



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Valuing the Police: Preparedness Inspection

**Hertfordshire Constabulary
July 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 Hertfordshire 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 Hertfordshire Constabulary

What is the financial challenge in Hertfordshire?

Hertfordshire Constabulary and Hertfordshire Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£36.2m** cash reduction to their budget over the four years of the comprehensive spending review period (2011/12–2014/15). In real terms (ie when inflation is taken into account), this equates to 15% of their gross revenue expenditure.

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

The required savings represent a real challenge. However, Hertfordshire Constabulary is a high performing organisation and the force and authority have a good track record of delivering efficiency savings. HMIC found that they had a good understanding of the scale of the challenge facing them and had been able to build on the previous savings programme, Programme 2010, to design a detailed cost reduction plan to meet the comprehensive spending review (CSR) funding gap.

This plan identified where and when the force will realise savings over the next four years, with timescales and savings milestones. The force and authority monitored progress against these, using clear governance arrangements and programme management.

Hertfordshire Constabulary's plan was robust and HMIC had confidence that the required savings would be made. However, there was some uncertainty as to whether the projected savings from collaboration would be realised on time. If this is to be achieved, the force and authority will need to take all necessary measures to quickly cement the strategic alliance with Bedfordshire Police and Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

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

Hertfordshire have planned that their workforce will change as follows:

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	2,130	1,677	262
31 March 2015 (proposed)	1,820	1,489	252

March 2010 figures have been used as the baseline, because most 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 authority had a clear vision for policing over the next four years, aiming to sustain the force's current high performance as well as prioritising neighbourhood policing. The force recognised the risk that the planned changes would affect the service it delivers to the public. They sought to mitigate this through plans to maintain response and neighbourhood numbers in years 1 and 2 of the CSR period.

A communications strategy was in place to inform the public of potential changes. Local public consultation had also taken place and there was evidence that feedback from this had influenced 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.

Hertfordshire's *Policing Plan* demonstrates their ambition to drive down crime and reduce ASB. Their current target aims for no increase in crime.

