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Office of the
**Police & Crime
Commissioner**
West Yorkshire

My Reference: OPCC/MBW/NF

Your Reference:

16 April 2020

Dear Kit

Thank you for your letter dated 1/4/20 regarding West Yorkshire Police's HMICFRS PEEL Assessment for 2018/19. Since then, in my statutory duty to reply to the report, I have submitted a full response to the Home Secretary and Inspectorate, a copy of which was also sent to your office on 2/4/20 and now published on my website.

In your correspondence you mention that West Yorkshire Police (WYP) are continuing to perform well across the three pillars of assessment. Specifically in 2018/19, WYP have retained their 'Good' grades for Effectiveness and Legitimacy, and achieved an 'Outstanding' grade for Efficiency – one of just six forces in England and Wales to achieve this recognition.

Based on these results, West Yorkshire Police could make a strong case for describing itself as the best performing metropolitan force (4th largest in England & Wales) in the country.

However, your letter appears to highlight more those areas of the report which describe 'causes of concern' in WYP's performance. Whilst we do not hide away from those aspects of local policing which need improvement, I also want to emphasize the important work WYP has achieved in the period since our last PEEL inspection.

In their report, the inspectors identified positive progress such as:

- The high quality of the initial response to incidents including vulnerable people, including a special mention of the force's understanding of vulnerability linked to mental health issues,
- Improvements in statement quality, handovers between teams, and processing times for digital evidence,
- Effective demand management through the appropriate use of telephone resolutions for non-emergency incidents,
- The force's strong collaborative approach to tackling domestic abuse, including the effective use of civil orders,
- That WYP is outstanding at assessing future demand for its services; has invested in and enhanced neighbourhood policing; and is 'doing well' on encouraging workforce diversity,

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- Finally concluding that West Yorkshire Police is an ambitious force that welcomes innovation.

Since the inspectors' visit I am also pleased to report that WYP have made further progress in addressing the 'issues of concern' identified in the PEEL assessment. These are described in more detail in my formal response to the report but include:

'Cause for concern relating to tackling corruption in the workplace':

- West Yorkshire Police has recently carried out an uplift in staff numbers within its counter corruption unit (CCU) which has doubled the number within the unit. This development enhances the unit's capabilities in intelligence collection, analysis, and covert investigations (such as those through RIPA applications).
- The Chief Constable has assured me that appropriate resources are now in place at the CCU, such that HMICFRS have now re-assessed the cause for concern and have shown this to be completed on their register. We are therefore moving to a stage of assessing the new arrangements, and hope the outstanding national matter regarding the monitoring of IT systems and devices is progressed expeditiously by the College of Policing and NPCC.

'Cause for concern relating to investigations':

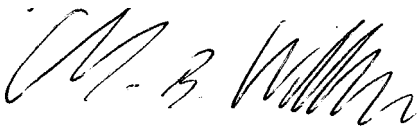
- The Chief Constable has assured me that progress is being made to address the long-standing issue of detective capacity, which has been experienced in forces across the country and is linked to the impact of austerity and in turn deferred recruitment. WYP's Detective Workforce Tasking Group is soon to launch a further campaign to promote the detective career pathway which will initially focus on the force's safeguarding function.
- West Yorkshire Police is committed to improving the quality of investigations, and has commenced a whole systems review of the victim's journey from the initial point of contact through to incident resolution. Each of the force's five district/division Continuous Improvement Teams are working to build capability at the point of initial attendance at the crime scene, so that all evidence is retrieved at the first opportunity, and initial statements are completed to a high quality.
- Responding to the Inspectorate's observations on capacity and capability within WYP's Safeguarding Unit, the force has now commissioned a force-wide Safeguarding Review which will lead to the development of a new training programme for investigation and evidential skills.
- HMICFRS have recently re-assessed this cause for concern and their latest update acknowledges the progress being made.

The narrative of a 'service under strain' is something which has been articulated by Chief Constables, PCCs and indeed HMICFRS themselves across the country since austerity

began to bite in 2012. West Yorkshire Police lost around one fifth of its workforce and in real terms more than 30% of our budget between 2010 and 2016.

In this context, for WYP to have improved its PEEL performance since the last inspection is an achievement which I feel should be better recognised, notwithstanding the continual ambition of the Chief Constable and myself to secure more improvements for the communities of West Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely



Mark Burns-Williamson
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire

CC: John Robins QPM, Chief Constable