

Sir Thomas P Winsor – Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary
Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary
6th Floor Globe House
89 Eccleston Square
London SW1V 1PN

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP - Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

31 May 2017

Dear Home Secretary and Sir Thomas,

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) Inspection Report – Child Protection

I am writing to you with my comments on the HMIC report entitled ‘National Child Protection Inspections – Humberside Police 14-25 November 2016’, as required by Section 37 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

I would like to start by saying that as the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Humberside Police area I welcome the latest inspection report although the actual inspection was carried out over six months ago. The protection of children is one of the most basic requirements of policing, although it is a hugely complex issue to address. Whilst the stated desire to do this has been evident within Humberside Police, the systems supporting the dedicated staff working extremely hard to provide this service have not been as resilient or effective as the public have a right to expect and this poses questions about the strategic leadership within the Force. I took the findings of HMIC, as expressed within this report, very seriously and cross-referenced them with other inspection reports that also raised concerns about the effectiveness and efficiency of Humberside Police. These reports, taken together with my own analysis of the problems within the Force, were a significant factor in my asking the Chief Constable Justine Curran to consider her position as Chief Constable, in February 2017, and her subsequent decision to take early retirement.

I have discussed the key findings of the report with the Temporary Chief Constable and the urgency around a number of the recommendations made by HMIC. The T/Chief Constable stated that *“the Force accepts the findings from the HMIC inspection of Child Protection and welcomes the fact that the inspection team found that senior leaders were committed to improving outcomes for children and that some progress has been made. The Force acknowledges that more needs to be done to improve the safeguarding of children and is committed to making the required improvements. A comprehensive action plan has been formulated which includes each of the 19 recommendations from the report. The action plan is regularly reviewed and updated via the Vulnerability Board, with oversight from an ACC and the wider Chief Officer team. The Force is confident that improvements have already been made in some key areas and that all issues will be addressed within the timescales specified by HMIC.”*



The T/Chief Constable has kept me informed at all stages of development of a comprehensive Action Plan covering all nineteen recommendations from the report, prioritised against the activity required. The plan clearly outlines the due dates for each action and provides a realistic understanding of the current position. Monitoring of progress will, as the T/Chief Constable states, be undertaken by a Vulnerability Board, attended by staff from my office. I will also be receiving regular reports from the Chief Constable on progress. I am therefore persuaded the Force is now properly addressing these concerns, that improvements have already been made and that a significantly better service is not only possible but being developed day by day.

Accepting the above, it is important to recognise that the story beneath the headlines is the key to sustainable improvement leading to a brighter future for the Force and an enhanced service for the people of the Humber area. There has been some good work locally by many officers within the Force, in particular within the area of public protection, and that effort has not gone unnoticed and is appreciated. The theme running through previous HMIC reports however, and continued to an extent in this one, is that more fundamental issues have been at the core of the problems highlighted. In my view these stem from poor strategic planning and implementation and remain capable of deflecting the Force from its goal of focussed and steady improvement. This must be addressed and is a key theme of my Police and Crime Plan. This will, therefore, be a priority for the new Chief Constable and I will ensure a proper focus on achieving significant improvement in that area.

I will post this response onto my web-site for public access.

Yours sincerely



Keith Hunter
Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside

cc:

Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP
Vera Baird QC, Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners
Lee Freeman, Temporary Chief Constable, Humberside Police
Michael Cunningham QPM, HM Inspector of Constabulary, Northern Region
Councillor Evison, Chair of the Humberside Police and Crime Panel

