in 2018, a joint working protocol in relation to unauthorised encampments was established between TVP and local authorities. The protocol sets out the aim and general principles for police and local authorities when responding to and dealing with unauthorised encampments.

The protocol also included the actions required to be taken and describes how

the police and partners will communicate with each other in relation to unauthorised encampments.

In response to a point raised of why only 16 Section 61s were used in 2022, out of a reported 386 unauthorised encampments, the PCC informed Members that the data did not show when local authorities and landowners took their own action, or the travellers moved on their own accord.

Section 61 was only used when proportionate action was required.

CYBER AND DIGITAL INVESTIGATION & INTELLIGENCE



The PCC explained that there was a significant overlap in this area for TVP and regionally. Reference was made to a service plan which had been created to define and focus the priorities and strategies for Thames Valley Police and the Regional Cyber Crime Units (CCU).

The plan sought to align service delivery based on the key strands of the Government's National Cyber Strategy 2022 and TVP force priorities as detailed within the Thames Valley Police Strategic Plan 2019/2020.

RESTART THAMES VALLEY



RESTART Thames Valley was a year-long pilot programme that started in May 2022, and which focused on supporting people leaving prison, including women and those on short-term sentences.

Over half of people released from prison in the Thames Valley re-offend within 12 months. This project, delivered in partnership with Aspire Oxfordshire, Browns Community Services, Parents and Children Together (PACT) and Thames Valley Partnership, aims to break the cycle by offering support prior to and post-release from prison.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner had secured £613,800 from the second round of the Ministry of Justice Local Leadership and Integration Fund (Prison Leavers Project) to work with partners across the region to develop solutions to key challenges faced by people released from prison.

The PCC referred to such challenges which included the provision of and access to support, access to accommodation and work opportunities and engagement with numerous service providers.

This pilot ran from May 2022 to end of April 2023, and this has been extended for a further 12 months, jointly funded

by the PCC and the Director of Probation, South Central.

The PCC reported that the objective of the scheme was about crime prevention and stopping the cyclical pattern of people who went to prison.

MULTI AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUBS- ROLE OF TVP



The PCC provided a report which gave an overview of the initial implementation of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), the current landscape, emerging risks and opportunities for the future and TVP's involvement in them.

MASHs are made up of a range of organisations including TVP in Thames Valley who are responsible for safeguarding adults and children.

Thames Valley have MASHs in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and in Reading, Slough, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham, Bracknell and West Berkshire.

The main advantage of the MASH is that officers now share the information their agency may have on a child or adult immediately. This is to ensure that decisions made consider all available information.

An information sharing agreement has been established between the agencies involved with the MASH to ensure that information is shared confidentially, proportionately and securely.

The PCC referred to some of the benefits of robotic automation in relation to safeguarding and that Robotic Process Automation (RPA) was used to relieve demand on 101 (around 600 calls per month) and improve service delivery to partners by eliminating call waiting time.

This would speed things up and spotted things quicker, which was vital for domestic violence disclosures (Clare's Law): RPA identified current or expired high-risk domestic abuse (DA) perpetrators in new or previously unknown intimate relationships to prompt a 'right to know' disclosure to their partner.

The Panel was informed of the proposals to explore the benefits of withdrawing from the six-hub model in Berkshire and to deliver statutory services remotely despite the previously held belief that co-location was key, adopted by most forces nationally.

During the scrutiny session, concern was expressed at the fragility of the MASH system in the Thames Valley, particularly with local authorities changing their financial commitments, and the PCC was asked for his view, on who was responsible to ensure the provision of the service was maintained.

The PCC replied that he had the opportunity to bring partners together and on a political level, to make sure there were the right strategic

partnerships. It was important that partners held each other to account, and he would be discussing MASHs with Chief Executives and Leaders of Councils. There were statutory duties for partners which had to be met. It was important that the correct rank of officer of the organisation was at meetings to ensure that key strategic decisions could be taken.

The Chief Constable of TVP expressed his concern at the situation and referred to the importance of partners working together and sharing information. There were differences across Thames Valley of how MASHs operated, with six MASHs in Berkshire and this was a challenge. It was important that MASHs continued because of the important work they carried out in terms of safeguarding children and adults.

CONFIRMATION HEARING FOR CHIEF CONSTABLE

On 18 November 2022, the Panel held a Confirmation Hearing to consider the PCC's intention to appoint his preferred candidate to the role of Chief Constable for TVP.

After asking the preferred candidate a number of questions on his suitability to be the next Chief Constable and after having received assurance that a full open and fair selection and recruitment process had taken place, with the preferred candidate fulfilling the eligibility criteria, the Panel endorsed the appointment of Mr. Jason Hogg to the position of Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police.

Both the PCC and the Panel placed on record their appreciation to the soon to be retired John Campbell for his service

to the people of Thames Valley as Chief
Constable.