

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

3 September 2014

Ms Lynne Owens QPM  
Chief Constable – Surrey Police

Dear Lynne

**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 This must not be published until this date and time.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 made a conscious decision not to have an overarching crime prevention strategy. This does not inhibit the effectiveness of the force's approach to preventing crime and the force has a strong culture of preventative policing.
- HMIC found some good examples of where the force has undertaken long-term crime prevention initiatives. HMIC also found that the daily management meetings in the force are being used well to focus staff towards crime prevention activity.
- The force has an electronic database that is updated with information in order to help officers and staff prevent crime in neighbourhoods. We found evidence of problem-solving but evaluation of preventative activity is inconsistent. As a result, the sharing of good practice is not as well developed as it could be.
- 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. In addition, staff in the force control room also consider the chief constable's priorities and the six 'People's priorities' set by the PCC. With a range of factors to consider, deployment is not always consistent in terms of the force's own policy. HMIC understands that the force has not consulted with the public in relation to its attendance policy.
- Call handlers 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 on to the crime-recording system, without first creating an incident. The force is able to identify how many crimes are recorded directly onto the crime recording system, and can identify the total number of those crimes it attends subsequently. However, without undertaking a time consuming manual search it is not possible to provide more detailed analysis of which crimes were directly recorded and then attended subsequently.
- During the inspection, HMIC reviewed a number of crime investigations, including reports of crimes that were not attended. In crimes such as burglary dwellings, there was clear evidence of effective investigation and supervision. However, for some crime types we found little evidence of effective investigation having been undertaken and limited supervision.
- HMIC examined the arrangements for the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) scheme, which is in place to manage those offenders likely to cause most harm to the communities. These were found to be effective, with strong partnership working, good access to pathways and effective recording of the selection and de-selection of IOM subjects.
- The force was unable to provide HMIC with the number of suspects who had failed to answer their police bail. Without this information, the force may be unable to ensure that it has effective arrangements to manage outstanding named suspects and offenders. The force recognises the importance of

developing an automated system to enable it to obtain this information without the need for costly manual searches.

- Evidence from a small sample of named suspect files (including those circulated as wanted on the police national computer) suggests that on occasions there had been insufficient investigative activity and/or it has not been properly documented or supervised.

### **Freeing up time**

- The force is taking steps to build up a sophisticated understanding of demand and how its resources are distributed. This includes analysis of different types of incidents and policing activity.
- The force has carried out work 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 have a clear understanding of how staff are spending their time and how effective or productive they are. Management information in this regard is limited and involves managers accessing a number of different force systems. However the force has undertaken a number of reviews as part of its change programme which have sought to assess productivity in a number of specific areas.
- The force is not yet 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. However it has embarked on work that it hopes will enable it to do so in the future.
- The use of mobile devices (such as tablets and mobile phones) to enable officers to access force systems while on patrol is currently limited. However the force is actively developing this area, including carrying out trials of a number of mobile devices.

Yours sincerely



**Zoë Billingham**

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Copied to Clive Davies  
HMIC Liaison Officer