

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
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Date: 26 July 2019
Ref: OPCC/MS/IOR/003/19

Dear Priti

HMICFRS – PEEL: Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy 2018/19

I am pleased to present my comments in response to the above report within the meaning of section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996 (as amended by section 37 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017).

I very much welcome the findings from HMICFRS' PEEL assessment of Kent Police which were as follows:

- **Efficiency – Outstanding** (uplift from Good)
- **Legitimacy – Outstanding** (maintained for a fourth consecutive year)
- **Effectiveness – Good** (maintained)

These are an impressive set of grades. Kent Police is one of only two forces (to date) graded 'Outstanding' in two pillars and the only force to achieve 'Outstanding' in both Efficiency and Legitimacy. Furthermore, it is the only force to be graded 'Outstanding' in Legitimacy for four consecutive years.

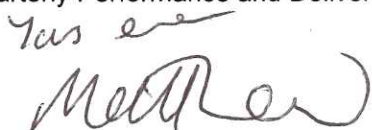
Taking these findings into account, and the force's recent 'Outstanding' grade for crime data integrity, I firmly believe that Kent Police is the best police force in the country – holding more 'Outstanding' grades, and for longer – than any other. Following a visit, the previous Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service, Nick Hurd MP, even described Kent Police as '...an outstanding example of an excellent force'.

Kent Police cannot stand still though and must continue to improve what it does, and how it does it. The Chief Constable's comments (attached) make clear his ambition to strengthen the force's position, with an aspiration to move from 'Good' to 'Outstanding' in Effectiveness whilst maintaining that grade in Efficiency and Legitimacy. I have every confidence that through the Chief Constable's leadership and the unerring efforts of his officers and staff, the force will achieve that goal. For my part, I hope the extra 180 police officers funded this year through council tax, plus the 200 extra officers recruited last year, and the ongoing investment in new technology and equipment will help the force on that journey.

Whilst the PEEL assessment did not include any recommendations for Kent Police, I am also reassured that the force has already, and will continue to make progress addressing the six Areas for Improvement (AFIs) identified.

Without every officer, Special Constable, PCSO, member of staff, and volunteer understanding that victims and witnesses must come first, that Kent Police exists to provide a first class service, and that 'doing the right thing' underpins everything, the force would not be where it is today. The PEEL assessment findings are testament to the fantastic job they do day in, day out and on behalf of the residents of Kent, I would like to thank them for keeping the county's communities safe.

I am very pleased that Kent Police can be considered the best police force in the country. I am also confident the force would welcome the opportunity to share its experiences and learning for the benefit of other forces and the police service nationally. However, there is no room for complacency and I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account at my quarterly Performance and Delivery Board for both the Kent Police ambition, and progress against the AFIs.

Yours ever


Matthew Scott
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner

HMICFRS POLICE EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY & LEGITIMACY 2018/19 – KENT POLICE

Part 1: Chief Constable's Comments (to PCC)

The 2018/19 integrated PEEL assessment (IPA) was, as always, rigorous, searching and penetrating. Areas particularly focussed upon by HMICFRS were:

- Demand – including the management of crime and related investigations
- How we deal with victims
- How we assess callers requiring police assistance
- Counter-corruption – internal mechanisms for the monitoring of staff

As well as these specific topics, the force was assessed in critical areas such as Local Policing, Vulnerability Investigation Teams, the Force Control Room, armed policing and other functions that support the vulnerability agenda such as the Police Online Investigation Team (POLIT). A strong spotlight was also shone upon the force's approach to efficiency, especially around medium to long-term savings plans and future financial stability.

The force not only stood up to this external examination but actually *enhanced* its position - moving from a grading of 'good' in Efficiency, to 'outstanding' in 2018/19.

With retaining a fourth consecutive year as 'outstanding' in Legitimacy, and a continuation of 'good' in Effectiveness, Kent Police is among the very highest graded forces in the country - a true testament to the hard work, dedication and professionalism of my workforce.

In keeping with the force's desire to continually improve, it is my intention to create a broad improvement plan embracing effectiveness, which, over the next two years, will see us further strengthen our position in this pillar. It is my hope this work might find us bidding to move from 'good' to 'outstanding' in effectiveness, whilst retaining that grading in Legitimacy and Efficiency. This is a very ambitious goal but one I believe my force is capable of meeting.

As always, I would point out that I see HMICFRS grading's not as ends in themselves, but as reflections of the highest quality service to the people of Kent.

Part 2: Planned Activity by Kent Police to the Report

Kent Police were awarded 'outstanding' in the pillars of Efficiency and Legitimacy, and 'good' for Effectiveness.

Within the report, the force were given six Areas for Improvement (AFIs), as follows:

- The force should ensure it progresses cases effectively, even if the victim does not support the investigation, and that officers understand the importance of this (page 11).
- The force should, within three months, review its use of THRIVE within the control room and the incident management unit (IMU) and ensure that staff understand the importance of correctly assessing incidents (page 15).
- The force should, within three months, review its incident management unit recovery plan to ensure it gives victims an appropriate service (page 15).
- The force should review demand and capacity in its police online investigation team (POLIT) and reduce the backlogs in the department (page 15).
- The force should ensure its counter-corruption unit:
 - has sufficient capability and capacity to be effective in its proactive approach to counter corruption; and
 - can fully monitor all of its computer systems, including mobile data, to proactively identify data breaches, protect the force's data and identify computer misuse (page 35).
- The force should ensure it builds effective relationships with the groups and organisations that support and work with vulnerable persons (page 35).

Each of the AFIs has its own internal action plan, these being created in the immediate period following inspection. The force's HMICFRS liaison officer, Superintendent Darren Alderson, has recently reviewed our plans and spoken to each of the department heads/subject leads covering the AFI areas. Mr Alderson was very content with progress and was particularly complimentary about the speed of action by the force to address matters following publication of the PEEL assessment.

HMICFRS will further review AFI progress quarterly in line with their regular practice. No AFI will be 'signed-off' as complete until HMICFRS commence their next IPA of Kent which is expected to be in January or February 2020.

Significant preparations have begun in readiness for the next IPA. Mr Gary Beautridge (Force Crime and Incident Registrar and Head of Operational Standards and Practice) is managing the Effectiveness pillar. A comprehensive plan is being developed by him and his team which will be managed via the new Effectiveness and Crime Policy Board. The Effectiveness plan will represent the force's combined effort to raise the current grading in this pillar from 'good' to 'outstanding' over a period of some eighteen to twenty-four months.

The Force Inspectorate is developing separate internal plans for both Legitimacy and Efficiency to ensure we retain the outstanding gradings achieved in 2018/19. These plans will be significantly informed by a thorough and comprehensive review of our current position in each of the relevant pillars, with involvement from key stakeholders. Other pre-inspection preparedness includes:

- An internal inspection of stop and search (Legitimacy)
- An internal inspection of stalking and harassment (Effectiveness)
- An internal inspection of POLIT (Effectiveness)
- An internal inspection of counter-corruption (Legitimacy)

We will also be reviewing documents and data that verify and support activities assessed in all three PEEL pillars. This can range from stop and search and use of force submissions, through to PDR completions and sickness data.

All the force's PEEL plans will be subject to a rigorous self-assessment using the same judgement criteria applied by HMICFRS when determining a force grading.

Reporting on progress to meet the next IPA will fall primarily upon the shoulders of the internal Force Inspectorate. It will report to the Strategic Change and Resourcing Board and to any other governance boards (including the PCC's Performance and Delivery Board) as and when necessary.