



RESPONSE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON TO THE HMICFRS REPORT: NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY INSPECTION: INSPECTION OF NCA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH REGIONAL ORGANISED CRIME UNITS

Police and Crime Commissioner's comments

I welcome the HMICFRS report "National Crime Agency Inspection" which provides a summary of its fieldwork which took place between October and November 2019. Although the primary purpose of the report is to inform the Home Secretary on efficiency and effectiveness of the National Crime Agency, the report provides valuable insights for Police and Crime Commissioners, especially for those like myself who have taken on additional responsibility to represent the regional units nationally. I have governance oversight of ROCU on behalf of the South West Police and Crime Commissioners, and therefore I am already working closely with the regional lead to monitor the progress of the recommendations presented by this report. The inspection examined the NCA's relationship with the ROCU network to understand how well does the NCA work with the regional organised crime unit networks, to reduce the impact of serious and organised crime on the UK and our communities.

Last year in February, we had an opportunity to read "PEEL spotlight report" in which Matt Parr, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, informed the public that policing across England and Wales was largely good, however, there were diverging pathways of how forces have been dealing with the common challenge of rising demand and falling resources. Responding to the financial challenges remains constant and ROCUs are facing the same pressure. The distribution of national funding on annual basis makes it very difficult for Police and Crime Commissioners to do long-term strategic planning. ROCUs, which are co-funded by Police and Crime Commissioners, are facing the same financial challenges, which has negative implications on their ability to develop estate planning, innovative capabilities, their staff recruitment and retention. In this light, I welcome Her Majesty Inspectorate of Constabulary's recommendation for the Home Office to review the funding arrangements for ROCUs.

At the same time, there is a real need to for the policing system to be better integrated to fight serious and organised crime and to reduce its impact on our communities. The

report suggests that this crime costs the UK at least £37 billion annually while its volume and complexity are increasing and will continue to evolve due to technological advances. I have always recognised that technological progress and technological advancements have rapidly accelerated in the recent years. While they brought significant benefits for our communities, they have come with a negative side of cybercrime and online enabled crime which continues to evolve and adapt. Whilst, I specifically allocated the money from the precept increase in 2019/2020 to the Chief Constable for him to set up a brand new Digital Investigations and Intelligence Unit to build operational capabilities locally, I believe that there is a pertinent need to take a regional and national approach to tackle this type of crime.

Nationally, there is a real need to ensure that the key capabilities are connected to ensure their interoperability, all forces should be using the same systems to ensure consistency of the data and information to enable effective investigations. While, I recognise that our community policing teams play a vital role in increasing awareness about cybercrime and other types of serious and organised crime, they are focusing on prevention and investigations of these crimes in many cases are beyond local capabilities and should be investigated regionally and nationally.

I also welcome the review of the Strategic Policing Requirement, a document which outlines national cross-boundary threats and supports Police and Crime Commissioners in balancing local and national priorities. In this regard, my view remains the same that policing must remain locally accountable regardless of its national or regional structure. Maintaining local accountability is central to Peelian principles and vital for the continued trust and appropriate scrutiny of policing services. Regardless of national, sub-national and local configurations there must be a clear and publicly accountable system for holding policing services to account, as well as articulating the legitimate demands of our communities.

Chief Constable's comments

The Chief Constable of Wiltshire notes the published report and recommendations made within it and welcomes the review of SPR, with greater emphasis being placed on threats as SOC.

Portfolio lead comments

The force works closely with the ROCU in tackling SOC. They are integrated within our force SOC meetings and this is reciprocated at a regional level with Wiltshire and other forces involved with the ROCU led strategic and tactical meeting structure. The NCA is a regular attendee at both the force and ROCU meeting timetable.

There are no recommendations for the Force specifically that fall out of the report.

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