

From: Ann Barnes, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner  
To: Kent Police and Crime Panel  
Subject: Kent Police culture, crime recording and performance update

### **Executive summary:**

Following the Commissioner's decision to review the accuracy of crime recording within Kent Police last year, follow up audits are now showing improvement and stability. Given this, and the work undertaken by the Force, the people of Kent can now have full confidence in the recorded crime figures.

- In June 2013, Commissioner Barnes commissioned Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to undertake an audit of crime recording in Kent – the audit found an accuracy rate of around 90%.
- Following work undertaken by the Force, a repeat audit conducted by HMIC later in 2013 showed a marked improvement, with accuracy around 96%.
- The increase in accuracy is attributable to a two-pronged approach to tackling the issue, namely:
  - Process - improved training and a complete review of crime recording processes; and
  - Culture - movement away from a culture based on targets, with changes being driven by the Chief Constable.

The Commissioner is personally holding the Chief Constable to account for delivery of the above.

- Following the events in Kent (which were initiated by the Commissioner), HMIC have now embarked on a national inspection of crime recording accuracy across all forces.
- Whilst the methodology for the national inspection is not exactly the same as that used in Kent, early results indicate that crime recording accuracy in some forces is significantly lower than the 90% found in Kent's original inspection.
- Understandably, Kent's Victim Based Crime (VBC) has risen by 10%. This can broadly be attributed to:
  - 8% - improved crime recording accuracy;
  - 0.5% - more effective and proactive policing; and
  - 1.5% - increase in crime. Given the relatively small change, it is difficult to specifically pin-point the reason, but it is likely to include factors such as the prolonged hot summer.

### **Introduction:**

1. The HMIC report commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner and titled 'Crime Recording in Kent' was published in June 2013. Following the report, the Force implemented and continues to deliver improvements to crime recording to instil greater public confidence.

### **Performance culture:**

2. The Commissioner and the Chief Constable have made clear their commitment to changing the culture from one driven by targets to one where providing a quality of service is at the heart of Kent Police. Demonstrating this commitment, the Chief Constable now chairs the quarterly Culture Board which he instigated last year as Deputy Chief Constable. The purpose of the board is to continue developing a culture consistent with the Commissioner and the Chief Constable's shared Mission, Vision, Values and Priorities.
3. The Culture Board will be the only internal Force meeting chaired by the Chief Constable. The membership of the board comprises of officers and staff from across the Force at all ranks and grades. The board will review progress against six themes; quality of service, assurance, leadership, standards and integrity, communications and our people.

4. The Force has already made changes to improve its quality of service. These include implementation of Trackmycrime, fulfilling one of the Commissioner's Manifesto pledges and training for officers to better deal with victims. In line with national requirements, the Force has also changed how crimes are classified following an investigation to one of eighteen outcomes, all of which have equal standing and allow the victims wishes to be placed at the heart of decision making.
5. The work being undertaken in relation to culture is attracting national attention for being innovative and helping to shape a more quality driven organisation. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary has expressed a desire to attend a future Culture Board.

### **Crime recording:**

6. The most significant process that ensures improved accuracy is the Investigation Management Unit (IMU) being the only team that can file and close incidents opened on a 'crime opening code'. This ensures only those individuals who have the skills, knowledge and experience record incidents amounting to a crime. In addition, all processes remain under the close scrutiny of the Force Crime & Incident Registrar (FCIR).
7. HMIC are conducting Phase II of the National Crime Data Inspection (CDI) in Kent on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2014, with Phase III commencing on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2014. Robust systems remain in place to maintain and improve the current compliance rate of 96%.

### **Repeat national HMIC Inspections**

8. In February 2014, the Commissioner wrote to Tom Winsor, Chief Inspector of Constabulary and the Policing Minister to raise concerns around the new national inspection. While expressing support, the Commissioner was concerned that it would examine a 4 month period in Kent prior to changes being made to crime recording processes. Therefore, it would be reporting on a period where two recording regimes were in place, possibly resulting in a compliance rate of less than 96% and send confusing and contradictory messages to the people of Kent.
9. Following the Commissioner's letter, HMIC, in recognition of the special situation in Kent (i.e. the only Force to be subject to a detailed inspection) have agreed to make an exception and only examine the period after implementation of changes to the crime recording process.
10. On a separate yet related issue, the Commissioner is also concerned about national benchmarking with other forces. Early results from the national inspection indicate the compliance rate varies from force to force. As a result, this makes it extremely difficult to benchmark crime data between forces as each clearly has a different level of crime recording accuracy.

### **Performance update:**

11. For the rolling year ending March 2014, the Force experienced a 10% increase in VBC. This is in line with forecasts and can be attributed as follows:
  - 6% - improved crime recording accuracy;
  - 2% - 'back record conversion' following internal audits (i.e. reviewing previously closed records and where appropriate re-categorising to a crime);
  - 0.5% - increase in 'proactivity' (i.e. more effective deployment in Night Time Economy and Predictive Policing); and
  - 1.5% - increase in crime. Given the relatively small change, it is difficult to specifically pin-point the reason, but it is likely to include factors such as the prolonged hot summer.
12. In summary, 80% of the increase in VBC is as a result of increased accuracy. This means that the Force experienced an actual increase of 2% over the last 12 months.
13. However, VBC has reduced in volume for seven consecutive months since a peak in August 2013, when processes to improve recording accuracy were implemented. This equates to 1,100 fewer victims in February 2014 than in August 2013. March 2014 did see a slight increase in volumes, but this was the result of the Force conducting a further period of auditing. The current trend around VBC remains stable.

14. The Force is forecasting that there will be improvements to VBC from September 2014, when 12 months of improved recording processes have passed.
15. Burglary dwelling and vehicle crime saw reductions at the end of March 2014 compared to the previous 12 months, with 94 and 100 fewer victims respectively. Lower levels of offending are being maintained and this trend is forecast to continue for the next 6 months.
16. The Force has started to see some increasing trends in criminal damage and shoplifting.
  - a. Criminal damage forms part of the Force seasonal Stay Safe campaigns and youth diversion initiatives are in place, along with education and engagement within schools. Criminal damage is being tackled through the policing of night time economy hotspots and is also being considered in line with our current anti-social behaviour management processes.
  - b. The Force hosts the Business Crime Advisory Group with local town centre managers and business leaders to actively tackle crimes such as shoplifting. Shoplifting forms part of offender management considerations and offender managers have been trained to deliver cell interventions to increase the cohort focusing on shoplifting.
17. Victim satisfaction with Kent Police remains high at 86.8%, although overall victim satisfaction of racist incidents is showing a downward trend, from around 85% in March 2013 to just below 80% from the most recent survey in March this year. The methodology for arriving at this statistic is to survey victims of racist crime, asking them about their satisfaction for the level of service provided by Kent Police. The number of people surveyed depends on the number of victims of racist incidents. For period between October and March 2014 (6 months) 199 people were surveyed of which 50 were not satisfied with our overall service provided (25% non-satisfied). The increase has been due to a larger proportion of people reporting "neither/nor" rather than being completely dissatisfied with the service. This is because either they received the service they were expecting, and therefore, were not particularly swayed one way or the other or alternatively the victims did not have enough information on which to base an opinion.