

Warwickshire Joint Audit and Standards Committee Report Summary

Meeting Date: 25th September 2024

Subject: Analysis and Performance – HMICFRS update

Contact details: Stephen Russell, Director of Data, Strategy & Technology

Purpose of the report

This report provides an overview of activity within Warwickshire Police in relation to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) who independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces. Their findings are reported through thematically-based reports and reports following Policing, Effectiveness, Efficiency & Legitimacy (PEEL) inspections.

Recommendation

That the current activity is noted by members of JASC.

Background

Within the TOR the Committee has the role to consider reports and policies from an ethics or standards perspective which includes HMICFRS reports.

This activity is primarily governed within force through the Performance & Assurance Board (chaired by DCC Franklin-Smith) and strategic Thematic Steering Groups (chaired by ACC Gardner and ACC Smith). The boards receive regular updates on inspection activity and force's readiness, compliance and delivery of recommendations.

Executive Summary

New HMICFRS reports:

The following HMICFRS reports relevant or specific to Warwickshire Police have been published since the last summary was submitted to the JASC in July 2024. For reasons of brevity, they will only be outlined below, but the links are included in the title for further information if required.

OFFICIAL

[Report: State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2023](#)

HMI Andy Cooke has produced his second report under s54(4A) of the Police Act 1996, where he gives an independent assessment of the state of policing, based on HMICFRS inspections during the last financial year. It is an essential barometer of the Inspectorate's view and triangulates issues the force faces. The report contains four recommendations, all directed at the Government, not forces. Warwickshire Police press towards continuous improvement through the HMICFRS PEEL Assessment Framework and a number of recommendations and Areas for Improvement. Principal themes within this report include:

The police are trying to rebuild public trust and confidence - with a number of cases of police officers perpetrating horrific crimes and a public perception of police inactivity in tackling local crime, there is much work to do. Neighbourhood policing is key to rebuilding this trust, and efforts must continue to tackle misconduct.

Too many victims of crime are still being let down by the police and wider criminal justice system - despite a downturn in crime, HMI Cooke highlights continued victim dissatisfaction in police not getting the basics right, outcomes not meeting victims' expectations and poor access to justice through the CJS.

The police workforce must be set up to succeed - with the huge influx of new officers, a large proportion have less than five years' service. Training and equipping the frontline therefore presents challenges. Conditions must be right for them to deliver the service officers and staff are passionate about, and attrition must be addressed.

Police finances are an area of increasing concern - the police funding model is seen as outdated and unfair. Forces are largely unable to make significant medium-term financial plans. An ageing police estate and ICT infrastructures need investment. HMI Cooke encourages the Government to stabilise and increase police funding.

The inspectorate needs the right powers and sufficient funding - with the huge need for scrutiny and continuous improvement, HMI Cooke calls for an increased budget for HMICFRS and wider powers to hold forces to account and enforce improvements.

[Report: Progress to introduce a national operating model for rape and other serious sexual offences investigations](#)

Over many years it has become clear nationally that the approach to the investigation of rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO) required improvement. Warwickshire Police was part of the pathfinder cohort for the Operation Soteria Bluestone project, which has introduced a six-pillar national operating model (NOM) for RASSO investigation. The pillars target suspects, focus on victims and equip investigators.

OFFICIAL

The force was inspected against these pillars in late autumn 2023 and the national thematic report is now published. Although a force-specific narrative is not included in the report, the debrief from inspectors was favourable and they noted the good progress the force has made.

A number of recommendations were made, five of which are directed at forces, but others have nationally strategic or collaborative implications and are therefore too numerous to list here. Implementation and governance are provided through the Operation Soteria Delivery Board, reporting into the Vulnerability and Safeguarding Delivery Board. Higher scrutiny is provided through the Vulnerability & Exploitation Steering Group and ultimately the Performance & Assurance Board.

Report: An inspection into activism and impartiality in policing

In September 2023, the then Home Secretary commissioned HMICFRS to urgently inspect the extent to which police involvement in politically contested matters may be having an impact on operational policing, by influencing policing policy, priorities and practice. Warwickshire Police was not chosen for inspection, but the report's reach and recommendations apply to all forces and examines whether the police allow politics or activism to unduly influence them.

The report is lengthy but overall found that the police generally act impartially, undermined by some instances of public trust wavering around particularly politically contested matters. Key themes include:

- The commitment to the Equality Act 2010.
- The need for clear guidance, definitions and legislation to support officers.
- Complex issues encountered around policing protests.
- The role of police staff networks – promoting diversity but maintaining impartiality.
- Better communication with the public is needed.
- Guidance around non-crime hate incidents and the demand.

Due to the varied nature of the recommendations and responsible bodies, and the very recent publication of the report, digestion of the detail and ownership are still in progress. Force-allocated recommendations will be driven at a tactical level by the appropriate delivery board, and will feed into the overarching Steering Groups (the Legitimacy & Equality Steering Group is likely to have prime oversight), with high level accountability at the Performance & Assurance Board.

New and ongoing activity:

PEEL 2024-2025 inspection

This remains the force's principal area of HMICFRS-related focus for the second half of 2024. PEEL is a far-reaching inspection, covering ten core areas of policing and most of

OFFICIAL

the breadth of daily business. The 12-month continuous assessment of Warwickshire Police under the latest [PEEL programme](#) began in February 2024, with any data or evidence collected during this period eligible for scrutiny.

Both HMICFRS inspection personnel are in place and in-force; Lorraine Roberts, our Force Liaison Lead (FLL) is assisted by Inspection Officer (IO) Louise King. Activity to date includes:

- Reality testing, interviews and floor-walking activity in a breadth of force departments since June 2024. This has been on a more informal basis as the FLL and IO understand the structure and functioning of the force and will help shape more rigid inspection activity later this year.
- Attendance at key strategic and performance meetings.
- Scrutiny of progress against the 2022 AFI's.
- A comprehensive document request has been completed and will be scrutinised through September 2024. This includes minutes, policies, procedures, performance and management data, reports, etc. Again, this will help evidence force performance and shape inspection activity.

As the remainder of this year continues, inspection activity will increase; significant planning between the Service Improvement Team and the FLL/IO is already underway. This includes:

- Progress against existing PEEL 2022 AFIs is being assessed continually and the FLL will look to close off any which are fulfilled.
- The Victim Services Assessment and Crime Data Integrity inspection will take place in October 2022. The VSA examines a varied sample of criminal investigations, from 'cradle to grave', i.e. first call or online report into the Control Room, right the way through to finalisation of the outcome. The quality of the investigation and the service to the victim(s) are scrutinised in forensic detail by inspectors. Although not graded, a narrative is provided at the top of the force's PEEL report and the VSA heavily influences findings across a number of other (graded) core questions within the [HMICFRS PEEL Assessment Framework](#) (PAF)¹. Many of our 2022 PEEL Report AFI's are dependent on verification provided by the VSA inspection and therefore remain open.
- Specialist sub inspections for the management of violent and sexual offenders (MOSOVO), online child sexual abuse and exploitation (OCSEA) and a deep-dive stop & search audit will take place in October.

¹ The PAF is the prescriptive set of criteria for HMICFRS' PEEL programme. Each police force in England and Wales is assessed against the characteristics of good performance, with graded judgments across several core questions set out in the framework.

The model helps inspectors to make consistent assessments across forces, taking account of existing national standards and guidance, College of Policing authorised professional practice (APP), and evidence from research.)

OFFICIAL

- In November and December 2024, further inspection activity will focus across ranks and departments, consisting of interviews, focus groups, meeting observation and floor walking by inspectors.
- The final intensive evidence collection phase runs for two weeks, commencing 13th January 2025. This is preceded by a strategic briefing from Chief Officers to senior HMICFRS members. Once this phase is complete, the force will await the draft report, and expect publication in late Spring or early Summer 2025.

Strategic Leads have been driving our response to the 22 AFIs issued from the [2022 PEEL report](#), governed and scrutinised by the Performance & Assurance Board (chaired by the DCC) and thematic Steering Groups (chaired by the ACC's). Appendix A (at the end of the document) shows progress at-a-glance against the AFI's. With inspection activity close, HMICFRS have stated that many of the AFIs will not be finally assessed or until the Victim Services Assessment (VSA) or other areas of the new PEEL inspection take place.

Service Improvement Team

The Service Improvement Team, headed by T/CI Angus Eagles and supported by Inspector Stuart Randall and T/DS Jenny Deakin continue reality testing activity of a wide range of services, through focus groups, informal interviews and data analysis. The raw data is robustly overlaid against the PAF to ensure compliance, identify better ways of working and improve service delivery. Findings are reported promptly to strategic leads and chief officers, with various recommendations allocated. Each finding is given a degree of confidence/corroboratorion.

The monthly SIT report is fed into the Operational Performance Meeting, chaired by the DCC. The team have also supported largescale audits of investigations, focussing on the quality of supervisor reviews. This is an area of key focus from HMICFRS within the VSA and PAF core question 5 (investigations).

Assurance

Assurance within the force remains robust and thorough. All progress against PAF compliance, PEEL inspection readiness, AFIs, internal reality testing and all other HMICFRS-related performance is driven through relevant tactical boards (chaired at CI/Superintendent/equivalent level), strategic boards (chaired at Superintending/equivalent levels) and the operational and organisational steering groups (chaired at ACC level). These are overseen by the high-level Performance and Assurance Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable.

T/Chief Inspector Angus Eagles

Service Improvement Team & HMICFRS Force Liaison Officer

11th September 2024

OFFICIAL

Appendix A – PEEL 202 AFI Progress as at August 2024

AFI#	AFI Details	Strategic Lead	Steering	Progress
1	The force should improve its external scrutiny processes for stop and search and for use of force, to make sure the powers are being used fairly and appropriately.	Supt Communities & Response	Legitimacy & Equality Steering Group	Complete
2	The force should increase its use of body-worn video to improve interactions between officers and the public.	Supt Communities & Response	Legitimacy & Equality Steering Group	Complete
3	The force should make sure that abstractions are effectively monitored and reduced (An abstraction is the diversion of an officer to duties that aren't part of their core duties, not necessarily emergencies, for an extended period).	Supt Force Operations	People & Organisational Development Board	Complete
4	The force should make sure that repeat callers, and those that are vulnerable, are routinely identified.	CSupt OCC	Delivering Effective Justice	Significant Progress
5	The force needs to make sure that call handlers give appropriate advice on the preservation of evidence and crime prevention.	CSupt OCC	Delivering Effective Justice	Significant Progress
6	The force needs to attend calls for service within its published attendance times and make sure that, when this doesn't happen, victims are fully updated.	CSupt OCC	Delivering Effective Justice	Significant Progress
7	Our 2019 report said that the force needed to improve the application of risk assessment when delays occur. This remains an area for improvement. The force should make sure that risk assessments are consistently applied to calls for service so that risk and vulnerability are visible from the outset and inform deployment decisions. Improvements must also be made to the quality of incident risk assessments when deployment delays occur.	CSupt OCC	Delivering Effective Justice	Some Progress
8	The force should make sure it carries out proportionate and thorough investigations into reported crimes.	CSupt Protective Services	Delivering Effective Justice	Some Progress
9	The force should make sure investigation plans are created where applicable, with supervisory oversight to make sure that all reasonable investigative opportunities are pursued.	CSupt Protective Services	Delivering Effective Justice	Some Progress
10	The force needs to make sure that the requirements of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime are complied with. This includes giving victims the opportunity to give victim personal statements and complete victim needs assessments.	CSupt Local Policing	Delivering Effective Justice	Some Progress
11	The force should make sure that there is an auditable record of the decision of the victim and their reasons for withdrawal of support. The force should make sure it documents whether evidence-led prosecutions have been considered in all such cases.	CSupt Protective Services	Delivering Effective Justice	Complete
12	The force needs to put in place appropriate governance and monitoring processes to make sure that the use of outcomes is appropriate and complies with force and national policies.	CSupt Protective Services	Delivering Effective Justice	Significant Progress
13	The force needs to improve its capacity and capability to deal with child sexual exploitation.	DSupt Public Protection	Vulnerability & Exploitation Steering Group	Complete
14	The force should make sure its harm assessment unit within the multi-agency safeguarding hub is resourced effectively so that delays can be avoided in the assessment of child and adult cases.	DSupt Public Protection	Vulnerability & Exploitation Steering Group	Complete
15	The force needs to make sure that it has effective governance in place to monitor the application and use of release under investigation and bail.	CSupt Protective Services	Delivering Effective Justice	Significant Progress
16	The force should improve its performance monitoring processes to make sure it can robustly address the backlog of work. Supervisory oversight should include a thorough review of Violent and Sex Offender Register records, providing additional scrutiny to address outstanding actions.	DSupt Prevention	Proactive Policing & Prevention Steering Group	Complete
17	The force should make sure it has the capacity and capability to progress all investigations of online indecent images of children effectively and quickly, including those referred to the force and those highlighted in peer-to-peer file-sharing systems. The force's investigative practice should include early liaison with children's services.	DSupt Public Protection	Vulnerability & Exploitation Steering Group	Complete
18	The force should continue to review and improve wellbeing support for staff in high-risk roles and staff experiencing trauma.	Director of ES	People & Organisational Development Board	Complete
19	The force should evaluate its wellbeing offer, and make sure its officers and staff have manageable workloads and the time to access wellbeing support.	Director of ES	People & Organisational Development Board	Complete
20	Our 2019 report said that the force should improve individual performance reviews and that processes for talent identification should be consistently and fairly applied across the workforce. Poor performance should be managed consistently. This remains an area for improvement.	Head of HR	People & Organisational Development Board	Significant Progress
21	The force needs to make sure that it realises the benefits of its investment in IT and data to continue to improve its overall efficiency.	Director of Data & Performance		Complete
22	The force needs to develop a comprehensive understanding of demand, and make sure it has the capability and capacity needed to meet and manage current demands efficiently.	Head of A&P		Significant Progress