

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
Direct Communications Unit
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

27 November 2018

Dear Home Secretary,

Re: Policing levels in Teesside,

We are all clear from regular casework and feedback from our constituents, how under-resourced policing is in Cleveland, and how worried those residents are. All local MPs recently received a detailed briefing on funding and operational issues from our Police and Crime Commissioner Barry Copping in the run-up to the recent budget.

We have raised the challenge of under-funding previously, in Parliament and elsewhere, and come together now to renew those concerns again directly with yourself.

We saw the very concerning BBC national news piece on policing in Hartlepool last week, and the PCC and Chief Constable discussed the situation in Hartlepool with Mike Hill.

We now know the situation highlighted in the BBC news piece, where Hartlepool at one point ran out of police response resources to deploy, is not unique to Hartlepool.

Despite having some of the highest levels of victim-based crimes per head of population, Cleveland police has lost £39m – or 36% in real terms from its government grant over the last seven years. This has resulted in the loss of 500 police officers and 50 PCSOs since 2010, in the face of increasing demand generally and from additional and complex crimes such as historical child sexual abuse and cybercrime.

The force currently records 163 crimes per day on average, with levels of violent crime increasing by 45% in the last 12 months.

Reports from independent bodies such as the national Audit Office and the Home Affairs Select Committee have stated the case very clearly – if the tide doesn't turn now, police forces will struggle to deliver a service to keep the public safe.

The Home Office must look urgently at their funding formula for policing, which has made Cleveland one of the most disadvantaged police forces in the country, and threatens their ability to protect the backbone of community safety, neighbourhood policing.

We have been concerned at the levels of national “top-slicing” over recent years from the overall budget for policing: into funding the College of Policing into funding Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary; into funding the National Crime Agency; into funding national counter-terrorism initiatives all of which have grown and - whilst valuable - have then reduced the share of the overall policing budget available to fund local forces.

We recognise that the government expects policing to reform – and to drive that reform itself as a sector. Cleveland Police seems to us to fully understand that agenda and has embraced change in terms of leadership, standards and diversity.

Under its *Transforming Cleveland Police* programme, it is building on that foundation by redesigning the organisation, focusing on:

- Increasing Empowerment – reducing hierarchy (including the removal of ranks)
- Improved Wellbeing - improvements in the health of the workforce
- Modern Estates - fit for purpose, modern, efficient workplaces
- Collaboration – working in partnership locally, regionally and nationally including the successful Evolve tripartite collaboration programme
- Workforce Mix – embracing the use of volunteers and Special Constables
- Agile workforce – making the best use of mobile and digital technology
- Leadership – inspirational, bold and audaciously lawful leadership
- Innovation – radical service design based on evidence of what works

The government has also agreed additional pay-awards, which whilst fully deserved by police personnel, have been passed onto forces to meet without additional funding; as well as national insurance increases and apprenticeship levies likewise.

We are also now aware HM Treasury have announced pension valuation directions to increase employers’ contribution rates and the Home Office have signaled forces will need to prepare to meet costs of around £165m in 2019/20 in this respect and potentially £417m in 2020/21.

The impact for Cleveland would be unfunded costs of £1.7m in 2019/20 - equivalent to 35-40 less police officers - and £4.2m unfunded costs from 2020/21 - equivalent to around 100 less police officers.

This is even more unfair – particularly when in Health and Education who face similar cost increases - the Treasury has committed to pick up those costs rather than the department.

Coupled with all this is a grant-funding allocation formula for forces, in respect of which evidence shows that areas like Cleveland (with some of the highest levels of deprivation and general need as well as recorded crime) receives a funding allocation which fails to properly value those factors.

It cannot be fair that Cleveland’s grant reduces by 10% between 2010/11 and 2018/19, whilst Surrey’s increases by 1%. A similar 1% increase would have given Cleveland - which has a police recorded crime level per head of population that is

nearly 60% higher than Surrey's - £15m per year to spend on policing.

That is a funding formula which is perverse.

It follows that we have 3 requests of the Home office and yourself.

1. We believe the Home Office must review and recognise the police funding formula within the next 12 months, to allow Chief Constables and PCCs in areas like Cleveland to invest in the 500 police officers and 50 PCSOs lost over recent years – they are desperately needed to police our communities.
2. We believe financial losses to local forces by top-slicing of the policing budget to grow other service initiatives nationally (as well as through un-funded pay awards and other policy initiatives) should be reinstated.
3. Urgently on the "pensions gap" and other central pressures: we believe the Home Office, and the Government as a whole, should grant-fund policing in Cleveland and elsewhere for 2019/20 at a level to fully meet increasing costs of service provision. Hard pressed forces such as Cleveland ought not to suffer costs imposed from the Centre which are unfunded.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss further and can confirm the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable would be happy to also attend and join in those discussions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



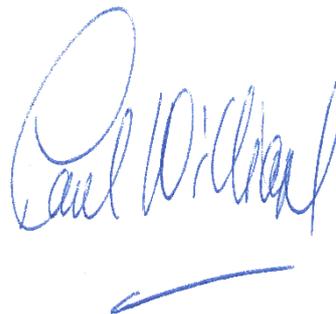
Mike Hill
Member of Parliament for Hartlepool



Anna Turley
Labour MP for Redcar



Alex Cunningham
Labour MP for Stockton North



Dr Paul Williams
Labour MP for Stockton South



Andy McDonald
Labour MP for Middlesbrough