Our ref: OPCC/1265/17

Date: 26 April 2017

Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP
Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
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Dear Minister,

HMIC PEEL: Police Effectiveness 2016

I have read, with great care, the publication of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's report - *PEEL: Police Effectiveness 2016* - Leicestershire Police.

Naturally I was pleased to see the force graded as 'good' at preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour, dealing with serious and organised crime, working well with partner organisations, pursuing suspects who present a high risk to others and managing the risk posed by dangerous and sexual offenders.

The people of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland will be reassured to know that their local police are performing well in these crucial areas.

However, the same report also concludes the force 'requires improvement' when it comes to its investigative capability and the protection of vulnerable people.

Leicestershire Police is committed to the provision of the highest quality service across all areas of policing and I know the Chief Constable shares my disappointment that the force fell short, in HMIC's view, in uniformly meeting these standards during the latest inspection.

That said, I'm sure you will be pleased to note, as I am, that before the report was even published, Leicestershire Police carried out its own review of the force's investigative and performance processes and, as a result, formally adopted Project Darwin - designed to specifically address identified shortcomings.

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There is now a Force Improvement Plan with assigned ownership, self-inspection and appropriate governance. I meet regularly with the Chief and am reassured to see that swift action is being taken to address the issues raised by the report.

Given the number of areas where HMIC has praised the Force's work, its performance and its innovation and grade it as good it was, to put it mildly surprising to be graded overall as requiring improvement. I simply cannot understand how, despite two 'Good' grades, the overall assessment was 'Requires Improvement' – bearing in mind that there are just four categories.

Across the entire Leicestershire police force, there is professional disappointment with the overall grade for Leicestershire in terms of the HMIC Effectiveness report. There are many areas of proactive and preventative work which demonstrate the force is delivering a good level of service in respect of its efficiency and effectiveness. The report praises the commitment to local, neighbourhood policing and says that the force understands its local communities very well.

Those communities are amongst the most diverse in the country – and continue to grow rapidly. It is worthwhile highlighting that whilst the population of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland has increased at a rapid pace year after year, the money made available by government to fund policing has continued to diminish. As a result we now have 547 fewer police officers than we had in 2009, 23% of our headcount. The full impact becomes apparent when you see that today there is one officer per 599 residents whereas in 2006 there was one officer per 430 residents.

At the same time, the nature and complexity of crime has changed dramatically, with a very significant proportion being committed online, and societal demands and expectations have drastically changed.

The Force has accommodated these changes extremely well, through sound financial management, effective leadership and innovative service delivery. There is a will across the force to address all the HMIC's observations, but it is important that the totality of the services provided by the Force are seen in context.

Having seen the resolve with which it tackles every new and emerging threat, I am confident that the measures put in place will address the areas identified as requiring improvement enabling the force to improve its overall grading accordingly.

Yours ever,

Willy Bach

Lord Willy Bach
Police and Crime Commissioner