PEEL: Police efficiency (including leadership) 2017

An inspection of Cheshire Constabulary

Contents

Introduction

As part of our annual inspections of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)[1] assesses the efficiency and leadership of forces in England and Wales.

What is police efficiency and why is it important?

As with all public services, the police service must operate in a way that makes the most of its available resources. To do this, police forces must understand what their demand is – by which we mean what work they can reasonably predict they will have on any given day – and ensure that they have the resources they need, in the right place, to meet that demand. To stay efficient they must have good, realistic and evidence-based plans for the future. Our efficiency inspection assessed all of these areas during 2017.

As part of the 2017 inspection, we also integrated aspects of leadership into our assessment of efficiency, as the two areas are closely linked. We assessed how police leaders are driving innovation in policing, within their own forces and further afield. We also inspected how well forces are planning for the future with regards to their leadership.

Between 2010/11 and 2015/16, central government funding for the police service in England and Wales fell by 19 percent, or £1.7 billion in cash terms. Police forces met the required budget reductions until November 2015, when the government announced that overall police spending would be protected from further cuts, to enable the police to continue to adapt to emerging crime threats while taking further steps to improve efficiency. While that was a more favourable funding settlement for policing than was expected, reductions in spending by other public services will still create additional pressure for police forces.

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[1] This inspection was carried out before 19 July 2017, when HMIC also took on responsibility for fire & rescue service inspections and was renamed HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. The methodology underpinning our inspection findings is unaffected by this change. References to HMICFRS in this report may relate to an event that happened before 19 July 2017 when HMICFRS was HMIC. Citations of documents which HMIC published before 19 July 2017 will still cite HMIC as the publisher.

Our report on Cheshire Constabulary's legitimacy inspection will be available on our website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2017/cheshire/) at the end of 2017. HMICFRS reports on police effectiveness will be published in early 2018. Previous PEEL reports are also available on our website: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2016/cheshire/.

More information on how we inspect and grade forces as part of this wide-ranging inspection is available on our website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/).

Force in numbers

£ Financial position

Forecast change in total gross revenue expenditure

2017/18	2020/21	Percentage change
£195m	£194m	0%

Workforce

Planned change in officer numbers

2016/17	2020/21	Percentage change
2,008	1,967	-2%

Planned change in total workforce

2016/17	2020/21	Percentage change
3,501	3,578	+2%

Calls for assistance

999 calls per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2017

Cheshire Constabulary	England and Wales force average
99	135
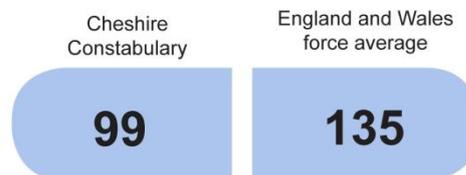
Recorded crime

Changes in recorded crime (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2017

2015/16	2016/17
50	63
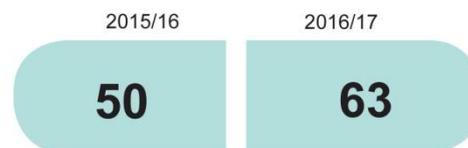
Percentage change in recorded crime (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2017

Cheshire Constabulary	England and Wales force average
+25%	+11%

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 judgment[2]

●●●○ **Good**

Cheshire Constabulary is judged to be good in the efficiency with which it keeps people safe and reduces crime. Our overall judgment is the same as last year. The constabulary has maintained a good understanding of demand; its use of resources to manage demand is judged to be good; and its planning for future demand is assessed to be outstanding.

Overall summary

How well does the force understand demand?

●●●○
Good

How well does the force use its resources?

●●●○
Good

How well is the force planning for the future?

●●●●
Outstanding

Cheshire Constabulary is good in its efficiency of keeping people safe and reducing crime. It is good at predicting likely future demand and in doing so it considers a wide range of information and changing public expectations. It has invested in IT solutions, changing how it operates to make the constabulary more efficient and effective through agile working and infrastructure improvements for the future. It has excellent partnership and collaborative arrangements for managing its current and future demand, and has been swift in realising tangible benefits through new ways of working from its collaboration with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS).

The constabulary plans well ahead and invests in its leadership, providing excellent training and development as well as bringing in skills from outside the constabulary to fill skill gaps and introducing a wider range of styles and experience. The continued refinement of the constabulary's priority-based budgeting (PBB) process

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[2] HMICFRS judgments are outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate.

has made it excellent in this area of management, and PBB is now completely rooted in all the constabulary processes for planning. It is used to continually review and improve the efficiency of the constabulary in meeting its demand and priorities, in line with the police and crime plan.

We have examined the constabulary's financial plans; it has sufficient reserves and balanced budgets, and its plans are built on sound planning assumptions and subject to informed challenge. These plans include making investments to continue to make savings in the future through management of its estate, collaboration, IT processes and a major new operating system for its control room functions that should improve public contact, identification of demand and officer deployment. Cheshire Constabulary is very well placed to face the future.

How well does the force understand demand?

To be efficient, it is essential that police forces have a good understanding of the demand for their services. This means that they should not only understand what sort of incidents are likely to be reported on a normal day, but also what they need to do in advance to prevent crime. They should also understand the crimes and other activity in their area that are often hidden and are less likely to be reported, such as modern slavery or child sexual exploitation, and take action to uncover them.

Forces should be able to identify and reduce work that is unnecessarily created internally through inefficient processes. Similarly, forces should be looking for ways to identify processes and ways of working that are more efficient. Forces also have to make decisions about how they prioritise and respond to the demand for their services and should be able to demonstrate that their approach to prioritisation does not cause them to overlook some of their demand.

How well does the force understand current demand?

HMICFRS inspected how well Cheshire Constabulary understands the demand for its services. These demands can range from answering and responding to 999 calls to protecting victims and uncovering crimes that would not otherwise be reported. It is important that police forces understand the work that they need to do so that they can ensure that they have resources in place.

Forces deal with much more than responding to emergencies and investigating reports of crime. However, the number of calls for service (999 calls and 101 calls) and the levels of recorded crime can nonetheless be used to make simple comparisons. In particular, they can give an indication of whether demand has changed or is particularly high or low. Figure 1 shows how the number of 999 calls has changed since 2010/11, while figure 2 illustrates how crime has changed since 2010/11.

Figure 1: Rate of 999 calls recorded per 1,000 people in the local population in Cheshire Constabulary compared with England and Wales as a whole, from 2010/11 to 2016/17
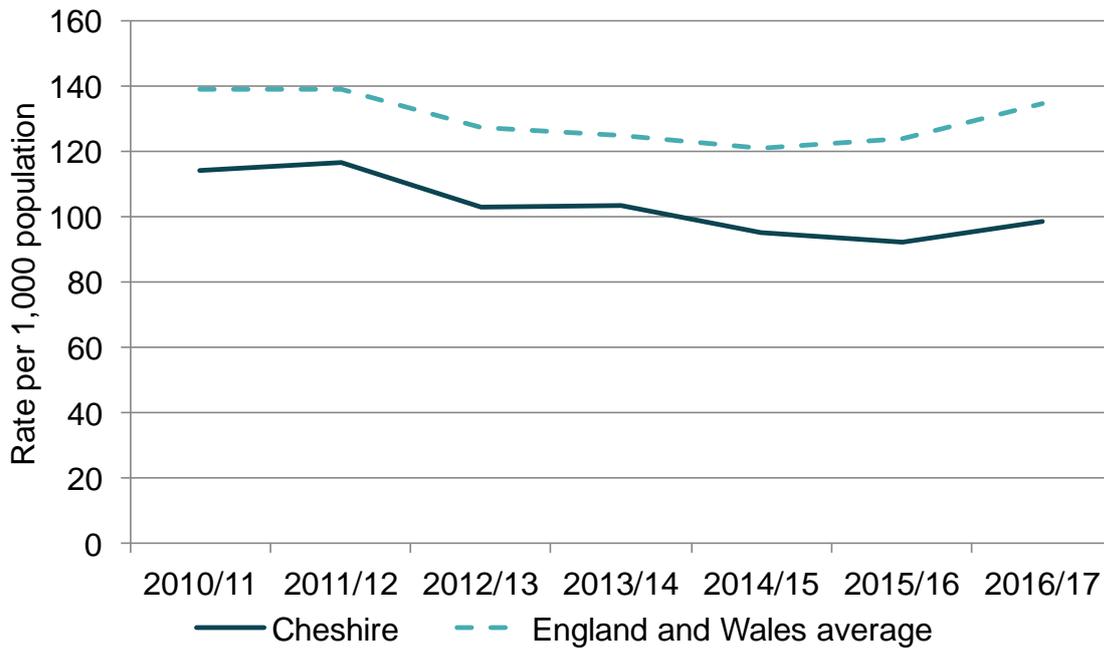
Source: Home Office Annual Data Requirement

Cheshire Constabulary recorded 99 '999' calls per 1,000 population in 2016/17. This was lower than the England and Wales force average of 135. The rate has decreased from the 114 calls per 1,000 population recorded in 2010/11 however, it has increased since 2015/16 when the rate was 92 calls per 1,000.

Figure 2: Police-recorded crimes per 1,000 population in Cheshire Constabulary compared with England and Wales from 2010/11 to 2016/17
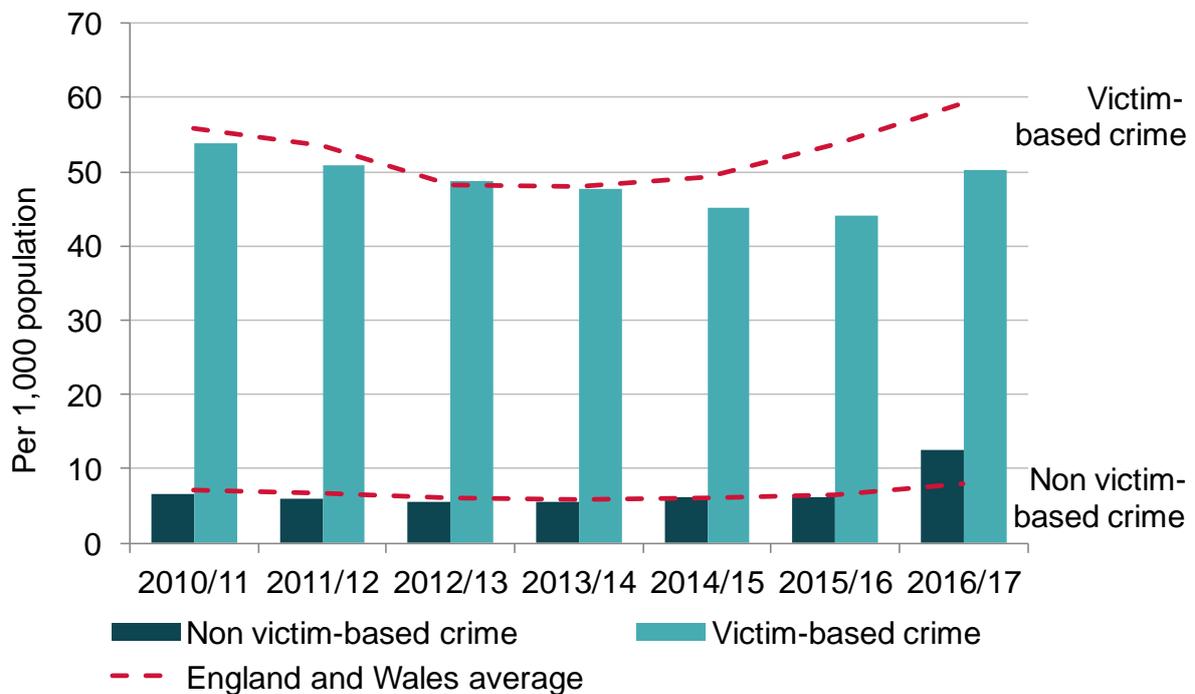
Source: Home Office Police-recorded crime data

Victim-based crimes (those where there is likely to be a specific victim) include violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery and other theft, criminal damage and arson. All other crime is considered non victim-based.

The rate of victim-based crime per 1,000 population in Cheshire in 2016/17 was 50.3 crimes. This is lower than the rate in 2010/11 of 53.7 crimes. The rate of victim-based crime decreased between 2010/11 and 2015/16 to 44.1 crimes per 1,000 population before increasing to the 2016/17 rate. The rate of victim-based crime per 1,000 population in England and Wales decreased from 55.8 to 48.1 crimes between 2010/11 and 2013/14 before increasing to 59.3 in 2016/17.

In the local population of Cheshire Constabulary the rate of non victim-based crime per 1,000 population in 2016/17 (12.5 crimes) was higher than in 2010/11 (6.7 crimes). The rate of non victim-based crime per 1,000 population decreased to 5.5 crimes in 2012/13 before rising again to the 2016/17 rate. The rate of non victim-based crime per 1,000 population in England and Wales in 2016/17 was 7.9 crimes. This decreased from 7.1 in 2010/11 to 5.9 crimes in 2012/13 before increasing to the 2016/17 rate.

Understanding demand

Cheshire Constabulary has a good understanding of demand. Its highly effective use of the priority based budgeting (PBB) process ensures that demand is assessed in relation to the constabulary's strategic objectives. This understanding of demand is supported by extensive data and research, to attempt to establish the total demand the constabulary faces both now and potentially in the future. The constabulary's strategic threat and risk assessment not only examines crime types, their trends and predicted growth, but also the wider effects of crime that will affect demand on the constabulary in the years to come. Data are analysed at local, county and national levels. The strategic threat and risk assessment takes into account both the predicted demographic growth of the county and anticipated government investment, such as in road networks and projects that will increase employment, that ultimately will affect the demand. In order to bridge potential gaps in intelligence the constabulary uses information from partner organisations such as local councils. For example the constabulary is looking much further ahead at local authority bids for housing over the next 10 to 15 years, to establish the demand on its services likely to result from more people living in the area. Further data and intelligence come from horizon scanning that uses two recognised methods which look at social, technological, economic, environmental, political, legal and organisational changes and their likely effects on the constabulary.

We found that the constabulary demonstrated a broad understanding of the things that affect demand. The PBB process also considers assessments of thematic areas of demand that are scored using MoRiLE.[3] This process forecasts areas of predicted growth in demand and then assesses the constabulary's capability and capacity to address it. This then allows for PBB adjustments to be made to resourcing and training, which brings in other departments not previously used in demand management such as HR. Training has already been provided in response to predictive demand indicating the need for more officers in cyber-crime and the prioritisation of modern-day slavery through control strategies and work with CFRS, who now also carry out demand-reducing crime prevention work for the constabulary during home safety visits.

Cheshire Constabulary also considers regional factors affecting demand. There is the planned development of a 'super-port' in Merseyside, and expansion plans for Manchester Airport. The constabulary considers these projects and makes predictions about likely demand – on the county's road infrastructure, and the potential for hidden demand from organised crime through any drugs or people-trafficking that may develop.

To enhance its understanding of total demand on the workforce, the constabulary carried out '24' – a project to gather data on the workforce's activity over a 24-hour period in April 2017. The data incorporate information from responding to and investigating incidents, carrying out preventative work in communities and time involved in paperwork, travelling and routine tasks that the workforce carry out as part of daily work. At the time of our inspection the data were still being analysed, but will be used to inform the constabulary's PBB process to continue to improve the alignment of resources and the elimination of any inefficiencies that are identified.

More complex demand

We found that the constabulary understands the types of hidden demand that are less likely to be reported and the absence of reporting does not imply an absence of criminality. The constabulary has built this into its priorities, plans and activities. As part of the strategic threat and risk assessment, the constabulary identifies intelligence gaps and develops plans, for example to counter modern-day slavery. The constabulary worked with trading standards and carried out proactive operations in targeting locations such as car washes and nail-bars to gain intelligence and provide support for people who could be at risk of modern-day slavery, with an understanding that victims may not even realise their circumstances are as a result of criminal activity. This then links to the constabulary's control strategy which includes a recognition of emerging crime types such as female genital mutilation,

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[3] MoRiLE, Management of Risk in Law Enforcement, is a method which helps inform decision-makers by identifying and prioritising threat, risk and harm linked to an organisation's capacity and capability to respond.

forced marriage and honour-based violence. This focuses awareness of the profile of such crimes on the part of call handlers and officers, as well as community teams who may receive intelligence from communities. The constabulary actively shares information with statutory partners such as social services.

In regard to hate crime, the constabulary prioritised and purposefully engaged with the LGBT community in the organisation of the 'Chester Pride' event. The purpose was to seek guidance and advice from the groups on how to encourage hate crime reporting, and this consideration influenced its policing of the event. The constabulary uses 'rainbow'-liveried patrol vehicles at incidents and events to encourage the reporting of these hidden crimes and actively uses social media to gain the confidence of communities who are less likely to report incidents. The deputy chief constable is the national policing lead for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and has facilitated inputs from members of these communities to raise awareness of cultural issues within the constabulary to enable officers to have understanding when dealing with incidents and events.

Call handlers are encouraged to examine detail in logs for demand that may be hidden, although due to time pressures this may not consistently happen. Repeat callers to the constabulary are analysed and data distributed to local policing team commanders with a view to carrying out problem-solving activities and looking at the broader circumstances of these individuals that may be hidden. This also links to the constabulary's priority in its complex dependency units (joint police, local authority and health partnerships) which are co-located to carry out triage and interventions of not only families but also individuals, in order to understand the whole picture and identify demand and the victims connected to this.

Historic investigations into allegations of sexual abuse in football have been prioritised by the constabulary. It commissioned a sexual offences profile to establish the demographics of the victims and direct the investigation to uncover unreported crimes and aligned specialist resources to deal with these crimes. The constabulary has recognised that cyber-crime is often under-reported or just not recognised by victims and previously, police officers. To address this, local policing officers have received training to bridge knowledge gaps, for example in blackmail offences and sharing sexual images, that has taken them beyond providing advice. More response officers now receive training to specifically deal with cyber-crime as the constabulary has prioritised how it deals with this growing area, to ensure incidents are identified as crimes at the outset and investigated as part of recurring operational business.

The constabulary has invested in a completely new command and control system that is due to go live in January 2018. This system is able to provide more information on callers, which should allow the constabulary to better and more consistently identify threat, harm and risk, to allow the most appropriate response to

be provided. This should enhance, at the point of first contact, the identification of demand in callers' needs as well as trends. HMICFRS will monitor the introduction of this system with interest.

How well does the force understand things that affect demand?

HMICFRS inspected how well Cheshire Constabulary reduces the demand that inefficiency can create internally. Forces can do this by identifying and eliminating inefficient processes, by ensuring they monitor work to get the best outcomes and by encouraging officers and staff to suggest new and better ways of doing their jobs.

Managing, prioritising and filtering demand

In March 2017 HMICFRS carried out a separate crime data integrity (CDI) inspection that examined how the constabulary complied with national crime recording standards. The constabulary was found to be inadequate in its compliance, with the under recording of an estimated 11,600 crimes per year.

The correct recording of these crimes, impact on constabulary control room operations, subsequent investigations, resourcing and time involved in these procedures, all affect demand that the constabulary needs to assess and is a significant task. The constabulary immediately commenced a programme of work, led by the deputy chief constable, to fully understand the overall impact, demand and challenges of the CDI findings. Until this is finalised and the constabulary understands and deals appropriately with the increased crime volume, then its management of total demand cannot be complete.

Cheshire Constabulary does though, have processes in place to manage, prioritise and filter demand through a range of established governance procedures. The constabulary's PBB process is now into its third year of use. HMICFRS has been consistently impressed with the PBB process, and last year we reported on some adaptations that PBB had led to in the constabulary. This year we specifically looked at how the constabulary has further developed PBB.

We found that PBB is now rooted within the constabulary's efficiency and governance processes and takes in a complete overview of how the constabulary operates, through resourcing, context of risks and ability, the vision of the constabulary, planning and achievement; all are mapped against the overall budget. This is evidenced by the reviewing and allocation of resourcing to areas of demand, and making continuous improvements to the constabulary operating model. It is now a completely integrated, sophisticated process that many other forces have been to Cheshire to learn from. From a position three years ago where training was provided to the constabulary by consultants on PBB's use, the constabulary itself has continually developed the process to ensure that all activities and departments are governed by it, with a view to making Cheshire Constabulary as efficient as possible.

Weekly meetings between the four department heads continually review PBB, with a quarterly performance review led by the chief officers. The constabulary has strong, established governance for improving efficiency.

In 2016 we reported that the workforce had raised concerns about rest days being cancelled, and the effect on welfare this had. This year we were pleased to see that the constabulary resource management unit has developed over the past 12 months to address this. It now has more robust scrutiny to ensure that the constabulary plans further ahead in operational resourcing, not just for day-to-day policing, but for all events and operations, to reduce the need for overtime and rest days being cancelled. Events are not routinely resourced based on the previous year's staffing levels, but are now formally reviewed through a risk assessment process, and resourcing is adjusted accordingly. We found examples of where this review had taken place based on incidents, feedback and intelligence, which resulted in the numbers of officers deployed for the 2017 events being reduced. In addition to this, the constabulary uses officers who normally work day shifts only, whether that be in specialist uniform or detective roles to support events. The constabulary ensures these officers select three shifts per year to work in uniform on the policing of major events, or at Christmas and New Year. This enhances the constabulary's resourcing efficiency and reduces rest days cancelled for response officers, as some additional 400 officers from these functions are now used to supplement staffing of police operations and events. The constabulary has also used external consultants to review its new operating model efficiency to meet demand and response times by adjusting staffing levels.

The constabulary monitors its incoming demand through the constabulary control room and can assess its call demand at any time. Calls to the constabulary are dip sampled for quality of their handling. Recruitment and retention of control room staff has been difficult and we found some staff had felt under resourced at times. However the constabulary has a resourcing plan where call handlers are trained in a second skill, such as deployment or crime recording, the plan aiming for all communications centre staff to be omnicompetent, to be able to meet demand flexibly at peak times and work was ongoing to better align staff availability to caller demand. The constabulary can spread its demand through priority assessment of calls, and if appropriate, schedule local policing appointments. This allows for demand to be purposefully delayed, to better meet both the constabulary's needs and that of callers. At this time, the constabulary allocates diary appointments only up to 1900 hours, and it may have to consider extending appointment times should demand increase in the future to suit public requirements.

All constabulary incidents are recorded on computer and there is daily examination of incidents at the established local management meetings and the constabulary-wide 'pacesetter' meeting, where uniformed and detective resourcing is adjusted to

cover incidents. At the time of our inspection, all call handlers were being trained in THRIVE[4] in preparation for the new command and control system being implemented in January 2018.

We found that the constabulary has comprehensive processes in place to ensure that the full benefits of change programmes are realised. The change delivery board oversees all constabulary change projects with robust scrutiny to realise the benefits of change through a change management dashboard. This examines progress, costs, cashable benefits and consequences. Reviews of all projects are completed and the constabulary has many examples of benefit realisation, of which the following are a sample:

Relocation of Widnes police station avoided £2m maintenance costs of the old premises and also brought a better work environment, with positive feedback from public and staff.

A mobile phone replacement project made savings by reducing the costs of connectivity contracts from £9 to £3 per user. An unintended consequence of this review was identification that the constabulary could also reduce the overall number of contracts by 350, making another significant saving.

The constabulary cancelled contracts for its digital programme, as the existing contract was not achieving all the work benefits required, and brought the work into constabulary to improve the outcome of the project.

In relation to IT, the constabulary understands that not all benefits from such programmes are financial. For example, the roll-out of 1,900 mobile data terminals to officers has brought time efficiencies, but this is not cashable, as the constabulary cannot take back police hours unless it reduces the number of officers, which it does not wish to do (in line with its police and crime plan).

HMICFRS found that benefit realisation is advanced and goes beyond finance and productivity benefits. For example, with agile working and hand-held devices, the constabulary has concentrated on looking at much wider benefits such as community engagement, visibility, and releasing supervisor time to be able to focus on having more quality conversations with staff and officers about performance and welfare. It also understands the beneficial effect that agile working can have in recruitment of new staff, the appeal of working flexibly with state-of-the-art technology attracting a diverse range of styles and skills to the workforce.

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[4] THRIVE is a structured assessment based on the levels of threat, harm, risk and vulnerability faced by the victim, rather than simply on the type of incident or crime being reported, in order to help staff determine the appropriate level of response to a call.

Leaders promoting innovative thinking

Cheshire Constabulary is committed to gathering ideas from its workforce. The constabulary's people strategy highlights the importance of allowing its workforce a say in the future, recognising that they have a stake in it and feel valued for their contributions. The constabulary has a 'what works' database to share ideas. New ideas can be submitted either via line managers or via an electronic mailbox. The constabulary has a dedicated post-holder whose role is to seek out and drive innovation in the constabulary.

The constabulary also recognises suggestions made. It holds WOW! and ACE awards,[5] and bonuses are paid for ideas that lead to change. Chief officers will convey messages to individuals, recognising ideas and explaining when things cannot be done. The constabulary responds to ideas and feedback, as evidenced through the introduction of a new PCSO shift pattern and two e-bikes for testing and evaluation. The constabulary's promotion process has been made more transparent following feedback, and leadership conferences have been opened up to sergeant and police staff equivalents. In the communications centre, staff are very positive about the encouragement of ideas by management.

The chief officer team is very visible within the constabulary and is considered approachable by the workforce. We found the majority of the workforce we spoke to during inspection was confident and aware of how they could submit ideas, although some were not aware of an actual process and some considered that they would not be listened to. The constabulary would benefit by clarifying the actual process to its staff so as to encourage more engagement.

Summary of findings

Good

Cheshire Constabulary has a good understanding of its demand and those things that affect demand. The information it uses is wide-ranging and thorough. The constabulary has a detailed strategic threat and risk assessment and the constabulary now looks much further ahead in its planning and predictions, both locally and regionally. In doing this it takes into account the changing demographics of Cheshire and local authority plans that extend well into the future. The constabulary understands that the absence of reporting does not imply an absence of criminality, and has undertaken work to reveal hidden crime, including hate crime,

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[5] The WOW! Awards are a national independent awards system which recognises positive feedback following interactions between organisations and their customers. The ACE (Achieving Cheshire Excellence) Awards are the Constabulary's highest accolade, awarded to an individual or team who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to the 'We're Here' pillars of policing in Cheshire.

historic abuse enquiries and modern-day slavery, linking these to its priorities. Changes to procedures and understanding the additional crime and investigation demand following HMICFRS' separate crime data integrity inspection is being led by the chief officers.

The constabulary has a comprehensive, completely integrated method of planning in its priority-based budgeting process which allows it to make continual informed adjustments to how it operates to meet demand, to ensure it is as efficient as it can be. This process has been implemented across all constabulary departments over the past three years. The constabulary can evidence numerous project benefits through robust benefit realisation. This has taken the constabulary beyond looking at routine financial and business benefits, to now looking at the qualitative outcomes of investments made through the time saved and the importance of understanding what can be done with this time. The constabulary leadership is very clear on welcoming ideas for innovation and recognising them, and this was acknowledged by the majority of the workforce we spoke to during inspection, although further clarity of the process would be beneficial to reinforce this.

How well does the force use its resources?

Police forces have finite resources with which to do an increasingly complicated job, so must ensure that they deploy and use their resources in the best way possible. The biggest resource that policing has is its workforce and it is important that forces make sure that they have access to the skills needed to police effectively now and in the future.

It is also important that forces make sophisticated decisions about how to spend and invest their resources in order to get the best value for the public. This means forces need to have a good understanding of what they can achieve within a particular budget.

Forces cannot provide services efficiently in isolation, and must work with other police forces and local organisations to ensure they provide the best service to the public at the most appropriate cost.

How well does the force understand the capability of its workforce?

HMICFRS inspected how well Cheshire Constabulary understands the skills it needs, the skills it actually has in the workforce and what steps it is taking to ensure that they match. Police forces spend around 80 percent of their budget on staffing, so it is vital that the workforce is as productive as possible.

Figure 3 illustrates the workforce profile (the number of officers, staff and police community support officers (PCSOs)) since 2010 and projections to 2021. Between March 2017 and March 2021, it is projected that the number of officers will decrease by 40.6 FTE (2 percent) from 2,008 to 1,967. Similarly, the number of officers across England and Wales as a whole is projected to decrease by 2 percent.

Figure 3: Cheshire Constabulary's planned full-time equivalent workforce (FTE) as on 31 March from 2010 to 2021
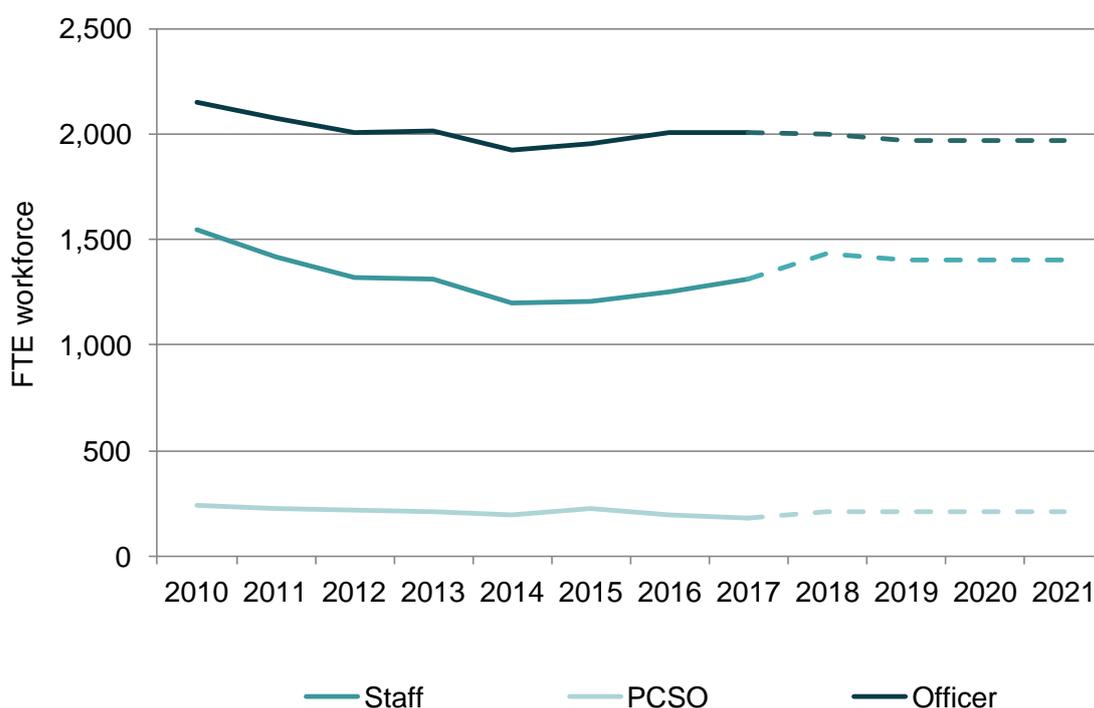
Source: Home Office Police workforce statistics and HMICFRS spring data collection

The number of staff working in Cheshire Constabulary is projected to increase by 85.0 FTE (6 percent) from 1,316 to 1,401 between March 2017 and March 2021. Staff numbers across England and Wales, however, are projected to decrease by 2 percent. The number of PCSOs in Cheshire is projected to increase by 32.4 FTE (18 percent) from 178 to 210 over the same period. For England and Wales as a whole, PCSOs are projected to increase by 0.2 percent.

The constabulary's strategic threat and risk assessment sets out the current and projected needs of the constabulary in terms of capability and capacity, mapped against crime and predictions up to 2020. Crime types are detailed together with an assessment of training needed or growth in posts required to meet the demand. When the constabulary moved to its new operating model, it made a strong commitment to neighbourhood policing, with dedicated teams being established. The constabulary recognised that there was a high proportion of younger, more inexperienced officers in these teams and that it needed to invest in enhancing their skills in order for them to be fully effective in these important roles. It developed a programme of beat management courses to teach skills in engagement, problem-solving, and using data and intelligence to target patrol activity. These courses have now provided the base line of training. Through a programme of supporting secondments from response teams to neighbourhood teams it is sharing learning in these skills, it is encouraging the next generation of beat officers and the sustainability of neighbourhood policing in Cheshire in line with public expectations.

In 2016 HMICFRS reported that the constabulary had a good understanding of the skills and capabilities of its workforce. Detailed knowledge of these skills is always important, but as the constabulary moves towards the implementation of its new command and control system in 2018, it is essential. This is because deployments will be identified and made by the system which can map incident types to skills capabilities. An organisational capacity and capability review has been commenced in the first quarter of 2017 and when this programme of reviews and role profile development is fully completed by 2018 it should set an advanced level of understanding workforce capabilities. To test the skills database, we asked the resource management unit to identify a 'crime family liaison officer, a negotiator, and a tutor constable' from the workforce. The system searched and located all such skills, identifying the skill commencement and end dates and availability of the officers. It also identified the current staffing level within the officer's department so that the decision to reallocate them could be made by supervisors if such a skill was requested for a specific incident or investigation. On a more limited separate system, police staff skills were tested and evidenced on request through identification of constabulary control room operators and a trainers skills. The constabulary is developing how this information is presented and hopes to eventually bring the police staff information to the same standard as officers to improve accessibility. The constabulary could enhance this capacity even further by looking at wider, non-operational skills of the members of its workforce and its special constabulary, such as language and IT skills.

The constabulary uses its people board to provide governance for workforce planning and for understanding the skills and capabilities it has to meet demand both now and in the future. This board is chaired by the deputy chief constable and links through the strategic threat and risk assessment to the constabulary's succession and recruitment plan. The board looks at gaps in skills and training. The constabulary recently recognised that its local policing unit (LPU) officers, rather than specialist teams, were dealing with the majority of cyber-crime incidents. Nearly 300 officers and staff then received training and access for internet and social media investigation to allow them to respond to and deal with investigations more effectively in the LPUs.

At the time of our inspection in May 2017 the constabulary was actively recruiting for detective transferees to meet a skills gap it had identified. Through 2016 and into 2017 it has held promotion processes that have been open to external force applications in order to bring new skills to Cheshire. This has resulted in skills transfers with people expert in cyber-crime investigation and problem-solving coming into the constabulary. The constabulary also realises opportunities for workforce modernisation can make it more efficient. For example, the constabulary has a dedicated rape enquiry unit. It carried out an assessment and made the decision to employ some non-warranted police staff investigators, releasing warranted detective posts back to front-line roles. The constabulary uses consultants to provide

professional coaching at its leadership conferences and works with Chester University for advice on ethics. The constabulary is currently working with the N8 Research Partnership[6] on research into bias and coercive control by perpetrators of domestic abuse during investigations, which will inform further training and guidance to its officers.

How well does the force understand the capability of its leaders?

HMICFRS inspected how well Cheshire Constabulary understands the skills it needs and the skills its leaders have, and what steps it is taking to ensure that they match.

The constabulary has a succession and recruitment plan. This plan examines the requirements of the constabulary in terms of its leaders. It sets out planned dates for promotion processes, including chief officers, based upon retirements and gaps the constabulary has in specialist skills. There is an identified gap for four chief inspectors with specialist skills (investigations) that it will address through external advertisement and constabulary promotion processes. To understand the skills of its leaders, the constabulary uses the capability assessment of officers and staff. Skills are uploaded onto a data-base that provides a clear understanding of the capabilities of the leadership in order to plan. For completeness, this data and the detailed strategic threat and risk assessment predictions of change and growth in specific areas of business are evaluated and feed into the PBB process for constabulary planning and budgets, to be able to meet demand. The constabulary plans to re-run a full leadership audit as soon as the new College of Policing competency framework is established.

Through capability assessment the constabulary is aware of the skills it has in its leadership, including police staff members. Governance comes from the deputy chief constable through the constabulary's people board. It has used personality profiling of leadership, to enable individuals to learn more about their own style and capabilities to enable them to communicate better with teams. The constabulary is confident it understands higher-risk skills, such as those of senior investigating officers, firearms and public order commanders, and plans for training and reaccreditation in line with professional practice. The constabulary's professional development review (PDR) process incorporates a talent matrix to encourage discussion and reflection including skills, but understanding of the actual value and use of the talent matrix within the workforce was very limited and could be enhanced.

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[6] A collaboration of the eight most research-intensive universities in the North of England: Durham, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and York.

In light of its understanding of the skills gaps and needs for the future, the constabulary advertises externally and has brought into Cheshire additional skills and styles of leadership, enhancing its overall capability. The constabulary has embraced the Police Now programme[7] and has ten graduates working in its LPUs. During our inspection we spoke with some of these officers, who were very positive about the programme and work they were doing for the constabulary. The constabulary has recently supported two senior officers through the Police National Assessment Centre process for development up to chief officer positions.[8] The chief officer team has recruited a new assistant chief constable to the constabulary and provided a temporary position to another senior officer at this rank for development. The constabulary also has a recent direct entry superintendent[9] who, in addition to normal duties, is carrying out research for the constabulary and using the skills from his private sector background. During our inspection we found creative staff leadership opportunities being provided by the constabulary. For example, it is possible to progress from being an apprentice in the finance team to achieving chartered accountant qualifications. The constabulary's aim is that local young people who join the constabulary at an early stage are retained in the organisation with those required future skills.

The constabulary realises that it needs other skills besides the obvious rank-based ones. We found abundant evidence of an understanding of the importance of people skills in leadership, necessary for a progressive police force to develop, retain and attract the calibre of workforce needed for the future. The constabulary has made significant investment in this area and provides its leaders, whether they are officers or staff, with professionally facilitated development that includes people skills such as managing quality conversations, wellbeing, understanding benefits of change and establishing themselves as legitimate leaders. The constabulary has plans to enhance this further with inclusion of its special constabulary leaders.

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[7] www.policenow.org.uk/

[8] www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Curriculum/Leadership/Strategic-Command-Course/Pages/Senior-PNAC.aspx

[9] College of Policing Leadership programmes: information available at Direct Entry: http://recruit.college.police.uk/Officer/leadership-programmes/Pages/Fast-Track.aspx

How well does the force allocate resources?

HMICFRS inspected how well Cheshire Constabulary uses its understanding of demand to prioritise its activities in order to provide the best service to the public. To assess this, we considered the extent to which the constabulary understands what it can provide within a particular budget.

The level of spending on different police functions varies between forces, depending on the particular demands that each force must meet. Higher expenditure does not necessarily mean better services, but it can demonstrate how a force prioritises its resources.

Figure 4 shows how expenditure is distributed across the most common police functions. Local policing covers functions such as incident response, neighbourhood policing and local investigations. Investigation covers areas of specific proactive investigative functions, such as major crime, while dealing with the public includes front counter and control room activities. Intelligence covers the gathering and assessment of intelligence.

Figure 4: Estimated percentage of net revenue expenditure allocated across policing functions in Cheshire Constabulary from 2011/12 to 2016/17
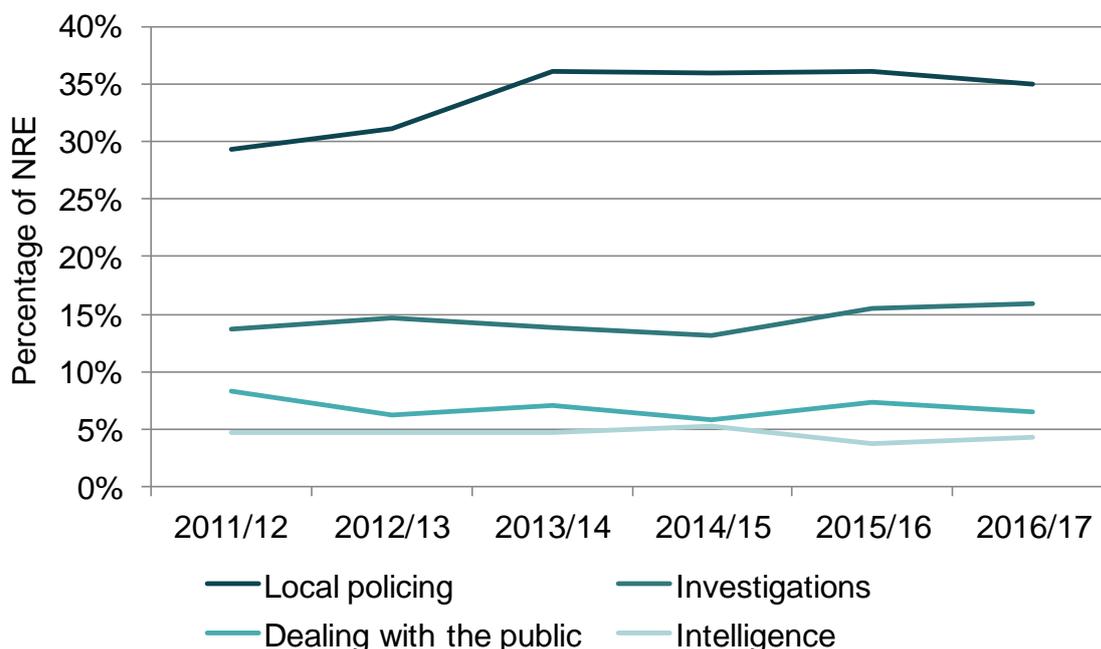
Source: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)
Note: Functions that have not been included as they are equivalent to back office functions or are only a small proportion of expenditure include operational support and road policing.

In Cheshire, the percentage of estimated expenditure on local policing in 2016/17 has increased from 29 percent in 2011/12 to 35 percent in 2016/17. Estimated expenditure on investigation has increased from 14 percent to 16 percent, expenditure on 'dealing with the public' has decreased from 8 percent to 6 percent and expenditure on intelligence is similar to 2011/12 at around 4 percent.

Prioritisation and cost

Throughout this report, we have commented on the constabulary's use of a PBB process. This involves all departments of the constabulary at the planning stage, and meetings are observed by the staff associations for transparency. The process requires each department to set out what it has achieved and what it plans to achieve over the next period, with agreed service levels, resourcing, funding, training, and change projects then being set. The criteria that PBB uses to make these decisions are comprehensive and include:

- Resource availability, using the medium-term financial strategy and workforce plan to look ahead.

- Future demand, threats and risk, using the comprehensive strategic threat and risk assessment and horizon-scanning.

- What priorities the constabulary has, using the police and crime plan, based on public expectations gained from extensive consultation, constabulary values and strategic policing requirements.

- How the constabulary wants to operate, using its principles, ethics and leadership.

- Demand and service levels, reviewing what has been achieved in the past 12 months and what the constabulary wants to achieve in the next 12 months.

- Efficiency, looking at how the constabulary can be more efficient and understanding the costs and risks in doing, or in some cases not doing, some activity.

- Facilitation, reviewing what is needed to make all this happen – for example, adjustments to the operating model, workforce and training plans, the constabulary change programme.

All of these factors are mapped against the available budget and adjustments are made with new service levels set through this thoroughly integrated process. Everything that the constabulary does is prioritised through this process and is part of its integrated planning framework.

The sophistication and connectivity of PBB means the constabulary can understand the relationship between budget and the service provided by all departments, and how making adjustments, for example in the distribution of its resources will affect performance outcomes. This takes into account the overarching 'We're here' values of the constabulary, which is committed to providing resources to communities, victims and justice.

Operationally, the constabulary is able to adjust its policing resources dynamically to meet demand. It does this through its control strategy which sets clear priorities to focus on and assist decision-making on a daily basis. HMICFRS observed daily management and pacesetter meetings where local and constabulary demand was reviewed and resourcing adjusted across the constabulary in response to specific incidents and in line with constabulary priorities.

The constabulary has improved in its event planning. We found that operations are now planned further in advance, with resourcing levels varied according to intelligence and assessment, considering incidents, crowds and risk. This has reduced the resourcing of Chester races, for example, achieving significant cost savings for the 16 race meetings in 2017. Changes to shift patterns have been made for more efficient working and the PCSO rota now operates between 0700 and 2400 hours. While this means some PCSOs will not be available on dayshifts as before, it allows the constabulary to cover seasonal demand trends, such as later summer evening anti-social behaviour, more efficiently than before.

Investment

Cheshire Constabulary is focused on using its investments to best effect. The chief officer team uses the priorities of the police and crime plan and the constabulary's vision as the evidence base for all design principles and business cases for future investment in change and collaboration.

The constabulary was early to recognise the need for investment through collaboration, and the need for increased resilience was an early motivation for developing shared services. To support this work, it began a blue light collaboration with CFRS. Since 2015, this investment has brought new ways of working and efficiencies through understanding how both organisations work, reducing duplication of estate, effort, IT provision, management and staffing roles. The replacement of desktop computers and the principle of hot-desking have allowed savings in office space that have assisted the merging of CFRS into police estate. Both organisations have a clear understanding that the changes and investments made will be financially realised in approximately five years' time.

Investment in the use of mobile data technology and agile-working has brought significant benefits, not financially but in terms of productivity and the release of quality time, which the constabulary views with equal importance. HMICFRS attended a leadership conference that the constabulary holds for its managers,

where the constabulary has explored the use of this time to improve the quality of supervision and look at operational benefits of increased visibility in communities and how police buildings are more efficiently used.

The constabulary change board provides scrutiny of investments made and the associated benefits, as does the audit committee, which is an appointed group of independent external volunteers. A review by the audit committee has been completed on the blue light collaboration work. The constabulary also has reviews and challenge from other external providers, such as Investors in People, and regional networks have all conducted independent thematic reviews of projects for the constabulary to ensure it learns from investment and change, and realises the benefits.

How well does the force work with others?

HMICFRS inspected how well Cheshire Constabulary has explored all opportunities to work in collaboration with others to increase efficiency and provide better, more resilient services. This can include working jointly 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 other organisations and other forces, and whether it has a good understanding of how successful its joint working is.

The level of spending on different police functions varies between forces, depending on the particular demands that each force must meet. Higher expenditure does not necessarily mean better services, but it can demonstrate how a force prioritises its resources.

How the force works with other organisations and other forces

The constabulary has a strong commitment to working with partners. In 2016 we reported the constabulary had very good partnership working arrangements, and this has continued through several initiatives. The constabulary's complex dependency units are now well established and identify families and individuals who are likely to cause the most demand on services. A lead agency deemed best to support the case is appointed and co-ordinates all partners' responses. The programme is supported by education, mental health, adult services, fire service, children's services and others to provide triage and problem-solving to do the best for the individuals and reduce demand on all of the partners involved.

In the LPUs the community teams work with local partners. For example, in Chester the teams work and share intelligence with community safety wardens and the Chester Cathedral wardens, to assist the police in reducing anti-social behaviour. The constabulary works with mental health service in the provision of triage cars. These joint patrols respond to incidents of mental health concerns, providing immediate support and problem-solving. Access time to medical records has been

reduced and the number of section 136 Mental Health Act detentions[10] has significantly reduced. This alleviates pressure not only on police resources, but also on the NHS and local authority through reduced admissions. It also importantly, means that vulnerable people with mental health problems have access to appropriate help. The constabulary has a partnerships superintendent who works across all four local authority areas in Cheshire to provide consistency and ensure all opportunities are explored. There is still a desire to do more, such as enhancing arrangements with regional search and rescue teams to assist in missing person enquiries, and to develop the network of connections of communities into the constabulary's independent advisory group.

The benefits of joint working

We found that the constabulary is clear about the benefits it gets from its collaboration work. It collaborates with several forces in routine administrative functions such as HR, finance and payroll. It also collaborates at an operational level with North Wales Police to provide joint firearms capability.

It is part of a tri-force collaboration with North Wales and Merseyside Police forces seeking to achieve a significant improvement through a shared IT platform that will allow instant access to data across all three neighbouring forces. Besides financial savings, this should bring benefits in terms of access to shared information to facilitate decision-making in terms of threats and to assist in keeping communities safe. The constabulary's blue light collaboration with CFRS has changed working practices, reduced estate costs, and is moving to a complete sharing of all back office functions, including finance, HR, IT, strategic change, engagement and insight, legal services, estates, planning and performance, information management, procurement and stores. The constabulary realised the opportunities the fire service provides through its community safety visits to thousands of households. It has provided training to CFRS staff to recognise domestic abuse, modern-day slavery and vulnerability, in order to be able to refer cases so that the constabulary can follow up to protect people and prevent exploitative crime.

The constabulary has also demonstrated why it sometimes has chosen not to collaborate. The tri-force collaboration was planned to include a single-site forensic provision. While appealing, this plan would have involved too much investment and a need for borrowing; together with an uncertain national forensic picture, this led the constabulary to decide against it at this time. It was clear that all collaboration opportunities were explored by the constabulary.

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[10] Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983. This enables a police officer to remove, from a public place, someone who they believe to be suffering from a mental disorder and in need of immediate care and control, and take them to a place of safety – for example, a health or social care facility, or the home of a relative or friend.

Leadership driving innovation

The leadership of Cheshire Constabulary is pro-active in seeking out new opportunities for service improvement. The constabulary invested in a new IT platform for its occupational health department. This platform is an integrated system that removes the need for paper records, and the referral times for its health appointments are considerably quicker than in most other forces. Since our last inspection in 2016 the constabulary has provided some 1,900 mobile data terminals to its workforce. This was a significant investment for the constabulary. It was not satisfied with the existing IT provider, so changed arrangements and worked directly with a manufacturer. It empowered 60 people as agile working champions across the constabulary and involved them in testing, selection and development of the product, so it actually suited the workforce's needs from the outset.

The PBB process the constabulary has developed was originally used by other forces. Cheshire Constabulary saw the opportunities presented by the process and refined it to the constabulary's needs.

The constabulary recognised that its existing command and control platform was in need of replacement to meet future needs. The constabulary carried out research both nationally and internationally, and invested in a new operating system that is due to be implemented in January 2018. This system will be the first of its kind in the UK and is a significant advance in technology for the constabulary. Through a unified platform, the system supports dynamic decision-making and deployments through the provision of detailed mapping, intelligence and identification of resource capabilities. This investment is projected to eventually realise savings on annual operating costs and to improve the public's experience of contact with the constabulary.

Summary of findings

Good

Cheshire Constabulary has been assessed as good in the use of its resources to manage demand, with some elements of excellent practice. The constabulary understands the skills and capabilities of its workforce and is developing this further through an organisational capability review programme which should when completed, provide an advanced level of understanding and access to all skills through revised IT processes and role profiles for all the workforce. It has learnt from the implementation of its new operating model and made adjustments to improve this, and now plans much further ahead. It has a clear succession and recruitment plan to provide continuity in leadership. It has excellent leadership development for

its supervisors, both police and staff, and has gone beyond looking at traditional rank skills to focus on the wider skills its leaders require to develop the workforce and retain and attract staff for the long-term benefit of the constabulary.

Since 2015 HMICFRS has recognised the value of the constabulary's highly effective priority-based budgeting (PBB) process. This has been refined further and is constantly reviewed. It is thoroughly embedded throughout all departments. Using the overarching PCC and constabulary priorities, PBB provides a detailed understanding of resourcing and the effects on service levels of any changes made. The constabulary has excellent benefit realisation processes and now looks further than costs, towards quality benefits.

Cheshire Constabulary's blue light collaboration with CFRS is now well-established and has already led to efficiencies through different ways of working together and changes to processes. The constabulary has provided training for CFRS staff to be better equipped to recognise vulnerability, increasing opportunities to refer people at risk. It understands the financial benefits of this investment in collaboration. The constabulary continues to innovate through the development of new IT platforms. Its control room system will be the first of its kind in the UK, and implementation of a shared intelligence system with North Wales and Merseyside Police forces is now scheduled for early 2018.

How well is the force planning for the future?

To be efficient, a police force needs not only to understand the present, but also to be able to make reasonable predictions about the future in terms of how its demand will change, how its workforce will change and how its partners will be affected. It needs to have adequate, realistic and innovative plans to meet the operational and financial challenges of the future.

How well does the force predict likely future demand?

HMICFRS inspected how well Cheshire Constabulary analyses trends in its current demand in order to predict likely future demand. We also assessed the extent to which it has taken account of changing public expectations and technology. In addition, we expect forces to be considering how they will work with other organisations and other forces in the future.

Predicting future demand

Cheshire Constabulary is very good at analysing and identifying trends in demand. The constabulary uses a range of data sources to understand trends in demand, from call data to environmental scanning and partnerships. The constabulary also works closely with the regional crime unit to tackle serious and organised crime. The constabulary demonstrated a positive awareness of current and potential trends in organised crime with its work on drug-trafficking into Cheshire, and the effect that this can have on crime, public perceptions and confidence. Such incidents, involving serious threats, firearms intelligence and potential violence, can impose a great demand on the constabulary's resources to deal with them, and drug trafficking is one of the growing areas of demand that the constabulary must meet. The constabulary is also seeing emerging areas of demand such as people-trafficking and modern-day slavery. It has realised an opportunity to share this work with CFRS and has facilitated training of fire staff to be able to recognise vulnerability and crimes when carrying out home safety visits.

The constabulary's strategic threat and risk assessment (STRA) not only examines crime types, their trends and predictions, but also their wider effects on demand in the years to come. Data are analysed at local, county and national levels. The STRA takes into account the predicted demographic growth of the county and factors such as government investment in road networks and other projects that will increase employment, that ultimately will affect the demand ahead. For example, the constabulary is looking much further ahead at local authority bids for housing over the next ten to fifteen years to establish urbanisation demand. It has looked at the planned development of a 'super-port' in Merseyside, and the expansion plans for Manchester Airport. The constabulary considers these projects and makes

predictions about likely demand on the county's road infrastructure, and the potential for hidden demand from modern-day slavery and organised crime through any drug or people-trafficking that may develop. Its predictions of future demand are complete.

Future considerations

Cheshire Constabulary has well established links to the communities it serves, operating through a broad variety of engagement methods. The constabulary has maintained contact with parish councils and the PCC holds public consultation events. The constabulary consistently communicates with the public through social media, to obtain the public's views. It also uses environmental scanning to look ahead at the wider issues that affect the public, such as Brexit and hate crime. The constabulary has a good understanding of changing public expectations regarding contacting the constabulary and accessing its services. It invested in a new public website, making it easier for the public to communicate with the constabulary, and ensured the new format would fit mobile devices.

The constabulary has remained loyal to its neighbourhood policing style, and throughout all change projects has prioritised the retention of this approach in its view of the future, as it understands this is what the public want. It has introduced online reporting of community priorities, realising that not everyone wants to attend a meeting to have their say. Public expectations have changed the way the constabulary prioritised its enforcement of motoring offences. For road traffic accidents causes, it found that the public had less concerns over speeding offences compared to offences such as using a mobile phone or not wearing a seatbelt, so it altered its activity and media focus accordingly.

The constabulary realises that its current policy of attendance on request from the public through its 'We're here' values may need to change in the future, and it is carefully reviewing this.

The constabulary has a thorough IT strategy with plans to 2020 for the continual development in the use of technology. Hand-held devices are used by all officers to improve their immediate access to systems and intelligence. These devices allow officers to work differently, remaining visible in communities and freeing-up time that can be focused on policing. While the devices are simple to use, the constabulary ensured a level of enhanced security and monitoring was built in, to minimise risks. The constabulary's substantial investment in a new command and control system should support easier public contact and more efficient deployments in the future. In procuring this system, the constabulary has ensured it is ready to adapt to the new emergency services network that will replace Airwave, the national police radio system. We found a strong understanding of cyber-crime threats and the links to organised crime. The constabulary has invested in training for LPU officers to be able to investigate online incidents and crimes more effectively, and its strategic threat and risk assessment highlights the

economic crime unit's aspirations in terms of new IT for investigation efficiency, prevention work, training for PCSOs to support vulnerable victims and succession planning for the unit's continued expertise.

Cheshire Constabulary has extensive and sophisticated plans to work with other organisations and forces in the future. The constabulary is well-established as part of the tri-force collaboration with Merseyside and North Wales police forces, which has advanced plans for IT developments and new ways of working. It has established arrangements through partnership working in complex dependency units, mental health triage and numerous problem-solving projects, such as retail and night-time economy with partners to reduce demand collectively.

The constabulary has undertaken joint working on all corporate services with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS), and since October 2016 joint IT services have been in place. By April 2018, all back office functions, including HR and procurement, are to be shared with CFRS. This major project is already resulting in new ways of working and more efficient deployments to demand. Estate has been shared and management processes streamlined with joint management posts. The constabulary has done this without the need for any compulsory redundancies, and the people strategy sets out a clear vision of how all staff will be incorporated into one team to discuss progress and to address what could be done differently in the future. The constabulary is also collaborating with Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and the Civil Nuclear police forces for the continuing development of the multi-force shared services (MFSS) for the routine administrative HR services. An optimisation group meeting is held monthly to bring MFSS forces together and ensure that the best results are achieved for all.

The constabulary works with Chester Racecourse and other event organisers to reduce resourcing based on risk and demand, with more work being transferred to private stewards to reduce policing of events.

How well is the force planning for the future, in terms of workforce?

HMICFRS inspected how well Cheshire Constabulary has plans in place to recruit, develop and nurture the leaders of tomorrow to ensure it has the right skills and talent in the right roles.

Succession planning

The constabulary has identified that its future leaders need support and development to obtain the skills they require. Specific courses, known as 'hot-housing', are held where groups of newly promoted leaders work together through the first stages of promotion so they can learn from each other while receiving training from the constabulary. We spoke to an operational senior supervisor who had been promoted in 2016 to a demanding role, for which a two-week course was available. The officer

had also received mentoring through an external training programme. The officer's own team, which had seen a lot of supervision changes, received support from HR in securing external leadership development to assist the team's supervisors. The officer found this support from HR very positive.

The constabulary supports secondment opportunities for its staff where these are appropriate and carries out re-entry interviews, so externally gained knowledge and skills are understood. It is very focused on officer and staff leadership development. It uses mentoring, 360-degree assessments and master classes with other agencies to develop partnership experience. It ensures there are professional external inputs at its leadership conferences, to creatively develop the wider people skills that it recognises progressive leaders need.

Candidates for promotion, whether successful or not, are provided with one-to-one feedback, including agreeing areas for future development. The constabulary recognised that it needed to increase its detective capability and so aligned the detective training programme to the workforce planning department for governance. Five detective training courses are planned through 2017, with further courses for senior investigating officers to ensure continuity. The constabulary also sees the opportunity for detectives to develop long term investigation skills by exposing them to different roles to gain knowledge and specialist experience such as intelligence and public protection. During career discussions, detectives have identified skills they need to acquire and have made their own decisions about stepping into other disciplines for experience and development, later returning to the detective role with these skills. Succession planning is considered thoroughly. We found HR were planning a three-month lead-in time for the replacement to a skilled post which is due a retirement in 2018, where the skill set and capabilities are significant and cannot quickly be handed over. The constabulary uses a talent grid as part of its PDR process; this has significant potential in posting decisions and could be enhanced if the process was clarified so there was more consistent use.

Recruitment

Cheshire Constabulary makes positive use of Police Now. It has eight graduates from the scheme within the constabulary – we spoke to some of them during inspection and they were very positive about the work they were doing and the research being carried out. The constabulary has recently introduced a direct entry superintendent who, using skills gained in the private sector, is providing the constabulary with valuable expertise in further research and development. All promotions are open to external candidates, as the constabulary wants to increase the diversity, style and experience of its workforce. It has already seen the benefit of this, with specialist skills coming to Cheshire to fill capability gaps the constabulary had in cyber-crime leadership.

The constabulary provides development opportunities for its workforce, with clear career progression. For police staff, there are opportunities to develop through the apprenticeship scheme. Police staff supervisors attend the constabulary leadership events for development. The constabulary has police staff members who have progressed from junior positions to departmental heads.

The senior leadership of the constabulary has also changed, with a new assistant chief constable (ACC) being recruited from another force and a development opportunity provided for an existing senior officer to temporarily carry out the second ACC post. This brings in new ideas to the constabulary at the highest level. Posting decisions are governed for consistency through the deputy chief constable's people board, where skills, circumstances and development are considered.

How well does the force plan for likely future demand?

HMICFRS inspected how adequate, realistic and innovative Cheshire Constabulary's plans for the future are, and to what extent it is planning to make savings in the future, including saving to invest in new systems and approaches.

Plans

The constabulary's vision is incorporated comprehensively into its scenario planning to meet future demand, and the change programmes meet the constabulary's organisational priorities and financial requirements. The new police and crime plan, Police 2020, and 'We're Here' values, are all incorporated into the scenario planning. The police and crime plan informs and leads the constabulary's planning and priorities for the next five years, and this connection continues to strengthen. The heads of planning, HR, finance and strategic change facilitate the excellent PBB process, meeting weekly to discuss topics such as recruitment needs in terms of achievability, so there is close understanding between the four areas of business. The forecasting and the reserve strategy help create a rich picture and new implementation plans are then developed to see how the constabulary can meet the objectives in an achievable way, with all the reviews linking back to the police and crime plan.

The constabulary has a balanced budget to 2020/21 based on sound assumptions. This includes during 2017/18 £2m for inflation, £2.4m for commitments (main items are increased pension contributions and apprenticeship levy) and £2.9m for developments and growth (technology, cyber-crime, investigations into sexual abuse). For 2018/19 onwards the budget assumes annual inflation of £2m–£3m per year plus developments of £700,000 per year.

Cheshire's financial plans are built on sound assumptions and are subject to informed challenge. The constabulary has incorporated some assumptions about reductions in government funding being offset in part by an increase in income from council tax, the effect of inflation, commitments from previous years and anticipated

areas of growth and development. The constabulary has not at this stage included an assessment of the impact on its future income, from the proposal to change the way the government allocates funding to police forces in England and Wales, although it does anticipate that this may result in a reduction in its funding at some stage. The constabulary shares its financial planning assumptions at least quarterly with the PCC and meets quarterly with regional heads of finance to share and review information. Challenge is also provided by the police and crime panel, which has external members. Weekly resourcing meetings are an opportunity for challenge to and by department heads.

The constabulary has wide-ranging and innovative plans for the future that will change how it operates and is currently planning to invest to achieve these plans. The constabulary's estates strategy will involve spending £2.4m over four years in its buildings in order to release capital assets and share locations with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service. The constabulary is also investing in IT and its new communications centre system, with spending planned to support the constabulary's transition to a cloud-based system, improved digital policing, a consequence of which is the release of office space for a joint HQ with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service. The constabulary is also investing £1.85m over four years in equipment, in order to provide for example body-worn video cameras and mobile data. The constabulary is also investing in vehicles, planning to spend £8.8m over four years in an annual replacement programme for vehicles. Plans are in place to adapt to the demands of an increasingly young workforce. This includes the use of technology, recognising that people use smartphones for finance and therefore should expect to be able to submit work-based claims accordingly. The finance team also recognises the need to change from the traditional way of updating technology and fleet every ten years to instead updating every three years so it is current and usable.

Savings

Cheshire Constabulary had already reduced its spending by £45.5m between 2010/11 and 2015/16. In 2016/17 it had plans in place to achieve another £6.9m savings. The latest medium term financial plan sets out the requirement for the constabulary to save a further £15.2m between 2017/18 and 2020/21. The constabulary's mature and robust approach to priority-based budgeting means it is well-placed to align its finances with priorities. So that despite the continuing need to reduce spending, the constabulary is able to systematically identify those areas where cutting spending will have least impact on its core policing priorities.

The constabulary is also continuing to make savings so that it can invest in future service improvements. It has effective plans for how resource and finance is to be invested in the medium and long term (beyond 2020). Cheshire Constabulary is continuing to explore opportunities to extend its collaboration with other police forces

and blue light services, in order that it can make better use of reducing resources and still maintain the level of service expected by the public. Collaboration opportunities are consistently considered by the constabulary.

The constabulary and PCC currently have a good level of financial reserves, but recognise the need to modernise and invest to save. A five-year capital programme is built into the reserve strategy. The constabulary is now seeing returns on invest-to-save programmes in its estates. The Widnes police estate has reduced in size by two-thirds, saving 40 percent of the previous running costs. The constabulary has invested in buying property outright instead of leasing it, and as a result is reducing overhead costs. The constabulary and PCC are using reserves to pay for ambitious new ICT projects that will improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of policing. The use of reserves is focused on invest-to-save, with any annual revenue underspend being returned to reserves to be used for future investment opportunities.

The local government pension scheme is clear for the next three years, but the constabulary is aware that reserves may be needed in the future. This is a dynamic strategy to move finances should they be required. A redundancy reserve is in place and redeployment is focused upon and redundancy deferred for up to two years. This links finance with HR and gives people the opportunity to find new employment. This is further assisted by the in-sourcing of cleaning and victim care, which has helped move and support staff by offering opportunities.

Summary of findings

Outstanding

Cheshire Constabulary is outstanding at planning for the future. The constabulary carries out extensive work to predict its likely future demand. This includes understanding how the demographics of Cheshire will change in the future, and how wider economic circumstances outside the county will affect it in the longer term. It has made investments in technology to meet public expectations in accessing its services and recognises the threats that technology presents through cyber-crime, organised and economic crime. The constabulary has extensive collaborative arrangements with other forces, and an excellent blue light collaboration locally with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service that is already seeing the benefits of this investment in managing demand more efficiently.

The constabulary is investing in its leadership through secondments, development opportunities and excellent leadership training. Newly promoted supervisors are provided with support, mentoring and training. All posts are advertised externally as the chief officer team is keen to develop new styles and diversity in leadership. This

has brought new leaders into the workforce to fill skills gaps. There are ten Police Now graduates working in the constabulary, and a direct entry superintendent.

There is constant review from departmental leads to ensure there is a thorough understanding of planning progress. This is refined through the excellent PBB process to meet priorities and public expectations. The financial plans of the constabulary are built on sound planning assumptions and subject to informed challenge with innovation through IT investments that will change how the constabulary operates in the future. The constabulary continues to invest to save and is using reserves to maximise the opportunities presented for the future.

Next steps

HMICFRS will assess progress on any recommendations and areas for improvement identified within our reports in several ways. We either revisit those forces where we have identified a serious cause of concern, go back to assess them as part of our annual PEEL inspection programme or receive updates on their progress through regular conversations with forces.

HMICFRS highlights recurring themes emerging from our PEEL inspections of police forces within our national thematic reports on police effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy and leadership (see: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/national-peel-reports/). These reports identify those problems that are reflected across England and Wales. They may contain additional recommendations directed at national policing organisations, including the Home Office, where we believe improvements need to be made nationally.

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', 'higher' 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.

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 within the average in this publication.

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 gross revenue expenditure

These data show estimated gross revenue expenditure (GRE) for the force in 2017/18 and 2020/21. This was gathered from forces by HMIC staff prior to fieldwork (April 2017). Some of the data provided will have been subject to revisions after this time but figures should represent the picture as at the time of inspection. Future forecasts of expenditure are estimates for which forces use different methodologies. As these are estimates care should be taken in interpreting changes.

Workforce figures (FTE) for 2016/17 and 2020/21

These data were 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 investigation, detention or escort officers, but does not include section 39-designated detention or escort staff.[11] The data are the actual full-time equivalent figures (or FTE), and figures for 2016/17 are the figures as at 31 March 2017.

For FTE, these data include officers on career breaks and other types of long-term absence, and excludes those seconded to other forces. Projections for 2020/21 are budget-based and therefore 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 high vacancy rate which masks this change.

Calls for assistance

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

Recorded crime

These data are obtained from Home Office police-recorded crime and outcomes data tables (available from www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crimeopen-data-tables).

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[11] See sections 38 and 39 of the Police Reform Act 2002. Available at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/30/section/38

Figures throughout the report

Figure 1: Rate of 999 calls recorded per 1,000 people in the local population in the force area compared with England and Wales as a whole, from 2010/11 to 2016/17

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 441. City of London Police does not submit 999 calls data to the Home Office as these are included in figures provided by the Metropolitan Police Service.

Figure 2: Police-recorded crimes per 1,000 population compared with England and Wales from 2010/11 to 2016/17

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 HMICFRS inspection. The England and Wales rate given in this figure is a simple average of all forces' rates to reduce the effect of large forces on the average.

Figure 3: Planned full-time equivalent (FTE) workforce as on 31 March from 2010 to 2021

Data from 2010 to 2017 are obtained from the Home Office annual data return (as set out in the Force in numbers section) which is an 'actual' FTE figure. 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. Data from 2018 onwards are budget-based projections, therefore depending on a force's planning strategy may not include a projection for absences.

Due to the complex and continually evolving picture of workforce collaboration between 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 need to be considered with caution as they may simply represent accounting changes related to how staff are allocated to forces and 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 are in many instances unconfirmed estimates provided to assist HMICFRS in our inspection programme and should not be seen as a concrete plan for the future workforce available for policing.

Figure 4: Estimated percentage of net revenue expenditure allocated across policing functions from 2011/12 to 2016/17

These data were obtained from data collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) for use in the HMICFRS Value for Money profiles (available from www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/our-work/value-for-money-inspections/value-for-money-profiles/#2016). The data define policing functions using the Police Objective Analysis categories.

We have made some adjustments to the original POA data in order to provide valid historical comparisons. For instance, in 2011/12 the POA category "Local policing" included the sub-category "local investigation and prisoner processing", however, from 2012/13 onwards this moved to the "Investigations" category. We have therefore removed "local investigation and prisoner processing from the 2011/12 figure to provide a historical comparison and not create misleading percentage changes.

For the same reason above, for the 2011/12 "Investigations" figure we have included "local investigations and prisoner processing" for historical comparison.

Furthermore, in 2016/17 "Public Protection" became its own level two category, whereas in previous years it had been included as a sub-category under "Investigations". Therefore for historical comparisons, we have included public protection in "Investigations" for 2016/17.