



Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland
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Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
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23 July 2024

Dear Home Secretary,

Congratulations on your appointment to the new Government. I wish you success in what is undoubtedly a challenging role, overseeing the Home Office and keeping the UK safe and secure.

I'm writing to raise my concerns about the use of the current police funding formula, that continues to disadvantage areas of high deprivation and high crime, like Cleveland.

Despite promises of the previous Government to review and revise the police funding formula, this did not take place and as such, Cleveland Police continues to be woefully underfunded for its needs.

In the recently published State of Policing Assessment, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary Andy Cooke specifically identifies Cleveland as victims of the broken funding formula.

The force is highlighted as having the lowest number of officers compared to its number in March 2010 – a reduction of 12 percent. Mr Cooke himself states this is “worrying, considering its policing area contains some of the most deprived communities in England and Wales.”

In comparison, statistically safer areas such as Surrey or Cambridgeshire have seen officer numbers increase by over 20 percent over the same time period. This is simply not fair.

To meet the high levels of neighbourhood crime, violence and antisocial behaviour, the Cleveland area has relied on the contributions of local people through their Council Tax. In effect, we have been asking local people to pay twice for the same service.

As an area that includes several of the most deprived wards in England and Wales, it is frankly outrageous that we have been forced to place the burden of paying for policing on our communities.

Mr Cooke recognises that the current system “means the more grant-dependent, deprived and urban parts of England and Wales are more likely to be underfunded compared to their needs.”

Whilst covering a geographically small area, Cleveland Police faces a policing challenge more in keeping with larger metropolitan forces, but without the same level of investment and resources.

As of September 2023, the force had the highest rate of police recorded crime per 1,000 population in the country – higher than major cities like Manchester, Liverpool and London.

The lack of funding affects the quality of the policing service delivered and places untold strain on the wellbeing and resilience of dedicated officers, staff and volunteers, who work tirelessly to protect and keep our communities safe.

Cleveland Police has already made great strides in maximising its resources and improving the service it delivers to communities. Now removed from HMICFRS national oversight arrangements, the force has moved into a new phase of proactive, preventative policing.

However, with increased resources, the Chief Constable has aims to further break the cycle of reactive policing and reduce the significant daily demand the force faces.

Every single person deserves to live a life free from the fear of crime, danger or harm. This includes the 600,000 diverse, interesting and proud people who call Cleveland home.

They deserve to have a police force who can respond to their needs, work proactively in their communities to keep streets safe and protect the most vulnerable, of which there are many.

Similarly, the hardworking officers, staff and volunteers of Cleveland Police need the time, space and energy to tackle the long-entrenched issues that cause crime in the first place.

I know that the demands on you as Home Secretary will be immense and I have no doubt that you will be receiving significant representations from elected members across the country on many different issues.

With a more equitable distribution of funds, I am confident that Cleveland Police could deliver even more significant and wide-ranging improvements to the safety of the

communities I represent and my request is that our circumstances are considered in any discussions and deliberations you have with your officials on such matters.

I am enthusiastic about the agenda you and the new government have set out in terms of policing and crime.

I share your policy priorities and within my draft Police and Crime Plan I have a clear commitment to community policing, tackling serious violence, as well as improving the safety of women and girls.

These clearly marry up to your focus on more neighbourhood officers across the country, a reduction in knife crime and the pledge to halve violence against women and girls.

I look forward to working closely with you to help deliver on those key themes that we share. I would like to invite you to visit Cleveland and meet with myself and chief officers, where we can give you a warm Teesside welcome and show you the challenges, and the opportunities, that present across our area.

I am tremendously proud to represent my home as Police and Crime Commissioner and I am aspirational and hopeful for our future. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke at the end of the "t".

Matt Storey
Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland