



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Valuing the Police: Preparedness Inspection

**Hampshire 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 Hampshire Constabulary. A thematic report, *Adapting to Austerity*, which brings together findings from all 43 forces, is also available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

Findings for Hampshire Constabulary

What is the financial challenge in Hampshire?

Hampshire Constabulary and Hampshire Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£40m** 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 10% of their gross revenue expenditure.

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

The force and the authority understood the scale of the financial challenge. They have considered a full range of options for delivering the required savings, including service redesign (restructuring from six operational command units to three), the possibility of outsourcing support services and exploiting opportunities for economies of scale through collaboration with neighbouring Thames Valley Police.

The force and authority planned to make the required savings taking into consideration the public's demand on the force, local threats and risk to service delivery, along with local, regional and some national priorities.

HMIC found that Hampshire Constabulary and their police authority had an ambitious savings plan in place. They aim to be a top performing force in key performance areas and deliver this at lower than average cost. The force and authority were aiming to exceed the projected funding gap of £40m by approximately 25%, thus achieving £50m of savings. The rationale given was that this would provide a financial cushion to cope with unforeseen changes or planned savings that do not materialise.

At the time of inspection, there was a detailed plan in place for meeting the savings for the first year of the comprehensive spending review (CSR) period only (2011/12).

However, there was an overall outline of where and when the force planned to realise savings over the whole CSR period. Good progress was being made in developing the detail for the remaining years of the CSR period. The force and authority also had strong governance arrangements in place to ensure the plan remains on track.

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

Hampshire have planned that their workforce will change as follows:

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	3,748	2,424	347
31 March 2015 (proposed)	3,294	1,563	337

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 force and the authority have a clear commitment to protecting visible policing and to improve the availability of officers to the public. This is evidenced by their intention to keep the reduction in police officer posts to a minimum and retain officer numbers within response policing, neighbourhoods and local crime investigation teams.

The force priorities remain the same despite significant proposed cuts in some areas, namely to strive to reduce crime and protect the people they serve. Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) continues to be a priority too. The force approached partners, such as local authorities, to establish what staffing reductions they intend to make and what impact this may have on community safety. However, at that point partners were still finalising budgets and could not provide this information. Therefore, at the time of the inspection the force was not in a position to assess the likely impact of partner cuts on the demand for policing services.

A communications strategy was in place to inform local communities of potential changes. The public were also consulted about the plans and there was evidence that their feedback had influenced the change programme.

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.

Hampshire's *Policing Plan* includes targets to reduce crime and ASB.

