



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

**Valuing the Police:
Preparedness Inspection**

**Warwickshire Police
July 2011**

Purpose of the review

The Police Service, along with all other parts of the public sector, is facing its biggest financial challenge in a generation. This could be seen either as an opportunity to innovate and refresh – or as a reason to continue as is and see services cut back.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has been heavily involved in monitoring the Service's reaction and preparedness for cutting crime while reducing costs. As part of this, in Spring 2011 we carried out an inspection of all 43 forces and authorities in England and Wales, to assess:

- how they are planning to meet the financial challenge; and
- what the impact will be on the service they provide to the public.

This report summarises the findings for Warwickshire Police. A thematic report, *Adapting to Austerity*, which brings together findings from all 43 forces, is also available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

Findings for Warwickshire Police

What is the financial challenge in Warwickshire?

Warwickshire Police and Warwickshire Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£22.9m** cash reduction to their budget over the four years of the comprehensive spending review period (2011/12–14/15). In real terms (ie when inflation is taken into account), this equates to 18% of their gross revenue expenditure.

Are the force and authority prepared to meet this financial challenge?

The force and authority clearly understood the scale of the financial challenge facing them, and have considered a broad range of options in developing a plan to meet it. This outlined some savings from collaborating with other forces and local partners, and service re-design. However, the main element was the introduction of a new, leaner policing model in May 2011.

At the time of inspection, plans were in place to make £13.5m of savings by 2013/14 (year three of the comprehensive spending review period), which is 59% of the total financial requirement. The outstanding gap is significant and the force and authority have realistically acknowledged that service reduction may be required to make up the remaining £9.4m if savings cannot be found within the strategic alliance with West Merica Police.

What will be the impact on the number of police officers and staff?

HMIC asked forces and authorities to provide data on proposed changes to their workforce between March 2010 and March 2015. However, Warwickshire Police did not at the time have this detail for the whole period, as the following table shows.

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	973	765	138
31 March 2012 (proposed)	882	600	116

March 2010 figures have been used as the baseline, because most forces began a recruitment freeze in that year, and as a result workforce numbers started to fall.

The force and authority's plans for the workforce will continue to be refined as the change programme progresses.

What will be the impact on service to the public?

The force and authority were confident that the introduction of the new policing model would result in more officers being visible and available to the public, and that neighbourhood teams would be maintained. The police authority will monitor performance to determine the impact of the cuts on delivery of service to the public. Clear governance arrangements were in place to oversee progress.

A communications strategy was in place and routine public consultation had been undertaken for some time to identify the public's priorities. Clear messages have been received by the authority from the community about the areas they wish to see protected. The authority used the consultation to inform the shape of the new policing model.

Does the force have targets to reduce crime and ASB?

The first job of the police is to reduce crime and keep the peace; and in 2010, Theresa May, the Home Secretary, stated that she expects forces and authorities to make financial cuts while still reducing crime and without damaging the front line.

Warwickshire's *Policing Plan* includes objectives to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the coming year.

