



Ms Zoe Billingham
HM Inspector of Constabulary
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service
6th Floor – Globe House
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2 September 2020

Dear Zoe

HMICFRS – Roads Policing Inspection

I write in respect of the recently published findings in the '*Roads Policing: Not optional*' thematic inspection into the roads policing in England and Wales. 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 understand the importance that the residents of Sussex place on road safety and recognise that safer roads and communities can be created by working together and sharing the roads responsibly.

The HMICFRS report provided police force areas with a clear framework to review how roads policing is delivered across England and Wales. Sussex Police was not one of the seven police force areas inspected but did take part in a pre-inspection telephone discussion to contribute to the overall findings.

I understood fully the clear message contained within the report that "*roads policing is not optional*". The significant and positive impact that roads policing can have in terms of reducing the number of deaths caused by road traffic collisions is clear for all to see with worrying trends apparent in recent years, seeing the number of fatalities gradually increase again after steadily falling for many years since 1979.

I shared HMICFRS' concerns that roads policing is seen as less of a priority than it should be and that the importance of how roads in England and Wales are policed has diminished. The starkness of this position is highlighted further with confirmation that spending on roads policing was cut by 34% (taking inflation into account) between 2013 and 2019, resulting in fewer officers responding to offences that cause deaths on the roads.

The Force has continued to monitor the resources allocated to police the strategic road network in Sussex to ensure that these remain appropriate. In recent years, I have raised additional funding through the police precept to secure additional resources for the Road Policing Unit (RPU) and, in January 2021, a new Specialist Enforcement Unit (SEU) will be introduced to deliver proactive and targeted operational policing activity where the communities of Sussex need it most. The SEU will concentrate on the road network in Sussex to make these roads a hostile place for offenders to carry out criminal activities by denying them the opportunity through visible and robust policing. Further information about the SEU can be viewed through the following link:

www.sussex.police.uk/police-forces/sussex-police/areas/careers/jobs/specialist-enforcement-unit/



I am also pleased to confirm that roads policing remains a key feature in my Police & Crime Plan and through my continued participation in #TalkSussex – an extensive public engagement programme – I continue to encourage communities and partners to play a full and active part in making the roads of Sussex safer to prevent the main causes of death and injury on the roads of Sussex. This work is carried out in partnership with the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, Operation Crackdown and local Community Speed Watch groups. My Police & Crime Plan can be viewed through the following link:

www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/our-priorities/police-crime-plan/

Influencing and changing driver attitudes and behaviours through a combination of education, engineering and enforcement is another essential requirement towards ensuring long-term improvements to road safety – this is because prosecution alone does not provide a sustainable solution. I am pleased to confirm that a full evaluation of all road safety initiatives delivered in Sussex is carried out after each campaign has concluded. These post-implementation reviews consider operational activity, geographical locations and individual demographics to inform the development of future educational materials and to determine targeted police and partner activity.

As always, I discussed the content of the inspection report with the Chief Constable at our webcast monthly Performance & Accountability Meeting on 31 July 2020. Strong assurances were provided to me regarding the positive direction that Sussex Police is now taking in terms of road safety – assisted by increased investment in RPU resources and the planned formulation of the SEU – and represents a renewed commitment to protect better the communities and all road users in Sussex.

Further improvements are also planned to Operation Crackdown – to simplify the process for members of the public to share information, intelligence and digital video footage. Sussex Police is also working to develop policing indicators that will enable the Force to predict demand and to task road policing resources more effectively, through a combination of local partnership data, national statistics and weather information.

The inspection report made 13 recommendations to the police and other bodies to improve the effectiveness of roads policing in England and Wales, of which seven were specifically relevant to Chief Constables. I am reassured that the Force is working hard to address each of these within the timescales set by HMICFRS, many of which had already been progressed prior to the publication of the report. This PAM session is archived and can be viewed on my website using the following link: www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/webcasting/

I am confident that the increased investment in the roads policing resources in Sussex will contribute positively towards improving the capacity and capability of the Force in this area, reducing the number of individuals killed or seriously injured on the roads and tackling criminals using the road network – protecting further the communities of Sussex.

In closing, I would like to formally challenge Recommendation 3 in the report that "*by 1 April 2021, the Home Office should use the statutory power under section 7(4) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to issue guidance on what should be included within future police and crime plans. The guidance issued should require reference to roads policing in all police and crime plans.*" It is my role as the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) to reflect accurately the policing, crime and community safety issues which members of the public have told me are most important to them in my Police & Crime Plan. It is not for HMICFRS to collectively determine what these priorities should be for each police force area in England and Wales – that remains the responsibility of each individual PCC, in consultation with their electorate.

Katy Bourne OBE
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

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**Sussex
Police & Crime
Commissioner**

I will continue to closely monitor the progress of Sussex Police in this important area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Bourne'.

Katy Bourne OBE
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner