



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

## **Valuing the Police: Preparedness Inspection**

**Nottinghamshire 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 Nottinghamshire Police. A thematic report, *Adapting to Austerity*, which brings together findings from all 43 forces, is also available from [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk).

## Findings for Nottinghamshire Police

### What is the financial challenge in Nottinghamshire?

Nottinghamshire Police and Nottinghamshire Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£42.3m** cash reduction to their budget over the four years of the comprehensive spending review period (2011/12–2013/14). In real terms (ie when inflation is taken into account), this equates to 17% of their gross revenue expenditure.

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

The authority and force clearly understood the scale of the challenge facing them, and were considering a range of options in developing a plan to meet it. They have a costed plan to save £45m.

The force and authority are continuing to make very good progress in addressing long standing under-performance problems. They are determined to ensure that the steps they take to close the funding gap do not detract from their continued improvement in the policing service for the people of Nottinghamshire.

Recent changes in the force at a senior level have been very positive, bringing greater cohesion, focus and energy. There have also been significant improvements in expertise across a number of business areas, particularly in human resources and finance. However, implementing these changes meant that the force was comparatively late in developing its financial plan and needed to move very quickly to catch up.

The force has designed a change programme to deliver the required savings over the comprehensive spending review (CSR) period. This comprises projects to restructure

corporate services (eg human resources, finance and IT), operational support (eg custody provision and firearms) and local policing. The force and authority are very clear that the majority of savings should be made in corporate and operational support services. This will protect the local policing function and increase police officer visibility and availability to the public.

The force understood that it has the potential to make savings of £12m through taking part in collaboration. However, progress in taking forward collaboration across the East Midlands region has been relatively slow and Nottinghamshire decided not to include any savings that could be made through collaboration in their plans. When the future of regional collaboration becomes clearer the force will readdress this.

At the time of inspection, detailed plans for some of the changes to be made in year one of the CSR period (2011/12) were still being refined. There were broad plans for subsequent years but the force intended to review these in more detail once the year one plan had been delivered.

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

Nottinghamshire have planned that their workforce will change as follows:

	<b>Police Officers</b>	<b>Police Staff</b>	<b>PCSO</b>
<b>31 March 2010 (actual)</b>	2,409	1,658	268
<b>31 March 2015 (proposed)</b>	1,954	1,138	275

The force has taken steps to reduce its workforce over the last two years. It recognised that further reductions of both police officers and police staff are needed if the required savings are to be achieved.

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?**

At the time of inspection the plans for the change programme and restructuring were still at an early stage, and therefore the force could not say with certainty how any changes to service delivery might impact on the public. However, the force and authority were determined to ensure that policing performance continues to improve.

The force and authority had developed a number of ways to engage with the public and with key stakeholders. Effective communication was an integral part of the change

programme, with all chief officers taking a prominent role. As part of this, the authority and force worked with local communities to set policing priorities. They also consulted with key stakeholders about what their priorities should be in the current financial climate. Feedback from this work informed the local policing plan and influenced the financial plan.

### **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.

Nottinghamshire's *Policing Plan* includes targets to significantly reduce crime and ASB.