

Mr Nick Ramsay AM  
Chair  
National Assembly for Wales Public Accounts  
Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
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Ein Cyf / Our Ref: AJ/AMJ/1432

13 January 2017

Dear Mr Ramsay AM

Thank you for your letter dated 15 December 2016 and the opportunity to share my views on the Auditor General for Wales' report on Community Safety in Wales. The Chief Constable and I have several concerns in relation to this report which we have shared with the Wales Audit Office, many of which I also refer to below.

Firstly, the report correctly identified that the definition of Community Safety is much broader than crime and includes environmental and quality of life issues. However, the focus of the report is very much on crime and did not consider the wider areas of Community Safety. To successfully review Community Safety in Wales all aspects of this subject should have been reviewed. I therefore question the methodology and the reliability of the evidence gathered during the compilation process for this report.

Given the report's focus on crime, it is disappointing that no police officers or police staff were included within the consultation process. The outcome of that lack of engagement is a report that demonstrates a lack of appreciation as to the existing statutory framework and the responsibilities that lie with me as the Police & Crime Commissioner, the Chief Constable and other agencies.

It also, in my view, offers a poor example of a single agency, narrow assessment of what is a broad topic. The report appears to contain a one dimensional approach to volume crime which fails to take into account the wider investment in the vulnerability agenda, including cyber-crime, Modern Slavery and Child Sexual Exploitation, amongst others, where significant investments and improvements have been seen.

The report consequently fails to engage Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and others and also the plethora of performance information and data available including most obviously the Crime Survey England & Wales. Much of the data within the latter and other information available is in stark contrast to some of the asserted findings and recommendations.

In reference to the recommendations, they do not support or reflect the importance of the Police and Crime Plan. There is no need for a national strategy. The strategy is set in Wales by the four Police and Crime Plans which are subsequently delivered through regional and local plans. Other recommendations made by the report are already in place and highlight the insufficient evidence gathering of this report<sup>1</sup>.

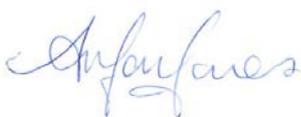
The report highlights the need to demonstrate how my Plan was influenced by public consultation. I consult with the people of North Wales throughout the year whether it is an informal conversation at several events or during my formal consultation evenings and third sector event. I also open an online survey to the public to comment on my perspective policing priorities. The evidence gathered during these consultation evenings will be published on my website.

There are a number of examples of how I and North Wales Police engage with partners to deliver a range of community safety initiatives, many of which are included within the Safer Communities Board Regional Plan I refer to above.

In summary, I believe the report makes a number of assertions and sweeping recommendations based on little evidence base. The report states that comparisons have been drawn across Wales; however, a greater proportion of fieldwork appears to have been undertaken in North Wales which will not give a balanced view of the whole country. The report also does not appear to be representative of WG arrangements.

I would be happy to provide further detail if required and would also be happy to meet with the committee to discuss my concerns further.

Yours sincerely



Arfon Jones  
Police and Crime Commissioner

c.c. Chief Constable Mark Polin

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendation 3 and 4 suggest further planning is required through the creation of action plans and pooled budgets. These measures are already in place with the Safer Communities Board and its Regional Plan which seeks to achieve the same outcomes as my Police and Crime Plan.