



**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**
for Leicester,
Leicestershire & Rutland

Your Communities - Your Commissioner

Date: 13th September 2024

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

Dear Andy Cooke, QPM,

I write to you in response to your Annual State of Policing Letter dated 19th July 2024.

I accept the recommendations outlined within your report. I will be discussing the main recommendations of the letter in my weekly meeting with the Chief Constable echoing my agreements.

The police funding formula has been a key point of shared frustration for both the Chief Constable and me. There is absolutely no doubt that the current funding formula is an outdated system, detrimental to Forces who are facing complex challenges in modern policing. I am proud to say that despite the archaic formula, Leicestershire Police have shown impressive resilience to these challenges. The Force have been able to maintain excellent service standards; a testament to their adaptability, planning and leadership. Crime has been steadily decreasing in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland - this alone is a significant achievement in light of the considerate underfunding impacting the Force. However, coping under these circumstances should not become the norm. Leicestershire Police have to face daily the complex policing issues resembling of a much larger force. I will continue to lobby the government to reform this out-dated, nonsensical funding formula and start allocating resource based on landscape and demand.

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) continues to be an area of priority for my office. As stated in my 2024 manifesto, and subsequently being built into my police and crime plan for 2024-28, I will continue the partnership working that I have built up in tackling VAWG to keep victims safe and reduce repeat victimisation. Through a successful round of Home Office funding through Safer Streets, I have commissioned a new VAWG Officer on a 12-month post to lead on implementing our new VAWG strategy with local partners. The officer in post has already carried out extensive work with young people across the City and two Counties, and is currently developing an educational package on sexual violence prevention including bystander element for 10-15 year olds and 16-19 year olds. With a focus on prevention, as well as continuing commission for our victim services, we can continue to help reduce harm and protect more women and girls. My office has also successfully delivered a grant round to enable community-based groups to develop co-produced resources to take the delivery of the Under 25 VAWG Prevention strand of the strategy forward. Six organisations have been commissioned to support co-production.



In partnership with the Force, our commissioning team is co-ordinating an improved rape response pilot during Q3 of the 24/25 fiscal year. As part of the new pilot, all victims of reported rape in LLR will be offered a contact call through GOOD SAM (a WhatsApp type platform) through the establishment of one FTE crisis worker. Benefits realised will ensure that every victim of rape in LLR is offered the same level of service regardless of time or geographical location. Through a victim focussed approach, victims will benefit from making an informed choice about the direction they want to take and will be empowered to makes choices that are right for them. In addition, all victims of rape will be able to access the extended support offer that is triggered by contact with the SARC on 24/7 basis.

Regarding the Force, last year, Leicestershire Police won four regional awards for its innovative work in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). These awards recognised several successes including the positive use of a threat assessment tool used to identify high threat relationships. Domestic abuse accounts for 1 in 6 of all crimes recorded by Leicestershire Police. Using Power-BI, the tool enables attending officers to identify those cases suitable for longer-term Problem Management Plans rather than assessing individual incidents in isolation. I will support the Force to continue this innovative, leading work, while implementing our OPCC VAWG strategy jointly with the Force and wider partners.

As mentioned in your letter, like many forces, Leicestershire has a young and inexperienced workforce, with many frontline officers having less than 5 years' experience. This certainly poses challenges, as training needs are significant, and experience will inevitably improve an officer's confidence and knowledge of the Force area from a policing perspective. However, there are several positives to be found with this. As of March 2024, Leicestershire Police had the highest number and percentage in its history of officers from under-represented groups as judged by protected characteristics. However, for the Leicestershire Police to be properly demographically representative of the population that it serves other characteristics will need to be taken into account, while also ensuring that no compromises are made with regard to the quality of officers and staff."

My office has been working hard over my previous term to support the Force in achieving increased public trust and confidence and will continue this work with as much determination as we move in to my next police and crime plan. The link between transparency on the one hand and public trust and confidence on the other is clearly important, though it is not the only important factor that needs to be tackled. During my previous term, I reformed and strengthened the Ethics and Transparency Panel and its remit for scrutiny, for example introducing the review of body worn video. I also instated a new Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel. These panels are crucial for organisational and individual learning, as well as strengthening the link between the public and the police. We have already made significant progress through these panels and their enhanced scrutiny structure which enable me to provide direct recommendations to the Chief Constable each year. The transparency that the Force have shown with these panels with regard to their attendance, providing of materials and being welcoming of and responsive to feedback is testament to their drive to improve public trust and confidence.

Members of my office also attend the Force's use of powers scrutiny panel for increased oversight and governance, as I echo your sentiments that every interaction officers have with members of



the public must be professional and reflect the Force values. Social media can be significant force's for good, however it no doubt plays a significant role in public perception of acceptable levels of use of force. Following attendance on this panel, our OPCC representative presents Body Worn Video footage to the Ethics and Transparency Panel, who provide further third party independent assessments for enhanced scrutiny and oversight. The aim of this is that the scrutiny of the Ethics and Transparency Panel will provide that clear, independent review with the knowledge of acceptable levels of use of force. Full minutes from the Ethics and Transparency Panel are available on our website and I encourage the public to review these and engage with our Panel for increased oversight and governance.

Neighbourhood Policing also remains a priority topic of conversation in our governance framework. We know that police visibility has direct correlation with confidence in policing nationally. Leicestershire have been facing significant budgetary challenges outlined earlier. However, the Force have managed to retain and even increase their frontline workforce to continue to deliver high quality service to the public and maintain visibility locally. I believe strongly that PCSOs are a vital part of neighbourhood policing. PCSOs provide key community links and relationships, and unlike police officers who are subject to role changes, are likely to work in the same locations over a long period of time. This allows them to form long term relationships with their communities, relationships that are extremely valuable in building trust and confidence in policing and providing support and intelligence to police officers to protect more victims. I believe PCSOs have a vital conversational and advisory role with the public, whose remit reaches far beyond operational.

I want to now further encourage officers and NPA commanders to increase awareness among the public of expectations of their local neighbourhood police officers. This has been discussed at my most recent corporate governance board in July and I will continue work with the Chief Constable to help strengthen these messages.

Another key element of building trust and confidence as mentioned in your letter is ensuring we have a robust approach in dealing with any Leicestershire Police employees who do not uphold the values of Leicestershire Police and therefore should not be associated with the organisation. I want to continue to restore confidence among the public that the Force employ the right people to protect and serve.

My office has adapted confidently and quickly to the new legislation around police misconduct hearings. This is a strong process in OPCC Leicestershire, where we have been actively involved with other OPCCs across the country in reviewing the changes being implemented by the Home Office and ensuring that there is a clear understanding of them.

My office has ensured that all parties involved in the implementation of new legislation have been appropriately updated by sharing guidance and organising training for independent panel members and Legally Qualified Chairs, so that they are all fully informed on how the new misconduct rules and the importance of the role they play to remove officers who do not uphold the values of the Force.



In addition to this, my office has taken steps to utilise Pension Forfeiture against officers who have been convicted of a criminal offence in connection with their service where appropriate to do so. I want victims to feel confident that when they report police officers, these concerns will be taken seriously and where officers are convicted, we respond robustly and utilise the powers we have to provide further justice to victims.

I wanted to also take this opportunity to raise two issues I think are becoming of increasing importance.

Firstly, the system that we currently have in place for the selection and training of Chief Officers is, I believe, lacking. In my view there should be more transparency and rigour around the selection and preparation processes for officers to get on to the training to ensure that the highest ranks of policing include those best suited to senior management posts. Just because a person is an exceptional police officer or senior police commander does not automatically mean that they are capable of adequately mastering the many skills needed to manage an organisation containing thousands of individuals and with a budget running to hundreds of millions of pounds. As a PCC, it would be my role to hire a new Chief Constable, and I believe that there is more we can be doing, with support from HMICFRS and the College, to ensure that there is a much larger pool of suitably qualified, talented and trained candidates ready to apply. As the inspectorate I think there is a role for you to play in that process.

Secondly, our Forces are being required to police increasingly diverse communities, and at times relatively high levels of transient populations. This presents a challenge for community cohesion. All members of our society have a right to feel safe, permanent resident or not. Leicester and other towns across Leicestershire and Rutland were well policed over the summer with an exceptional proactive approach taken by our officers. There is little guidance to be found as to best practice when it comes to policing diverse communities. This needs to be improved so that Forces all over the country can apply it to their operations and so ensure good and improving relations with often hard-to-reach communities, with a particular need when it comes to neighbourhood policing.

With all of the above in mind, I look forward to producing my Police and Crime Plan for 2024-2028 and ensuring we continue to protect and serve the public. I will continue to lobby for the reform of the police funding formula. I will continue to work with the Chief Constable to maintain the excellent service standards being delivered despite the challenges currently being faced, and uphold my role of scrutinising and supporting the Force, and providing essential services to victims across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Yours sincerely,

Rupert Matthews



Prof. Hall

Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland