



Matthew Barber
Police & Crime Commissioner
for Thames Valley

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To all Town & Parish Councils

March 2024

Dear Colleague,

Working in partnership to fight crime

I regularly meet with town and parish councils to discuss local concerns and talk about the work I am doing to support Thames Valley Police in fighting crime. Of course, with over 700 parishes across our three counties, I am not able to attend every council personally, but as a former town councillor I recognise the important role you play in your community.

I thought it would be useful to highlight some of the work that I and my office do with unitary, county and district councils in Thames Valley that may not always be visible to parishes and towns. One of the areas I am particularly passionate about is improving CCTV coverage. Better use of technology can never replace strong local policing, but it is an important tool. I have committed significant investment to this area, which is not a statutory function for either the police or local authorities. Earlier this year, we launched the first phase of the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership with new cameras – owned and operated, monitored and maintained by the police, with continued support from councils. The first phase covers Milton Keynes and Slough, with a second phase hopefully coming online in Oxfordshire later this year. We continue to talk to local councils elsewhere about continued expansion of the network.

Alongside this specific work on CCTV, I continue to support local authorities through our Community Safety Partnerships. These are vital partnerships harnessing the power of local government as well as the police to tackle anti-social behaviour and persistent crime concerns. I have recently written to council leaders informing them of a 15% increase in the funding that I have allocated from 2025/26, which will mean a total of £11.4m will be provided to crime prevention work in local areas over the next four years. I hope we will also repeat our success in bidding for additional funding from the Home Office through the Safer Streets fund, which has seen a further £5m brought into Thames Valley.

There is, of course, a continued opportunity for parish and town councils to apply for funding for crime prevention projects through my Community Fund. This takes money from criminals – through the sale of stolen goods – and provides it to good causes. In recent years, I have increased the level of funding to £400,000 per year and many parishes and towns have already benefited from the scheme. The next round of funding will be in September, and there is more information available on my website at thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/community-fund/.

Another area that I know causes great concern in many communities is speeding. Not only am I agreeing with the Chief Constable a new road safety enforcement team to provide a more flexible response to local concerns, but I continue to support Community Speedwatch. The Community Speedwatch scheme has recently moved into the new Citizens in Policing portfolio within the Force, which means as well as the free equipment available through my office, I hope that we will be able to improve the support for volunteers.

More broadly of course we have seen a reduction in crime overall across Thames Valley in the last twelve months, and we are on target to have doubled the number of neighbourhood officers in the Force by the end of this financial year. This increase is set to continue and I have committed further funds to put more officers into neighbourhood teams and continue to

recruit PCSOs and Special Constables. This is on top of the record number of police officers serving within Thames Valley. We will be just over 5,100 officers at the end of this month, almost 600 higher than back in 2010.

As always, please do feel free to contact me or my office if we can support your local council in our collective efforts to keep the public safe.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Barber', written in a cursive style.

Matthew Barber
Police & Crime Commissioner