

18 July 2013

## **Leicestershire Police has made some progress in meeting its financial challenge, but has more to do, finds HMIC**

*Leicestershire Police has made some progress in meeting its financial challenge. It has more to do if it is to put in place the sorts of efficient ways of working seen in many other forces. However, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is encouraged that the force is now developing a plan to achieve this.*

In a report published today, HMIC has found:

### **Progress in making savings**

- Leicestershire Police has identified that it needs to save £33.9m over the four years of the spending review (ie between March 2011 and March 2015). The force has planned how to save £27.6m, it still has £6.2m to find. Most other forces have worked out how they will make all the required savings. The force's funding gap is therefore a concern.
- This savings requirement is 17% of its overall budget and is broadly in line with most other forces. The force's position is not without challenge as it has below average spends on policing per head of population compared with other forces in England and Wales, so it will be harder to drive out further savings.

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

- The force is reducing police officer numbers by limiting recruitment and holding vacancies. As a result, by the end of the spending review period it is planned that there will be 243 fewer police officers. This means the number of police officers in the county is planned to reduce by 10% between March 2010 and March 2015, which is similar to the reduction in most other forces.
- The force is protecting frontline posts as it makes these cuts. This is commendable. Between March 2010 and March 2015, the proportion of police officers in frontline crime-fighting is planned to increase from 91% to 93%. 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. The number of police staff is seemingly planned to increase by March 2015 (compared to March 2010), however, this figure is skewed because staff that are shared between several forces (as they work in collaboration) show on the books as full time Leicestershire employees. The force will lose four police and community support officers (PCSOs). This 2% reduction is smaller than that planned by most other forces.
- However, with an outstanding funding gap it is likely that the force will need to make more workforce reductions than it is currently planning.

### **Impact on the public**

- Over the first two years of the spending review recorded crime (excluding fraud) fell by 17% in Leicestershire. This is a good outcome as it is considerably greater than the 13% reduction recorded across England and Wales as a whole.
- Victim satisfaction remains high at 84.5%.

### **Future challenges**

- Unless the force successfully closes the funding gap for this spending review period the force will find it more of a challenge than others to make the further savings required after March 2015 while maintaining its high level of service to the public.

HM Inspector of Constabulary for the Eastern Region, Zoë Billingham, said:

*“Leicestershire Police’s savings requirement is broadly in line with other forces. However, its financial challenge is made more difficult because it already spends less on policing and has lower costs than many other forces.*

*“The force still has more than £6m to find if it is to close its funding gap by March 2015. It now recognises that it must act quickly to develop plans to close this gap.*

*“The force has not taken the range of decisive action that HMIC has seen in many other forces, in order to put in place new, more efficient ways of working.*

*“As a result Leicestershire Police is not currently as well placed as it should be to meet the demands of the next round of budget reductions in 2015/16. However, HMIC is encouraged that the force, under the governance of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), is now developing a more sustainable approach. HMIC will revisit the force in the autumn to assess its plans for closing the outstanding gap.”*

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

The full report for Leicestershire Police, 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  $\pm 1.8\%$
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.