

Alex Cunningham MP

Member of Parliament for Stockton North



The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
SW1P 4DF

Wednesday, 13 February 2019

Dear Home Secretary,

RE: Funding for Cleveland Police

The five of us as MPs for the Cleveland area, together with the Cleveland Police & Crime Commissioner, wish to seek an urgent meeting with you on behalf of local communities within our area. We are keen to raise our concerns about continuing inadequate levels of grant funding for Cleveland Police, and to express our support for the best efforts of its dedicated workforce.

We have had – and continue to have - serious ongoing concerns about the fundamentally flawed policing funding formula. This has recently delivered the lowest grant increase in the country for an area with the 4th highest recorded crime rate. This perpetuates the ongoing loss of £40m in grant to Cleveland and resultant loss of 500 police officers and 50 PCSOs since 2010. Whilst the PCC has recently secured public and Police & Crime Panel support for an increase, yielding £1.8m, it in no way recovers 8 years of cuts within some of the most disadvantaged communities in the UK.

We are seriously concerned that Cleveland in overall terms:

- Has some of the highest levels of looked-after children nationally, and research suggests looked after children are 5 times more likely to offend than other children.
- Has more than 3 times the national average of asylum seekers and refugees residing in the force area, many of which have been resettled under the vulnerable person's resettlement scheme.
- Has some of the highest levels of drug usage, drug deaths and cheapest supplies. Also above average alcohol misuse, hospital admissions and mental health problems, homelessness, domestic abuse and unemployment related issues
- Has mental health conditions strongly associated with socio-economic deprivation, with adult depression in areas higher than that elsewhere in the country, and a suicide rate double the national average

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- Has some of the highest rate of unemployment across the country, more than double the national average, with high numbers of workless households across the Cleveland area
- Has some of the cheapest housing stock, which can lead to high levels of sex offenders residing, as lower costs make it easier to set up halfway homes and accommodation for offenders
- Has some of the highest rates of income deprived households, over 25% in places, with over 35% of children living in income deprived households, which research shows can be a factor increasing the risk of offending in young people.
- Has population density of more than twice the national average and 3 times that of the North East region, and over the next 10 years the age profile will change to an increasingly vulnerable elderly population

Demands on the police are considerable, and continuing to grow, as resources have declined.

Over 12 months December '17 to December '18:

- Calls for service are up 3%, over 5600 additional calls.
- Recorded crime up 19%
- Violent crime up 46%
- Sexual Offences up 9%
- Children missing from Home up 17%
- Homicide up 400% (15 compared to 3 previous year)
- Domestic Abuse up 54%, with significant rates of repeat victimisation.
- Robbery up 35%
- Theft up 6%

Our Police are working extremely hard with other partners, and volunteers, to tackle these issues, but there just aren't enough of them.

Cleveland Police and PCC have invested in reforms and changes in processes to promote wellbeing and tackle sickness, which are cited nationally by the College of Policing. An Everyone Matters programme is making progress on Equality, Diversity & Human Rights – the force was the first force to win a recent Equality North East award in this respect. Ground-breaking work replacing the old Professional Standards set-up with a new Directorate of Standards & Ethics has been cited by the IOPC as good practice.

The departure of the previous Chief Constable was regretful, but it has also demonstrated that Cleveland Police is an organisation where complaints are listened to and acted upon. The PCC has also moved swiftly, to secure an Interim Chief Constable from Humberside for 3 months. He has begun the recruitment process for the substantive Chief Constable, and is already receiving exciting levels of interest in what will be a rewarding and challenging role and, of course, a pivotal appointment for the force.

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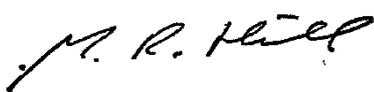
Cleveland Police has insufficient resources and growing demand. This is of concern to many of the people that we represent. 94% of residents consulted by the PCC in January over the precept felt the government should increase its funding. The Force and PCC would be willing to submit a full, detailed and particularised bid for funds to the Home Office, including details of how they would be utilised and the benefits and positive social outcomes that could be achieved with such investment, if, as we hope, you were to indicate your willingness to give consideration to such a submission.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet at the earliest opportunity and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Alex Cunningham MP



Mike Hill MP



Andy McDonald MP



Paul Williams MP



Anna Turley MP



Barry Coppinger, PCC for Cleveland