

Our Ref: ID: HMIC/SP

21 August 2013

The Rt. Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DP

Dear Home Secretary

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I write with regard to the above recent inspection and published reports. I would firstly like to thank the inspection team for the support shown throughout this process and for the balanced advice given.

It is reassuring to note the recognition given to the size of the challenge faced by South Yorkshire Police in particular, and especially the impact of the additional funding gap we face. I accept the observation that the force has not yet embraced the level of change or achieved the savings seen in many other forces, though I would emphasise that they have successfully delivered the target savings in each of the first two years of this CSR and are on target to achieve the remaining savings. The challenge for South Yorkshire Police is around meeting the additional funding gap, while maintaining their strong record of performance and keeping the people of South Yorkshire safe.

I also acknowledge the concerns raised regarding the balance of police officer and police staff numbers, a concern and which I share which has been the focus of attention for the Force Diamond Change Management Team since the start of the CSR period. Over the last two years, I have sought to protect the frontline and in particular, this year I have sort to maintain police officer and PCSO numbers in line with my manifesto commitments. This strategy has enabled the force to maintain performance and increase confidence levels while they have focussed attention on redesigning and reducing support functions. I recognise that this means they are not currently projecting the level of reductions seen elsewhere in terms of police officer and PCSO numbers, though their strategy is one of flexible responsiveness and this is something we will be considering in more detail as we move to the next phase of the CSR.

In adopting this flexible, threat and risk based, responsive strategy, South Yorkshire Police have been able to adapt their approach in response to evolving challenges.

For example, having digested the contents of both the national and the South Yorkshire specific HMIC reports, they have already developed a detailed action plan that seeks to incorporate the independent advice and observations into the Diamond programme. Having reviewed the support functions across the force, the Diamond Programme has more recently focussed attention on the Protective Services portfolio, which it is anticipated will deliver considerable savings in terms of both police officer and police staff numbers. They have now reached the point where the force is able to consider the most fundamental area of service delivery, local policing. The Local Policing Review has recently been commissioned and as part of its terms of reference will consider many of the issues raised within the HMIC reports.

As we move into the latter stage of this CSR period, the Chief Constable has requested that the Greater Manchester Police conduct a peer review of the Diamond Programme so that we can be sure the methodology is of sufficient rigor to meet the remaining challenge. Having streamlined all areas of the force as part of a Systems Thinking approach, I am conscious that we now need to give consideration to alternative options for delivering transformational change. I acknowledge, for example, that the scale of the funding gap may now require the force to return to less palatable savings options that were previously discounted, or indeed to adopt a different Operating Model. In addition, as part of recent discussions with the other Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioner's within the Yorkshire and the Humber Region, we have now decided to move to a Lead Force delivery model for specialist functions, as part of our continued commitment to collaboration.

Finally, I welcome the recognition you have given to the scale of our challenge and the higher demand experienced in South Yorkshire in terms of victim-based crime. Regrettably, the force also faces the additional financial challenges and special circumstances posed by Hillsborough which present a considerable cost implication for the force over the next few years. Unless these significant costs are supported by the Home Office, it is likely the impact on the public of South Yorkshire will be even more severe than that already highlighted in this report. We would therefore seek your support in accessing funds that will enable the force to meet these costs, so that we can continue to focus our energy on addressing the considerable financial challenge of the CSR.

I look forward to discussing this in more detail with you when you return for our re-inspection later in the year, at which point the Chief Constable will also be able to share with you the progress he has made in relation to your wider concerns. My focus, together with the Chief Constable, is currently on addressing the remaining funding gap as part of delivering transformational change and improving service delivery and I welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you when you visit.

Yours sincerely



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Police and Crime Commissioner

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