POLICING THE THAMES VALLEY

HOW WE CUT CRIME AND PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY
How do you cut crime and inspire trust and confidence in the policing of Thames Valley?

What steps do you take to make sure that your officers and staff are ready and able to respond, patrol, investigate and prevent crime and disorder?

And how do you make sure that your effort is as effective in a city centre as a remote rural village; as considerate to the concerns of a single-parent family as to those of an elderly couple in sheltered housing?

Despite overseeing a 13 per cent fall in levels of crime in Thames Valley in 2011–12, safeguarding the lives of its 2.2 million people remains a challenging task for our police officers and staff.

Over the following pages, we will describe how our team sets about achieving it.

We will illustrate the factors that influence our decision-making and the way we assess risk within our borders and beyond.

We will describe how our ability to cut crime depends upon a carefully balanced blend of policing styles and the teamwork of talented professionals throughout our organisation.

We will explain how we have reshaped our organisation and adopted strategic partnerships that will reduce our costs by £55 million over the four-year period 2011–15 without compromising our focus upon policing more visibly, more locally.

And we will show how we forge partnerships locally, regionally and nationally to catch criminals, prevent crime and protect vulnerable people in our community.

In November 2012, the Thames Valley public will be invited to elect their first Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The PCC will be accountable to the public for setting policing priorities and working with Thames Valley Police to implement them.

This document describes how we police Thames Valley.
HOW WE DECIDE WHAT TO POLICE

We are able to deploy 4,202 police officers, 507 PCSOs and 700 special constables to carry out policing activity with the support of 2,744 police staff and more than 600 volunteers.

Our officers are equipped with operational assets including 326 marked police cars, 93 vans, 4 lorries, 15 motorcycles, 74 x 4s, 9 police horses and 52 dogs.

As one of three forces which form the Chiltern Air Support Unit, we also have the ability to deploy up to two helicopters to support our operations.

3,700 FEWER VICTIMS OF BURGLARIES AND ROBBERIES THAN IN 2010-11

With these resources at our disposal in 2011-12, we will invest policing resources to achieve significant falling levels of crime in Thames Valley: almost 24 per cent fewer incidents of violence against the person and a drop of 13 per cent in burglaries and robberies.

Meanwhile, in 2012, detections of violent crime have fallen by 22,500 fewer victims of violent crime than in 2010-11.

In 2012–13, we will invest £371 million with Thames Valley Police’s service almost 45 per cent and satisfaction with public confidence in our policing. And to achieve this we must ensure that the financial and organisational resources at our disposal are harnessed in a way that achieves the best possible operational policing outcome for Thames Valley.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND POLICING

Our Force exists to serve the public and is funded by taxpayers, so how we invest policing resources is decided by a body that is representative of the Thames Valley public.

That body is the Thames Valley Police Authority (TVPA) which comprises elected and non-elected representatives from across Thames Valley who oversee our work.

TVPA asks our Force to propose a three-year strategy for policing Thames Valley and, annually, a Delivery Plan and budget against which it is able to assess our performance. This is approved by TVPA who hold us to account for its delivery.

22,500 FEWER VICTIMS OF CRIME IN 2011-12 THAN IN 2010-11

From November 15 2012, this responsibility will pass to the new Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) who is chosen by the Thames Valley public. In Thames Valley, we have a three-year strategy – agreed by TVPA in 2011 – to do just that:

1. To cut crimes that are of most concern to the community;
2. To increase the visible presence of the police;
3. To protect our communities from the most serious harm;
4. To improve communications with the public in order to build trust and confidence within our communities;
5. To tackle bureaucracy and develop the professional skills of all staff;
6. To reduce costs and protect the frontline.

These are our strategic goals for operational policing, and the strategic principles that determine the shape of the organisation required to deliver it.

And, for each year of our strategy, we provide a delivery plan of tactical actions that sets out what we will do to get there.

DECIDING OUR OPERATIONAL POLICING PRIORITIES

As a police force, we know that the visible presence of patrol officers in our cities, towns and villages is a source of reassurance for all of us.

And we know that our community values the role that our neighbourhood officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) can play in tackling anti-social behaviour, theft and vandalism on our doorsteps.

But, as a police force, we also know that neighbourhoods are protected from the most serious harm by less visible but vital policing.

So if we lack the appropriate policing skills to combat the threat of regional or national terrorism or serious organised crime, for example, the consequences for our community – and public confidence in our policing – may be serious.

THE PROCESS WE GO THROUGH:

To strike the balance between operational need and organisational capacity, while inspiring public confidence in policing, we assess our response to the following strategic questions:

• What crime and criminal behaviour pose the greatest risks of harm to our community?
• What are the operational policing requirements that will enable us to address these risks?
• What is the best way to organise our people and resources to meet our operational policing requirements?

We address these questions by evaluating factors that are likely to influence policing requirements in Thames Valley in the future. In order to do that, we draw together two strands of strategic analysis:

4.  to increase the visible presence of the police;
5.  to tackle bureaucracy and develop the professional skills of all staff;
6.  to reduce costs and protect the frontline.

1. TO CUT CRIMES THAT ARE OF MOST CONCERN TO THE COMMUNITY;
2. TO INCREASE THE VISIBLE PRESENCE OF THE POLICE;
3. TO PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES FROM THE MOST SERIOUS HARM;
4. TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE PUBLIC IN ORDER TO BUILD TRUST AND CONFIDENCE WITH OUR COMMUNITIES;
5. TO TACKLE BUREAUCRACY AND DEVELOP THE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS OF ALL STAFF;
6. TO REDUCE COSTS AND PROTECT THE FRONTLINE.

We invest in specialist support like forensics, intelligence analysis or information technology in order to capture those who commit serious crimes like homicide or robberies or serious sexual assaults.

Our decisions cannot only be based on what we have learned in the past and the demands of the present: we must also anticipate the consequences of social, technological and economic events upon likely criminal behaviour.

In other words, the priorities we decide upon not only have repercussions for public safety today; they also influence our ability to cut crime and inspire public confidence in the future.

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF RISK

To do that, we draw together two strands of strategic analysis:

• a political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal and organisational (PESTLEO) analysis;
• a strategic intelligence assessment.

From an operational policing perspective, the PESTLEO enables us to consider the potential effects of external factors that may lead to a heightened risk of criminal behaviour or disorder – which, in 2012 for example, ranges from the potential for rising levels of metal theft as its value on global markets rises, to the risks posed by the presence of the Olympic venue in Thames Valley.

Organisationally, we may consider the ways in which innovation in mobile technology, for instance, could be both a help and a hindrance. On the one hand, it may be another way to enable people to report non-emergency crimes; on the other – as we saw in the summer disorder in London in 2011 – it presents challenges for public order policing.

The strategic intelligence assessment, meanwhile, is used to identify patterns and trends in criminal behaviour which are likely to have a bearing on our strategic policing priorities.

Feeding into these strands of our strategic assessment are findings – gathered through independent market research – from Thames Valley Police Authority (TVPA) and conducted with 1,753 residents in Thames Valley – which offer insight into public sentiment about crime in Thames Valley and confidence in Thames Valley Police.

Alongside this research survey, we also include findings from our own half-yearly surveys conducted across our 263 neighbourhoods.

Finally, we bring together data that helps us assess our operational and organisational performance. Drawing on Home Office, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) assessments and Thames Valley Police’s own annualised management information, we are able to objectively assess our actual performance against the objectives set out in our existing delivery plan.

By pooling this data and insight, and refining our understanding of what it suggests, we then begin to set out potential tactical steps we will take in the forthcoming 12 months.
On 9 March 2011, during Prime Minister’s Questions in the House of Commons, David Cameron was asked about the effect upon frontline policing of cuts in police budgets, as a result of the comprehensive spending review (CSR). The Prime Minister said:

“The point that I would make is that, if we listen to what chief constables are saying about what they want to do, here is the chief constable of Thames Valley: ‘What I haven’t done at all is reduce the number of officers who do the patrol functions, so the officers you see out in vehicles, on foot, in uniform, on bicycles. We haven’t cut those numbers at all.’”

The reason why our force has not cut those numbers at all dates back to 2006 – three years before CSR – and the pursuit of a strategic goal to improve our force’s productivity. Strategically ‘productivity’ means making the most of the time, money and skills at our disposal. In practice, it means being able to put police officers where it matters; by rethinking the way we are organised and adapting it, by identifying costly bureaucracy and reducing it, and by recognising unnecessary cost and cutting it.

So since 2006, our productivity plan has led us to challenge the way we think, organise and act to cut crime and protect the public in Thames Valley. And it has resulted in transformational change which has enabled us to fulfill our commitment to police more visibly, more locally, by:

• adopting a Local Policing Model that has enabled us to remove an entire tier of command and increase the concentration of policing resources within 14 local police areas; and
• entering a collaborative agreement with Hampshire Constabulary to create a joint operation unit for roads policing, firearms and dog handling.

In tandem with our VFM framework, we adopt the principles of a ‘zero-based budgeting’ approach. This enables us to challenge the budgets and functions of departments and units across our Force, and reduce the risk of waste, by focusing on the tactical and strategic objectives that we have set out in our delivery plan. Finally, our force-wide Tackling Vulnerable People Team enables officers and staff to raise examples of procedures, processes and practices which they consider cost our force unnecessary time or money.

The principle of collaboration and cooperation through joint operations with other forces has been a consistent feature of operational policing in the United Kingdom.

And, of course, in a period of reduced public spending on policing, the idea of pooling resources with other forces to cut crime and reduce costs, makes a great deal of sense.

What is changing, however, is the nature of the collaborations that forces like Thames Valley Police are pioneering.

Our ability to navigate transformational change has not only relied upon changing the shape of our organisation, but on establishing ways to challenge and change the way the Force’s time and money is invested.
NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

If you were invited to single out one step that Thames Valley Police could take to make you feel safer, what would it be?

In 2010, a survey conducted on behalf of Thames Valley Police Authority asked 1,793 residents of Thames Valley a similar question.

70% say increased police visibility makes neighbourhoods feel safer

Of the responses received, 70 per cent said an increase in the visibility of police on the beat in our neighbourhoods would be the most influential factor.

This is unlikely to be a surprise. Since the foundation of the modern police force by Sir Robert Peel in 1829, the presence of police on our streets has served both as a source of reassurance in our neighbourhoods and as a visible deterrent to criminal behaviour.

For the police, too, the importance of visibility in our neighbourhoods cannot be underestimated.

Our visibility and conduct within neighbourhoods are vital in fostering public confidence in our stewardship of law and order in our communities. In turn, public confidence is more likely to translate into a willingness for police and neighbourhoods to work side by side to cut crime.

So when a survey says that 70 per cent of the Thames Valley public want to see an increase in the visibility of police on the beat, it matters equally to both the public and the police.

POLICING OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

Across the Thames Valley, each of our 263 local policing areas (LPA)s has dedicated neighbourhood teams whose activity is determined by the local area commander.

Our officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) currently patrol 263 neighbourhoods in order to cut crime and anti-social behaviour in our villages, towns and cities. Our approach is built upon key principles of communication, cooperation and constructive community-based action. These are:

• to engage with communities and individuals,
• to listen to what they say,
• to work with them to resolve issues,
• to communicate the successes that we have achieved.

The British Crime Survey shows that our investment in front-line policing is leading to rising confidence within neighbourhoods across Thames Valley.

The confidence in our policing has risen to 76.6% in 2011 from 70.8% in 2009.

64.7% of people in Thames Valley think we do a good or excellent policing job compared to 56.3% in 2009.

54.4% of people think we are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter - a rise of 8.2% since 2009.

INSPIRING CONFIDENCE IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

Our neighbourhood teams’ knowledge of people and places within their communities and the connections that they build, fulfil an invaluable communication role for our force in three distinct ways:

• First, neighbourhood officers and PCSOs are able to encourage the formation of neighbourhood action groups and call on the help of community representatives and local authorities to resolve problems of anti-social behaviour or crime themselves. Examples like the Coffee Hall estate in Milton Keynes illustrate how, by investing in neighbourhood policing, we are able to encourage communities to gain confidence in their own ability to diagnose and address petty crime and anti-social behaviour problems together.

• Second, to help seek information related to criminal activity either through formal appeals for witnesses through local publicity, or through known contacts or sources on their beat;

• Finally, to convey information - whether directly or through community newsletters and other media – that promotes neighbourhood policing activity. For instance, promoting neighbourhood initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour, or alerting communities to suggest prevention measures in light of crimes committed in the neighbourhood or nearby.

Alongside the benefits of making house visits or meeting people face-to-face on their beat, neighbourhood teams are also able to call on dedicated communications support – coordinated centrally by Thames Valley Police’s headquarters – for text messaging, e-mail and print communications.

This means that when crime occurs, neighbourhood teams are not only able to provide a visible presence where it is appropriate, but also to broadcast timely text alerts or e-mails, or post leaflets and information in order to appeal for information or keep communities informed.

MAKING CONNECTIONS THAT CUT CRIME

At street level, our neighbourhood teams are expected to make connections with individuals and organisations in the community they serve so they understand its unique law and order concerns.

For instance, neighbourhood officers will attend parish, community and town council meetings, as well as voluntary community and faith-based groups, forums and events. They may also establish strong connections with schools, doctors’ surgeries and local services for young people and the elderly.

By doing so, neighbourhood officers and PCSOs are able to tap into the flow of intelligence throughout our force – either to provide, confirm or act upon intelligence highlighted in their daily briefing before they leave their base;

• First, to communicate the successes that we have achieved.

TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN COFFEE HALL, MILTON KEYNES

Anti-social behaviour had been a persistent problem in Coffee Hall. Residents of Jonathans Court sheltered housing complained of groups of young people regularly gathering at a nearby bus shelter. Damage was being caused to the bus shelter as well as young people running in the road, creating unwanted disturbance for local residents.

The ringleaders among the group were identified and measures were put in place to target them and disrupt their activity by increasing patrols of the area and taking steps to engage with group members at local youth clubs.

This was followed by anti-social behaviour contracts, which are voluntary agreements between the police, council and offenders.

These measures proved to be successful. Group members began to consider the feelings of elderly residents, leading to a reduction in the level of anti-social behaviour.

Two years ago the anti-social behaviour on coffee hall reached critical proportions. I live near the centre of the estate and would regularly see groups of youths drinking and causing criminal damage.

The bus companies were threatening to stop the evening services because windows were constantly being broken or their drivers assaulted. Many Coffee Hall residents are elderly, disabled or on a low income and without public transport they’d be totally isolated.

We set up a working group involving local agencies such as the parish council, residents association, the church, play group and the police. We worked together to put a dispersal order in place for three months while we set up activities to give the youngsters something to do.

Youth workers and police community support officers spent time engaging with young people and gradually built up a relationship. Now the atmosphere on the estate is totally different: the young people have claimed ownership of the activities they helped to set up, and warn their peers not to cause trouble and risk them being taken away. It’s an ongoing project, but we’re getting there.

STEVE COWENT, COUNCILLOR AND RESIDENT OF THE COFFEE HALL ESTATE, MILTON KEYNES
PROTECTING COMMUNITIES FROM CRIME

Mandela Court was a notorious centre for drug dealing in Reading and the source of many complaints to local councillors and MPs. The local impact was considered significant enough to warrant further investigation and investment of Thames Valley Police resources.

Thames Valley Police established an operation to gather intelligence and investigate criminal activity with the following strategic objectives:

1. To Minimise the harmful effect of drug dealing in this area of Reading
2. To carry out arrests that lead to convictions
3. To inspire confidence among residents to engage with the police

STAGE 1: INVESTIGATION AND PREPARATION

In August 2010, Thames Valley Police began to investigate the activity of drugs gangs operating in and around Mandela Court, Reading.

By January 2011, we had gathered enough evidence to warrant the creation of an out-of-station base for the investigation, which was staffed by a full time team of officers.

Intelligence gathering continued in order to identify suspects and gather evidence. Detectives kept officials at Reading Borough Council in touch with progress of the investigation.

STAGE 2: OPERATIONAL SUSPECTS AND GATHER EVIDENCE

By May 2011, we had gathered sufficient intelligence and evidence to carry out a night-time operation to catch and arrest suspects. The operation involved:

- 16 Arrest warrants
- 16 Teams to carry out the warrants
- 200 Police officers including public order trained officers
- Rivers police
- Helicopter
- Drugs and search dogs
- Medics
- Gold and silver command
- Detectives
- 16 Teams supervisors
- Lighting
- Dedicated custody suite at local police station

STAGE 3: POST-OPERATIONAL COMMUNITY REASSURANCE AND PRESENCE

Once the operation was completed, it was important that we established a policing presence that would prevent criminals from returning to the Mandela Court area and reassure the community of our commitment to do so.

As well as long-term neighbourhood policing measures designed specifically for Mandela Court, we have undertaken other steps to reduce the risk of crime in the community.

THE SUSPECTS

The drugs gang was an organised crime group with four ringleaders who – communicating via a combination of radios and runners – directed the activity of 7–8 street dealers with 8 ‘spotters’ whose job was to warn dealers of police presence during deals.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED

20 suspects arrested and charged for conspiracy to supply drugs
£63,000 worth of drugs recovered
4 drug gang ringleaders convicted and sentenced
£183,000 of cash from criminal activity recovered
**RESPONSE AND RESILIENCE**

For many people, the front line of policing is represented by neighbourhood officers, PCSOs, patrol officers, local crime investigation teams and emergency call handlers. So for Thames Valley Police, our ability to deal with concerns and respond appropriately - whether it is by phone or in person - has a significant bearing upon public confidence in our policing.

We will deal with neighbourhood policing and crime investigation in more detail in the following two chapters. This section describes:

- how we make sure we have enough police on our streets;
- how we manage the demands of day-to-day tactical policing; and
- how we handle calls from the public and prioritise incidents.

**HOW DO WE KNOW WE HAVE ENOUGH POLICE OFFICERS AVAILABLE 24 HOURS EACH DAY?**

While an emergency call received by our 999 service is handled at a force level, the officers and vehicles that may be deployed as a result of the call are based within one of Thames Valley Police’s 14 local policing areas.

At all times, our objective is to ensure policing resilience - our ability to ensure that we have officers who are equipped with the appropriate skills, vehicles and equipment, where we need them, when we need them - throughout our local police areas.

Our assessment of how staff are allocated to different policing functions is influenced by the strategic policing requirements for Thames Valley and our annual strategic assessment.

We determine how many police officers are allocated to local police areas by reviewing historical data for crimes and incidents and the current population figures. The allocation is adjusted to reflect changes on an annual basis.

On a day-to-day basis, we ensure continuous 24-hour minimum staffing levels by operating a three-shift pattern which ensures the number and duties of officers available are aligned with each day of the week.

All officers operating within local police areas book on and book off their shifts using the force-wide duty management system - nicknamed ‘Bobo’.

At force level, data from all of the duty management systems across Thames Valley is drawn together and updated in real-time. In other words, our operations team, based in Kidlington, and Control Rooms - who deploy officers to incidents - are aware of the availability of an officer as soon as they sign-on or sign-off duty, and has oversight of all resources available within the force around the clock, each day.

**IN ADDITION TO INFORMATION ABOUT OFFICERS, OUR CONTROL ROOM HAS VISIBILITY OF THAMES VALLEY’S FORCE-WIDE ASSETS AND SPECIALIST TEAMS INCLUDING OUR JOINT OPERATIONS UNIT- COVERING ROADS POLICING, FIREARMS OPERATIONAL SUPPORT AND THE DOG SECTION – WHICH WE OPERATE IN COLLABORATION WITH HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY.**

These specialist units undertake routine day-to-day patrol duties, but are strategically deployed to allow for rapid response across Thames Valley as and when they are needed.

**MANAGING RISK AND RESILIENCE OF DAY-TO-DAY POLICING**

While our headquarters team has operational oversight of available officers and assets, the day-to-day tasking of patrol officers, local crime investigation teams and neighbourhood officers, is decided by our 14 local police area commanders.

Each morning our operation teams receive briefings from each of the local police areas, highlighting incidents in the previous 24 hours.

But our ability to ensure resilience across Thames Valley at all times requires force-level monitoring of exceptional incidents, and the sharing of intelligence information about planned police activity.

Each day a daily management meeting takes place involving the Force’s day gold commander - the senior officer who is in operational command of the force throughout the day - force crime, corporate communications, information technology, strategic department and local police area commanders.

Call participants are able to raise the incidents highlighted in their morning briefing and decisions are made about assigning resources and actions to be taken to address potential risks or levels of threat.

For example, a shooting may occur in one local police area but involves a gang from another. The daily management meeting allows the force, as a whole, to determine the appropriate action to take and direct a coordinated response.

It may decide to increase our presence of neighbourhood and patrol officers, or deploy trained firearms officers in a patrol vehicle.

**PRIORITISING INCIDENTS**

How we decide to respond to reported incidents of crime is determined by our assessment of the risk to life or to order within our community, and the time within which we must respond in order to address those risks.

In other words, how immediate and urgent our attendance at an incident must be.

For instance, faced with the report of a burglary in progress and a vehicle theft within close proximity to one another, we will give priority to the deployment of available officers to the scene of the burglary.

The burglary is immediate or urgent: it requires rapid identification of the policing requirements, the ability to locate the appropriate officers and assets, and their deployment as quickly as possible in order to protect life, arrest a suspect and restore order.

Unless the vehicle theft is connected to another incident that we are already investigating – or is a crime in progress – we can deal with it by appointment.

Whether an incident is reported to an officer on the street, or a call handler within our control rooms, we expect our officers and staff to be able to assess the risk to life and our community, and respond appropriately.

The design of our service for dealing with theft of vehicles or criminal damage, to calls from the public reporting suspicious behaviour or responding to appeals for information about crimes.

**RESPONDING TO EMERGENCY CALLS AND ENQUIRIES**

Thames Valley Police deals with two types of inbound calls – our control rooms, receive emergency 999 calls, and our enquiry centres, which deal with non-emergency calls from the public.

Control rooms and enquiry centres operate around the clock each day.

Within Thames Valley Police, we operate two control rooms - based in Abingdon and Milton Keynes - which handle an average of 5,600 inbound 999 calls each week.

**5,600 999 CALLS PER WEEK**

Non-emergency 101 calls are received by our three enquiry centres in Kidlington, Milton Keynes and Windsor. We receive an average of 27,000 per week.

101 calls range from reports of crimes to theft of vehicles or criminal damage, to calls from the public reporting suspicious behaviour or responding to appeals for information about crimes.

**27,000 NON-999 CALLS PER WEEK**

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Every June, Royal Ascot races attract over 294,000 visitors with numbers, on some days, in excess of 70,000. Thames Valley Police supports Ascot Racecourse Limited to ensure the event runs safely, smoothly, and with as little disruption as possible to local communities and road traffic.

For such a complex event, internal and cross-stakeholder planning starts early in the year to put the right people in the right place, with the right support in order to meet the policing objectives for this event.

In the build up to and during the event, Thames Valley Police focuses on five objectives. These are:

1. To ensure the safety of Her Majesty the Queen, members of the Royal Family and other distinguished visitors;
2. To support Ascot Racecourse Limited, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in maintaining public safety;
3. To deter or prevent crime, disorder or other anti-social behaviour from taking place, and to deal with offenders positively and appropriately;
4. To support Ascot Racecourse Limited and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to minimise traffic and pedestrian congestion in and around the venue, and to seek to minimise disruption to the communities affected by the holding of the event; and
5. To coordinate a multi-agency response to and manage the effects of any major incident, including terrorism or any other emergency.

Achieving these objectives requires the right blend of skills, resources, communications and equipment. It also requires Thames Valley Police to work closely with other police forces, regional and national security agencies, communities and local authorities – all in addition to Ascot Racecourse Limited.
CRIME INVESTIGATION AND INTELLIGENCE

When a crime has been committed, our priority is to protect life and then capture a suspect.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CRIME INVESTIGATION?

All our officers are able to play a role in that task; from our neighbourhood and patrol officers, who are the first to respond to a reported crime and carry out initial investigation and enquiries, to a Detective Superintendent leading a murder investigation.

In fact, the spectrum of crime, and the skills and resources required to investigate it, directly influence the way in which we organise crime investigation within Thames Valley Police.

All our officers apply a simple National Decision Making tool (see diagram opposite on page 17) to inform their decision making.

In addition, officers are aware that our approach to investigation is based upon a crime continuum (see diagram below), which enables all our officers to do two things in order to decide upon the best way for our Force to investigate a crime:

1. Determine how critical an offence is by assessing its seriousness, complexity and the risk or harm it has caused or poses to people in our community; and
2. Establish the most appropriate crime investigation skills and resources required to undertake an investigation.

On pages 18-19 we have detailed – step-by-step – how an incident is investigated from a 999 call made to our Control Room and a patrol officer’s initial investigation, to the incident’s escalation to a murder investigation led by our Force Crime Investigation Department (CID) Major Crime team.

As the diagram of the Crime Continuum suggests, crime investigation is carried out throughout our Force either within a Local Police Area – by neighbourhood officers, patrol officers, and detectives in local CID teams – or by detectives within our Force CID hubs in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire or Oxfordshire, or Major Crime Team and PVP teams.

This not only provides a high level of resilience in crime investigation capacity and capability across Thames Valley but – just as importantly – it ensures that our neighbourhoods can rely upon our force to have the means to deal locally with crime that is of greatest concern to our community.

SOLVING CRIMES AND BUILDING CASES

Successful detective work requires an ability to secure evidence, gather witness statements and information and build a body of evidence to identify suspects and make arrests which lead to successful convictions.

In addition to the evidence gathered through witness statements and information in the course of an investigation, investigating officers may also work side by side with our Force’s intelligence and forensics teams in order to build evidence in a case.

For example, detectives may want to develop evidence based on information gained during an investigation by adopting intelligence-led tactics to target suspects by tracking vehicle movements.

Meanwhile, crime scene examination and lab-based scientific analysis of evidence by our forensic team can be pivotal throughout an investigation.

In the initial investigation of crime scenes, our scene-of-crime officers and forensic photographers play an important role in leading searches and securing evidence which can help identify suspects or establish lines of enquiry.

In particular, collection and analysis of DNA evidence can prove crucial in both building a case which leads to an arrest and charging of a suspect, and as compelling evidence to secure a conviction in court.

HOW WE MONITOR CRIME AND CRIME INVESTIGATIONS

Each morning, our Local CID, and Force CID and Intelligence teams gather for a daily crime review – a conference call which enables each team to raise significant incidents and progress on live investigations over the past 24 hours.

In addition, the call allows the escalation of incidents up the Crime Continuum, the confirmation of priorities, and a chance to share information and agree actions which assist live investigations.

The outcomes from the daily crime review are also raised in the daily force management meeting mentioned in the section on response and resilience on page 12.

PREVENTING CRIME THROUGH INTELLIGENCE

While the role of crime investigation is to address the consequences of crime, intelligence plays a vital role in preventing crime occurring at all.

And as our primary means to combat crime, our ability to translate raw information into meaningful intelligence that we can act upon, is essential if our Force is to continue to cut crime and protect our community. Often described as the ‘lifeblood of policing’, good information may be gathered through a variety of sources, ranging from our own neighbourhood and patrol officers, to informants and anonymous calls to Crimestoppers.

In fact, every day at every police station within Thames Valley an intelligence briefing forms part of the daily briefing for officers on duty. In other words, every officer – at every level of our police force – who books on for duty every day is aware of the intelligence briefing and mindful of it on patrol.

Like crime investigation, the ability of our officers and staff to develop information into actionable intelligence is as important within our local police areas and neighbourhoods as it is at Force level.

In the initial illustration on pages 14-15 – Policing Royal Ascot – shows how intelligence initially gathered by officers, local CID and intelligence, and neighbourhood and patrol teams, was developed with support from Force Intelligence officers to enable a significant crime prevention operation.

At a force level our central intelligence team of analysts and intelligence officers gather, analyse and refine information, in order to identify patterns and emerging trends, which inform both tactical and strategic policing operations.

In addition, our intelligence officers prepare intelligence ‘packages’ for more specialist teams to develop; intelligence which supports operations targeting known criminals in order to gather evidence of planned criminal operations.

With a focus upon the prevention of force-wide and cross-border serious organised crime, our teams undertake surveillance and manage informants for operations within our borders, and to support both the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit and national Serious Organised Crime Agency operations that help to protect Thames Valley’s community from serious harm.

NATIONAL DECISION MODEL

GATHER INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE

TAKE ACTION AND REVIEW WHAT HAPPENED

POLICE MISSION AND VALUES

IDENTIFY OPTIONS AND CONTINGENCIES

ASSESS THREAT AND RISK AND DEVELOP A WORKING STRATEGY

CONSIDER POWERS AND POLICY

THE CRIME CONTINUUM: HOW WE MAKE SURE WE INVEST THE RIGHT SKILLS IN THE INVESTIGATION OF CRIME

The way we decide who should investigate crime is based upon a crime continuum which enables all our officers to determine how critical an offence is – shown in green below – and assess the most appropriate crime investigation skills and resources required to undertake an investigation – shown in blue.

LOCAL POLICE AREA

FIRST RESPONSE PATROL & NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS

LOCAL CRIME INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT

FORCE CRIME & PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE INVESTIGATION TEAMS

FORCE MAJOR CRIME UNIT

Burglary / Robbery / Theft / Hate Crime / Violent Crime / Anti-Social Behaviour / Public Disorder / Criminal Damage / Serious Sexual Offences / Drugs / Mobbing / Local Fraud

Protecting Vulnerable People / Gun Crime / Serious Violent Crime / Serious Sexual Offences / Public Disorder / Complex Frauds / Complex Crime / Offences Against Older Person / Fraud / Unplanned Deaths / Crimes in Action / Threats to Life

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When dealing with a major crime such as murder or rape, Thames Valley Police's objective is to carry out an investigation that identifies the suspect and leads to the successful conviction of that suspect, while all the time reassuring the local community. While no two cases are ever the same, there are steps which are typical of any major crime case. The illustration on the following pages is based on an actual case and demonstrates the steps in a murder investigation.

**Emergency response**
- Identification of victim
- Detection of suspect
- Arrests and interviews
- Charging and court case preparation
- Communications

**INVESTIGATING A MAJOR CRIME**

**DAY 1**
- Thames Valley Police Authority (TVPA) member informs by LPA commander
- Thames Valley Police Authority (TVPA) / LPA
- Incident case opened on HOLMES case management system
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT
- Media statement issued
- TYP CORP COMMUNICATIONS
- LPA commander establishes an Independent Advisory Group (IAG) as a means of communicating with community leaders
- LPA / COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES
- Family liaison officer assigned
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT / FORCE CID
- Inform next of kin about victim’s death
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT / LPA / PATROL OFFICERS
- Coroner’s office notified
- CORONERS OFFICE
- SIO briefing to investigative team
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT / LPA / FORCE CID / LOCAL CID
- Scene of crime forensic examination begins
- FORENSICS
- On-duty Media Officer prepares media statement with SIO
- TYP CORP COMMUNICATIONS / MAJOR CRIME UNIT
- SIO calls in Major Crime team for 0630 briefing
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT / LOCAL CID
- Gather information about next of kin
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT
- SIO informs on-duty Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)
- ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE (ACC) / MAJOR CRIME UNIT
- SIO informs LPA Commander of the incident
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT / LOCAL POLICE AREA (LPA)
- HQ operations are contacted for lighting to be provided at crime scene operations
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT / LOCAL POLICE AREA (LPA)
- Scene of Crime Officer is requested to attend scene
- FORENSICS
- LPA officer and paramedics arrive at scene
- AMBULANCE SERVICE / PATROL OFFICERS
- Paramedic confirms death and patrol officer begins preservation of the crime scene
- AMBULANCE SERVICE PATROL OFFICERS

**DAY 2**
- Investigation and reassurance patrols continue throughout the night
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT / LPA / FORCE CID
- On-duty Chief Officer LPA Command and Crime investigation team receive briefing in progress
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT / LPA / ACC
- House-to-house enquiries in progress
- FORCE CID / LOCAL CID
- LPA commander commissions community impact assessment
- LPA
- Community and diversity officers drafted in to support operations
- NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM / COMMUNITY AND DIVERSITY OFFICERS
- Reassurance patrols begin in the area of the incident
- LPA / POLICE / NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM
- IAG meeting to provide information, communications and reassurance
- LPA / COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES
- Apparent bloodstains are discovered on clothing and a sheath for a weapon within one room of the property
- FORENSICS
- Audible and visible suspicious activity is noted
- TYP CORP COMMUNICATIONS / NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM
- Blood sample is retrieved and sent for DNA analysis
- FORENSICS
- Tasking briefing with investigation team
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT
- Family conduct formal identification of victim
- CORONERS OFFICE / MAJOR CRIME UNIT
- Arrangement made to search scene after conclusion of forensic examination
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT / SPECIALIST SEARCH OFFICERS
- Media statement is released confirming cause of death
- TYP CORP COMMUNICATIONS / MAJOR CRIME UNIT
- DNA samples taken from the suspect match with both the weapon used to kill the victim, clothing at the scene of crime and clothing found at the property
- FORENSICS
- Family Liaison Officer support has been provided to the family of the victim throughout the court proceedings
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT / FAMILY LIASON OFFICER
- SIO issues media statement on the outcome of the trial
- TYP CORP COMMUNICATIONS / MAJOR CRIME UNIT
- The suspect is convicted and sentenced to imprisonment
- CORRECTIONS / MAJOR CRIME UNIT
- Media statements are prepared in advance of verdict by communications team with TYP CORP COMMUNICATIONS / MAJOR CRIME UNIT
- Trial begins at Crown Court
- MAJOR CRIME / CPS / CROWN COURT
- Detectives continue to liaise with CPS foraras and witnesses in preparation for the trial at Crown Court (Commission)
- MAJOR CRIME / CPS
- Case filed with CPS
- MAJOR CRIME / CPS
- Detectives continue to gather witness statements and conclude all lines of enquiry in order to submit full case file to CPS
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT
- The suspect appears at Magistrates Court and is remanded in custody pending trial
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT / CPS / MAGISTRATES
- SIO and CPS issue a media statement announcing charging of suspect
- TYP CORP COMMUNICATIONS / MAJOR CRIME UNIT / CPS
- CPS reviews the evidence in the case and the suspect is charged with murder
- MAJOR CRIME UNIT / CPS
We operate a referral centre process, which means that all reports of domestic abuse, child abuse, missing people and sex offences are received and dealt with centrally. The case associated with each case are assessed and a priority is assigned.

The details are then shared with multi-agency partners – ranging from adult and children’s social care to schools and local national health services – depending on the nature of the incident.

As well as participating in Local Safeguarding Adults Boards – which oversee the joint partnership approach to local safeguarding – DAUI also co-chairs Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, known as MARACs, with the Probation Service. MARACs are non-statutory but bring together a variety of partners from education, health, housing and social care to share information, review risk levels of cases and agree a joint safety management plan to minimise the risk to the victims and children.


DOMESTIC ABUSE

Our Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit (DAUI) deals with cases involving abuse that either occurs within families, or involves professionals or people in positions of trust.

Within Thames Valley, we work with Children’s Social Care on a daily basis, as well as representatives of educational and local health services, either to reduce the risks of prolific offenders committing more offences.

The number of convictions among the 468 offenders in Thames Valley, who were selected to participate in the programme, fell by more than half – from 538 in first quarter of 2010 to 269 in the second quarter of 2011.

In addition, this outcome saved taxpayers an estimated £450,000 per annum in police and criminal justice costs.

VIOLENT AND SEX OFFENDERS

Our Violent and Sexual Offender Register (VISOR) team manages registered sex offenders who are either in the process of being released from prison, or are already living within our community.

The team enables police officers and police staff to monitor behaviour, review risks, reduce the likelihood of re-offending and deal with any offending or breaches of their release conditions.

With the Probation Service, our VISOR team also co-chairs statutory monthly Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) meetings with representatives from Social Care for Adults and Children, local housing departments, Named Nurses, mental health services, and education welfare partners to share information, evaluate risk, and agree joint management plans and case review dates.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE COMMUNITIES FROM PROLIFIC OFFENDERS

Even by preventing a relatively small number of offenders re-offending, the consequences for reducing crime in our community can be significant.

And initial work on an integrated offender management programme, run in tandem with the Probation Service and other local community partners, has begun to yield promising results.

The programme, which establishes a plan of action for individual offenders and continuous monitoring, is intended to reduce the risks of prolific offenders committing more offences.

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Not all criminal activity encountered in Thames Valley originates in or remains confined within our borders.

The nature of organised crime and terrorist activity, for example, means it will cross borders.

Thames Valley’s proximity to London means that crime originating within London may affect our own community within Thames Valley or pass through our borders.

Whether its origins lie elsewhere in the United Kingdom, or from another country altogether, the consequences of organised crime – like people trafficking, drug trafficking and terrorism – pose serious threats to our community.

And the ability to prevent crime networks from operating, depends on an ability to coordinate policing activity to track it down and stop it.

### Thames Valley Police and the National Strategic Policing Requirement

Nationally, the Home Office assesses the threats to national security and public safety and sets out its requirements of all police forces in the United Kingdom to address the risks in the form of a Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR).

As well as identifying the type of threats which it considers to be of national significance – such as terrorism, civil emergencies, organised crime, public order and large-scale cyber incidents – the SPR sets out the steps the Home Office expects police forces to take to counter the threats it has identified.

The Government’s purpose for doing so is to ensure that, nationally, it can rely on the combined capacity and capability of its police forces – and other agencies – to be able to successfully coordinate and deploy resources in response to national threats.

Thames Valley Police’s contribution to the SPR is realised in two ways:

- as a Force, our strategic assessment – and subsequent delivery plan – must address the resourcing and resilience demands posed by the national Strategic Policing Requirement; and
- within our region of the UK, we work alongside other forces to monitor regional crime activity and contribute intelligence that is of both regional and national significance.

Thames Valley Police is the lead force for the South East Counter Terrorism Unit (SECTU) whose participants also include Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire.

In turn, SECTU forms part of a UK-wide national counter terrorism network.

However, our participation in SECTU does not only contribute to the SPR.

It also means that Thames Valley Police supports the Government’s comprehensive strategy for countering terrorism – called CONTEST.

It is this network that determines the priority of tasking for anti-terrorist operations. This means that Thames Valley Police – as part of the regional counter terrorism unit – is expected to contribute resources to operations nationally, while also tasking other police forces as part of the region’s counter terrorist operations.

The south east regional organised crime unit – which includes Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire constabularies as well as the UK Border Agency, Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs, and the national Serious Organised Crime Agency – operates on a similar basis to SECTU.

Its operations are co-ordinated by Sussex Police and its activity focuses on cross border organised crime affecting regional forces.

### From the Chief Constable

The Government has called the election of Police and Crime Commissioners the most ambitious and far-reaching plans for reform of policing in more than half a century. It is my responsibility to work with the current Police Authority to ensure that we are prepared for that change. An important part of that preparation is to make sure that the public understands how we police our community.

I hope that you have found this prospectus to be informative and interesting and that it may have also prompted you to want to find out more about policing in your area. Our website contains lots of useful information and you can sign up for Thames Valley Alert which will give your local information by e-mail or text – whichever you prefer.

The main responsibility of my force is to cut crime in the area and this prospectus has explained how we set about that. The remit is wide – from anti-social behaviour to terrorism – and we are working hard to ensure that we exploit every advantage that science, technology, intelligence and evidence give a modern, professional police force. Sir Robert Peel, the founder of British policing, was quite clear that the primary purpose of the police was the prevention of crime and disorder. In 183 years that has not changed, but the means by which we do that have changed considerably.

Policing by consent underpins all that we do. We are a thin blue line and rely on the support of the public and on the fact that most people obey the law most of the time. But officers do have considerable powers to use force, to arrest and to search and seize property. It is essential that these powers are used fairly and with integrity. Thames Valley police is effective in fighting crime and protecting you and always seeks to do so in a way that inspires the trust and confidence of everyone.

Sara Thornton
Chief Constable
For non-emergency enquiries or to report a non-emergency crime call 101.

To receive information directly from your local neighbourhood teams – in addition to up-to-date bulletins on major crime and policing issues – sign up for the Thames Valley Alert System by visiting www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk

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