



Vehicle Crime Strategy

2026-2028



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Police & Crime Commissioner
for Thames Valley



THAMES VALLEY
POLICE



Foreword by PCC

As Police and Crime Commissioner, my priority is to protect our communities, people and property. This Vehicle Crime Strategy delivers directly on the commitments set out within my Police and Crime Plan.

Vehicle crime results in financial loss, disrupts victims' daily lives and causes significant emotional distress. Whilst we have seen a reduction in vehicle crime across Thames Valley, there is more to do. That is why this strategy places prevention at its core, alongside strong enforcement, improved data and intelligence, and closer collaboration with our partners.

By working closely with Thames Valley Police and using the full breadth of tools and partnerships available to us, we will ensure that the Thames Valley remains hostile to those who seek to commit vehicle crime and supportive of those who live and work here.



Foreword by Chief Constable

Thames Valley Police is committed to keeping our communities safe, and this Vehicle Crime Strategy sets out how we will continue to reduce harm and prevent offending across the region. Vehicle crime may appear opportunistic, but its impact on victims is significant, causing disruption, financial loss and a sense of intrusion.

Although levels have fallen across the Thames Valley, we recognise the importance of maintaining pressure on those who seek to offend and strengthening our ability to prevent crime before it occurs.

Our approach is grounded in prevention, partnership and problem-solving supported by professionalism, visibility and effective collaboration across our neighbourhood teams and specialist units.

I am grateful for the continued support of the Police and Crime Commissioner, whose priorities align closely with our operational approach. Together, we will make the Thames Valley an increasingly difficult environment for those intent on criminality, while supporting the individuals and communities we serve.



Our Purpose

Our objective is to create an environment in the Thames Valley that is hostile to vehicle crime, ensuring that residents, visitors and industry partners are aware of the measures they can take to prevent themselves from becoming victims of vehicle crime and that, where a vehicle crime offence is committed, there is a robust policing response.

Vehicle crime is currently down in the Thames Valley, compared to data from last year. However, we want this trend to continue. Vehicle crime can have a significant impact on victims and on feelings of safety in our communities, in turn undermining public confidence.

Vehicle crime, therefore, remains a priority within the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Police and Crime Plan with this strategy identifying five strategic pillars, in addition to a range of tangible actions, to clearly set out our approach to tackling vehicle crime in the Thames Valley.

What do we know about vehicle crime?

Vehicle crime is an umbrella term which includes several offences - theft of a motor vehicle, theft from a motor vehicle and vehicle interference.

In the 12 months to the end of August 2025, there were 3,496 vehicle thefts and 6,666 thefts from vehicles in the Thames Valley. Whilst this is a 13.5% reduction on the previous year, we must maintain a focus on vehicle crime so that this trend continues.

Vehicle crime can have a significant impact on victims including financial loss and emotional stress, as well as on feelings of safety in our communities which undermines public confidence. Nationally, vehicle theft is estimated to cost around £1.77 billion per year, a figure drawn from Home Office "cost of crime" metrics and reflecting prevention spending, economic losses to victims, and the cost of remediation, with researchers noting this is likely a lower estimate given rising vehicle prices, repair costs, and insurance premiums. For tradespeople, tool theft alone results in approximately £56 million in annual losses, with average direct losses of £1,565 in tools and £623 in income per incident, and nearly £100 million worth of tools stolen in 2023, significantly disrupting businesses.



Recent reporting shows that vehicle crime in the UK has undergone a shift from opportunistic offending to organised criminal operations. Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) identifies the growing role of sophisticated Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) using advanced technology, targeting high-value vehicles, and exporting them through international routes. The National Vehicle Crime Reduction Partnership (NVCRP) notes that contemporary vehicle theft is increasingly “stolen-to-order,” crossing multiple force boundaries.

National policy continues to evolve to address this emerging threat. The National Vehicle Crime Strategy sets out a coordinated national response, including strengthened intelligence capabilities, port-security measures, and enhanced collaboration with manufacturers. The government’s Crime and Policing Bill will introduce new offences banning possession or distribution of electronic devices such as signal jammers and relay amplifiers which are used in around 40% of vehicle thefts.

Prevention remains the most effective long-term tool in reducing vehicle crime, with national guidance emphasising public awareness, secure-by-design vehicle standards, and environmental improvements such as CCTV and secure parking. Collaboration with industry is central to raising security standards, while neighbourhood policing and specialist units such as National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NaVCIS) support targeted prevention activity, hotspot patrols, and improved intelligence sharing.

Our Approach

This strategy outlines the PCC’s plans to tackle vehicle crime in the Thames Valley. While it has been developed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), it is supported by Thames Valley Police who play a key role in several of the identified interventions.

It has been informed by analysis of vehicle crime data over the previous two years, engagement with law enforcement colleagues (including TVP and OPAL - the national intelligence unit focused on serious organised acquisitive crime) and national industry experts (including the National Vehicle Crime Reduction Partnership and the Motorcycle Action Group).

This strategy will be supported by an operational delivery plan which is overseen by the OPCC’s Programme Management Office which reports into the OPCC Senior Leadership Team to provide assurance, updates on performance and oversight of risk. The Police and Crime Commissioner is also able to hold the force to account for its performance through Performance and Accountability Meetings (PAM).



Five strategic pillars have been identified which set out how the OPCC and TVP will tackle vehicle crime in the Thames Valley:

- 1. Prevention** – a dedicated focus on prevention through awareness raising among the general public and industry, the provision of target hardening advice and physical security materials, as well as opportunities to design out vehicle crime at the planning stage.
- 2. Collaboration** – working closely with a range of partners from law enforcement to local authorities, vehicle manufacturers, retailers and trade bodies in order to share good practice, explore opportunities for joined-up approaches and reach wide audiences for crime prevention advice.
- 3. Data and Intelligence** – enhanced efforts to ensure accurate recording of vehicle crime to enable a good understanding of our current threats and emerging trends to guide our prevention activity.
- 4. Enforcement** – delivering a robust policing response to vehicle crime, in relation to both acquisitive crime and serious organised crime, is critical to maintaining a reduction in offences and providing assurance to those who have had a vehicle or personal items stolen.
- 5. Trust and Confidence** – through targeted activity, there is a commitment to supporting over-represented groups impacted by vehicle crime, such as motorcyclists and tradespeople, as well as the general public.

As an underlining principle, this strategy seeks to remain agile to evolving areas of risk and emerging technologies through the activity that will be delivered in line with the strategic pillars above.

To ensure this strategy is targeted and effective, it applies only to motor vehicles; as such, interventions for bicycles are not included within this plan.

How will this strategy be delivered?

The following areas of activity have been identified to deliver against the five strategic pillars that make up this strategy.



1. TARGETED AWARENESS MESSAGING (Prevention, Collaboration, Trust and Confidence)

Raising awareness of vehicle crime among both the general public and industry partners, including practical crime prevention guidance, will empower individuals and businesses to take proactive steps to prevent themselves from becoming victims of vehicle crime.

We will, therefore, deliver targeted awareness campaigns within the Thames Valley, aligning this with nationally co-ordinated awareness weeks (where appropriate).

What will be delivered?	How will progress be measured?
Distribution of 'Clear Car' campaign posters, leaflets and digital graphics at key locations in higher-risk areas including service stations, park and ride locations, shopping centre car parks, hotels and residential areas in hotspot locations as a reminder of the steps that can be taken to prevent vehicle crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of posters and leaflets distributed• Engagement metrics for social media content – (i.e. shares, likes)• Radio campaign reach and frequency metrics provided by the broadcaster
A radio advertising campaign to share key awareness messages	
A social media communications strategy with targeted content for the most prevalent vehicle crime types in each of the hotspot locations identified	



2. TOOL MARKING FOR TRADESPEOPLE (Prevention, Collaboration, Trust and Confidence)

Tradespeople will often carry tools in their vehicles which are at risk of theft when the vehicle is unattended.

The theft of tools can have significant financial and emotional impact on an individual due to a loss of work and earnings in addition to the costs for replacement tools.

Tool marking can make tools less desirable as they may be more difficult for criminals to sell on and, once registered, can increase the likelihood of stolen tools being able to be returned to their rightful owners by law enforcement.

What will be delivered?	How will progress be measured?
Work in collaboration with TVP Local Command Units, wider law enforcement partners and industry, to hold tool marking events for tradespeople in hotspot locations to include the distribution of kits, demonstrations and the provision of information on tool theft prevention strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of tradespeople attending tool marking events• The number of tool marking kits distributed
Work with TVP to ensure all Local Command Units have access to the kit to be able to identify where stolen items that have been recovered have been forensically marked	



3. TARGETED ACTIVITY RELATING TO THEFT OF MOTORCYCLES (Prevention, Collaboration, Trust and Confidence)

Criminals only need a matter of seconds to steal a moped, scooter or motorcycle, especially if they are left insecure.

Motorcycles are disproportionately represented within theft of vehicle offences both within the Thames Valley and nationally. Therefore, they have been identified as an area of focus for this strategy.

What will be delivered?	How will progress be measured?
Targeted communications materials aimed at motorcyclists to raise awareness of theft prevention measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of posters and leaflets distributed • Engagement metrics for social media content – (i.e. shares, likes) • Publication of data on motorcycle thefts within the PCC’s Annual Report
Work with TVP to refine vehicle crime data to enable data on motorcycle theft to be extracted	

4. ENHANCED OPERATIONAL POLICING RESPONSE (Enforcement, Trust and Confidence)

Operation Purchase is the operational policing response to retail crime in the Thames Valley and has delivered notable results. To mirror this approach, a delivery plan for TVP Local Command Units will be produced setting out clear expectations regarding the force response to vehicle crime and good practice in relation to crime prevention initiatives.

What will be delivered?	How will progress be measured?
A Vehicle Crime Delivery Plan for TVP Local Command Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion and internal publication of the Vehicle Crime Delivery Plan



5. IMPROVED CRIME RECORDING

(Data and Intelligence, Trust and Confidence)

Understanding our vehicle crime data is crucial to understand our current issues, hotspot locations and emerging risks, in turn helping to inform our enforcement and prevention activity. Scoping work to inform the development of this strategy has identified an opportunity to improve crime recording in relation to vehicle crime.

What will be delivered?	How will progress be measured?
Work with TVP to improve crime recording for vehicle crime, in particular details regarding the items stolen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in accuracy of vehicle crime recording

6. ORGANISED CRIME (Partnership, Enforcement)

Historically, vehicle theft has predominantly been committed by opportunistic criminals. However, in more recent years, the theft of motor vehicles is increasingly being recognised as a serious and evolving form of organised crime. Both TVP and the OPCC will work closely with OPAL to ensure awareness of emerging risks and maximise opportunities to access grant funding for force activities, operational support and subject matter expertise.

What will be delivered?	How will progress be measured?
Work with TVP to ensure bids are submitted for grant funding to support national weeks of intensification such as Op Alliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of bids submitted and grant funding secured• The outcomes delivered during national weeks of intensification



7. PARTNERSHIPS WITH INDUSTRY (Partnership, Prevention)

Recognising the vital role that industry must play in preventing vehicle crime, partnerships will be established with local car dealerships and garages, with a particular focus on brands that experience higher volumes of theft of and theft from motor vehicles.

What will be delivered?	How will progress be measured?
Work with industry partners to provide crime prevention materials to customers (i.e. Faraday pouches and anti-theft number plate screws)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of industry partners engaged with by the OPCC/TVP The number of crime prevention materials distributed

8. TARGET HARDENING (Prevention, Trust and Confidence)

Vehicle crime can have a significant impact on victims and on feelings of safety in communities, in addition to substantial financial loss. Preventing crime before it happens is the most effective outcome; where relevant, TVP Designing Out Crime Officers will provide advice to developers on vehicle security and safer parking design. For those who have unfortunately been a victim of vehicle crime in the Thames Valley, efforts will be made to provide crime prevention advice and materials.

What will be delivered?	How will progress be measured?
Prevention kits will be made available to TVP Area Investigation Units (AIUs) so that target crime prevention advice and target hardening materials can be offered to victims of vehicle crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of prevention kits distributed to AIUs and offered to victims of vehicle crime
Advice regarding how to reduce crime in parking areas provided to developers during the planning application by TVP Designing Out Crime Officers	



About Us

For further information about the PCC's work to tackle Vehicle Crime across Thames Valley, please visit our website at <https://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/vehiclecrime/>.

For further information about the PCC, his Police and Crime Plan, or how you can get involved in our work, get in touch using the contact details below:

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