

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
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3 October 2014

Dear Home Secretary

HMIC Inspection: 'Core Business – an inspection into crime prevention, police attendance and the use of police time'

In line with my statutory responsibilities I am writing in response to the recent publication of the HMIC 'Core Business' inspection, which looked specifically at the important areas of crime prevention, crime recording and attendance and freeing up police time.

I fully support the HMIC aim of independently inspecting and assessing force performance in the public interest and providing accessible and easily understandable information to the public. I am aware of some concerns over the process in relation to this particular inspection and both the Chief Constable and myself will work closely with HMIC to discuss and address these concerns professionally.

The thematic report contains a large number of recommendations which I do not intend to respond to individually here. I am satisfied that Dorset Police have already begun the process of reviewing the recommendations and developing an associated action plan to address these, and that this will be reported through our internal governance arrangements which I am very much sighted on. I will just make some general observations on the three key themed areas covered by the inspection, however.

Preventing crime

HMIC acknowledge that, whilst Dorset Police does not have a single overarching crime prevention strategy in place, crime reduction and prevention does form an integral part of specific strategies and plans addressing the Force's response to particular threats and crime types.

As you may also be aware, Dorset recently submitted a joint bid to the Police Innovation Fund with our colleagues from Devon and Cornwall, requesting funding to assist in establishing a joint Prevention Directorate. Whilst this bid was ultimately unsuccessful, work continues to explore the potential for progressing this project.

Crime recording and attendance

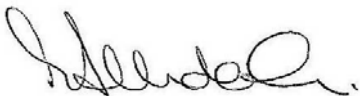
I would echo the comments of HMIC, Sir Hugh Orde and others, that there can never be a 'one size fits all' approach to policing response across the 43 forces and that each force will need to tailor their response to the demands and priorities facing them in their particular area. I will certainly never advocate 100% attendance for reported crimes – not only would it be unachievable given current resource levels it would also be inappropriate. Some cases do not merit police attendance, nor do those reporting crimes always want the police to attend either. The important issue for me is how crime is investigated and resolved and this continues to be an area of focus for me locally.

Freeing up police time

This has been a long running agenda within policing and one that I have been very much focused on since being elected as PCC. In our efforts to improve efficiency and help free up police time we are in the process of introducing body worn cameras and mobile data devices. Pleasingly, the HMIC report recognises Dorset's innovation in this regard, and initiatives like this will save police officer time whilst boosting their visibility in our communities.

Finally, I would just like to return to the general issue of recommendations arising from inspections. This particular inspection report refers to a large number of recommendations, some of which stray into the 'how' with no acknowledgement of the associated costs for implementation alongside all of the other things that forces are asked to do. I am also concerned that by HMIC imposing 'required by dates' for recommendations that this may potentially deflect resources from the delivery of my own Police and Crime Plan and associated priorities. Now more than ever resources are at a premium and to redistribute these resources to meet inspection recommendations by the specified time may have serious repercussions for the delivery of locally agreed priorities.

Yours sincerely



Martyn Underhill
Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner

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