

**Roads Policing: Not optional**  
**An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales**

**RESPONSE OF DAVID KEANE, POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR CHESHIRE**

I welcome Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection into Roads Policing, published 15 July 2020, that examined the effectiveness and efficiency of the police service's ability to provide roads policing capability. I note that this is a national thematic report and although Cheshire Constabulary was not one of the seven forces inspected by HMICFRS, I welcome the inspection and subsequent recommendations provided within the report to improve the effectiveness of roads policing. As detailed within the report, in 2018, 1,624 people were killed and a further 23,931 suffered serious, often life-changing, injuries as a result of road traffic collisions in England and Wales. Within Cheshire alone, 46 people sadly lost their lives in road traffic collisions in 2018, more than twice the number in comparison to the previous year.

HMICFRS has rightly identified that the '*number of those killed on the roads had been in steady decline for over 30 years. But in 2013, that trend changed, and began to show a gradual increase.*

*This change coincided with a cut of around 34 percent (or £120m) in the annual amount that police forces spent on roads policing. This has resulted in a drop in the number of dedicated roads policing officers'.* I am aware that the Constabulary provides an annual Home Office return which provides a breakdown of officers in post by function and at 31 March 2018, the number of officers in post under the Roads Policing classification within Cheshire was 99. As of 31 March 2020, the number of officers was 139, a clear indication of the importance and priority of roads policing within Cheshire, despite the ongoing pressures of rising demand and falling resources as a result of ongoing cuts to police funding nationally.

Cheshire Constabulary enables the public to submit dashcam footage via the website should footage capture road traffic offences. In addition, Cheshire Constabulary, in collaboration with Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service and North West Ambulance Service, launched the Fatal 5 campaign in May 2019 that aimed to raise awareness of the five main contributory factors that cause serious road traffic collisions: i) careless driving: ii) drink and drug driving: iii) not wearing a seatbelt: iv) using a mobile phone: and v) speeding. In September 2019, Cheshire Constabulary and Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service released a powerful account of how a fatal collision affects not only the driver and their family, but everyone else subsequently involved. The emotive [video](#) highlighted the devastation collisions cause with emergency services staff explaining how such incidents affect them personally.

I continue to applaud the community policing model adopted in Cheshire and the ongoing activities of dedicated PCSOs in each of the 122 local communities across Cheshire. It is clear that every community within Cheshire has some issue in relation to speeding and, therefore, PCSOs continue to undertake at least one hour per week speed enforcement within local communities throughout Cheshire and also support the existence of community speedwatch initiatives, both of which support my desire to improve the safety of Cheshire's roads through enforcement activity and education as detailed within my Police & Crime Plan. Such enforcement and education within local communities at random times throughout the week supplements the ongoing enforcement undertaken by the Roads & Crime Unit and the four Constabulary speed vans, all of which have recently had improved technology installed to enable speed enforcement in low level light. In addition, I continue to explore the concept of average speed with the Chief Constable, local partners and the Cheshire Road Safety Partnership, with a desire to introduce average speed to A roads across Cheshire as soon as possible.

I agree with the 13 recommendations provided within the report to improve the effectiveness of roads policing. I note that the majority of recommendations are for the Chief Constable to action and I will be requesting that The Constabulary develops an action plan and reports on progress to my scrutiny board in order complete such actions accordingly. It is imperative that roads policing remains a priority for Cheshire Constabulary and I agree with the conclusion of HMICFRS, 'roads policing is not optional'.

