

**Zoë Billingham BA Hons (Oxon)**  
HM Inspector of Constabulary, Eastern Region

3 September 2014

Ms Sara Thornton QPM  
Chief Constable – Thames Valley Police

Dear Sara

**Core business: An inspection of crime prevention, police attendance and use of police time**

Between January and April 2014, HMIC carried out inspection fieldwork across all 43 forces in England and Wales. This inspection, called 'Making best use of police time' (now known as 'Core business: An inspection of crime prevention, police attendance and use of police time') assessed three areas of police work. These were:

- how well forces are preventing crime and anti-social behaviour;
- how forces respond to reports of crime, including investigating crime and bringing offenders to justice; and
- how well forces are freeing up the time of their staff so they can focus on core policing functions.

Attached is an embargoed copy of the national thematic report for this inspection which will now be published by HMIC on Thursday 4 September 2014 at 00:01. This must not be published until this date and time.

The findings that specifically relate to your force are included in this letter. The initial findings were previously sent to you for factual accuracy checks and, where appropriate, have been amended following your response.

The majority of the inspection findings contained in the national thematic report do not identify individual forces. However electronic versions of the national report will link to the HMIC website where data on each force can be viewed.

We will revisit some of the evidence gathered during the 'Core business' inspection as part of the crime inspection for HMIC's Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) interim assessment.

All forces will be given the opportunity to provide an update. This updated evidence will be considered as part of the PEEL interim crime inspection, which is due to be published at the end of November.

Findings that specifically relate to your force are:

### **Preventing Crime**

- The force has a strong focus on preventing crime. There are references to crime reduction and prevention in some of the force's plans and documents.
- HMIC found some good examples of where the force has undertaken long-term crime prevention initiatives. The daily management meetings in the force are being used well to direct staff towards crime prevention activity.
- The inspection found evidence of some neighbourhood preventive activity taking place; however the force does not have a means of evaluating this work or sharing good practice easily.
- Although the force has provided some training to officers and staff, formal crime prevention training has not been delivered to staff that frequently deal with victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.

### **Attendance at crimes and incidents**

- The force does not have a policy to attend all reports of crimes and incidents, but one based on a series of considerations including identifying the threat, risk and harm to the victim, caller or community.
- It was found that call-handlers have clear policies and procedures to enable them to consistently identify vulnerable and repeat victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Crime is recorded by the force in one of two ways, either by creating an incident on its command and control system and then by entering the details onto its crime recording system or directly recording crime onto the crime recording system without creating an incident first. Although the force is able to identify how many crimes are recorded directly onto the crime recording system, it is not able to identify how many of those crimes it attends subsequently.
- During the inspection HMIC reviewed a number of crime investigations, including reports of crimes that were not attended. HMIC found that, in general, there was clear evidence of effective investigation and supervision.
- HMIC examined the arrangements for the Integrated Offender Management scheme, which are in place to manage those offenders likely to cause most harm to the communities. These arrangements are well managed with effective arrangements in place to prioritise offenders. There are regular meetings with key partners and a structured approach is used to identify and assess risk. The force is working with Oxford University to examine the effectiveness of IOM methods which is considered good practice.
- The force was able to provide HMIC with the number of named suspects that are yet to be arrested or interviewed, as well as those who had failed to answer police bail. The inspection team found that the force has clear, robust arrangements to manage its outstanding named suspects and offenders.

### **Freeing up time**

- HMIC identified that the force has a relatively good understanding of demand. It is taking steps to build up a more detailed assessment of demand and how its resources are distributed. This includes analysis of different types of incidents and policing activity.
- The force has carried out some work with other agencies to identify and address those tasks that are not the sole responsibility of the police.
- The inspection found that there is a clear structure to assist supervisors in assessing the workload and performance of frontline officers and staff.

- The force is not able to identify the amount of savings in staff time that has been made as a result of changes introduced or as a result of new technology being implemented.
- The force is investing in the use of mobile technology devices, such as tablets and mobile phones to enable officers to access force systems. However the availability and effective use of such technology for patrol officers is limited.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zoë Billingham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'Z'.

**Zoë Billingham**

HM Inspector of Constabulary, Eastern Region

Copied to Mr Peter Warner  
HMIC Liaison Officer