



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

**Valuing the Police:  
Preparedness Inspection**

**Gloucestershire Constabulary  
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 Gloucestershire Constabulary. A thematic report, *Adapting to Austerity*, which brings together findings from all 43 forces, is also available from [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk).

## Findings for Gloucestershire Constabulary

### What is the financial challenge in Gloucestershire?

Gloucestershire Constabulary and Gloucestershire Police Authority reported that they are facing an **£18m** 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 13% of their gross revenue expenditure.

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

The constabulary and authority have been identifying and addressing areas for cost reduction since 2009. This work has included the creation of a new operational structure; this was implemented on 01 April 2011, and has already saved the organisation £4.2m.

A high-level summary identifies where and when the constabulary and authority will realise savings over the comprehensive spending review period, with clear governance arrangements and programme management to make sure this stays on track. At time of inspection, a full four-year plan was not yet complete, but good progress was being made.

We found over 55% of the savings were realised in years one and two, with saving milestones set out for years three and four.

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

Gloucestershire Constabulary planned to make the following changes to its workforce numbers.

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	1,309	729	148
31 March 2015 (proposed)	1,184	550	150

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 proposed figures shown for March 2015 were provided to HMIC by the force in June 2011.

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 constabulary and authority were clearly committed both to maintaining the number of visible officers and to improving the proportion who are available to the public. This is evidenced by the intention to keep the reduction in police officer posts to a minimum, and by the recent restructuring, which aims to provide a more consistent and efficient police service for local communities.

The constabulary and authority have actively engaged the public in helping to decide its course – over and above any traditional local policing consultation – and a comprehensive media strategy was in place to inform staff, stakeholders, external partners, key individuals and the wider public of all proposed organisational changes.

## 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.

Gloucestershire's *Policing Plan* includes objectives to reduce crime and ASB in the coming year.

