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Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
London
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Your Ref:

Our Ref: RH LG 024 2016

Date: 8th July 2016

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Dear Home Secretary

Re: HMIC Revisit Inspection, *PEEL* Police Effectiveness (vulnerability)

I am writing to you following the report from her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) PEEL revisit inspection of Essex Police around the strand of 'effectiveness' (vulnerability).

I welcome HMIC's re-inspection of Essex Police and I am encouraged by their findings that the force has made 'good progress' in its approach to vulnerability. I am also pleased that HMIC has found that there has been 'a change of mind-set and approach to vulnerability' amongst Essex Police officers and staff. I pay tribute to all the hard work that the force has undertaken, and to the efforts of police officers and staff to keep the vulnerable safe.

Last year, HMIC found Essex Police to be 'inadequate at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm and supporting victims'. This was not an acceptable position.

In the light of this report on the revisit inspection, the public can have increased confidence that Essex Police is now protecting the vulnerable more effectively and is better at identifying situations where people – young or old, men or women – are at risk of serious harm. Protecting vulnerable people, whether they are victims of domestic abuse or young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, must be at the heart of Essex Police's activity. It is important that we see further progress in this essential work.

I recognise the report highlights areas where there is still more to do. HMIC notes that the sheer number of suspected online paedophilia cases means that Essex Police's specialist team is not able to investigate all of them. HMIC adds that the force's decision to allocate lower-risk cases to officers outside the specialist unit, with appropriate support, is pragmatic; I believe we must in time go beyond that and put in place an operational solution which is sustainable.

I note that HMIC also found that awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation has improved markedly across all levels of the force. However, I believe we can do still more to provide comprehensive guidance to police officers and staff.

I also note that while identifying improvements in Essex Police's work in tackling domestic abuse, there are still a high number of outstanding perpetrators and the force must put in place a plan to reduce this number and bring these offenders to justice.

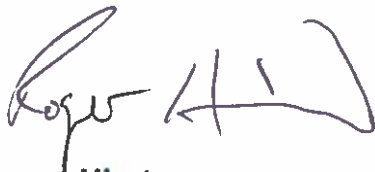
As PCC, I will work together with the Chief Constable to deliver more complete solutions in these important areas. We will monitor progress on the work of Essex Police in protecting vulnerable people as part of our regular scrutiny programme, and publish details of this work.

As we develop a new Police and Crime Plan for Essex over the coming months, I am committed to ensuring that tackling horrific crimes such as domestic abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation, protecting vulnerable victims and bringing perpetrators of crimes against the vulnerable to justice will feature as priorities for Essex Police.

I would like to close by recognising the positive findings of HMIC but also noting that this good work needs to be maintained, monitored and further enhanced to ensure that Essex Police does more to keep the vulnerable safe.

With regards

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger Hirst', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Roger Hirst
Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex