

## The Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire

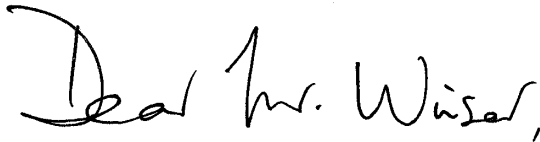
Deepdale Lane, Nettleham, Lincoln LN2 2LT  
Telephone (01522) 947192 Fax (01522) 558739  
E-Mail: [lincolnshire-pcc@lincs.pnn.police.uk](mailto:lincolnshire-pcc@lincs.pnn.police.uk)  
Website: [www.lincolnshire-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.lincolnshire-pcc.gov.uk)

**Alan Hardwick**  
**The Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire**

**Our Reference:** AH/hh/2013-1502

2<sup>nd</sup> August 2013

Tom Winsor  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary  
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary  
6th Floor  
Globe House  
89 Eccleston Square  
London SW1V 1PN



**Comments on recent inspection reports:**  
**Lincolnshire Police's response to the funding challenge;**  
**Policing in Austerity: Rising to the challenge**

I am pleased to present my comments on the above reports within the meaning of s55 (5) of the Police Act 1996. I will publish this letter on my website and also forward a copy to the Home Secretary.

I welcome your reports and recognise that having the lowest cost of policing per head of population in England and Wales presents us with a difficult challenge. I am also gratified that you know it is a challenge we do not shirk from. Your observation that we have taken more decisive steps than most forces in order to close our funding gap is apposite for other forces that are just beginning to realise the scale of the challenge ahead. You are, I know, familiar with our arguments about the inequalities within the current police funding formula which place Lincolnshire at a disadvantage. I continue to lobby Government for a change that will bring greater equity.

...2/...

It is however disappointing that, despite our on-going assistance over many months, the inspection team has failed to fully understand those decisive steps and their impact. I say this with particular reference to our strategic partnership with the private sector. The suggestion that this relationship constrains us in some way shows a fundamental misunderstanding of the contractual relationship. Firstly, one of the objectives of the partnership is to secure business transformation, i.e. to bring real gains in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of our police officers and staff through changes in working practices underpinned by investment in ICT. It is interesting that as an inspectorate you say so little about this huge area of challenge for the police service and it is one I will expand on below. Secondly, we can choose to renegotiate elements of the contract. Any contract that covers a ten year period contains an ability to flex the terms in order to meet new demands and priorities that arise and which cannot have been foreseen when the contract was entered into. As more forces explore use of the private sector, I would suggest it is important your teams build the necessary commercial acumen that will be required to take an informed view of the impact of these arrangements. You rightly recognise the financial savings the relationship has delivered, but for me these are secondary to what the contract already delivers for the people of Lincolnshire in terms of service outcomes and the future potential we have only just begun to exploit.

You observe correctly that we have plans to utilise an ear-marked reserve to close the funding gap in the last year of this spending review period. HMIC have said previously that limited use of reserves is a sound approach. You will also note that our reserves remain within the risk based prudent parameters of our reserves policy. But your report states this one-off use of reserves indicates we do not "have in place a sustainable workforce model where spend matches available budget." The fact that this will deliver a balanced budget and that our medium term financial plans look forward to 2017/18 appear to have been overlooked. We have gone much further than many others in our planning, taking a medium term view about what levels of funding, resourcing and therefore service provision are sustainable.

You recognise that since 2010 reductions in police officers have been smaller in Lincolnshire than in most other Forces. You are also aware of my commitment to maintain numbers at 1100 with no further reductions. This has been welcomed by Lincolnshire, but apparently not by yourselves given your reported view that, "This is a very thin blue line." This is an unhelpful phrase without context and is inconsistent with the professional view I have received from the Force chief officer team. Indeed the context for me is what we are delivering with 1100 officers. I would suggest, and my conversations with the public confirm this, that the public find our ever improving crime figures of more relevance than subjective opinion.

Ultimately what the public want from any public service is a fair deal. They want a sense of value for money, and of efficiency and effectiveness, yet your current inspection methodology seems to be quite narrowly focussed on cuts and numbers of police officers. I would like to see greater consideration in your reviews of issues such as productivity and asset utilisation. A simplistic view of the number of officers adds little without the context of how those officers are being utilised and what they are delivering. Developing methodologies for the measurement of success in this area together with progress being made in business transformation would enable HMIC to form a view about how the police service compares to other sectors where this type of work is significantly more advanced.

On more than one occasion it is suggested that as a result of changes in the chief officer team the Force has been de-stabilised or unsettled in some way. Like all organisations, our good people sometimes move on to pastures new and personally, when this happens, I am very pleased we have played a part in their successful career trajectories. I am confident that the Chief Constable has appropriate succession plans in place and do not accept there has been an adverse impact in terms of capability and resilience.

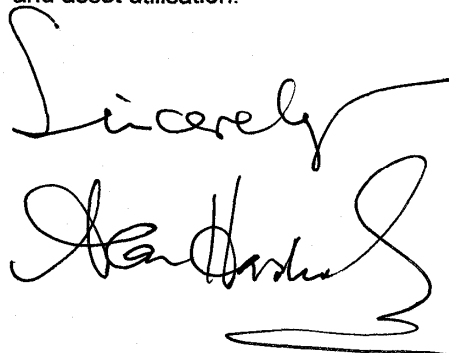
Your quoted statistics for call response times do not paint the full picture. One of the most important improvements that has been brought about by our strategic partner is an improvement in the 999 call response rate with over 93% of calls answered within 10 seconds. This is up from an average of 89% in 2011/12 and is a positively improving trend. At the same time, public satisfaction has risen to 94% for emergency calls.

You rightly note the continued commitment of all of us involved in our well established East Midlands Collaboration. Whilst this has brought financial savings, I would again highlight what this has enabled us to achieve in terms of outcomes and we continue to explore areas where we can collaborate further.

I am pleased you have noted that we allocate a higher than average proportion of our police officers to visible roles. Visibility is a key commitment in my police and crime plan.

As you note, we have an effective approach to change management which has enabled us to reduce costs while continuing to fight crime. I have absolute confidence in the positive leadership my own chief officers and those of the Force bring to these areas. Whilst it may become increasingly difficult to continue to protect the frontline, it remains my absolute priority and that of my Chief Constable.

In closing, I look forward to having a productive relationship with you over the coming years. I repeat my offer of helping you understand the implications and benefits of private sector partnering and I am keen to have further discussions with you around measures of productivity and asset utilisation.

Sincerely  


Alan Hardwick  
The Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire

cc: Chief Constable Neil Rhodes, Lincolnshire Police  
John Shaw, Managing Director Policing Support Services, G4S  
The Rt Hon Theresa May MP, Secretary of State for the Home Department