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Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP

Home Secretary

2 Marsham Street

London

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12<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Dear Home Secretary

**HMICFRS Report: Cambridgeshire Constabulary vetting and counter-corruption arrangements inspection.**

Under Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, as Police and Crime Commissioner I am pleased to provide my formal response to the report by HMICFRS entitled 'Cambridgeshire Constabulary vetting and counter-corruption arrangements inspection.'

Both the Chief Constable and I welcome the publication of this report, which followed an inspection by HMICFRS into the collaborated Professional Standards Department (PSD). The inspection, undertaken in September 2021, examined the effectiveness of vetting processes, IT monitoring, and counter-corruption activities.

The Chief Constable's response to the recommendations is shown at Appendix 1.

I welcome the Chief Constable's response to the two areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS within their report.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary is part of a well-established tri-force collaboration with Bedfordshire Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary. This collaboration provides a range of shared operational and specialist capabilities, including a collaborated PSD. PSD's services comprise of Investigations (public complaints, conduct, crime), Anti-Corruption, Prevent, Vetting, Complaint Handling, Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) Liaison, Ethics, Learning, Analytics, and Administration. PSD are committed to maintaining and improving public confidence and quality of service across the three forces.

I continue to remain resolute in my commitment to ensure that the police act with integrity and social responsibility, promoting a culture that is inclusive, diverse and takes equality seriously. My Ethical policing theme was one of five themes developed to tackle crime and keep communities safe. These five themes are contained within my Police and Crime Plan 2021 to 2024. I am pleased to say that the response from the Chief Constable provides me with the necessary assurance that they continue to deliver against my Plan.

I hope this response, and that of the Chief Constable, provides reassurance regarding the ongoing commitment both Cambridgeshire Constabulary and I have in improving how the vetting of the workforce is managed and how systems are being developed to monitor and respond to disproportionality in vetting decisions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Darryl Preston', written in a cursive style.

**Darryl Preston**

**Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough**

Enc - Appendix 1 – Cambridgeshire Constabulary's response to HMICFRS report 'Cambridgeshire Constabulary vetting and counter-corruption arrangements inspection.'

## Appendix 1

### **Cambridgeshire Constabulary's response to the two identified areas for improvement in the HMICFRS report 'Cambridgeshire Constabulary vetting and counter-corruption arrangements inspection':**

Bedfordshire Police, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, and Hertfordshire Constabulary are part of a well-established tri-force collaboration with a range of shared operational and specialist capabilities, including a collaborated Professional Standards Department (BCH PSD). BCH PSD's services comprise investigations (public complaints, conduct, crime), Anti-Corruption, Prevent, Vetting, Complaint Handling, Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) Liaison, Ethics, Learning, Analytics and Administration.

#### **1. The force should improve how it manages the vetting of its workforce, to make sure that post holders have valid clearance for the role undertaken.**

**Force response:** This area for improvement is accepted. BCH PSD completed a full review of its Vetting function and a 3-year demand forecast in early 2022. This culminated in a bid for significant additional resourcing to manage the vetting workload. A permanent uplift of 9.5 Vetting Officers, 1 Vetting Supervisor, and 1 Business Support Assistant was agreed. Temporary additional resourcing of 4.5 Vetting Officers was also requested to clear a backlog of individuals with lapsed or insufficient vetting clearance.

The permanent resourcing should be sufficient to meet new vetting demand, however the temporary funding that was initially agreed has recently been withdrawn due to other financial challenges. Further work is now required to assess the forecast timescale to reduce the number of individuals with lapsed or insufficient vetting in the absence of dedicated temporary staff. In the interim, re-vetting will continue to be undertaken on a risk and prioritisation basis.

#### **2. The force should further develop its system to monitor and respond to disproportionality in its vetting decisions.**

**Force response:** This area for improvement is accepted. BCH PSD analyse disproportionality in vetting decisions, alongside disproportionality in other PSD business areas, at a quarterly PSD Scrutiny Panel. This analysis currently focuses on ethnicity but will be extended to monitor the impact of decisions on other protected characteristics.