



RESPONSE BY THE PCC TO HMIC INSPECTIONS OF CLEVELAND POLICE

INSPECTION DETAILS

Title of Inspection

2014 PEEL (Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy) Assessment of Cleveland Police

Date Inspection Published

27 November 2014

Type of Inspection:

- Cleveland Specific
 Follow Up
 Partner Inspection

- National
 Thematic

Is Cleveland Police quoted in the Report?

Yes

No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the first PEEL Assessment of Cleveland Police. In making this assessment HMI Mike Cunningham has used his professional judgment to consider the evidence available from inspections undertaken in the past 12 months. The available evidence indicates that:

- in terms of its effectiveness, in general, the force is **GOOD** at reducing crime and preventing offending, and is **GOOD** at investigating offending. However, it requires improvement in the way it tackles anti-social behaviour;
- the efficiency with which the force carries out its responsibilities is **GOOD**; and
- the force is acting to achieve fairness and legitimacy in some of the practices that were examined this year.

HMIC were impressed with the strong victim focus the force has. It works well with local partners to make the best use of resources. The force is focusing resources on providing support to victims of domestic abuse and in pursuing domestic abuse perpetrators.

Cleveland has made excellent progress in achieving its required savings. It has carried out extensive assessments of the demands and risks that it faces and has transformed the way it provides policing to obtain better value for money from fewer resources. In its review of efficiency, HMIC assessed three key areas.

The judgements and HMIC comments in each area were as follows:

To what extent is the force efficient? (Judgement – GOOD): “Cleveland Police has a good understanding of demand and has used this to reshape the way it provides policing. It is working innovatively to improve further its overall understanding of demand by incorporating information from partners. This will enable it to identify and include greater efficiencies in the way it uses resources. Cleveland is set to lose proportionately more police officers than other forces, but the proportion working on the front line has increased. Over the spending review the force has reduced crime, although crime levels remain higher than elsewhere. Both crime and detection rates are higher than the figures for England and Wales.”

To what extent is the force taking steps to ensure a secure financial position for the short and long term? (Judgement – OUTSTANDING): “The force already has a strong track record of achieving planned savings. Cleveland Police was set a tough financial challenge. A strong vision and effective leadership has enabled it to achieve the bulk of the savings requirement and there are clear plans in place to achieve the balance in 2014/15. The force is developing outline savings plans that extend beyond 2016. Successful partnering and collaboration with other organisations continue to play a vital role in these plans.”

To what extent has the force got an affordable way of providing policing? (Judgement – GOOD): “The force makes good use of working with others to achieve better value for money. Collaboration with other forces and the private sector is well established in Cleveland and has contributed considerably to its savings. It has achieved considerable savings, and will continue to do so. The force has made good overall progress in implementing its change programme. The new structure for policing has enabled it to function with considerably fewer officers and staff. The changes have taken place with minimal impact on the service to the public. There is a clear future vision involving partnership working and information technology-enabled change. This will help Cleveland to provide an affordable, effective and sustainable resource model.”

Overall, HMIC judged the efficiency with which the force carries out its responsibilities as GOOD

HMIC have concerns that the incidence of anti-social behaviour in Cleveland is very high and the force does not have a clear understanding of the reasons behind this.

While call-handling staff have received training in recognising domestic abuse, there is a lack of knowledge about repeat victims and some lacked understanding about the complexities of domestic abuse.

HMIC have serious concerns about the force’s approach to crime-recording, which is not as accurate as it should be.

Their intention is to examine leadership specifically as part of future PEEL Assessments, once criteria have been established. This will allow us to take account of the College of Policing review of leadership that is currently underway. In common with other forces, there is a need to develop a better understanding of the changing demands for police services.

HMIC is interested to see how the force responds to the areas identified for improvement over the next 12 months and in particular addressing the recommendations from the crime data integrity inspection report; an improved understanding of and approach to anti-social behaviour; consistency of investigations; and an increased understanding of repeat and vulnerable victim definitions within call-handling.

FORCE RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Comment by Chief Constable Jacqui Cheer:

“I welcome the PEEL Assessment as it provides an independent view of what we are doing well and where we need to improve. We are clear that our role is to keep our communities safe and protect people from harm. We do this by prioritising how we use our resources and responding to the most serious risk and immediate harm to residents. It is pleasing we have been praised for our work in the areas of child sexual exploitation, safeguarding adults and children, dealing with organised crime, and for a strong commitment to identifying and managing vulnerable victims. The policing landscape has changed to include new crimes such as cyber, and combined with reducing resources means we have to adapt and find new ways of working as part of our financial plan, for which we have been highly praised.

“The new Force structure sees a Neighbourhood Policing Command consisting of neighbourhood teams, a Community Drug Enforcement Team and neighbourhood detectives. I make no excuse for expanding our neighbourhood function to tackle certain crime types, because crimes such as shoplifting affect our neighbourhoods and family businesses - for neighbourhoods to flourish, local businesses must be supported and we will continue to work with them to prevent and tackle the crimes which affect them. We accept that developing a better understanding the rate of antisocial behaviour must be prioritised and analysts have begun the difficult task of working out the science behind the numbers. Senior officers are aware of the local impact caused by antisocial behaviour and there is activity at a local level to solve issues and good joint working, which is recognised in the assessment.

“We do need to continue the debate locally as to why some people who live in the Cleveland think that it is acceptable to behave badly and damage property in the area in which they also live. Some of these people are adults, others are young people and we are asking parents for support in ensuring that they know what their children are doing each and every evening. We have faced the challenges of the last year and delivered policing to the best of our ability. It will become increasingly difficult to do everything as well as we would like and that the public quite rightly expect as we continue to deal with the significant cuts to our budget.

“I would like to thank our officers and staff for their ongoing commitment in the face of challenging times and to the public for their support for Cleveland Police.”

PCC RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Comment by the Police & Crime Commissioner, Barry Coppinger:

“This report comes at a time when the force faces increasing demands upon its services and is dealing with unprecedented reductions in finances, officers and staff. Since 2010 the amount of funding received from Government has reduced by £27.6m in real terms, the depressing news is that we can expect further cuts of 20% to our funding over the next four years. It is pleasing, therefore, that the HMIC has rated the financial planning as outstanding and despite severe challenges, the Force has been judged as good in reducing crime, preventing offending and in investigating offending.

“I’m very concerned about HMIC’s judgement that the Force requires improvement in tackling antisocial behaviour and the conclusion that the Force doesn’t understand why levels are so high. I will be holding the Chief Constable to account on this and have asked that she puts a plan in place by the end of the calendar year, addressing the issues raised by HMIC. I also want police to analyse the information behind the statistics and produce a report which sets out in some detail what now constitutes antisocial behaviour on Teesside. Reducing antisocial behaviour is not a responsibility for the police alone, but it’s vital that the Force knows why incidents are high across Cleveland; otherwise work to tackle it will be fruitless over the longer term. We need action from the police, partners and the public – and where antisocial behaviour is caused by young people, parents also need to take responsibility.

“In my regular discussions and meetings with senior officers, I will be asking for updates on how we are improving our good practice and responding to HMIC’s recommendations and will be feeding back to the public on action taken through my engagement meetings across all wards in Cleveland.”