

Thames Valley Police & Criminal Justice Plan 2020-2025

**POLICE
& CRIMINAL
JUSTICE
PLAN**

**Thames Valley
Police & Crime
Commissioner
Candidate**

**Matthew
Barber**

**Version 2.4
31st January 2020**



Foreword

by Matthew Barber, Candidate for
Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner



In these pages I set out my proposals for the next Police and Criminal Justice Plan for the Thames Valley. As the Conservative candidate in the 2020 Police & Crime Commissioner elections I am setting out my vision for policing in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

Throughout the document I set out clear objectives that, as PCC, I will hold the Chief Constable accountable for delivering. Setting out a Police and Criminal Justice Plan is not an exhaustive process, but it does set the strategic priorities and the focus for the effort of the Force in the years to come. These priorities make clear the key areas for future work and the endeavour to bring clearer accountability and to focus on the outcomes for the public.

I have not met a single police officer who does not understand the need for the police to be scrutinised and held to high standards. In return they expect strong leadership, both from their senior officers and the PCC, and a clear vision of what is expected. Officers in the Thames Valley place themselves in harms way every day in order to keep the public safe and uphold the law. They deserve the respect of politicians and the public for their work. My vision for policing, set out in this plan, is for a clear focus on the priorities that matter the most to the public; police officers being empowered to make decisions to protect the public they serve and to remember that the police are only the public in uniform. If we work together, public and the police, councils and the community, law enforcement and the judiciary, we can make the Thames Valley an even better and safer place to live for everyone.



Matthew Barber
Police & Crime Commissioner Candidate
Thames Valley

Police & Criminal Justice Plan

This Police & Criminal Justice Plan sets out the five priorities I intend to focus on if elected on Thursday 7th May. The detailed implementation of the policing elements will be for the Chief Constable to determine through the Force's Strategic Plan and I will hold him accountable for delivering these priorities.

If elected on the basis of this Plan I intend to conduct a short statutory consultation on the final draft of this document before formally adopting it as the statutory plan for Thames Valley.



01 Strong local policing



Recruiting more police officers, protecting local neighbourhood policing and focussing on driving down burglary & rural crime.

Neighbourhood policing is the bedrock of law enforcement in the UK. New and emerging threats such as terrorism and high-tech crime rightly have created specialisms which are vital to protect the public in the modern world, but the significance of effective, visible, local policing cannot be overlooked. Even in the areas of counter-terrorism and serious organised crime it is often neighbourhood police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) that gather the vital intelligence or who are the first on the scene of an incident. We all know that the public not only expect to see police officers, but that they feel safer when they do. This is level of trust and the confidence the police can give to communities is hugely valuable and their trust should be repaid.

Each one of our communities should expect and receive the same highest standards of policing that Thames Valley can provide. Whether it is our city centres where the concern of residents may be the nighttime economy or isolated rural communities that may face vandalism and theft, the police response should always be proportionate, appropriate and understand the impact such incidents have on victims.

The purpose of prioritising local policing goes beyond just visibility. With the victim always at the heart of what we do, we must continue to drive down traditional acquisitive crime and reduce the fear of violence in all parts of Thames Valley.

Neighbourhood policing is at the heart of this model and will be protected. Locally based CID must improve the quality of investigations and communications with victims and witnesses needs to improve to ensure that the public can contact the police easily and that they are kept up to date with the crimes that are affecting them.

Other issues such as speeding traffic also cause great concern in our communities but it is recognised that many of these cannot be solved by the police alone. Engaging with partnership organisations and community groups will provide the key to addressing the concerns of the public and allowing frontline police officers focus on fighting crime.

WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE

- Protecting Neighbourhood Policing Teams
- Recruiting additional officers and improving retention of frontline officers
- Improving communications with victims
- Community Speedwatch to be enhanced under the OPCC
- Maintaining low levels of burglaries
- Reducing levels of rural crime
- Reducing levels of violent crime
- Maintaining the use of stop and search to detect and deter crime
- Improving 101 and other contact services



02 Fighting serious organised crime



Cracking down on the threat from “county lines” drugs gangs to protect children from exploitation and abuse.

Serious organised crime often seems like a distant threat to many members of the public. Sadly, the effects of gangs and serious organised crime groups can often be seen in local communities. Whether it is the drug trade, serious violence, people trafficking or sexual abuse, some of the most vulnerable members of our society often become the victims of serious organised crime.

It can take many forms and Thames Valley already take a regional lead through the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROUCU). Throughout this Police & Criminal Justice Plan the importance of strong neighbourhood policing is emphasised and once again these crime gangs are not purely the remit of specialist officers, but also need to be tackled through strong local intelligence and action.

Sufficient resource needs to be dedicated to tackling these organised crime groups and ensure effective local and regional policing. Technology plays a role as does collaboration with security and intelligence agencies and other police forces. Protection of the public is key and this priority covers those threats that may harm any of us indiscriminately such as terrorism as well as those that are specifically targeted such as victims of child abuse and exploitation.

The Force will continue to lead the way in tactics and techniques to tackle these gangs. As well as seeking to bring those responsible to justice through the courts, tactics will be employed to disrupt their activities, especially when this will safeguard the most vulnerable.

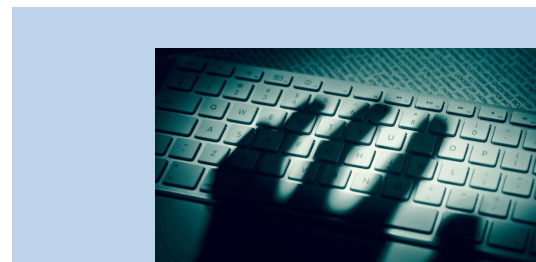
In tackling the exploitation of vulnerable adults and children we will not lose sight of the high levels of acquisitive and environmental crime that is also perpetrated by serious organised crime groups. Additional resources invested in this area will have an impact in reducing many of the crimes that concern the public most in their communities.

WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE

- Continuing to develop the Violence Reduction Unit, identifying potential victims and perpetrators and enable multi-agency interventions
- Increasing the number of disruptions and successful prosecutions for serious organised crime
- Ensuring focus on SOC groups involved with acquisitive crime as well as exploitation
- Ensuring regional resources are available to support local investigations



03 Fighting cyber crime and fraud



Crime is changing and I will invest in the technology and resources the police need to protect the public online.

Whilst traditional acquisitive crime such as burglary (see *Strong Local Policing*) remains one of the public's greatest concern, and undoubtedly can have a huge impact on victims, a new and arguably greater risk is emerging.

We are all much more likely to be victims of cyber crime, often without even realising it, than we are to be a victim of a 'traditional' crime. Fraud and cyber crime covers a wide variety of offences, from corporate fraud within the banking industry that may stretch into billions of pounds, to scam emails that may seek to take just a few pence from a large number of accounts.

Investigating these crimes and bringing people to justice is incredibly complex. Law enforcement agencies across the UK need to significantly improve performance on dealing with these issues domestically let alone the challenge of need to tackling these offences of a global scale.

At a national level I will continue to work with Government, national and regional law enforcement agencies for a more effective and joined up system for dealing with these complex threats.

At a local level will continue to be proactive in educating the public and embracing the specialist technology and expertise necessary to pursue high-tech criminals.

Working through the existing regional structures, developing new collaborations and enhancing the Force's own capability we will enhance Thames Valley's ability to protect the public from both cyber and cyber-enabled crime.

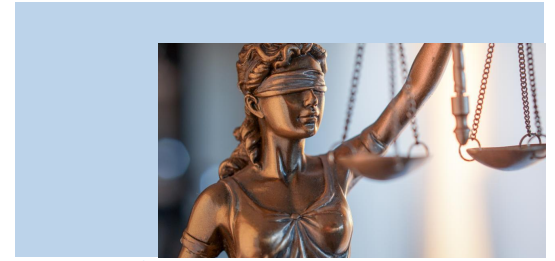
Dealing with cyber is no longer just a specialism, but almost every incident of crime could have some digital footprint. Ensuring that the Force has in place the resources, training and structures to ensure investigations can remain effective in a digital age is vital to maintaining public confidence and fighting crime across the board.

WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE

- Improving education and awareness campaigns to prevent the public from becoming victims
- Working with national and regional partners to develop a more effective national response
- Increasing confidence in reporting cyber and fraud offences, resulting in an increase in recorded crimes
- Increasing the number of successful outcomes
- Enhancing the expertise and capability within TVP and SEROCU to better protect the public



04 Improving criminal justice



Supporting victims of crime, bringing more criminals to justice and reducing reoffending.

The public want to see criminals brought justice, yet the police can rightly only be involved in part of that process. Prevention and detection is the role for Thames Valley Police but there must always be a level of independence from other areas of the criminal justice system.

Police & Crime Commissioners have a wider remit and this is likely to grow further into other areas of the criminal justice system. Through vehicles such as the Local Criminal Justice Board the PCC can exert influence (although not authority) over other partners. Devolution of powers and budgets in other areas could see this role expand as PCCs are uniquely placed to be both publicly accountable and yet have the convening power across all areas of criminal justice.

Much work will still focus on policing, especially ensuring that evidence is gathered efficiently and effectively to ensure the Crown Prosecution Service are able to prosecute cases effectively. Yet a greater focus needs to be placed on getting cases through the courts successfully, improving access to courts even if that is through the use of technology and particularly around reducing reoffending.

The PCC will continue to provide support services for victims of crime through our own Victims First service and will continue to support the voluntary sector working both with victims and the rehabilitation of offenders.

Supporting innovation will be key, as Thames Valley has already demonstrated, for example in the use of GPS tagging of offenders and fast-tracking cases of domestic abuse through the courts.

Ultimately delivering a fair system of justice that provide justice for victims, protection of the innocent and stops criminals from reoffending must be our goal.



WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE

- Continuing Chairmanship of LCJB by the PCC and publishing a public performance report
- Improving victims satisfaction
- Increasing successful outcomes through the criminal justice system
- Working to reduce reoffending in the Thames Valley
- Working closely with the Ministry of Justice on the expanding remit of PCCs
- Supporting innovative projects in crime prevention and rehabilitation

05 Tackling illegal encampments



Ensuring a fair but firm response to illegal encampments and reducing the effect on our communities.

At the peak of the season illegal encampments can be a significant concern for residents across the Thames Valley. Currently the initial trespass is rarely a police matter, but this is often accompanied by reports of anti-social behaviour, criminal damage, theft and intimidation.

Everyone should be treated equally before the law. There are undoubtedly individuals within the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community who consider themselves above the law but equally the many law-abiding members of those nomadic communities should expect the same protection by the police as permanent residents. This is often seen as a conflict, with static communities either feeling the authorities turn a blind eye, or GRT communities feeling victimised.

The answer is a “firm but fair” approach that has buy-in from representatives of the GRT communities and local authorities. Tackling the criminal elements within GRT communities and making them unwelcome in the Thames Valley is to the benefit of both permanent residents, but also the law-abiding majority of travellers who are all too often victimised because of their background.

There needs to be a redoubling the efforts of partnership working with local authorities and landowners to meet the expectation of swift action. Local police areas need to be empowered to take action swiftly to tackle illegal encampments and associated criminality. At the same time local authorities should be proactive in meeting the requirements of the law-abiding GRT community and all partners including the police will need to work with communities to tackle prejudice and discrimination.

Having campaigned for a change in the law, which is now being progressed by the Government I will continue to engage with politicians locally and nationally to ensure we strike the right balance and give the police the right powers to tackle the issue.



WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE

- Reviewing the agreement between local authorities and TVP to tackle illegal encampments
- Reducing the number of illegal encampments across the Thames Valley
- Increasing the successful outcomes resulting from offences recorded relating to illegal encampments
- Working with local authorities on the appropriate provision of sites
- Improving intelligence gathering and site hardening



Draft Thames Valley Police & Criminal Justice Plan

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