

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel
DATE: 2nd March 2017
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PART I **FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

THAMES VALLEY POLICE OVERVIEW

1. **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Thames Valley Police locally and to respond specifically to:

- A reference made to it at a Council meeting on 26th July 2016
- Questions specified by members of the Panel prior to the meeting

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Committee is requested to note the report.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The work of Thames Valley Police ensures that local communities remain safe and protected. This has a particular link to the following strategy priorities:

- Protecting vulnerable children

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

Thames Valley Police's co-operation with Slough Borough Council also supports the following Five Year Plan outcomes:

- Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives.
- Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and visit.

4. **Other Implications**

As the report relates to the functions of a separate organisation, there are no direct wider implications for SBC.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1 Policing in Slough is the responsibility of the local Area Commander who has direct responsibility for response, investigation and neighbourhood functions. This is supplemented by Force resources and teams which cover a number of specialist functions such as Force CID (investigations into more serious offences), Roads Policing, Armed Response Teams and Protecting Vulnerable People Department (which covers domestic abuse and child offences).
- 5.2 The response teams provide 24/7 coverage in the town, and are the first response to calls to service, predominantly from phone calls. This demand consists of both crime and non-crime incidents. Non-crime incidents cover a multitude of occurrences but include fear for welfare and missing person incidents. This team is also responsible for the investigation of crimes.
- 5.3 More complex investigations are the responsibility of Local CID (Criminal Investigation Department). This team deals with the more complex crimes and those that are subject of higher threat, harm and risk. Typically, offences include burglary, robbery, fraud, serious assaults and some sexual offences.
- 5.4 The neighbourhood teams have geographical responsibilities and are tasked with providing visibility, engagement, problem solving and community resilience within their sector. There is a close relationship with Local Authority community safety teams. Neighbourhood teams include police officers and police community support officers.
- 5.5 Slough Local Police Area has recently been identified as a benchmark for neighbourhood policing by the Police Foundation who have completed a five year project in Slough and Luton. (See Police Effectiveness in a Changing World, Paper 4 A Natural Experiment in Neighbourhood Policing, Police Foundation February 2017).
- 5.6 The commander has identified the following local police priorities:
- Protecting children and vulnerable adults
 - Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse
 - Investing in staff
 - Disrupt organised and problem crime groups
 - Engage with and understand our communities

Sexual Assaults (reference from Council – 26th July 2016)

- 5.7 Subject to final audit, year to date data (From April 2016) for all sexual offences in Slough currently shows a 5% increase which is consistent with the Force average, reflected in an increase from 264 to 277 offences. Of this, rape is down 4% with the biggest decrease experienced in non-domestic rape. The biggest increase is in non-rape sexual offences from 149 to 167. Contrary to perception, there has not been a significant increase in sexual offending over the last year and the trend is actually decreasing. These numbers are statistically small but the increase is partly due to improved confidence in reporting domestic abuse which is actually a good position in being able to support victims that would otherwise not have reported crime. This reflects the strong multi agency work led by the SSP in relation to domestic abuse.

Traffic Policing

- 5.8 The policing of traffic in the town is primarily the responsibility of the Roads Policing department, which is a force resource and not accountable to the local commander. Roads Policing provision for Slough is currently provided by patrol teams based out of Taplow. Officers from that base have responsibility for responding to incidents on the M4 motorway and incidents on the strategic roads network. In addition they respond to injury collisions for the whole of East Berkshire (Slough, Windsor, Bracknell and Maidenhead, as well as the smaller towns in between). Where necessary local officers will also attend road collisions.
- 5.9 When not responding to incidents requiring immediate responses, Roads Policing officers will concentrate on casualty reduction activity by enforcing the road traffic act legislation. As a result, they concentrate on the areas that are shown evidentially to be the most significant factors in causing death and serious injury on the roads. Consequently, they pay particular attention to excess speed, using a mobile phone while driving, not wearing a seatbelt and drink/drug driving offences.

The casualty reduction activity does not exclude other areas or offences.

- 5.10 Mixed in with this activity is a responsibility to target criminals who use the roads by utilising intelligence led profiling of known offenders for example those who are disqualified from driving, known to be driving without documents or in contravention of driving licence requirements. As well as known criminals who utilise vehicles and the roads while committing criminal offences.
- 5.11 Finally, Roads Policing have a duty to provide support to local police areas by forming a second tier of response to any police matter that requires attendance, but when local areas are struggling to meet the demand.

Balance of Police Constables and Police Community Support Officers

- 5.12 The balance between police officers and PCSOs has not changed over the last four or five years. PCSOs are an intricate aspect of neighbourhood policing and play a vital role in providing visibility and engagement. In fact, as a result of some recent analysis in relation to demand, Slough LPA will see a very small increase in the number of police officers over the next year.
- 5.13 The final issue raised by the Panel (Safer Slough Partnership) is discussed in a separate report which will be taken at this meeting.

6. Conclusion

Policing within Slough is provided by a local police command supported by force led specialist resources. There is no evidence of a rise in serious sexual offending. Traffic policing is primarily the function of the force resource Roads Policing and the balance between police officers and PCSOs has remained consistent over many years.

7. **Background Papers**

- '1' - Police Effectiveness in a Changing World
Police Foundation February 2017
<http://www.police-foundation.org.uk/projects/police-effectiveness-project>