

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
6 JULY 2017  
7.30 - 9.01 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Leake (Chairman), Angell (Vice-Chairman), Allen, Mrs Angell, Mrs Birch, Brossard, Finnie, Mrs McCracken, Porter and Mrs Temperton

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillors Tullett

**Executive Members:**

Councillor McCracken

**In Attendance:**

Councillor Peacey

Ian Boswell, Community Safety Consultant

Andrea Car, Overview & Scrutiny Officer

Victor Nicholls, Assistant Chief Executive

Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services

Timothy Wheadon, Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership

**4. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission held on the 11 May 2017 and the minutes of the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Commission held on the 24 May 2017 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

**5. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

Councillor Mrs Birch declared a personal interest as the spouse of the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing.

Councillor Mrs McCracken declared a personal interest as the spouse of the Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection.

**6. Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

**7. Public Participation**

There were no submissions from the public in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

**8. Community Safety**

The Chairman welcomed representatives of the Community Safety Partnership and Thames Valley Police (TVP) to the meeting of the Commission, in its capacity as the Crime and Disorder Committee.

Timothy Wheadon, Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) said that the partnership had sustained success over a number of years, but that there was no room for complacency. Close partnership working with TVP and engagement with other parties in the Borough were key. Over the past year there had been some increase in crimes reported, but this was a small increase compared to other areas. There were also some internal staff changes, with the Chief Officer: Housing taking over the role previously held by the Assistant Chief Executive and Alison O'Meara filling the Community Safety Manager role.

Ian Boswell, Community Safety Consultant, gave a presentation to the Commission on the Bracknell Forest Community Safety Partnership's performance during 2016/17, and plans for 2017/18.

Nikki Ross, Assistant Chief Constable and Superintendent Shaun Virtue, the newly appointed Local Police Area Commander of Thames Valley Police were present at the meeting for this item.

The CSP was a statutory partnership which met four times a year, which was required to conduct an annual assessment of crime, anti social behaviour and substance misuse within the borough. Its work supported the Council's Strategic Theme of 'Strong, safe, supportive and self-reliant communities'.

The Partnership were required to publish a three year plan, which was updated annually, of how it intended to make the community safer. The plan had been refreshed for 2017 – 2019 to fit with the current council plan. There were four main priorities that the plan would focus on over this period.

The CSP received £152,740 grant funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner in 2016/17. The Community Safety Team was comprised of 4 Full Time Equivalent posts which included the Community Safety Manager. The Community Safety Team currently sat within the Chief Executive's Office, but would be moving to Adult Social Care, Health and Housing.

There were two themes and eight CSP priorities for 2016/17.

The key headlines arising from the presentation were:

- Crime had fallen every year since 2008/09 but increased this year.
- There were 4302 fewer victims of crime in 2016/17 than in 2006/07.
- The Crime Survey of England and Wales 2016 showed that there was a constant fall in crime, however this data was not always comparable.
- Within the similar family group, Bracknell had recorded the least number of crimes in the last 12 months. It was hard to compare against the other Thames Valley Boroughs as the areas were so different.
- There had been a 5% reduction in sexual offences in 2016/17.
- There had been a 5.4% reduction in possession of drugs offences. There had been a national drug operation in July 2016 which had issued 60 closure orders.
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary had produced a report about how the police recorded crime, which had brought about changes in the way crimes were recorded.
- The increase in crime in Bracknell Forest could be due to the increase in people in the Town Centre. This would be a challenge going forward as

visitors to the Town Centre were likely to increase from 2.3 million a year to 12-15 million a year. Plans were in place with the local police.

- The 2017 residents' survey recorded that 11% of the public surveyed had said that the low level of crime was one of the best things about living in the Borough.
- There was a number of sub groups of the CSP, these included the Partnership Problem Solving Group which was new and would see through the transition period of the opening of the Lexicon over the next 7/8 months.
- There were many joint operations planned for the school holidays to prepare for the Town Centre opening. Previous work had been undertaken in the Easter holidays and May half term.
- All businesses in the Town Centre from the 7 September 2017, would have to sign up to Bracknell Businesses Against Crime initiative and be required to have a radio system, which would allow for better information sharing across the businesses.
- Westgrove Security would be providing security in the Town Centre, they would be uniformed and were currently undergoing accreditation by TVP.
- The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 listed that the local authority was a statutory partner.
- Risk assessments had stated that Bracknell Forest was a low risk area for acts of terrorism.
- There was a Prevent Steering Group which met three times a year.
- Channel Panels were set up to mitigate the risk of racialisation. There had been two referrals in the past year, one had been a young, vulnerable person in the care system who had caused radicalisation concerns. The Panel had worked closely with the individual to mitigate the risks which had been successful.

Arsing from the Members' comments and questions, the following points were made:

- The people working on site in Bracknell Town Centre had been included in the Town Centre footfall as there had been a number of tools and equipment stolen from site as well as thefts from vans. This did not explain all the increase in crime as there did not seem to be one reason.
- The exact number of Westgrove Security staff was currently unknown, there would be an assessment of needs to determine what scheme was required.
- Premises opening at night would require their own security not just police response, subject to strict licensing regulations.
- The night time economy would bring a different footfall. The Neighbourhood Inspector and Ian Boswell were working through a programme to set the tone, reliance and police visibility.
- The Town Centre management had been mindful in their choice of night time establishments.
- The Chief Constable would decide the powers delegated to Westgrove Security.
- There was a balance between being visible at night time as often an increased number of visible Police Officers caused more issues. The Police were very experienced and hoped that Members would trust their approach.
- The Security firm would be accredited, vetted and trained. Their powers would include being able to issue fixed penalty tickets, but they would not be able to arrest offenders. There was a similar arrangement at the Oracle, Reading where the Security team were very good at building a rapport with the public, recognising flash points and doing prevention work.
- The Police were aware of the anti social behaviour which had increased in local car parks. This was one of the Neighbourhood Team's priorities and they

would be introducing education programmes and focusing on public areas in the summer holidays. This would be a long term engagement and would depend upon the resources and capacity within the team.

- Concerns were raised that there was also an issue of anti social behaviour in the car park at South Hill Park.

Nikki Ross, Assistant Chief Constable at TVP updated the Commission on the changes within the new operating model.

Changes had been introduced for front line policing. This had been implemented on the 1 June 2017, and was now in week five of the new system. TVP were ensuring that the change was seamless to the public even though it may not be behind the scenes.

The changes had allowed for the Police to model demand against resources for the first time. As well as working on a triage basis within contact centres to determine over a number of questions what had happened and whether the police needed to attend or another agency. This allowed for the police to only attend if necessary and ensure that the right team or agency was sent out at the first time of contact.

There was a new TVP structure which had three different teams, this would be circulated to the Commission.

These were:

Response

Investigation Hub

Neighbourhood Team

The colocation of the teams would be different throughout towns and Boroughs, and the size of the Neighbourhood Team would be smaller but dedicated solely to neighbourhood issues rather than used for response, which was what often happened previously.

There were also changes for back office staff with process changes and different systems which would all take time to bed in. Demand had increased over the last month due to the terror attacks in London and a murder investigation in Oxford. This increase was the same across the Country.

The Assistant Chief Constable commented that partnership working in Bracknell Forest was incredibly strong and made a significant difference. This was not replicated across all of the other sixteen locations within Thames Valley.

As a result of the Members' questions, the following points were made:

- When demand was back to normal focus would be on bedding in the new system. On the hot weekend in June the police had received more telephone calls than they did on New Years Eves. This spike needed to be investigated to understand the reason why.
- The new system would be reviewed at three and six months and phase two being implemented after these reviews which would introduce more technology.
- The new operational model had been developed by process evolution technology and demand matrix to ensure the correct staffing levels locally. The number of Officers had not decreased and was the same as the previous year. The new model allowed for officers to be on duty at the time of need not

when nothing was happening. This would be reviewed in September and also annually to ensure staffing levels were correct, but it was no longer guesswork.

- The Police Point in Crowthorne would be placed in the Fire Station to ensure there was still an accessible point, which was a priority. It would be operated by the Neighbourhood Team as the Police Station had previously.
- The way the police managed and dealt with lost property had changed as the service was not value for money and often storage was an issue.
- All areas had retained their Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) but would need to be smarter about visibility making sure that they target certain areas at key times.
- Comments were made that a PCSO had attended an event at The Pines School and was very engaging and had done a really good job.
- Volunteers allowed for a better service to be provided in the Police Points. There were often more volunteers in the Sandhurst Police Point than people using it as the public used other means to contact the police.
- There was no desecration over recording court diversion outcomes within Youth Offences. Even if diversion was the outcome this would still be recorded. There had been no increase in youth offences.

The Chairman thanked all those who had contributed to the item. He commented that the most important message was that Town Centre policing and safety commenced on the right footing from the start as it would be easier than having to correct the approach later down the line. He wished TVP good luck in embedding the new model and looked forward to future updates.

## 9. **Communications and Marketing**

Having resumed its Overview and Scrutiny role, the Commission received a presentation updating them on the work of the Communications and Marketing function.

The key headlines from the presentation were:

- The team was currently based within the Chief Executive's Office.
- There was full in-house capability, with a Head of Service, a deputy and a graphic designer within the team.
- There were 5 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) in the team, the average across similar teams within Berkshire was 5.2 FTEs.
- The function had been reviewed by the IESE Business School in 2016. The team had previously worked in an account management model with officers matched to specific departments which were not often the best use of officers' time or skills.
- The new model focused on a strategic approach to communications and marketing, particularly focusing and delivering support on the big strategic projects happening within the Council.
- There had been a considerable growth in social media demands. The team's target was to hit four million social media impressions a year, the team was currently hitting five million, putting three or four messages a day out on social media.
- The new approach meant that the team were focusing on the most important council priorities and supporting transformation.
- As part of the new model, a self service approach for routine, straight forward communications would be provided by nominated service officers who had

been trained by the Communications and Marketing team. This had been implemented in February 2017.

- Press Office and out of hours support would still be provided.
- There was one long term sickness absence within the team and one member had left, which resulted in two vacancies within the team at present.
- Digital upskilling of the team was a priority.
- The team were happy with the shift of focus and work and felt that the new model was working well.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- The Mayoral website was being administered by Mayoral support as part of the new self service approach.

The Chairman thanked the Assistant Chief Executive for his presentation.

#### 10. **Quarterly Service Reports (QSRs)**

The Commission noted the Quarterly Service Reports for the fourth quarter of 2016/17 (January to March 2017) relating to the Chief Executive's Office and Corporate Services Department.

As a result of Members' comments and questions, the following points were made:

- Councillor Finnie expressed concern that he had not received any information as the councillor for Crowthorne regarding the Crowthorne Community Hub.
- Business reporting was currently being looked at as part of Transformation work as the quarterly performance reports were often out of date by the time they were reported at Overview and Scrutiny Commission meetings.

#### 11. **Executive Forward Plan**

The Commission noted the forthcoming items on the Executive forward plan of a corporate nature.

Arsing from discussions it was noted that:

- The Council were already out to tender for the contract for the work at Time Square, this would conclude at the end of August with work due to start at the beginning of October and finishing in February 2018.
- A newsletter regarding the Time Square work was due to be sent out to Members.
- Members and the Democratic Function would move across to Time Square in March 2018.
- It was important to get the tender in place for the demolition of Easthampstead House, as otherwise rates would still need to be paid on the building prior to being demolished. This had formed part of the business case.

#### 12. **Updates from Panel Chairmen**

The Commission noted progress against the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2017-18.

#### 13. **Date of the next meeting**

The date of the next Overview and Scrutiny Commission was 21 September 2017.

The Chair commented that this was the last meeting for Victor Nicholls, Assistant Chief Executive. On behalf of the Commission he thanked Victor for his attendance, work undertaken on behalf of the Commission and Council, in particular the regeneration of the Town Centre and wished him all the best for the future.

**CHAIRMAN**