

18 July 2013

## **Kent Police has made good progress in meeting its financial challenge finds HMIC**

*Kent Police has made good progress in meeting its financial challenge and has developed a detailed change programme which will allow it to reduce costs. However, reducing crime will continue to be a challenge for the force, although satisfaction amongst victims of crime compares favourably with other forces.*

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

### **Progress in making savings**

- Kent Police has identified that it needs to save £46.1m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015). The force has planned how it will save £46.1m and therefore has no outstanding funding gap.
- The savings requirement is 14% of its overall budget, a smaller proportionate reduction than that faced by most other forces.
- However, HMIC considers that Kent Police still faces a moderately difficult challenge. This is because it spends less on policing than most other forces, and has a lower number of staff so has a comparatively lower pay bill. The amount it spends on each officer and staff member is also below most other forces.

### **Workforce changes and protecting the front line**

- The force is reducing police officer numbers by limiting recruitment and holding vacancies. As a result, by the end of the spending review period, there will be 504 fewer police officers in the force. This means the number of police officers is planned to reduce by 13% between March 2010 and March 2015. This is a bigger reduction than in most other forces.
- Kent Police is 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 89% to 92%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.
- The force has also made some police staff redundant and has not replaced others as they have left (e.g. through retirements and resignations) and, as a result, by the end of the spending review period, there is planned to be 661 fewer police staff in Kent Police. This means the number of police staff is planned to reduce by 25% between March 2010 and March 2015. This is a much larger reduction than in most other forces. Kent Police plans to reduce the number of police community support officers (PCSOs) by 4%, which is a much smaller reduction than planned by most other forces.

### **Impact on the public**

- Over the first two years of the spending review period, recorded crime (excluding fraud) fell by 5%, which is less than the figure for England and Wales (13%).
- Victim satisfaction remains high at 88.2%, which is higher than in other forces.

## Future challenges

- The force is developing plans for beyond this spending review to ensure they are in line with the time frame of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Police and Crime Plan, which sets out the priorities and objectives for the police in Kent until 2017.

HM Inspector of Constabulary for the Eastern Region, Zoë Billingham, said:

*“Kent Police faces a smaller savings requirement compared to other forces, but this is not without its challenge. It has lower costs than many other forces, so it has had to work harder to identify more efficiencies in order to squeeze its costs down even further.”*

*“Kent Police has made good progress in meeting its financial challenge. It has developed a comprehensive and detailed change programme. The force has well established collaboration arrangements, particularly with Essex Police and is saving more through collaboration than many other forces.”*

*“Maintaining service delivery is a challenge for the force. In particular, the reduction in victim based crime in Kent has been less than that seen in most forces. However, satisfaction among victims of crime compares favourably with other forces.”*

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

The full report for Kent Police, along with the national thematic review, can be found at [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://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](http://www.hmic.gov.uk)
2. Victim satisfaction for this force has a confidence interval of  $\pm 1.2\%$
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](http://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.