



South and Vale IAG Meeting

Minutes

DATE 22nd September 2022
TIME: 5pm – 7pm
LOCATION: Abingdon Police Station/MS Teams

Attendance

David Orpwood	IAG Chairman
Supt Dave Horsburgh	LPA Commander for TVP South and Vale
Matthew Barber	PCC
	IAG member
	IAG member
	IAG member
	IAG member
	IAG member
	IAG member
Sergeant	Problem Solving Team
Sergeant	Tasking Team (Drugs)
Admin Support Officer	Minute taker
Apologies	
	IAG member
	IAG member
	IAG member

Agenda

1. Introduction and welcome
2. Supt. Horsburgh: S&V update
3. Tasking Team
4. Stop & Search
5. PCC report
6. AOB

1. Introductions

The Chairman opened the meeting and introductions were made by everyone attending. The Chairman mentioned that Supt Horsburgh has been meeting with all the new officers that were starting on the LPA to make them feel more involved. Officer retention is a concern to the force at the moment and one step that is been taken to engage with them. He also told the group that Supt Horsburgh is retiring early next year.

2. South and Vale update (Supt Dave Horsburgh)

Supt Horsburgh informed the group that the Senior Appointments Board would be taking place shortly and someone would be appointed to take over as the LPA Commander when he retires. This will be communicated to the group.

How the LPA is doing:

We operate at 100-120 deployable officers mainly from response teams. With recruitment we will have additional 62 officers within a year (32 of which by March) on the South & Vale. The challenge going forward is training and tutorship. Eight of our new recruits were PCSOs from the S&V. New recruits also have protective learning, and while they are at training college we have needed to fill the gaps through Neighbourhood, Problem Solving and Tasking Team officers who all have to do at least 1 x five week stint in ICR. The positive is that these are experienced officers who can support and increase knowledge on the Response teams but the negative is these officers are taken away from their key roles and responsibilities for the five weeks.

Across the force 80% of officers will have less than 5 years in service. The officers are also predominately younger than they were in the past due to the graduate programmes and there have been barriers recently that have made it more difficult for military personnel to join up. These brought in a wealth of experience and the force is looking how to refresh recruitment to target these individuals again.

The LPA has currently got nearly 20 PCSO vacancies as priority has been given to recruit police officers. Next year once we have more of an uplift in the number of officers the PCSOs numbers should start to rise again. One of the struggles with recruiting PCSOs is the lack of progression in the role and something that is being looked at. Options include a Supervisory PCSO and changing their powers. However, the latter could cause other issues about them being extracted to others areas of the force.

The South & Vale now has a dedicated School's PCSO who provides support to the whole LPA, delivering school talks. The PCSO works closely with the School's Officer and this means a consistent approach to the schools and allows the other PCSOs to concentrate on other demands.

One reason that we have a lower number of officers in the Force is also due to the post Covid effect. At the start of Covid there was a positive feeling in the force about pulling together in an emergency. Also many officers that may have left or retired have probably stayed due to having a secure job in the uncertain times. When the pandemic had started to ease all these police officers who would have left in the last few years have left at the end of 2021 and 2022.

The question was asked whether individuals who apply to be officers but don't make it through the recruitment process are directed to a PCSO roles as an alternative to help fill these roles. PCSOs often join up to become officers and it does not happen as much the other way. However, we have had officers that have done this due to various reasons.

Supt Horsburgh updated everyone on how the South & Vale are doing using performance data. Some key points:

Operation Vigilant which we discussed at the last IAG meeting, is a more proactive approach to deter predatory behaviour at hot spot areas in the night time economy. This acts as prevention and reassurance.

Domestic abuse has been a real focus over the last eight months. Our large population over a very large policing area has made responding to domestic abuse incidents problematic. We prioritise threat, harm and risk and attend incidents accordingly. We have had an increase of 73.7% in our outcomes in the last year and are the joint highest in the force. Our demand has reduced as we have been doing a lot of work with the families and have used a problem solving approach for repeat victims. The Problem Solving Team use an OSARA (Objective, Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) problem solving matrix to get to the core of the problem. This allows us to pull in the right partner agencies to support and the correct interventions are used.

We have had a 35% reduction in knife enabled crime which is the reduction in the Force. This is mainly due to reducing our robberies (many of our knife crime are robberies).

3. Tasking Team (drugs)

The South & Vale LPA Tasking Team is based at Abingdon station and headed up by the Detective Inspector. The Team is made up of a Sergeant and five Police Constables. Between them the team have around 80 years-experience within different policing backgrounds like Roads Policing, Firearms, Surveillance, Response and Neighbourhood Policing.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line".

They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move [and store] the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

What does the Tasking Team do?

1. Work alongside departments in Thames Valley, including close links with neighbourhood and problem solving teams to stop and assist people exploited by county drug lines, safeguarding their vulnerability and identifying modern slavery.
2. The team are primarily intelligence led and proactive in dealing with high-risk subjects identified on the area, with positive action being taken against them. (Stop Searches / fast time deployments)
3. Use both covert and overt tactics to develop intelligence which can trigger the execution of warrants, searches or arrests.
4. Investigations are often complex and long term. This often sees my team presenting or giving evidence in Crown Court on a regular basis, where long term sentences for offenders are often a result.
5. The spread of County Lines within our geographical makeup primarily originate from the major cities of London, Birmingham and Liverpool, they bring high levels of risk, violence and exploitation among our communities.
6. Any CDL activity has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and our communities.

Intelligence led Policing is key to the Tasking Team.

- Members of the public report to police activity in the area.
- Generates an area of interest in the local area.
- Move police resources towards the area.
- Pro – active addressing of issues.
- May lead to identification of addresses where warrants can be obtained via a court.
- Fast time warrants can be executed.

The Tasking Team mainly deals with Class A drugs but the group had a discussion around how drugs like Cannabis can be used to start getting young people into drugs and then the Class A drugs are gradually introduced by the County Drugs Lines. Submitting intelligence to the Police is vital so that we can pick up any top offenders and hot spot areas to focus on. Concerns were raised about difficulties of submitting intelligence via the Neighbourhood Teams because of the officers back filling response roles and the reduced amount of PCSOs on the teams at the moment. A local youth project had regular communication with the Neighbourhood Teams. However, any referrals can be directed to towards MASH who will pass it on to Children's services.

Tasking Teams results April 21 – April 22:

- Dealt with 72 people last year

- Ranged from juveniles to adults. Age range 15 – 68 years
- Primarily for drug supply / possession / weapons offences.
- Primarily Crown Court Cases
- Total custodial sentences: 32 years and 8 months.
- Highest custodial was 7 years imprisonment for line holder on phone work alone.

Seizure summary:

- Approx 4kg cocaine (Street Value estimated £320,000)
- Approx 1.8kg cannabis
- Over 1.8kg Ketamine
- Crack cocaine / heroin.
- Variety of weapons – daggers / lock knives / Machete / Sword
- Cash seizures - £45,756, which a majority has been forfeited through financial orders / court orders.

Safeguarding put in place for those who require this.

- Problem solving (OSARA, Problem Solving Team)
- Multi agency meetings
- PPO (Police Protection Orders)
- National Referral Mechanism – vulnerabilities/modern slavery
- Closure orders through court – to allow us to have more control over vulnerable people
- OP OROCHI (MET Police) – provide phone work data
- Partnership working

4. Stop and Search

The South and Vale has a 25% positive outcome in Stop Searches which is above the Force average. The number of searches has gone down, mainly due to resourcing issues and that many of our younger officers who joined at the start of Covid have not had much experience.

More positive outcomes are mainly due to analytical work that is carried out. This intelligence allows us to identify hotspot areas so that officers can be in the right place and at the right time.

The Sergeant from the Problem Solving Team showed the group two examples of Stop Searches that have been carried out recently on the South & Vale. The footage is captured by the Officer's Body Worn Video. The group agreed that they carried out the Stop Searches professionally and calmly.

5. PCC Update

The PCC is recruiting for the new Chief Constable at the moment who will be approved by the end of November so that there is a handover period with CC John Campbell who is retiring.

The Force does concentrate on Class A drugs but there are concerns around Cannabis as drug addicts usually start on this 'recreational' drug. Combating Drugs Partnerships are being set up around the Country. Some areas have these at Force level but due to the scale of Thames Valley this has not been possible. Therefore we have set them up more locally in Buckinghamshire, East Berkshire, West Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes. The Police are key in these partnerships which also include the NHS and local authorities to provide treatment as well as enforcement at a local level.

In July TVP launched Operation Deter in Milton Keynes to try and combat Knife Crime. This has now been rolled out to Aylesbury. The main objective of the operation is to make better use of charging and remanding offenders over 18 who are found in possession of a knife. Since launching there has been a significant increase in the number of individuals who have been charged and remanded. For more information on Op Deter please visit www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk

The PCC also outlined the Neighbourhood Policing Review which being undertaken at the moment. Neighbourhood Policing has been under pressure due to the officers having to fill the gaps in response policing. This review will consider upscaling and restructuring Neighbourhood Policing.

6. AOB

To get an update on Youth IAG for the next meeting.

To review the date of the next IAG (15th December) due to this one being put back.

Next meeting dates:

TBC