



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Valuing the Police: Preparedness Inspection

**Lincolnshire Police
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 Lincolnshire Police. A thematic report, *Adapting to Austerity*, which brings together findings from all 43 forces, is also available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

Findings for Lincolnshire Police

What is the financial challenge in Lincolnshire?

Lincolnshire Police and Lincolnshire Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£19.7m** 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 14% of their gross revenue expenditure.

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

Lincolnshire Police faces a greater challenge than most other forces in closing the funding gap. It is a geographically large force that is relatively small in resource terms and it spends less per head of population on policing services than any other force in England and Wales. The funding challenges have existed for some time and as a result a great deal of organisational 'fat' has already been trimmed. This has left the force with fewer options for making cuts and very little room for manoeuvre.

The authority and force clearly understood the scale of the comprehensive spending review (CSR) challenge and had considered a range of options in developing their policing change programme to address it. The Chief Constable articulated a clear vision for the force in the future based on: local policing services provided through a restructured single local policing command model; protective services (e.g. tackling serious organised crime) provided through regional collaborative arrangements; and the remaining support functions (eg human resources, IT, finance etc) delivered by outsourced service providers.

HMIC is confident that the savings planned for year one of the CSR period (2011/12) will be achieved. However at the time of inspection and in a subsequent follow-up visit, it remains too early to say whether Lincolnshire's plans to deliver significant savings through outsourcing and further regional collaboration will release all the savings required while maintaining or improving service delivery. The force and authority recognise the risk involved in their approach but they are clear that a possible alternative approach, that of cutting further into frontline policing, is neither acceptable nor viable. At the time of the follow-up visit the force and authority were at an early stage of developing an alternative plan should outsourcing not deliver the necessary savings.

The projects within Lincolnshire's policing change programme were at different stages of maturity. However, the force and authority had a clear governance framework to oversee progress and each project had identified lead officers and resources. The new policing model for Lincolnshire took approximately six months to be implemented. This is a significant achievement in such a short timescale and provides confidence as to the rigour of the force's and authority's governance arrangements.

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

HMIC asked forces and authorities to provide data on proposed changes to their workforce between March 2010 and March 2015. However, Lincolnshire Police were unable at the time to provide this level of detail for March 2015, as the following table shows.

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	1,206	917	149
31 March 2015 (proposed)	1,063	n/k	149

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 has not been able to provide figures for police staff to March 2015, however the position will become clearer when a decision on outsourcing has been made.

It is the Chief Constable's intention to retain the current number of PCSOs however, this is dependent upon local authority decisions to continue the funding.

What will be the impact on service to the public?

The force has introduced a new model for delivering policing in Lincolnshire which offers some opportunities to improve the service provided to local communities. However, there are associated risks. The force reported that 49 of the 70 police officer posts that are to be lost during the first year of the CSR period will come from the frontline response and neighbourhood teams. This means that proportionately there will be a higher impact on frontline police officers in Lincolnshire than we have seen elsewhere in the country, which carries with it a consequent heightened risk of there being an adverse impact on the service to the people of Lincolnshire.

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.

Lincolnshire's *Policing Plan* outlines their ambition to continue to reduce crime and ASB.