

18 July 2013

## **Wiltshire Police has made good progress in meeting its financial challenge, finds HMIC**

*Wiltshire Police has identified current and future risks, and has plans in place to manage them accordingly. Over the period of this spending review the force has shown itself to have a good track record in meeting its financial challenges while at the same time focusing on the delivery of high quality policing to people working and living in Wiltshire.*

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

### **Progress in making savings**

- Wiltshire Police has identified that it needs to save £16.7m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015). The force has planned how it will save £16.4m of this total. It therefore has £0.3m to find.
- As a proportion of its overall budget (14%) its saving requirement is below that of most other forces. However, Wiltshire Police does face a number of challenges which makes achieving the savings more difficult. It spends less on policing than most other forces, and the costs of its police officers and staff are lower than elsewhere. As a small force, it does not have the benefit of economies of scale available in larger forces to achieve efficiency 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, the force plans that there will be 139 fewer police officers.
- There is evidence that Wiltshire Police is successfully protecting frontline posts as it makes these cuts. Between March 2010 and March 2015, the proportion of police officers in frontline, crime-fighting roles is planned to increase from 87% to 92%. 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 (e.g. through retirements and resignations). As a result, by the end of the spending review period, it plans to reduce the number of police staff by 300 (30%) between March 2010 and March 2015, a larger reduction than most other forces.
- Wiltshire Police plans to increase the number of police community support officers (PCSOs) by 11 officers (8%), whereas most forces are planning to cut PCSO numbers.

## Impact on the public

- Over the first two years of the spending review, crime rates (excluding fraud) fell by 9%, which is less than the figure for England and Wales (13%).
- Victim satisfaction remains high at 86.5%, which is broadly in line with other forces.

## Future challenges

- The force has assessed future savings requirements and has high-level plans in place to deliver them in line with the objectives of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Police and Crime Plan.
- In particular, the force is developing a strong programme of integration with Wiltshire County Council, both in terms of planning more cost effective business support services, and a better integrated estate for improved public access.
- The force continues to work hard to minimise any potential negative impact of the change programme on its communities and workforce.

HM Inspector of Constabulary for the Wales and Western Region, Dru Sharpling, said:

*“Wiltshire Police has a smaller savings requirement than most other forces. However, as a small force it does not have the same opportunities to deliver efficiencies through economies of scale, and it is already a low-cost force.”*

*“The force has developed and implemented a change plan which has delivered savings, while reducing crime and increasing victim satisfaction. It is working towards greater collaboration on operational police services with other forces in the region. There is an ambitious programme of integration with the County Council.”*

*“The force prioritises engagement with staff and pays particular attention to investing in future leadership. This approach should facilitate any changes that are necessary while maintaining service delivery.”*

*“HMIC will continue to monitor the force for the remainder of the spending review period.”*

The full report for Wiltshire Police, 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  $\pm 2.0\%$
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.