

# MINUTES OF CHILTERN & SOUTH BUCKS POLICING ISSUES FORUM

Tuesday 12th July 2022, at Gerrards s Cross Memorial Centre, and via ZOOM

## In attendance:

Chiltern & South Bucks Policing Issues Forum: Andy Garnett (Chair), Robert Gibson

Thames Valley Police (TVP): Insp James Ellis, Sgt Roy Evans

Buckinghamshire Councillors: Cllr Qaser Chaudhury, Cllr Linda Smith, Cllr Peter Martin, Cllr Andrew Wood, Cllr Michael Bracken, Cllr David Anthony, Cllr Jonathan Waters, [others online]

Buckinghamshire Officers: Roger Goodes, Service Director – Partnerships, Policy and Communications

Residents: 26- not listed in case of GDPR concerns

**Inspector James Ellis (JE)** apologised for not being able to attend in person, owing to having contracted COVID-19.

**JE began his presentation with a reminder of how Neighbourhood Policing fits within the context of the overall Local Policing Area (LPA) structure.**

Each Neighbourhood area has dedicated resources in the form of a shared Inspector, and Sergeant, Police Constables and PCSOs. The Neighbourhood teams are one facet of policing within the LPA, the two other main ones being RESPONSE teams and INVESTIGATION teams.

In summary:

Neighbourhood Teams – have a geographical and problem solving function, with a primary task of reducing demand and vulnerability.

Response Teams – attend emergency incidents following borderless principles, as tasked by control room.

Investigation Teams – attend non-emergency incidents and take Officer in Charge responsibility for all local crime; include detective resources, and undertake functions such as prisoner handling.

**With regard to current local crime trends**, JE reported that:

- Broadly, crime levels are gradually returning to pre-pandemic levels.
- However, these pre-pandemic levels had already experienced consecutive years of reduction, and the year-on-year rise to dwelling burglary is only 3%.
- Vehicle crime is a notable rise (24%) year on year, as is Robbery (53%). Catalytic convertor theft is a contributor to this rise, as are keyless thefts. Robbery pertains to any theft where violence is used or threatened in its commission, and has contributory factors which include the comparison to a lockdown year, and more robust crime recording; especially concerning weapon-enabled offences.
- The largest rise is Weapon Possession (124%), but this is the result of particular police attention. There has been an intensive scrutiny in recording all incidents where a weapon is suggested. The rise is also from a relatively low base.

JE informed residents that they can find out about crime data specific to their area through

Quarterly Updates, published and distributed to community boards (also available via the Forum website), by subscribing to Thames Valley Alerts, and from the Policing Issues Forum. These aim to provide comprehensive summaries for our communities. For further data, the POLICE.UK website has extensive data by Policing area.

**Regarding Force manning**, JE explained a particular current challenge. TVP has had exceptional years for new intakes in 2020/21, 2021/22 and into this current year, as a result of the recruitment drive to build up personnel numbers. The process of training new Officers cannot be carried out exclusively on the job, and a certain amount of formal learning ('PLT' – Protected Learning Time) is required, which takes the Officers away from Policing duties. This is a challenge that is being felt nationally.

As a force TVP places all new officers on the Incident and Crime Response (ICR) teams which is identified as the best way for them to become operationally competent. But by their nature, these are teams that cannot be allowed to lack the strength to support the public. When PLT requirements take these new officers away, their places need to be 'backfilled', and TVP has decided that Neighbourhood Policing is best placed to manage the requirement with some support from others where possible.

JE reported that despite concerns sometimes being voiced, he feels that NH Policing continues to deliver and perform as expected. The resourcing picture will improve once the Uplift training demands are through, and other capacity building work is being undertaken which may in time reduce the draw on non-ICR officers where there are gaps.

**JE also updated residents on a specific local issue of concern, namely regular pony and trap racing on the A413.** He explained that public expectation falls on the Police but that the lack of specific offences and uncertainty of timing of events make it difficult. Recently, Neighbourhood Police had worked with Roads Policing and the Rural Crime Taskforce on 'Operation Gallop', focussing on Road Traffic infractions. But he encouraged a realistic perspective on what is achievable via policing means alone. Could community groups assume a more central role in this issue; deciding on how they wish to approach the problem, and coordinating partnership activity in that direction?

### **Questions from Residents**

Q: Regarding the 124% YoY uplift in weapons possession, what kind of weapons are these?

A: These can range from a housebrick up to a gun. Frequently it may involve something like a metal bar, and of course knives. The 124% uplift is from a low base, and reflects also targeting by TVP. Thankfully the numbers are at by no means the same level as many other areas in the TVP and the country. Through knife searches, sweeps and arches, we try to make ensure a toxic environment for knife carriers.

Q: How can we increase officer numbers in relation to the challenge you outlined?

A: Whilst there are some short-term challenges, there will be long-term gain.

Q: How representative is the survey? Are cyber crime and phishing, for example, not greater threats than Fly Tipping and Speeding?

A: The public doesn't expect that we should be policing Fly Tipping over all else. Some fundamental policing issues will always need to be a focus. And in some areas we augment the work of 'lead agencies': we augment the work of Roads Policing in relation to Speeding; Buckinghamshire Council is the lead agency on Fly Tipping, but TVP has a good operational relationship with the Fly Tipping team, and can augment its work.

Q: Do other locations within TVP have the same sort of problem with pony and trap racing? Could we consult other parishes regarding their experiences?

A: We know this is a hot topic locally. There are a limited number of other locations locally, but none to the level of the A413. Suggest consulting College of Policing, Police and Crime Commissioner. No doubt this is a very challenging situation.

Q: Re weapons possession, do you hold regular weapons amnesties?

A: Yes, we do. There are seasonal Force initiatives, offering knife amnesties, with disposal bins advertised in a number of locations.

Q: Could a greater visibility of policing process and data help in building confidence, for example patrol plans and data on clear-up rates?

A: Patrol plans would be sensitive, but I can direct you to the Police.UK web site, and the quarterly reports generated by our neighbourhood teams. TVP is also a great deal more active on social media, including information on operations.

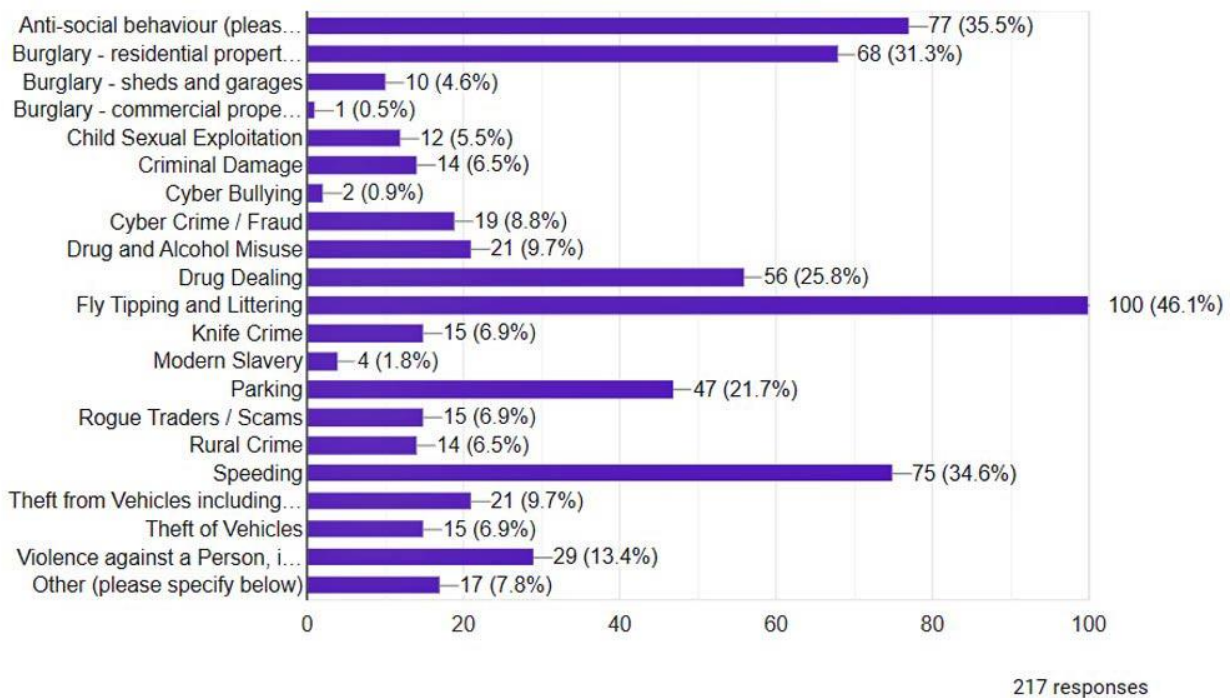
### **Robert Gibson (RG) presented the data from the survey of concerns**

RG said that in a world in which survey fatigue is a real factor, we try to place an emphasis on results being taken forward very quickly and transparently into the discussion of Neighbourhood Policing focus areas, and once set, these focus areas go immediately into the worksheet and reporting schedules of Neighbourhood policing officers. We have adopted the hashtag #NotJustAnotherSurvey.

The survey had obtained 217 responses, and for the second successive time, Fly Tipping had been voted the primary concern among residents. Leading concerns by Community Board had been disparate fairly disparate, but generally coalescing around 5 major concerns.

The results of the survey are summarised by the following chart and table:

1. Please select your top THREE neighbourhood priorities that our Neighbourhood Police and its partners should address over the next four months.



Top Residents' Concerns by Community Board Area - June/July 2022 C&SB Forum Survey			
Amersham and Villages	Speeding (51%)	Fly Tipping & Littering (46%)	Residential Burglary (30%)
Beaconsfield & Chepping Wye	Violence against a Person (41%)	Residential Burglary (37%)	ASB, Drug Dealing (29%)
Beeches	Fly Tipping & Littering (58%)	Residential Burglary (49%)	Drug Dealing (31%)
Chesham and Villages	Speeding, Fly Tipping & Littering (48%)		ASB (38%)
Denham, GX and Chalfonts	Fly Tipping & Littering (58%)	ASB (41%)	Speeding (38%)
Missendens	Speeding (63%)	ASB (46%)	Fly Tipping & Littering (38%)
Wexham and Iver	ASB (54%)	Fly Tipping & Littering (42%)	Drug Dealing (33%)
Under 18's	Speeding (53%)	ASB (46%)	Fly Tipping & Littering (42%)

There was some discussion on:

- particular concern on Fly Tipping in the South of the LPA. This had been highlighted at the previous meeting with a 'heat map' of convictions supplied by the Council's fly tipping team – essentially, the closer to London, the worse the problem.
- the nature of ASB - different types of antisocial behaviour in different locations; the Forum will pass the comments from the survey to the relevant Sergeants, but they and their teams probably know already what needs targeting
- the usefulness and representativeness of the survey. It was explained that the survey is

very widely distributed, via direct mails, social media, Thames Valley Police platforms, and to bodies such as Community Boards, Parish and Town Councils etc. So there's no doubt that the opportunity is there for many residents. But surveys are not easy! JE confirmed that TVP is very happy with the process, which is unique within TVP.

**AG asked for the meeting, and in particular the Community Board Chairs, to agree on three Focus Areas** for our Neighbourhood Policing teams. It was agreed to retain the existing ones, namely:

- Serious Acquisitive Crime
- Speeding
- Anti Social Behaviour

AG thanked all who attended, and the meeting ended at 8.20pm.