

16<sup>th</sup> April 2018

The Rt. Hon Amber Rudd MP  
Home Secretary  
Home Office  
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London  
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*Dear Amber,*

### **PEEL: Police Effectiveness 2017**

Overall, Warwickshire Police has been assessed as requiring improvement in respect of how effective it is at keeping people safe and reducing crime. This is a disappointing outcome, particularly as last year the Force was assessed as being good.

The inspection graded the Force in three areas. My response will comment upon each of these areas in turn.

#### **1) Preventing Crime and Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour – Grade Requires Improvement**

The inspection found that the Forces vision to protect the public from death, injury, loss and distress, and it's aspiration to be great at protecting the most vulnerable, was well understood by the workforce.

The Force is committed to local policing and the new policing model which has just been implemented on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2018 ensures that all areas of Warwickshire have a designated Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) and this reflects the importance that both I and the Chief Constable place on engagement, visibility and collaboration with the public and partners in accordance with our service priorities.

The new policing model will focus our SNTs on problem solving and crime reduction work and the guiding principles of the model prevent the SNTs from being abstracted to deal with incoming incident demand – a weakness that was identified during the inspection. It is hoped that longer term the work of the SNTs will drive down demand and reduce crime.

Effective channels of communication with communities were highlighted in the report as was the Forces well established independent advisory group (IAG) network. Added to which it was acknowledged that the Force benefits from good relationships with partner agencies, and particular mention was made on how anti-social behaviour (ASB) is managed by a broad range of professionals. The work of the Community Problem Solving Co-Ordinator was highlighted who offers significant support to SNTs, ensuring that they use the full range of tactics and interventions to tackle community and ASB problems.

However, the inspection identified three areas for improvement, each of which I will comment upon in turn.

***'The Force should ensure that local policing teams routinely engage with local communities and undertake structured problem solving with partner organisations to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour'***

Disappointingly, this area was previously identified by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) and appropriate action has not been taken by the Force to address it.

In response to all areas of this inspection the Force has a comprehensive action plan which is being led by an Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) and a member of my team attends every meeting to monitor progress against the action plan.

My team are working closely with the ACC to run a Problem Solving Workshop for all SNT members that will be based upon the good practice championed by Durham Police and the College of Policing. It is recognised that the Force needs to embed processes and a culture that delivers effective problem solving and community policing. It is hoped that the planned workshop, which will be taking place early this summer, will start to address this area for improvement.

***The Force should work with local people and partner organisations to improve its understanding of local communities to understand their needs. It should supplement this with focussed analysis to inform activity and prioritisation, including those which are less likely to communicate with the police such as migrant communities or elderly people.***

The action plan referred to earlier identifies two main pieces of work to address this area for improvement.

1. The development of a Force Consultation and Engagement Strategy; and
2. The development of community profiles, which will be intranet based

Both are seen as key pieces of work.

It is essential that the Force understands the geography, demographics and complexity of the communities they serve and this information should be captured in the community profiles.

***The Force should evaluate and share effective practice routinely, both internally and with partners, to continually improve its approach to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour***

The action plan covers the requirement of this area for improvement in detail which includes highlighting the role of the Service Improvement Board at Alliance level, whose responsibility is to access and disseminate good practice across the policing alliance. This Group is led by a Deputy Chief Constable.

## **2) Protecting Vulnerable People and Supporting Victims – Grade Requires Improvement**

The inspection found that the workforce has a strong understanding of vulnerability, reflecting the forces ambition to be 'great at protecting the most vulnerable'. Officers and staff have been urged to 'see past the obvious' when assessing an individual's vulnerability.

HMICFRS examined how personnel working in the Force control room identify vulnerable people when they first contact the police, in particular victims of domestic abuse. Processes

and practises applied to evaluate the needs of callers and the harm they may be exposed to were found to be sound. However, a selection of incidents that were awaiting assignment were not routinely reassessed by supervisors which meant that should the circumstances change following the initial risk assessment the caller may not always receive the right service for their needs. This specific finding has been identified as an area for improvement.

***The Force should improve its service to vulnerable people, particularly domestic abuse victims, when officers have been unable to attend or attendance is delayed. This should include a reassessment of the risks that victims face so that safeguarding support can be prioritised.***

A tragic incident in the recent past – Collette Lynch – also highlighted the need for improvement in this area. As a consequence since the inspection a new process has been implemented in the control room that ensures that a daily review by control room supervisors takes place of all unresourced incidents to review the risk assessment and endorse its suitability. My Policy and Research Officer for vulnerability will keep this issue under review. This area for improvement does form part of the action plan referred to earlier.

The inspection found that Warwickshire Police generally investigate crimes involving vulnerable victims to a good standard. Domestic abuse risk officers (DAROS) review cases and provide support and advice to repeat victims to keep them safe whilst the police investigation continues. The Force was found to have good procedures in place to ensure that victims receive regular updates about the progress of their case.

The force has also increased its use of legal powers to protect victims of domestic abuse e.g. domestic violence protection orders (DVPNS), but these could be used more frequently.

The work of the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) which assess the risk to victims and provides expert care to them, was assessed as operating effectively and the inspection found that risk assessments were completed well by officers. In addition, body worn video (BWV) has been introduced across the Force which should provide additional evidence to support prosecution in domestic abuse cases.

Despite all of this positive feedback the Force still has a relatively high proportion (when compared with other forces) of outcomes for domestic abuse that fall into the category of 'evidential difficulties; victim does not support police action'. This is disappointing particularly as this has been a focus of activity by the Force which my office has been closely monitoring for the past 18 months or so, as it has been raised previously by HMICFRS as a concern.

As a consequence the inspection has highlighted the following area for improvement.

***The force should take steps to understand the reasons why a high proportion of crimes related to domestic abuse fall into the category 'evidential difficulties; victim does not support police action and rectify this to ensure that it is pursuing justice on behalf of the victims of domestic abuse.***

The concerns of HMICFRS in this area are compounded by limitations in the Forces existing domestic abuse action plan and that during the inspection the Force was also unable to present domestic abuse arrest data. Or provide information that victims were being attended to promptly and that an increasing number of perpetrators were being brought to justice or that better evidence was being gathered to support prosecutions. As such, the Force is judged not to be doing enough to reduce the proportion of crime investigations falling into the category of 'evidential difficulties'.

I find this very concerning. I am aware that the domestic abuse action plan is being updated in response to this inspection and that an audit programme has commenced which will

scrutinise how the Force supports vulnerable people and I note that this audit programme will be reviewed by HMICFRS during 2018.

Improvements must be made in this area and despite efforts over the past 18 months or so there is still much work to be done. I will be raising this matter directly with the Chief Constable and seeking reassurance that sufficient focus and energy is being applied to improve the Force's performance in this area. My Policy and Research Officer for vulnerability will keep this issue under close scrutiny.

### **3) Tackling Serious and Organised Crime – Grade Requires Improvement**

Five areas for improvement were identified during the inspection and they are listed below. Each one is included in the action plan referred to earlier. Clear owners are designated for each area for improvement. I am satisfied that on this basis that the improvements required will be delivered by the Force.

- The Force should further develop its serious and organised crime local profile in conjunction with other interested parties to enhance its understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime and inform joint activity aimed at reducing this threat.
- The Force should enhance its ability to gather and use intelligence from a range of sources to develop its understanding of serious and organised crime.
- The Force should ensure that it maps all organised crime groups promptly following identification and re-assesses them in line with national standards and scrutinises them regularly.
- The Force should assign capable lead responsible officers to all active organisation crime groups as part of a long-term, multi-agency approach to dismantling them. These officers should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and adopt a 'four Ps' (pursue, prevent, protect, prepare) approach to tackling serious and organised crime.
- The Force should improve its understanding of the impact of its activity on serious and organised crime and ensure that it learns from experience to maximise the disruptive effect on this activity.

The inspection identified the need for the serious and organised crime local profiles to be improved by incorporating more partnership information and intelligence. This will then enable the Force to gain a better understanding of the threats posed by this type of criminality.

The insufficient submission of intelligence has hampered the Force in its understanding of new and emerging threats, such as modern day slavery. The inspection recommended including serious and organised crime as part of the Force's strategic intelligence requirement to improve upon the current position, this I strongly support.

Action has already been taken by the Force to address the intelligence submission backlog mentioned in this section. I am pleased to see that the inspectors recognised the investment of additional resources that has been made into the local Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) which will improve the identification of criminals involved in organised crime and increase action taken to stop their criminality. The mapping of organised crime groups (OCG) requires attention as set out in the report.

The report specifically highlighted two actions which my office have led on. The work of the Serious and Organised Crime Joint Action Group (SOCJAG) and the project funded by Home Office money to divert young people away from a life of crime in Nuneaton and Bedworth and Rugby. This has been quite a commitment for my small office but it is good to see that this work is having a very positive impact on the County.

During the Autumn of 2017, my office also successfully ran a conference which was attended by 120+ police and partners which raised the awareness of serious and organised crime in all its guises and highlighted the role that delegates had to play in addressing this type of criminality in the communities in which they work.

Although more work needs to be done to support and develop the lead responsible officers (LROs) the report does highlight the mentoring and training that has been provided to date.

I am disappointed to read that the observation of a previous inspection with regards to the recording and evaluation of disruption activity has not been progressed. How else is the Force going to understand what works well or not so well in tackling this type of criminality. My lead officer will closely monitor action to deliver improvements in this area.

Finally, Warwickshire Police was found to have the necessary arrangements in place to ensure that it will be able to fulfil its national policing responsibilities and to respond to an attack requiring an armed response which is reassuring.

I want Warwickshire to be a highly effective Force and since this inspection I have provided the finances which have enabled the Force to implement new technology and systems which will ensure that our officers and staff are better equipped with the best information to prevent and detect crime.

I acknowledge that all of the areas identified by HMICFRS as requiring improvement are warranted and I will ensure that the required improvements are delivered as set out in my letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Seccombe', written in a cursive style.

**Philip Seccombe**  
Police and Crime Commissioner