



RESPONSE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON TO THE HMICFRS REPORT:

‘PEEL spotlight report: The Hard Yards: Police-to-police collaboration’ (July 2020)

Police and Crime Commissioner’s comments

I welcome the HMICFRS report “The Hard Yards”, which provides a national perspective on police-to-police collaboration. The report assessed six police collaborations including the South West Tri Force and the Major Crim Investigations Team (MCIT), two collaboration programmes between Avon and Somerset Police, Gloucestershire Constabulary, and Wiltshire Police. Although the South West Tri Force programme has been dissolved, Wiltshire Police continues to an active member of several successful police collaborations with forces in the South-West of England.

Collaborations between policing areas represent a great opportunity how to save money, reduce bureaucracy, and improve efficiency and effectiveness. At the same time, I as the representative of the local people need to ensure that these programmes deliver benefits for our county and minimise any safety risks for our communities. The ending of the Tri Force Specialist Operations collaboration with neighbouring forces in April 2019 saw the return of specialist firearms, dogs and roads policing resources to local control. This move ensures that specialist skills can be used to support our Community Policing Teams – a significant benefit to our communities.

I feel that the report makes reasonable recommendations, however, I would welcome more specific recommendations concerning one of the key findings on technology which states: *“Technology offers myriad opportunities for policing. But if forces are to take full advantage of their chosen system, they need effective methods of monitoring how they use and develop it. This monitoring should be set against the original requirements.”* One of the most significant factors which has bedevilled many collaborations, and particularly the dis-continued Tri Force Specialist Ops collaboration, has been the divergent IT systems. I strongly believe that without an agreed strategy to integrate IT, any collaborated unit that is created

will face IT barriers. These may be between members of the collaborated team itself, if each force maintains its personnel on home force systems. Alternatively, if the collaborated unit migrates to one IT system, it will face barriers in communicating with one or more constituent forces.

The other significant barrier that we have encountered is HR terms and conditions. It is clearly undesirable to have team members working on different terms and conditions. Harmonising those terms, however, brings a separate problem – the ratchet effect of equal pay claims by members of a home force who see preferential rates within collaborated units.

The report brings into the spotlight 6 police collaborations as case studies as well as it draws on its findings collected from all 43 forces. Overall, it highlights some good practice as well as areas for improvement, however, I feel that the report does not focus sufficiently on the two pervading problems of collaboration: disparate IT systems and divergent terms and conditions. These are matters that must be addressed nationally and without delay, if the benefits of collaboration are to be achieved on the scale required.

Our focus on future collaborative opportunities must be sharpened to shape the nature of policing and justice so that it delivers an excellent service that meets the changing needs of our communities. I will continue to collaborate with other PCCs and Forces nationally and regionally to deliver benefits for our county. Besides, I will keep strengthening the provision of local specialist capabilities to be able to respond to local needs.

Chief Constable’s comments

Wiltshire Police is committed to delivering against the recommendation highlighted within the HMICFRS report. The update below provides a good foundation for improvement. Wiltshire accepts the recommendation which will be monitored through its’ strategic boards.

Business area lead

Wiltshire Police is committed to delivering positive outcomes and benefits from changes managed through programmes and projects, including efficiencies, improvements in effectiveness, financial savings and compliance. The force recognises there are opportunities to increase the focus on benefits management, balanced against the current positive elements already in place.

Recommendations	Wiltshire response
If forces haven’t yet implemented an effective system to track the benefits of their collaborations, they should use the methodology created	<p>Wiltshire Police is currently reviewing the collaborations in place with a view to understanding the benefits, challenges and extracting learning from existing collaborations. This review will inform the creation of a new Collaboration Strategy for our organisation.</p> <p>To date we have not used a set framework or methodology to identify, track or report on benefits from collaboration projects. Collaboration</p>

<p>by the NPCC, the College of Policing and the Home Office.</p>	<p>projects are reported to the Strategic Change Board and the Force uses a localised approach to benefits realisation to challenge benefits from collaborative arrangements.</p> <p>While these may exist within any individual initiatives we are looking to improve the reporting and scrutiny of these at our Sponsor Group (Strategic Change Board).</p> <p>The new strategy will include ensuring a methodology for articulating and monitoring benefits for collaborations with governance through the Force Strategic Change board. We currently use established MSP approach and distinct benefits profiles using our templates to document key benefits, owners and timescales for all programmes and this will be applied to collaborative programmes and projects.</p> <p>Once the NPCC/COP benefits tracking system is developed (March 2021) we will review and consider replacing our existing MSP methodology if it is more effective.</p> <p>Performance of collaboration is reported through the Strategic Performance Board using recognised analysis techniques. The Force also uses Continuous Improvement resources to assess performance which requires more in depth qualitative consideration.</p>
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