

GWENT POLICE AUTHORITY

Strategic Performance and Planning Committee

Date: 5th November 2009 **Item No:** 6b

Heading: HMIC Inspection – Policing Pledge

Report Author: Chief Constable

SUMMARY

The Policing Pledge sets out ten minimum standards of service to the public that the Police Service promised to deliver from 1st January 2009. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has undertaken a review of the pledge to check progress made by forces in its first year. This review took place between April and August 2009. The main report (national strategic overview) was published on HMIC's website on 7 October along with individual force reports. This report is a summary of the national strategic overview, together with a synopsis of Gwent's individual performance.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

a). That members note the content of this report.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Policing Pledge is a series of ten minimum standards of service to the public that the Police Service promised to deliver from 1st January 2009.
- 1.2. Between April and August, 2009, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) carried out a review of the ten standards, to check progress made by forces in its first year.
- 1.3. The methodology HMIC used to arrive at the gradings included interviewing frontline staff including radio operators, telephone switchboard staff, local neighbourhood police constables and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). It also included an element of mystery shopping, which involved inspectors attending meetings, visiting enquiry desks, sending e-mails to neighbourhood policing teams and reading force websites. Inspectors spoke to victims of crime and complainants. To ensure consistency, the initial grades of forces were subject to a moderation process.
- 1.4. The main report (national strategic overview) was published on HMIC's website on 7th October 2009, along with individual force reports.

2. PROPOSAL FOR CONSIDERATION BY COMMITTEE AND CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 Forces were graded as excellent, good, fair or poor. They were graded for each pledge point and were also given an overall grade. In relation to the national picture, no forces received a grading of excellent, either for the individual pledge points or for the overall grade. Eight forces received an overall grading of good. Two forces received an overall grading of poor, which has prompted 'intervention' action from HMIC.
- 2.2 Most forces (33) received a grading of 'fair', which means a mixed performance with some areas requiring improvement. Of those forces graded as fair, some required only minor improvements to achieve a grading of good, whilst others required a much greater level of improvement.
- 2.3 Forces were also graded on their direction of travel, i.e. their efforts to improve performance in delivering the pledge. HMIC looked at whether forces sought feedback from the public, whether gaps were identified, including action taken to improve and whether the force's senior teams were leading on delivery of the pledge. Over half of forces (56%) were graded good on leadership, 40% were graded good at identifying gaps and 19% of forces were graded good in using feedback to improve performance.
- 2.4 Performance on the pledge points relating to neighbourhood policing and the handling of 999 and non-emergency calls were relatively strong areas. The national strategic overview report states that forces have taken steps to provide fair access to all. Police generally treated the public with respect, answered emergency calls quickly and responded to the vast majority of emergencies within target times, safely. All forces provided information to the public on crime levels in their area.
- 2.5 The most concerning aspects of the pledge review related to better treatment of victims, improvements in the way police call back or arrange visits to the public and more effective handling of dissatisfaction. In some areas, the public were not given the opportunity to agree priorities with police and in one force, 17% of non-emergency calls were abandoned in a week, after being transferred to other departments.
- 2.6 Jane Stichbury, Her Majesty's Inspector, said that "although the performance of most forces did not consistently match the level promised to the public, the majority of forces have made efforts to build a stronger relationship and dialogue with local people". She added: "Forces cannot deliver an effective public service without asking the public what they want. They must listen to the public, act on their concerns and keep them informed on the progress they have made".
- 2.7. In relation to individual force results, Gwent Police has performed well. As far as the ten standards of the pledge are concerned, Gwent achieved a grade of 'good' in five areas and a grade of 'fair' in the other five areas.

- 2.8. In relation to a comparison of our performance with other forces, Gwent was placed first in Wales; second against forces in our 'Most Similar Forces' group and joint ninth overall, out of the 43 forces nationally.
- 2.9 As well as reporting on the force's delivery of each Pledge standard, HMIC has also assessed and graded the efforts it was making to improve performance:
- Surveys and management meetings were being used to improve performance; public satisfaction and confidence data were taken into account. HMIC grade - FAIR.
 - The force had identified deficiencies in its delivery of the Pledge and was taking action in those areas. HMIC grade – FAIR
 - Implementation was led by the force's senior team, the Police Authority was involved, staff were being trained and the Pledge was communicated to staff and the public. HMIC grade – GOOD.
- 2.10 The report on the inspection of Gwent Police contained a number of recommendations to complete 'Work in Progress' and 'Areas for Improvement'. These will be captured and placed in an Action Plan, for implementation and monitoring purposes. Lead persons will be identified to progress the work required, together with timescales for completion. It is intended that the Plan will be placed on the force 'Tracker' database for ease of administration.
- 2.11 A 'pocket' version of the report received from HMIC, outlining the results achieved, can be found at Appendix 'A' and a copy of the full inspection findings report is available from the Service Development Department.

3. STAFFING/PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no staffing, or other personnel implications, attached to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the HMIC report.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Likewise, there are no specific financial implications attached to the implementation of the recommendations contained within the HMIC report. Should any financial implications later become apparent, these will be met from existing budgets.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Full consultation took place with all parties involved in the HMIC inspection process. These included the Chief Executive and members of the Police Authority, the Chief Constable and members of the public where applicable. Similarly, interested parties were also consulted on accuracy etc, on receipt of the draft copy of the final report.

6. PROJECT ASSESSMENT FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY MATTERS

- 6.1 This project/proposal has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Force's Equality Schemes, and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The final report has been assessed in relation to risks to Gwent Police, the Police Authority and members of the public. No significant risks have been identified.

8. STAYING AHEAD (2011 REVIEW)

- 8.1 The final report has also been assessed in relation to the progress of implementation of the Staying Ahead Review. No implications have been identified at this time.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The inspection of the Policing Pledge by HMIC produced mixed results for forces nationally. HMIC concluded that forces must work harder to meet their Pledge commitment. However, on a comparison of individual force performance, Gwent Police did well - achieving grades of 'good' in five areas of the policing pledge and 'fair' grades in the remaining five areas of the pledge. In relation to a comparison of our performance with other forces, Gwent was placed first in Wales; second against forces in our 'Most Similar Forces' group and joint ninth overall, out of the 43 forces nationally.
- 9.2 There is, however, still room for improvement and the focus of attention during the next twelve months will be to implement the recommendations outlined in the 'Work in Progress' and 'Areas for Improvement' sections of the report. These will be captured and placed in an Action Plan, for implementation and monitoring purposes. It is intended that an appropriate governance structure will be put in place and the Action Plan will be administered via the force 'Tracker' database.

10. CONTACT OFFICER

- 10.1 Mr John Metcalfe, Head of Service Improvement, Service Development Department.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 None.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix 'A' – Copy of report entitled "Delivering the Policing Pledge – Gwent Police"