Alison Lowe
Deputy Mayor for
Policing & Crime

5th February 2025

Dear Home Secretary,

Re: An inspection of the Yorkshire and Humber regional response to serious and organised crime

I am pleased to see that West Yorkshire Police (WYP) have received an 'Outstanding' grading for how they tackle serious and organised crime (SOC). This grading is well deserved, and the report outlines much of the great work undertaken by the force. This includes work with partner agencies to strengthen the joint response to SOC, innovative SOC local profiles, significant dedicated resources to tackle SOC and use of the lifetime offender management team to manage offenders effectively.

In West Yorkshire, we have a joined-up approach with WYP and I meet quarterly with police and local authority Community Safety Partnership representatives through the West Yorkshire SOC Partnership Board. These meetings provide an opportunity to review progress across the region and ensure a coordinated approach to tackling serious and organised crime.

A key focus of this work is the Clear, Hold, Build programme, where activity across project areas is regularly assessed to identify further opportunities for collaboration. This is supported by investment from the Mayor's Safer Communities Fund, which provides grants for grassroots initiatives aimed at diverting individuals away from serious and organised crime under the "Hold" and "Build" pillars.

I also chair the West Yorkshire Anti-Slavery Partnership, which brings together agencies to address child criminal exploitation, labour exploitation and sexual exploitation. This partnership strengthens joint working between the police and local partners on issues closely linked to serious and organised crime.

Alongside this, West Yorkshire Police are delivering a Home Office-funded operation targeting County Lines drug activity, while the Economic Crime Unit has recovered almost £6 million in criminal assets in the financial year to December 2025. We also receive regular briefings on the force's work to address non-recent child sexual exploitation, which HMICFRS has described as a well-run investigation.

As the lead force of the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Organised Crime Unit (YHROCU), I feel reassured that WYP will ensure that the areas for improvement outlined by the inspectorate are fully implemented. WYP report to myself and the Mayor on overall ROCU activity, as well as to the new Partnership Board, where performance is shared with all Yorkshire and Humber constituent members. This includes oversight of the signing of the new Section 22A agreement.

Following the inspection and ahead of the publication of the HMICFRS Inspection Report, the Head of YHROCU convened a quarterly HMIC extraordinary meeting cycle with the Regional Heads of Serious and Organised Crime. This forum facilitated shared learning across the region. The meeting cycle will continue and will serve as the governance mechanism for overseeing the action plans and monitoring progress against the two Areas for Improvement, as well as other issues identified within the report.

Regards,

Alison Lowe, Deputy Mayor of West Yorkshire for Policing and Crime

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Our response to key recommendation in the inspection report

The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Organised Crime Unit and its constituent forces should improve how the region procures and uses technical surveillance equipment

WYP have Technical surveillance units that provide specialist surveillance equipment to support organised crime investigations. The YHROCU and some regional forces have retained their own technical surveillance units.

A review by the force found that most other serious and organised crime policing regions collaborate on the procurement and use of technical surveillance equipment. This approach is intended to ensure compatibility and promote the sharing of resources across regional boundaries. However, within this region, individual forces have been purchasing certain technical surveillance equipment independently of the YHROCU, despite the often significant associated costs.

This area of work is currently being led by the YHROCU Technical Surveillance Unit (TSU) Manager, with support from the Force TSU Managers. While the Area for Improvement focuses on procurement of TSU resources, it also provides an opportunity to consider whether YHROCU should assume responsibility for delivering both Level 1 and Level 2 TSU provision across the region. At present, YHROCU provides Level 2 TSU services for all forces and Level 1 services for West Yorkshire Police, while the other three forces maintain their own Level 1 capability. This issue was discussed at the CCOB in 2025, where the decision was made to retain the existing delivery model. The YHROCU TSU Manager is, however, exploring whether this position could be reconsidered, as consolidating both Level 1 and Level 2 provision within YHROCU may enable more efficient and effective procurement processes and deliver overall cost savings for the forces.

The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Organised Crime Unit and its constituent forces should improve how they work together to tackle serious and organised crime

The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Organised Crime Unit (YHROCU), and its constituent forces, should improve:

- **the quality and consistency of 4P plans;**
- **how they record disruption activity on the agency and partner management information system (APMIS); and**
- **the recording of unmet demand on APMIS.**

WYP have assured the Deputy Mayor's office that the delivery of improving the quality and consistency of 4P plans will be led by the YHROCU SOC Coordinator. The approach will be for all forces to adopt the NPCC 4P IT solution. This digital solution will ensure consistent use and storage of documentation. To improve quality of plans training will be delivered by the YHROCU SOC Coordinator to LROs and SIOs. The NPCC team have already been delivering training into the YHROCU on the app and its use.

Regarding the recording of unmet demand on APMIS, nationally the classification of unmet demand and associated ownership in the SOC system remains unresolved. There remains difficulty and inconsistency in the practical application of the current guidance available for the recording of unmet demand. This has been raised with the National SOC Portfolio Officer and NPCC SOC Lead and further clarification and guidance is awaited. In the interim the YHROCU ROCTA Manager will continue to work with the National Crime Agencies Federated Tasking Team (NCA FTT) who provide the governance for SOC system tasking and APMIS across the national network. The ROCTA Manager will deliver the guidance through the Regional Force SPOCs. Implementation will be driven by the Heads of SOC for their respective Force. Unmet demand will also be identified in the YHROCU Multi Agency Regional Tasking & Oversight Meeting (MARTOM) to identify system challenges and matters requiring escalation, this meeting is attended by all YH forces, Partners, and NCA FTT.