

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
3 MAY 2012  
7.30 - 10.05 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Leake (Chairman), Angell (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Angell, Ms Brown, Finnie, Harrison, Heydon, Turrell, Virgo and Worrall

Ms S Cauchi, Parent Governor Representative  
Mrs C Murray, Parent Governor Representative

**Executive Members:**

Councillors McCracken

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillors Mrs Birch, McLean and Ms Whitbread

**In Attendance:**

Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview & Scrutiny  
Ian Boswell, Community Safety Manager  
Chief Inspector Simon Bowden, Thames Valley Police  
Assistant Chief Constable John Campbell, Thames Valley Police  
Khan Juna, Chairman, Thames Valley Police Authority  
Victor Nicholls, Assistant Chief Executive  
Timothy Wheadon, Chief Executive

**68. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members**

The Commission noted the attendance of the following substitute member:

Councillor Worrall for Councillor Ms Whitbread

**69. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

A Working Group made up of Councillors Leake, Gbadebo, Thompson and Wade had been established to examine the Communications Strategy; an initial meeting would be held on 10 May 2012.

Information relating to questions raised about School Improvement Officers, E+ card use in pay and display car parks and performance indicators relating to special educational needs had been circulated to Commission members following the meeting.

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

There were no declarations of interest relating to any items on the agenda, nor any indications that members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

71. **Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

72. **Public Participation**

There were no items submitted under the Public Participation Scheme.

73. **Community Safety**

**RESOLVED** that Mr Juna Khan, Chairman of the Thames Valley Police Authority, be co-opted onto the membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for this meeting.

Timothy Wheadon, Chairman of the Bracknell Forest Community Safety Partnership, summarised the partnership's structure and said that 2011/12 had been another successful year, with Bracknell Forest being one of the safest boroughs in Berkshire. Ian Boswell, Community Safety Manager, presented an update on the work and resourcing of the Community Safety Partnership. The update included an overview of crime statistics, notable successes and key challenges.

Community Safety Partnership

The Commission was informed that during 2011-12 the overall level of crime in Bracknell Forest had fallen by 17%. Across the whole of the Thames Valley Police area only Wokingham and Chilterns Police Areas had recorded more improved scores. During the same period Bracknell Forest had been the only Thames Valley Police area to record positively for both crime reduction and crime detection. The reduction of Serious Acquisitive Crime, a category that included burglary, vehicle crime and robbery, had been a notable success with a reduction of almost 30.4% when compared to the same period the previous year. A significantly better performance than any other area within the Thames Valley Police area, and a favourable performance compared to other boroughs in the Council's 'family group' nationally.

Following a year on year decline, levels of anti-social behaviour in the Borough over the past year had risen by 4.2% when compared to the previous year. Of particular concern was the number of assaults being reported by the Ambulance Service which had seen a significant increase in recent months and work was taking place with the Ambulance Service to try and identify the reasons why there had been such a marked increase and assess the reliability of this data.

The key challenges for the Community Safety Partnership for the coming year were:

- Continuing to reduce crime figures
- CCT and Automatic Number Plate Recognition
- Tackling public perceptions of crime
- The introduction of Police Commissioners

Members commended the Partnership on the reduction in crime achieved in 2011-12. Arising from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Every incident recorded on CADIS represents a case of anti-social behaviour as seen by the person who reported it, an inevitably there was a degree of error in the data
- The incidents of anti-social behaviour recorded on CADIS built up a picture of activity in an area and often provided useful intelligence of other more serious crimes for example information reported to CADIS has directly contributed to the identification and closure of five crack houses in the Borough, which in turn led to a 90% reduction in antisocial behaviour in those areas
- The police force in Bracknell Forest was split into three teams: Patrol teams, neighbourhood police teams and CID
- The Bracknell Forest Local Police Area was made up of 84 full time police officers, 22 PCSOs and 35 Special Constables
- The Special Constables each worked an average of 3 or 4 hours a week.
- The number of officers in CID stood at 17 however should additional CID resources be required additional CID officers could be brought in from other areas of the Thames Valley to support the local police area
- Criminal damage detection rates were relatively low. This was due to the nature of the incidents for example graffiti tagging and vandalism which were often done out of sight of any potential witnesses
- Compared to other police areas Bracknell Forest's detection rates for serious sexual assaults was relatively good. However a number of factors influenced successful detection statistics including: lack of witnesses, some victims being unwilling to work with the police and the Crown Prosecution Service occasionally declining to proceed with a case
- The Police worked closely with the Council's Drug and Alcohol Action Team however data sharing with three different hospital trusts complicated matters and work was taking place to improve the situation
- It was acknowledged that while the Health and Wellbeing Board could raise the matter of data sharing protocols with Hospital Trusts it was unable to dictate to the Trusts that they comply
- The Council's Drug and Alcohol Action Team were leading multi-agency work to tackle Methedrone use in the Borough. Four significant seizures of the drug had been made since Christmas and work was underway to establish a picture of the supply chain for the drug and build up a profile of the trade in the Borough. The increase in drug trafficking was seen by some members to be alarming
- Thames valley Police had some 35 police dogs, some of which were specialised drugs dogs. Additional resources were available from Hampshire Police dogs operation which was now combined with Thames valley Police's
- A number of intelligence led exercises had taken place with schools to tackle drug and knife crime including taking knife detection arches into the schools and working with security staff from the Coppid Beech Hotel to look for drugs
- Following the completion of a strategic needs assessment the refreshed Community Safety Plan contained three new priorities relating to tackling: metal theft, damage caused by fire and Class A and B drug use and distribution
- Burglary of non-dwellings was an increasingly common crime and included thefts from sheds, garages and business premises
- In budget decisions, Thames Valley Police had safeguarded front-line policing and it was acknowledged that visible police presence affected the levels of fear of crime
- Theft from person related to incidents of pick pocketing and purses being taken from shopping trolleys. Muggings were classified as a violent crime

- Anecdotal evidence from community groups suggested that hate crimes were at a higher level than that recorded and the police were working to encourage higher reporting levels. Efforts were also being made to reduce repeat incidents of domestic abuse, hot spots of anti-social behaviour and harassment incidents
- Members welcomed the long term initiative to counter domestic abuse and noted that most prolific offenders had previously had some experience with this

### Designated Public Place Order

Thames Valley Police had asked the Borough Council to make a Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) for the Town Centre, as research showed there was a related issue with alcohol and anti-social behaviour. The order would give the police the power to seize alcohol from an individual in order to prevent anti-social behaviour. Consultation was taking place currently and to date the majority of responses had been supportive of the proposals.

The area proposed for coverage by the DPPO had been evidence based and if approved the DPPO would cover the whole of Bracknell town centre, extending northwards to cover Millenium Way, eastwards to cover the Met Office Roundabout, westwards to cover the Peel Centre and Arlington Business Park and south to the Station Roundabout.

The DPPO was a proactive power that the Police would use on a discretionary basis to prevent behaviour escalating to a level where arrests and anti-social behaviour orders might be required.

It was acknowledged that the DPPO might push disruptive behaviour to the areas immediately outside the DPPO area however these areas would be monitored closely and additional DPPOs to cover other areas would be applied for if necessary.

The nervousness around additional Police powers was recognised, and if people felt that they were being unfairly targeted under the DPPO then they would be eligible to lodge a complaint within the framework of the Police Complaints Procedure.

The frequency with which the DPPO was used would not be recorded in the figures reported statutorily to the Home Office however it would be recorded in CADIS and could be used as evidence to support further police actions for example applications for anti-social behaviour orders.

**RESOLVED** that the Crime and Disorder Committee endorse the adoption of a Designated Public Place Order in Bracknell town centre.

### Police Crime Panels and the Police Commissioner

A key aspect of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 was the abolition of Police Authorities and the replacement of their functions with the elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC).

The PCC would assume responsibility for securing an efficient and effective police force in their area, set police and crime objectives for their area, appoint the Chief Constable, set the annual police budget, co-operate with the criminal justice system and work with partners and fund community safety activity to tackle crime and disorder.

Although secondary legislation relating to the election of PCCs was still awaited, they would take place on 15 November 2012 with the winner taking office on 22 November 2012.

The secretariat function of the Police Authority including the legal, financial and communications teams would be transferred across to the PCC however the PCC would be able to replace them if they so wished. A transition board would be established to oversee the change over between the Police Authority and the PCC.

PCCs would be held to account by Police and Crime Panels (PCP) who would have responsibility to scrutinise the PCC and support them in the exercise of their functions. Buckinghamshire County Council would host Thames Valley's Police and Crime Panel. A shadow PCP had been set up to oversee the work required in advance to the PCP coming into being in October, with Councillor McCracken representing the Council.

The Commission thanked Ian Boswell, Chief Inspector Simon Bowden and Assistant Chief Constable John Campbell for their update.

#### **74. Executive Forward Plan**

The Commission considered items on the Executive Forward Plan relating to corporate issues and the following points were noted:

- The Service Plans were reviewed annually and detailed the actions that the Council would take over the coming year
- The Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee was focusing on delivering the regeneration scheme. It was considered that the introduction of the new National Planning Policy Framework did not pose a significant risk to the scheme at the current time
- Discretionary rate relief decisions related to buildings used for charitable and community uses
- A fuller description of the purpose of decisions would assist in understanding

The Commission expressed concern about the lack of information about consultation processes and the purpose of the decision that many items displayed. It was agreed that these concerns would be fed back to the Corporate Management Team.

It was agreed that the suggestion of having a presentation on the Service Plan approval process at a future meeting of the Commission would be followed up by the Chairman.

#### **75. Work Programme Update**

The Commission received a report setting out a summary of progress made against the Overview and Scrutiny Commission work programme for 2011-12.

The Commission was informed that the status of all the actions against the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel were on course for completion. Delays in the enactment of the Health and Social Care Bill had delayed the work of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Commission noted the report.

76. **Date of Next Meeting**

The Commission noted that, other than the annual meeting, the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission would take place on 12 July 2012.

**CHAIRMAN**