

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

3 September 2014

Mr Douglas Paxton QPM  
Chief Constable – Suffolk Constabulary

Dear Douglas

**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 This must not be published until this date and time.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**

- There are references to crime reduction and prevention in some of the force's plans and documents. However, the force does not have an overarching strategy and as such crime prevention activity is not coordinated.
- 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 focus staff towards crime prevention activity.
- The force has a database to assist officers and staff to solve problems that support neighbourhood prevention activity. This is regularly and consistently used to record activity undertaken to resolve and prevent problems occurring. Some evaluation of crime prevention activity and sharing of good practice takes place.
- New recruits are trained on crime prevention but this does not extend to other staff who frequently deal with victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.

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

- The force does not have a policy that officers will attend all reports of crimes and incidents. Instead it considers the threat, risk and harm to the victim, caller or community. There are specific crimes that the force will always aim to attend. HMIC understands that the force has not consulted with the public in relation to this policy.
- Control room staff do not have a clear picture of the number of staff and officers on duty and available to deal with incidents. The force would benefit from ensuring it understands the availability of staff. This would enable the force control room to deploy the most appropriate resource to incidents.
- The force has clear policies and procedures to enable staff to consistently identify vulnerable and repeat victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Crime is recorded by the force, initially through creating an incident on the command and control system and then subsequently entering the details onto the crime recording system. The force has systems in place to identify how many crimes that it attends.
- During the inspection HMIC reviewed a number of crime investigations, including reports of crimes that were not attended. In most cases, there was clear evidence of officers recording updates of the progress of the investigation and effective supervisory oversight.
- HMIC found that the Integrated Offender Management scheme, in place to manage those offenders likely to cause most harm to the communities, is well managed. There are regular meetings with key partners and a structured approach is used to identify and assess risk.
- The force was able to provide HMIC with the number of suspects who had failed to answer their police bail and the number of outstanding named suspects.
- A small sample of named suspect files, including those circulated as wanted on PNC, indicated clear evidence that activity had been documented and properly supervised in a number of cases.

### Freeing up time

- The force has a relatively 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.
- There is a clear structure to assist supervisors in assessing the workload and performance of frontline officers and staff.
- The force has some understanding of 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 use of mobile technology devices, such as tablets and mobile phones to enable officers to access force systems whilst on patrol is limited.

Yours sincerely



**Zoë Billingham**

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Copied to Nicola Goulding  
HMIC Liaison Officer