

BEV HUGHES
DEPUTY MAYOR
OF GREATER
MANCHESTER

Rt Hon Priti Patel,
Secretary of State for the Home Department
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

9 September 2021

Dear Home Secretary,

SUBJECT: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Crime and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2020

I am writing to comment on the HMICFRS Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2020 report. I welcome the Chief Inspector's report and agree with many of the points made as part of the assessment. In-particular I would like to comment on the following:

- The analysis of policing in the pandemic – this has continued to challenge policing in its response to enforcement of protests and vigils, in responding to domestic violence and rising mental health related demand and many other areas. I agree that the police approach to enforcing lockdown measures was effective despite the lack of clarity and engagement from central government.
- The mental health system and interdependency between policing and health and social care – GMP has seen a 42% rise in mental health related police incidents since the pandemic started. Likewise, some local authorities in Greater Manchester have been left with budget gaps of more than £20 million because of the pandemic. There is an interdependency between health and social care that needs urgently addressing.
- The dysfunctional criminal justice system and rehabilitation of offenders - the systematic under resourcing of criminal justice systems continues to negatively impact victims and vulnerable people. We also need more investment in wider mental health, drugs, and alcohol services to break the cycle of re-offending which has also been impacted by cuts elsewhere in the system.
- Workforce diversity – having a workforce representative of the communities that they serve is essential for public confidence and effectiveness. GMP has made great progress in this regard but I agree that more still needs to be done to improve representativeness and ensure career progression.
- Multi-year funding settlements – short term funding settlements lead to instability and uncertainty. I agree that multi-year settlements will enable policing to plan for the longer term.
- Understanding demand – I agree that more needs to be done to understand current and future demand. There is a need to understand the impact of wider societal change and rising inequality on policing and the interdependencies with other services.

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The report acknowledges the increased risks and demands on police officers, but the report could go further. Staff morale and wellbeing is concerning. The recruitment of quality candidates to the police force continues to be a challenge and retaining good and experienced staff is also becoming more of a challenge as the physical and mental demands of the job increase. As the Chief Inspector rightly comments, there needs to be correlation between the increase in police officers and the investment provided in the wider criminal justice system.

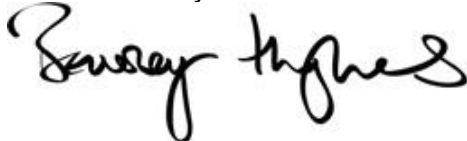
The report emphasises that other public services must do more but does not recognise the budget and resource constraints put on these public services by central government. Local authorities for example have experienced much larger cuts in real terms than policing, and it is how we work as one public service system that matters.

In addition, the report talks at length about how the operational independence of chief constables is not always respected by PCCs and of the undue and intrusive political pressures placed on Chief Constables. This over generalises and simplifies the relationship between PCCs and Chief Constables. The report needs to acknowledge that a relationship needs to be built between PCCs and Chief Constables that is open, transparent, people centred and accountable.

In terms of Inspections, I would like to make the following points:

- The Peel Inspections and the GMP Victims Service Assessment - I agree with the analysis and that opportunities were missed to support victims. The report however does not recognise the action that has since taken place since to address these issues and the wider cultural, system and structural issues within GMP. As you will be aware, good progress has been made on crime recording and the new Chief Constable is moving the force towards where it needs to be.
- More joint inspections are required to evaluate the policing response alongside wider public services in areas such as child protection, domestic abuse, and mental health.
- The Road Safety Inspection highlighted the rise in road related incidents that have also coincided with cuts in road policing. The report suggests that road safety does not feature highly enough in police and crime plans. I believe this to be a priority for PCCs and something that we are addressing in Greater Manchester.
- The Disproportionate use of Police Powers inspection – proportionate use of police powers remains one of the most challenging areas of policing. The recently published Beating Crime Plan also mentions the relaxation of section 60 of stop and search. In Greater Manchester we will be considering this alongside our own recently published Achieving Race Equality report and local scrutiny will remain a key factor of this.
- The Policing Public Protest Inspection acknowledges the difficulties faced by police forces in balancing individual rights and that of the community. These difficulties were exacerbated during the pandemic as highlighted in the Sarah Everard vigil. Whilst GMP have good processes in place for managing protests more support is required for managing difficult protests.
- The report does not mention the national policing and crime outcomes and measures. We will also see the introduction of 999/101 league tables for call answering times. It would be useful to understand to what extent these are going to drive future HMICFRS Inspections and the interdependencies between them.

Yours sincerely



Rt. Hon Baroness Beverley Hughes
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Policing, Crime and Criminal Justice

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