



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

## **Valuing the Police: Preparedness Inspection**

**North Wales Police  
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 North Wales Police. A thematic report, *Adapting to Austerity*, which brings together findings from all 43 forces, is also available from [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk).

## Findings for North Wales Police

### What is the financial challenge in North Wales?

North Wales Police and North Wales Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£14.7m** cash reduction to their budget over the four years of the comprehensive spending review period (2011/12–2014/15). In real terms (ie when inflation is taken into account), this equates to 8% of their gross revenue expenditure.

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

The force and the authority clearly understood the scale of the challenge facing them, and have considered a range of options in developing a plan to address it.

At the time of the inspection, a large amount of work had already taken place. The force and authority have detailed plans in place for delivering savings during 2011/12 and 2012/13, and have budgeted to realise all the required savings.

The plan also included a financial cushion, designed to absorb any unexpected costs or any slippage in implementation. There were clear and justified timescales and milestones, supported by good analysis (for instance, of the link between changes to workforce numbers and actual cash savings). Clear governance structures were in place to oversee progress.

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

North Wales Police planned to make the following changes to its workforce numbers.

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	1,590	921	157
31 March 2015 (proposed)	1,383	902	160

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 authority have identified the changes in the plan that might have an impact on the service they provide to their community, and have worked to ensure that this is minimised.

They have made communication with the public and key stakeholders an integral part of the change programme. Local public consultation has taken place and there is evidence that this has helped shape the content of the plan.

## 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.

North Wales' *Policing Plan* includes objectives to reduce crime and ASB in the coming year.

