

The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
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20th April 2022

Dear Home Secretary

State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2021

As required by statute, I am writing to you to respond to the report entitled, 'State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2021'.

As was the case during 2020, 2021 was another year that put policing under significant pressure and required us to continue to alter our ways of working and adapt to frequent legislative changes. I remain incredibly proud of the way Gwent Police, as well as my office, has responded.

I am pleased that the report, which is used by the UK Government at the highest levels to inform decision making, acknowledges the growing demand on front-line policing services and the challenges this creates for local policing. I was also pleased that its author, Sir Thomas Winsor, highlights issues that Police and Crime Commissioners have been raising for some time, such as poor public mental health provision, evolving crime types and a lack of funding which are among the challenges faced by police forces across the country.

In Gwent I fund dedicated mental health practitioners in the force control room. Although this allows the police to deal more sensitivity and appropriately with vulnerable victims, it does not help to reduce the frontline demand. I am also pleased and reassured to see that Sir Thomas Winsor has acknowledged the very real difficulties that we face balancing public demand with insufficient funding.

In light of the issues facing policing and the insufficient funding received, the Chief Constable and I face very real difficulties in balancing resources and demand and determining which areas will be the focus of investment while also trying to ensure value for money is achieved for the people of Gwent. Since 2010, Gwent Police alone has had to make nearly £53 million in savings due to government cuts. As a Police and Crime Commissioner, I have the power to

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg, a phan ddaw i law, byddwn yn ateb yn y Gymraeg – ni fydd hyn yn gohirio ein hymateb. Os hoffech dderbyn gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg o hyn ymlaen, neu os ydych wedi cael eich gwahodd i gyfweiliad neu gyfarfod ac yr hoffech ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg, anfonwch e-bost at: Commissioner@gwent.pnn.police.uk. Darperir gwasanaethau cyfieithu.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and where received, we will reply in Welsh - this will not delay our response. If you wish to receive correspondence in Welsh hereafter or if you have been invited to an interview or meeting and you wish to use Welsh, send email to: Commissioner@gwent.pnn.police.uk. Translation services will be provided.

raise additional funds through the local council tax precept, but it is wrong that local taxpayers should continue to shoulder the burden of long-term underfunding from the UK Government.

Eventually something will have to give, and I hope that this report will ensure that the UK Government seriously considers a review of police funding for the future.

I also acknowledge that policing needs to rebuild public trust as recent “toxic” behaviour and attitudes demonstrated by a small minority of officers in the police service across England and Wales have had a damaging impact.

The Chief Constable has provided the comment below on the report:

“I welcome Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary’s annual assessment of policing in England and Wales 2021. The report reflects on the ten years since Sir Thomas Winsor has been in office. I concur that during this time, policing has come a long way in many respects, as highlighted in domestic abuse, child protection, the quality of some investigations, relations with the public and workforce diversity. The horrifying abduction, rape, and murder of Sarah Everard in 2021 by a serving police officer highlights that there is significant work that needs to be done with regards to recruitment, vetting and elements of police culture. I await the findings from the ongoing inquiries and resulting recommendations.

The report rightly recognises the courage and commitment of police officers and staff. I am hugely proud of the bravery shown on daily basis by the officers and staff in my force and indeed throughout the country.

This is the final report by Sir Thomas Winsor and I am grateful for the commitment and enthusiasm he has demonstrated since he took up the post as Chief Inspector of Constabulary in 2012. I wish him every success for the future.”

In Gwent, the Chief Constable is holding roadshows where focus is placed on abuse of power. She is also ensuring that all officers and staff understand the reporting process in place to support them if they want to highlight any concerns they may have. These conversations have also taken place within my office and have also been highlighted at my volunteer scheme meetings. In addition, Gwent Police also established a Gold Group to develop and implement their Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy. One of the key aims of this strategy is to repair the trust and confidence levels of the public, specifically women and girls, in the police.

I am also reassured that Gwent Police do everything in their power to ensure the integrity and professionalism of its officers and staff before they start their roles and throughout their employment. Investment has been made in the vetting team, ensuring all staff and officers undergo annual vetting checks and there is also a vetting appeal panel which considers all appeals received as well as all refusals of any applicant with a protected characteristic. A member of my staff represents me on this panel which also has representation from the Independent Advisory Group, ensuring there are independent voices feeding back into the force.


I was disappointed to read that in a minority of policing areas that some Chief Constables have a lack of confidence in the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner. I do not believe this to be the case in Gwent. The Chief Constable and I have a positive working relationship and we work closely to provide the best policing service possible to the people of Gwent. We have a number of areas such as the development of the Estate Strategy for policing in Gwent, commissioning of services and the recent development of my Police and Crime Plan, that we have worked closely on together and will continue to do so.

The report also highlights that the primary purpose of the police is prevention and that Police and Crime Commissioners have “considerable power and influence” in this area. As highlighted earlier in my response, this primary role can be severely impacted by the lack of mental health resources available to the public. However, I do as PCC provide grant funding and commission services to try and divert people away from crime. One example of a success story in Gwent is the funding my office provides to Positive Futures to provide sport, physical activity and mentoring opportunities to engage young people, often diverting them away from crime and anti-social behaviour. I also continued to fund the delivery of Gwent’s Early Action Together project and its pilot intervention in the Newport pathfinder area during 2021/22. Newport Live received £123,457 of funding from me to continue with the pilot project to build on the existing safeguarding hub response in Newport after Home Office funding ceased in March 2020.

The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner in the criminal justice system is important. In Wales, partnership working, not only between police forces but also with our partners, is something I believe we do well. For example, a member of my staff is currently seconded to the All Wales Criminal Justice Board Coordinator role. The Board brings together the four Welsh local criminal justice boards as well as the Welsh Government and Home Office to develop policy and strategy aimed at reducing reoffending and crime across Wales and is the overarching body that has responsibility for the delivery of Integrated Offender Management Cymru. This highlights the importance all partners in the criminal justice arena in Wales place on partnership working.

Overall, I am pleased to see that forces are generally providing a good service to the public although there is always room to improve. I look forward to continuing to work with the Chief Constable and partners locally, across Wales and nationally to improve policing further for the public. As has already been stated by the Chief Constable, I would also like to wish Sir Thomas Winsor all the best in his future endeavors.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Cuthbert', written in a cursive style.

Jeff Cuthbert B.Sc., MCIPD
Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent