

To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

Subject: HMICFRS PEEL Inspection 2021/22

Date: 16 June 2022

Introduction:

1. One of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) key duties is to be democratically accountable for the provision of an efficient and effective police force by holding the Chief Constable to account.
2. However, the PCC does not judge progress based on targets as he recognises that they can skew behaviour and that often, despite Kent Police's best efforts, it is not always possible to protect the public or bring offenders to justice. The PCC does though consider other feedback, including Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports, other independent publications, anecdotal examples of frontline service delivery and feedback from staff and local communities.
3. HMICFRS independently assesses and reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces and fire & rescue services – in the public interest. HMICFRS asks the questions that it believes the public wish to have answered, and publishes the answers in an accessible form, using expertise to interpret the evidence and make recommendations for improvement.
4. This paper provides an overview of Kent Police's HMICFRS PEEL Inspection 2021/22, and also outlines how the PCC will hold the Chief Constable to account.

Background:

5. PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) is HMICFRS' regular assessment of police forces in England and Wales. Using inspection findings, analysis and professional judgement they assess how good forces are in core areas of policing.
6. PEEL significantly changed in 2021 moving from an assessment of three pillars of policing to twelve core areas.
7. A further significant revision saw the gradings move from a four-tier to five-tier approach with the addition of 'adequate' as a judgement [Outstanding; Good; Adequate; Requires Improvement; Inadequate]. This means it is not possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded and those in previous PEEL inspections. A reduction in grade, particularly from good to adequate, does not necessarily mean that there has been a reduction in performance.
8. During Kent's PEEL inspection, HMICFRS further revised the methodology removing assessments in two core areas of policing, namely serious and organised crime and counter corruption and vetting.
9. On 28 April 2022, HMICFRS published the Kent PEEL 2021/22 Inspection report.
10. The published report provides an assessment across ten areas of policing with graded judgements on nine. The findings cover a period of assessment between March 2021 and October 2021.
11. The [full report](#) is available on the HMICFRS website, but a copy was also circulated to Members on 29 April.

PEEL Inspection 2021/22:

12. The following is an overview of HMICFRS' graded judgements in the nine areas of policing:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Recording data about crime	Preventing crime	Protecting vulnerable people	Investigating crime	
	Treatment of the public		Responding to the public	
	Developing a positive workplace		Managing offenders	
	Good use of resources			

13. HMICFRS also inspected how effective a service Kent Police gives to victims of crime but did not make a graded judgement in this overall area.

14. Commenting on the report, HM Inspector of Constabulary Roy Wilsher said:

"I am satisfied with some aspects of the performance of Kent Police in keeping people safe and reducing crime, but there are areas where it needs to improve.

"Kent Police is outstanding at recording crime with very effective crime recording processes. The Force is good at both preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour and treating people fairly and with respect.

"The Force promotes an ethical and inclusive culture, and generally supports its workforce. The Force is also good at achieving savings and improving productivity.

"I recognise that Kent Police has faced some unique difficulties in relation to Brexit and channel crossings, because of the county's geographical location. But there are some improvements needed, particularly in its service to victims of crime and the way it responds to calls from the public.

"Kent Police needs to improve its ability within local policing to arrest and manage suspects and offenders to protect the public from harm. It also needs to review its policy for people released on bail and while under investigation.

"The Force must ensure that all crimes are allocated promptly to officers who have both the capacity and capability to investigate them properly. Opportunities to achieve positive results for victims are being missed because some investigations are poor, or because officers haven't maximised evidential opportunities. This lets victims down.

"Kent Police's response to domestic abuse is of particular concern. The Force is rightly proud of some of its work protecting vulnerable people. However, domestic abuse investigation teams have not been properly resourced with suitably qualified staff. As a result, some victims have received an unacceptable level of service and have continued to remain at risk. Investigations have often been delayed or are of a poor quality, reducing opportunities to achieve positive outcomes for victims. I am pleased to acknowledge that the Force recognises these concerns and is already taking steps to improve its response.

"I acknowledge the good work Kent Police has already undertaken, and I will monitor the Force's progress towards addressing the areas where it can improve."

15. Attached as Appendix A is a summary of the assessed areas and gradings prepared by Kent Police. This was included in the 'Inspections, Audits & Reviews' paper discussed at the PCC's Performance and Delivery Board on 8 June which both Mr Hill and Mr Sandher attended.

Holding to account:

16. The PCC commends the Force's continued outstanding performance in the recording of crime, and for its work on preventing crime from happening in the first place. However, he also believes that some elements of work, such as the focus on cutting county lines and dealing with burglars were not sufficiently recognised in the report.

17. Of course, the PCC also acknowledges that some findings were disappointing, particularly those in respect of domestic abuse and the investigation of crime. He knows that members of the public will want reassurance they are being given the serious attention they deserve.
18. The Force has already taken some action to address the findings and developed an Improvement Plan. As indicated above, one of the principle ways the PCC will hold the Chief Constable to account is through his quarterly Performance and Delivery Board.
19. Open to Panel Members and the public on a non-participating basis and also live streamed, the meeting is chaired by the PCC and papers are submitted by the Force in advance and published [here](#). The Chief Constable is required to attend the meeting in order to present and discuss the papers and answer questions about delivery of the [Making Kent Safer](#) Plan and policing generally in the county.
20. Although the 'Inspections, Audits & Reviews' paper routinely reports on HMICFRS activity, the PCC has formally requested that in the future it specifically includes an update on the Force's Improvement Plan. As referenced at paragraph 15, this commenced at the June meeting.
21. In addition to this routine reporting, a bespoke and additional Performance and Delivery Board meeting will be held on 3 November; it will focus exclusively on the Inspection report and the Force's progress against its Improvement Plan.
22. The PCC will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account via their regular weekly briefings, and as noted at paragraph 47 of Appendix A, will be represented at the 'Chief Constable's PEEL Oversight Board' by his Chief Executive. He will also routinely receive bespoke briefing notes and updates from the Force.
23. Whilst the PCC recognises that the Force has work to do to ensure it consistently provides a first-class service, he would like to thank the officers, staff and volunteers of Kent Police for their continued diligence and dedication to service which they demonstrate every single day in trying to do their best for local neighbourhoods and victims of crime.

Recommendation:

24. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report and agree to a further update at their December 2022 meeting.