
KATE GREEN
**DEPUTY MAYOR
OF GREATER
MANCHESTER**

Rt Hon Yvette Cooper
Secretary of State for the Home Department
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

12th September 2024

Dear Home Secretary

SUBJECT: State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2023

I write in response to the HMICFRS Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2023 report.

The second annual report of the Chief Inspector raises many important points, including how police forces can remain effective and efficient in the face of ever increasing operational and resource demands. The continuing challenge of maintaining and rebuilding the public's trust in policing for both those who are victims of crime, and communities more widely, is rightly highlighted and is certainly at the forefront of my, the Mayor's and our Chief Constable's thoughts.

I was particularly pleased to see the Chief Inspector directly reference the Greater Manchester Police (GMP) 'stay team'. Between September 2022 and March 2023 that team successfully retained 71 percent of people it interviewed who had indicated their intent to leave the service, thus maintaining a total of 1,305 years of experience. This has contributed to ensuring that GMP can both maintain its police officer numbers and maximise the experience levels of its officer establishment.

Since the Chief Inspector's last report, GMP has also received its latest PEEL inspection report. That inspection showed that since 2021, GMP has continued to improve the service it provides and maintain the trajectory of improvement that has been clear since Chief Constable Stephen Watson came into post in May 2021.

GMP has made significant progress in most areas and as such, achieved grades which have demonstrated it to be the most improved force in the country. However, both the Chief Constable and I recognise that there is still a significant amount of progress to be achieved and the one area judged as 'Requires Improvement' and five as 'Adequate' remain a critical

GMCA, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU

<u>BOLTON</u>	<u>MANCHESTER</u>	<u>ROCHDALE</u>	<u>STOCKPORT</u>	<u>TRAFFORD</u>
<u>BURY</u>	<u>OLDHAM</u>	<u>SALFORD</u>	<u>TAMESIDE</u>	<u>WIGAN</u>

element of my continued oversight and scrutiny of the force. I was particularly pleased that GMP was graded as good in respect of leadership and force management and preventing and deterring crime and anti-social behaviour.

Within his report, the Chief Inspector makes three specific recommendations. My thoughts on those recommendations are below:

1. Recommendation 1

By 1 April 2025, the Government should abolish the fixed police officer numbers target in favour of a more balanced performance framework.

The service to the public is policing's greatest aim and whilst the number of police officers and visibility is always an important measure, in many cases police staff are crucial to the outcomes for victims and communities. Police staff are often higher skilled in technical areas and lower in cost, but as funding pressures increase on forces, the fixed officer numbers target means that the only areas forces can make savings are in their staff numbers. This will potentially result in a reduction in outcomes for the public and/or the de-civilianisation of services by moving police officers into roles that can be done by staff, resulting in higher cost. Freedom to manage budgets through forces optimising their police officer numbers in parallel with staff numbers and a better focus on outcomes will lead to an improved service to the public and more sustainable police activity.

2. Recommendation 2

By 1 April 2026, as part of the next spending review, the Government should provide police forces with a multi-year funding settlement that covers at least three financial years. As part of this, the Government should:

- **conclude its review of the police allocation formula and make changes to ensure that funding is distributed according to the needs of communities; and**
- **substantially increase the amount of capital funding that it provides to forces.**

I support the recommendation and provide further reason as to why later in this letter.

3. Recommendation 3

By 1 April 2025, the Home Secretary should develop legislative proposals to grant additional powers to the inspectors of constabulary. And they should write to HM Chief Inspector to explain these plans.

Since my appointment as Deputy Mayor, the inspectorate's work has provided significant support and information to assist me in carrying out my oversight and scrutiny functions. While I agree that there may be areas where this could be built on further, I would wish to see further engagement and discussion with PCCs regarding this recommendation to ensure there is no conflict or lack of clarity between the role and functions of HMICFRS and PCCs.

4. Recommendation 4

By 1 December 2025, as part of the next spending review, the Government should increase the funding allocated to the inspectorate to adequately reflect the scope and scale of the work of the inspectorate.

GMCA, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU

<u>BOLTON</u>	<u>MANCHESTER</u>	<u>ROCHDALE</u>	<u>STOCKPORT</u>	<u>TRAFFORD</u>
<u>BURY</u>	<u>OLDHAM</u>	<u>SALFORD</u>	<u>TAMESIDE</u>	<u>WIGAN</u>

I do not hold a view as to this recommendation, save to say that any additional funding should not come from the core police grant, which was the case in 2012 when the then HMIC's budget was increased significantly (as was the then IPCC's).

Further to the recommendations, I also wish to provide my thoughts on several other points made by the Chief Inspector in his report.

Theme 1: Restoring public trust and confidence

The police service recognises the scale of the challenges it faces

In his report, the Chief Inspector identified a number of areas that PCCs across the country consistently identified as best practice to strengthen the public's trust and confidence in their police forces. One of these was the improved use of community surveys.

The Greater Manchester (GM) Police & Community Safety survey has recently completed its fifth full year of results and now provides us with the views of almost 65,000 GM residents about community safety and their perceptions and expectations of GMP.

In the last 12 months, the survey has found that 60% of respondents are confident of getting help from GMP in an emergency, and 41% are confident of getting help from GMP in a non-emergency. This has remained static from the previous 12-month period. The public's response to this question is inextricably linked to their faith and trust in the police, and whilst it is reassuring to see these results remain steady, it also demonstrates the potential for improvement.

GMP is committed to building increased trust with communities across the totality of policing but particularly through building on and continuing to develop and enhance their neighbourhood policing model. Through newly established Neighbourhood PACT (Police and Communities Together) meetings and Community Innovation Hubs, GMP are committing to a direct engagement approach with the public to better hear their concerns and understand how they can work alongside communities to understand needs and community assets and identify sustainable problem-solving approaches to local issues.

This is further enhanced through the development and continued rollout of the 'Bee in the Loop' community engagement tool and visible and targeted operations, including the award winning Operation Vulcan and Operation Avro, to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). The people of Greater Manchester are starting to see the results, including a 23% reduction in neighbourhood crime indicators.

A national focus on improving vetting, rooting out corruption and challenging misconduct

As I stated in my letter of the 24th June following the publication of the Vetting and Anti-corruption part two report, the professional integrity of the police is a critical element in securing the public's trust in, and the legitimacy of, the police in this country. Without it, the model of policing by consent will be undermined.

GMCA, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU

<u>BOLTON</u>	<u>MANCHESTER</u>	<u>ROCHDALE</u>	<u>STOCKPORT</u>	<u>TRAFFORD</u>
<u>BURY</u>	<u>OLDHAM</u>	<u>SALFORD</u>	<u>TAMESIDE</u>	<u>WIGAN</u>

GMP has continued to deliver the required improvements in its vetting processes to ensure only the right individuals are employed by GMP, and that vetting acts as a robust front door to preventing potential incidents of corruption. This remains an important strategic priority for myself and the Mayor, and we will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account for its delivery.

GMP has significantly increased its efforts to take all appropriate action against officers who fail to meet the standards required of modern policing. As a result of this robust approach, GMP are projecting to dismiss three times the number of individuals in 2024 than in 2022. More widely, this firm stance is believed to have had an impact on behavioural standards within the force, and GMP in the 12 months to Q1 2024/25 have seen an almost halving in sexual misconduct complaints and investigations against GMP officers.

The police are renewing their focus on addressing violence against women and girls.

In 2021, Greater Manchester published its ambitious Strategy to tackle gender-based violence across the city region. Our aim is to deliver a radical transformation in Greater Manchester's approach to tackling violence against women and girls.

The Strategy sets out a comprehensive programme of service delivery to enhance the safety of women and girls, while working to prevent gender-based violence from happening in the first place by challenging the societal attitudes and inequalities that enable it. In August, we published our second annual report which highlights the progress made and success achieved to date. I have included a link to that report for your information: [gender-based-violence-annual-report-2024.pdf \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/gender-based-violence-annual-report-2024.pdf)

GMP are one of the second stage pilot forces for Operation Soteria. We are determined that Soteria is the vehicle by which in Greater Manchester we radically improve the reporting, investigation, and prosecution of rape and other serious sexual offences. Under the auspices of the Gender-Based Violence Strategy, we have invested significant resources to support the successful delivery of Operation Soteria. This is bearing fruit. In 2023/24 GMP solved 42% more rape offences. Proportionally, this accounts for 10% of rapes reported to GMP, up from 7% the previous year and placing Greater Manchester marginally above the national average. GMP has also increased domestic abuse arrests by almost 6% between 2022/23 and 2023/24 and domestic violence is down by 11%.

I am encouraged that GMP have solved more domestic abuse crimes in the last 12 months, rising from 9.2% in 21/22 to 12.6% in 23/24. A similar trajectory is being maintained this year and this improving picture is a positive reflection of the commitment and effort of GMP in delivering key ambitions within our GBV Strategy.

I am also focussed on more cases getting to court, with cases of VAWG being my priority.

Theme 2: Providing a service to victims and the most vulnerable

More often than not, victims aren't satisfied with the service they receive from the police and criminal justice system

GMCA, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU

<u>BOLTON</u>	<u>MANCHESTER</u>	<u>ROCHDALE</u>	<u>STOCKPORT</u>	<u>TRAFFORD</u>
<u>BURY</u>	<u>OLDHAM</u>	<u>SALFORD</u>	<u>TAMESIDE</u>	<u>WIGAN</u>

A critical factor to trust in policing, which the Chief Inspector references at the head of his report, is the satisfaction levels of victims of crime following their interaction with the police, and the wider criminal justice system. Greater Manchester Police in 2019 were found to be systematically failing victims at almost all points, and this was the primary reason for the force entering the HMICFRS 'enhanced' monitoring process. Although by no means complete, the journey of improvement since then has been significant.

Alongside the GM Police & Community Safety Survey, I also commission a quarterly quantitative Victims Survey. The survey will obtain the views of 4,000 victims of crime each year and is structured to reflect Rights 1 to 7 of the Victims Code of Practice. The survey will provide clear trends as to how the Code of Practice is being delivered by the relevant criminal justice partners. The results of this survey will be relayed back to both GMP's own internal Victims Improvement Board and the GM Victims Strategy Board, and will seek to drive improvement in the experience of victims across GM, including identifying where and when basic expectations of service are not being met.

A further qualitative survey has also been commissioned that will focus on Rights 8-12 of the Code of Practice and will involve wider criminal justice system partners beyond Greater Manchester Police.

Theme 4: Funding the police

The Government should give police forces a multi-year funding settlement

The Chief Inspector offers pertinent reflections on the way in which the police can continue to improve their own internal value for money processes, and ensure financial efficiency is at the heart of their operating models. This has been at the heart of the Chief Constable's strategic approach since the start of his tenure and is an area to which I apply strong scrutiny.

Policing is an expensive function in terms of both capital and revenue spend. Whilst the drive to be efficient is critical to ensure public value for money is achieved, it is extremely challenging for police forces to be fully effective when the efficiency savings required are, and continue to be, as severe as they have been in recent years.

The past decade and more funding cuts has had a catastrophic effect on the police's ability to invest and plan for the long term to ensure its capacity and capabilities remain as robust, modern and innovative as possible to tackle ever changing and sophisticated crimes and threats. Despite commitments from the previous government over several years to revise the outdated and flawed police funding formula, their failure to do so has only exacerbated matters for metropolitan forces such as GMP, who have been disadvantaged by the current model. There is also a clear need to rebalance the inverse relationship between the ability to raise funding through the council tax precept and the demands on GMP. As such I would urge you as a matter of urgency to reform the funding formula in order for it to accurately reflect our needs and priorities as a city-region.

GMP continues to focus on how it can improve efficiency and value for money. The force has made significant strides in achieving value for money through strategic procurement. For instance, the Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) contract awarded to Axon combined DEMS and Body Worn Video services, resulting in a £500k annual saving.

GMCA, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU

<u>BOLTON</u>	<u>MANCHESTER</u>	<u>ROCHDALE</u>	<u>STOCKPORT</u>	<u>TRAFFORD</u>
<u>BURY</u>	<u>OLDHAM</u>	<u>SALFORD</u>	<u>TAMESIDE</u>	<u>WIGAN</u>

Additionally, by advancing the IT re-platforming project, GMP avoided a £1.2m price increase in VMware licensing costs. GMP's mobile phone procurement strategy secured handsets at 40% below blue light channel pricing, saving £1.2m and enabling the replacement of an additional 3000 phones.

However, not all collaborations have delivered the expected value for money. GMP is currently in the process of exiting the regional motorways collaboration due to its failure to deliver value for money. Similarly, the firearms collaboration was terminated a few months ago, leading to improved value for money for GMP. Blue Light Commercial (BLC) contracts have also posed challenges, often increasing costs above inflation levels. For example, GMP faced an additional £787k in costs for 2024/25 for procurements made with BLC, a 17% overall increase. The national uniform contract was another area where GMP opted out to better meet local needs, as the contract lacked flexibility.

On a positive note, the national Adobe licensing contract has worked well, saving GMP £200k per annum. This demonstrates the benefits of standardised licensing for essential software, where there is limited variation in what is needed.

Whilst the Chancellor has made it clear that difficult spending decisions are required in the short and medium term, I strongly urge that as part of the next Comprehensive Spending Review, a multi-year funding settlement is considered and implemented for police forces that will allow them to invest in their own future and significantly strengthen their capabilities. I believe that will produce a significant improvement in their ability to better support victims of crime, be proactive in communities and rebuild the trust of those they protect.

To conclude, the Mayor and I will continue to work with GMP and HMICFRS to ensure that the public in Greater Manchester are being served by the best police force possible, and where future points of learning are identified, a robust and proportionate level of scrutiny is applied to ensure the necessary improvements are made in a timely manner.

Yours sincerely



Kate Green
Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester

GMCA, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU

<u>BOLTON</u>	<u>MANCHESTER</u>	<u>ROCHDALE</u>	<u>STOCKPORT</u>	<u>TRAFFORD</u>
<u>BURY</u>	<u>OLDHAM</u>	<u>SALFORD</u>	<u>TAMESIDE</u>	<u>WIGAN</u>