



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

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

**Staffordshire 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 Staffordshire 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 Staffordshire Police

### What is the financial challenge in Staffordshire?

Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£38.7m** cash reduction to their budget over the four years of the comprehensive spending review period (2011/12–14/15). 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 force and authority understood the scale of the challenge facing them over the next four years, and have considered several options for how to control and reduce costs, while simultaneously improving the way they provide their service to the public.

They have produced a plan for the first two years of the comprehensive spending review period. This includes details of a structural reorganisation, which is centred around moving from four divisions to local policing teams (which are in line with community safety partnership boundaries) and two investigative hubs. This is intended to reduce duplicate costs and provide more flexibility in the way they work.

At the time of inspection, firm plans were not yet in place for years three and four of the comprehensive spending review period (2013/14 and 2014/15), although options (including increased use of collaboration) were being considered.

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

Staffordshire Police planned to make the following changes to its workforce numbers.

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	2,161	1,373	237
31 March 2015 (proposed)	1,777	986	212

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?

The authority and force have a clear vision for policing over the next four years which prioritises protecting the public – especially vulnerable people – by working to solve problems quickly, provide an effective response, and conduct high-quality investigations.

The force has invested time and resource in ensuring the impact of the budget cuts on service to the public is minimised. They have constantly monitored demand, and will continue to review the way services are delivered.

The authority and force have been clear in their message to the public that the changes and cost reductions will not affect frontline policing over the next two years and have committed to retaining numbers of neighbourhood beat officers. They have consulted with their local community in setting priorities and developing plans.

## 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.

Staffordshire Police has objectives to reduce crime and increase the percentage of victims of ASB who are satisfied with the overall service provided by the police.

