



**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**
for Leicester,
Leicestershire & Rutland
Your Communities - Your Commissioner

Date: 22/01/2026

Dear Lee Freeman, KPM,

I write in response to HMICFRS' report 'An Inspection into how Effectively the Police Investigate Crime'. I welcome the report's detailed, evidence-based assessment of investigative policing practice nationally, and the clarity with which it identifies systemic challenges affecting outcomes for victims, investigative quality, workforce capability, supervision and digital evidence handling. The Report provides a timely and rigorous framework that I will use to hold the Chief accountable, ensuring these findings are addressed and that the force demonstrates measurable improvement surrounding investigative effectiveness and service to victims.

The report findings highlight a disconnect between investigative demand and capacity, with forces not consistently understanding the level and nature of investigative demand they face, resulting in workloads that outstrip available resources, frustrates investigators and limit capacity to progress cases effectively. This disconnect is particularly acute in volume crime and crimes involving digital complexity, leading to inconsistent service and delayed outcomes for victims. In Leicestershire, the PEEL 2023-2025 investigation identified similar pressures, noting that while leadership is adequate, investigative performance is constrained by resource and capability gaps, particularly in high-volume or complex crimes, with fewer positive outcomes being achieved than would be expected given crime levels. Leicestershire Police has responded through targeted recruitment, structured detective career pathways, and workforce planning designed to align resource to demand, ensuring that investigative capacity is better matched to local need.

The report also highlights the significance of crime recording, allocation, and early investigative processes in the quality of investigations. HMICFRS found evidence nationally that unnecessary delays in recording and allocating cases, notably online reported crime, limit the opportunity for effective evidence gathering and risk

assessment at early stages. Leicestershire Police has recognised this risk through the PEEL inspection and has already implemented enhanced quality assurance mechanisms for crime recording and improved supervision at initial allocation points, to ensure cases are allocated appropriately skilled teams and progressed without undue delay. Performance data is monitored regarding timeliness and allocation to efficiency at regular force governance and performance meetings, providing assurance that cases are managed efficiently from the point of first contact.

Supervision and investigative quality are evidently a consistent barrier to effective investigation, with insufficient oversight leading to poor lines of enquiry, inconsistent case progression and variable documentation of investigations. I recognise this echoes Leicestershire's PEEL assessment that Leicestershire Police 'doesn't always carry out relevant and proportionate lines of enquiry'. The Force has taken steps to address these issues through structured supervisory training programmes, case review panels and the introduction of enhanced dip-sampling procedures to capture learning and good practice. I will ensure the Chief is held accountable for improving quality and supervision across all crime types, notably where current practice falls below expected standards.

Digital capability and forensic capacity are also identified as a critical factor affecting investigative efficiency. The report highlights backlogs in digital forensics and under-utilisation of digital investigative tools, a barrier to timely and effective investigations. In response, Leicestershire Police has invested in digital forensics capacity, upgraded case management systems, and introduced mobile technology that enables investigators to progress cases from the point of first contact. These investments are critical, and I will continue to monitor the impact of these investments concerning improvements in investigative speed, efficiency and outcome quality through published performance data and independent scrutiny.

Victim experience is rightly highlighted throughout the HMICFRS report as integral to investigative effectiveness. The inspection highlights that inconsistent victim updates, lack of meaningful communication and limited needs assessments damage confidence and trust in policing. The PEEL inspection noted that investigatory outcomes and victim service require improvement and that the force must better understand the barriers of securing successful outcomes for victims. From my own personal contact with the public, there is anecdotal evidence that service to victims of crime require improvement. I will ensure to continue to hold the Chief to account for both compliance with the Victims' Code and demonstrable improvements in relevant performance

indicators, ensuring victims are engaged, informed, and supported throughout investigative processes.

The report reaffirms that effective investigations are fundamental to public confidence in policing, and that failures in investigation, delays or perceived inaction undermine trust and deter future reporting. Recent analysis highlights that police investigations nationwide are seen as under-resourced and overburdened, eroding public confidence in the criminal justice process. In Leicestershire, positive elements of policing including innovative crime prevention work and strong community engagement have been acknowledged in the 2023-2025 PEEL assessment, yet investigative performance remains an area requiring consistent improvement. I will ensure to prioritise transparency around performance, victim engagement, outcomes and timeliness will be central to the accountability framework, holding the Chief to account. This is alongside also asking the Chief Constable to look at reducing expenditure in other areas to free up resources to fund improvements to this area

The HMICFRS inspection provides a comprehensive national and evidence-based assessment of the challenges facing police investigations. The issues raised including investigative demand and capacity, recording and allocation, supervision and quality, digital capability and victim service, are reflected in Leicestershire's local inspection findings and planning documents. I am satisfied the force has already begun targeted improvement work, but I will ensure to maintain rigorous oversight of delivery. Through formal governance, performance reporting and public transparency, I will ensure to hold the Chief accountable to account for measurable improvements that align with HMICFRS' findings, and above all improve outcomes and confidence for victims of crime in Leicestershire.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rupert Matthews', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rupert Matthews,

Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland