

Central Bedfordshire  
Council  
Priory House  
Monks Walk  
Chicksands,  
Shefford SG17 5TQ

**This meeting  
may be filmed.\***



**Central  
Bedfordshire**

**please ask for** Rebecca Preen

**direct line** 0300 300 4193

**date** 22 June 2017

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

### **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date & Time

**Wednesday, 5 July 2017 10.00 a.m.**

Venue at

**Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford**

Richard Carr  
**Chief Executive**

To: The Chairman and Members of the SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

Cllrs D McVicar (Chairman), B Saunders (Vice-Chairman), D Bowater, P Downing, Ms A M W Graham, J Kane, Cllr M Liddiard, K C Matthews and R Morris

[Named Substitutes:

Mrs A Barker, C C Gomm, P Hollick, R W Johnstone, I Shingler and N Warren]

All other Members of the Council - on request

**MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS  
MEETING**

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# AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence and notification of substitute members.

2. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members any declarations of interest and of any political whip in relation to any agenda item.

3. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

To receive any announcements from the Chairman and any matters of communication.

4. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 May 2017 and to note actions taken since that meeting.

5. **Petitions**

To receive petitions from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 2 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

6. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

To receive any questions, statements or deputations from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of part A4 of the Constitution.

7. **Call-In**

To consider any decision of the Executive referred to this Committee for review in accordance with Procedure Rule 10.10 of Part D2.

8. **Requested Items**

To consider any items referred to the Committee at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

<b>REPORTS</b>
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<b>Item</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page Nos.</b>
9	<b>Executive Members Updates</b>	* Verbal
10	<b>Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) PEEL Report</b>	* 9 - 32

To receive a brief verbal update from the Executive Member for Community Services and the Executive Member for Regeneration.

To discuss with the Police and Crime Commissioner and senior police officers the findings of a recent HMIC PEEL report, the support of vulnerable children, a recent rise in gang related culture in Central Bedfordshire and any other areas of concern.

Attached are background papers which comprise an overview and summary of the Inspector's report and the Minutes from a Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 19 April 2017 at which the HMIC report was discussed, with input provided from the Inspector of Constabulary.

Below can be found the link to the full report:-

<http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/peel-police-effectiveness-2016-bedfordshire/>

**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Committee Room 2, the Council Offices, High Street North, Dunstable on Thursday, 25 May 2017.

**PRESENT**

Cllr D McVicar (Chairman)  
Cllr B Saunders (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs D Bowater  
P Downing  
Ms A M W Graham  
J Kane

Cllrs Cllr M Liddiard  
K C Matthews  
R Morris

Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	A D Brown	Deputy Executive Member for Regeneration
		I Dalgarno	Executive Member for Community Services
		G Perham	
		Mrs T Stock	Deputy Executive Member for Health
		B Wells	Deputy Executive Member for Community Services
		J N Young	Executive Member for Regeneration

Officers in Attendance:	Ms A Bishop	– Senior Engineer
	Mr M Coiffait	– Director of Community Services
	Ms S Holder	– Building Control Team Leader
	Mrs J Jones	– Project Manager
	Mrs R Preen	– Scrutiny Policy Adviser

Public 0

**SCOSC/17/1 Members' Interests**

None.

**SCOSC/17/2 Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman announced that there would be a minute's silence held at 11am in memory of the victims of the Manchester Arena bombing and that the Committee would be scrutinising the recent Bedfordshire Police PEEL HMIC (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary) report at a special meeting on 5 July 2017.

SCOSC/17/3 **Minutes**

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 March 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

SCOSC/17/4 **Petitions**

None.

SCOSC/17/5 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None.

SCOSC/17/6 **Call-In**

None.

SCOSC/17/7 **Requested Items**

None.

SCOSC/17/8 **Executive Members Updates**

The Executive Member for Community Services provided details with regards to the closure and refurbishment of Dunstable Leisure Centre, the recent upgrade to leisure facilities in Houghton Regis. It was also confirmed that the Library strategy would be added to the committee work programme later in the year.

The Executive Member for Regeneration advised that the backlog of work in relation to HGV signage across the region was being addressed and that the Committee would receive an update in relation to a directorate restructure in due course. Measures were being considered to strengthen the Planning Enforcement service and the Committee would again be asked to assess any proposals.

The Deputy Executive Member for Community Services provided an update with regards to the opening of the Thorn Turn depot which would be completed on 10 July 2017 with the official opening in September. The directorate were considering the introduction of a commercial cost element to be included at some Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC's) confirming that there was no correlation between offering a commercial service and fly tipping, with separate plans in place to address this issue.

SCOSC/17/9 **Highways Asset Management Plan**

The Team Leader for Highways Business Support delivered a report which set out changes to central government funding of the highways network and the need for the Council to demonstrate compliance in order to secure 'Band 3' grading which would enable the bid for additional funds.

In light of the report Members discussed concerns regarding customer responsiveness, to which it was confirmed that measures were being taken to improve the service delivered.

Members expressed frustration at the lack of a mobile application to log defects and potholes and that tracking a reported complaint was very difficult.

**RECOMMENDED:-**

1. That the Highways Service utilises the principles set out in the Draft Highways Asset Management Policy to develop a Highways Asset Management Strategy, Communications Strategy, undertake a Service Review and develop any other supporting documents relevant to the Incentive Fund Bid.
2. That the Executive adopts the updated Network Maintenance Management Plan and approves the Resilient Network for public consultation.
3. That the Council, as Highways Authority, adopts Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that are situated within the highway boundary and which only receive highway run off and agrees the criteria as set out in Appendix B.
4. That a review of the contractor, Ringway Jacobs be included within the Committee Work Programme.

**SCOSC/17/10 Review of the 2011 Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA)**

The Executive Member for Community Services delivered a report which set out a refresh to the 2011 Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA), explaining the screening exercise which involved collecting information on historic and potential future floods in order to identify areas with an increased risk of flooding and to manage and mitigate the associated risks.

In light of the report Members discussed the following in summary:-

- The national policy implications at a local level and how each area was categorised.
- That additional funds be made available to map and clear gullies.
- That the Council had a coordinating role in order to identify those responsible for drainage systems.
- The importance of considering climate change and sharing data with strategic partners.

**RECOMMENDED that the Executive support the 2017 review and submit the report to the Environment Agency by the statutory deadline of 22 June 2017.**

**SCOSC/17/11 Work Programme 2017/18 and Executive Forward Plan**

**RECOMMENDED that the Committee Work Programme be agreed subject to the following amendments:-**

- **HMIC PEEL (Police) Report – 5 July 2017**

- **Partnership Working with Anglian Water to include Flood Risk Management and Drainage Maintenance – 14 September 2017**
- **Review of Highways Contract Performance – 14 September 2014**
- **Library Strategy – TBC**

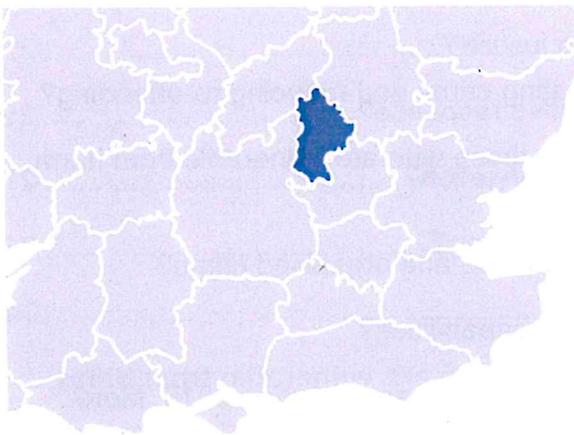
(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.10 a.m.)



Promoting improvements  
in policing to make  
everyone safer

# PEEL: Police effectiveness 2016

An inspection of Bedfordshire Police



March 2017

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[www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic)

## Introduction

As part of our annual inspections of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) assesses the effectiveness of police forces across England and Wales.

### **What is police effectiveness and why is it important?**

An effective police force is one which keeps people safe and reduces crime. These are the most important responsibilities for a police force, and the principal measures by which the public judge the performance of their force and policing as a whole.

To reach a judgment on the extent of each force's effectiveness, our inspection answered the following overall question:

- How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

To answer this question HMIC explores five 'core' questions, which reflect those areas of policing that we consider to be of particular interest and concern to the public:<sup>1</sup>

1. How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?
2. How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?
3. How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?
4. How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?
5. How effective are the force's specialist capabilities?

HMIC's effectiveness inspection assessed all of these areas during 2016. More information on how we inspect and grade forces as part of this wide-ranging inspection is available on the HMIC website ([www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/)). This report sets out our findings for Bedfordshire Police.

Reports on the force's efficiency, legitimacy and leadership inspections are available on the HMIC website ([www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016/bedfordshire/](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016/bedfordshire/)).

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<sup>1</sup> HMIC assessed forces against these questions between September and December 2016, except for Kent Police – our pilot force – which we inspected in June 2016.

## Force in numbers



### Calls for assistance

Calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016

Bedfordshire Police

England and Wales

**197**

**240**



### Crime (excluding fraud)

Crimes recorded per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016

Bedfordshire Police

England and Wales

**62**

**68**

Change in recorded crime 12 months to 30 June 2015 against 12 months to 30 June 2016

Bedfordshire Police

England and Wales

**+3.0%**

**+7.8%**

Change in recorded crime for the 5 years to the 12 months to 30 June 2016

Bedfordshire Police

England and Wales

**-6.3%**

**-3.4%**



### Crime outcomes\*

Charged/summonsed

Bedfordshire Police

England and Wales

**11.0%**

**12.1%**

Evidential difficulties: suspect identified but victim does not support action

Bedfordshire Police

England and Wales

**10.7%**

**10.6%**

Investigation completed but no suspect identified

Bedfordshire Police

England and Wales

**48.1%**

**47.4%**

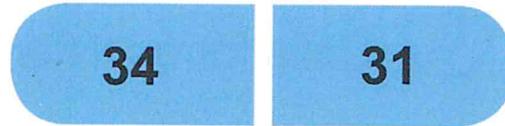
\*Figures are shown as proportions of outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016.



## Anti-social behaviour

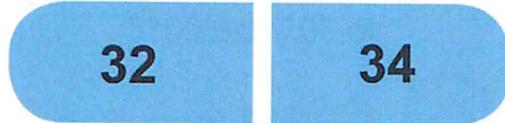
Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

Bedfordshire Police      England and Wales



Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

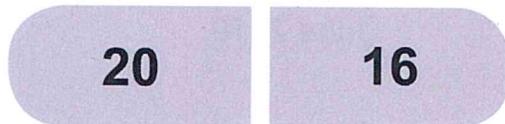
Bedfordshire Police      England and Wales



## Domestic abuse

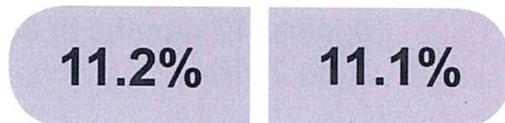
Domestic abuse calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016

Bedfordshire Police      England and Wales



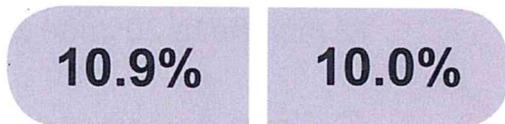
Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2016

Bedfordshire Police      England and Wales



Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2015

Bedfordshire Police      England and Wales



## Organised crime groups

Organised crime groups per million population as at 1 July 2016

Bedfordshire Police      England and Wales



## Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction with the overall service provided by the police 12 months to 30 June 2016

Bedfordshire Police      England and Wales



For further information about the data in this graphic please see annex A

## Overview – How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

### Overall judgment<sup>2</sup>



Bedfordshire Police is inadequate in respect of its effectiveness at keeping people safe and reducing crime. The way the force prevents crime, tackles anti-social behaviour, keeps people safe and protects vulnerable people,<sup>3</sup> is inadequate. The force’s initial investigation of crime and how it tackles serious and organised crime need to improve. Our overall judgment is a deterioration on last year, when we judged the force to require improvement.

### Overall summary

How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?		<b>Inadequate</b>
How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?		<b>Requires improvement</b>
How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?		<b>Inadequate</b>
How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?		<b>Requires improvement</b>
How effective are the force’s specialist capabilities?	<b>Ungraded</b>	

Overall, Bedfordshire Police’s effectiveness at keeping people safe and reducing crime is inadequate.

<sup>2</sup> HMIC judgments are outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate.

<sup>3</sup> A vulnerable person is someone who needs special care, support or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.

Bedfordshire Police's effectiveness at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe is inadequate. The force introduced a new policing model in 2015, which aimed to improve crime prevention and problem-solving activities through new community teams. However, HMIC found that, beyond isolated pockets of good practice, such as the established community cohesion team, the force still does not have enough police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) to provide effective community engagement and visible targeted foot patrols across the county, or to work consistently with partner organisations (such as local authorities, or health and education services). As a result, the force cannot take the early intervention activity necessary to help prevent crime and anti-social behaviour happening in the first place.

The context within which the force operates is particularly difficult. Bedfordshire Police faces a more acute financial challenge than most other forces and in Luton the complexity and high volume of crime represent a significant operational challenge for a small force with very stretched resources. The overall inadequate grading should not be seen as a reflection on the commitment and hard work of the police officers and staff in Bedfordshire Police who, day to day, are doing their best, with very limited resources, and often under extreme pressure, to keep the public safe. However, once again HMIC has found that in rightly focusing resources to protect its most vulnerable members of the community, the force has exposed its inability to maintain a preventative policing presence across Bedfordshire. However understandable the reasons for this might be, the consequence is that the people of Bedfordshire are not being well served by their police force. The force does not plan to resource its community teams fully until August 2018, three years after they were initially planned. This is unacceptable.

The force has centralised its intelligence teams to provide more focus on vulnerable people, guns and gangs, serious acquisitive crime, and communities, and has devised a plan to address intelligence gaps, but it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of this work. The force needs to review how it records anti-social behaviour so that it has accurate information on which to base a problem-solving approach. Although the force has improved the way it shares knowledge of 'what works' among its workforce, it does not yet routinely record and assess local initiatives and needs to do more to evaluate tactics and share effective practice.

The force lacks a full understanding of the communities it serves, although it is now recruiting more officers to increase engagement with local people. The force is involved in some good work with partner organisations to protect communities, but this needs to be consistent across the force area.

Bedfordshire Police's effectiveness at investigating crime and reducing re-offending requires improvement. The quality of initial investigations needs to improve, as well as of subsequent investigations in cases of stalking and harassment. This is partly

due to the high proportion of new recruits in the force and the lack of sufficient supervisors to provide the support they need.

A significant backlog remains in the forensic examination of digital devices, which means there are unacceptable delays in investigating crime and supporting victims. This was due in part because a number of staff were needed to support a national project. However, the force does ensure that high-risk cases, such as those involving vulnerable children and adults, are prioritised.

The force is good at protecting the public from the most prolific, serious and dangerous offenders. It has a robust and effective system for actively managing and reviewing outstanding suspects, those not yet apprehended, prioritising those who pose the greatest risk. A well-managed integrated offender management scheme now includes a focus on offenders who cause the most harm. We found good work in place to tackle serious youth violence, to reduce re-offending and to divert young people from first-time offending.

Bedfordshire Police's effectiveness at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm and supporting victims is also inadequate. In particular, HMIC continues to have serious concerns about the force's overall response to missing children and young people, not just the force control room response. The process of assessing calls about missing children is poor, and the review of the initial risk assessment determining whether the case requires a 'missing' or 'absent' police response is inconsistent. In addition the force has poor intelligence on those children who repeatedly go missing from care homes, which makes the difficulties in locating them when they go missing, and the time spent doing so, even worse. Some of the most vulnerable children and young people are being left at risk of severe harm as a result of systemic failings in this important area of policing.

The force has made progress in its understanding of vulnerability in its local areas, but gaps remain. It is improving its ability to identify vulnerable people at the first point of contact, people who are vulnerable through their age, disability, or because they have been subjected to repeated offences, or are at high risk of abuse, for example.

On a much more positive note, the force recognises that it is important to respond quickly to victims of domestic abuse and it has a mandatory attendance policy. This means that all domestic abuse incidents will receive an immediate attendance from an officer. The force has worked very hard to improve services and support for victims of domestic abuse and there are some important structural changes that have been put in place over the last year that HMIC would expect, over time, to lead to tangible improvements in the service the force provides to victims of domestic abuse. However, the arrest rate at domestic abuse incidents has fallen by 13 percent, despite an increase in cases identified as domestic abuse. The force also

needs to understand why fewer victims support police action than in many other force areas.

Bedfordshire Police requires improvement in its effectiveness at identifying and tackling serious and organised crime. The force does not yet have a clear understanding of the threat and risk across Bedfordshire and it is therefore poorly placed to tackle it effectively. It has identified a very low number of organised crime groups, and HMIC is concerned that it is not identifying and mapping all groups that are active in the force area. With insufficient resources in community policing, early identification of organised crime groups is less likely.

We found examples of the force working effectively with partner organisations to disrupt organised crime groups. The force is doing good work with schools, communities and families to prevent young people from being drawn into organised crime. However, its approach to managing serious and organised criminals is limited; it does not currently have a clearly defined approach to managing offenders to minimise the risk they pose to local communities.

Bedfordshire Police has the necessary arrangements to ensure that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities. The force is well prepared to respond to an attack requiring an armed response and is part of a strategic alliance with other forces, which regularly conducts terrorist firearms exercises.

In summary, Bedfordshire Police faces significant challenges because it has low levels of funding compared with other forces, but unusually high levels of serious threats and criminality that are not normally dealt with by a force of its size. The force has had to change its plans over the last year to address risk in the area of vulnerability and has therefore lost its promised focus on crime prevention. However, the force acknowledges the problems that exist and is determined to improve. HMIC is hopeful that the commitment of the new police and crime commissioner to a focus on community policing and crime prevention, and the determination of chief officers and the continued hard work of frontline officers and staff to make improvements, will lead to the changes needed.

19 April 2017

**AT A MEETING**

of the

**BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

held at the offices of Luton Borough Council, Council Chamber, Town Hall, George St, Luton  
on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of April 2017 at 6.30 pm

**PRESENT**

Councillor Chapman, Central Bedfordshire Council (Chair)

**Bedford Borough Council**

Councillors Charles and Foster

**Central Bedfordshire Council**

Councillor Dodwell, Downing and Hollick

**Luton Borough Council**

Councillors Agleby, Farooq and Saleem

**Independent Members**

Messrs Cain and Warburton

Ms Z Billingham, Force Inspector, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabularies (HMIC) and Ms L McCarthy, HMIC Force Liaison Officer attended only for part of Minute Item 58 during which time they addressed the Panel and provided responses to questions from the Panel.

19 April 2017

Ms K Holloway, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Bedfordshire, Mr M Cooper, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Mr J Boucher, Chief Constable (CC), Bedfordshire Police Force attended for Minute Items 58 and 59 only.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Holland (Bedford Borough Council)

**55. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE CONSTITUENT COUNCILS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no questions.

**56. MINUTES**

The PCC commented that in Minute Item 53, the wording “50% fewer Section 20 referrals” should read “50% fewer Section 136 referrals”.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 6 February 2017 be confirmed subject to replacement of the wording “Section 20” with “Section 136” in Minute Item 53.

**57. DISCLOSURE OF LOCAL AND/OR DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

<b>Member Disclosing an Interest</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>	<b>Present or Absent During Discussion of Item</b>
Councillor Farooq	Local – his niece is a Bedfordshire Police Officer	Present

**58. HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY (HMIC) INSPECTION**

**Background**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) had recently carried out an Inspection and published a PEEL Report on the Effectiveness of the Bedfordshire Police Force. The Report had rated the Force 'Inadequate overall' and Bedfordshire was the only Force in the Country to receive that rating.

Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) Ms Zoe Billingham and HMIC Force Liaison Officer Linda McCarthy had been invited to attend the PCP meeting to formally present the Report and to answer questions from the Panel on it. The Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable of Bedfordshire were also present to respond to questions from the Panel.

Some questions had been submitted in advance by members of the Panel and then forwarded to the Inspector and the Commissioner as appropriate prior to the meeting.

**Questions to the Inspector of Her Majesty's Constabularies**

**Introduction**

HMI Ms Billingham began by explaining that she had been the Inspector of the Bedfordshire Force for over 7 years. She was also responsible for 15 other Forces. Her colleague Ms McCarthy was the Force Liaison Officer for Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire and would therefore be able to comment on collaboration between these three Forces.

Ms Billingham explained that the aim of HMIC was to build strong enduring relationships and to work together with each Force with the common aim of improving the Policing service to the public. The Inspection process usually involved an inspection in the Spring to assess Legitimacy and Efficiency and a further inspection in the Autumn to assess the overall operational Effectiveness of the Force.

The Inspections covered all areas of operation from neighbourhood policing through to serious crime and potential terrorist attacks. Each inspection lasted a week, involving ten Inspectors and resulted in an Assessment Report.

## History of Inspections since 2011

The Panel asked the Inspector what confidence she had that the Bedfordshire Force was now on the right track to achieve a better rating once the measures which were already in progress came to fruition and, in particular, what the HMIC needed to see from Bedfordshire Police to demonstrate that it was improving.

Ms Billingham responded that she had no doubt as to the commitment and dedication of the PCC and Chief Constable (CC) but she could not say with confidence that the public of Bedfordshire were being well served by the Force.

She explained that she had been carrying out Inspections of the Bedfordshire Force for over 7 years and had worked with four different Chief Constables. In July 2012 the government's austerity measures had resulted in 20% cuts to Police Forces. The grant to Bedfordshire Police had been cut by £19 million. Other Forces had had cuts which were proportionally greater but arguably the cuts were more challenging for Bedfordshire which, as a smaller force, could not take advantage of economies of scale. It was also recognised that Luton provided complex challenges for a small and otherwise rural Force.

An HMIC Inspection in 2013 had identified that Bedfordshire was not taking a strategic response to the cuts and, instead, was allowing its Neighbourhood policing service to dwindle by not filling vacancies. The Inspection Report had noted that this was an unwise approach as research had shown neighbourhood policing to be a fundamental part of preventative policing. The Report had warned that failure to invest in neighbourhood policing would result in future problems.

Further Inspections in July 2014, November 2014 and May 2015 had continued to report on failings to reinforce neighbourhood policing.

In October 2015 the Inspector had been informed that plans were in place to reintroduce neighbourhood policing by March 2016. However Inspections in the Spring and Autumn of 2016 had revealed that these plans would not be fully implemented until April 2018 and this was felt to be unacceptable.

It was because of this history and the length of time it would take for plans to come to fruition that the Inspector had felt it necessary to rate the Force Inadequate. Consequently she did not feel able to say at this time that she had confidence that the Force would achieve a good rating at the next Inspection.

## Further questions from the Panel

In response to further questions Ms Billingham commented that:

- Funding was indeed a challenge that would make it difficult to achieve a 'Good' rating but improvements could still be made and should be aspired towards.
- HMIC Inspections could only report on what needed to improve and make comparisons with other forces. HMIC could not suggest how improvements should be achieved and it was the job of the CC to ensure that there was a correct balance of priorities.
- There was no fundamental difference of opinion between the CC and HMIC. Both accepted that the Force needed to improve and both recognised that preventative policing was fundamental
- She herself worked alongside 4 other Inspectors and 'Inadequate' ratings were always compared with Inspection Reports for other Forces to ensure a consistency of approach. This had shown that the Bedfordshire Force had clear failings in fundamental areas which fully justified the Inadequate rating in comparison to other Forces.
- She was persuaded that the CC and PCC did not underestimate the scale of the task ahead of them. They were both determined to achieve positive results and this demonstrated the maturity of the relationship they had with HMIC.
- Bedfordshire Force had the lowest spend on neighbourhood policing per head of population out of all Forces in the country. Only 2% of Bedfordshire Police Officers were engaged in neighbourhood policing compared to a national average of 18%.
- The Force had historically reacted to issues rather than planning and preparing for prevention of crime. There was a necessity to fully understand the demands on the Force and to make appropriate plans.
- The fundamental nature of neighbourhood and preventative policing was universally agreed and based upon much research carried out by the College of Policing. This did not necessarily mean 'bobbies on the beat' but did require good relationships with communities and community leaders. It may also involve using technology and an online presence.

19 April 2017

- The poor rating for tackling serious and organised crime was due to two factors. The first was a failure to adequately resource intelligence gathering and the second was a failure to fully map serious and organised crime groups within Bedfordshire. The latter had a knock on effect for the gathering of national crime data.
- She was hopeful that the ratings for tackling serious and organised crime and for protecting the vulnerable would be improved for the next Inspection, however it would take longer to improve the performance of neighbourhood policing.
- It could be that, once a proper plan and methodology had been implemented, it may transpire that resources were spread too thinly. However it was still necessary to proceed with thorough planning.
- An unresolved murder from 25 years ago would have no noticeable effect on the current rating of HMIC for a Force.
- The performance of specialist capabilities had deliberately remained ungraded for Bedfordshire and for all other Forces. This had been decided for national strategic reasons, to not draw attention to differences in capabilities in dealing with national threats.

The Inspector concluded that the PCC, the CC and HMIC shared the same aims and objectives. She offered her support and goodwill to the CC and PCC and said that she had no doubt of their commitment to succeed. She also thanked the PCP for providing this opportunity to outline the findings of the Inspection of the Bedfordshire Force by HMIC and hoped it would assist understanding.

### **Questions to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police**

The Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police were then invited to respond to the Inspector's comments and to her Report, and to respond to questions from the Panel.

### **Introduction**

The Chief Constable began by explaining that the Force was currently undergoing a complete restructuring which included every area of operation and this process would take 18 months to fully complete.

Various consultants and partners had been engaged to help put together a plan to improve community policing and this had already resulted in a new Response Team, improved shift patterns, the new Emerald Team to tackle domestic abuse, the new Sentinel Team to improve rural relations and a new Intelligence function.

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To improve understanding in the Force of vulnerability and child sex exploitation, a victim of abuse from Rotherham would be speaking to the entire Force. Training had also been arranged for the whole Force on understanding domestic abuse.

It was recognised that funding was an issue and that issues in Luton could drain resources. Despite that, the CC believed that the Force could do better and that the Inspections later in 2017 would show improvement. There had already been good results with crime having risen by just 1.3% compared to a national average of 7.8%. Work which had been done in Luton over a long period had dismantled the leadership of Britain First and had resulted in custodial sentences for some 'hate preachers'.

The Commissioner was pleased to report that the Inspector had commented on the plans currently in place, saying they were more credible than any she had seen from the Force previously. All of the Officers currently being recruited would be going directly into Community Policing, though not all to Hubs. The Commissioner confirmed that all 7 Hubs would be fully staffed and operational by April 2018.

The Commissioner commented that HMIC had contrasted Bedford with neighbourhood policing in Durham, however she saw clear differences between the two Forces, not least that Durham received an additional £17 million compared to Bedford. This was an amount that would pay for over 500 additional Officers which equated to increasing the number of Officers in Bedfordshire by almost 50%.

The Commissioner reported that performance figures for dealing with incidents of domestic abuse had already shown improvement since the implementation of the new Emerald team and that the entire £250,000 under-spend from 2016/17 would be put into the Emerald team for 2017/18.

The Commissioner acknowledged that there were serious problems in dealing with missing children and that the County had to manage many children placed in care from other Counties. To respond to this issue, the Force was working closely with Local Authorities and other partner agencies.

The Commissioner concluded her opening statement by reporting that the Policing Minister had described the Chief Constable's 21 page response to the HMIC report as being a "responsible response" to it.

### **Questions from the Panel**

In response to questions from the Panel the Commissioner and Chief Constable responded that:

- It was hoped to achieve better results at the Inspections later in 2017 by using evidence and testimonies gathered from partner agencies that demonstrated actual achievements of the Force.

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- All training for new recruits and Special Officers was carried out jointly with the Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire Constabularies as part of the joint force collaboration.
- Staff in the Control Room were trained internally. This training consisted of 6 weeks of classroom based lessons followed by an 18 month period of Continual Professional Development with tutors. All calls were recorded and call recordings were then used by tutors in development sessions with staff. Additional training included response to a major attack and considering the 'journey of a child' through traumatic circumstances.
- Panel Members were welcome to visit any of the new Hubs and the Panel would be kept informed of progress and any developments.
- In addition to 100 new Officers, a further 45 new Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were also being recruited.
- The Force made use of various consultancy services to prepare for the HMIC Inspection and to respond to the points made in the HMIC Report. Contact had also been made with the Lancashire and Durham Forces to share best practice.
- An Appeals Board was meeting monthly to look at every recommendation for improvement and to ensure that every task was assigned to an appropriate person who was then accountable for that task.
- To improve performance in protecting vulnerable people, the Force was working with 37 partner organisations. One of the initiatives already implemented was the development of 'Trigger Plans' for 17 young people who were most likely to go missing. Each plan contained information on contact numbers, key relationships and places they were likely to visit.
- Having four different Chief Constables in five years had not been good for stability and planning. The Commissioner and the current Chief Constable were determined to continue to work until real improvements were made and, notwithstanding the radical restructuring that was currently under way, to ensure there was a period of stability to enable the Bedfordshire Force to develop and improve performance.
- Inter-Force collaboration involved some give and take. Some initiatives might benefit one Force more than another but overall Collaboration would continue to bring benefits, make savings and improve resilience.

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- Despite the small size of the Bedfordshire Police Force, it was believed that more could be done and there was a determination to respond positively to the criticisms within the HMIC report.
- The Commissioner would supply the Panel with an Action Plan showing the steps, timescales and milestones which would achieve the improvements required by the HMIC Report.

### **Community Hubs**

In response to a question, the Chief Constable commented that the College of Policing had been advising on development of the Community Hubs.

The Hub locations had been chosen according to three criteria:

- 1) The density of location and ease of accessibility for as many people as possible.
- 2) The best use of Estate resources, including both property owned by the Force and property available through collaboration with other public bodies.
- 3) The best degree of equidistance between the 7 Hubs across the County.

The Chief Constable added that the Hubs were very different to the previous 'Cop Shops' which had been used. Cop Shops had been little more than somewhere for PCSOs to hold surgeries and carry out interviews whereas the Hubs were properly staffed premises where Inspectors, Sergeants and Officers would be based. Each Hub would be open to the public and would have a geographical responsibility. In essence they were closer to previous models of satellite Police Stations although this terminology could not be used as several of them were located within existing Fire Stations.

### **Information sharing**

In relation to Information Sharing with Ward Councillors, the Chief Constable regretted that much of the valuable relationships with local communities had been lost following restructuring in 2012 but this was now being rebuilt. Work was being done to establish lines of communication with community leaders and Ward Councillors. Police Inspectors would be making visits to introduce themselves at Parish Council meetings.

It was hoped that this, along with the new Community Hubs and the work of the new Sentinel Team in rural areas, would rebuild strong Community Engagement links.

## Call handling performance

In fulfilment of her commitment made at the Panel meeting of 6 February 2017 (Minute Item 43 refers) the Commissioner produced figures on the performance of the 101 Call Handling Service.

### Performance for the Year 2016 / 17 (Total Year)

**999** Performance – **88.45%** of calls answered within 10 Seconds

**101** Performance – **84.93%** of calls answered within 30 Seconds

### Current Performance

**999** – April 2017 (month to date) – **86.08%** of calls answered within 10 Seconds (with an aspiration to achieve 90%)

**101** – April 2017 (month to date) – **78.09%** of calls answered within 30 Seconds (with an aspiration to achieve 85%)

It was pointed out that those statistics related to the time taken to answer a call once a preliminary automatic message had been played. The automatic message took around 60 seconds and in comparison the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) automatic message took 7 seconds. The CC responded that the FRS was not a comparable service as they received a fraction of the number of calls the Police received but he would look to see if the automatic messages could be shortened.

The Chair concluded this Agenda Item by thanking the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable for their positive response to the questions raised by the Panel and for the determination they expressed to succeed in bringing about the necessary improvements to the Bedfordshire Police Force.

### RESOLVED:

- 1) That the comments and responses of the Inspector of Her Majesty's Constabularies be noted.
- 2) That the comments and responses of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable be noted.

**59. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR BEDFORDSHIRE - UPDATE**

The Commissioner presented her report and provided the following additional information.

**Breakdown of 100 Additional Officers**

To clarify the position on the 100 additional Officers that had been announced at the Panel meeting on 6 February 2017, the Commissioner explained that 90 of these posts were to fill vacancies currently held by the Force and 10 posts were an actual increase in the number of budgeted officer posts. Together, the 10 new budgeted posts and the refilling of 90 vacancies would represent a 10% increase in the number of Officers.

**Expenses**

With regard to her expenses, the Commissioner expressed her regret that claims had inadvertently been made that did not comply with the Home Office guidance. She explained that she had received no induction from the Home Office and neither the induction pack from the Association of PCC nor the 100-page induction pack she had received from her own office gave any guidance on expenses. Furthermore, neither her current nor her two previous Chiefs of Staff had been aware of the guidance on expenses, which had only been discovered accidentally, following an investigation by Bedfordshire On Sunday newspaper and a subsequent discussion between her and a neighbouring Police and Crime Commissioner.

She confirmed that she had fully repaid all expenses that had been claimed erroneously and which did not comply with the Home Office guidance. This came to £693.73 for the ten month period from when she started until the error had been identified.

She and her Chief of Staff were currently working to ensure that her expenses were fully transparent and accurate and when this was complete the expenses would be published on the appropriate website. They were also checking all other Home Office guidance to ensure that they were aware of and complying with any other guidance which applied to the Commissioner role.

Concern was expressed by the Panel that none of her Chiefs of Staff had been aware of the guidance which was so easily accessible online. It was also pointed out that the Commissioner's expenses that had already been published did not give sufficient details such as the reason for the expense and actual mileage travelled. The Commissioner explained that the mileage for all her travel was calculated from the AA Route-finder website to ensure total accuracy. The Chief of Staff confirmed he would ensure that, once checked and published, all expenses would show full details including the mileage travelled.

In conclusion the Commissioner thanked the Panel for its positive approach and attitude towards the HMIC Inspector.

RESOLVED:

That the report and the Commissioner's additional information be noted.

**60. COLLABORATION**

The Panel noted that the 7 questions put to the Commissioner at the Panel meeting of 6 February 2017 had not yet been answered. These were:

- (a) What is currently covered through regional collaboration?
- (b) How is it being governed?
- (c) What are the key aspects of the regional framework?
- (d) Are the planned savings expected from collaboration being achieved?
- (e) Is collaboration delivering operational effectiveness?
- (f) Is there a performance management scorecard?
- (g) Are there business cases for further areas of collaboration?

The Panel heard that the Office of the Commissioner had verbally stated that they did not yet have sufficient information to answer these questions. The Panel felt this was not acceptable and that answers should be provided at the next meeting of the PCP.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report of the PCC be noted.

2. That the PCC be asked to provide a full written response at the meeting on 20 June 2017, to the 7 questions put to her at the Panel meeting of 6 February 2017.

**61. ESTATES STRATEGY**

RESOLVED:

That the report of the PCC be noted.

**62. PANEL'S BUDGET TO 31 MARCH 2017**

The Panel considered a report of the Head of Democratic and Registration Services, Bedford Borough Council, relating to information about the grant provided by the Home Office to the Panel's host Authority for administering and supporting the Panel together with expenditure against that budget.

It was explained to the Panel that the item for 'Staff Costs' included appropriate and proportionate amounts for all Officers and senior staff of the Local Authorities who were engaged in work on the Panel while the item for 'Members Allowances' related to remuneration for Panel Members.

The Panel was further informed by Officers that the Panel's budget for 2017/18 had been agreed and remained at the same level as for 2016/17.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel's provisional outturn budget to 31 March 2017, set out in the report, be noted.

**63. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE AND CRIME PANELS**

The Vice Chair informed the Panel that representatives of 25 PCPs had agreed to form a National Association of PCPs and discussions were progressing to achieve this. The Local Government Association (LGA) had subsequently submitted a proposal to fulfil this function by creating an LGA Special Interest Group however his option did not appear to be favoured.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal update be noted.

**64. MEETING OF PCP REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT COLLABORATION (BEDFORDSHIRE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND HERTFORDSHIRE)**

The Vice Chair reported that representatives from each of the three Forces had met and it had been noted that none of the three PCCs had yet answered the 7 questions relating to Collaboration (Minute Item 60 refers).

RESOLVED:

That the verbal update be noted.

**65. EASTERN REGION PCP NETWORK**

The Vice Chair reported that the representatives had discussed the new Police and Crime Act 2017 with particular regard to new provisions allowing PCCs to take responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services. The Act also stipulated that complaint appeals would now go to the PCC and this may result in PCPs becoming involved in complaint procedures.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal update be noted.

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**66. WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17**

RESOLVED:

That an 'Away Day' be arranged for Panel Members to further develop the Work Programme for 2017/18.

The meeting closed at 9.32 pm

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