



***PEEL - Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy 2018/19:
An Inspection of Cheshire Constabulary***

PEEL spotlight report: A workforce under pressure

RESPONSE OF DAVID KEANE, POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR CHESHIRE

I welcome Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) PEEL inspection report, published 27 September 2019, which sets out the findings of the inspection of Cheshire Constabulary's effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy 2018/2019. I also welcome the PEEL spotlight report, also published 27 September 2019, that provides an overview of the emerging themes from the second group of 2018/2019 PEEL inspections.

I am pleased that Cheshire Constabulary has, once again, received the grading of 'good' from HMICFRS for the annual assessment of effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy. It is particularly pleasing to read the positive reflections of the Inspectorate regarding policing in Cheshire and that the Constabulary continues to perform well in relation to keeping people safe and reducing crime. In addition, I am pleased the Inspectorate has recognised that the Constabulary is good at protecting vulnerable people, has a better understanding of how to support people with mental health issues and has a good understanding of the nature and scale of vulnerability across Cheshire.

Despite the ongoing financial challenges due to a 37 per cent real-terms cut in central Government funding since 2010, I am delighted Cheshire Constabulary has retained an grading of 'good' in all areas for the third consecutive year. This positive assessment, at a time when both the volume and complexity of crime is increasing, is testament to the hard work and dedication of both officers and staff of Cheshire Constabulary who put themselves in harms way each and every day to keep us safe. This assessment should provide the residents of Cheshire with increased confidence in their local police service.

One of my most important roles as Police & Crime Commissioner is being responsible for holding the Chief Constable to account for maintaining an efficient and effective police service in Cheshire. Whilst I applaud the ongoing leadership of the Chief Constable, I have discussed the assessment with him and in particular, how Cheshire Constabulary continues to improve in order to achieve an outstanding grading in the areas of effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy in the future. I am pleased the Chief Constable shares my ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and I welcome the Chief Constable's assurance that the Constabulary acknowledges the areas for improvement identified in the report and that work is ongoing to enhance the Constabulary's service to the public. Given the significant improvements the Constabulary has previously made in relation to crime recording processes, I am confident the Constabulary will action such areas for improvement accordingly.

It is perhaps unsurprising that the PEEL spotlight report has identified a workforce under pressure. With the demand for policing services increasing, I am concerned that our already thin blue line is now at breaking point. Whilst Cheshire Constabulary has recruited an additional 43 officers and seven PCSOs during the current financial year, these extra officers will only help start to address some of the adverse effects austerity has had on police numbers. Indeed, the spotlight report rightly identifies that an increase in officer numbers will not, on its own, solve the pressures facing policing. The report highlights that forces continue to provide additional wellbeing services in order to protect the workforce. This is something that I intend to continue to drive in Cheshire and I applaud the Constabulary's ongoing commitment to welfare across the organisation.