



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Valuing the Police: Preparedness Inspection

**Derbyshire Constabulary
Amended version - November 2011**

Purpose of the review

The Police Service, along with all other parts of the public sector, is facing its biggest financial challenge in a generation. This could be seen either as an opportunity to innovate and refresh – or as a reason to continue as is and see services cut back.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has been heavily involved in monitoring the Service's reaction and preparedness for cutting crime while reducing costs. As part of this, in Spring 2011 we carried out an inspection of all 43 forces and authorities in England and Wales, to assess:

- how they are planning to meet the financial challenge; and
- what the impact will be on the service they provide to the public.

This report summarises the findings for Derbyshire Constabulary. A thematic report, *Adapting to Austerity*, which brings together findings from all 43 forces, is also available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

Findings for Derbyshire Constabulary

What is the financial challenge in Derbyshire?

Derbyshire Police and Derbyshire Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£23m** cash reduction to their budget over the four years of the comprehensive spending review period (2011/12–14/15). This represents 12% of their gross revenue expenditure. In real terms (ie when inflation is taken into account), this equates to £20.8m and 11% of GRE.

Are the force and authority prepared to meet this financial challenge?

The force and authority made a head start in reducing their costs. They have had a plan in place to deliver savings since Spring 2009. This gave the force valuable experience in cost-cutting while minimising the impact on service delivery. It also meant that they could implement changes at a measured pace so that they had a chance to 'bed in'.

The force and authority clearly understood the scale of the challenge facing them and have considered a range of options in developing a plan to address it. They have a structured approach to understanding local threats, risk and harm to their communities, using this to inform their decisions on where the cuts should fall. On this basis, their budget reductions have primarily affected support functions and the force had already changed neighbourhood and local CID shifts to better meet public demands. At the time of inspection, work was underway to make changes to the way the force responds to calls for service from the public.

Building on earlier work, a detailed plan was prepared for the first two years of the comprehensive spending review period. The force identified other areas where savings could be made for years three and four, including from the estates budget and

procurement function as well as through collaborating with other forces in the region. The levels of anticipated savings were broadly known and at the time of the inspection greater detail was being developed around each project. The force understood that the quicker it is able to release savings, the more likely it is that it can prevent future job losses and protect frontline policing.

The plan contained clear timescales and milestones and chief officers regularly monitored progress against these. The authority worked closely with the force and had been fully engaged in the budgeting process.

What will be the impact on the number of police officers and staff?

Derbyshire have planned that their workforce will change as follows:

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	2,074	1,359	181
31 March 2015 (proposed)	1,925	1,137*	160

*The changes to Police Staff numbers in this report were updated in September 2011 following further discussion with Derbyshire Constabulary.

March 2010 figures have been used as the baseline, because all forces began a recruitment freeze in that year, and as a result workforce numbers started to fall. The proposed figures shown for March 2015 were provided to HMIC by the force in June 2011. The force and authority’s plans for the workforce will continue to be refined as the change programme progresses.

What will be the impact on service to the public?

The force and authority made informed decisions about where to make cuts and in some cases increased the budget in areas of potential risk. It also prioritised every police officer post in the organisation, initially by department and then at force level. This gave them a very clear understanding of when and where posts will be lost and the likely impact on service.

The force and authority developed a number of mechanisms to inform the public and stakeholders about the changes. The Chief Constable and the Chair of the Police Authority had key roles in this and communication was clearly an integral part of the change programme.

Does the force have targets to reduce crime and ASB?

The first job of the police is to reduce crime and keep the peace; and in 2010, Theresa May, the Home Secretary, stated that she expects forces and authorities to make financial cuts while still reducing crime and without damaging the front line.

Derbyshire’s *Policing Plan* includes a commitment to tackle crime and ASB.

