

CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL	Agenda Item No. 11
17 JUNE 2015	Public Report

Report of the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner

Contact Officer – Dr Dorothy Gregson, Chief Executive

Contact Details – cambs-pcc@cambs.pnn.police.uk 0300 333 3456

CRIME DATA INTEGRITY– UPDATE ON ACTIONS FOLLOWING HER MAJESTY’S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY INSPECTION OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE CONSTABULARY

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Police and Crime Panel (“the Panel”) with an update on actions following Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary’s (HMIC) Inspection of Cambridgeshire Constabulary’s (“the Constabulary”) Crime Data Integrity practices.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. To note the report.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

3.1 Item 6 – To review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, by the Commissioner in connection with the discharge of the Commissioner’s functions.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Policing Protocol Order 2011 (“the Protocol”) sets out some key guiding principles for all Police and Crime Commissioners, Chief Constables and Police and Crime Panels.

4.2 Under the Protocol, the Police and Crime Commissioner (“the Commissioner”) has the legal power to scrutinise, support and challenge the overall performance of the Constabulary and hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of the Constabulary’s officers and staff. The Protocol is clear that the Commissioner must not fetter the operational independence of the Constabulary and the Chief Constable. Crime recording is clearly an operational matter.

4.3 In turn, the Protocol enables the Panel to scrutinise the Commissioner in the exercise of his statutory functions, but does not provide for the Panel to scrutinise the Chief Constable. However, in the spirit of the Protocol to enhance policing for local communities, the Commissioner has provided this report which predominately relates to the actions of the Constabulary.

5. CURRENT RECORDING RATE

5.1 The Constabulary continues to drive up recording standards, with National Crime Recording Standard compliance rates improving to 94% (up from 71% at the HMIC inspection point in June 2014). This focus on recording has narrowed the gap between recorded crime and the extent of crime as measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

6. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S ROLE

- 6.1 The Commissioner has a statutory duty under the Police Act 1996 to publish, as he sees fit, a copy of his comments on HMIC reports and then forward these to the Home Secretary. A copy is also sent to HMIC.
- 6.2 The Constabulary submitted a report to the Commissioner's Business Coordination Board ("the Board") in December 2014 of their response to HMIC's Crime Data Integrity inspection. This report enabled the Commissioner to hold the Chief Constable to account for the findings of the report and the actions that would be taken forward to address these recommendations. A copy of the minutes of the Board meeting and a link to the published Board report, were subsequently sent to the Home Secretary, with a copy to HMIC, thus fulfilling the Commissioner's statutory duty under the Police Act 1996.
- 6.3 The Commissioner further held the Constabulary to account by calling for a report to the June 2015 Board meeting, which detailed progress against delivering the actions against the HMIC recommendations. The Commissioner will continue to call for reports to his Board in order to fulfil his statutory duty to hold the Chief Constable to account for the Constabulary's performance in respect of crime data integrity.

7. HMIC INSPECTION AND REPORT

- 7.1 HMIC independently assesses and routinely monitors the performance of police forces in order to ensure that:
- emerging problems with the efficiency or effectiveness of individual forces are spotted quickly, and Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners are aware of these problems and are taking corrective action; and
 - if problems with efficiency or effectiveness of a force are enduring and there is a low prospect of them being resolved, those problems are raised formally with the Police and Crime Commissioner, so that they can respond.
- 7.2 HMIC undertook their Crime Data Integrity inspection of the Constabulary in June 2014. The central question of the inspection was "*to what extent can police-recorded crime information be trusted?*" The methodology used was the examination of crime records for the period 1 November 2012 to 31 October 2013; a dip sample of out of court disposals (e.g cautions, penalty notices, and community resolutions) and no-crime decisions for rape, robbery and violence; inspection of the police force; and a peer review by a National Crime Recording Standard expert from outside HMIC.
- 7.3 HMIC's report '*Crime Data Integrity – Inspection of Cambridgeshire Constabulary*' was published in November 2014. The report provided a qualitative assessment of the Constabulary's crime recording arrangements and made specific recommendations on how the Constabulary could improve the accuracy of, and therefore public confidence in, the way it records crime.
- 7.4 HMIC reviewed 75 Constabulary incident records and their analysis indicated that 50 of these had been recorded by the Constabulary as a crime and were compliant with Home Office Counting Rules and National Crime Recording Standards. Despite HMIC's recognition that due to the small numbers involved in their audit of individual Forces, any estimated compliance rates were unreliable, they reported that the Constabulary's approach to no-criming was a matter of concern. However, no explanation was given to substantiate this. It was clearly identified that the Constabulary had a strict process in place whereby only Designated Decision Makers or the Force Crime Registrar have the

authority to 'no-crime', and in addition this is regularly audited to ensure compliance.

7.5 HMIC found that Chief Officers in the Constabulary promote compliance with Home Office Counting Rules, encouraging a victim-centered approach. HMIC Inspectors also reported that they found frontline staff, including call-takers, understand the importance of meeting the needs of the victim when considering crime recording and investigation, and they are polite, professional and helpful.

7.6 A national thematic report¹ '*Crime recording: making the victim count*' was published at the same time as the Constabulary's report.

8. HMIC RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 HMIC made nine recommendations following the inspection, all of which the Constabulary accepted. In January 2015 a National Crime Data Integrity Action Plan was circulated to all police forces following a recommendation in the HMIC National Thematic report. The actions identified as being owned by individual police forces have subsequently been included within the Constabulary's Action Plan to ensure that all risk areas identified both locally and nationally would be considered fully by the Constabulary.

9. CAMBRIDGESHIRE CONSTABULARY'S ACTION PLAN

9.1 The Action Plan includes 38 actions divided into five key themes. 29 of the actions are complete and nine are in progress, all which are scheduled to be completed by Autumn 2015.

9.2 Leadership and Governance

9.2.1 The Constabulary's progress against the Action Plan, which is under the direct leadership of the Chief Constable, is tracked on a monthly basis through the scrutiny of the Assistant Chief Constable's Force Operational Performance Board. This Action Plan is progressed through the Crime Data Integrity Working Group, and is monitored through the Information Management Strategy Group, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable.

9.2.2 Clear and consistent messaging has been provided by senior officers to all staff around the importance of accurate and ethical crime recording. There is no pressure from senior officers within the Constabulary to meet crime reduction targets by not recording or delaying recording; a message that is continually reinforced. The Constabulary's Force Crime Registrar is allowed with independence and authority to maintain high standards of adherence to the Home Office Counting Rules and the National Crime Recording Standards.

9.2.3 The Force Crime Register chairs the Crime Data Integrity Working Group which enables the group to have a fully independent view of crime recording and the authority to progress any changes required to ensure high standards are achieved and maintained.

9.3 Victim Focus

9.3.1 The Constabulary has a strong victim focus at the forefront of its crime recording and outcomes procedures and consequently, recognises the need to ensure that the Victims' Code is followed. One action currently under review involves the potential implementation of 'track my crime' the software enabling victims to see the progress of their crime and investigation via the internet.

9.3.2 As above, strong leadership messages have been provided to reinforce the importance of a victim focus in crime recording and outcomes. The Victims' Code

¹ These inspections examine a key issue across a representative number of police forces, and comment solely on performance in relation to that key issue. This type of inspection identifies deficiencies relevant to the police service as a whole and spreads good practice regarding a specific aspect of policing

e-learning package has been made available to all staff.

9.4 **Processes and Systems**

9.4.1 The process for crime recording is under review following the Home Office Counting Rules changes introduced in April 2015 whereby the requirement is for crimes to be recorded as soon as possible after the person receiving the report is satisfied that a crime has been committed. The revised process is due to be implemented in June 2015 with clear and detailed briefings and guidance for all staff.

9.4.2 The Constabulary's Audit Plan for crime and incident quality and compliance, has been reviewed for 2015-16 to ensure it is fit for purpose. All avenues of reporting to the Constabulary have been identified and are now subject to scrutiny as part of the revised Audit Plan. Violent and sexual crime were identified as high risk areas by the National HMIC report and therefore have an increased level of scrutiny as part of the plan.

9.4.3 Feedback from audits is regularly provided into the Constabulary's relevant governance groups to ensure progress is monitored and any issues are identified and responded to quickly.

9.5 **Training**

9.5.1 An extensive training programme is being provided which includes front-line officers, call-taking staff and staff in specialist units. This training highlights the importance of crime-recording and provides guidance around the Home Office requirements of whether and when to record a crime.

9.6 **Out-of-court disposals**

9.6.1 All actions within this theme are complete. This includes retaining records where appropriate, checking offenders' previous history to ensure they outcome is appropriate and taking victims wishes into account.

10. **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

10.1 Crime Data Integrity Inspection, Business Coordination Board, December 2014

Crime Data Integrity - Update on Action Plan, Business Coordination Board, June 2015

<http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/>

'*Crime Data Integrity – Inspection of Cambridgeshire Constabulary*', HMIC, November 2014

<http://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/crime-data-integrity-cambridgeshire-2014.pdf>

'*Crime recording: making the victim count*' – HMIC, November 2014

<http://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/crime-recording-making-the-victim-count.pdf>