



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Valuing the Police: Preparedness Inspection

**Sussex 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 Sussex 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 Sussex Police

What is the financial challenge in Sussex?

Sussex Police and Sussex Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£51m** 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 15% of their gross revenue expenditure.

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

The force and authority fully understood the scale of the challenge ahead and had already been planning for financial cuts some time before the comprehensive spending review (CSR) announcement in Autumn 2010. At the time of the inspection, they had identified £47.1m of the £51m savings required, and intended to achieve the bulk of the savings in 2011/12 and 2012/13.

The force planned to cut costs through the 'Serving Sussex 2015' change programme, which consists of several workstreams. Most of the savings in 2011/12 and 2012/13 will come from:

- 'leaning down' processes so that policing services are delivered in a more streamlined and cost effective way;
- a review of working conditions, shifts and pay; and
- changes to the structure and delivery of local policing, including a merger of two policing divisions and alterations to police stations.

At the time of inspection, the workstreams were all at different stages of maturity. The force and authority recognised the need to progress the less well-developed areas to establish if they are viable and will deliver the necessary savings on time. The force was still developing its local policing model and was unsure of the exact number or mix of

police officers, staff and police and community support officers (PCSOs) it would require by 2015. As a result, the force could not fully profile its workforce requirements over the four year CSR period.

The force and authority had developed a clear governance and programme management structure to oversee the changes. A member of either the force or the authority was the named lead for each workstream. Understandably, there was more detail of how savings would be delivered for the first two years of the CSR period than for years 3 and 4.

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

Sussex have planned that their workforce will change as follows:

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	3,213	2,155	377
31 March 2015 (proposed)	2,713	1,605	377

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?

Sussex Police and Police Authority are committed to maintaining and improving neighbourhood policing, and have sought to minimise the cuts to frontline policing. However, at the time of the inspection some of the cost reduction plans were still at an early stage so it was not possible for the force and authority to be clear as to the likely impact of the planned cuts on the service to the public.

The force and authority have consulted with the public to identify their priorities and values for their policing plan, but did not consult specifically with the public on their plans to meet the cuts. Going forward, the force and authority intends to use local and user surveys to gauge the effects of the cuts on service delivery.

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.

Sussex's *Policing Plan* includes targets to reduce crime and ASB in the coming year.

