

18 July 2013

## **Durham Constabulary has made good progress in meeting its financial challenge, finds HMIC**

*Durham Constabulary has responded well to the challenge in this spending review period, it has already found 79% of the savings it needs, and has plans in place to deliver all but £0.5m of the remainder by 2015.*

In a report published today, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has found:

### **Progress in making savings**

- Durham Constabulary has identified that it needs to save £22.2m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015). The force has planned how it will save £21.7m of the £22.2m required by March 2015. It therefore still has £0.5m to find. HMIC would expect the force to close this gap given its track record, and the force anticipates that it will deliver the remaining savings.
- While as a proportion of its overall budget (16%) this savings requirement is broadly in line with most other forces, HMIC considers that Durham Constabulary faces a moderate challenge. This is because the amount of money it spends on policing is lower than most other forces, but it has a higher number of police officers and the amount it spends on each officer is higher than most other forces. However, it spends less on its police staff employees compared to most other forces.

### **Workforce changes and protecting the front line**

- The force is reducing police officer numbers by limiting recruitment and holding vacancies and as a result, by the end of the spending review period, it is planned that there will be 206 fewer police officers. This means the number of police officers is planned to reduce by 14% between March 2010 and March 2015. This is a greater reduction than in most other forces.
- There is evidence that Durham Constabulary is successfully protecting frontline posts as it makes these cuts. Between March 2010 and March 2015, the proportion of police officers in frontline, crime-fighting roles is planned to increase from 88% to 90%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.
- The force has also made some police staff redundant and not replaced others as they have left (e.g. through retirements and resignations). As a result, by the end of the spending review period, it is planned that there will be 95 fewer police staff. This means the number of police staff is planned to reduce by 10% between March 2010 and March 2015 - this is less than in most other forces. The force plans to reduce the number of police community support officers (PCSOs) by two officers only, or 1%; this is a smaller reduction than in most other forces.

### **Impact on the public**

- Over the first two years of the spending review, recorded crime (excluding fraud) fell by 17%, which is more than the figure for England and Wales (13%).
- Victim satisfaction remains high at 89%, which is higher than other forces.

### **Future challenges**

- HMIC is confident that the force can deliver the savings in the remaining years of the spending review and this is supported by a good track record of delivery. The force is well placed to face future challenges.

HM Inspector of Constabulary for the Northern Region, Roger Baker, said:

*“Durham Constabulary has made a good start in its challenge to cut spending by £22.2m by 2015. It has already found nearly 80% of the savings it needs.*

*“Because of its good track record in managing change so far, HMIC is confident that the force will achieve its savings target. The force has stayed focused on making sure that the cuts do not damage the service they provide to local people. We have seen crime falling more quickly in Durham than elsewhere in England and Wales, and victim satisfaction with policing is higher than the average.*

*“The response to the spending review has been well led and the force has a comprehensive and effective approach to engaging staff and equipping them at all levels to manage change and deliver an improved service.*

*“HMIC will continue to monitor the force for the remainder of the spending review period.”*

The full report for Durham Constabulary, along with the national thematic review, can be found at [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk)

### **Notes to Editors:**

1. The thematic report ‘Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge’ can be found at [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk)
2. Victim satisfaction for this force has a confidence interval of  $\pm 1.6\%$
3. HMIC’s July 2012 report ‘Policing in austerity: One year on’ and July 2011 report ‘Adapting to Austerity’ along with supporting materials can be found at [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk)
4. In October 2010, the government announced that the central funding provided to the police service would reduce by 20% in the four years between March 2011 and March 2015.
5. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is an independent inspectorate, inspecting policing in the public interest, and rigorously examines the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces to tackle crime and terrorism, improve criminal justice and raise confidence. HMIC inspects all 43 police forces in England and Wales together with other major policing bodies.
6. For further information, HMIC’s press office can be contacted during office hours from 8:30am – 5:30pm Monday – Friday on 0203 513 0600.
7. HMIC’s out-of-hours press office line for urgent media enquiries is 07836 217 729.