

Agenda Item: 7

To: Scrutiny and Audit Committee

From: Chief Constable

Date: 9th December 2009

HMIC INSPECTION OF THE POLICING PLEDGE

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the recent HMIC inspection into the delivery of the Policing Pledge by the Constabulary and the action taken since the inspection to improve performance delivery in the area.
- 1.2 In light of the recent HMIC announcement that the Constabulary will be subject to a Pledge re-inspection during January 2010, to inform Members of the current position and work ongoing to improve our Pledge performance in anticipation of the re-inspection.

2. HMIC inspection process and report

- 2.1 The HMIC inspection began in Spring 2009 with the process including amongst the more established HMIC inspection tools, mystery shopping exercises, site visits and e-mailing into the Force to assess the response time.
- 2.2 From this process HMIC produced a document, *HMIC Inspection Findings* released in May 2009.
- 2.3 The Constabulary had the opportunity to challenge any factual errors in this document.
- 2.4 The identified factual errors were as follows:
 - HMIC stated that the Police Service Centre (PSC) was staffed solely by police staff and that it dealt only with Grade C incidents and crime reporting which is not the case as the PSC is staffed by both Police Officers and staff and deals with all non emergency calls for service and not just Grade C calls. (Pledge Point 5).
 - HMIC stated that PSC operators did not check reported crimes against neighbourhood priorities in the same way they do incidents.

The Constabulary noted that calls are not reported as incidents or crimes at the time of receiving the call the decision to record a call as a crime or an incident is taken once the facts have been established by the operator and that part of that process is consideration of the neighbourhood priorities for the given area. (pledge Point 6).

- HMIC stated that Force policy was that public meetings were only held on Wednesdays at 7 p.m this was challenged as being totally incorrect with evidence produced to disprove this statement. (Pledge Point 7).
- HMIC stated that the Constabulary did not have a Victim Care Contract template in place when one had been in place for a number of months. (Pledge Point 9).
- In the areas assessed under 'Action being taken to address deficiencies' it was noted by the Constabulary that HMIC had not recorded the local policing priorities in full, reporting instead truncated versions.
- HMIC reported Covalent as being an operation and not the IT product it actually is.

2.5 From the *HMIC Inspection Findings* HMIC produced their final inspection report, *Delivering the Policing Pledge, Cambridgeshire Constabulary* (Appendix A – summary) released in October 2009.

2.6 In this document HMIC graded the Constabulary as Fair overall and Fair across all ten points of the Pledge and the three additional areas based around the efforts the Constabulary is making to improve performance.

2.7 The Fair grade is defined as being awarded 'where performance is variable and falls short of the required standard. Remedial action is needed'¹

2.8 Of the 43 Forces inspected 33 received a Fair grade, eight received Good and two received a Poor.

¹ HMIC, Oct 2009, *Delivering the Policing Pledge, Cambridgeshire Constabulary*, p.2

2.9 The only factual error found in the final report was in relation to public meetings at Pledge Point 7 (2.4) which was not to say that there was concern around the grading given in some areas. It could be argued that in Pledge Point 5 we should have received a grading of Good as we meet the targets set and we are rated as best for ease of contact amongst our most similar forces (MSF). Substantial, robust dialogue has taken place between the Constabulary and the HMIC, however, the Constabulary has taken the stance of moving on and focusing on improving our performance rather than engaging in a further debate around a document that has already been published and released into the public arena.

3. Action taken post inspection

3.1 The *HMIC Inspection Findings* found that the Constabulary's Policing Pledge Action Plan held on Covalent was 'a comprehensive list of activity but is not a robust delivery/action/improvement plan'²

3.2 The Constabulary's Citizen Focus team undertook a review of the all Pledge action plans. This review, reported to the Strategic Citizen Focus Group chaired by the Chief Constable, found that the mixture of Pledge action planning processes was undermining the delivery of the Pledge.

3.3 As a consequence of the above a single Pledge Action Plan has now replaced all other Pledge action plans; this plan is set at a strategic level and seeks to ensure robust delivery/action/ improvements across the Pledge points.

3.4 The key action held within the single Pledge action plan is the production of a 'Manual of Standards' for the Policing Pledge. This document when complete will offer a clear signpost for Officers as to where the relevant standards are to be found across all ten points of the Pledge. It will service not just the needs of HMIC but will present a practical and usable publication that will enable Officers to recognise and deliver service to the required standard.

3.5 The decision to move toward a Manual of Standards was taken after debate and discussion between the Citizen Focus, Strategic Development and Corporate Performance teams in light of the HMIC inspection result.

3.6 The scoping exercise for the Manual of Standards is underway and has already identified numerous workstreams across a wide range of departments. Engagement with those responsible individuals is also underway and a comprehensive plan is being developed to include robust milestones to ensure the timely delivery of this fundamental publication.

² HMIC, May 2009, *HMIC Inspection Findings, Cambridgeshire Constabulary*, p. 22

- 3.7 It is expected that the Manual of Standards will be in first draft early in the New Year with a final iteration ready for publication before the end of the financial year.
- 3.8 Over and above the Manual of Standards work the Action Plan is focusing on the procedures and practices that will make a real difference to performance and Pledge delivery, thus work around marketing the Pledge is well advanced with a 20 week campaign ongoing. Safer Communities are developing the Estimated Time of Arrival area, whilst bespoke work on 'Enquiry Office' business has been allocated to a Chief Inspector.
- 3.9 The forum to drive forward Pledge delivery is the Pledge Working Group. This meeting has expanded from the initial strategic level discussions to a delivery focused group with representation at a level which will ensure delivery and action. This group now meets weekly on Fridays as a consequence of the desire to drive forward Pledge delivery at a rate that reflects the importance of the work and with an eye to the upcoming HMIC Pledge re-inspection due January 2010.

4. Summary

- 4.1 The 'Fair' grade received by the Constabulary must take into account the time of inspection relevant to the initiation of the Policing Pledge, Cambridgeshire were subject to one of the early inspections and as such had not at the time made as much progress as those Constabularies who benefited from a later inspection.
- 4.2 Whilst the single Policing Pledge Action Plan seeks to ensure corporacy and grip the development of Pledge delivery it should be noted that all BCUs and departments have understood the importance of the Pledge and have taken and are taking action to meet its requirements as can be evidenced by the recent improvements in satisfaction performance.
- 4.3 That the culture of the Constabulary is capable of delivering the Pledge can be evidenced from the recent NPIA Hallmark inspection which reported, 'generally high morale ... staff generally felt very engaged in the change process'³. This is as a direct result of the massive culture change programme conducted within the organisation over the past eighteen months. This has been underpinned by the investment into and introduction of the Putting People First programme supported by the recent SUMO initiative.

³ NPIA, 2009, *Citizen Focus Hallmarks, Abstracted Report- Hallmark 1*, p.15, para2

These training programmes have been focussed on improving service delivery to the citizens of Cambridgeshire which, along with other initiatives such as the appointments system, and targeted support for vulnerable neighbourhoods, victims and witnesses via the 'victim care contract' have begun to impact on satisfaction rates. The recently introduced Telephone Research Bureau has shown early indication that confidence levels are improving as outlined in the report submitted to the Citizen Focus Panel (7.12.09).

- 4.4 It is expected that the delivery of the Manual of Standards for the Policing Pledge will place the Constabulary in a solid position for the future and will give our staff clear and unambiguous guidance and direction for Pledge delivery. This coupled with the Pledge Performance Framework and the bespoke template and scorecard used for performance monitoring the Pledge will ensure robust delivery.
- 4.5 The HMIC re-inspection should be seen as an opportunity to showcase the Constabulary's work and ambition in the area of confidence and whilst it sets some challenges it is expected that the process will result in an improved position for the Constabulary with regards to Pledge delivery.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 The Committee is recommended to note the details of this report and await a further update in the spring of 2010.

