



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Responding to austerity

Avon and Somerset Constabulary

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Contents

How well does the constabulary provide value for money?	4
The constabulary in numbers	6
Introduction	8
To what extent is the constabulary taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position for the short and long term?	9
To what extent has the constabulary an affordable way of providing policing?	12
To what extent is the constabulary efficient?	20
Our judgments	27

How well does the constabulary provide value for money?

Overall judgment

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has responded extremely effectively to their spending review challenge. It is looking to the longer term and is taking today the necessary decisions to ensure future sustainability.

Outstanding

Summary

Avon and Somerset is on track to meet its financial challenge of the spending review period and also for the following financial year of 2015/16. Importantly the constabulary is looking beyond the immediate horizon. While there are inevitably uncertainties about future funding and costs pressures, the constabulary's planning is identifying likely future scenarios and developing high-level options to meet the challenge.

Overall, the constabulary understands the issues facing it, and has a comprehensive and well-managed change programme in place to achieve the savings required. It has undertaken a rigorous assessment of demand which has provided the evidence base for restructuring how policing will be provided more effectively and continue to realise savings for the constabulary.

HMIC was reassured by the level of detail that underpins Avon and Somerset's change plans and by the leadership's ability, innovation and determination to make changes while fighting crime and keeping its communities safe.

To what extent is the constabulary taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position for the short and long term?

To what extent has the constabulary an affordable way of providing policing?

To what extent is the constabulary efficient?

Outstanding

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has a strong track record of achieving underspends and over achieving saving requirements.

The constabulary has a balanced budget for 2014/15. It has a funding gap for 2015/16 but has plans in place to close this. It is developing plans for 2015/16 and is looking to greater collaboration and partnership to achieve these.

The constabulary is looking to the long term taking decisions needed today to ensure future sustainability.;The constabulary recognises that the scale of future challenge means there are limits to how much of these savings can be achieved internally and sees the key to future sustainability being from greater collaboration and partnership working.

Good

The constabulary has an established change management programme in place which is integrated, cohesive and well managed.

Avon and Somerset has been at the forefront of collaboration with the Southwest One initiative, a joint venture with the local authority and IBM. It is also engaged in developing wider police collaborations in the region.

A comprehensive engagement and communication programme is in place.

Over the spending review the constabulary plans to increase the proportion of its workforce and police officers in key crime-fighting roles.

Outstanding

The constabulary has undertaken a systematic, comprehensive and rigorous assessment of demand that has provided an empirical evidence base to inform the new operating model.

The new operating model will align resources against the policing challenges the constabulary faces.

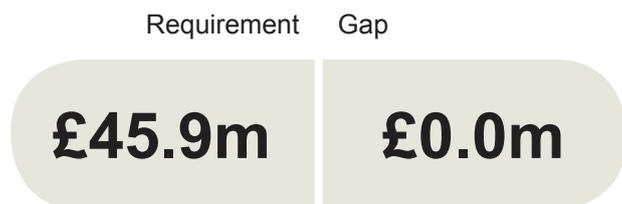
A new comprehensive ICT strategy will both realise savings and enhance effectiveness.

Over the spending review period, crime has reduced at a higher rate than in England and Wales. Over the last year victim satisfaction is above the figure for England and Wales.

The constabulary in numbers

Financial position

The constabulary's savings requirement

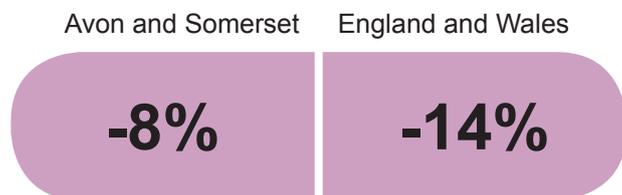


Providing policing

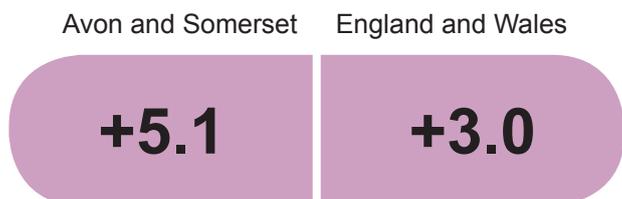
Planned change in police officer numbers 2010/11 – 2014/15



Planned change in total workforce numbers 2010/11 – 2014/15



Planned proportion of police officers on the front line 2014/15 vs 2010/11 (percentage points)



Planned proportion of total workforce on the front line 2014/15 vs 2010/11 (percentage points)





Efficiency

Police officer cost per head of population
2013/14

Avon and Somerset

England and Wales

£93.2

£117.7

Workforce cost per head of population
2013/14

Avon and Somerset

England and Wales

£133.5

£168.1

Change in recorded crime
2010/11 – 2013/14

Avon and Somerset

England and Wales

-17%

-14%

Victim satisfaction 2013/14*

Avon and Somerset

England and Wales

88.6%

85.2%

*Confidence intervals: $\pm 1.2\%$ for Avon and Somerset; $\pm 0.2\%$ for England and Wales.

Introduction

In October 2010, the Government announced that central funding to the Police Service in England and Wales would reduce by 20 percent in the four years between March 2011 and March 2015.

HMIC's Valuing the Police Programme has tracked how forces are planning to make savings to meet this budget demand each year since summer 2011. This report identifies what we found in this, our fourth year.

Our inspection focused on how well the constabulary is achieving value for money. To answer this question we looked at three areas:

- To what extent is the constabulary taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position in the short and long term?
- To what extent has the constabulary an affordable way of providing policing?
- To what extent is the constabulary efficient?

During our inspection we collected data and plans from forces, surveyed the public to see if they had noticed any changes in the service they receive from the police as a result of the cuts, and conducted in-force inspections. We also interviewed, where possible, the chief constable, police and crime commissioner and the chief officer leads for finance, change, human resources and performance in each force, and held focus groups with staff and other officers.

This provides the findings for Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

To what extent is the constabulary taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position for the short and long term?

HMIC looked at the savings plans that forces have developed in order to meet the financial challenge of the spending review, and for the year after 2015/16. It is also important that forces look to the future beyond 2016 in their planning, so we also explored how they are starting to prepare for further financial challenges.

Financial challenge

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has identified that it needs to save £45.9m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015).

As a proportion of its overall budget, this savings requirement of 14 percent is lower than most other forces; but HMIC considers that Avon and Somerset still faces a challenge in achieving this target. The central funding Avon and Somerset receives from the government is adjusted through a mechanism called 'damping'¹, which means the constabulary is allocated a lower amount than the police funding formula would otherwise provide.

The scale of the challenge

Avon and Somerset faces a particular challenge because of the scale of the financial savings that must be made. As an already low cost constabulary there are fewer opportunities to reduce its costs in line with other forces as:

- it spends less per head of population than other forces in England and Wales;
- it has fewer police officers per head of population; and
- the cost of police officers and police staff per head of population is lower than other forces in England and Wales.

Savings plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16

For 2014/15 the constabulary has balanced the budget with savings of £11.5m coming principally from: workforce reductions arising from its new operating model; budgetary efficiencies; savings from 2013/14; collaboration; and estates. In addition the constabulary has a managed budget under spend of £2.7m for 2013/14, with a further contribution to reserves of just over £4.0m made in year. The constabulary has a secure financial position and has developed plans for realistic and achievable savings to balance the budget for 2014/15.

¹ When the funding formula is allocated, each police force is assured a minimum percentage increase in grant each year. This is known as 'the floor'. Those forces that get less than the minimum percentage based purely on the formula are topped up to the minimum percentage. In order to pay for this, any force receiving an increase based purely on the formula that is greater than the minimum percentage has its grant scaled back by a standard proportion. This process is commonly referred to as 'floor damping' or 'damping'.

For 2015/16, Avon and Somerset has a further savings requirement of £13.4m. It plans to save £9.6m leaving a gap of £3.9m. To meet this requirement and achieve the savings, the constabulary's plans include; further planned workforce reductions, collaboration, public finance initiative (PFI) savings and other budget efficiency savings. The constabulary has been able to over achieve its savings in previous years and has a track record of using managed under spending to close any savings gap. The size of the gap as a proportion of the constabulary's overall net revenue expenditure is small; the constabulary has a range of developing projects that would achieve a balanced budget. In addition, Avon and Somerset has a history of exceeding its savings expectations.

Outlook for 2016 and beyond

The medium-term financial plan clearly sets out the challenge for future years and a total savings requirement from 2015/16 to 2017/18 of £23m cumulative, or approximately £7.6m annually. This is not without its challenge and the constabulary has identified 2016/17 as a critical year. This is because it has assumed that funding cuts will continue and potential increases in pay awards and national insurance will place greater demands on the money available.

To meet this challenge the constabulary is already developing, at a high level, how it might achieve such savings. It recognises that there is a limit to how much of these savings can be achieved internally and sees the key to future sustainability coming from greater collaboration and partnership working.

The constabulary is looking to the long term in their planning and importantly understands the decisions needed today to ensure future sustainability, this is evident for example, in their planning for the end of the Southwest One contract.

In order to provide assurance against the risks and uncertainties ahead, Avon and Somerset has sought to build its reserves. At the close of 2013 the constabulary has £9.1m earmarked unusable reserves, £19.6m earmarked usable reserves (to support change and build capacity and capability in the future) and £13.6m general reserves. The constabulary's approach is that reserves can be used to smooth a transition as part of planned change but not to be a replacement for change. To date the constabulary has not in fact needed to use reserves.

Summary

Outstanding

- Avon  and  Constabulary has a strong track record of achieving underspends and over achieving saving requirements.
- The constabulary has a balanced budget for 2014/15. It has a funding gap for 2015/16 but has sound plans in place to close this.
- It has built up reserves to support change and build capacity and capability in the future.
- It is developing plans for 2015/16 and is looking to greater collaboration and partnership to achieve these.
- The constabulary is looking to the long term taking decisions needed today to ensure future sustainability; this is evident for example, in their planning for the end of the Southwest One contract.
- The constabulary recognises that the scale of future challenge means there are limits to how much of these savings can be achieved internally and sees the key to future sustainability being from greater collaboration and partnership working.

To what extent has the constabulary an affordable way of providing policing?

HMIC looks at how the constabulary is structured to provide policing. We ask if this is affordable as the constabulary responds to their financial challenge. We look at what the constabulary is doing to reduce its costs, how it is protecting officers and staff engaged in fighting crime and keeping communities safe, and how it is making the required changes through its change programme.

How the constabulary provides policing

The constabulary are currently embarking on a phased implementation of a new operating model, evaluating as they progress and building required changes into new structures incorporating cultural change. The plans in place give confidence that required savings will be achieved and that the new operating model is sustainable in the medium term and through collaboration and partnership affordable in the longer term.

Neighbourhood and partnership working are a key part of the constabulary's new operating model which is being implemented in a phased way throughout 2014/15. Current pilots in different areas are teasing out teething problems and provide an opportunity to check and challenge the model as it moves towards full implementation. The model highlights an integrated response: neighbourhood provision and basic command units (BCUs) have been aligned with local authority boundaries to maintain the connectivity which support local partnerships.

Collaboration

HMIC monitors forces' progress on collaboration because it offers the opportunity to provide efficient, effective policing and help achieve savings.

Avon and Somerset has been at the forefront of collaboration and partnering and the Southwest One joint venture is unique in policing. The venture which launched in March 2008 is a strategic partnership between the constabulary, two local authorities in Somerset and IBM. Its vision was to provide world class technology, transforming services both internally and externally. The venture was primarily focused on the back office with savings to be realised through doing more with less people. Procurement for South West One has identified £17m of agreed savings through the life of the contract to date. The venture is due to end during the year 2017/18 and the constabulary is currently mapping out the services it provides before a full options review takes place.

Avon and Somerset is part of a four force regional collaboration led by Dorset Police that is shortly to join forensic services and facilities. There is also a regional organised crime unit (ROCU) arrangement between the same forces that is well developed and has improved efficiency as well as reducing costs with a current saving of £693k. It is also party to a

tri-force collaboration (Avon and Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire) for specialist operations that went live in April 2014 and to which is, date operating efficiently.

In 2014/15 the constabulary expects to spend 16 percent of its net revenue expenditure on collaboration, which is slightly higher than the 11 percent for England and Wales. Collaboration is expected to contribute to 3 percent of the constabulary's savings requirement, which is lower than the 10 percent for England and Wales.

Managing change

Reductions in police budgets have led to a shrinking workforce. HMIC expects forces to look at longer-term transformation which can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and help prepare for future funding reductions.

Avon and Somerset's overarching change programme 'Aspire' has been in place since 2013; more recently consolidating its change projects together using external expertise, sophisticated analysis and demand modelling with a view to reshaping the organisation. It is integrated, cohesive and well-managed. The vision of Aspire is to ensure processes, people, culture and systems are in place to keep the constabulary's promise – themes drawn from public consultation on what matters; mission – to make the communities of Avon and Somerset be safe and feel safe; and vision – the communities of Avon and Somerset to have the highest levels of confidence in the provision of police services.

There is clear evidence that the constabulary has used business improvement methodology such as process mappings and the application of lean principles with the change programme which has been used to inform the new operating model. The change team has increased its capacity and has employed an external consultant who specialises in change management. This development has brought rigour around its approach, provided an external critique and has seen the transfer of new 'change management skills' to existing staff.

Avon and Somerset has also looked to other forces within the region in the development and design of the new operating model, exploring different options. There has also been consultation from the College of Policing and external advice in relation to complex change and transformation, ensuring that business improvement methodologies are embedded in the change process.

The change programme, led by a chief superintendent, is extensive and affects virtually every part of the constabulary, including; estates, ways of working, roles, responsibilities and basic structure. Strong governance and consultation has taken place throughout this period and there is evidence of the effective management of the different parts of the projects.

The constabulary identified that the main elements of its change programme during the current spending review are:

- improving the way operational support is undertaken;
- changing the way business support such as human resources and finance are achieved;
- protective services;
- better alignment of resources to demand; and
- using IT to streamline processes and reduce bureaucracy.

The constabulary identifies that the main elements of its change programme as it responds to future financial pressures will include:

- collaboration with other forces;
- estate rationalisation;
- improved IT to support policing and support functions;
- use of mobile technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of staff; and
- the use of predictive technology to identify key crime locations.

How is the constabulary supporting its workforce to manage change and effective service provision?

Avon and Somerset has recognised the need for cultural change to support the implementation of the new operating model and this was evidenced by the recent appointment of a superintendent as the lead for 'cultural change'. The first stage of this programme is to understand the current position through staff surveys, bespoke focus groups, and stakeholder and public engagement. This recent appointment will be embedded within the change programme governance structure and feed in the information gathered from the various groups and surveys.

The constabulary has also carried out extensive consultation with staff around the new operating model implementation. 'Invent the future' was an example of an initiative where the change team spent two days from 6.00am until midnight in each local policing area, consulting staff on potential efficiency gains and increasing general awareness of the change programme. It has been creative in gathering staff opinion through virtual opportunities to 'make decisions as the chief constable' and canvassing opinion on inefficient practices through "invitation to disposal into 'room 101'." Interactive seminars have also been held, inviting comment and consultation on all aspects of the operating model changes.

The constabulary also captures the views of staff in the more traditional ways, for example through staff associations and annual surveys. The widespread consultation was evidenced by cross-sectional feedback received by HMIC that staff felt engaged and informed in the change programme at all levels. Strong relationships were also apparent with partners being consulted at critical junctures; the constabulary is keen to emphasise the elements of change and implications as to how they affect them.

How is the constabulary achieving the savings?

Because around 80 percent of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs, it is not surprising that forces across England and Wales, plan to achieve most of their savings by reducing the number of police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) and police staff employed.

However, we do expect forces to also bear down on their other costs (non-pay) such as the equipment they buy, the accommodation and vehicles they use and the contracts they enter for services such as cleaning. The constabulary plans to make 21 percent of its savings from non-pay; this is lower than the 29 percent figure for England and Wales.

Avon and Somerset has actively borne down on non-pay costs in the context of its approach to budgetary control and achieving cost reduction. While it is not an explicit separate work programme; targets are set across functions so that they aspire to be as efficient as the best performing forces. Some specific savings in this area have already been achieved the Southwest One collaboration which has identified £17m of agreed procurement savings. This exceeds the £15m target required over the contract life.

The constabulary has assessed that the estates strategy requires a 30 percent reduction in the cost of the estate by 2017/18. The intention is to build on established collaborations and co-location initiatives with further collaborations and where feasible, integrated services. A scoping exercise has already taken place mapping all stakeholders' different estate sites and needs.

As with other forces most of the savings comes from reducing the workforce. Avon and Somerset Constabulary made an early start on this in 2010 when it slowed its recruitment of new police officers and police staff, and reduced the number of police staff. The constabulary plans to make 79 percent of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is higher than the figure for England and Wales.

The following table shows the constabulary’s planned changes to workforce numbers over the spending review period, and compares these to the change for England and Wales.

Please note, these figures are rounded.

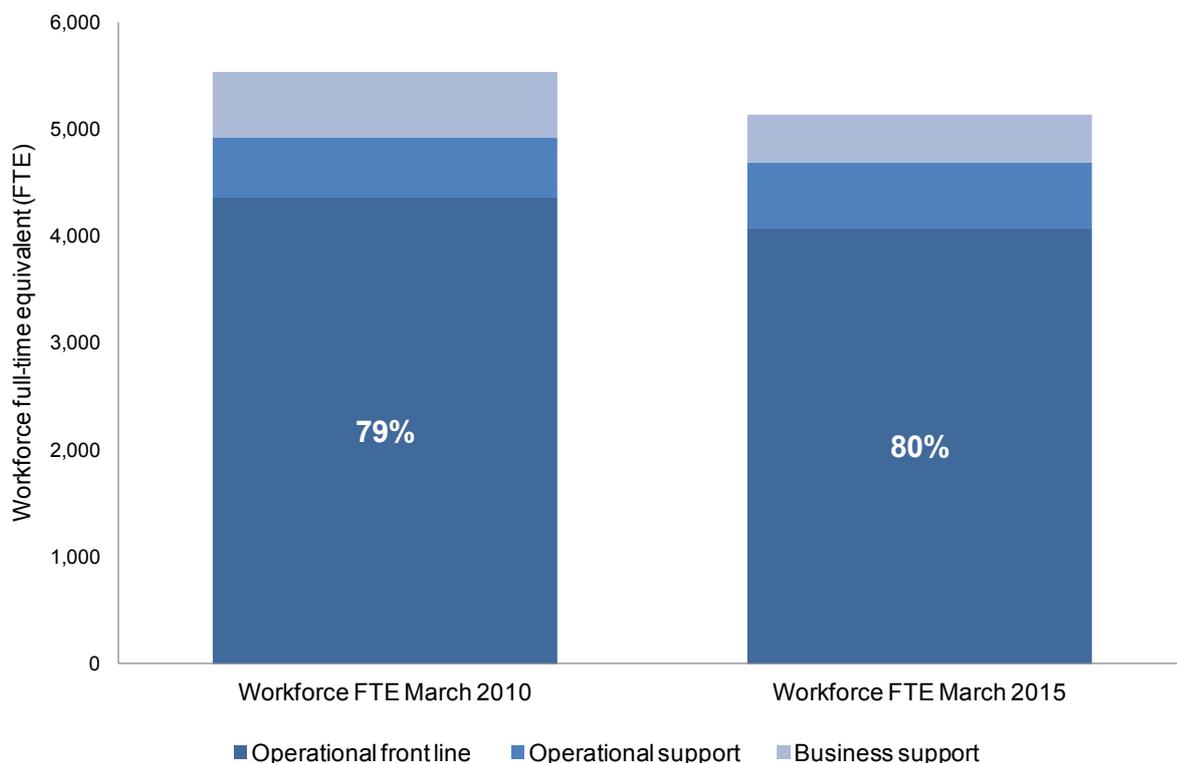
	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Constabulary change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police officers	3,302	2,791	-511	-15%	-11%
Police staff	1,871	1,981	110	6%	-17%
PCSOs	430	363	-67	-16%	-22%
Total	5,603	5,135	-468	-8%	-14%
Specials	449	572	123	27%	44%

Over the spending review Avon and Somerset Constabulary plans to lose a smaller proportion of its workforce than other forces. It plans to lose a greater proportion of police officers but a smaller proportion of police staff and PCSOs.

It is important that as forces reconfigure their structures and reduce workforce numbers, they focus on maintaining (or if possible increasing) the proportion of people in frontline crime-fighting roles.

HMIC defines the people who work on the police front line as those who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law.

The following chart shows the planned change in the workforce frontline profile in Avon and Somerset Constabulary.



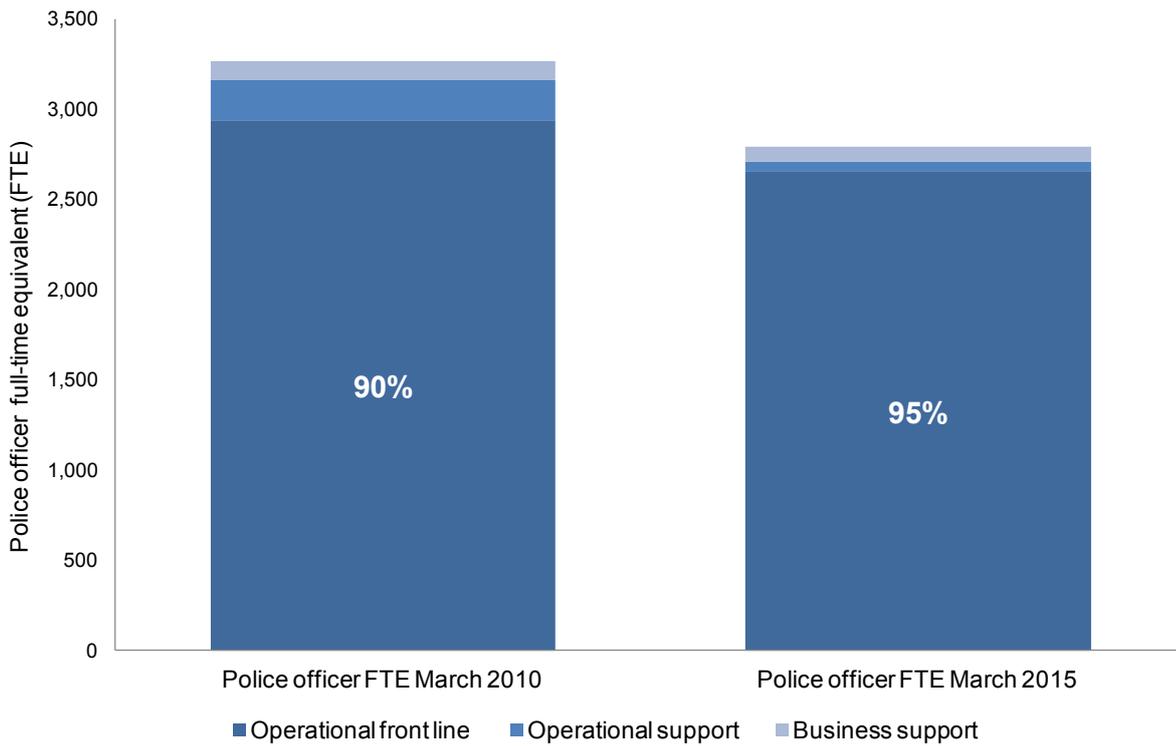
Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of workforce on the front line from 74 percent in March 2010 to 78 percent in March 2015.

The number of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e., of the constabulary's total workforce) working on Avon and Somerset's front line is projected to reduce by 6.0 percent between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 4,366 to 4,084).

Over the same period, the proportion of Avon and Somerset's total workforce allocated to frontline roles is projected to increase from 79.0 percent to 80.0 percent. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74 percent to 78 percent.

The number of Avon and Somerset's police officers in frontline roles is planned to reduce by 10.0 percent from 2,937 in March 2010 to 2,651 by March 2015, as the following chart shows. The proportion of those remaining on the front line is projected to increase from 90 percent to 95 percent. This compares well to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89 percent to 92 percent and shows Avon and Somerset Constabulary is successfully protecting frontline crime-fighting roles as it makes these cuts.

The following chart shows the planned change in police officers' frontline profile.



Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of police officers on the front line from 89 percent in March 2010 to 92 percent in March 2015.

Summary



Good

- The constabulary has an established change management programme in place which is integrated, cohesive and well managed.
- Avon and Somerset has been at the forefront of collaboration with the Southwest One initiative, a joint venture with the local authority and IBM. It is also engaged in developing wider police collaborations in the region.
- The constabulary has actively borne down on non-pay costs with savings from procurement and estates.
- A comprehensive engagement and communication programme is in place which uses a mix of innovative and tradition methods.
- Over the spending review the constabulary plans to lose a smaller proportion of its workforce than other forces in England and Wales. The proportion of its workforce and police officers in key crime-fighting roles are planned to increase over this period and will be higher than the figure for England and Wales.

To what extent is the constabulary efficient?

HMIC looks at how the constabulary understands the demands that it faces and how it allocates both financial resources and staff to meet these demands. We look at how these decisions are leading to effective results for the public; in particular, that police are visible and that they attend promptly when called, that they are fighting crime and keeping communities safe, and that victims are satisfied with the service they receive.

How well does the constabulary understand and manage demand?

Avon and Somerset has been regularly reviewing its demand and resource profiles and since 2013 has undertaken a comprehensive overarching review process, 'The Constabulary Review'. The constabulary has undertaken a systematic and comprehensive assessment of demand, drawing on data from operations 'check' and 'census', utilising consultancy and demand analysis modelling as well as other tools.

Operation check was a 24 hour analysis of all calls for service in August 2013 to understand the source of the demand. This approach identified every demand received from the public and partners. These were then validated against three previous years' comparable data. Each piece of demand was analysed to understand the full impact from the end-to-end process, measuring the time and appropriate resource needed to complete it. The process also identified 'demand failure' (self-generated demand); the additional work required when the task is not completed properly at the first opportunity, either because suitable resources were not available or processes were inadequate. 'Waste demand' was also measured; work that could be better dealt with by a more appropriate partner agency. The result was a significant investment in what the constabulary describe as their 'as is' position and an evidence-base to build their new 'to be' targeted operating model.

Operation census was carried out at the same time as operation check; examining police resources against the demand profile. In addition the constabulary conducted further analysis to understand areas of greatest demand, people (offenders and victims; including risk and vulnerability factors) and places, where the sites of largest geographical demand were; cross-checked with social information from partners. Partners have been consulted and engaged with each development of the new model. This included an external challenge panel, engagement with the College of Policing, Business West, voluntary sector, local authorities, and the Crown Prosecution Service.

This is one of the more detailed, comprehensive and rigorous approaches to demand modelling that HMIC saw during this national inspection of all forces. It has provided a robust empirical evidence base to inform the constabulary's new target operating model. Together with key stakeholder engagement, practitioner involvement, critical evaluation and validation, Avon and Somerset has developed a new operating model that will align resources against demand including threat, harm and risk. There is a clear understanding of

critical roles in the constabulary, supported by quarterly succession planning structures, built into the new operating model.

How efficiently does the constabulary allocate its resources?

With its change programme, the constabulary has sought to manage and reduce demand both strategically and tactically, for example the top ten calls for demand for each local policing area (LPA) are provided to commanders for their action through problem solving or other intervention.

In the last year, Avon and Somerset has adopted the IT predictive demand modeller (developed by IBM); a sophisticated predictive demand analysis tool that assesses demand; identifies risk and required interventions at constabulary, local and individual level; mapped against resources. The analytical model was piloted during the latter part of 2013 looking at anti-social behaviour in south Bristol. The model is now being extended to develop similar models for priority crime types building on the emerging evaluation from the pilot. The constabulary is working with the University of the West of England to refine the tool and build future capability to more dynamically align resources to smarter deployments, enable better resource utilisation, and create the potential to release capacity and thus further savings.

The constabulary recognise that its current IT infrastructure and capability are not fit for purpose to support the new operating model, albeit that they currently have effective systems and have been innovative to date, for example introducing mobile technology in vehicles. The recognition of a new approach concentrates on the potential of technology to support the new operating model, enable staff to be more efficient and effective and achieve the vision of the PCC and chief constable. The new IT strategy, critically reviewed externally, sets out a four year blueprint to realise these ambitions based on the themes of servicing the public, efficient IT provision, integrated solutions, collaboration, predictive insight and mobility. The investment from reserves to fund this work will achieve both direct and indirect savings over future years as well as enhancing operational effectiveness.

How does the constabulary respond and keep its communities safe?

The challenge for forces is not just to save money and reduce their workforce numbers, but also to ensure the choices they make do not have a negative impact on the service they provide to their communities. HMIC looked for evidence that keeping the communities safe is at the heart of the constabulary's decision.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether Avon and Somerset was taking longer to respond to calls for help, as a result of its workforce reductions and other changes designed to save money. Forces are not required to set response times or targets and are free to determine their own arrangements for monitoring attendance to calls, so information between forces is not comparable.

We found that over the four years since 2010, Avon and Somerset had maintained the same target response times of 15 minutes for calls classed as ‘emergency’ (also known as Grade 1) in an urban setting; and within 20 minutes for calls classed as ‘emergency’ in a rural setting. Over the same period, calls classed as a ‘priority’ (also known as Grade 2) had a target response time of within 60 minutes.

The following table compares the constabulary’s performance in 2010/11 to 2013/14.

Calls for service	2010/11	2013/14
Percentage of urban emergency calls on target	93.0	87.7
Percentage of rural emergency calls on target	88.0	83.3
Percentage of priority calls on target	77.0	68.7

Over the spending review, attendance within target for both emergency and for priority calls has declined.

Visibility

The work done by police officers and staff in visible roles (such as officers who respond to 999 calls, deal with serious road traffic collisions or patrol in neighbourhoods) represents only a part of the policing picture. Chief constables need to allocate resources to many other functions in order to protect the public, such as counter terrorism, serious and organised crime, and child protection (to name just three).

That being said, research shows that the public value seeing visible police officers on patrol in the streets, and that those who see police in uniform at least once a week are more likely to have confidence in their local constabulary. HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the constabulary had affected the visibility of the police in the Avon and Somerset area.

In 2014, Avon and Somerset Constabulary allocated 59 percent of its police officers to visible roles. This is 6 percentage points lower than the number allocated in 2010, but is higher than the figure for England and Wales which was 56 percent.

Police visibility is further enhanced by PCSOs, who principally support community policing. Looking at the proportion of police officers and PCSOs, Avon and Somerset Constabulary allocated 63 percent to visible roles. This is 6.1 percentage points lower than it allocated in 2010, but higher than the 60 percent figure for England and Wales.

HMIC conducted a survey¹ of the public across England and Wales to assess whether the public had noticed any difference in the way their area is being policed. Of those people surveyed, in Avon and Somerset 5 percent said that they have seen a police officer more often than they had 12 months ago; this compares to 12 percent of respondents in England and Wales.

Furthermore, 89 percent of respondents in Avon and Somerset said they felt safe from crime where they lived, compared to 84 percent of respondents in England and Wales. Finally, 9 percent of respondents in Avon and Somerset said they felt safer from crime than they did two years ago, compared to 9 percent of respondents in England and Wales.

Crime

In 2010, the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to reduce crime. Between 2010/11 and 2013/14 (the first three years of the spending review), Avon and Somerset Constabulary reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 17 percent, compared with 14 percent in England and Wales. Over this period, victim-based crime (that is, crimes where there is a direct victim – an individual, a group, or an organisation) reduced by 18 percent, compared with 14 percent in England and Wales.

Looking at the last 12 months, recorded crime (excluding fraud) fell by 1 percent, which is broadly in line with the figure England and Wales.

By looking at how many crimes occur per head of population, we can get an indication of how safe it is for the public in that police area.

¹ Sample sizes for each force were chosen to produce a confidence interval of no more than ± 6 percent and for England and Wales, no more than ± 1 percent. Forces' differences to the England and Wales value may not be statistically significant.

The table below shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Avon and Somerset (per head of population) compared with the rest of England and Wales. Overall, crime levels in Avon and Somerset remain below the figures for England and Wales, although anti-social behaviour incidents are marginally higher.

12 months to March 2014	Rate per 1,000 population	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
Crimes (excluding fraud)	60.0	61.1
Victim-based crime	51.3	54.3
Sexual offences	1.2	1.1
Burglary	6.3	7.8
Violence against the person	10.5	11.1
ASB incidents	40.1	37.2

It is important that crimes are investigated effectively and the perpetrator brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to identify who has committed a crime, it can be described as detected. Avon and Somerset’s detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2014 was 29 percent. This is higher than the detection rate for England and Wales of 26 percent.

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in the Avon and Somerset Constabulary area. For information on the frequency of other kinds of crimes in your area, go to www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator.

Victim satisfaction surveys

An important measure of the impact of changes to service provision for the public is how satisfied victims are with the overall service they receive when they seek police assistance.

In the 12 months to March 2014, 88.6 percent (± 1.2 percent) of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Avon and Somerset Constabulary. This is higher than the England and Wales figure which is 85.2 percent (± 0.2 percent).

Changes to how the public can access services

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services. Over the period of the saving review, Avon and Somerset is planning to shut a number of front counters and police stations but will open new shared access points with other partner organisations.

It is also making more use of the internet and social media to communicate with the public and developing different mechanisms for the public to contact the police.

Summary

Outstanding

- The constabulary has undertaken a systematic, comprehensive and rigorous assessment of demand that has provided an empirical evidence base to inform the new operating model. This was one of the most detailed and wide ranging approaches to understanding demand and has provided Avon and Somerset with a robust basis to develop an affordable and sustainable structure for the provision of policing services.
- The new operating model will align resources against demand, threat, risk and harm.
- A new comprehensive ICT strategy will both realise savings and enhance effectiveness.
- Over the spending review crime has reduced at a higher rate than in England and Wales. Over the last year victim satisfaction is above the figure for England and Wales.

Our judgments

HMIC uses four categories for making judgments, two are positive and two are negative. The categories are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Judgment is made against how well the constabulary achieves value for money, it is not an assessment of the overall effectiveness of policing. In applying the categories HMIC considers whether:

- the way the constabulary is achieving value for money is good, or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged as outstanding;
- the constabulary requires improvement in the way it achieves value for money, and/or there are some weaknesses; or
- the constabulary's provision of value for money is inadequate because it is considerably lower than is expected.