

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION (CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE)
9 JULY 2015**

**COMMUNITY SAFETY
Assistant Chief Executive**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 Meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Commission is invited to consider the performance of the Community Safety Partnership in 2014-15 and the priorities in the Community Safety Plan for 2015-16.

1.2 Those present at this meeting will include:

Thames Valley Police

John Campbell, Deputy Chief Constable

Dave Gilbert, Chief Inspector and Local Police Area Commander for Bracknell Forest.

Bracknell Forest Council

Councillor Iain McCracken, Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection

Timothy Wheadon, Chief Executive and Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership

Ian Boswell, Community Safety Manager

2 RECOMMENDATION

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee:

2.1 Considers reports by representatives of Thames Valley Police and the Council on the performance of the Community Safety Partnership in 2014-15 and the Community Safety Plan for 2015-16.

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Police and Justice Act 2006 requires every local authority to have a 'Crime and Disorder Committee' with the power to review and scrutinise, and make reports or recommendations, regarding the functioning of the responsible authorities of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership/Community Safety Partnership. Under the Council's Constitution, the O&S Commission is designated as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee. Home Office guidance requires that the Committee should meet at least once annually.

Crime Figures for 2014-15

- 3.2 Thames Valley Police (TVP) has issued the attached information (commencing at page 13 of the agenda), concerning reported crimes in 2014-15.

Other Information From Thames Valley Police

- 3.3 TVP were asked to provide responses to three questions of interest to Members, and the following responses have been received.
1. *How does TVP ensure that the information it issues on reported crimes is complete (by reference to actual crimes) and reliable?*

Crime Recording Governance

Crime recording in Thames Valley Police is overseen by the Force Crime Registrar (FCR) reporting to the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) who is the chief officer with overall responsibility for crime recording.

The FCR is supported by the Force Data Standards Team who maintains ongoing scrutiny of reports of crime to ensure their accurate and timely recording in compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) and the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) for crime.

Routine compliance audits are undertaken for high risk areas of crime including rape, sexual offence, violent crime, domestic abuse, child and adult protection, domestic burglary and robbery. If the audits identify apparent non-compliance the record will be corrected and the appropriate crime recorded.

The results of compliance audits are a key feature of the DCC's oversight and governance regime through the quarterly performance review meetings of Local Police Areas (LPA) and Operational Command Units (OCU) such as Force Crime. In April 2015 the Home Office introduced significant changes to the crime recording requirement to ensure that crimes are recorded at the first point of contact and that the needs, and rights, of the victim are the primary consideration. The Force is fully supportive of these changes and is currently amending our Police Enquiry Centre systems and processes to meet the new requirements.

In support of the Force's emphasis on leadership and legitimacy LPA Commanders have been given clear responsibility for ensuring that staff deal with victims effectively and that reports of crime are consistently recorded in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules for Crime.

2. *What are TVP's views on the indicators of 'fear of crime' ?*

I have attached¹ a copy of the most recent publication of the Crime Survey for England and Wales from March 2015. Unfortunately the CSEW data samples are too small to produce force level samples. However, there is useful information in the report regarding public perceptions of local crime levels based on the English Indices of Deprivation, (Page 3) and the information sources which people use to form their opinion of crime levels (Page 9).

¹ Not attached to the agenda, but sent separately to Members and available to download at <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-public-perceptions-of-crime-and-the-police--and-the-personal-well-being-of-victims--2013-to-2014/chapter-2--focus-on-public-perceptions-of-crime.html>

The bottom line is that given the plethora of information sources available to the public, perceptions of crime are very difficult to influence positively. The other problem is that the CSEW in its current form is too limited. To make meaningful judgements we would need larger samples to show force and sub-force (LPA) responses. The problem is that it would be too expensive and the Government funding isn't available.

From a Local perspective we encourage people to report all crimes, we have recently set up the "it's never OK" website in partnership with Berkshire Woman's Aid, Bracknell Forest Council and the NHS, this is a one stop shop for victims of Domestic Assault, we have also produced a local partnership leaflet encouraging people to report Hate Crime, there are 5 reporting centres across the borough which are advertised to the community.

Our TVP Alerts now reach over 3,500 local residents, we regularly use these and social media to advise residents of all crime reported in their Neighbourhood, it also advises residents on Crime Prevention and encourages them to report suspicious behaviour as well as Crime.

The Council have conducted 3 resident surveys since 2012, the first was a fear of crime survey in 2012, in this 60% of the respondents stated that they are "not very worried or not at all worried about being a victim of crime", in the same year they conducted a Residents Survey, in response to the question "what do you most like about living in the Borough" the top 2 answers were about the access to parks, open spaces and nature and the 3rd top answer was the low level of crime. In 2014 the question was again asked of residents and the "low level of crime" came 5th out of 24 indicators when asked "what do you like best about living in the Borough"

3. What is TVP's strategy for managing its budget reductions, in particular on any impact on the number of police personnel deployed in Bracknell Forest?

The Force has a current budget short fall of £11.7m in 16/17 and a further £10.2m in 17/18. The Force is also awaiting any news of further reductions in budget as a result of Government cuts.

To meet these challenges the Force is currently undergoing a Priority Based Budgeting review whereby all its key services across the Force, are assessed and costed. This process includes looking at new ways of delivering those priorities and restructuring where necessary.

The Force Executive will consider the outcomes of these Reviews in July 2015.

Community Safety Plan

- 3.4 The Community Safety Plan for 2014-17 was refreshed in 2015 and is attached to this report (commencing at page 15 of the agenda).

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS/ EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT/ STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES / OTHER OFFICERS/ CONSULTATION – Not applicable

Contact for further information

Richard Beaumont – 01344 352283
e-mail: richard.beaumont@bracknell-forest.gov.uk