



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Valuing the Police: Preparedness Inspection

**Leicestershire 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 Leicestershire 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 Leicestershire Constabulary

What is the financial challenge in Leicestershire?

Leicestershire Constabulary and Leicestershire Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£34.4m** 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 16% of their gross revenue expenditure.

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

The force and authority started their programme of reducing costs in the summer of 2009, which is much earlier than most forces. This meant that by the beginning of the comprehensive spending review (CSR) period they had already identified and realised £15m of savings through a restructuring of local policing and centralisation of support services. This has given them a 'breathing space' to work on a sustainable long-term plan for the remaining three years of the CSR period.

HMIC found that Leicestershire Constabulary and Leicestershire Police Authority clearly understood the scale of the challenge facing them and had considered a range of options in developing a plan to meet the required savings for the first year of the CSR period. At the time of inspection, the plan for the remaining three years was less detailed, although the force was running an extensive review programme to identify where the further savings could be made. A significant amount of work had also been done to understand the threats to the public in Leicestershire and the demands on the force. This will enable the force and authority to make informed decisions on where the further cost reductions should fall. The work that is underway, coupled with the force's previous record of delivering savings, gives some confidence that required savings will be fully realised by the end of the CSR period.

The force is part of the East Midlands collaborative programme. At the time of the inspection, there were a number of collaboration projects under development, although the focus tended to be on improved resilience of the policing service as opposed to driving out savings in back office and support functions. There is clear scope for the force and authority to make more of the opportunity that collaboration with other forces presents.

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, Leicestershire Constabulary was unable at the time to provide this level of detail for March 2015, as the following table shows.

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	2,317	1,272	233
31 March 2015 (proposed)	2,103	N/K	N/K

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 police officer 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 authority were confident that the majority of their planned changes would not affect the service they provide to local communities. To ensure this they have maintained staffing levels in neighbourhood teams and increased the number of staff in local neighbourhood action teams. The force will review shift patterns throughout the CSR period to match demand more effectively than current arrangements.

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.

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

