

18 July 2013

## **Norfolk Constabulary has made very good progress in meeting its financial challenge, finds HMIC**

*Norfolk Constabulary has made very good progress in meeting its financial challenge, making an early start in preparing for the spending cuts, and has embraced collaboration achieving considerable savings.*

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

### **Progress in making savings**

- Norfolk Constabulary has identified that it needs to save £21.4m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015). The force has planned how to save £20.2m of its savings requirement and by the end of March 2013 had achieved 72% of this. This leaves a further £1.2m to find.
- This savings requirement is 13% of its overall budget, and is a much smaller proportionate reduction than that faced by most other forces. Norfolk's position is not without its challenges as it already spends less than most other forces on policing; it has fewer staff and has a lower pay bill for police officers than other forces. Norfolk Constabulary is a small force with fewer opportunities to find the economies of scale from which larger forces benefit, and consequently it is more difficult for it to find further savings.

### **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 127 (8%) fewer police officers in Norfolk between March 2010 and March 2015. This is a much smaller reduction than in most other forces.
- Norfolk Constabulary is protecting frontline posts as it makes these cuts. This is commendable. Between March 2010 and March 2015, the proportion of police officers in frontline crime-fighting roles is planned to increase from 91% to 93%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.
- The force has also made some police staff redundant, and not replaced others as they have left. The number of police staff is planned to decrease by 182 (16%) between March 2010 and March 2015. This is a similar percentage decrease to that seen in most other forces.
- Norfolk Constabulary also plans to do as much as it can to protect the number of police community support officers (PCSOs). The force will lose 15 PCSOs (5%), which is a smaller reduction than that planned by most other forces.

### **Impact on the public**

- Over the first two years of the spending review, recorded crime (excluding fraud) rates fell by 12% in Norfolk, which is broadly the same figure for England and Wales (13%).
- Victim satisfaction remains high, at 88.0%, which is a much higher level achieved than most other forces.

### **Future challenges**

- The exemplary collaboration arrangements with Suffolk Constabulary are helping both to find savings and to add capacity. The force estimates that by 2015, savings from collaboration will contribute to 34% of its total savings requirement. This is commendable.
- HMIC is confident that the force is on track to deliver the savings required by the end of this spending review period. It has also already started to assess and plan for future savings beyond 2015.

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

*“Norfolk Constabulary’s savings requirement is smaller than that of most other forces. However, as a low cost force that had taken positive steps to become more efficient before this spending review period began, closing the funding gap is not without its challenges.*

*“The force has made very good progress in meeting its funding challenge. It has taken more decisive steps to achieve greater efficiencies than many other forces. It has developed a strong and effective change programme which will enable Norfolk to meet its financial challenge while maintaining a focus on reducing crime and keeping its communities safe.*

*“The force has robustly reviewed how it operates to ensure that efficiencies and savings are achieved throughout the organisation. Crime continues to fall and overall crime rates are lower than in other forces. HMIC commends the force for the high levels of victim satisfaction that it continues to achieve.*

*“Through its exemplary work with Suffolk Constabulary, Norfolk has embraced collaboration. The two forces are delivering a wide range of operational policing and support services together. They have achieved excellent efficiencies in doing so.”*

The full report for Norfolk Constabulary, 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  $\pm 1.3\%$
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.