

Katy Bourne
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**Sussex
Police & Crime
Commissioner**

Ms Zoe Billingham
HM Inspector of Constabulary
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service
6th Floor – Globe House
89 Eccleston Square
London
SW1V 1PN

27 April 2018

Dear Zoe

HMICFRS – PEEL: Effectiveness

I write in respect of the recently published findings for Sussex Police in the 'Effectiveness' strand of the annual inspection into Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL). I welcome the opportunity to comment on the HMICFRS report and have carefully studied its findings and recommendations.

Independent scrutiny of policing is an essential part of maintaining public confidence and this report comes at a critical time for Sussex Police – straight after the major modernisation of the Force's approach to local policing.

The public have seen changes to the deployment of police officers and PCSOs at the frontline of policing and their confidence in Sussex Police is naturally more influenced by what they see rather than by the huge amount of policing that goes on unseen, tackling serious crime.

I am, therefore, delighted that despite the complete redesign of local policing over the past three years, Sussex Police has been independently recognised to be 'good' in respect of the effectiveness with which it keeps people safe and reduces crime. The report also recognised that the Force has made "significant progress" since last year's inspection when Sussex Police received a grading of *requires improvement*.

I am pleased that HMICFRS have acknowledged that their assessment took place before the new Prevention teams were fully embedded and their ongoing expectation that the crime prevention strand will steadily improve is referenced in the report.

The Chief Constable provided me with strong assurances that the Crime Management Strategy which already exists within the Force ensures that investigations are dealt with by the most appropriate person. I would, therefore, like to understand better HMICFRS' statement that "the Force would benefit from a clear crime allocation policy" to formalise this process. I would like to know where the failings are within the existing processes used in Sussex, and request further clarification from you on why the current Strategy is not sufficient?



I welcome HMICFRS' commendation for the Force's "ground-breaking work" to tackle county lines crime by disrupting, responding and safeguarding vulnerable individuals from cuckooing. I recognise that the National Crime Agency is considering sharing this nationally as "best practice" and note that the "way that the Force analyses information in relation to serious and organised crime has been put forward for consideration to be included in the college of Policing Authorised Professional Practice". You will also recall from our meeting on 1 March 2018 that I was interested to know what a police force has to do, in order to receive a grading of *outstanding*? You had agreed to write to me with this information and I look forward to receiving this from you in due course.

As you will be aware, the changes to pre-charge bail, as part of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, means that there is now a presumption of release without bail, unless necessity and proportionality criteria are met. I am reassured that, despite the apparent high number of domestic abuse suspects given bail in Sussex, the Force is still ensuring that appropriate conditions are imposed to safeguard victims. The report also highlighted that the number of suspects charged with domestic abuse-related offences had reduced by 31% too. I am satisfied that Sussex Police has demonstrated increases in both the recorded number of domestic abuse crimes and the subsequent number of offenders charged. However, the reason for the perceived overall percentage reduction is because of a higher proportion of recorded crimes, than charges. The percentage figures highlighted in the report were, therefore, not as helpful as they could have been in this regard. In future, it would be more representative if the actual numbers, as well as percentage changes, were included in HMICFRS inspection reports too.

I recognise that the report does highlight public engagement as an area where Sussex Police falls short. Part of the problem is that the Force is spending less time engaging with local communities which means that, whilst it understands risks to most communities, it does not understand the specific concerns of individuals and, more puzzling, it does not understand why anti-social behaviour has fallen in some areas.

At a local and county level, the Force has clearly not communicated some of the benefits and successes of the new Prevention Teams. This is doubly frustrating because of the excellent work of the Community Investigation Teams to support local police commanders that I know exists. This is an area that I will continue to monitor closely.

As always, I discussed the content of the report with the Chief Constable at our webcast monthly Performance & Accountability Meeting (PAM) on 20 April 2018. This session is archived and can be viewed on my website using the following link: www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/webcasting/

It is also worth emphasising that the Chief Constable launched the *Sussex Police 2018/22 Transformation Strategy* last week which set out how the Force will use the additional funding raised through the precept uplift and the use of reserves to modernise and strengthen local policing in Sussex.

The four-year Strategy is aligned with my *Medium Term Financial Strategy* so that the Chief Constable is able to plan further ahead. The Strategy also demonstrates that, by 2022, Sussex Police will have 200 more officers than it currently has. This will mean that people will see an increased visible policing presence throughout Sussex.

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I am confident that, if the Force makes this investment into local, neighbourhood policing, it will be reflected in improved public confidence and an improved HMICFRS grading at the next inspection. As PCC, I will continue to closely monitor the progress of Sussex Police in this area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katy Bourne'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'K' and 'B'.

Katy Bourne
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner