



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Responding to austerity

Hertfordshire Constabulary

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How well does the constabulary provide value for money?

Overall judgment

Hertfordshire Constabulary has impressive and well-established joint working arrangements with Bedfordshire Police and Cambridgeshire Constabulary. The force is very well-placed to be able to continue to provide an effective service to the public while reducing its costs further.

Good

Summary

Hertfordshire is on track to achieve its required savings of £35.8m over this review period. Importantly, the force is also looking to 2015/16 and beyond, and it is planning now for further funding reductions and financial pressures in the future.

The force understands the issues it is facing, and has change programmes in place that will lead to increased collaboration with Bedfordshire Police and Cambridgeshire Constabulary. Through the tri-force ICT change programme, known as Metis, the forces plan to make further savings and protect frontline posts as new technology and streamlined process appreciably improve the productivity of police officers and staff.

The force is working to improve understanding of the demand it faces, and plans to manage this demand through collaboration with other forces. This includes control room, custody and criminal justice functions (operational support) and its human resources, finance and IT functions (organisational support), supported by the work of Programme Metis.

The force is achieving the savings required and it is planning well for the future, while continuing to reduce crime and retaining high levels of victim satisfaction.

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

Good

The constabulary has a strong track record of achieving savings and adding these to its reserves to assist with future budget gaps.

Hertfordshire will achieve a balanced budget for 2014/15 and plans are being made for 2015/16.

A medium-term financial plan developed with Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Bedfordshire Police is a clear signal of commitment for future collaboration and the desire to achieve savings.

Future financial plans are being made. These are based on prudent and realistic assumptions.

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

Good

Extensive collaboration with Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire is in place to improve efficiency and make savings.

Hertfordshire is developing further collaboration with other emergency services through its 'blue light collaboration strategy'.

Programme Metis will support transformational ICT change. The constabulary is planning to improve its IT and has provided officers in the field with durable, mobiles devices.

There is a clear effort to reduce non-pay costs, and savings have come from reductions in the estate.

The constabulary is aware of the need to support staff through major change; it uses visible senior leaders and good communications to help achieve this.

To what extent is the constabulary efficient?

Good

The constabulary is working to gain more understanding of demand, and it is developing plans to manage future demand with both Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire forces.

The constabulary is working with other blue light emergency services to reduce duplication and to improve the response to calls for service.

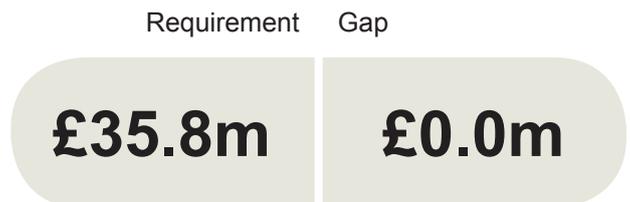
Programme Metis will bring about considerable transformational change and make processes and service provision more efficient.

Performance has improved, with reductions in crime and a higher percentage of victims satisfied with the service they received than for most other forces in England and Wales.

The constabulary in numbers

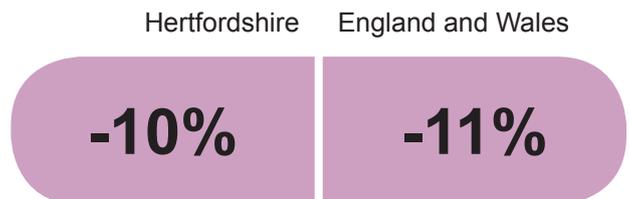
Financial position

The constabulary's savings requirement



Providing policing

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



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



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



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





Efficiency

Police officer cost per head of population
2013/14

Hertfordshire

England and Wales

£89.9

£117.7

Workforce cost per head of population
2013/14

Hertfordshire

England and Wales

£142.2

£168.1

Change in recorded crime
2010/11 – 2013/14

Hertfordshire

England and Wales

-21%

-14%

Victim satisfaction 2013/14*

Hertfordshire

England and Wales

88.6%

85.2%

*Confidence intervals: $\pm 1.3\%$ for Hertfordshire; $\pm 0.2\%$ for England and Wales.

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

This provides the findings for Hertfordshire Constabulary.

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

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

Financial challenge

Hertfordshire Constabulary has identified that it needs to save £35.8m over the four years of the spending review (between March 2011 and March 2015).

As a proportion of its total budget, this savings requirement of 17 percent is broadly in line with that required of most other forces. However, HMIC considers that, overall, Hertfordshire faces a moderately difficult challenge compared with other forces. It is a low-cost constabulary that spends less on policing, and it has lower police officer and police community support officer (PCSO) costs than other forces. Hertfordshire does have higher spending on police staff, so there are opportunities for the constabulary to reduce costs in line with other forces.

The scale of the challenge

Hertfordshire faces a particular challenge because of the scale of the financial savings that must be made. There are limited opportunities for it to reduce its costs because:

- it spends less per head of population than most other forces in England and Wales;
- it has a lower number of police officers per head of population; and
- the cost of police officers and PCSOs per head of population is lower than for other forces in England and Wales.

Savings plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16

The constabulary has achieved more savings than it was required in each of the last three years, with a considerable underspend of around £9m in 2013/14, which was added to reserves.

The constabulary needs to find £7.9m savings in 2014/15. It has clear plans in place to achieve most of this, but there is a gap of £0.8m in savings. Of the savings required the majority has already been made and the constabulary is confident that the total savings required will be achieved, with any remaining savings gap met through the use of reserves.

The constabulary has plans in place to achieve £5.5m of the £6.3m savings required in 2015/16 and intends to use reserves to fund the £0.8m gap. Robust financial controls have

enabled Hertfordshire to build reserves to contribute to this and there are plans for local savings and further savings from collaboration with other organisations that will reduce this gap. Although there is confidence in the constabulary that the savings will be made, more work needs to be done to ensure that this will happen.

Outlook for 2016 and beyond

Plans for 2016/17 and beyond are being developed. The constabulary has made some predictions about future savings that will be required through to 2017/18, based on prudent assumptions about likely grant reductions, cost increases and council tax (precept) increases.

The force's future approach is to develop further collaborative working with Bedfordshire Police and Cambridgeshire Constabulary. The three forces have worked hard to develop a joint medium-term financial plan (MTFP). This is an impressive and clear commitment for much greater collaboration to generate over £26m savings across the three force areas over the next three years.

Summary

Good

- The constabulary has a strong track record of achieving savings and adding these to reserves to assist with future budget gaps.
- Hertfordshire will achieve a balanced budget for 2014/15 and plans are being made for the 2015/16 financial year.
- A medium-term financial plan developed with Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire is a clear signal of commitment for future collaboration, and the desire to achieve savings across the three forces.
- Future plans are being made, and these are based on prudent and realistic assumptions.

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

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

How the constabulary provides policing

During its original change programme in 2011, Hertfordshire reviewed demand across local policing functions, and as a result, it introduced a new way of providing policing. The constabulary removed the geographical basic command units (BCUs) and introduced a new policing model that integrates a local policing command (a non-BCU model) with intelligence, crime and operations, custody and criminal justice, and a crime reduction unit (that includes safer neighbourhood policing). This model allows a more connected approach, and it also provides efficient and effective service provision.

Collaboration

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

In November 2013, a change programme agreement was jointly agreed by the chief officers and police and crime commissioners from Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. This agreement describes why and how a much greater collaborative and integrated approach to achieve the majority of business changes across the forces will be applied. It addresses how the forces can maintain frontline policing services in the face of considerable budget reductions. Lead forces have been agreed for each of the main areas of collaboration (i.e., protective services, operational support and organisational support).

In addition to this collaboration, Hertfordshire has an emerging blue light plan to reduce duplication across emergency services (particularly for repeat, high risk and vulnerable victims). The constabulary is also exploring expanded roles, for example, training police staff to put out small fires, PCSOs and fire fighters training as paramedics, and fire fighters managing police cordons or enforcing anti-social behaviour legislation.

In 2014/15, the constabulary expects to spend 18 percent of its net revenue expenditure on collaboration, which is higher than the 11 percent figure for England and Wales. Collaboration is expected to contribute to 24 percent of the constabulary's savings requirement, which is above the 10 percent figure for England and Wales, and reflects the level of collaboration between the Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire forces.

Managing change

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

Programme Metis is being led by Cambridgeshire on behalf of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. It is an ambitious programme designed to: *“deliver transformational change through the streamlining of processes and development of enabling technology across all areas of business to enable the Constabulary to protect frontline operational policing, continually improve the quality of service provided to the public, and to optimise all available resources in order to work within a balanced budget”*.

If implemented as intended, Programme Metis will improve the flow of information within and across the three forces, thus enabling officers to spend more time out in their communities.

Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire submitted a bid to the Home Office innovation fund for support to bring together their operational and organisational support service through Programme Metis. The project will receive nearly £2m of Home Office funding in 2014/15, which is part of total funding of £8.4m over three years.

Hertfordshire has an ambitious IT project within Programme Metis and is currently running pilot scheme and work groups to identify and establish future initiatives. The project aims to provide a mobile office to staff and is piloting the use of specially adapted durable, rugged tablets. When implemented, the project will make considerable savings in both money and officer time.

The constabulary has a good understanding of the need to manage change effectively and has developed a plan to promote a meaningful approach, with good management and communication. The constabulary’s business benefits manager is part of the change management team to ensure that benefits are identified and achieved across all projects.

The constabulary identified that the main elements of its change programme during the current spending review are:

- improved IT;
- using IT to make processes more efficient and reduce bureaucracy;
- collaboration with other forces;
- priority-based budgeting; and
- introducing borderless deployment of resources in the constabulary area.

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

- improved IT;
- improved call management;
- collaboration with other forces;
- priority-based budgeting; and
- improving the way operational support is undertaken.

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

There is strong evidence in the move towards collaboration that frontline staff have been involved in a constructive way. A 'readiness for change' programme has been started to help prepare staff for collaboration. This has revealed different confidence levels in the three forces about the likelihood of success and has provided the change team with a clear view of the concerns that need to be addressed.

Hertfordshire Constabulary has signalled clearly the extent of the financial challenge through road shows, information on the intranet and 60-second briefings. Budget-holders and middle managers have an understanding that the budget and resource need to be managed carefully.

There is an overriding sense of pride in, and commitment to, the constabulary itself. The senior leaders (chief constable, deputy chief constable, assistant chief constable and chief finance officer) make sure that they are seen out and about around the constabulary. As a result, the workforce is clear that whatever is happening in terms of change is not because of any lack of leadership but as a result of financial and other pressures.

How is the constabulary achieving the savings?

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

However, we also expect forces to bear down on their other costs (non-pay) such as the equipment they buy, the accommodation and vehicles they use and the contracts they enter for services (e.g., for cleaning). The constabulary plans to make 26 percent of its savings from non-pay, which is lower than for most other forces.

The constabulary is focusing on savings in non-pay wherever possible and in 2014/15 £3.4m has already been saved from business support in this year, the majority of it in non-pay through estates reduction.

As with other forces, savings mostly come from reducing the workforce. The constabulary made an early start on this in 2010 when it slowed its recruitment of new police officers and police staff, and reduced the number of police staff. Hertfordshire plans to make 74 percent of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is a higher proportion than for other forces.

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

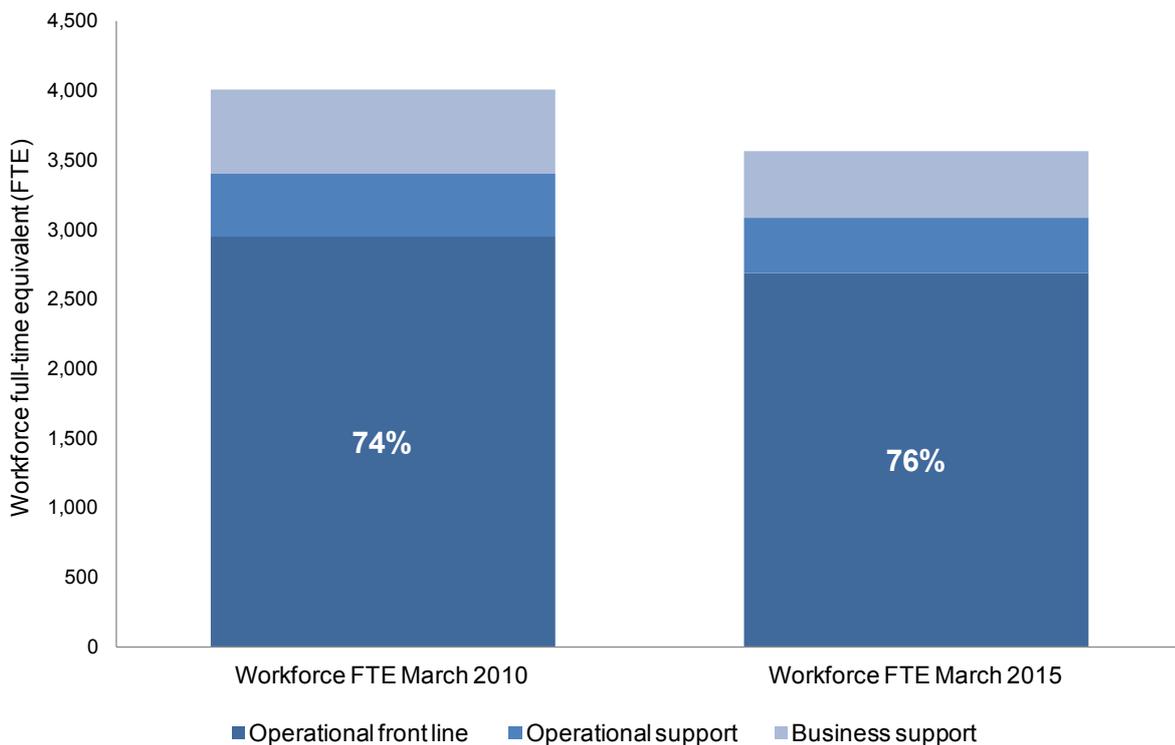
Please note, these figures are rounded.

	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Constabulary change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police officers	2,130	1,924	-206	-10%	-11%
Police staff	1,677	1,410	-267	-16%	-17%
PCSOs	262	232	-30	-11%	-22%
Total	4,069	3,566	-503	-12%	-14%
Specials	344	375	31	9%	44%

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

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

The following chart shows the change in the workforce frontline profile in Hertfordshire Constabulary.



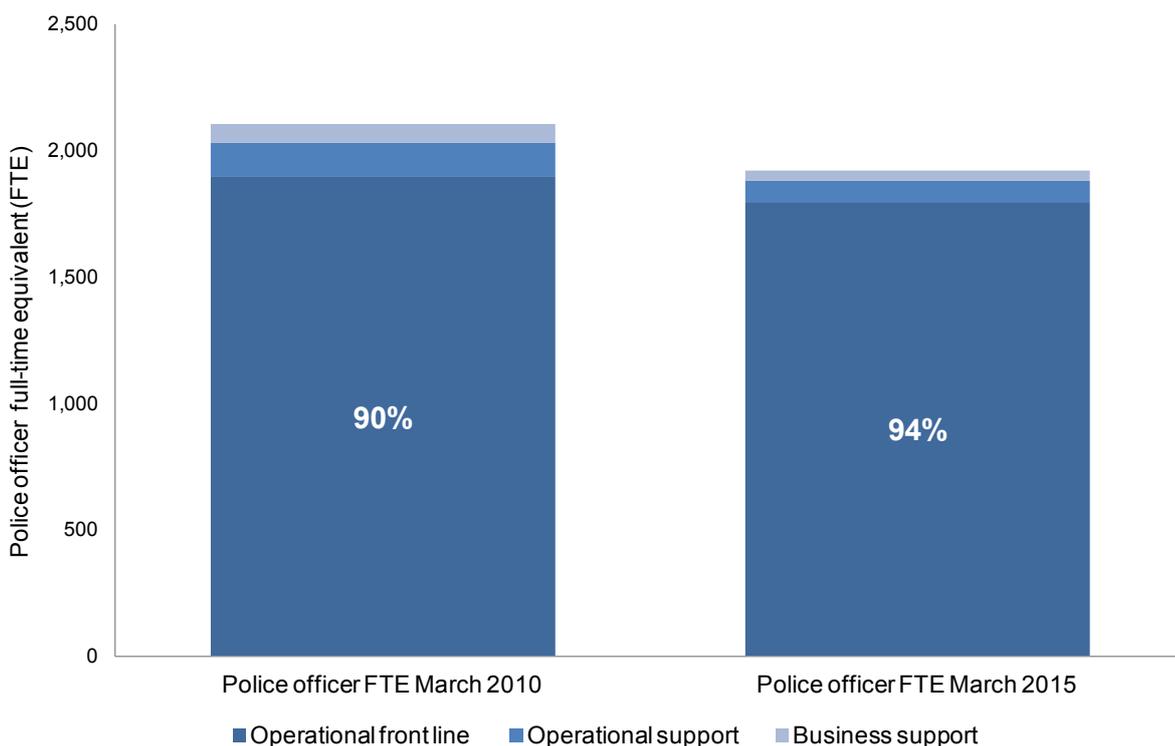
Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of workforce on the front line from 74 percent in March 2010 to 78 percent in March 2015.

The number of officers, PCSOs and staff working on Hertfordshire’s front line is projected to reduce by 9 percent between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 2,953 to 2,691).

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

The number of Hertfordshire police officers in frontline roles will reduce by 97 from 1,894 in March 2010 to 1,797 by March 2015, as the following chart shows. The proportion of those remaining on the front line is projected to increase from 90 percent to 94 percent. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89 percent to 92 percent and shows that the Hertfordshire constabulary is protecting frontline crime-fighting roles successfully as it makes these cuts.

The following chart shows the change in police officers' frontline profile.



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

Summary

Good

- Extensive collaboration with Bedfordshire Police and Cambridgeshire Constabulary is in place to improve efficiency and make savings.
- Hertfordshire is developing further collaborative working with other emergency services through its 'blue light collaboration strategy'.
- Programme Metis will support transformational ICT change; as part of this, the constabulary has piloted the use of durable, rugged tablets.
- There is a clear drive to reduce non-pay costs; savings in this area have come from reduction in the constabulary's estate.
- The constabulary is aware of the need to support staff through a period of major change and is using good communications and making sure its senior leaders are visible to help achieve this.

To what extent is the constabulary efficient?

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

How well does the constabulary understand and manage demand?

Hertfordshire has not undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the amount and sources of its demand since the work it carried out to prepare for its restructure in 2011. It recognises that more work is needed in this area in order to understand and manage demand.

The force is developing a greater understanding of demand, and will manage this demand through collaboration on its control room, custody and criminal justice functions (operational support) and its human resources, finance and IT functions (organisational support), supported by the work of Programme Metis. In addition, the force has recognised that resources need to be allocated to new areas of demand such as child sexual exploitation and cyber-crime.

However, it has a good understanding of emerging threats and this clearly informs the allocation of resources, the force's strategic risk assessment and the police and crime plan. The single local policing command allows for the intelligent use of flexible resource to meet demand in real time.

The force's emerging blue light collaboration plan aims to reduce duplication across the emergency services, and to expand roles within those services in order to better manage demand.

How efficiently does the constabulary allocate its resources?

The local policing command structure has given the community safety partnership (CSP) commanders some autonomy to set priorities to meet local needs. Together with the responsibility they have for local performance and service provision, this has improved performance in crime prevention and reduction.

The force has regular meetings to allocate resources to emerging challenges. Daily force-level operational meetings decide how to deploy resources to deal with emerging threats. The force gives due consideration to national requirements, particularly in relation to the regional and national impact of serious and organised crime originating in the force area.

The force can move resources to meet the calls for service and the crime demand that it faces. This is done on an incident-by-incident basis (when necessary) and through its daily

and bi-weekly work-assigning processes. The quick deployment of resources is helped by the understanding the workforce has of colleagues' roles and how they all play a part in the force's aim to reduce crime, catch criminals and keep people safe.

Hertfordshire works well in partnership activities and it has a strong focus on prevention and local problem solving through the CSP structures. The force has started to work with local health authorities to improve the response to calls for service relating to mental health, and also with the ambulance service to improve the response for calls for ambulance services.

The force has an ambitious IT project within Programme Metis and it is currently running pilots and work groups to identify and establish future initiatives. Programme Metis aims to increase efficiency, improve back-office work, and reduce duplication and bureaucracy. The force has made considerable progress in putting in place an effective mobile information technology solution by piloting the use of tablets. This will improve response times and staff effectiveness, achieve considerable savings in officer time, and achieve financial savings and enhanced services for the public. The project will completely change ways of working.

How does the constabulary respond and keep its communities safe?

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

Calls for service

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

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

Over that period, the force met its target response time for urban and rural 'emergency' calls 93 percent of the time in 2010/11, and 84.8 percent of the time in 2013/14. In respect of 'prompt' calls, the force met its target 77 percent of the time across 2010/11, and 56.6 percent of the time in 2013/14.

The following table compares the constabulary's performance in 2010/11 to 2013/14.

Calls for service	2010/11	2013/14
Percentage of emergency calls on target	93.0	84.8
Percentage of priority calls on target	77.0	56.6

Over the spending review, attendance for both emergency calls and prompt calls has declined.

Visibility

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

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

In 2014, Hertfordshire Constabulary allocated 56 percent of its police officers to visible roles. This is 3.8 percentage points lower than the number allocated in 2010, and is comparable to most other forces (which was 56 percent across England and Wales).

Police visibility is further enhanced by PCSOs, who principally support community policing. Looking at the proportion of police officers and PCSOs, Hertfordshire Constabulary allocated 60 percent of these staff to visible roles. This is 4.2 percentage points lower than it allocated in 2010, but it matches the 60 percent figure for England and Wales.

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

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

Furthermore, 87 percent of respondents in Hertfordshire said they felt safe from crime where they lived, compared to 84 percent of respondents in England and Wales. Finally, 12 percent of respondents in Hertfordshire said they felt safer from crime than they did two years ago, compared to 9 percent of respondents in England and Wales.

Crime

In 2010, the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to reduce crime. Between 2010/11 and 2013/14 (which includes the first three years of the spending review), Hertfordshire Constabulary reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 21 percent, compared with a reduction of 14 percent in England and Wales. Over this period, victim-based crime (crimes where there is a direct victim, such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) reduced by 22 percent, compared with a reduction of 14 percent in England and Wales.

Looking just at the last 12 months, recorded crime (excluding fraud) fell by 1 percent, which is in line with 1 percent reduction for England and Wales.

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

12 months to March 2014	Rate per 1,000 population	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
Crimes (excluding fraud)	45.5	61.1
Victim-based crime	38.7	54.3
Sexual offences	0.7	1.1
Burglary	5.3	7.8
Violence against the person	7.2	11.1
ASB incidents	21.7	37.2

It is important that crimes are effectively investigated and that the perpetrator is identified and brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to identify who has committed a crime, it can be described as detection. Hertfordshire's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2014 was 36 percent. This is higher than the England and Wales detection rate of 26 percent.

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

Victim satisfaction surveys

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

In the 12 months to March 2014, 88.6 percent (\pm 1.3 percent) of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by the Hertfordshire force. This is higher than the England and Wales figure of 85.2 percent (\pm 0.2 percent).

Changes to how the public can access services

Since the start of the savings review, the force projects that it will close 13 police stations and 24 front counters and plans to open one access point shared with other partners and organisations.

The force is making greater use of the internet and social media to communicate with the public. As more people become used to contacting large commercial and public organisations in different ways, the force is planning to offer the public different ways to contact them. Greater use of technology through Programme Metis will enable the force to offer options such as online reporting and tracking crimes.

Summary 

Good

- The force is working to develop a greater understanding of demand, and is developing plans to manage future demand in collaboration with Bedfordshire Police and Cambridgeshire Constabulary.
- The force is working with other blue light emergency services to reduce duplication and improve the response to calls for its services.
- Programme Metis will bring about considerable transformational change and make processes and service provision more efficient in the constabularies.
- Performance has improved, with reductions in crime and a higher number of victims satisfied with the service they received than for most other forces in England and Wales.

Our judgments

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

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

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

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