



## **RESPONSE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON TO THE HMICFRS PEEL SPOTLIGHT REPORT: DIVERGING UNDER PRESSURE – AN OVERVIEW OF 2018/2019 PEEL INSPECTIONS (FEBRUARY 2020)**

### **Police and Crime Commissioner's comments**

I welcome the “PEEL spotlight report” which comprehensively builds on the findings of the PEEL inspection reports of all 43 forces in England and Wales in 2018/2019 and outlines the key identified themes under the succinct title “Diverging under pressure”. Matt Parr, Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary, informs the public that policing across England and Wales is largely good, however, there are diverging pathways of how forces have been dealing with the common challenge of rising demand and falling resources. Responding to the financial challenges is constant and I am proud that Wiltshire Police has been consistently graded as ‘good’ in all three key categories in the annual inspection.

Whilst the underlying intent of this report is to depict a picture of divergence in policing services in different policing areas, the report makes a justified introduction of a victim service assessment into the future HMICFRS’ PEEL inspections. I welcome this introduction and I feel that this change represents a positive step forward to better understand and have a comprehensive overview of the national picture in a structured way in order to improve services where necessary and to prevent any further divergence in experiences of victims of crime. This new service assessment will enable Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales to hold their Chief Constables to account based on the assessment of standards of services that are provided to victims of crime from their point of contact to an outcome. The report points out that there has been an increase in the number of crimes closed for the reason that the victim does not support, or no longer supports, a prosecution. This increase of 2.6% from 20% for the period of 12 months to 31 March 2019, should alert us to do our best to ensure that victims are not losing faith in the criminal justice system.

Ensuring that victims of crime receive a high standard of support has been and remains an absolute priority for me and that is why I continue to allocate funding to

a number of victim services including Victim Support and Wiltshire Police's Horizon Victim and Witness Care Hub. I am heartened to read that the findings from IPA conclude that forces have greatly improved their ability to protect vulnerable people and support victims. I feel that this journey is still at its early stages and I fully understand that good leadership can lead to significant improvements. To ensure that the wider criminal justice system does not let down vulnerable people, I proudly chair the Wiltshire Criminal Justice Board. Under my leadership, my office has set up Victim, Witness & Most Vulnerable Group in order to monitor and promote the proper care and treatment of victims and witnesses. The key objectives of this group are aligned to the National Strategy & Action Plan as well as my Police and Crime Plan. The group reports their progress to the Wiltshire Criminal Justice Board which brings together key partners to deliver local improvements by working together.

The Wiltshire Criminal Justice Board also enables key partners to strategically work together to reduce reoffending and provide an effective and efficient criminal justice system in Wiltshire. I recognise that by breaking the circular journey of offending, conviction, punishment, release, and re-offending, harm to victims and demands on police can be significantly reduced. This brings us to the next point of the PEEL report which states that force performance varies widely in relation to their ability to understand both their demand and their resources available to meet that demand – their efficiency.

I am pleased that Wiltshire Police was graded as 'GOOD' in this category considering the wider context, as well as the Novichok challenges the force faced in 2018. The PEEL inspection which was published in May last year clearly stated that:

*'The force is acting to manage future demand by intervening early, and by working with its partner agencies in areas such as mental health and troubled families. Wiltshire Police has clear ambitions to improve. These focus on maintaining and enhancing its local policing model and responding to demand.'*

I have fully supported the Chief Constable in his efforts to enhance the local policing model.

Local policing has always been my first priority. The Community Policing Teams, which are at the heart of this model, build strong connections with our communities which in effect empowers them to solve safety problems at their earliest stages. In this regard, PCSOs continue to be the bedrock of local policing by engaging with our communities and supporting those most vulnerable as they continue to be the eyes and ears of our communities. A good local policing service reduces demand by tackling problems as they occur and supporting local problem solving.

To demonstrate my commitment to local policing, I have ensured that Wiltshire Police protects frontline community police officer numbers and PCSOs. My commitment has been supported by the people of Wiltshire and Swindon through increases in local council tax. At the end of 2018/19, Wiltshire had 934 police officers and 131 PCSOs respectively. In 2019/20 the precept increase increased officers by

41 police officers and protecting PCSO numbers. And with both national funding and local precept increases police officers 75 will increase to 1050 and PCSOs will continue to be protected for 2020/ 21. Local policing will see the majority of this increase in officer capability, and 16 officers will be providing proactive local policing response to reduce demand.

To strategically support demand reduction, I commission services with an aim to reduce crime, support early intervention, and preventative services such as wider collaboration with a number of partners. Under my strategic leadership, the Commissioning Team works in a successful partnership with both local authorities and their Youth Offending Teams to help young people stay away from crime and provide them with opportunities to ensure that they feel valued and productive members of the community. The YOTs form part of the wider Early Help Service provided by Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council. My office has also contributed to SMASH which is a pilot scheme offering mentoring service for children in schools. These projects showcase an excellent partnership work with local authorities and contribute to the delivery of my Police and Crime Plan.

I am responding to this report during the times when we are facing a global pandemic of coronavirus disease. The changing patterns of crime have already started developing and they will impact the operational demand. In this regard, I trust the Chief Constable that the force will quickly adapt to the changing policing landscape. I will continue to lead the whole system approach to crime as the police's success in tackling crime depends on the success of the other criminal justice bodies and public sector partners.

The last point of the report draws attention to the claim that more effort is required to drive improvements in police legitimacy. In this regard, I am pleased to read that more forces are good at treating their workforce fairly when compared to the previous legitimacy inspections. I and the Chief Constable encourage police officers, staff and volunteers to role model Wiltshire Police values (transparency, impartiality, integrity, and public service) and encourage them to act professionally to represent Wiltshire Police.

This week, I welcomed the Government's first report on its national campaign to recruit 20,000 extra police officers over the next three years. I am thrilled to see good progress being made to increase diversity within the workforce. The Positive Action team is doing great work with people from underrepresented groups, including women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds, and as a result more are coming forward to join the police.

To conclude, the report has outlined that the public are experiencing policing services that are diverging under the pressures they are facing. The past few weeks, when our country has been facing unprecedented times of a global pandemic, have further deepened this divergence. In this light, I will relentlessly focus on enabling effective and efficient policing service and support our partnerships with other key, local agencies with the aim to protect those most vulnerable in our communities.

## **Chief Constable's comments**

The Force notes the third Peel Spotlight inspection report and has through its continuous approach has asked that all members of the Chief Officer Executive Leadership Team (ELT) review recommendations that fall within their business areas. Further to review, ELT members will look to consider relevant areas for further focus as part of the Force annual 'Plans on a Page' approach. These plans are then reviewed on a monthly basis by the CC and DCC through the Force governance boards.

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

Cc: Wendy Williams, HMI  
Chief Constable Kier Prichard, Wiltshire Constabulary