

Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel

For Immediate Release
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HMIC Report

Cllr Fiona Chapman, Chair of Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel, said: "The Bedfordshire Police & Crime Panel carries out detailed scrutiny of the work of the Police & Crime Commissioner. The Panel has agreed to comment as follows on the recent HMIC Report and its grading of "inadequate" for the Beds Police Force.

Over the past five years, Bedfordshire has had three Chief Constables and two PCCs and our latest team had been working together for just six months when this inspection and report was made.

The Panel finds this report and grading particularly ill-timed as we have seen over the past ten months how the new team have agreed initiatives from the Commissioner's new Police Plan, which are well underway to implementation by the force. These are positive steps designed to deliver a good local police force. Unfortunately it appears, the inspection has taken no note of these improvements.

Public confidence is beginning to increase as the plans to bring back community policing are implemented and new rural hubs are being established around the county. The Panel has begun to see a lift in morale of hard-working staff and officers of Beds Police and we are very concerned that this unnecessarily negative report will set back both public opinion and staff morale at a crucial time.

The serious underfunding of Bedfordshire Police is very well documented and accepted nationally. The criticisms within this report can be directly attributed to having insufficient resource to deal with the complex crime faced within the county.

The Panel wish therefore to reassure the public that it is its view that the current team leading Beds Police are taking real steps to improve policing in Bedfordshire and are disappointed that the HMIC inspection had not taken on board the ongoing improvements. The main problem facing Bedfordshire Police is the inadequate funding from Central Government.

What is needed now is a period of consolidation and time to embed the changes and improvements being made by the leadership team of Bedfordshire Police which have the full support and backing of all the Panel."

-Ends-

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