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

My Reference: OPCC/MBW/NF

Your Reference:

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Dear Home Secretary

### **HMICFRS – State of Policing 2019**

Can I take this opportunity to thank HMICFRS for their recent publication, the State of Policing 2019.

I have already replied in full regarding the performance of West Yorkshire Police (WYP) during 2018/19 through this year's PEEL inspection report. In this year's report, WYP were awarded 'Good' classifications for their Effectiveness and Legitimacy, and an 'Outstanding' grade for their Efficiency.

The State of Policing report describes a series of issues which reflect the challenges faced by our police services nationwide, namely:

- The degree of demand placed on the police to manage vulnerable and mentally ill people, and the need to define what the police's role should be in these cases,
- The challenge of new recruitment in very high numbers, and the resulting inexperience of new recruits,
- The limitations posed by current funding arrangements,
- The need to modernise police activity by moving away from the 43 force model as the default,
- Poor integration between police services and other public services,
- Creating more potent police collaboration projects, and,
- Improving work to develop the police's future leaders.

These themes will not be unfamiliar to PCCs, indeed, HMICFRS will have championed many of these objectives and challenges in previous State of Policing reports. The lack of substantial progress on some of these topics reflects the complexity of the challenges faced; the longstanding obstacles that hinder greater co-ordination between the police and other public services; and the pressures created through funding cuts for the police and wider public services, particularly over the decade of austerity policies.

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Here in West Yorkshire, I have supported closer integration between the police and allied services through a series of forums that bring leaders together. Our objective is to design more effective and efficient ways of addressing some of the challenges you have identified.

These bodies include our Partnership Executive Group (comprised of representatives from local authority, health, probation, and courts services), the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), and its associated groups, the West Yorkshire Criminal Justice and Mental Health Forum, and the LCJB Victims and Witnesses Group.

Together, we have made an important contribution to encouraging integration between local public services in West Yorkshire, for example by improving our support for those in mental health crisis, developing strategies to reduce reoffending, and co-ordinating our work to recognise and safeguard vulnerable people across our communities. Promoting the opportunities where partners can work together to prevent crime and enhance support for the vulnerable or the victims of crime will remain priorities in my work as PCC in West Yorkshire.

The recruitment of 20,000 more officers nationwide is a reflection of the strain police services have been placed under during the past decade. Although welcome, this new investment in policing does bring with it the challenge of recruiting, training, equipping, and embedding new officers in our police services. Consequently, there will be costs incurred by forces which the initial announcement did not acknowledge. However, this programme of recruitment does provide an opportunity for us to work harder to build police services with workforces that better reflect the diversity of the communities they represent. I have been encouraged to see that in recent recruitment rounds, the proportion of BAME candidates applying to become WYP officers has increased. A Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion 'Gold' Board is driving this work forward within West Yorkshire Police to help achieve our vision of more of BAME applicants progressing to employment in our local police service.

As I write, it is hard to be certain of what new demands our society will face as we adjust to the challenge of Covid-19. Predicting the impact this will have on the police and complementary public services is also difficult, but this 'new normal' is unlikely to see us disregard some of the topics this report covers; the desire to see police services which efficiently collaborate with each other and partner agencies; which fully utilise the benefits of new technologies; which tackle crime at the most effective geographic-scale; and which retain their focus on, and legitimacy within, local communities.

Looking ahead, we can expect a further increase in the complexity of crime, as new internet-based technologies promote the opportunities for global and local offending. Meeting this challenge will call for appropriate resourcing, but the current short-term annual funding model hampers our ability to plan for future demand.

I have called for reform to the police funding formula for many years, and it remains an issue that the Government appears reluctant to address. In the meantime, more and more of the burden of funding our police service has been directed towards Council Tax payers.

I will continue to fight for sustained resources from government to provide West Yorkshire communities with the right level of support over the next Comprehensive Spending Review period. In the meantime, the great question for public services following the most severe

period of Covid lockdown is whether this experience acts as a catalyst to transformational change in the way partners work together, or whether we are pushed toward 'Austerity Mk.2', and a further decade of doing more with less.

Yours sincerely



Mark Burns-Williamson  
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire