



Berkshire East

Community Scrutiny Panel

Reporting period: April 2025- March 2026





Executive Summary

This annual report sets out the work and findings of the East Berkshire Community Scrutiny Panel (CSP) during the period April 2025 – March 2026. The Panel provides independent scrutiny of Thames Valley Police's use of Stop and Search and Use of Force powers, with the aim of promoting fairness, accountability, transparency, and public confidence in policing.

During the reporting year, the Panel operated during a period of development and transition, marked by fluctuating membership levels and ongoing recruitment activity. Despite these challenges, the CSP continued to meet regularly and maintained constructive professional relationships with Thames Valley Police (TVP) and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). Recruitment and onboarding processes have been strengthened to improve sustainability and effectiveness.

Across the majority of Body-Worn Video (BWV) footage reviewed, officers were observed acting professionally and in accordance with police and legal requirements. Where learning points were identified, these were raised with senior officers and used to inform reflective learning and future training.



Executive Summary

Looking ahead, the Panel has established a structured programme of future scrutiny and remains committed to continuous improvement, meaningful challenge, and strengthening public confidence in policing.



Leadership Messages

Chair Mohammed Kharbouch

It is a privilege to present this year's report as Chair of the East Berkshire Community Scrutiny Panel. Over the past year, the Panel has continued to evolve, and with that evolution has come both challenges and positive change. We recognise that we have not yet reached the level of stability we aspire to, and the Panel remains in a period of development.

To support this, we have initiated a new recruitment process and are pleased to welcome new members who will be joining us shortly. We continue to seek additional participants to ensure we meet the minimum required numbers. This renewal strengthens the diversity of voices within the Panel and reinforces our commitment to representing the communities of East Berkshire and the surrounding areas.





Leadership Messages

Chair Mohammed Kharbouch

This year has been one of learning, reflection, and constructive professional dialogue. All partners share a clear understanding that effective scrutiny must be meaningful, rigorous, and rooted in public confidence. Through careful and constructive challenge, the Panel believes it has contributed to ensuring that Thames Valley Police continues to uphold the principles of fairness, accountability and community legitimacy.

Our members have generously given their time, expertise, and lived experience to support robust oversight and to ensure that police powers are exercised lawfully, proportionately, and with respect for the communities they serve. We are also working closely with Thames Valley Police and the OPCC to strengthen induction and onboarding processes for new recruits.





Leadership Messages

Chair Mohammed Kharbouch

Our focus has not only been on learning but also on improving how feedback is received, embedded, and evidenced by Thames Valley Police. Independent scrutiny must lead to meaningful change and directly influence operational practice; without this, it risks becoming merely symbolic.

Overall, I am encouraged by the progress made over the past twelve months. I remain optimistic that, in the year ahead, we will build on this foundation and continue to strengthen the Panel's contribution to public confidence and policing legitimacy.





A message from Chief Superintendent Steve Raffield

I would like to thank the East Berkshire Community Scrutiny Panel for their continued commitment and constructive challenge. The Panel plays an essential role in providing independent oversight of our use of police powers and in strengthening public trust and confidence in policing.

Over the past year, the Panel has shown professionalism and resilience during a period of development, offering thoughtful challenge that supports meaningful learning and genuine improvement. Their scrutiny of Body-Worn Video footage has provided both reassurance where policing is carried out well and insight into where further learning can be taken forward.





A message from Chief Superintendent Steve Raffield

TVP values the Panel's diverse perspectives and ongoing engagement, and we remain committed to working transparently with members to evidence learning, embed change, and continue to improve. I am grateful to the Panel for the time and dedication they give in supporting fair, accountable, and legitimate policing.





About the group

The Community Scrutiny Panel meets every month to scrutinise officers' use of Stop and Search and Use of Force. It is comprised of volunteer community members who live, work or study in East Berkshire (Slough, Windsor, Maidenhead, Bracknell, Ascott and surrounding areas) and are diverse as to age and gender but as of yet, not ethnicity.

While we are facilitated by the acting Chief Inspector Neil Misselbrook and various frontline officers, the panel is independently chaired, and members are encouraged to speak freely and honestly to ensure the genuine view of the citizen is considered.



Meetings & membership

- Number of meetings held: 9
- Average attendance: 4 per meeting
- Police representation: 1-2 per meeting
- **Member diversity summary:** the panel includes members from different walks of life, both retired and currently in work. Efforts are ongoing to improve the diversity further.
- **Identified gaps:** although the community is still small, it is already quite diverse, with a mix of young adults, working professionals, and retirees.
- **Recruitment aims:** to represent our communities better.





What we focused on



Themes

- **Theme one** – stop and search for drugs and weapons where force was used but the outcome was no further action (NFA).
- **Theme two** – stop and search relating to drug supply.
- **Theme three** – searches under S.60 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (suspicion-less searches).



Issues raised – actions taken

First of all, it should be noted that the Panel observed that, in the majority of Body-Worn Video (BWV) reviews, police officers conducted themselves professionally and followed the procedures outline above. In the rare instances where the Panel identified concerns, these were shared with the senior officer present, who acknowledged and took forward the Panel's observations.



Issues Raised – Actions Taken

Issue	Action Taken
A S&S was performed on a vehicle purely due to the odour of drugs, not withstanding that the officer had been advised the suspect had consumed hashish earlier.	The Panel questioned the necessity of the S&S, noting that there was insufficient evidence to justify it. They also observed that the suspect was lucid and spoke to the officer in a respectful manner.
Opportunities for improved community engagement on police powers.	TVP agreed to support CPS-led community awareness sessions focusing on rights, expectations, and how BWV informs accountability.
Limited clarity in grounds for certain S&S encounters.	Supervisors acted on feedback, reinforcing standards for recording and communicating grounds clearly and lawfully.



Issues Raised – Actions Taken

Issue	Action Taken
Occasional inconsistency in officer tone or professionalism.	Incidents were reviewed by supervisors with officers; reflective learning sessions were scheduled to reinforce professional conduct.
Public perception concerns regarding S&S disproportionality.	The Panel recommended clearer public messaging and improved data dashboards to contextualise search patterns and community impact.
Develop & maintain clear, timely, and transparent outward-facing communication products relating to use of police powers and their scrutiny.	The panel has commenced publication of scrutiny panel meeting summaries to improve transparency and accountability.



Issues Raised – Action Taken

The East Berkshire Community Scrutiny Panel (CSP) did **not** find evidence to support many of the concerns reported in the media about TVP Stop & Search. During our reviews, most Body-Worn Video footage showed officers following established procedures and engaging professionally with the public. However, several issues continue to be highlighted in external reports and media coverage, which are important to note even though they were not observed to the same extent by our panel.



Issues Raised – Action Taken

Disproportionate impact on ethnic minorities (media concern)

Media reports frequently claim that Black and Minority ethnic groups are disproportionately targeted.

- ITV News, for example, reported that Black people are up to 5 times more likely to be stopped in Thames Valley.
- Other publishes data suggested Black residents were over four times more likely to be stopped than White residents in 2022.

CPS finding:

Our Panel did **not** observe evidence of deliberate or systematic targeting during BWV reviews. Most encounters adhered to policy and were based on clearly articulated grounds.



Issues Raised – Action Taken

“Reasonable grounds” and record-keeping (external inspection concern)

HMICFRS inspections identified weaknesses in TVP’s documentation and justification of stops.

- A 2023-2025 inspection said TVP “needs to improve” how it records grounds.
- Only 78% of 2022 records included sufficient grounds, down from 88% in 2020.

CPS findings:

BWV cases reviewed locally generally demonstrated clear explanations and reasonable grounds, contrasting with the broader concerns reported at force level.



Issues Raised – Action Taken

Communication and transparency during stops

External reviews found officers often failed to explain what was being searched for or how to obtain a stop-and-search record.

CPS finding:

The Panel found that communication during stops was usually clear, respectful, and compliant with guidelines. Most officers explained the purpose of stop and the person's rights.



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Issues Raised – Action Taken

High “no further action” rates

Official statistics show that around 70% of searches result in “no further action”

CPS observation:

Although this is a legitimate concern at a strategic level, our Panel did not find evidence of unnecessary or unjustified stops in the cases reviewed.



Issues Raised – Action Taken

Trust and legitimacy concerns

Senior TVP leaders have acknowledged that disproportionality affects trust and that independent scrutiny is essential.

CPS note:

Our findings suggest that operational practice – at least within the material we reviewed – was more consistent and proportionate than implied by some media reporting.



Issues Raised – Action Taken

Training and officer experience

External reports link some procedural issues to large numbers of new officers.

CPS finding:

While varying experience levels were visible, most officers' reviews showed good understanding of stop-and-search requirements.



Issues Raised – Action Taken

Under-reporting of use-of-force (broader accountability concern)

HMICFRS has raised concerns about potential under-reporting across the force.

CPS scope:

This issue falls outside BWV stop-and-search reviews and was not directly evidenced in our Panel's work.



Reflections on How the Panel is working

What worked well:

- Having a 6-weekly meeting on a fixed day and time.
- Having a frontline officer as part of the review process to offer a practitioner's perspective.
- The process of relaying feedback to the officers via their supervisors has worked well. Officers value the feedback. The reviews have also helped identify themes which are being incorporated into a new training package for the frontline.



Reflections on How the Panel is working

What we want to improve:

- Increase the number so that at least 4 members are present for each meeting.
- Demographic of the Panel – East Berkshire has large Asian community, but this is not represented in the Panel.
- Maximise the different skills that the individual panel members possess in driving improvements for TVP.
- Analysis of the benefits and unintended consequences of the Scrutiny Panel's reviews.
 - How can we measure that the CPS is adding value to the T&C strategy?
 - What actions has TVP taken in response to panel observations?
 - Disproportionality v/s Effectiveness – to understand whether higher S&S for some ethnic groups reflect bias or operational need
 - Include the subject's perspective where possible
 - Compare lived experiences with the panel's observations
 - Develop flexible opportunities for scrutiny



Areas of Future Focus

Cycle	Proposed Areas of Focus
May 2026	Use of Force scrutiny – CAPTOR Incapacitant spray and/or Baton (used or drawn).
July 2026	Use of Force scrutiny – Limb restraints and/or spit hood.
Sept 2026	Use of Force scrutiny – Taser (used or drawn).
Nov 2026	S&S scrutiny – Stolen Property S.1.PACE
Jan 2027	S&S scrutiny – Offensive Weapon/bladed article – S.1 PACE



How to get involved

Have you noticed any changes in how Thames Valley Police use their powers?

Your views and experiences are important to us.

For any enquiries relating to the Community Scrutiny Panel please contact:
scrutiny@thamesvalley.police.uk

We are committed to supporting members' learning and development through training and informal learning sessions and seek your valuable input to help shape and improve what and how services are delivered to our communities.