

18 July 2013

## **Lincolnshire Police has responded very well to the financial challenge, but may soon struggle to protect frontline policing further**

*Lincolnshire Police has made good progress in meeting its financial challenge and has developed a detailed change programme which will allow it to reduce costs while continuing to fight crime. However, as a small force which has undertaken significant change and restructuring to reduce its costs, Lincolnshire Police has limited opportunities for further savings.*

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

### **Progress in making savings**

- Lincolnshire Police has identified that it needs to save £19.8m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015). The force has planned how it will save £18.3m, although it still has £1.5m to find. The force expects this small outstanding gap to be closed by use of ear marked reserves set out for this purpose. HMIC has some concerns that the force is relying on reserves as the principal means of closing the funding gap in the last year of this spending review period. This indicates that it does not have in place a sustainable workforce model where spend matches available budget.
- This savings requirement is 16% of its overall budget and is broadly in line with most other forces. HMIC considers that Lincolnshire Police faces a particularly difficult challenge. This is because it has one of the lowest spends on policing, small workforce numbers, low costs and limited further opportunities for economies of scale. There is an additional constraint that business support functions such as human resources and some operational support functions such as control rooms are provided by an outsourced contract. As a small force that has outsourced large parts of its business, is now has extremely limited room for manoeuvre.

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

- The force is reducing police officer numbers by limiting recruitment and holding vacancies; as a result, there are 106 fewer police officers in Lincolnshire Police. This number of police officers reduced by 9% between March 2010 and March 2013 and will be maintained at that level to March 2015; this is a smaller reduction than in most other forces. By March 2015 it is planned there will be 1,100 police officers keeping the people of Lincolnshire safe. This is a very thin 'blue line'.
- Lincolnshire Police is attempting to protect frontline posts as it makes these cuts. However, between March 2010 and March 2015, the proportion of police officers in frontline, crime-fighting roles is planned to remain the same at 91%. This compares unfavourably to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.
- The force has also transferred a significant number of police staff to G4S. As a result, by the end of the spending review period, there will be 657 fewer police staff in the force. This means the number of police staff is planned to reduce by 72% between March 2010 and March 2015. This is considerably higher than most other forces, due

to many functions being provided through the outsourcing arrangement with G4S. Many former police staff are now employed by this company.

- The force intends to maintain its police community support officer (PCSO) numbers and plans to increase its number of volunteers to 1,000 by April 2016. The force's ambitious programme to deliver this, '1000 Volunteer Challenge Project', aims to increase specials to 310, police support volunteers to 250, cadets to 150 and introduce 250 volunteer police community support officers. HMIC has not seen details of these plans in order to assess how achievable they might be.

### **Impact on the public**

- Over the first two years of the spending review, recorded crime (excluding fraud) fell by 16% in Lincolnshire. This is a very good outcome as it is considerably greater than the 13% reduction recorded across England and Wales.
- Victim satisfaction remains high at 83.9%, which is broadly in line with other forces.

### **Future challenges**

- As a small force which has undertaken significant change and restructuring to reduce its costs, Lincolnshire Police has limited opportunities for further savings. In addition there have been significant changes in the senior team, which has not helped in terms of organisational stability. The recent loss of capability and resilience in that top team is of concern to HMIC. It may impact on the organisation's ability to put itself into the best possible position to meet future challenges.

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

*"Lincolnshire Police faces a difficult challenge. It has the lowest cost of policing per head of population in England and Wales and has taken more decisive steps than most forces in order to close its funding gap."*

*"Over the last year the chief officer team has been subject to significant change and uncertainty. HMIC is concerned that this could be de-stabilising for the organisation at a time when further substantial financial challenges are expected."*

*"Due to outsourcing significant business and operational support areas Lincolnshire now has far fewer opportunities to make non-staff savings compared to other forces. It may soon struggle to identify where further savings can come from with little option but to cut frontline police officer numbers further."*

*"HMIC therefore has concerns about the ability of the force to maintain its current level of service to the communities of Lincolnshire when faced with further significant budget reductions from 2015/16 onwards."*

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

The full report for Lincolnshire 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  $\pm 2.0\%$ ,
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.