



17th March 2017

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd, MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

Warwickshire Office of the PCC
3 Northgate Street
Warwick
Warwickshire CV34 4SP

Philip Seccombe, TD
Police and Crime Commissioner

Tel: 01926 412322
E-mail: opcc@warwickshire.gov.uk

Dear Home Secretary

HMIC PEEL INSPECTION - Police Effectiveness 2016

Overall, Warwickshire Police is graded as **good** at keeping people safe and reducing crime. This is an improvement on last year's assessment and demonstrates that the Force is making clear progress and this follows on from similar good assessments during the efficiency and legitimacy inspections.

The overall **good** grading reflects the hard work and commitment to serving local communities and protecting the vulnerable that is demonstrated by officers and staff on a daily basis. There can be no complacency, however, as the report has identified areas for improvement which I will touch on in my letter.

Warwickshire Police has a good track record of delivering against HMIC recommendations and I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure that they are acted upon in the same constructive way.

The inspection addressed five key questions which I will briefly cover below:

How effective is the Force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?

Grade: Requires Improvement

There were a number of positive comments in the report, particularly regarding Safer Neighbourhood Policing and the use of THRIVE concept, which ensured that the Force provided the most appropriate response to incidents and events, relative to the level of threat or risk of harm involved. On a daily basis, particular attention is given to incidents involving missing or vulnerable people, or wanted individuals who are likely to reoffend via the daily management meeting.

Two areas for improvement were identified as follows:

The force should work with local people and partner organisations to improve its understanding of local communities, including those which are harder to reach such as migrant communities or elderly people.

The lack of community profiles and limited evidence of efforts to identify threats or risks affecting harder to reach groups formed the basis for this recommendation. The report did acknowledge however, that the Force's plans to introduce new IT systems will improve working practices in this area and that the Safer Neighbourhood Teams were judged to be enthusiastically committed and understood the importance of protecting vulnerable people.

The force should evaluate and share effective practice routinely, both internally and with partners, to continually improve its problem solving approach to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour, including how its neighbourhood policing team effectively make use of their enforcement powers.

The 2015 PEEL Effectiveness report found that the Force's general approach required improving and that training was needed. This is an area that still requires focus, hence the recommendation. Reassuringly though, the inspection did find evidence of good problem solving activity which was taking place at a local level including the use of powers to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?

Grade: Good

I have noted with interest the inspection's findings that Warwickshire Police 'use of further investigation to support formal action, not in the public interest' outcome was amongst the highest in England and Wales. I will explore this issue with the Chief Constable to understand why this is the case and to ensure that the force is providing the best possible service to these victims of crime.

The report highlighted that the force generally conducts thorough investigations, but it was also found that emergency response and neighbourhood officers were under pressure and that there are signs that the quality of their investigations have deteriorated.

Since the inspection took place, in order to improve the standard of investigation particularly amongst junior Constables a Patrol Development and Support Team has been set up. Officers on a rolling basis are attached to the team for a month, during which they are trained and supported with their investigations, the overall aim being to improve each officer's standard of investigation. To date a 75% positive outcome rate for prisoners being dealt with by the team is being achieved.

It was pleasing to note that the inspectors recognised the improvements that have been made since the last inspection in the force's ability to retrieve digital evidence from phones, computers and other electronic devices. In addition, the role out of forensic kiosks had reduced the backlog of digital forensic items awaiting extermination. Very real progress has been made in this area by the force.

A positive comment concerning the force's approach to offender management and the management of dangerous and sexual offenders was referred to and was reassuring.

One area for improvement was *'The Force should put measures in place to ensure that all investigations are of a good standard and subject to regular, effective supervision. Work has already started to address this issue, please refer to my comments concerning the Patrol Development and Support Team'*.

How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?

Grade: Requires Improvement

Since HMIC's 2015 Vulnerability inspection, Warwickshire Police has responded well to the recommendations made; its action plan is judged by Inspectors to be thorough and it has worked with care homes and other agencies to improve its response to persistent and repeatedly missing children.

In addition, as a consequence of the vulnerability training that has been delivered, all officers and staff now have a greater understanding of the force's approach to vulnerability and consistently demonstrate positive behaviours in relation to vulnerable victims.

Other positive improvements since the last inspection included the existence of good problem profiles for areas of vulnerability e.g. CSE, embedded THRIVE principles, and the identification of risk at the initial point of contact was much improved. In addition, the force's recognition of mental health issues was found to be good.

Areas for improvement:

The force should improve the way it works to share information and safeguard vulnerable people so that they received the services they need at the right time; specifically by ensuring that the capability of the MASH enables it to process referrals promptly and effectively.

Since the inspection to address this concern, additional staff have been incorporated in the MASH to ensure that the processes for assessing threat or risk of harm are carried out promptly and effectively.

The Force should ensure that decisions made to the downgrade risk are based on the circumstances of the individual case and do not result in a reduced level of service for victims.

I will be discussing this finding with the Chief Constable at one of our weekly meetings.

I have already highlighted to the Chief Constable the Force's low arrest rate in relation to domestic abuse suspects which is concerning. I have also asked him to explain why the positive outcome rate for domestic related offences is lower than the national average. Both of these factors in my view, will potentially undermined the domestic abuse victim's confidence in Warwickshire Police. This data may also suggest that Warwickshire Police needs to do more to support victims of domestic abuse.

The national recommendation on page 35, I will not replicate here, suffice it to say I have already challenged the Chief Constable in relation to this and I await the action plan which I will scrutinise in detail once it is available.

Any areas for improvement such as this, must be delivered.

How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?

Grade: Good

Much progress has been made by the force in relation to managing the threat from serious and organised crime since the inspection during 2015.

The report highlighted the excellent work of the Serious Organised Crime Joint Action Group (SOCJAG) which now operates force wide. This group, led by my office, is a local partnership with responsibility for tackling serious and organised crime.

However, two areas for improvements were identified:

The force should engage routinely with partner agencies at a senior level to enhance intelligence sharing and promote an effective, multi-agency response to serious and organised crime across Warwickshire.

The force should ensure that an individual force action plan is published that sets out in detail what steps it will take to make maximum use of the ROCU capabilities, minimise duplication at force level and ensure that the shared ROCU resources are prioritised between regional forces.

I will discuss both of these areas with the Chief Constable to understand how he is going to ensure that the required improvements are delivered.

How effective are the force's specialist capabilities?

This section of the report was not graded.

The inspection found that Warwickshire Police had a good understanding of how the national threats outlined in the strategic policing requirement relate to the force area. The force has studied the Paris terror attacks carefully and considered the implication for the command, deployment and training of armed officers.

In addition, the police weaponry and tactics have been enhanced as a consequence of the ferocity of these attacks. An established exercise training regime and simulated terrorist attacks are used to test the forces ability to withstand this type of threat.

Overall, as outlined in my introduction, I am pleased to see the progress that has been made by the force, but there remains much still to do. I will monitor very closely progress against the areas of improvement, which have all been included in a force level action plan which will be led by the Deputy Chief Constable.

Yours faithfully



Philip Seccombe TD
Police and Crime Commissioner