



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Valuing the Police: Preparedness Inspection

**West Yorkshire 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 West Yorkshire 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 West Yorkshire Police

What is the financial challenge in West Yorkshire?

West Yorkshire Police and West Yorkshire Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£90.5m** 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 15% 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 financial challenge facing them, and have considered a full range of options in deciding how to meet it. They have produced a four-year cost reduction strategy which includes annual milestone savings targets, and detailed plans for how and when these will be met for year one and most of year two of the comprehensive spending review period (2011/12 and 2012/13). The force and authority monitored progress via clear governance arrangements.

The force intended to achieve savings through Operation Transform, an overarching co-ordination function which has adopted some programme management principles. In particular, the force's analysis around how much can be saved from the workforce budget is detailed, and provides a degree of confidence that the required savings will be made.

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

West Yorkshire Police planned to make the following changes to its workforce numbers.

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	5,758	3,539	763
31 March 2015 (proposed)	4,999	2,065	751

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?

West Yorkshire Police and Police Authority have committed to maintaining frontline services and neighbourhood policing, and protecting the public from serious harm. The force recognised that there is the potential for the financial cuts to have an impact on the service they deliver to their communities, but had yet to determine the detail of how to mitigate this risk. In particular, it needs to ensure that reducing the back and middle office does not mean so many extra duties are transferred to frontline officers that they are by necessity less available to the public.

Local public consultation had taken place, and this has influenced the change programme. A communications strategy was also in place to inform the public of potential changes to the service they receive.

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.

West Yorkshire's *Policing Plan* includes targets for reducing crime and around ASB for the coming year.

