



The Rt Hon Theresa May MP  
Home Secretary  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
LONDON  
SW1P 4DF

**John Dwyer**

Clemonds Hey  
Oakmere Road  
Winsford  
Cheshire  
CW7 2UA

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Our Ref:  
JD/PCC/

Your Ref:

Tel: 01606 364000  
Fax: 01606 364006

Email:  
police.crime.commissioner@cheshire.pnn.police.uk

Dear *Theresa*

## **HMIC PEEL INSPECTIONS OF CHESHIRE CONSTABULARY: RESPONSES TO EFFECTIVENESS AND LEGITIMACY INSPECTION REPORTS AND LEADERSHIP STATEMENT**

I welcome the opportunity to formally respond to the outcomes of the above assessments published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary as part of the police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) programme. I have considered the results of each inspection and discussed the reports with the Chief Constable. My responses are outlined below:

### **Effectiveness**

The first duty of the police is to protect its citizens from harm. I am therefore proud that Cheshire was rated as 'good' overall for this inspection. In particular, the grading of 'outstanding' in preventing crime and keeping people safe demonstrates that Cheshire Constabulary is creating a hostile environment for criminals, protects the vulnerable and provides support for victims.

The report highlights many areas of success for the Constabulary: with particular emphasis on the broad range of tactics used to prevent crime; how specific powers to tackle anti-social behaviour have been employed; and the important work undertaken with a wide range of partners to tackle the issues that matter to local people.

The report praises officers and staff across Cheshire for the high quality of their investigations and acknowledges the investment the force has made in this area. HMIC praises the Constabulary for carrying out high quality investigations – in particular serious crimes such as rape, which are investigated to a very high standard. It also highlights the fact that response, neighbourhood and detective investigators work well together and that staff are used flexibly to meet demand.

I am also pleased that the report recognises the work of the Paedophile and Cyber Investigation Team which is praised for its work in effectively prioritising investigations and helping to bring offenders to justice more quickly. Whilst tackling serious and organised crime is highlighted as an area requiring improvement, I am glad that HMIC recognises that the Constabulary has a good understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime and responds well to this threat.

I am confident that the Chief Constable is already actively addressing the recommendations in the report:

- A partnership structure is being put in place across Cheshire to ensure that partner agencies are engaged in the fight against organised crime;
- Raising awareness of local organised crime groups amongst neighbourhood teams is now being addressed to ensure that opportunities to gather intelligence and disrupt their activity are maximised; and
- The partnership structures referred to above will enable appropriate links to be established with the complex dependency programme and troubled families work being undertaken across Cheshire. This will enable those at risk of being drawn into organised crime to be identified and for preventative measures to be put in place.

## **Legitimacy**

Legitimacy is a key principle of policing and I am pleased that Her Majesty's Inspectors assessed the Constabulary as "good" overall, and especially welcome the "outstanding" judgement on how well the Constabulary understands and engages with the people that it serves. Engagement is an area that I have championed as Commissioner, so I am very proud of the Constabulary's success in this area. Officers and staff ensure they understand the people that they serve; identify their needs, listen to their concerns and feedback on what they have achieved.

I welcome the report's findings in respect of ensuring practice and behaviour reinforces wellbeing and an ethical culture. A significant amount of work has been undertaken to ensure that the Code of Ethics is fully embedded within Cheshire and that officers and staff are empowered and encouraged to raise concerns and challenge issues of perceived unfairness. The wellbeing of officers and staff is a top priority and I am committed to investing in training to improve and extend their skills. I am proud that complaints and misconduct are dealt with fairly and appropriately, that recruitment and promotion selection processes are viewed as fair, transparent and free from bias and that Cheshire is committed to recruiting volunteers and ensuring they have meaningful opportunities to improve policing services. I am pleased that HMIC has recognised all the above activity and I am confident this will ensure the Constabulary continues to be a high performing organisation in the future.

I was extremely concerned by HM Inspectors' findings about the use of Stop and Search and implementation of the Best Use of Stop and Search. As I indicated to you in my letter dated 11 February, I immediately raised the issue with the Chief

Constable and have held him to account to ensure progress at the earliest opportunity.

I am pleased to report that the Constabulary has made great strides to improve its level of compliance with the Scheme:

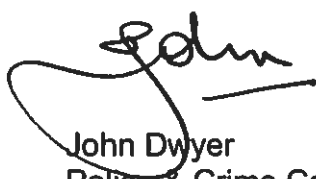
- The Constabulary implemented a new process for recording Stop Search encounters in March 2016. This process enables all of the information required under the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme to be captured and this will be published accordingly;
- A stop and search 'ride along' was implemented in February 2016 to enable the public to witness stop and search encounters. The scheme is advertised on the websites of the Cheshire Constabulary and my Office and the public can apply to use the scheme on line. A resident of Warrington became the first member of the public to participate in the ride along scheme on 5 March 2016;
- The Constabulary agreed a 'community trigger' policy in relation to Stop and Search in February 2016. The policy is published on the websites of the Cheshire Constabulary and my Office and the public can apply to activate the community trigger through an on-line form; and
- The Constabulary monitors the use of Stop and Search through the Public Encounters Board. This Board has been re-developed to include a variety of public encounters where police powers are used and includes representation from staff networks, my Office and the public.

The Constabulary has continued to take steps to improve awareness of the legal grounds required to undertake fair and legal stop and search encounters. In addition to the training provided to frontline officers, a bespoke training package has also been delivered to police sergeants which ensures that all supervisors are aware of their responsibility to monitor compliance with the code of practice and equality legislation and that they are able to carry out their duties in this regard.

## **Leadership**

I welcome the Inspectorate's findings on leadership within Cheshire Constabulary. The statement recognises that the changes in the Chief Officer Team since 2014 has provided new impetus and resulted in a stronger focus on: prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour; improving efficiency through the priority based budgeting process; and promoting high standards of professional behaviour.

Yours sincerely



John Dwyer  
Police & Crime Commissioner