

Katy Bourne OBE
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

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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

11 March 2020

Dear Zoe,

HMICFRS – PEEL Assessment 2018/19

I write in respect of the recently published findings for Sussex Police in the Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Assessment 2018/19 inspection report. I welcome the opportunity to comment on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report and have carefully studied its findings and recommendations.

I am pleased that the inspection report judged Sussex Police to be 'good' in respect of reducing crime and keeping people safe and how it treats the public and its workforce.

The report acknowledged that Sussex Police has continued to improve its ability to identify vulnerable people and police officers and staff understand and assess vulnerability well. It was disappointing to note that the Force had not responded to previous concerns and recommendations in respect of how it safeguards vulnerable people, including inconsistent processes for assessing and managing risk highlighted in the report. I am reassured that Sussex Police has put plans in place to improve the safeguarding arrangements and address the cause for concern and the six associated recommendations around risk-management across the areas of initial contact, triage and supervision, within the prescribed timescales, but I will continue to monitor and ensure improvements are expedited.

HMICFRS recognised the investment that has been made in neighbourhood policing through increases to the police precept to provide 379 additional police officers and 100 extra Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). This increased visible policing presence for the local communities in Sussex should ease some of the pressure on frontline officers.

I have also supported investment in the Force Contact Command and Control Centre which has contributed to non-emergency call waiting times reducing by over 70%, to an average of under five minutes, and reductions to the number of callers who abandon their calls before getting through to a contact handler by more than 60%.

In 2020/21, further investments will be made in more enforcement, more investigation and an even greater policing presence in the towns and villages of Sussex. This will include increased disruption and enforcement activity through the Tactical Enforcement Unit and the dedicated rural crime teams, both of which will be expanded further across the three policing divisions.

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In addition, Sussex Police will be enhancing the service provided to victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence through the provision and availability of increased specialist support. The Force will also provide investigative teams with increased capacities and capabilities through more detectives and police staff investigators that are expected to deliver better outcomes for victims through improved investigative outcomes.

I shared HMICFRS' view about the overall quality of the policing service provided in Sussex although, being published almost a year after the inspection took place in May 2019, the Force has been working hard to address the areas where improvements were identified for more than 10 months now and I was disappointed that the scale of the progress already made was perhaps not recognised as accurately as it could have been.

I discussed the content of the report with the Chief Constable at our webcast monthly Performance & Accountability Meeting (PAM) on 21 February 2020. The Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police has developed a comprehensive action plan and taken significant steps to improve the service provided in respect of identifying, safeguarding and responding to risk.

It was also emphasised that ongoing plans and actions are in place to address each of the 13 areas for improvement highlighted in the report through existing governance structures. This will all contribute towards an improved policing service being provided to members of the public in Sussex. This PAM session is archived and can be viewed on my website through the following link: www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/webcasting/

I am pleased that HMICFRS recognises Sussex Police to be a Force that has a "good track record of taking positive action following inspections". I expect to see further improvements demonstrated around how the force assesses and prioritises resources to meet demand through a more efficient use of resources, targeting them where they are needed most.

I have commended the police officers, staff and volunteers for their hard work and ongoing commitment to make local people feel safer in Sussex. I will continue to monitor closely 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 long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

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