



Force Headquarters
Wootton Hall
Northampton
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Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP
Minister of State for Policing and Fire Services
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

24 March 2017

Dear Brandon

HMIC EFFECTIVENESS INSPECTION

We are writing in response to your letter, dated 7 March 2017, concerning the recent HMIC effectiveness inspection. As your letter was directed to both of us, we wanted to provide you with a joint reply.

Firstly; we wanted to provide you with our combined and collective assurance that we take the whole performance of the Force with absolute and wholehearted seriousness. Therefore, we agree that the report from HMIC is disappointing.

Secondly; you sought details as to how we intended to address the findings within the HMIC inspection report. There were 18 Areas For Improvement (AFIs) highlighted by the report from the inspection that took place in November 2016. The report also states that Northamptonshire Police are in the process of designing and implementing the Service Delivery model (SDM), which will address two thirds of the AFIs along with the actions that have already taken place between the inspection in November last year and now. The decision to properly design and implement a demand led operating model is the correct approach and has been endorsed separately by HMIC. Therefore, we are both confident that the issues raised by the AFIs are already known, understood and have already been or are in the process of being addressed.

However, our serious concern is that the next round of HMIC inspections will take place during and immediately after initial implementation of the SDM, which is a fundamental and generational change in the delivery of operational policing in Northamptonshire. A key factor in the successful delivery of this operating model is the internal staff and external public/partner confidence in the approach. We would urge both the Home Office and specifically HMIC to be conscious of this and the timing of the inspection and subsequent publication of their report on the impact and ultimate confidence in the model that will allow it to succeed. Whilst neither of us will accept poor

performance, we are also completely focused on providing a positive outlook and not needlessly damaging public/partner confidence based on a snapshot inspection.

Whilst wanting to actively and positively engage with you and HMIC, we are also conscious of our respective roles. With this in mind we have recently introduced a more robust and comprehensive internal accountability and assurance process. Therefore, we can both provide you with assurance that the specific issues raised within this and any other HMIC report are gathered, assessed, actioned as deemed appropriate and then evaluated. However, we must also take the Police and Crime Plan along with available resources into account to make a risk based assessment of which actions are necessary and appropriate.

Collectively we are both really keen to engage further with you and HMIC to expand on the SDM plus our current financial position, construction of our estates strategy and capital programme along with the subsequent use of reserves to deliver a viable and sustainable police service.

We also note from your letter that you make specific reference to the importance of HMIC in the policing landscape. We both fully agree that HMIC provide a vital role and should provide the PCC with a technical inspection assessment of the local Force. However, further discussions are required as to how and where HMIC fit within the wider landscape, their role both within policing and also as part of a wider inspection regime along with who and how they subsequently provide their findings. Ultimately, as the representative of the public in each Force Area we believe that HMIC should provide PCCs with that report that will form part of the wider accountability and assurance process locally. To that end we are concerned that HMIC appear to pulling back engagement opportunities with the removal of the PCC Reference Group.

The discussion surrounding the respective roles of HMIC, College of Policing, APCC, NPCC, NAO, Select Committees, other government departments and inspectorates along with other partners is becoming more important as local partnerships, regional and national collaborations become more prevalent and directly impact on individual Force performance.

Yours Sincerely

S MOLD
Police and Crime Commissioner
For Northamptonshire

S EDENS
Chief Constable
Northamptonshire Police