



**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

for Leicester,

Leicestershire & Rutland

Your Communities - Your Commissioner

Date: 18/01/2023

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary
Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services
6th Floor Globe House
89 Eccleston Square London
SW1V 1PN

Dear Mr Wilsher,

I write to you in response to your report "An inspection into how well the police and other agencies use digital forensics in their investigations" published on the 1st December 2022.

The findings within this report were very concerning to read, to say the very least. I was shocked to learn the extent of the confusion nationally around some of the processes involved in digital forensics which will no doubt be having an ongoing detrimental impact on victims, and those we are dedicated to serve and protect. Within my Police and Crime Plan, I pledged to 'invest in modern technology to prevent such crimes as cyber-crime, and on-line child abuse...' and this is only worthwhile if the technology is being understood and utilised to its fullest potential to protect our community.

Since the release of your report, my office has been in liaison with the lead of Leicestershire Police's Digital Hub – an advanced system which governs the Digital Forensics Unit (DFU) - to gain an understanding of Leicestershire's position against the report's findings. Whilst it was acknowledged by both the DFU lead and the OPCC that there is evidently still progress to be made I am pleased to report a number of promising findings:

- The post of a dedicated Digital Forensics lead has been in place since 2017, well ahead of the April 2023 deadline outlined in the report;
- Leicestershire Police has two Level 2 UKAS Accredited digital forensics laboratories;
- Leicestershire Police has one Level 3 accredited laboratory – a rare, highly specialist lab which often supports other forces nationally;
- Leicestershire Police currently has 20 technicians trained in computer extraction, however a further 276 officers are trained in device examination, minimising a back-log for the DFU and allowing more effective performance.

I am pleased to further report that Leicestershire Police have a system which is actively monitoring the recommendations made in the report, to which my office has open access. This is in conjunction with a separate monitoring system managed by the OPCC for all HMICFRS publications which will be used for scrutiny and monitoring in our governance boards. This framework tracks the progress of each recommendation in detail and records steps taken to achieve the targets. I am confident that Leicestershire also understand the current and forecast demand, as the Digital Hub lead is also working with the Change team on a Digital Forensics Transformation Project - a proposal to create a dedicated digital forensics network. This project is designed to enhance Leicestershire Police's digital forensic efficiency, help maintain their



accreditation, support their goals for the retention, review and disposal of digital material, and also to ensure investigators receive an evidential product which is effective and accessible. I will request evidence of progress from the Chief Constable in our regular Corporate Governance Boards to ascertain both the successes, and failures, and how I can support the progress further as Police and Crime Commissioner.

Upon my office's initial consultations, I have been reassured that the force is taking a pro-active approach on the relevant failings outlined in the report and that these will be addressed within the deadlines given. I believe that Leicestershire's Digital Forensics Unit has the potential to be a leading unit nationally and I am confident in their ability to address the failings outlined with dedication and rigour.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rupert Matthews', written over a large, stylized circular flourish.

Rupert Matthews
Police and Crime Commissioner
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland