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HM Inspector of Constabulary, Eastern Region

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Mr Simon Parr QPM
Chief Constable – Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Dear Simon

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 This must not be published until this date and time.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 does not have an overarching crime prevention strategy, but this does not inhibit the effectiveness of the force's approach to preventing crime.

The force has a strong preventative policing ethos, which is driven by chief officers and supported by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

- HMIC found some good examples of where the force has undertaken long-term crime prevention initiatives. In addition, HMIC found that the daily management meetings in the force are being used well to direct activity towards crime prevention.
- Although the force has a case management database designed to support officers and staff in neighbourhood prevention activity, it is not being used as effectively as it could be. While we found evidence of a problem-solving response, areas such as thorough evaluation and sharing good practice were limited.
- Although the force has provided some training to officers and staff, formal crime prevention training has not been delivered to staff who frequently deal with victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Attending crimes and incidents

- The force does not have a policy to attend all reports of crimes and incidents. Attendance decisions are based on a series of considerations including identifying the threat, risk and harm to the victim, caller or community. This approach is well understood by staff and appears to work effectively. There are specific occasions when crime is reported where attendance is mandatory, for example domestic abuse, threat to life incidents, serious sexual offences. HMIC understands that the force has not consulted with the public in relation to this policy.
- The culture within the force control room is that the nearest and quickest resource should attend incidents requiring an immediate response. Of secondary importance is making sure the right people, with the right skills are deployed effectively.
- The force has clear policies and procedures to enable it to consistently identify vulnerable and repeat victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Crime is recorded by the force in one of two ways:
 - creating an incident on the command and control system and then subsequently entering details onto the 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 is evidence of officers recording updates of the progress of the investigation appropriately and there is supervisory oversight.
- 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.
- The Integrated Offender Management scheme, in place to manage those offenders likely to cause most harm to the communities, is very well managed. There are regular meetings with key partners and a structured approach is used to identify and assess risk.

Freeing up time

- HMIC identified that the force has a good understanding of demand, and is taking steps to build up a more detailed insight of demand and how its resources are distributed. This includes analysis of different types of incidents and policing activity.
- The force has worked with other agencies to identify and address those tasks that are not the sole responsibility of the police.
- The inspection found that the force does not always have a clear understanding of how staff are spending their time.
- The force is at the leading edge in its approach to the use of new technology. It has made a strong investment in the use of mobile technology devices, such as slates to enable officers to access force systems whilst on patrol. Staff are very positive about the introduction and use of mobile technology. The Metis programme, where new ways of working will be supported by new technology, is vitally important to reducing costs across the Strategic Alliance.

Yours sincerely



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Copied to Paul Ormerod
HMIC Liaison Officer