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City of London Police has made good progress in meeting its financial challenge, finds HMIC

City of London Police has made good progress and has taken an innovative approach to meeting the financial challenge. The implementation of the change programme combined with increased income generation provides reassurance that the force is on track to deliver the savings required while maintaining a good service to the public.

In a report published today, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has found:

Progress in making savings

- City of London Police has identified that it needs to save £9.5m over the four years of the spending review (from March 2011 to 2015). The force has plans to deliver the entire £9.5m savings requirement and to date has achieved £6.6m of this.
- As a proportion of its overall budget (10%), this savings requirement is below that of most other forces. The scale of the challenge would have been larger, but in addition to cutting its spending, the City of London Police has adopted an approach of actively seeking to secure additional grants and other income from business levies to offset the budget cuts. The force anticipates it will have secured £5m in additional income over the spending review period.
- Taking into account this approach, and the demands on the force, HMIC considers the force faces a lesser challenge in comparison to many other forces.

Workforce changes and protecting the front line

- The force has reduced police officer numbers by limiting recruitment and holding vacancies; as a result, by the end of the spending review period, it is planned that there will be 140 fewer police officers in the force. This means the number of police officers will reduce by 16% between March 2010 and March 2015; this is a greater reduction when compared to most other forces.
- The force will be broadly protecting frontline posts as it makes these cuts. Between March 2010 and March 2015, the proportion of police officers in frontline, crime-fighting roles is planned to increase from 86% to 88%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.
- By the end of the spending review period, it is planned that there will be 97 additional police staff. This means the number of police staff is planned to increase by 31% between March 2010 and March 2015. It is the only force in the country with an increasing number of police staff. This is due to increased funding to fight economic crime, the force will be employing additional staff on temporary contracts.
- The City of London Police has already achieved the required reduction (36 or 69% of the total) of police community support officers (PCSOs); which proportionally is a greater reduction than in most other forces. Although this figure is high, the population in the City of London is very small and the new figure will be a better allocation of resource to demand.

Impact on the public

- Over the first two years of the spending review, recorded crime (excluding fraud) fell by 8%, which is less than the figure for England and Wales (13%).
- Victim satisfaction remains high at 83.1%, which is broadly in line with the figure for England and Wales.

Future challenges

- The approach to income generation taken by the force has limited the impact of monetary reductions, however, it means around one third of the force's income comes from funding streams that are reviewed annually and could be withdrawn. This is a potential risk but one the force is aware of and is mitigating, primarily by making use of temporary contracts.

HM Inspector of Constabulary for the London and National Team, Stephen Otter, said:

“Compared to other forces, City of London Police faces a smaller financial challenge, in part because of its approach to finding additional income streams to offset the budget reductions. The force has developed and implemented a strong programme of change. The force does rely on annually reviewed external funding which if reduced, phased out or removed would leave a shortfall. However the force is aware of these risks and is mitigating them.

“Overall, HMIC was reassured that the force will continue to deliver the savings while maintaining service delivery.

“HMIC will continue to monitor the force for the remainder of the spending review period.”

The full report for the City of London Police, along with the national thematic review, can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk

Notes to Editors:

1. The thematic report 'Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge' can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk
2. Victim satisfaction for this force has a confidence interval of $\pm 9.8\%$
3. HMIC's July 2012 report 'Policing in austerity: One year on' and July 2011 report 'Adapting to Austerity' along with supporting materials can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk
4. In October 2010, the government announced that the central funding provided to the police service would reduce by 20% in the four years between March 2011 and March 2015.
5. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is an independent inspectorate, inspecting policing in the public interest, and rigorously examines the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces to tackle crime and terrorism, improve criminal justice and raise confidence. HMIC inspects all 43 police forces in England and Wales together with other major policing bodies.
6. For further information, HMIC's press office can be contacted during office hours from 8:30am – 5:30pm Monday – Friday on 0203 513 0600.
7. HMIC's out-of-hours press office line for urgent media enquiries is 07836 217 729.