



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Kent Police's response to the funding challenge

July 2013

Contents

Kent Police: Executive summary	3
The challenge	5
Progress in making savings: Years 1–2	5
Plans for Year 3–4	5
Looking beyond the current spending review	5
The scale of the challenge in Kent Police	6
Demand	6
How difficult is the challenge?	6
Response to the challenge	7
Changes to workforce numbers	7
Changes to the proportion of workforce on the front line	8
Collaboration	9
Managing change	10
How is the force engaging police officers, PCSOs and staff in the change programme?	10
How effective has the response been?	11
Impact of the changes on the public	12
Visibility	12
Calls for service	13
Crime	13
Victim satisfaction surveys	14
Changes to how the public can access services	14
Conclusion	15

Kent Police: Executive summary

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 collaboration¹ 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.

Financial challenge

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 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.

Progress in making savings

Kent Police has planned how it will save £46.1m and therefore has no outstanding funding gap.

Changes to the workforce

All forces spend most of their money on staff costs (such as wages and overtime), and so have focused on reducing this expenditure in order to cut costs.² Kent Police is no exception.

It 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 2010³ and March 2015. This is a bigger reduction than in most other forces.

1 HMIC defines collaboration as “all activity where two or more parties work together to achieve a common goal, which includes inter force activity and collaboration with the public and private sectors, including outsourcing and business partnering”.

2 See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p.13. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

3 We use 2010 as our baseline as many forces started to make staff reductions in anticipation of the spending review.

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

HMIC expects forces to make savings without damaging the service provided to the public. We monitor whether they are achieving this by examining crime rates and the results of the victim satisfaction surveys which all forces conduct.

Over the first two years of the spending review period, recorded crime⁴ (excluding fraud) fell by 5%, which is less than the figure for England and Wales (13%). Victim satisfaction remains high at 88.2%⁵, which is higher than in other forces.

Future challenges

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.

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.

4 Crime excluding fraud as per the new classifications released in July 2013 by the Office for National Statistics.

5 \pm 1.2%.

The challenge

Over the four years of the spending review Kent Police has identified that it needs to find savings of £46.1m. This is 14% of its total expenditure⁶ (which in 2012/13 was £315.3m). The average amount to be saved by forces across England and Wales is 17%.

Progress in making savings: Years 1–2

The force successfully made 60% (£27.6m) of the total savings required by March 2015 in the first two years of the spending review period. It achieved this by:

- not recruiting any new police officers;
- making savings from its non-pay budget;
- reducing the number of police staff it employs (which it started to do in 2010); and
- moving to a new policing model where some services, for example, custody are centralised.

All of this activity has enabled the force to make significant savings and the frontline to be maintained.

Plans for Year 3–4

The force has plans in place to achieve further savings of £7.6m in 2013/14, and another £10.9m in 2014/15, and therefore has no outstanding funding gap.

Looking beyond the current spending review

The force has started to consider what savings it might need to make in the next spending review period (after March 2015) and the force's medium-term financial plan looks further forward to 2016/17.

The force has a good understanding of its future financial challenge and has conducted extensive scenario planning to look at different options.

⁶ Based on a gross expenditure baseline in 2010/11.

The scale of the challenge in Kent Police

Although the requirement for savings is lower than in most other forces, Kent Police still faces a challenge 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 than most other forces in England and Wales; and
- the cost of police officers and police staff per head of population is lower than most other forces in England and Wales.

Demand

Forces face different levels of demand for the service they provide to the public. This section looks at three of the key indicators of demand to provide an overall impression of the challenges each force faces:

- the number of calls the force receives from the public;
- the number of crimes the force deals with; and
- the number of prosecutions (suspects charged with offences) the force brings.

12 months to March 2013	Kent Police	England and Wales
Emergency and priority calls per 1,000 population	129	134
Victim-based crime per 1,000 population	51.3	54.5
Prosecutions (charges) per 1,000 population	9.1	10.2

This table shows that in 2012/13, Kent Police received slightly fewer emergency and priority calls than other forces. It has to deal with fewer crimes per head of population than other forces and supports fewer prosecutions than elsewhere. However, Kent is a large geographic area to police with some concentrated areas of high demand, including the border with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS).

How difficult is the challenge?

The challenge for Kent Police is to deliver further savings from a position where the force spends less on policing than other forces and its staff cost base is already lower than elsewhere.

Response to the challenge

Over 80% of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs.⁷ It is therefore not surprising that forces across England and Wales plan to achieve much of their savings by reducing the number of police officers, PCSOs and police staff employed.

Kent Police is no exception. It made an early start on this in 2010, when it stopped its recruitment of new police officers and police staff, and reduced the number of police staff. The force plans to make 81% of its savings from its pay budget. This is a higher proportion than in most other forces and although savings have been made from the non-pay budget this is an indicator that the force needs to do more to protect its crime fighting capacity by reducing what it spends on goods and services.

Changes to workforce numbers

The following table shows the force's planned changes to workforce numbers over the spending review period and compares these to the change for England and Wales.⁸

	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Kent Police change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police Officers	3,787	3,283	-504	-13%	-11%
Police Staff	2,673	2,012	-661	-25%	-16%
PCSOs	387	370	-17	-4%	-17%
Total	6,847	5,665	-1,182	-17%	-13%
Specials	310	404	+94	+30%	+60%

Overall, the table shows that Kent Police plans to lose more officers and police staff than in other forces. The force also plans to lose a number of PCSOs, although the predicted numbers are lower than in other forces.

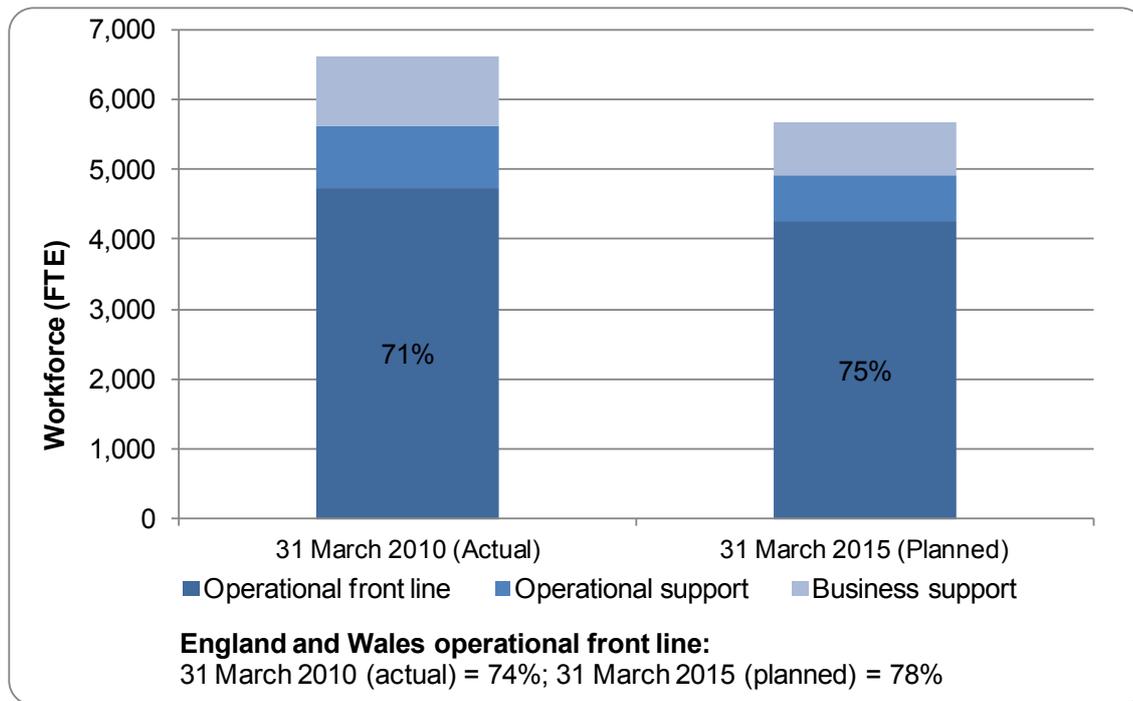
⁷ See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p.13. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

⁸ Workforce figures for March 2010 show the actual number of people working for the force in permanent posts on the 31 March in that year. People on long-term absences (such as maternity leave) are included in these 'actual' figures, but vacant posts are not. Workforce projections for March 2015 are for budgeted posts, so the actual number of people who will be working for the force at that point in reality may be different, because some posts will be vacant or filled by temporary staff. Forces' projections may also exclude people who will be on long-term absences. The difference between actual workforce numbers and projected numbers should therefore be taken as an approximate expected change.

Changes to the proportion of workforce on the front line

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’*. 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 these crime-fighting roles.

The following chart shows the change in the workforce frontline profile in Kent Police.⁹



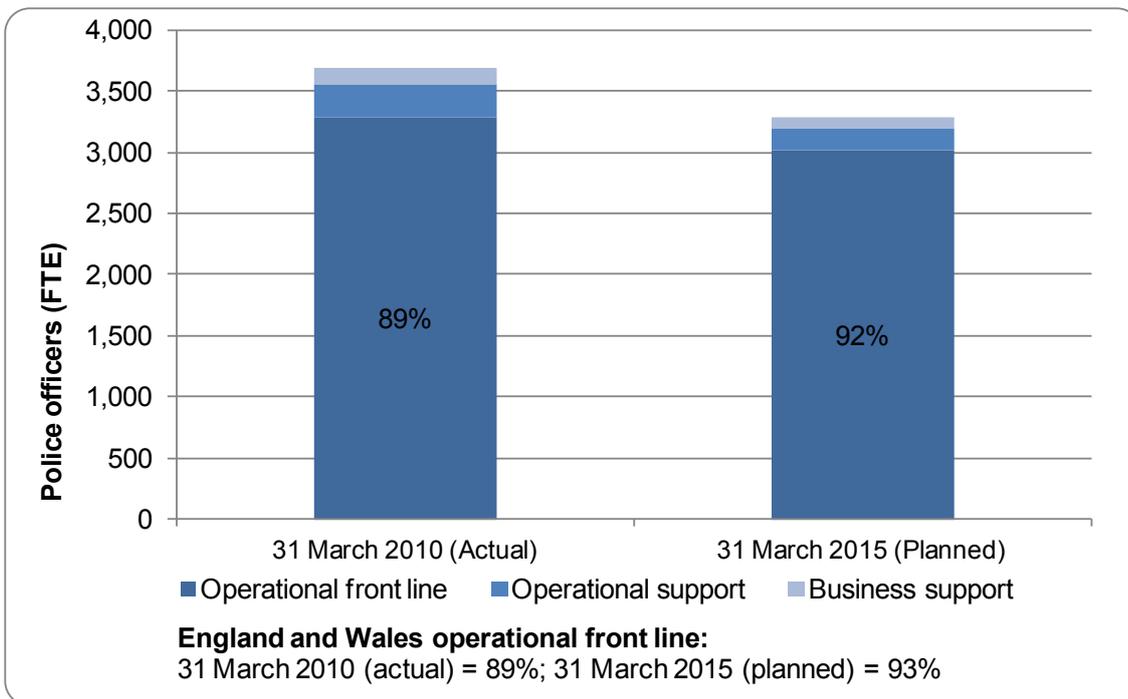
The **number** of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. the force’s total workforce) working on Kent Police’s front line is planned to reduce by 10% between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 4,728 to 4,258).

Over the same period, the **proportion** of Kent Police’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is planned to increase from 71% to 75%. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74% to 78%.

The **number** of Kent Police’s officers in frontline roles is planned to reduce by 8% from 3,283 in March 2010 to 3,020 in March 2015, as the chart on the next page shows.

⁹ From 2010, Gwent, the MPS, Wiltshire and North Wales police forces chose to code those officers and staff who are on long-term absence from duty due to maternity/paternity leave, career break, full-time education or suspension, and those on long-term leave, to their normal working role. This has the effect of inflating their workforce and frontline figures by up to 1% compared to other forces.

The **proportion** of those remaining on the front line is planned to increase from 89% to 92%. This is a strong indicator that the force is taking steps to protect vital front line officers and is broadly comparable to the increase (from 89% to 93%) across England and Wales.



Collaboration

HMIC monitors forces progress on collaboration¹⁰ because it offers the opportunity to deliver efficient, effective policing and helps achieve savings.

The force has a positive view of collaboration built on the successful collaborative working arrangements it has already implemented. A well established governance structure is in place.

Essex Police is Kent's preferred partner. Their collaboration delivers financial benefits as well as increased capacity and resilience. Examples of services that are delivered jointly include: intelligence; major crime; serious and organised crime; covert support; forensics; and IT. The most recent collaboration in business support services is progressing well. The force takes a long term approach, aligning processes wherever possible with Essex. The force also uses benchmarking to identify potential areas for collaborative savings and is reviewing existing collaborated units to assess whether there is scope to identify further savings or improvements in service delivery.

The force is of the view that efforts to collaborate with more than one force increases complexity and therefore tends to dramatically slow progress. With limited resources, the focus is on working with Essex Police. However, the force also works closely with a range of other partners. For example, it is working closely with Kent Fire and Rescue Service on call management.

¹⁰ HMIC defines collaboration as "all activity where two or more parties work together to achieve a common goal, which includes inter force activity and collaboration with the public and private sectors, including outsourcing and business partnering".

In 2014/15 the force expects to spend 20% of its total expenditure on collaboration, which is considerably higher than the 11% figure for England and Wales. Commendably collaboration is expected to contribute to 26% of the force's savings requirement, which is higher than the 7% figure for England.

Managing change

Reductions in police budgets have inevitably led to a shrinking workforce. HMIC expects forces also to have an eye within their change programmes on the longer term transformation¹¹ which can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and prepare for future funding reductions.

Kent has designed and delivered a force wide change programme which resulted in a significant restructure of local policing services built on extensive analysis and evidence. It has robust governance arrangements, led by the deputy chief constable, which ensures that all force plans are integrated and support delivery of the police and crime plan.

The force has focused on making the transformational change that it identified would be needed to maintain or improve service delivery with a smaller workforce. The changes the force made were significant, involving the delivery of neighbourhood policing and investigation through local policing areas with some other services such as custody being centralised.

The force manages the impact of the savings plans against individual project plans and has structures in place to ensure interdependencies are identified at the earliest opportunity. For example, the force identified a skills gap as a result of the expanded responsibilities of neighbourhood policing teams and has put in place a comprehensive investigative skills training programme.

The force is confident it can deliver savings in the remaining years of the spending review and this is supported by a good track record of delivery.

How is the force engaging police officers, PCSOs and staff in the change programme?

Kent Police has placed a high priority on consulting and engaging with staff during the change programme. This has involved a series of workshops involving staff at all levels, roadshows by the Chief Constable and online question and answer sessions. Awards have been given to some members of staff for their contribution to the change process.

Staff in Kent are aware of the change programme, are realistic about future financial pressures and the impact on individuals. Staff generally feel that the change process has been well managed and they appreciate the efforts made to engage them.

The force has invested in its leaders who have in turn supported staff. There is evidence of this reducing sickness and helping to facilitate flexible working arrangements requests while recognising that organisational requirements are paramount.

¹¹ Transformation is a process of radical change that orientates an organisation in a new direction and takes it to an entirely different level of effectiveness. It implies a fundamental change of character, with little or no resemblance to the past configuration or structure.

Staff associations and staff union representatives report good working relationships with the force, providing examples where they had been able to add value to the planned changes. Staff associations feel supported by senior leaders and are involved in the consultation.

How effective has the response been?

Kent Police has made good progress in meeting its financial challenge and has developed a detailed change programme which will allow it to reduce its costs. The force has implemented major change well and engaged effectively with staff in doing so. However, it acknowledges that it needs to take swift action to address recent increases in crime.

Kent Police has delivered a strong response to meeting its financial challenge over the last two years.

Impact of the changes on the public

The challenge for forces is not just to save money and reduce their workforce numbers, but to ensure the choices they make in deciding how to achieve this do not have a negative impact on the service they provide to their communities. HMIC therefore looked for evidence that the force had kept a consideration of the effect on the public at the heart of their choices.

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 services in order to protect the public, such as counter terrorism, serious and organised crime, and child protection (to name just three).

That being said, research shows that the public values 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.¹² HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the force had affected the visibility of the police on the streets of Kent.

In March 2013, Kent Police allocated 58% of its police officers to visible roles. This is five percentage points higher than it allocated in 2010, and is higher than the figure for most other forces (which was 54% 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, the force allocated 61% to visible roles. This is four percentage points higher than it allocated in 2010 and remains higher than the 59% figure for England and Wales.

HMIC conducted a survey¹³ of the public across England and Wales to assess whether they had noticed any difference in the way their area is being policed. Of those people surveyed in Kent, 10%¹⁴ said that they have seen a police officer more often than they had 12 months ago; this is broadly in line with the 13% average across all survey respondents in England and Wales.

Of those people surveyed, 75%¹⁵ said they felt either as safe or safer in the areas where they live compared with two years ago. This is the same as the figure for most other forces.

12 See *Demanding Times*, HMIC, London, 2011. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

13 A YouGov survey was carried out during a four-week period during March 2013. Satisfaction and confidence surveys are also carried out at a national level by the Crime Survey of England and Wales. These use larger sample sizes and are carried out quarterly over a rolling-year period. Some forces also carry out their own surveys of the general public. More information can be found at www.crimesurvey.co.uk, www.hmic.gov.uk or from force websites.

14 $\pm 5\%$.

15 $\pm 5\%$.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether police forces were taking longer to respond to calls for help, as a result of its workforce reductions and other changes designed to save money. This analysis relies on force collected data. Forces are not required to set response times and are free to determine their own arrangements for monitoring attendance to calls so information between forces is not comparable.

In the three years from 2010 to present, Kent Police had maintained the same response time of within 15 minutes for calls classed as 'emergency' (also known as grade 1) in an urban setting and within 20 minutes for calls classed as 'emergency' in a rural setting. Over the same period, calls classed as a 'priority' (also known as Grade 2) had a response time of within 60 minutes.

The force met its response time for urban 'emergency' calls 87% of the time in 2010/11, 88% of the time in 2011/12, and 83% of the time in 2012/13. In rural areas the force met its response time for 'emergency' calls 87% of the time in 2010/11, 89% of the time in 2011/12 and 83% of the time in 2012/13.

For 'priority' calls, a 74% response time was met in 2010/11, 73% response time in 2011/12 and 72% response time in 2012/13.

Overall, this shows a declining trend in attendance over a three period for both 'emergency' and 'priority' calls.

The force has introduced borderless deployment to emergency calls (traditionally officers patrol and respond within one of a number of geographic areas within the force. Moving to borderless deployment means the nearest available officer will attend and is not constrained by a geographic patrol area) and it is expected that this will improve response times.

Crime

In 2010 the Home Secretary, Theresa May, set a clear priority for the police service to reduce crime.

Between 2010/11 and 2012/13 (the first two years of the spending review) Kent Police reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 5% compared to 13% in England and Wales. Although the force has reduced crime, this was among the lowest reductions compared to other forces. Over this period, victim-based crime (that is, crimes where there is a direct victim – an individual, a group, or an organisation) also reduced by 5% compared with 12% in England and Wales.

By looking at how many crimes occur per head of population, we can see how safe it is for the public in that police area. The table on the next page shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Kent (per head of population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

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

12 months to March 2013	Rate per 1,000 population in Kent	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
All Crime (excluding fraud)	55.8	61.4
Victim based crime	51.3	54.5
Burglary	7.8	8.2
Violence against the person	11.0	10.6
Anti-social behaviour incidents	33.2	40.7

It is important that crimes are effectively investigated and the perpetrator identified and brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to say who has committed a crime, it can be described as detected.

The force's sanction detection¹⁶ rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2013 is 29.9%. This is above the England and Wales sanction detection rate of 27.0%.

Victim satisfaction surveys

An important measure of the impact of changes to service delivery 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 2013, 88.2%¹⁷ of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Kent Police. This is higher than the England and Wales figure of 84.6%.¹⁸

Changes to how the public can access services

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services. Kent Police is planning to close 15 front counters¹⁹ and seven police stations between 2010 and 2015. However, the force is planning to open four shared access points²⁰ across the same period. The PCC has committed to providing a fleet of mobile police stations to improve accessibility in rural parts of the force.

¹⁶ A sanction detection is a 'solved crime' where a suspect has been identified and notified as being responsible for committing that crime and what the full implications of this are, and has received an official sanction. Official sanctions include charges, cautions, penalty notices, offences taken into consideration (TICs) and cannabis warnings.

¹⁷ ± 1.2%.

¹⁸ ± 0.2%.

¹⁹ A police building open to the general public to obtain face-to-face access to police services.

²⁰ A non-police building open to the general public to obtain face-to-face access to police services. For example, shared facilities with council services (e.g. libraries or offices), the fire service or other partners.

Conclusion

Kent Police has made good progress in meeting its financial challenge. It has developed a detailed change programme and well established collaboration arrangements, particularly with Essex Police. This will allow the force to reduce costs further.

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 crimes compares favourably with other forces.

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

The force is on track to meet its savings requirement and is planning for 2015/16 and beyond. It is open to new ideas and approaches, for example it has recently introduced an approach called Predictive Policing, an evidence based approach to reducing crime. This strong track record, early planning and innovative and open approach will put the force in a good position as it faces future budget reductions.

In October 2010, the Government announced that central funding to the Police Service in England and Wales would reduce by 20% 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 third year.

Our inspection focused on three questions:

1. How is the force responding to the budget reduction?
2. What is the impact for the workforce and the public?
3. How is the force managing current and future risks?

To answer these questions, 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 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.

National findings and patterns across all 43 forces are given in our thematic report, *Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge*, which is available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

This report provides the findings for Kent Police.