



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

**Valuing the Police:
Preparedness Inspection**

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

Findings for the Metropolitan Police Service

What is the financial challenge in the Metropolitan Police Service?

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) reported that they are facing a **£543m** 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 14% of their gross revenue expenditure.

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

The MPS and the MPA clearly understood the scale of the financial challenge facing them, and have considered a range of options in developing a plan to address it. Due to the structure, size and complexity of the MPS, this included a large number of different projects; our inspection focused on those that were intended to deliver the greatest savings.

HMIC found evidence that the force has put in place detailed plans for each project, and was making good progress against them. This provides some confidence that the work planned for the rest of the CSR period will be delivered. However, there was no overarching programme board, which has led to some inconsistency between projects (for instance, in the amount of detail given in risk assessments, and the level of communication and engagement with staff, unions and staff associations). In addition, because the Greater London Authority only requires the MPS to provide a three-year business plan, detailed plans for the fourth year of the comprehensive spending review did not exist at the time of inspection.

The overarching plan identified local and regional demands on the force as well as threats and risks to the public, and also took into account the force's national

responsibilities. In particular, the Mayoral elections and the Olympics in 2012 pose a unique challenge for the MPS and MPA.

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

The MPS planned to make the following changes to its workforce numbers.

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	33,367	14,504	4,645
31 March 2015 (proposed)	31,460	14,130	3,725

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 developed its plan with the aim of ensuring minimum impact on the service it delivers to the public up to and during the 2012 Olympics. As plans for future years were less well developed, it was not possible at the time of the inspection to assess the full impact of the changes on the public.

Local public consultation had taken place and there was evidence that feedback from this has influenced the change programmes. An overall communication strategy, covering communication with staff, the public, partners and stakeholders, has been developed and supported by a Strategic Communications Group (SGC). In addition, directorates within the MPS have their own communications teams and some of the programmes for change have developed their own communications plans.

However, the inspection showed that the impact of the SCG had yet to be felt and while there was information on the intranet to communicate the changes internally, the messages were not clear about what these changes might mean for the public and what they can expect from the police in the future. Consequently, communications with all stakeholders and the public may not be as effective as they could be.

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.

The Metropolitan Police's *Policing Plan* includes objectives to reduce crime, with specific targets for violent and property crime (including robbery) for the coming year.

