



Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Our Ref: JC/TLO

4th June 2018

Dear Sajid,

HMICFRS PEEL Inspection Reports: *PEEL: Police effectiveness 2017*

I am writing to you in response to the HMICFRS PEEL Effectiveness inspection report for West Mercia published in March 2018. The overall judgement of HMICFRS is that the force requires improvement in how effective it keeps people safe and reduces crime.

I am disappointed with the overall grading, particularly as West Mercia Police were graded as 'good' in 2016. This is clearly not acceptable. I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account for the activity the force is taking in response to the areas identified for further improvement, and which were subject to specific recommendations.

West Mercia Police is in a unique alliance with Warwickshire Police and therefore inspected as an alliance that delivers the single specialist capability on the delivery of policing priorities in relation to serious organised crime. It is disappointing and surprising that as forces we then received different gradings. The issue of being inspected jointly is of concern and has been raised with HMI Williams who has agreed we will be inspected separately in the future.

I was particularly disappointed with the grading of 'inadequate' in relation to Serious and Organised Crime and I am writing to reassure you of the urgent and targeted work West Mercia Police are undertaking to address this. The Chief Constable and I fully appreciate that there were shortcomings at the time of the inspection, however, it is hard to accept the HMICFRS conclusion that as a force we were 'putting the public at risk' as I do not believe that statement is evidenced in the inspection report. Tackling Serious and Organised crime is rightly a priority for Government, and I confirm that it is also a priority for me, as Commissioner.

I set out below each of the areas raised by HMICFRS for improvement and the recommendations, along with commentary as to progress on addressing them.

In the area of Preventing Crime and ASB, HMICFRS advised three areas for improvement:

a) Local Policing and better Engagement around Problem Solving

Problem Solving is a significant part of West Mercia's new interim policing model introduced in April 2018. The number of Safer Neighbourhood Team Officers and PCSOs have been protected in this model. West Mercia have worked with the College of Policing and Durham Police, to develop a new problem solving approach which is being embedded across our policing alliance. This will put in place a process, and culture that delivers effective problem solving and community profiling.

b) Evaluate and Share Best Practice Internally and with Partners

As stated above, the development of a problem solving approach is in West Mercia's new policing model. This takes best practice from other forces. The next stage will be ensuring partners are contributing to the problem solving framework effectively. New beat profiles have also been developed on our force intranet to improve awareness of issues based on analysis.

c) Work better with Local People and Partners to Understand the Needs of Communities and Evidence with Analysis

Building on the new problem solving approach and new beat profiles above, the force has also implemented a Consultation and Engagement Strategy, as part of our Confidence Strategy work.

In the area of Protecting Vulnerable People & Supporting Victims, there were three areas of improvement:

a) Improve Service to Vulnerable People around Delayed Attendance and Reassessment of Risk

West Mercia has introduced an action plan approach to deal with un-resourced incidents. Part of that process is daily reassessment of all un-resourced incidents by Control Room Supervisors, and daily assessment by local policing management teams of any incidents that have become higher risk. Any that remain un-resourced have continued daily re-assessment until they are resourced. At the same time introduction of Incident Progression Teams working closely with the control room have meant that incidents where there is no requirement for deployment are resolved and taken off the list quickly, allowing greater scrutiny around those incidents that are still waiting for deployment where there may be some risk for the victim.

b) Improve the Quality of DASH Forms

A full audit of domestic abuse has been conducted in early 2018 which included a review of related DASH submissions. The results are being compiled and will include commentary regarding findings related to use of DASH. A domestic abuse service review has also now commenced and includes additional interrogation of the use of DASH. All of this has been conducted whilst we await a College of Policing pilot regarding a new DASH assessment in a small number of forces which focuses more on longer-term risk elements.

c) Use of Evidential Difficulties

As per above, a full audit of domestic abuse is now complete. The results are being compiled and will include commentary regarding any findings related to use of Outcome Code 16. In addition a domestic abuse service review has now commenced and includes additional interrogation of the use of Outcome 16.

Finally, in the area of Serious & Organised Crime (SOC), there were 5 recommendations:

a) Improve Engagement with Partner Agencies and Data Sharing

West Mercia is developing more effective partnership working arrangements to tackle SOC. Joint action groups to address SOC with partners are in place across the force and work is ongoing to bring consistency to practices. SOC Local Profiles for each policing area have been completed but further engagement with partners is needed to obtain richer partner agency information. This engagement is subject to clear delivery plan actions.

b) Mapping and Profiling Organised Crime Groups (OCGs), including Reassessment

All West Mercia local intelligence teams are briefed on the new Regional and Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) mapping processes and trigger mechanism, and there are clear examples of newly identified OCGs being mapped. Organised crime threats need to be business as usual and our new OCG meeting chaired by a Chief Officer will assist in keeping this focus in place across all departments.

c) Assignment of Lead Officers to active OCGs

Training of Lead Responsible Officers is being built into West Mercia's training plan, with additional support and guidance being provided via our Force Intelligence Bureau. This will ensure that any OCG activity is resourced appropriately and support development for force or regional tasking bids.

d) Better Prevention with Partners around Those at Risk of being Drawn into SOC

The work being conducted with partners is assisting in developing a problem solving ethos around SOC that this is a community based issue. A Prevent Strategy is being developed and the force and I are committed to work together to support

partnership working as well as access to funding streams. Work is also ongoing to increase the use of civil orders, and has been successful in obtaining two Serious Crime Prevention Orders in recent weeks. Further applications are in place for a number of other serious and organised, and economic crime investigations.

e) Measure Activity and Learning on SOC

Disruption activity is now being recorded. Work is ongoing to ensure this is sustainable and embedded, using a clear, auditable system. An OCG Management Unit is now established to assist LROs and others in maximising disruption potential and quality assuring/reporting to ROCU / ROCTA as per national reporting requirements.

West Mercia Police has undertaken peer reviews, sought support from other forces, and is working with HMICFRS through the “engage” process to assist in analysing its response to SOC as a whole. A SOC improvement plan has been developed to improve leadership & governance; systems and process issues; infrastructure and support; partnerships and collaboration.

In addition to the above activity, West Mercia Police has sought assistance and support from forces that have been graded as ‘good’ and from the Chief Constable for Merseyside Police who holds the NPCC Lead for serious and organised crime. This work is well underway to learn from relevant best practice in order to drive the necessary improvements in West Mercia.

Nationally total recorded crime has risen by an average of 12%, however in West Mercia total recorded crime has only risen by 5%. Levels of residential burglary and vehicle crime have risen, but the increase is far less than in previous years and there has also been a reduction in robberies. These specific crime types are intrinsically linked to serious organised crime and it is the robust prevention strategies that West Mercia Police has put in place to reduce violent crime that have led to this improvement.

As I alluded to earlier, I have consistently used my holding the Chief Constable to account role in respect of the HMIC Inspection reports. My holding to account minutes are published on my website. I would highlight the following holding to account activity over the last 18 months:

- Following publication of the PEEL Effectiveness 2015 in which the subcategory of tackling serious and organised crime was judged as requiring improvement in June 2016, I held the Chief Constable to account concerning what steps had been put in place to address the force response to tackling OCGs. A briefing note was provided on each of the AFIs relating to serious and organised crime. This note was discussed at the subsequent holding to account meeting.

- In December 2016 and January 2017, I asked about outcomes of the South Worcestershire SOCJAG Pilot and what progression had been made in developing a West Mercia wide approach. The Chief Constable advised that the JPP pilot had not progressed as well as intended.
- In July 2017, I was advised by the Chief Constable that the force approach had started to improve and a structure of local partner meetings was in place. Meetings were planned or had started in all local policing areas but overall progress was not as advanced as it could be. The ACC for protective services was now leading on ensuring the right organised crime groups were identified and looked at through this partnership approach. I advised that my Crime Reduction Board (CRB) could be used to feed in the local work and provide the strategic oversight required. It was agreed that the CRB would request a presentation at its September meeting on how the local partnership arrangements were progressing in each of the local policing areas, to include an overview of planned activity and outcomes and a further update be brought back to the October Holding to Account meeting. SOCJAG did indeed go to the CRB in September and it was agreed that it would become a standing item on the agenda from December 2017 onwards; with CRB taking on strategic ownership.
- The PEEL Effectiveness 2016 report was the sole focus of my holding to account meeting in April 2018. The Chief Constable was asked to outline his response to each of the AFIs and the five specific recommendations on SOC. I was advised that the local SOC meetings still weren't being run consistently and a target date of June 18 had been set to ensure consistency. I was advised that the mapping of OCGs was complete, that each OCG was now 'owned' by a local inspector and was being reviewed through tasking. In addition, Merseyside police had offered support and that the leadership structure was now in place. It was noted that more needed to be done to get partners input into assessments and that measuring activity and learning from it was an ongoing piece of work. For further oversight, I agreed that my office would attend each of the local SOC meetings for the next 12 to 18 months and for an update on all AFI recommendations to be brought back to the July 18 meeting.

As you will see from the activity above I have been consistently holding the Chief Constable to account on the inspection report findings, but I accept that this hasn't resulted in the required improvements at the required pace. I have reviewed the holding to account process that I use to ensure appropriate confidence can be gained on the activity that is being reported. I am confident my changes will be more effective in holding the Chief Constable to account.

The Chief Constable and I have considered at length the HMICFRS Peel Effectiveness report. At the time of the inspection West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police as an

Alliance were undergoing a leadership review including this area of business. One of the outcomes of this review is that there will be investment in this area including in senior leadership in the form of a new shared Assistant Chief Constable. The new shared Chief Officer will have direct responsibility for shared functions across both West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police; this will include, as a priority, the delivery of policing of serious and organised crime.

I can reassure you that I take my responsibility as Commissioner exceptionally seriously and I am disappointed by the HMICFRS judgement. Whilst the immediate response to the inspection report from the Chief Constable was not effective in making the improvements required at the required pace, I am now reassured that the Chief Constable has the necessary grip to deliver the required improvements and that I have the necessary processes in place to support and hold him to account effectively.

Best Wishes



John Campion
Police & Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

cc Rt Hon Nick Hurd MP, Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service
HMI Wendy Williams, HMICFRS