

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Our ref:TP/VS

19 December 2019

Dear Home Secretary

HMICFRS inspection: PEEL Inspection 2019 (Published September 2019)

I welcome the HMICFRS PEEL inspection report for Suffolk Constabulary which was published at the end of September, and the opportunity to comment. I am pleased that the Constabulary has been judged as good in relation to all three overarching inspection areas, and also good in eight of the nine sub-criteria (with the exception of crime investigation).

The 'force in context' sections highlight some pleasing comparative performance given some evident disparity in resources at its disposal, when judged against the national average.

I have received a detailed response from Suffolk Constabulary which I attach for your information. There were no formal recommendations for the force but there were some areas for improvement, which the Constabulary is taking action to address. Progress over the next year will be monitored via my Accountability and Performance Panel.

Whilst I found the full report to be a balanced assessment of strengths and areas for improvement which we can learn from in Suffolk, I was disappointed that the HMI's overall assessment 'one-liner' was negative and was not in my view fully substantiated by the wider report content. My view is that, due to the weight that can be attached the HMI's view, this could easily have caused a disproportionate focus on that one line. This would have been to the exclusion of the overall judgements and the depth of findings in the report, a large proportion of which was positive, and which illustrated good practice and improvements since previous inspections.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Passmore
Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk

Suffolk Constabulary Response to the HMICFRS PEEL Inspection 2019

Suffolk Constabulary is committed to making Suffolk a safer place to live, work, travel and invest and welcomes the scrutiny that HMICFRS brings to the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy of the service we provide to Suffolk's communities.

The 2019 PEEL report recognises the commitment of the organisation and every individual within it in delivering this high level of policing service. There is more that we need to do and the report provides a number of areas where we need to improve and the work to achieve this is underway with effective and robust governance and oversight to ensure we deliver against these areas for improvement.

Across the three inspection areas, effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy the Constabulary has achieved a grading of good. In eight of the nine sub-criteria – the judgement is also good. However, the judgement in respect of 'Investigating Crime' has been graded as requiring improvement.

There is no complacency in those areas graded as good and work continues across the organisation to maintain and further improve how we deliver policing in Suffolk. A number of strategic and operational boards ensure that constant improvement is an organisational focus.

Even prior to the HMICFRS inspection the Constabulary has embarked on an ambitious and challenging programme of work to improve investigative standards with a particular focus on less complex crime. The report refers to the fact that serious and complex crime is investigated well and we are taking the learning from how this has been achieved to raise the standard of investigation and supervision of investigations. This work will ensure that our investigations are of a consistently high standard and that victims of crime received a high quality of service and satisfactory outcome.

Within the report there are seven areas for improvement (outlined below). Four under the heading of effectiveness, two under efficiency and one under Legitimacy. Progress against these AFIs is overseen by a monthly oversight board under the leadership of the Assistant Chief Constable.

Effectiveness

- The force should review its approach to the provision of training and development for undertaking and supervising investigations within its neighbourhood and response policing teams.
- The force should ensure that regular and active supervision is put in place consistently and recorded appropriately to monitor the quality and progress of investigations, ensure that crimes are allocated appropriately throughout the course of an investigation and that workloads are manageable.
- The force needs to take steps to better understand the data relating to its crime outcomes and puts actions in place to ensure that it is effectively pursuing justice on behalf of victims.
- The force should review its processes for documenting threat, harm and risk on incident records to ensure that it is able to reassess these for incidents involving vulnerable people where police have been unable to attend, or attendance is delayed, to ensure that any changes to risk are identified and appropriate action is taken in a timely manner.

Efficiency

- The force should develop clearer longer-term plans which are shared with the workforce and take into account projected future demand, resourcing requirements and changing public expectations.
- The force should undertake appropriate activities to understand fully its workforce's capacity and capability in order to identify any gaps in meeting future requirements, put plans in place to address these, and carry these out.

Legitimacy

- The force should ensure its counter corruption unit has the capability and capacity to be effective in its proactive approach to counter corruption – and has full information technology (IT) monitoring to effectively protect the information contained within its systems.

The Constabulary is committed to making the improvements highlighted by the HMICFRS within the report and will report regularly on this progress to the Police and Crime Commissioner.