



Promoting improvements
in policing to make
everyone safer

PEEL: Police efficiency 2016

An inspection of Avon and Somerset Constabulary



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Contents

Introduction	3
Force in numbers	4
Overview – How efficient is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?	6
How well does the force understand its current and likely future demand?	7
How well does the force understand the current demand for its services?	7
How well does the force understand potential future demand for its services?	10
Summary of findings	12
How well does the force use its resources to manage current demand?	13
How well does the force’s current allocation of resources match demand, organisational and financial requirements?	13
How well does the force improve the productivity of its workforce?	17
How well does the force work with others to improve how it manages demand for its services?	19
How well does the force understand how any changes made to improve efficiency have affected its ability to manage demand?	21
Summary of findings	22
How well is the force planning for demand in the future?	23
How well does the force identify and prioritise areas to invest in for the future? ...	23
How well does the force plan its investments?	24
To what extent does the force fund its investments sustainably?	26
Summary of findings	27
Next steps	28
Annex A – About the data	29

Introduction

As part of its annual inspections into police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), HMIC assesses the efficiency of police forces across England and Wales.

As with all public services, it is vital that the police service operates in a way that makes the most of all its available resources. Police forces need to make sure they understand the current demand for their services. This is to make sure that they use all the resources available to them to fight all types of crime and to protect communities. Also, forces need to be looking to the future to understand how that demand may change and to plan where they need to invest extra resources or change the ways they operate so that the public can continue to receive the policing it expects and deserves.

As part of the government's objectives to cut public spending, central funding to the police service in England and Wales has been reduced by around 20 percent since 2011. Police forces across England and Wales have faced a difficult challenge to sustain effective levels of policing in the face of significant budget cuts. Forces need to continue to make efficiencies and invest resources wisely in order to maintain a focus on reducing crime and keeping their communities safe. HMIC considers that a police force is efficient if it is making the best use of its resources to provide policing services that meet expectation and follow public priorities, and if it is planning and investing wisely for the future.

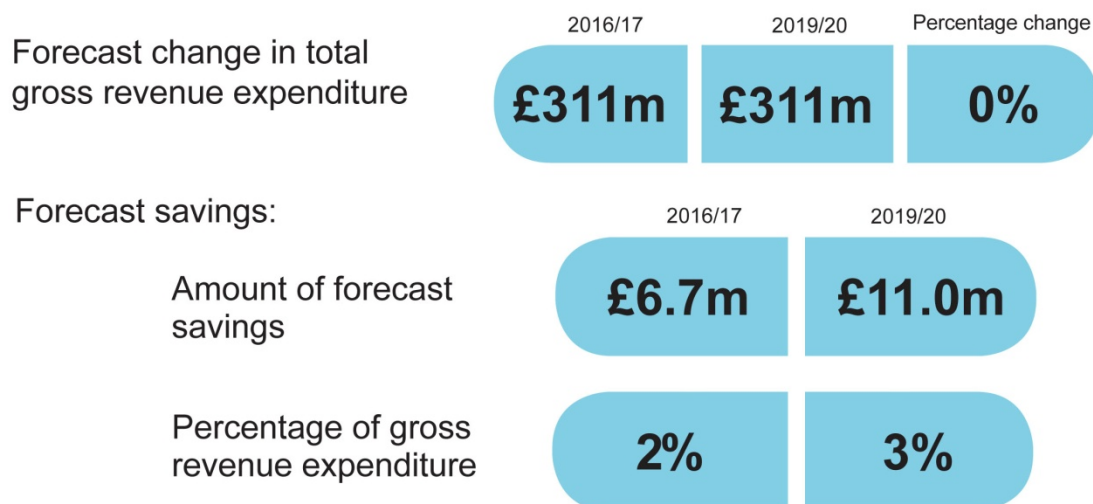
HMIC's efficiency inspection assessed all of these areas during 2016. More information on how we inspect and grade forces as part of this wide-ranging inspection is available on the HMIC website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/). This report sets out our findings for Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

Reports on Avon and Somerset Constabulary's legitimacy and leadership inspections will be available on the HMIC website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016) in December 2016. Our reports on police effectiveness will be published in early 2017.

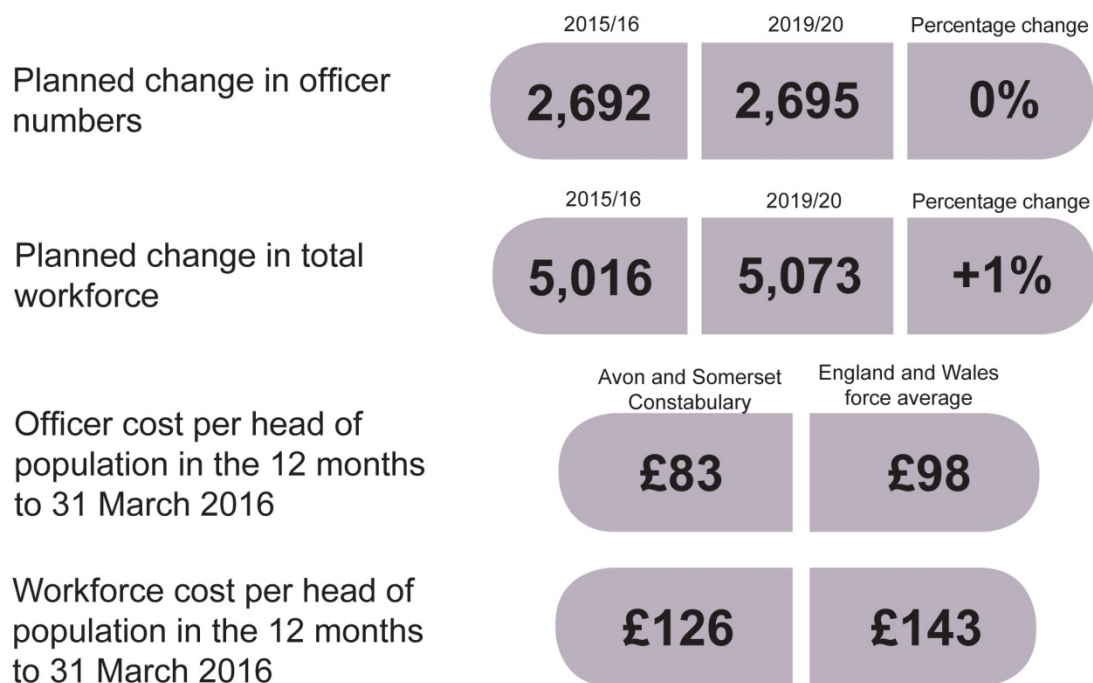
Force in numbers



Financial position



Workforce





Calls for assistance

999 calls per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

Avon and Somerset Constabulary

130

England and Wales force average

124



Recorded crime

Changes in recorded crime (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

2014/15

59

2015/16

70

Percentage change in recorded crime (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

Avon and Somerset Constabulary

+19%

England and Wales force average

+9%



Victim satisfaction

Victim satisfaction with the overall service provided by the police 12 months to 31 March 2016

Avon and Somerset Constabulary

78%

England and Wales force average

84%

For further information about the data in this graphic please see annex A

Overview – How efficient is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

Overall judgment¹



Good

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has been assessed as good in respect of the efficiency with which it keeps people safe and reduces crime. The force has a comprehensive understanding of a full range of current demand and a good understanding of future demand. It makes decisions based on prioritisation of current and projected demand and has robust governance structures in place to manage how it operates. The force continues to seek savings by working with other forces and agencies across the south west region.

Overall summary

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has a comprehensive understanding of its existing demand, based on a wide range of management information. Through new programmes, such as the Qlik Sense data visualisation app, the force is taking this understanding well beyond an analysis of the calls which the contact centre receives. The force is quick to identify and assess new and emerging demand and has restructured its workforce to provide the skills base and capacity which will meet future needs. It makes decisions based on prioritisation of current and projected demand and it has robust governance structures in place to manage the way it operates.

The force's financial and workforce planning are closely aligned to deal with areas of high demand. For example, the force has increased its capacity to investigate child abuse and serious sexual offences. The force continues to exploit all methods of reducing costs. Its digital services programme will transform policing over the next four years, and will include remote working and real-time intelligence about current and trending demand. In addition, the force has a good track record of making savings by working closely with both neighbouring forces and other public services across the entire south west region.

Recommendations

Avon and Somerset Constabulary is a good force. HMIC has not identified any causes of concern and therefore has made no specific recommendations.

¹ HMIC judgments are: outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate.

How well does the force understand its current and likely future demand?

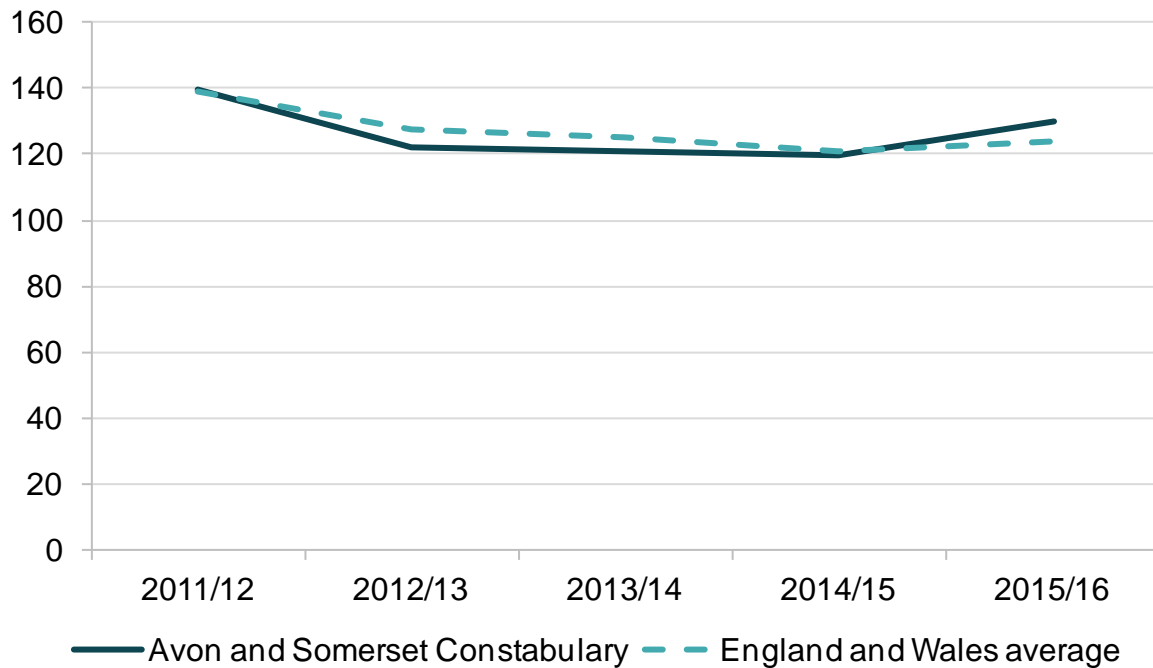
A good understanding of the demand for police services is vital in ensuring that forces have the right resources in the right place to provide the right level of policing now and in the future. This means not just an understanding of reported incidents but also how well a force proactively looks for demand that is less likely to be reported (e.g. incidents relating to modern slavery or child sexual exploitation) so that it can ensure that it protects the most vulnerable victims. Forces also need to understand how much resource to put into work that prevents crime and anti-social behaviour from occurring in the first place. It is important that forces continually review how they operate to ensure that they are not wasting police resources by operating inefficiently or responding to unnecessary demands.

Forces must understand how demand is changing and how they need to change in order to adapt to ensure that they can plan for the future and continue to respond effectively. As well as assessing likely future threats and risks from crime, this also means understanding and assessing the potential impact of wider societal and environmental changes on the demands they will face.

How well does the force understand the current demand for its services?

Police services cover a wide spectrum of activities and go far beyond the most obvious demands for providing a response to 999 calls, protecting victims of crime and pursuing offenders. It is important that forces have a comprehensive understanding across the whole range of different demands they face, including early intervention work with other organisations to prevent crime and proactively seeking out 'hidden' crimes (e.g. domestic crime, internet crime, fraud, modern slavery and crime in communities who are more reluctant to trust or engage with the police). Police forces also need to understand how efficiently they run their own operations in order to avoid wasted effort and to ensure that they make the best use possible of all available resources.

Figure 1: Volume of 999 calls per 1,000 population received by Avon and Somerset Constabulary compared with England and Wales in the 12 months to 31 March 2012 to the 12 months to 31 March 2016

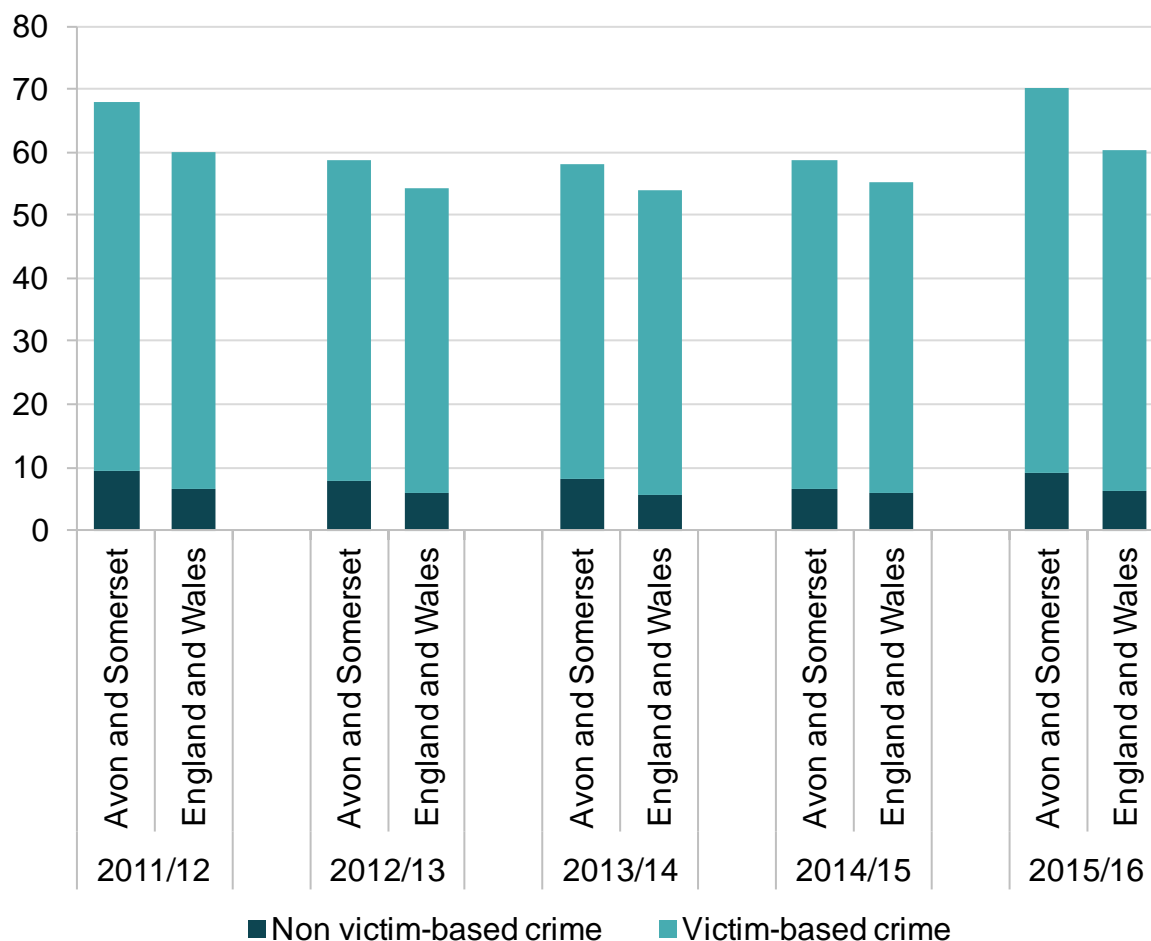


Source: Home Office Annual Data Requirement

For further information about the data in figure 1 please see annex A

Avon and Somerset Constabulary received 130 '999' calls per 1,000 population in the 12 months to 31 March 2016. This was broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 124 calls per 1,000 population. In the 12 months to 31 March 2012, the constabulary received 139 '999' calls per 1,000 population, in line with the England and Wales average of 139 calls per 1,000 population.

Figure 2: Police recorded crimes per 1,000 population in Avon and Somerset Constabulary compared with England and Wales in the 12 months to 31 March 2012 to the 12 months to 31 March 2016



Source: Home Office Police recorded crime data

For further information about the data in figure 2 please see annex A

With regard to police recorded crime for the 12 months to 31 March 2016, Avon and Somerset Constabulary recorded 61.0 victim-based crimes per 1,000 population, broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 53.8 victim-based crimes per 1,000 population. Over the same period, Avon and Somerset Constabulary recorded 9.2 non victim-based crimes per 1,000 population, higher than the England and Wales average of 6.5 non victim-based crimes per 1,000 population. There has been an increase in the victim-based crime rate of 4 percent and a decrease in the non victim-based crime rate of 3 percent since the 12 months to 31 March 2012.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary is skilful at making the best use of its resources. It has an exemplary record of effectively measuring and understanding the demands for its services and ensuring that it organises its resources well to respond to those demands. The force’s structure, known as its operating model, was founded on a systematic examination of demand and activity. This gave the force a comprehensive understanding and enabled it to direct resources to priority areas and avoid wasting time and duplicating effort across all police activities.

The operating model is well-established, and is working efficiently. To ensure that the force continues to monitor and stay abreast of changing demand, it has developed a 'business intelligence system'. This is a more sophisticated and precise way of looking at current and future demand, and it enables the force to think about the resources it needs to meet the demands which are made on it. The force has bought commercial software and has developed it to give an 'at a glance' picture of calls for service, the current activity of the workforce and its future availability. The system can also identify trends in patterns of offending which show if the force needs to intervene or take other action.

The app-based system is highly visual and user-friendly. It maps the location of frontline staff and shows the requests for help which the force has received through the 999/101 systems. The system does this digitally, in real time. It can also chart the availability of the workforce against projected demands, and can determine the volume and complexity of individual officers' workloads. For example, it can predict peaks in offending by dangerous criminals. It can also show which investigating officers have the heaviest workload. This has clear potential for improved offender management programmes and also has the potential to improve staff wellbeing by ensuring that officers do not have an excessive workload. The system is highly effective in analysing reactive demands, but the force recognises that the system cannot provide a full picture of demand. Not all demands on police services are obvious or easily measurable. By its nature, hidden demand may still be missed or underestimated.

A significant proportion of police time is spent in tackling crime proactively. For example, officers spend time on early intervention work to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. They search actively for under-reported crimes, such as online child sexual exploitation and modern slavery, and safeguard vulnerable victims from further harm. A good example of this is the way that local officers work with the Somali community to raise awareness of the laws about sexual offences, and to encourage more victims to come forward. The force continues to seek out tried and tested methods of measuring and monitoring hidden demands to supplement the detailed picture of its demand which its business intelligence system provides.

How well does the force understand potential future demand for its services?

Demands for police services are continually evolving. Forces need to anticipate and understand likely future changes so that their plans keep pace with the public's needs and expectations. Potential future demand includes new and emerging types of crime, such as cyber-crime, modern-day slavery and human trafficking. Also, it includes changes to the communities that forces serve, developments in technology and environmental events, such as flooding.

Every year, Avon and Somerset Constabulary assesses the greatest threats and risks facing the communities it serves, and highlights emerging or growing demands. This enables the force to prioritise the way it uses resources so that the most urgent risks are dealt with properly. The force produces profiles of emerging and less well-understood crimes such as cyber-crime, female genital mutilation and modern slavery. This improved understanding of the scale and nature of such crimes has enabled the force to target resources so that it can intervene earlier, in order to prevent crime. The force has worked with 'Unseen UK', a charity that works to prevent modern slavery. It has also made joint visits to businesses in order to safeguard vulnerable employees, and to deal with the rogue employers who exploit them.

The force has recognised the likely impact on demand caused by budget cuts in partner organisations, such as local councils. Where some existing joint work might be put at risk, or where the withdrawal of a partner's services might mean extra demands are made on police services, the force has responded quickly and effectively to minimise the risk and manage the impact of any extra demands. For example, the force has managed the withdrawal of Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Council from the joint venture, 'South West One', which provided back office services such as HR, procurement, and some financial services for all three organisations. The force has acted promptly, and has brought some tasks, such as payroll, back into its direct control. It has also looked for alternative ways of providing these services efficiently. The force has agreed to collaborate with Gloucestershire Constabulary and Wiltshire Police, and back office services for all three forces will be provided jointly.

At an operational level, when partner organisations have had to reduce their contribution to joint commitments because of budget cuts, the force has established joint workshops known as 'collaboration laboratories' to understand and mitigate the consequences. This has led to the refinement of joint operational procedures to ensure that projects remain viable and sustainable. For example, the 'Think Family' programme is a collaborative effort which supports families who have problems, and who need additional support from public services. This programme has been reshaped to reflect budget reductions.

The force has a good understanding of the public's changing expectations of police services. In previous inspections, we found that the voice of the public was at the heart of the force's operating model and its 'Service Promise'. The force continues to take steps to maintain this understanding. For example, the force uses the police and crime survey to find out what the public thinks, and then uses this information to shape operational priorities. Recently, the force re-prioritised road safety and speed enforcement because of the views which residents had expressed. The force has used market research to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of victims and of the trust which the public has in the police. These are important factors in improving services. Recent survey results showed that victims felt let down when the

force had promised to update them during the course of an investigation. As a result, the force's obligations to victims have been emphasised when officers are being trained.

The force has also been creative in using a variety of media to manage public expectations of the level of service it can provide. A 24-hour 'Tweetathon' exercise took place last year. The force generated 500 tweets that were read by 750,000 people. This gave an insight into a day in the life of officers and staff, and also highlighted the way that some members of the public misuse the 999 service. A prominent commercial broadcaster played examples of inappropriate calls throughout the day. A second media day will be run in 2016 to re-emphasise when, how and if the public should contact the force. The force envisages this will help reduce unnecessary calls to the force's contact centre. The BBC has agreed to be the force's media partner on this occasion.

Summary of findings



Outstanding

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has a comprehensive understanding of the full range of its existing demand that is based on a wide range of management information. Through new programmes, such as the Qlik Sense data visualisation app, the force is taking this understanding well beyond an analysis of calls received in the contact centre. This now includes a greater appreciation of the workload carried by individuals and teams and their capacity to complete it to required standards.

The force is quick to identify and assess new and emerging demand. It is also adept at restructuring and modernising its workforce to provide the skills base and capacity to meet future challenges. Its understanding of the future is properly informed by an understanding of technological advances and changes in public expectations.

How well does the force use its resources to manage current demand?

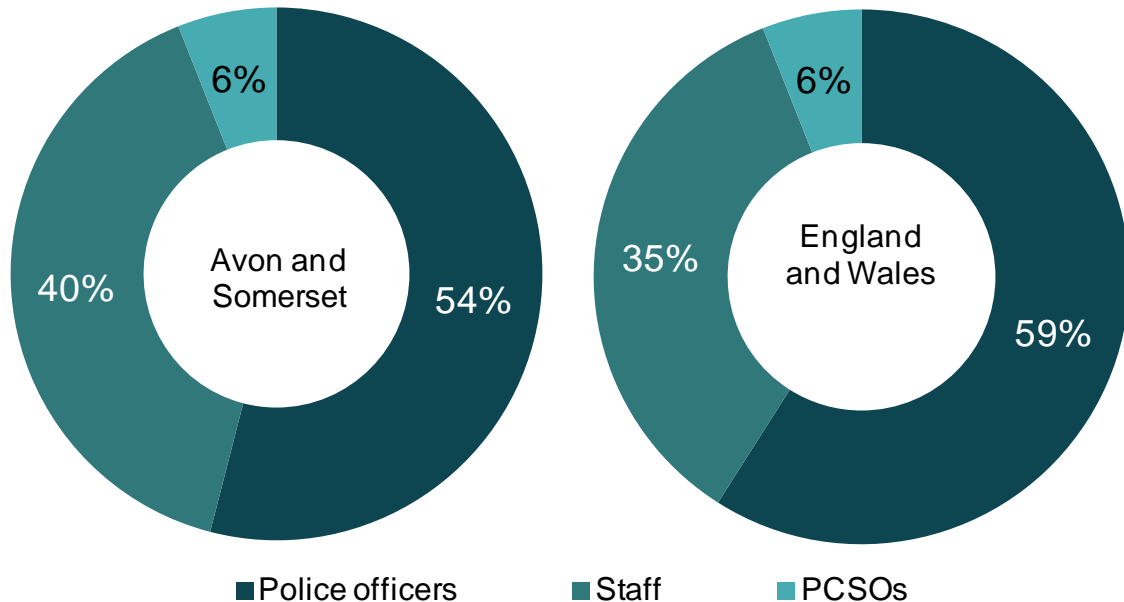
Police forces need to operate in a way that makes the best use of all available resources so that demand is met and public expectations are satisfied. We looked at the extent to which Avon and Somerset Constabulary has the right people with the right skills in the right place to protect the public and to fight crime. Police resources have been reducing continually over recent years. It is increasingly important that resources are aligned to priorities to provide value-for-money services that tackle priorities, manage demand and meet financial requirements. This not only involves a force using its own workforce as efficiently as possible; it also involves the police working in new ways with others to ensure the best possible service to the public, and using all available resources to improve efficiency.

For a number of years, police forces have been focused on changing the way they operate and finding ways to save money in order to manage reducing budgets. It is important that these savings are sustainable and forces can demonstrate that they have achieved efficiencies while continuing to have the capacity and capability to meet demand.

How well does the force's current allocation of resources match demand, organisational and financial requirements?

Police forces need to consider many factors when deciding how to allocate their resources, including all elements of demand, local risks and priorities, and their national responsibilities. We look at how well Avon and Somerset Constabulary assesses these factors in making decisions about the level of service to provide and how to use its resources to best effect.

Figure 3: Police officers, staff and police community support officers (PCSOs) as a proportion of total workforce in Avon and Somerset Constabulary compared with England and Wales as at 31 March 2016



Source: Home Office Police workforce statistics

Note: figures may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding of numbers. For further information about the data in figure 3 please see annex A

As at 31 March 2016, police officers make up 54 percent of Avon and Somerset Constabulary's workforce. This was lower than the England and Wales average of 59 percent. The proportion of staff in Avon and Somerset Constabulary was 40 percent, higher than the England and Wales average of 35 percent. The proportion of police community support officers in Avon and Somerset Constabulary was 6 percent, in line with the England and Wales average of 6 percent.

Figure 4: Planned changes in full-time equivalent workforce from 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2020 for Avon and Somerset Constabulary compared with England and Wales

	March 2010	Change from 2010 to 2016		March 2016	Change from 2016 to 2020		March 2020
		Force	England and Wales		Force	England and Wales	
Officers	3,302	-18%	-14%	2,692	0%	-2%	2,695
Staff	1,871	7%	-21%	1,999	2%	-5%	2,037
PCSOs	430	-24%	-35%	325	5%	-6%	342
Workforce total	5,603	-10%	-18%	5,016	1%	-3%	5,073

Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection

For further information about the data in figure 4 please see annex A

Managing demands for police services

Avon and Somerset Constabulary designed its operating model to align resources with demand and ensure that when the force faced cuts in its budget, reduced resources could be directed towards the most urgent tasks. The force uses its comprehensive understanding of the demand for its services, together with its assessment of the main threats and risks, to ensure that its resources are directed to the most important tasks. The force is able to respond to emerging demand, and move resources to the most important areas, by using its sophisticated information systems and its efficient methods of managing resources. It can readily identify and address peaks in offending, emerging criminality and seasonal variations in crime patterns.

The force has a robust and systematic method of assessing risk when it determines its response to demands, and the way it allocates resources. It uses a structured method of assessing risk and managing demand, known as the THRIVE principles: threat, harm, risk, investigative opportunity, vulnerability and engagement opportunity. This enables the force to consider the whole picture on a case-by-case basis, placing emphasis on the vulnerability of the victim rather than on a standard response for each type of crime. The force applies this method to both immediate and longer-term considerations of how it allocates resources to demand. For example, call handlers now apply the THRIVE principles consistently when determining the most appropriate level and speed of response to 999/101 callers. A greater proportion of incidents are now resolved immediately over the telephone, or are referred to the incident assessment unit. The force set up this unit to investigate

crime and resolve some incidents without the need for an officer to attend. This method releases frontline officers to deal with emergencies, and high-risk victims and incidents.

The force also extends THRIVE principles to the investigations of crime, to ensure that the needs of victims are prioritised. It has moved additional investigative resources to support the most vulnerable people. The workforce has had difficulties adjusting to this. Detectives who had specialised in certain fields, such as burglary investigation, now have to investigate a wider range of offences, including child abuse and serious sexual assaults. It has taken time for officers to develop safeguarding skills and adapt to new ways of working, but the force has been able to increase its overall capacity to investigate this growing area of crimes and provide better protection to the most vulnerable victims.

We found that the force understands the link between costs and outcomes when giving an informed assessment of value for money. In the last spending review period (2011–2015), specialist services such as homicide investigations, motorway patrols and dog handlers made a significant contribution to the £65m savings made since 2010/11. This was achieved by collaborating effectively with neighbouring forces to provide sustainable policing services at the best possible cost.

Increasing efficiency

Avon and Somerset Constabulary's efficiency has improved over the last few years, as demonstrated by the savings achieved since the start of austerity in 2010. However, HMIC's 2015 Value for Money Profile² shows that Avon and Somerset Constabulary's estimated net revenue expenditure per head of population is higher than all forces in its most similar group (MSG),³ but its estimated expenditure on visible frontline activity is lower than all but one of the forces in its most similar group. The force understands that expenditure on support costs are higher as a legacy of its South West One shared services contract which is due to end in 2018. The force plans to reduce enabling services costs by £9.5m at this stage, reducing support costs below the MSG average. It acknowledges that more use could be made of value for money profiles in identifying areas where further efficiencies might be achieved. It anticipates that, as its business intelligence develops and provides a clearer understanding of time spent on a particular activity, its cost and contribution to policing objectives will be more clearly understood.

² *HMIC Value for Money Profile – Avon & Somerset Constabulary*, HMIC, 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/publications/avon-and-somerset-2015-value-for-money-profile/

³ Most Similar Groups (MSGs) are groups of police force areas that have been found to be the most similar to each other based on an analysis of demographic, social and economic characteristics which relate to crime. With the exception of City of London Police (for which it is not possible to identify any most similar forces), each force area has its own group of up to seven force areas to which it is 'most similar'.

ICT development will play a major part in bringing about the efficiency savings that will be needed over the next four years. The force's ICT strategy focuses on core systems, technology (such as data centres) and capability development to address more agile working on portable devices. The force has recently invested in a new record management system. This has linked the force's processes of custody and case file preparation, intelligence recording and crime management. The new system is also compatible with the force's command and control programme. This more streamlined and joined-up system has already brought immediate benefits, including the automated updating of multiple ICT platforms.

The force's ICT strategy is based on making best use of the latest mobile technology. It aims to enable staff to do their jobs more efficiently and productively. Officers have access to police IT systems wherever they are, which means that they can spend more time in their communities and less time in police stations. The force has completed phased trials of body-worn video cameras and will issue them to over 2,000 frontline staff. Experiences in other forces suggest that if incontrovertible evidence is recorded at the scene of a crime offenders are more likely to plead guilty, and there will be fewer complaints about the way that police officers have behaved. The force anticipates that the benefits will include a reduction in time spent preparing prosecution files and on misconduct investigations. Most importantly, offenders will be more likely to be brought to justice swiftly.

The force has effective systems in place to ensure that it reviews regularly the impact of change on its service provision. Its corporate change board is reviewing all current change projects which will support the operating model through to 2020/21. The chief finance officer is responsible for approving finance for projects, verifying envisaged benefits and updating the mid-term financial plan. We validated this process by examining a historical change project which led to the establishment of Lighthouse, the integrated victim care facility. We found structured and disciplined compliance with change project governance procedures.

How well does the force improve the productivity of its workforce?

Finding ways to make police officers and staff more efficient when they are out in their communities and reducing time spent doing back office functions is essential to ensuring that police officers remain visible, on the beat and engaged in activities to reduce and fight crime. Police forces spend around 80 percent of their budget on staffing, so it is vital that the workforce is as productive as possible. This means forces need to ensure that all their staff have the skills and capabilities to provide the required level of service. We assessed how well Avon and Somerset Constabulary understands the skills its staff need, both now and in the future; where there are gaps in either capacity or capability, we looked at whether the steps it is taking are appropriate to ensure that its staff work as efficiently and effectively as possible. We

looked in particular at whether the workforce has the right level of digital skills, both to make the most of current ICT systems and to investigate crime digitally.

Understanding current workforce capabilities and gaps

Before it introduced the new police operating model, Avon and Somerset Constabulary analysed the accreditation and skills of officers and staff in their existing roles and the skills and knowledge they needed for their new roles. This analysis has formed the basis of the force's corporate learning and development plan and ensures that its training plans will provide adequate levels of skills and accreditation in the workforce. The force's learning and development needs arising from the corporate change programme, as well as its 'five year ambition' programme and HR strategy are all clearly articulated. We found the corporate learning and development plan is effective in addressing these needs, as well as any mandatory and core police training to maintain 'business as usual' in the force. For example, the force has made a considerable additional training commitment to support the introduction of the new records management system in recent months and the current year's curriculum addresses other elements of the change programme, including the introduction of body-worn video cameras and the recruitment programme.

Tackling workforce gaps

Avon and Somerset Constabulary's workforce planning arrangements can predict any shortfalls in staffing levels and skills. We found examples of how the force is boosting recruitment to maintain overall officer numbers over the course of the spending review period (2016–2020/21). The force is addressing previous HMIC recommendations through the planned accreditation of an additional 51 child abuse detectives. Additional training will also increase the number of officers who have been trained in specialist techniques for interviewing child victims.

Through the training curriculum, the corporate learning and development department is supporting the force's workforce modernisation programme. Workforce analysis has identified the main areas where staff vacancies have consistently been high. These areas include highly skilled roles such as firearms officers. To address this, the force has concentrated on recruiting officers in these roles from other forces, and has recruited several officers in this way. Additionally, the force has hired civilian investigators to work alongside detectives and has established a list of retired officers on zero-hours contracts who can be employed at times of high demand.

How well does the force work with others to improve how it manages demand for its services?

We assessed how well Avon and Somerset Constabulary has explored all opportunities to work in collaboration with others to increase efficiency and provide better, more resilient services. This can include work with other police forces, local public sector organisations, the private sector and the voluntary sector. We looked at whether the force has a clear rationale for the decisions it has taken about how it works with others, and whether it has a good understanding of how successful its joint working has been in helping it to better meet demand for its services.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary can demonstrate clearly how collaboration and joint working is transforming outcomes, reducing costs and building greater resilience into the service it provides. The force works constructively with Gloucestershire Constabulary and Wiltshire Police in a tri-force alliance. Through pooling resources and jointly providing a range of policing services, such as road network patrols, armed officers and other specialist services, the collaboration has generated savings and provided more resilient services in the counties for a number of years.

Collaboration benefits

In 2007 the force began a pioneering joint venture with Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Council and a commercial partner for the provision of enabling services, known as South West One. This arrangement will end soon. It has saved an estimated £20m since 2007. The experience the force has gained will mean that it is well placed to lead negotiations on a replacement for South West One. The force is discussing a project with Wiltshire Police and Gloucestershire Constabulary which will provide the back office services for all three forces that had formerly been provided for Avon and Somerset Constabulary by South West One.

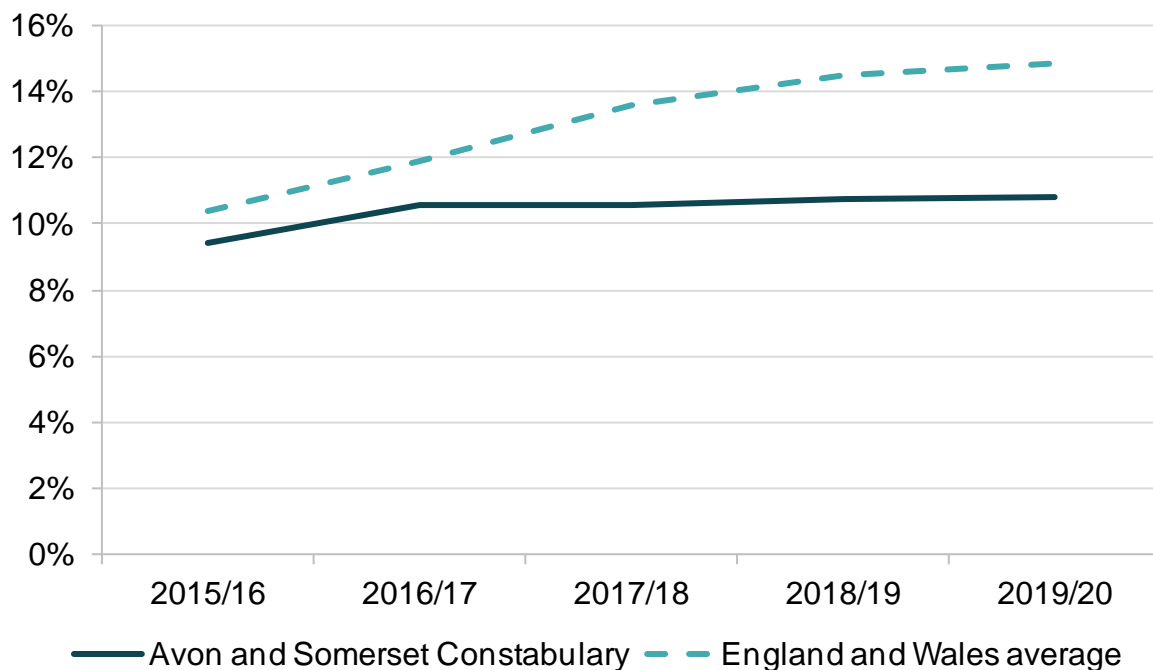
The force is planning to work more closely with Avon Fire and Rescue service. It is exploring ways of making more efficient joint use of police and fire operational resources. As a first step, the fire service's chief officer team will share a headquarters with the police, resulting in savings in premises costs and providing opportunities for senior officers to work together more closely. Soon, a pilot process will begin, which will send reports of people who have been taken ill or who have collapsed in their homes, to the fire service instead of the police in the first instance. This should reduce the deployment of police officers. At present, officers attend these incidents about 20 times every day.

The force has also extended joint working with the NHS to manage demand more effectively and to improve services. Mental health liaison officers in each local policing area work closely with the agencies that deal with mental health concerns. As a result the number of repeated 999 or 101 calls made about people with mental

ill-health or dementia has fallen. The needs of these people are now more often met by direct access to NHS mental health services and the force only becomes involved when absolutely necessary.

These arrangements, known as the Crisis Concordat, include initiatives such as the introduction of a control room mental health triage. A mental health manager and other qualified NHS staff have been recruited to work in the force’s control centre. They can provide direct access to NHS databases for real-time access to information to help resolve incidents. This has resulted in better solutions for individuals in crisis, particularly through access to pre-planned care pathways which are often already in place for people who have confirmed mental health conditions. Not only has this saved police time, but more importantly it has led to better, faster access to appropriate NHS services for people with mental health conditions, and it has reduced the number of people who have been detained in police cells.

Figure 5: Projected percentage of net revenue expenditure in Avon and Somerset Constabulary, compared with England and Wales, on collaboration with other forces in the 12 months to 31 March 2016 to the 12 months to 31 March 2020



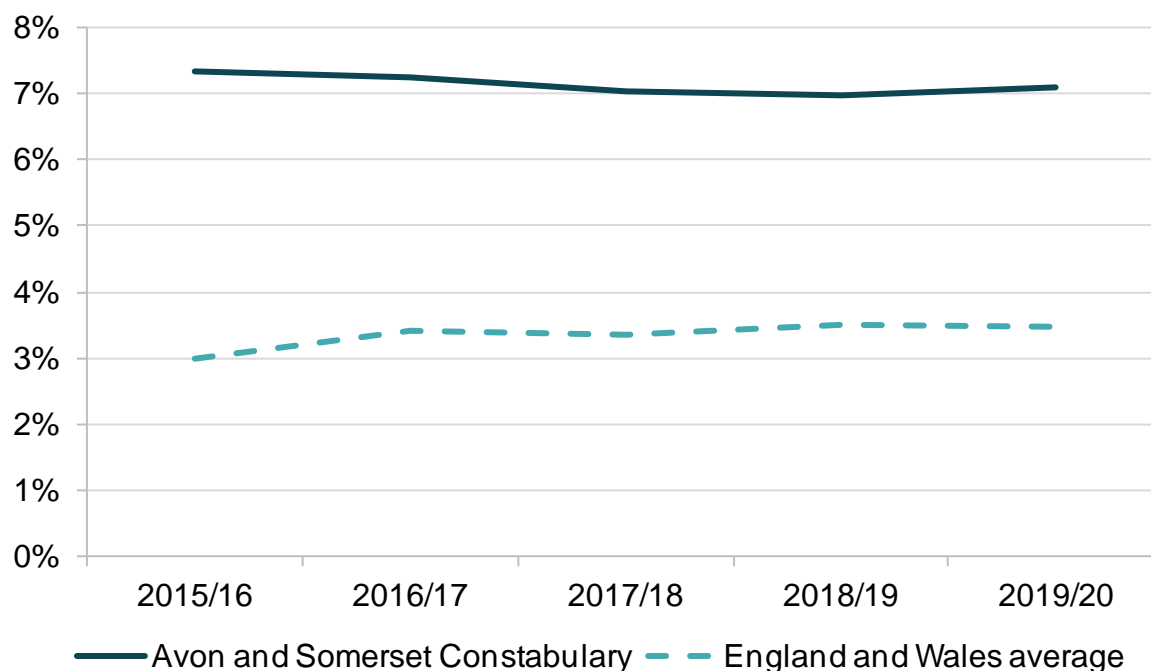
Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection

Note: some forces could not provide data for all years. These forces have been excluded from the England and Wales average in those years only. West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police stated that all of their net revenue expenditure is spent in collaboration. To avoid distorting the distribution of forces, these have been removed from the England and Wales average for this figure. For further information about the data in figure 5 please see annex A

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has forecast that it will spend £29.4m in 2016/17 on collaboration with other police forces. This is 10.6 percent of its net revenue expenditure (NRE), which is broadly in line with the England and Wales average of

11.9 percent. For 2019/20, the constabulary has forecast that it will spend £30.2m (10.8 percent of NRE) on collaboration with other police forces. This is broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 14.8 percent.

Figure 6: Projected percentage of net revenue expenditure in Avon and Somerset Constabulary, compared with England and Wales, on collaboration with non-police organisations in the 12 months to 31 March 2016 to the 12 months to 31 March 2020



Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection

Note: some forces could not provide data for all years. These forces have been excluded from the England and Wales average in those years only. For further information about the data in figure 6 please see annex A

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has forecast that it will spend £20.1m in 2016/17 on collaboration with non-police organisations. This is 7.3 percent of its net revenue expenditure (NRE), which is higher than the England and Wales average of 3.4 percent. For 2019/20, the constabulary has forecast that it will spend £19.9m (7.1 percent of NRE) on collaboration with non-police organisations. This is higher than the England and Wales average of 3.5 percent.

How well does the force understand how any changes made to improve efficiency have affected its ability to manage demand?

As resources reduce and demands on police services become ever more complex, it is increasingly important that forces understand fully the benefits that are realised from any investment and the impact of any new ways of working. This understanding enables them to learn from what works and to take swift action to mitigate any negative results.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has successfully managed a programme of change that has resulted in savings of over £60m since 2010. Through the corporate change board, the force has a disciplined, structured approach to monitoring the implementation of change plans to ensure the expected benefits are realised. It can clearly demonstrate the benefits realised and the efficiencies accrued from its investment in change programmes. The police and crime commissioner also scrutinises the change programme as part of her audit programme.

Investment in ICT has been a main theme for the force, both to facilitate change and to integrate mainstream ICT platforms, for example, investment in resourcing and business intelligence software and the new records management system.

Summary of findings



Good

Avon and Somerset Constabulary makes strategic decisions based on its prioritisation of current and projected demand. Financial and workforce planning arrangements align closely to address areas of high demand. For example, the force has increased its capacity to investigate child abuse and serious sexual offences. The force's corporate change programme is subject to firm governance arrangements and the force makes regular reviews of the effect of change on budgets, the quality of service provided and factors that affect the morale of the workforce. We believe the force could improve its understanding of the pressures experienced by investigators and we still have some reservations about the sustainability of the investigative model, which we shall test in the future.

The force can clearly demonstrate the benefits of its investments. An estimated £20m over ten years have been saved by providing HR, finance, procurement and other support functions through shared service with other organisations.

How well is the force planning for demand in the future?

HMIC examined how well forces are using their understanding of current and future demand on their services to develop more efficient ways of operating that balance ambition, realism, innovation and risk. Our assessment examined the extent to which Avon and Somerset Constabulary's plans are credible and achievable while at the same time are creative and ambitious. This included how far it is aiming to improve efficiency through its workforce plans, collaboration plans, financial plans, ICT plans and approaches to risk.

How well does the force identify and prioritise areas to invest in for the future?

It is important that forces have good plans in place which take account of future demands for their services as well as the likely future funding available to them. They need to invest wisely for the future in order to ensure that they have the right capabilities to meet future demand. HMIC examined the force's financial plans and workforce plans to assess how far it is set to meet future changes in demand and local priorities. We looked in particular at how well Avon and Somerset Constabulary has considered its future ICT capabilities as well as any wider changes to the communities it serves.

Matching resources to demand, organisational priorities and financial requirements

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has developed solid financial plans based on realistic and prudent assumptions about future income, costs and benefits. The force has made good use of information on future demand and workforce capabilities, and has identified savings through further tri-force collaboration on services such as HR, finance and procurement, and, to a lesser extent, specialist policing functions.

The force's mid-term financial plan includes plans to balance revenue and expenditure. It also plans to exceed these saving levels to allow for reinvestment in areas of high demand and priority growth, such as increasing the number of officers investigating child abuse, domestic abuse and serious sexual offences, as well as issuing over 2,000 body-worn video cameras.

Workforce planning, the corporate change programme and the mid-term financial plan align well. Since 2010 the force has reduced officer numbers by approximately 600 full time equivalents. The force is taking a logical approach to reducing the workforce between now and 2020/2021. Although the overall size of the workforce is likely to reduce, the force envisages that savings made through expanding the

tri-force collaboration and other workforce modernisation programmes will also have an effect. The current recruitment drive shows that the force is committed to maintaining officer numbers.

Investing in ICT

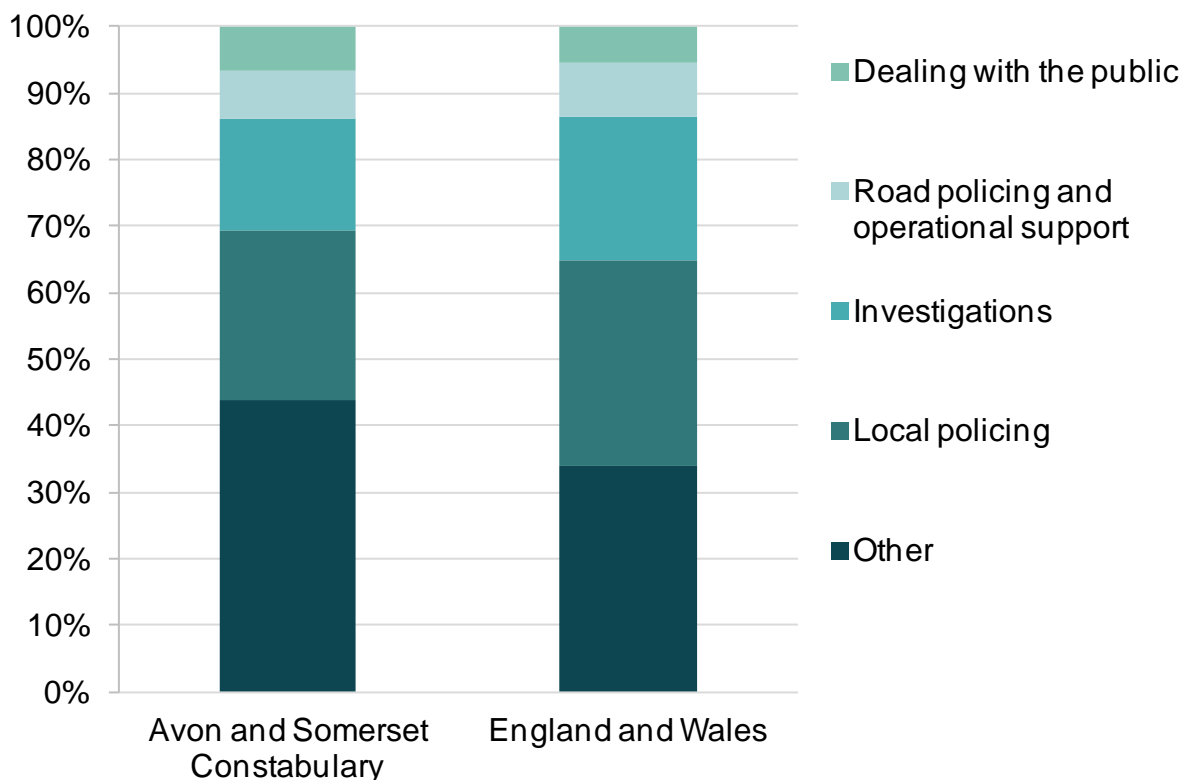
The force has considered how its future workforce and ICT capabilities will integrate. It has an ambitious and comprehensive ICT strategy which is closely aligned with the workforce and service priorities. New ICT developments are enabling the force to carry out existing tasks more efficiently and also to improve the way it provides a service. In addition to integrating all mainstream ICT platforms onto a single records management system, the force's strategic digital services team is implementing a number of innovative digital programmes.

Network 5, an internal web-based learning community network, is transforming training by providing recruits with access to learning materials before they join the force. This reduces the need for classroom time. Digital devices for assignments and assessments are also streamlining training. Future plans include the introduction of collaborative workspaces on the new force intranet and secure access for partner organisations, which will improve efficiency through less reliance on emails.

How well does the force plan its investments?

A force's plans for investment and savings need to be credible, realistic and informed by a full understanding of the future challenges (both financial and operational) that it is likely to face. HMIC assessed the extent to which Avon and Somerset Constabulary's future plans are prudent, robust and based on sound assumptions about future demands and costs, while at the same time being ambitious enough to meet public expectations, including identifying new ways of working and providing services in the future.

Figure 7: Estimated percentage of gross revenue expenditure allocated across different policing functions in Avon and Somerset Constabulary compared with England and Wales in the 12 months to 31 March 2016



Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection

For further information about the data in figure 7 please see annex A

Planning for the future

Beyond the theme of consolidation, the force’s corporate change programme remains ambitious. Much of the force’s planned change is based on technology, through its digital policing programme. The single records management system, Qlik Sense (a data visualisation app) and the body-worn video camera programme already support more efficient working. A tool called Aurora will improve time management, the forecasting of resources, and the scheduling of duties. Trials of tablets by frontline staff will end soon. When issued to all officers, the tablets will introduce a new era of remote working, and will help to reduce the time which frontline staff spend returning to police buildings to report on crime and incidents.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has a good track record of making required savings. It has a mid-term financial plan that highlights planned savings and areas for investment until the financial year 2020/2021. The financial viability of the plan is validated by external auditors every year. It is anticipated that during the 2016–2020/21 spending review the force will consolidate its operating model to support areas of investment and high demand.

To reaffirm the force's commitment to existing and future collaborations and anticipated savings, three assistant chief constables as single strategic leads will be appointed from the region for each of the collaborative arrangements. This will include an assistant chief constable from Avon and Somerset Constabulary as the single strategic lead for specialist policing functions shared between the constabulary, Gloucestershire Constabulary and Wiltshire Police and the plans to share support services.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary and other forces in the south west region have worked together for a number of years on organised crime, counter terrorism and forensic services. The newly appointed strategic lead for the region has a mandate to explore new areas for collaboration so that additional efficiencies can be identified.

In conclusion, the force has made significant progress in exploiting all opportunities to drive down costs, make savings and invest in priority areas in order to provide sustainable services to the public. For the current year, required savings have already been entered into the budget. For the remainder of the spending review period, likely savings have been identified and contingency plans exist if any of the plans are delayed. The force needs to realise a further £5m of savings to fund growth in priority areas and invest in important projects and it will undertake a priority-based resourcing review in the autumn to address this shortfall. A sound track record of savings and successful collaborations with other organisations leave the force well placed to meet the budgetary constraints of the future.

To what extent does the force fund its investments sustainably?

Police forces have made significant financial savings over recent years which has enabled them to reduce their costs and protect frontline policing. They continue to face financial challenges and it is vital to their ability to sustain effective policing that they continue to seek improved efficiencies and drive down costs so that they can not only balance their budgets but also invest in improving their capability in the future. Forces need to consider different ways of transforming the way they work in order to secure effective policing in the longer term. This may include plans to establish different joint working arrangements with other organisations or investing in ICT to improve operational efficiency.

Saving to invest for the future

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has effective financial processes that consider medium-term funding shortages and has a good history of making required savings. It has a mid-term financial plan that highlights planned savings and areas for investment until the financial year 2020/2021. The financial viability of the plan is validated by external auditors every year. During this spending review, the force

aims to consolidate its operating model to support areas of investment and high demand. It is investing in technology that will reduce demand and improve efficiency, as well as equipment such as body-worn video and mobile data.

Working together to improve future efficiency

Avon and Somerset Constabulary and other forces in the south west region have worked together for a number of years on organised crime, counter terrorism and forensic services. The newly appointed strategic lead for the region has a mandate to explore new areas for collaboration so that additional efficiencies can be identified.

The force is committed to existing and future collaborations and anticipated savings, and will support the appointment of three assistant chief constables from the region as single strategic leads for each of the collaborative arrangements. This will include an assistant chief constable from Avon and Somerset as the strategic lead for the specialist policing functions shared between the force, Wiltshire Police and Gloucestershire Constabulary and the plans to share support services.

Summary of findings



Avon and Somerset Constabulary's future is based on prudent assumptions about revenue, its cost base, required savings and areas for investment. Its mid-term financial plan is reviewed quarterly to adjust areas of pressure and is scrutinised by the police and crime commissioner and through external audit assurance processes.

The force exploits all areas of cost savings. It has pioneered shared service savings over a ten-year period. The digital services programme is set to transform policing over the next four years. This will include remote working and real-time intelligence about current and trending demand. The force has a good track record of making savings by working more closely with neighbouring forces and other public services across the south west region. Joint arrangements are now in place for all shared services to be led by individual chief officers.

Next steps

HMIC will assess progress on any recommendations and areas for improvement identified within its reports in a number of ways. We may re-visit those forces where we have identified a serious cause of concern, go back to assess as part of our annual PEEL inspection programme or receive updates through regular conversations with forces.

HMIC highlights recurring themes emerging from our PEEL inspections of police forces within our national reports on police effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy, and also leadership. These reports identify those issues that are reflected across the country and may contain additional recommendations directed at national policing organisations, including the Home Office, where we believe improvements need to be made at a national level.

Annex A – About the data

The source of the data is presented with each figure in the report, and is set out in more detail in this annex. The source of Force in numbers data is also set out below.

Methodology

Please note the following for the methodology applied to the data.

Comparisons with England and Wales average figures

For some data sets, the report states whether the force's value is 'lower' than, 'higher' than or 'broadly in line with' the England and Wales average. This is calculated by using the difference from the mean average, as a proportion, for all forces. After standardising this distribution, forces that are more than 0.675 standard deviations from the mean average are determined to be above or below the average, with all other forces being broadly in line.

In practice this means that approximately a quarter of forces are lower, a quarter are higher, and the remaining half are in line with the England and Wales average for each measure. For this reason, the distance from the average required to make a force's value above or below the average is different for each measure so may not appear to be consistent.

Statistical significance

When commenting on statistical differences, a significance level of 5 percent is used.

For some forces, numbers described in the text may be identical to the England and Wales average due to decimal place rounding, but the bars in the chart will appear different as they use the full unrounded value.

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator, unless otherwise noted, we use the Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2015 population estimates.

Force in numbers

Forecast change in expenditure

These data show estimated gross revenue expenditure (GRE) for the force in 2016/17 and 2019/20, calculated using total GRE pay and total GRE non-pay budgets provided to HMIC by individual forces at the time of data collection (April 2016), excluding expenditure on the office of police and crime commissioner.

Forecast savings

These data show planned savings (including use of reserves to bridge an in-year funding gap) in future years, calculated using the planned savings for pay and non-pay budgets provided to HMIC at the time of the data collection (April 2016). Some forces only provided figures for savings that they had formally signed off at that point, while others provided estimates for the whole period. Therefore a force with only a small savings requirement is not necessarily faced with only a small savings challenge for the future.

Workforce figures (based on full-time equivalents) for 31 March 2016 and 31 March 2020

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 502. The data are available from the Home Office's published Police workforce England and Wales statistics (available from www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales), or the Home Office police workforce open data tables (available from www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables). Figures may have been updated since the publication. Workforce includes section 38 designated officers (investigation, detention and escort), but does not include section 39 staff.

Projections for March 2020 are budget-based projections and therefore are likely to take into account a vacancy rate depending on a force's planning strategy. In some instances therefore an increase in budgeted posts may not actually indicate the force is planning to increase its workforce. In other cases, forces may be planning to reduce their workforce but have a current high vacancy rate which masks this change.

Workforce costs per head of population are obtained from calculations in HMIC Value for Money Profiles 2015, which use the ONS mid-2014 population estimates. The England and Wales averages will differ slightly from the Value for Money Profiles because we have included City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police Service.

Figures throughout the report

Figure 1: Volume of 999 calls from the 12 months to 31 March 2012 to 12 months to 31 March 2016

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 441.

Figure 2: Police recorded crime in 12 months to 31 March 2015 to 12 months to 31 March 2016

These data are obtained from Home Office Police recorded crime and outcomes data tables (available from www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables). Total police recorded crime includes all crime (excluding fraud

offences) recorded by police forces in England and Wales. Home Office publications on the overall volumes and rates of recorded crime include British Transport Police, which is outside the scope of this HMIC inspection. Therefore England and Wales averages in this report will differ slightly from those published by the Home Office.

Figure 3: Percentage of officers, staff and PCSOs in force workforce on 31 March 2016 compared to England and Wales

Data as at 31 March 2016 are obtained from the Home Office annual data return (as set out in the Force in numbers section) which is an 'actual' full-time equivalents (FTE). The percentages used in figure 3 are derived from the total FTEs within forces, and therefore may differ slightly from the exact figures quoted within the report.

Figure 4: Planned changes in workforce FTE from 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2020 for the force compared to England and Wales

The figures in figure 4 are rounded to the nearest whole person, full-time equivalents (FTEs), and therefore may differ slightly from the exact figures quoted within the report. Police staff includes section 38 designated officers (investigation, detention and escort).

Data as at 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2016 are obtained from Home Office annual data return (as set out in the Force in numbers section) which is an 'actual' FTE. These data include officers on career breaks and other types of long-term absence, and those seconded to forces. Projections for March 2020 are budget-based projections and therefore are likely to take into account a vacancy rate depending on a force's planning strategy, but may not include a projection for absences. In some instances therefore an increase in budgeted posts may not actually indicate the force is planning to increase its workforce. In other cases, forces may be planning to reduce their workforce but have a current high vacancy rate which masks this change.

Due to the complex and continually evolving picture of workforce collaboration between neighbouring forces, not all changes in workforce figures reflect the workforce that is available to forces. Involvement in strategic alliances and/or regional organised crime units would be an example of where changes over time are likely to be skewed. Therefore sharp increases or decreases over time need to be considered with caution as they may simply represent accounting changes related to how staff are allocated to forces, not real changes in staffing levels.

At the time of the inspection, the future financial climate was uncertain. Several forces did not have confirmed plans for workforce projections. It is important to note that figures provided are in many instances unconfirmed estimates provided to assist HMIC in our inspection programme and should not be seen as a concrete plan for the future workforce landscape of policing.

Figure 5: Projected net revenue expenditure on collaboration with other police forces for the 12 months to 31 March 2016 to the 12 months to 31 March 2020

These data were provided to HMIC by individual forces at the time of data collection (April 2016), prior to inspection.

These data cover the level of expenditure by forces on collaboration-related activity. Collaboration can include a variety of different types of activity, some of which may not incur specific expenditure, but may still generate benefits such as savings or improved services the public. Therefore these data should be seen as only one aspect of potential collaboration activity.

West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police have a highly-developed integrated relationship and have stated that all of their net revenue expenditure is through collaboration. To avoid distorting the distribution of forces around the average, West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police have been removed from the England and Wales average for this figure.

Figure 6: Projected net revenue expenditure on collaboration with non-police organisations for the 12 months to 31 March 2016 to the 12 months to 31 March 2020

These data were provided to HMIC by individual forces at the time of data collection (April 2016), prior to inspection. As suggested above, these data should be seen as only one aspect of potential collaboration activity.

Figure 7: The percentage of gross revenue expenditure allocated to different policing functions in the 12 months to March 2016

These data were provided to HMIC by individual forces at the time of data collection (April 2016), prior to inspection. These data define policing functions using the Policing Objective Analysis categories which we have grouped. The grouping is illustrated in the table below.

Figure 7 policing functions	POA categories
Local policing	Local policing
Investigations	Specialist Investigations Investigative Support Public Protection
Road policing and operational support	Roads Policing Operations Support
Dealing with the public	Dealing with the Public
Other	Intelligence Criminal Justice Arrangements Support Functions National policing Office of PCC Central Costs