

TVP ISOB – Annual Report 2024/25

Written by: Jason Sinclair

Meetings were held on the following dates during the above period:

2024 - 30th April, 26th June, 26th July, 25th September, 30th October, 28th November

2025 – 27th January, 20th March

This was a year of transformation with the change in Chairperson taking place over the summer period and into Autumn.

With the change of personnel came a change in focus and working practice, with a realignment of how we work with Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Thames Valley Police (TVP) to being more collaborative.

We are now looking with more detail at the processes for implementing the Police Race Action Plan (PRAP) across all geographic areas of TVP and measuring the effectiveness of that implementation by scrutinising data and metrics provided for each Local Command Unit (LCU), questioning variances and seeking more of a deep dive where there were great examples of good practice and improvement, as well as looking closely where the data gave cause to question effectiveness on the surface, to allow for conversations to offer more understanding or indeed explain how the figures could be translated for our communities where it shows disproportionality. This is very much focused on increasing trust and confidence across the wider community in Thames Valley and ensuring more engagement and communication with new and historically cautious communities.

Added to this and as part of seeking to make the group as effective as possible I have engaged in a programme of recruitment, supported by the OPCC to bring in a membership that was both representative of communities from an ethnic background standpoint, but also with a range of lived and professional experience. I also focused on the Thames Valley geography with a target of making sure we had members who were located within the different areas and who had knowledge of the various demographics within them. The aim of this was to not only raise numbers of members (we went from 4 to 9 members) but also to ensure the profile of Independent Scrutiny and Oversight Board (ISOB) was raised within Thames Valley, both within the force and out in the wider community. Our being closer to LCU's would allow us to get more involved with local events and support efforts by our Community and Diversity Officer's (CADO) (which we are individually encouraged to build relationships with) and Local Scrutiny Groups etc.

Our Group makeup is purposely diverse in both Visible and Invisible Diversity, covering Race, Ethnicity, Religious Background and Cultural identity, Gender, Age, Sexual Orientation, Education, Work Experience, Socioeconomic background, Neurodiversity and of course Personality.

More than 50% of our membership have been recruited during this past 9 months and have quickly been getting up to speed and getting familiar with TVP structures, individuals and the vast array of data we have to pull from. I am delighted that many of the new members have been very proactive in getting involved and volunteering time to attend community events local to them in support of our work in the community.

In terms of Scrutiny structure, to allow us more time to digest information and to be more active individually, we collectively decided to meet bi-monthly, which is more in line with other groups such as Community Scrutiny. We are engaging in discussions with the relevant personnel at Thames Valley with support from Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Murray to ensure we are getting the data streams we need to make sure the level of scrutiny is adequate and is easily accessible to all members. Also, we are focusing on how to disseminate the headline messages to community leaders and members, alongside the CADO's which is very much a priority in supporting the increase in trust and confidence of all communities.

We are aware that a Communications Strategy is still being developed, and we do have engagement with that team. I think our members would like to have a meeting focused on Communications, so we are all able to support and lend voices to the best way of making that as effective as possible. It is really important that the community knows exactly what our role is and how we are helping shape the service they receive. At the moment, I think it's safe to say that those who know, know, and there are some areas where there is a need to be more expressive with that message.

So far in my term as Chair I have moved away from criticism for criticisms sake and really been focused on measuring effectiveness, which I feel is shared by all members. We are all passionate about making sure the performance metrics we are receiving are appropriate and can be explained well for all audiences to digest with the ultimate aim of having fully engaged communities who trust TVP and have confidence that the service they receive is of the highest standard, free of bias and proportionate for all regardless of background.

As a group we have looked at and commented on the Comms plan related to the PRAP, feeding back on having more content on direct engagement with community networks on a regular basis, since many under-represented groups will not look at/go to standard pages and news outlets for information. We have also actively contributed to discussions around the choice of language used across TVP to describe communities or activities taking place by the force, to ensure it is up to date and not inflammatory to any group. We have also have discussions within and outside of meetings on metrics relating to Trust and Confidence so that it is easier to observe and communicate around any differences in certain geographies. And where tabloids or local papers have sensationalised certain bits of data, such as this year a paper publishing that in Thames Valley a high rate of children of ethnic backgrounds are detained overnight in cells, we have fed back to community members to ensure that the truth is told, and also been supportive of TVP being able to quickly quantify such claims with accurate data.

Over the course of the coming 2025/26 year, I am planning on adding at least one more member (ideally female) and I am also interested in how I can engage some younger members of the community in this work. Currently I am encouraging and supporting this by inviting younger members to our community scrutiny events in Milton Keynes as a starting point. I am certainly considering how we can be more visible as a group and which events can be supported with attendance by members throughout the calendar year with the purpose of both raising profile and engagement, whilst also supporting our knowledge as a team of Thames Valley and the communities within. But the core focus is making sure we have accurate evidence as to the effectiveness of the PRAP implementation across Thames Valley.