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| Audit | Volume Crime Investigations |
| Assurance Opinion | Limited Assurance |
| Overall Risk | High Risk |

Introduction

As part of the HMICFRS PEEL: Police Effectiveness Inspection 2017, Humberside Police had been graded as requiring improvement in how it keeps people safe and reduces crime. This was the same conclusion as the previous inspection which also judged the force to require improvement.

As a result of these comments the DCC commissioned Internal Audit to provide assurance regarding progress against improvement actions, particularly in relation to vulnerability and the investigation of volume crime. The audit was scoped into two specific areas with the vulnerability aspect covered and reported earlier in 2018. There were a number of significant actions ongoing in relation to the improvement and robustness of allocation, investigation and supervision of crimes and it was agreed that the volume crime aspect of the audit would be completed in Spring/Summer of 2018, by which time some of the agreed actions in respect of volume crime would have been delivered and there should be evident improvement in this area.

Main Findings

Improving Investigations and Offender Management Working Group (IIOM)

An Improving Investigations and Offender Management Working Group was developed, originally chaired by the Chief Constable, now chaired by a D/CS meets bi-monthly and is designed to identify and implement improvement actions across investigations and offender management, particularly addressing the weaknesses raised during the HMICFRS inspections. The working group has developed an action plan incorporating the ongoing improvement actions across IIOM. Though comprehensive, the action plan did not benefit from clarity regarding the priority of agreed actions, any recognition of interdependencies of other ongoing or agreed actions or any escalation processes where actions were not or could not be implemented or where necessary improvements were not being achieved.

Internal Improvement Assurance Processes

There is significant activity across the force intended to provide assurance regarding the effectiveness of the implementation of improvement actions and changing processes. These include but are not limited to extensive monthly Inspector dip-sampling as well as periodic thematic reviews undertaken by the Force's own internal review team. The auditor was provided with the results of Inspector dip-sampling undertaken since April 2018 as well as copies of the reports in relation to two thematic audits undertaken by the internal review team, Violent Crime and Domestic Violence, both reported in June 2018. Whilst the outputs from the Inspector dip-sampling and the review team provide some assurance regarding the progress being made in relation to volume crime investigations, the auditor has included a number of recommendations in relation to the presentation of the findings of their work which will add value to how the force can recognise and share pockets of best practice as well as identify and focus on specific areas of concern.

Internal Audit testing

As a result of the significant activity already ongoing within force, it was agreed that the internal audit testing would adopt a reality check approach and focus particularly on qualitative aspects and context not necessarily reflected in other assurance outputs. The auditor was assisted by two Regional Officers, who provided both expertise from a safeguarding and vulnerability point of view as well as more general investigation good practice.

Overall, there was some evidence of good quality, timely and well supervised investigations, with appropriate victim contact and communication, however, the better examples tended to relate to apparently less complex, standard investigations such as shoplifting. In the majority of cases where there were apparent weaknesses such as delay or lack of investigation plan, lack of effective supervision and/or poor victim contact, these failures occurred in cases which involved vulnerable victims and/or witnesses.

Outcome 16

The force continues to be an outlier in the use of Outcome 16 which is defined as 'Named suspect identified – Evidential difficulties prevent further action, victim does not support (or has withdrawn support from) police action. The Force Crime Register who completes regular reviews to ensure that outcomes are correctly classified according to the circumstances of the case. The findings of his most recent audit, reported in February 2018 concluded that 90.2% were satisfactorily disposed of as Outcome 16. He has suggested that the force consider if: Outcome 16 is being used as an explanation for poor victim contact or that cases are being finalised early as Outcome 16 as a result of HP inactivity rather than the victim truly withdrawing support. The findings from the internal assurance work as well as the internal audit findings suggest that further work needs to be undertaken to

provide assurance that the force is effective at working with victims and supporting them through investigations and the judicial process.

Use of technology

The auditor was provided with a comprehensive update and position statement by the Humberside Digital Lead. This update supported progress noted within the IOM Action Plan.

Recommendations and Management Action

Nine recommendations were made, eight of which were significant, including:

- Regular dip-sampling should continue, with reports provided to the D/Supt to demonstrate relevant and timely improvement. Where relevant, findings should be presented with context, identifying pockets of best practice and/or particular areas of concern (for example, geographical area, crime type, victim type etc).
- Where relevant, the dip-sampling results should be supported by a summary identifying what remedial action is being implemented locally to improve the quality and timeliness of investigations.
- There should be an agreed escalation process/senior management intervention where agreed improvement levels are not being achieved.
- The internal review team might consider opportunities to develop the reporting and presentation of their findings including, agreed TOR/scope, findings to be presented with context, inclusion of overall opinion or direction of travel, inclusion of formal agreed action plan with agreed action owners and implementation date, agreed escalation process where serious matters of concern or lack of progress is identified
- Consideration of the process for allocation and investigation to ensure the process is timely, appropriately triaged and ongoing THRIVE assessment and that vulnerabilities are appropriately considered throughout the course of any subsequent investigation.
- Continuous improvement actions to include: evidence of effective and timely supervision including consideration of the effectiveness of the current 28 day review period, completion of quality, effective and timely investigation plans and evidencing appropriate victim contact (including use of relevant tab in CONNECT).
- The force should continue to identify and address the reasons for being an outlier in the use of Outcome 16
- The force should have effective processes in place to ensure that the implementation of technological capabilities are having the desired impact and that efficiencies and effectiveness is being achieved.

Internal Audit is satisfied that the force has accepted and agreed the recommendations as outlined above and the agreed management actions, when implemented, will improve assurance in respect of the effectiveness of volume crime investigations.