



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Responding to austerity

Northamptonshire Police

July 2014

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ISBN: 978-1-78246-444-0

www.hmic.gov.uk





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How well does the force provide value for money?

Overall judgment

While Northamptonshire Police faces a challenging future, the force understands the issues it faces and continues to take positive steps to achieve savings while keeping its communities safe.

Good

Summary

Northamptonshire Police is on track to achieve its required savings of £22.9m over this spending review period. It has plans in place to achieve further savings in 2015/16. The force faces a particular challenge because it is already a low spending force and so there are fewer opportunities to further reduce its costs.

The force has detailed plans to meet the savings required in 2014/15 and will, over the spending review, exceed the amount it needs to save. This has been managed by over achievement on savings targets and by annual under spends in its budget. The force has assessed the financial issues it faces and has now put in place a change programme together with supporting plans to restructure the organisation and achieve the required savings.

The force has looked at the period beyond 2016 and is developing plans which will enable it to provide policing within its future projected budget. This is largely dependent on maintaining local policing but working collaboratively with others in specialist policing functions, functions that support operational policing and business support.

To what extent is the force taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position for the short and long term?

Good

The force has an established track record of achieving its savings targets.

The force has developed savings plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16; these are realistic and achievable. Although there is a small projected deficit of £0.3m in 2015/16 this is not of concern and the force is confident that it will close the gap.

The force has assumed a period of continuing austerity and is developing plans up to 2018/19.

To what extent has the force an affordable way of providing policing?

Good

Northamptonshire has well-established collaborative arrangements in place with other forces, which have already yielded considerable savings. The force has plans to engage in further collaboration within the region.

The force is also pursuing collaboration with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service and looking how the two organisations can practically work more closely in frontline service provision.

Key to enabling the force to have sufficient staff to meet demand is through the use of the special constabulary and volunteers. An ambitious recruitment programme for specials will see numbers increase significantly over the spending review.

To what extent is the force efficient?

Good

The force uses a variety of tools and approaches to identify demand, and takes into account the need to meet new demand such as cyber crime.

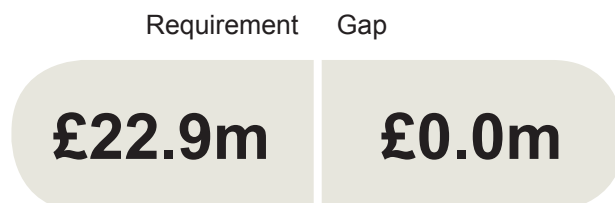
The police and crime commissioner has established the Public Safety, Crime and Justice Institute with the University of Northampton which will, in the future, look to establish other ways to manage demand as well as developing evidence-based approaches to more effective policing.

The force has achieved an improved recorded crime performance in comparison with last year and has achieved a 12 percent reduction over the 12 months to March 2014, which is higher than other forces. Over the same period victim satisfaction has increased and is higher than in other forces.

The force in numbers

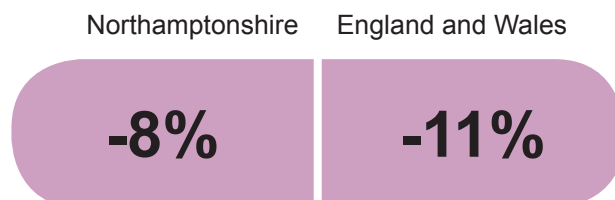
Financial position

The force's savings requirement

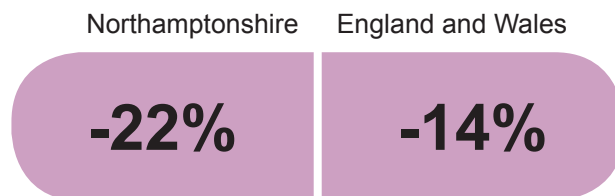


Providing policing

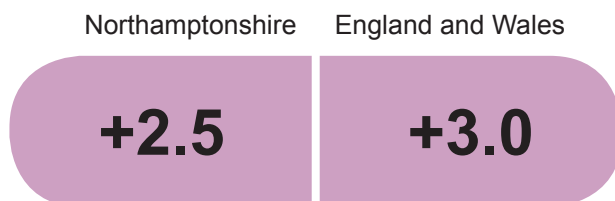
Planned change in police officer numbers 2010/11 – 2014/15



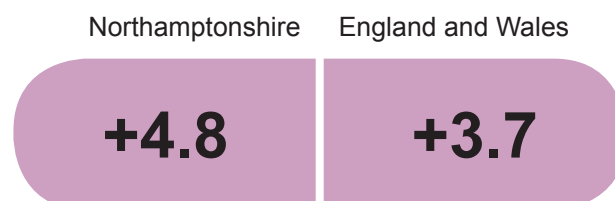
Planned change in total workforce numbers 2010/11 – 2014/15



Planned proportion of police officers on the front line 2014/15 vs 2010/11 (percentage points)



Planned proportion of total workforce on the front line 2014/15 vs 2010/11 (percentage points)





Efficiency

Police officer cost per head of population
2013/14

Northamptonshire

England and Wales

£94.3

£117.7

Workforce cost per head of population
2013/14

Northamptonshire

England and Wales

£141.5

£168.1

Change in recorded crime
2010/11 – 2013/14

Northamptonshire

England and Wales

-15%

-14%

Victim satisfaction 2013/14*

Northamptonshire

England and Wales

87.9%

85.2%

*Confidence intervals: $\pm 1.9\%$ for Northamptonshire; $\pm 0.2\%$ for England and Wales.

Introduction

In October 2010, the Government announced that central funding to the Police Service in England and Wales would reduce by 20 percent in the four years between March 2011 and March 2015.

HMIC's Valuing the Police Programme has tracked how forces are planning to make savings to meet this budget demand each year since summer 2011. This report identifies what we found in this, our fourth year.

Our inspection focused on how well the force is providing value for money. To answer this question we looked at three areas:

- To what extent is the force taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position in the short and long term?
- To what extent has the force an affordable way of providing policing?
- To what extent is the force efficient?

During our inspection we collected data and plans from forces, surveyed the public to see if they had noticed any changes in the service they receive from the police as a result of the cuts, and conducted in-force inspections. We also interviewed, where possible, the chief constable, police and crime commissioner and the chief officer leads for finance, change, human resources and performance in each force, and held focus groups with staff and other officers.

This provides the findings for Northamptonshire Police.

To what extent is the force taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position for the short and long term?

HMIC looked at the savings plans that forces have developed in order to meet the financial challenge of the spending review, and for the year after 2015/16. It is also important that forces look to the future beyond 2016 in their planning, so we also explored how they are starting to prepare for further financial challenges.

Financial challenge

Northamptonshire Police has identified that it needs to save £22.9m over the four years of the spending review (i.e., between March 2011 and March 2015).

As a proportion of its overall budget, this savings requirement of 16 percent this is lower than the 18 percent figure for other forces in England and Wales.

The scale of the challenge

Northamptonshire Police faces a particular challenge because it is already a low spend force and so there are fewer opportunities to further reduce its costs.

Northamptonshire Police:

- spends less per head of population than other forces in England and Wales;
- has a lower number of police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) per head of population; and
- has a cost of police officers and PCSOs per head of population which is already lower than other forces in England and Wales.

Savings plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16

The force has an established track record of achieving its savings requirement since 2010/11. In each of the years it has over achieved on its target achieving over £5m of additional savings. For 2013/14 the force has over achieved on its savings target by £0.5m.

The force has a savings requirement of £5.8m for 2014/15 and has developed plans to achieve this. In 2015/16 the force has a savings requirement of £6.2m and plans to achieve £5.9m, with ongoing work it will undoubtedly close the small remaining gap.

The principle areas for savings within the force's plans for both years are £2.6m from procurement budgets, £3m from further collaboration with other forces, and £1m from further streamlining police officer rank structures and a reduction in PCSO numbers.

Outlook for 2016 and beyond

The force has assessed the financial outlook to 2018/19 and has assumed that austerity will continue during this period. Over the period 2014/15 to 2018/19 the force estimates the savings requirement to be £22.6m. Developing work within the change programme has identified £19.2m of savings (including staff reductions and efficiency savings), leaving a gap of £3.5m. The force is now working on the detail of the structures that will enable Northamptonshire to provide effective policing within the projected budget. Within these plans the force has assumed that police officer numbers will remain at 1,220 throughout the period. However, if no other savings can be found by 2018/19 the force will have to consider further reductions to officer numbers.

Summary



Good

- The force faces a particular challenge because it is already a low spending force and so there are fewer opportunities to further reduce its costs.
- The force has an established track record of achieving its savings targets.
- The force has developed savings plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16; these are realistic and achievable. Although there is a small projected deficit in 2015/16 this is not of concern and the force is confident that it will close the gap.
- The force has assumed a period of continuing austerity and is developing plans up to 2018/19.

To what extent has the force an affordable way of providing policing?

HMIC looks at how the force is structured to provide policing. We ask if this is affordable as the force responds to their financial challenge. We look at what the force is doing to reduce its costs, how it is protecting officers and staff engaged in fighting crime and keeping communities safe, and how it is making the required changes through its change programme.

How the force provides policing

The force provides policing in Northamptonshire through a neighbourhood policing model from two Operational Command Units (OCUs). These OCUs cover Northampton Borough and the rest of the county. This model is then supported by force-wide specialist units. Northamptonshire collaborates extensively with other forces in the region on a range of policing functions, in particular major and serious and organised crime. The scope of this collaboration is to be extended 2014/15 to include firearms, roads policing and dogs. In addition the force collaborates with Cheshire Constabulary on many aspects of its business support (human resources and finance) functions.

Collaboration

HMIC monitors forces' progress on collaboration because it offers the opportunity to achieve efficient, effective policing and help achieve savings.

Northamptonshire is ahead of many forces on collaboration with well-established regional arrangements, the East Midlands collaboration programme, the East Midlands Specialist Operations Unit and a multi force shared service (MFSS) for the provision of business support functions.

The East Midlands collaboration provides a range of policing and support services including major crime, special branch, forensics, serious organised crime, occupational health and learning and development. Working with the four other forces of the region (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire) these collaboration arrangements provide both a more effective response than could be provided solely within the force as well as providing savings. In addition Northamptonshire collaborates on procurement and legal services.

Northamptonshire has been working within the region on options to extend regional collaboration including on ICT, criminal justice and business support. If agreed by the chief constable and the police and crime commissioner this will result in collaboration being the means by which the force provides the majority of its specialist policing and business support functions and in particular it will increase the operational support provided through collaboration. This is commendable.

In 2012 Northamptonshire Police and Cheshire Constabulary established the MFSS which has replaced previous business support functions provided individually by both forces. By aligning ways of working, reducing duplication and bureaucracy, and more effective IT systems the MFSS is providing savings of £1m per annum.

The force is also pursuing collaborative opportunities outside of policing, most notably with the Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS). Ultimately the police and crime commissioner has a long-term ambition to bring the fire and police service for the county together. However this requires primary legislation and public consultation before a decision can be made. The force has already assessed the local operating models of both services and identified areas which can be progressed without legislative changes.

The force is collaborating with NFRS in a number of different areas, for example, since January 2014 a joint prevention and community protection team has been established, managed by a fire officer and supported by a senior member of police staff. Through a police and fire interoperability board (chaired by a chief police officer) a combined safety strategy is being implemented. There is already a joint shared fire and police station operating in the county and successful bids for government funding has supported plans to create more community hubs from which fire and police can operate and engage more effectively with local communities. Joint deployment pilots (where fire and rescue staff work alongside police) are also being considered. Although no financial savings are planned, improvements to service provision have already been identified by this work with the NFRS.

In 2014/15 the force expects to spend 6 percent of its net revenue expenditure on collaboration, which is lower than the 11 percent figure for England and Wales. Collaboration is expected to contribute to 11 percent of the forces savings requirement, which is broadly in line with the 10 percent figure for England and Wales.

Managing change

Reductions in police budgets have led to a shrinking workforce. HMIC expects forces to look at longer-term transformation which can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and help them prepare for future funding reductions.

The force's change programme, Aspire, is overseen by the chief constable. Aspire and other elements of the organisation's wider change portfolio are brought together through the transformation board which is chaired by the police and crime commissioner.

The force is now using a more comprehensive range of approaches to inform the development of future change options. The force plans to undertake a systematic review of staff productivity. It has been successful in its bid for Home Office innovation funding enabling it to invest in an IT based system, Triaster, which will assist it in mapping out its

processes in order to strip out further inefficiencies. The substantial investment that the force has made to make better use of business improvement methodologies will assist it in developing an affordable and sustainable operating model for the medium-term.

The force identified that the main elements of its change programme during the spending review were;

- changing the way local policing is provided;
- improved call management;
- use of business improvement methodologies;
- restructuring the way operational support functions are provided; and
- restructuring business support functions.

The force identifies that the main elements of its change programme as it responds to future financial pressures will include:

- estate rationalisation;
- better alignment of resources to demand;
- restructuring the way operational support functions are provided;
- further work to restructure business support functions; and
- working with the public and private sector to provide services.

How is the force supporting its workforce to manage change and effective service provision?

Cultural change and different ways of working form part of the force's change approach.

Staff surveys are regularly undertaken by the force. The latest survey was completed by over two thirds of the workforce and indicated that the majority of those responding understood the financial challenges facing the force and the rationale for changes made to date. Chief officers provide a 'You said, we did' feedback on the surveys which is well received by the workforce. However, one of the risks facing the force is its ability to communicate effectively with the workforce given the complexity and pace of change it is now embarking on. Although the force has plans to address this, senior leaders are aware of the scale of the challenge and the issues and complexities of keeping staff engaged and supportive of change.

The force is redesigning its leadership programmes to ensure its staff have the skills

required in the future. It has provided business partnering training to staff to increase the understanding of the scale of the change programme and to increase the level of support available to the wider workforce as the changes are implemented.

How is the force achieving the savings?

Because around 80 percent of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs, it is not surprising that forces across England and Wales, plan to achieve most of their savings by reducing the number of police officers, PCSOs and police staff employed.

However, we do expect forces to also bear down on their other costs (non-pay) such as the equipment they buy, the accommodation and vehicles they use and the contracts they enter for services such as cleaning. The force plans to make 17 percent of its savings from non-pay costs; this is lower than the 29 percent figure for other forces.

As an already low cost force, having reduced expenditure on non-pay ahead of the spending review, it has fewer options to drive further efficiencies. However, Northamptonshire has a number of initiatives to reduce its non-pay costs; it has developed a procurement strategy; provided training to contract owners across the force to increase their commercial awareness and is leading nationally on framework agreements for telephony and telematics (automated voice recognition telephone systems).

As with other forces most of the savings come from reducing the workforce. Northamptonshire Police made an early start on this in 2010 when it slowed its recruitment of new police officers and police staff. The force plans to make 83 percent of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is higher than the average across other forces, which is 71 percent.

The following table shows the force's planned changes to workforce numbers over the spending review period, and compares these to the change for England and Wales.

Please note, these figures are rounded.

	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Force change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police officers	1,343	1,238	-105	-8%	-11%
Police staff	1,172	745	-427	-36%	-17%
PCSOs	164	106	-58	-35%	-22%
Total	2,679	2,089	-590	-22%	-14%
Specials	180	600	420	233%	44%

Over the spending review the force plans to lose a higher number of its workforce than other forces, in particular police staff and PCSOs. However, the figures for police staff are overstated as the majority of those who now provide support to the force sit within either the East Midlands region or the MFSS. For practical purposes all these staff are employed by another force (for example, Cheshire in the case of MFSS) but nonetheless provide services across forces. Therefore the figures for police staff are not directly comparable with other forces. Aside from police staff, the force expects to lose fewer police officers than in other forces but a greater number of PCSOs.

A key part of the force's future workforce strategy is to increase the number of specials and volunteers. This is an important priority for the police and crime commissioner. As a result the force has an ambitious recruitment programme to increase the number over the spending review period.

Northamptonshire Police has plans to increase the number of special constables three-fold to 900 by 2016 to increase the visibility of police officers with warranted powers. To date it has reached an establishment of 350, an increase from 280, when the project began. During 2014 the force is on target to achieve in excess of 100,000 hours worked, in comparison with 42,000 in 2012 and 70,000 in 2013. The average hours performed by each officer in 2014 has also risen in excess of 25 per month in comparison with an average of 16 hours worked per month in January 2012. Although still developing, the force is exploring how the specials and volunteers can be deployed across all force functions to provide extra support where their background and experience can add the most value.

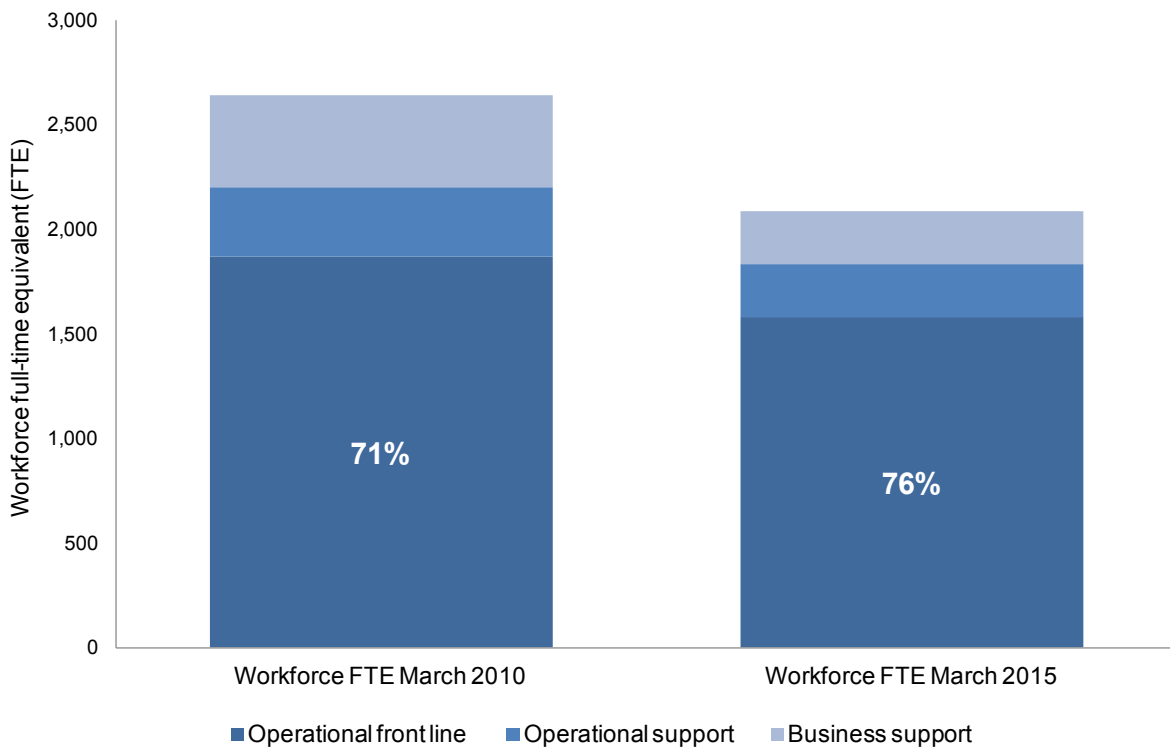
Northamptonshire Police ambitions extend beyond Special Constables to the wider

volunteer agenda, working in partnership with Volunteering Impact Northamptonshire to increase police support volunteers. Progress to date has secured over 750 individuals, which includes 155 police cadets.

It is important that as forces reconfigure their structures and reduce workforce numbers, they focus on maintaining (or if possible increasing) the proportion of people in frontline crime-fighting roles.

HMIC defines the people who work on the police front line as those who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law.

The following chart shows the planned change in the workforce frontline profile in Northamptonshire Police.



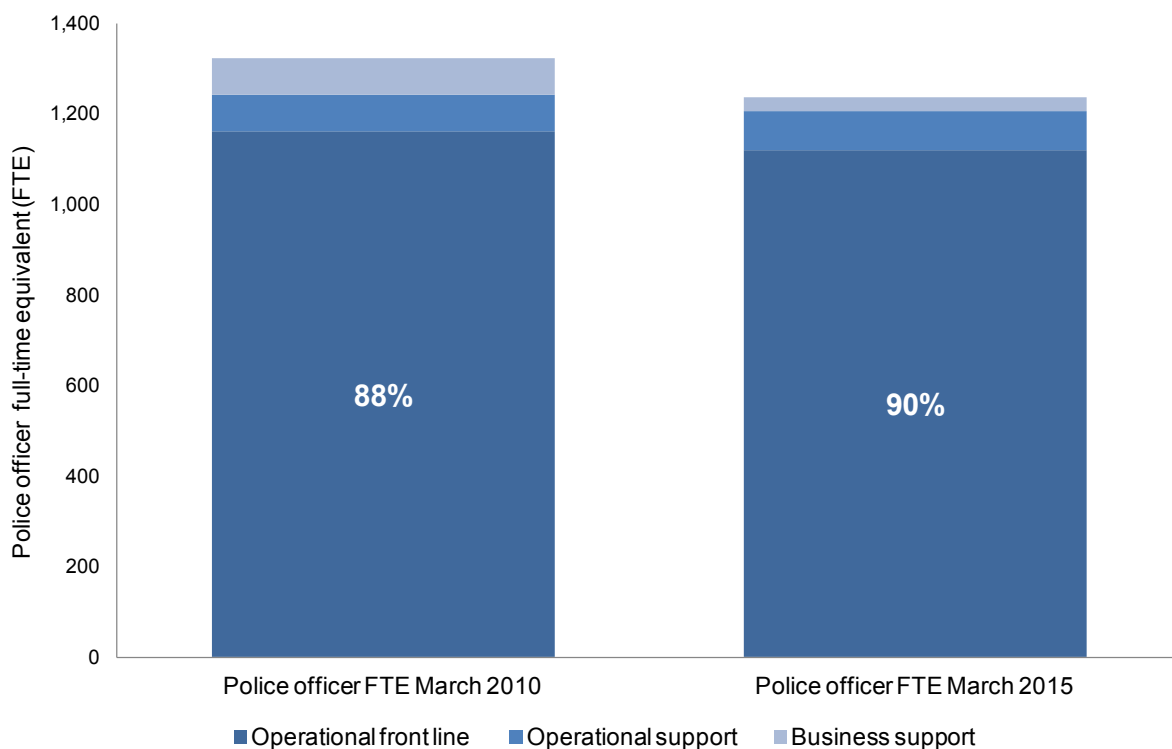
Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of workforce on the front line from 74 percent in March 2010 to 78 percent in March 2015.

The number of officers, PCSOs and staff (that is, of the force's total workforce) working on Northamptonshire's front line is projected to reduce by 16 percent between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 1,868 to 1,578).

Over the same period, the proportion of Northamptonshire's total workforce allocated to frontline roles is projected to increase from 71 percent to 76 percent. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74 percent to 78 percent.

The number of Northamptonshire's police officers in frontline roles is planned to reduce by 4 percent from 1,163 in March 2010 to 1,119 by March 2015. The proportion of those remaining on the front line is projected to increase from 88 percent to 90 percent. This is compares to the overall increase across England and Wales from 89 percent to 92 percent.

The following chart shows the planned change in the profile of police officers on the front line.



Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of police officers on the front line from 89 percent in March 2010 to 92 percent in March 2015.

Summary



Good

- Northamptonshire has well-established collaborative arrangements in place with other forces, which have already yielded considerable savings. The force has plans to engage in further collaboration within the region.
- The force is also pursuing collaboration with the Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service and is developing a number of joint units and looking how the two organisations can practically work more closely in frontline service provision.
- Key to enabling the force to have sufficient staff to meet demand is through the use of the special constabulary and volunteers. An ambitious recruitment programme for specials will see numbers increase significantly over the spending review.
- The workforce understands the financial challenge and the rationale for the changes made to date.

To what extent is the force efficient?

HMIC looks at how the force understands the demands that it faces and how it allocates both financial resources and staff to meet these demands. We look at how these decisions are leading to effective results for the public; in particular, that police are visible and that they attend promptly when called, that they are fighting crime and keeping communities safe, and that victims are satisfied with the service they receive.

How well does the force understand and manage demand?

The force has used a variety of tools and approaches to identify the demand that it faces. This has included the use of the formal assessment of the challenges facing the force, the outcomes from the emergency planning processes and through an analysis of incidents and call demand.

The outcomes from this work are then used to inform the force's resource deployment decisions. In particular this work has been used to inform the structure of the force, for example, the establishment of two operational command units, additional resources for child sexual exploitation and public protection. In addition, the force has recognised the need to resource new demands and is exploring the requirements for a force cyber capacity and capability.

The force knows that this work is not yet finished and it is doing more to gain a better understanding of demand to help inform demand management and more effective demand resolution.

How efficiently does the force allocate its resources?

The force recognises the importance of demand management and has a number of initiatives in place. It has established a triage capability in its control room to enable calls and incidents which do not require the deployment of a police officer to be resolved at first point of contact. The force has also established a mobile mental health unit comprising trained health professionals to provide an immediate assessment in support of police officers, which has seen a significant reduction of demand in this area.

There is recognition that there are opportunities to manage demand differently and more effectively. The control room understands the principal call demand areas and are working with the two operational command units to help support focused activity in this area. The ambition is to be able to provide detailed demand data to the operational command units, so that work can be done to better manage the demand through, for example, problem solving approaches and early intervention.

The force recognises levels of demand coming from other agencies such as the health and

ambulance service, and is engaging with partners on this. There are a number of forums where these demands can be discussed. Examples include the local chief executives' board, through the local criminal justice board (LCJB) chaired by the police and crime commissioner, and community safety partnerships (CSPs) and regular strategic meetings between the force and the East Midlands Ambulance Service. While there is still much more work to be done with partners to bring about a collective solution the police and crime commissioner is clearly pivotal to this.

Safer community teams provide neighbourhood and community policing across the force. PCSOs are particularly valued as an essential part of the neighbourhood policing response. All PCSOs have recently undergone training on intensive engagement, an initiative which encourages community based solutions to problems by empowering communities to take ownership of issues.

The Public Safety, Crime and Justice Institute is a police and crime commissioner initiative which was established with the University of Northampton. As the Institute develops it is intended that they will help develop a better detailed understanding of the causes of crime this will inform both options and solutions to manage demand through other solutions.

How does the force respond and keep its communities safe?

The challenge for forces is not just to save money and reduce their workforce numbers, but also to ensure the choices they make do not have a negative impact on the service they provide to their communities. HMIC looked for evidence that keeping the communities safe is at the heart of the force's decision.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether Northamptonshire was taking longer to respond to calls for help, as a result of its workforce reductions and other changes designed to save money. Forces are not required to set response times or targets and are free to determine their own arrangements for monitoring attendance to calls, so information between forces is not comparable.

We found that over the four years from 2010 to present, Northamptonshire had maintained the same target response times of: within 15 minutes for calls classed as 'emergency' (also known as Grade 1) in an urban setting; and within 20 minutes for calls classed as 'emergency' in a rural setting. Over the same period, calls classed as a 'priority' (also known as Grade 2) had a target response time of within 60 minutes.

Northamptonshire was unable to provide data for meeting attendance for either 'emergency' or 'priority' calls in 2010/11. However, in 2013/14 the force met the target for 'emergency' response 82.8 percent of the time and in respect of 'priority' calls, 54.9 percent. (The force has identified that a large number of the calls currently included in the 'priority' category do not require a response within the hour but could be dealt with within the day. They are currently working to remove this group and show only those which need a deployment in the hour. Until this is done the figures appear to show a poorer response than perhaps is the case.)

Visibility

The work done by police officers and staff in visible roles (such as officers who respond to 999 calls, deal with serious road traffic collisions or patrol in neighbourhoods) represents only a part of the policing picture. Chief constables need to allocate resources to many other functions in order to protect the public, such as counter terrorism, serious and organised crime, and child protection (to name just three).

That being said, research shows that the public value seeing visible police officers on patrol in the streets, and that those who see police in uniform at least once a week are more likely to have confidence in their local force. HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the force had affected the visibility of the police in the Northamptonshire area.

In 2014, Northamptonshire Police allocated 54 percent of its police officers to visible roles. This is 0.8 of a percentage point higher than the number allocated in 2010, and lower than the figure for other forces which was 56 percent across England and Wales).

Police visibility is further enhanced by PCSOs, who principally support community policing. Looking at the proportion of police officers and PCSOs, Northamptonshire Police allocated 59 percent of these staff to visible roles. This is the 0.3 of a percentage point higher than it allocated in 2010, and broadly in line with the 60 percent figure for England and Wales.

HMIC conducted a survey¹ of the public across England and Wales to assess whether the public had noticed any difference in the way their area is being policed. Of those people surveyed in Northamptonshire, 11 percent said that they have seen a police officer more often than they had 12 months ago; this is broadly in line with the 12 percent average across all survey respondents in England and Wales.

Of those surveyed, 88 percent of respondents in Northamptonshire said they felt safe from crime where they lived, this compares to 84 percent of respondents in England and Wales. Also, 8 percent of respondents in Northamptonshire said they felt safer from crime than they did two years ago, this compares to 9 percent of respondents in England and Wales.

Crime

In 2010, the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to reduce crime. Between 2010/11 and 2013/14 (the first three years of the spending review), Northamptonshire Police reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 15 percent, compared with 14 percent in England and Wales. Over this period, victim-based crime (that is, crimes where there is a direct victim – an individual, a group, or an organisation) reduced by 15 percent, compared with 14 percent in England and Wales.

Looking just at the last 12 months, recorded crime (excluding fraud) fell by 12 percent in Northamptonshire, which is higher than the figure for England and Wales (1 percent).

By looking at how many crimes occur per head of population, we get an indication of see how safe it is for the public in that police area. The table below shows recorded crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Northamptonshire (per head of population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to March 2014	Rate per 1,000 population	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
Crimes (excluding fraud)	58.4	61.1
Victim-based crime	53.4	54.3
Sexual offences	1.1	1.1
Burglary	8.2	7.8
Violence against the person	10.5	11.1
ASB incidents	51.9	37.2

¹ Sample sizes for each force were chosen to produce a confidence interval of no more than ± 6 percent and for England and Wales, no more than ± 1 percent. Forces' differences to the England and Wales value may not be statistically significant.

It is important that crimes are investigated effectively and the perpetrator brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to identify who has committed a crime, it can be described as detected. Northamptonshire Police's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2014 was 25 percent. This is in line with the England and Wales's detection rate of 26 percent.

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in the Northamptonshire force area. For information on the frequency of other kinds of crimes in your area, go to www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator.

Victim satisfaction surveys

An important measure of the impact of changes to service provision for the public is how satisfied victims are with the overall service they receive when they seek police assistance.

In the 12 months to March 2014, 87.9 percent (± 1.9 percent) of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by the Northamptonshire force. This is higher than the England and Wales figure, 85.2 percent (± 0.2 percent).

Changes to how the public can access services

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services.

Northamptonshire Police provides a wide range of services online including: reporting of crime and incidents; providing information to police; obtaining information; and tracking progress of reported crime. In addition the force website has dedicated pages for young people 'Neenor' which provides a range of information and engagement tailored for the young. Like many forces, interested residents can sign up to receive information and news feeds.

Over the spending review period the force intends to retain its ten police stations but reduce the number of front counters from ten to nine.

Summary

Good

- The force uses a variety of tools and approaches to identify demand, and takes into account the need to meet new demand such as cyber crime.
- Work is being done to more effectively manage demand including work with partners such as the health and ambulance services.
- The police and crime commissioner has established the Public Safety, Crime and Justice Institute with the University of Northampton which will, in the future, look to establish other ways to manage demand as well as developing evidence-based approaches to more effective policing.
- According to the force's own recorded crime figures, it has achieved an improved crime performance in comparison with last year and has achieved an 12 percent reduction over the 12 months to March 2014, which is higher than other forces. Over the same period victim satisfaction has increased to 87.9 percent (\pm 1.9 percent), which again is higher than in other forces.

Our judgments

HMIC uses four categories for making judgments, two are positive and two are negative. The categories are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Judgment is made against how well the force achieves value for money, it is not an assessment of the overall effectiveness of policing. In applying the categories HMIC considers whether:

- the way the force is achieving value for money is good, or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged as outstanding;
- the force requires improvement in the way it achieves value for money, and/or there are some weaknesses; or
- the force's provision of value for money is inadequate because it is considerably lower than is expected.