



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Responding to austerity

Cumbria Constabulary

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How well does the constabulary provide value for money?

Overall judgment

Cumbria Constabulary is achieving the required savings today while planning for the future. The constabulary has performed well in the first three years of the spending review – achieving savings, protecting the front line and maintaining high levels of satisfaction.

Good

Summary

Cumbria Constabulary has clear plans not only to meet its financial challenge for the spending review period but also for the year after (2015/16). Importantly, the constabulary is already looking beyond this period and has developed plans, which it will refine, to achieve the savings required over the next four years. Although the constabulary has access to a healthy level of reserves, it has identified a significant risk in the future from potential changes to central funding; this risk is reflected in the level of the reserves it plans to retain over this period.

Overall, the constabulary has performed well in the first three years of the spending review. It has achieved savings while increasing the proportion of the workforce allocated to frontline roles and maintaining high levels of victim satisfaction in the services it provides.

The investment that the constabulary has made to improve its understanding of demand gives it the opportunity to become more efficient. The continuous improvements made through its robust change programme mean the constabulary is well placed to develop further a sustainable and affordable way of providing community policing in Cumbria. HMIC was reassured by Cumbria's coherent business plan and by the leadership's determination to make further improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of the constabulary's workforce and assets.

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

Good

Cumbria Constabulary has clear plans to achieve savings in 2014/15 and to achieve the £16.6m savings required over the spending review period.

It is on course to achieve further savings of £3.5m in 2015/16.

The constabulary has identified it needs to save £13.1m by 2017/18, and has already developed outline plans that it will review and refine over the next two years.

The constabulary has access to reserves to invest in building a sustainable and affordable policing structure for the future.

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

Good

Cumbria Constabulary's workforce structure matches the needs of the organisation to date. More of the workforce is on the front line.

The constabulary has a coherent change programme mapped out. This provides it with a clear projection of the resources required to support its future policing needs while achieving savings.

The constabulary may be able to realise additional savings and operational benefits from collaborative opportunities over the next four years.

The constabulary has achieved approximately 22% of its savings by reducing its non-pay costs, although these are still comparatively high.

To what extent is the constabulary efficient?

Good

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, recorded crime has reduced but at a lower rate than in England and Wales. Over the last year victim satisfaction in the constabulary is above the figure for England and Wales.

The constabulary in numbers



Financial position

The constabulary's savings requirement

Requirement Gap

£16.6m

£0.0m



Providing policing

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

Cumbria England and Wales

-8%

-11%

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

Cumbria England and Wales

-14%

-14%

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

Cumbria England and Wales

+3.7

+3.0

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

Cumbria England and Wales

+5.0

+3.7



Efficiency

Police officer cost per head of population
2013/14

Cumbria	England and Wales
£117.3	£117.7

Workforce cost per head of population
2013/14

Cumbria	England and Wales
£164.0	£168.1

Change in recorded crime
2010/11 – 2013/14

Cumbria	England and Wales
-10%	-14%

Victim satisfaction 2013/14*

Cumbria	England and Wales
89.4%	85.2%

*Confidence intervals: $\pm 2.6\%$ for Cumbria; $\pm 0.2\%$ 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 Cumbria 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

Cumbria Constabulary has identified that it needs to save £16.6m 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 15 percent is lower than the value for England and Wales, but HMIC considers that Cumbria Constabulary still faces a challenge. In 2013/14 it attracted a slightly higher central funding contribution but local funding is broadly in line with other forces, which means that central funding cuts can have more of an impact compared to other forces.

The scale of the challenge

Cumbria Constabulary does face some challenges in finding efficiencies as it covers a large geographical and often remote area, with communities dispersed throughout. Additional demand on policing comes from a large influx of tourists all year but especially during the summer months. As a force with a small population, direct comparison with other forces will tend to show Cumbria's expenditure per head of population as higher. Nonetheless, it is important that the constabulary looks for further efficiencies to achieve savings and reduce costs. There may be some scope for Cumbria to do so because:

- the spend per head of population on policing is higher than in most other forces in England and Wales;
- the constabulary has higher numbers of police officers and police staff, including police community support officers (PCSOs), per head of population than most other forces in England and Wales; and
- it has non-workforce costs that are higher than in most other forces in England and Wales.

Savings plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16

The constabulary has a good record of achieving savings and in 2013/14 it achieved £3.8m of planned savings. In addition, it underspent by £3.1m, mainly by holding workforce vacancies. This underspend has been transferred to reserves to ensure the long-term sustainability of the constabulary.

Since achieving 93 percent of required savings over the first three years, the constabulary has made good progress and has detailed plans to achieve savings in 2014/15 by streamlining management processes and cutting overtime costs further. Based on prudent assumptions, the savings requirement for 2015/16 is £3.5m and there is a robust change programme plan that sets out in detail how these savings will be achieved.

The savings plans to 2016 prioritise expenditure on the objectives set out in the police and crime commissioner's (PCC) police and crime plan, and the constabulary is taking necessary action to mitigate any risks to meeting the priorities over this period.

Outlook for 2016 and beyond

Based on a prudent set of assumptions about likely grant reductions, cost and precept increases, Cumbria Constabulary has identified that it needs to make savings of £10.4m over the four years to 2017/18.

The constabulary has developed its savings plans to 2017/18, which it will continue to review and refine over the next two years. These savings plans will be informed by the findings of the review of demand that the constabulary has completed and the investment it will make in the next two years. The way that policing will be provided in the future is being developed to be fit for purpose for beyond 2018. This includes having the necessary flexibility to adapt to potential further austerity while meeting the needs of the public, based on assessments of threat, harm and risk.

The PCC and the constabulary have a healthy level of reserves and plans to invest them in IT and training and leadership to implement its change programme. The scenario planning that the constabulary has done is informed by the risks facing the organisation over the next four years. In particular, the potential impact of a change in the Government's policy for allocating funding to police forces could significantly reduce the level of central funding the constabulary receives. The reserves have been increased to reflect this risk; however, the plans rely on any adverse impact being introduced over an extended period. The constabulary recognises that it will need to keep reviewing this assumption.

The change programme plans currently under development aim to achieve the savings planned up to 2017/18 without using reserves to bridge any funding gap. If achieved, this places the constabulary in a strong position to manage the risk of a change in the funding allocation policy without having an adverse impact on the policing service provided to the public over the four years to 2017/18.

Summary



Good

- Cumbria Constabulary has clear plans to achieve savings in 2014/15 and to achieve the £16.6m savings required over the spending review period.
- It is on course to achieve further savings of £3.5m in 2015/16 while prioritising spend on the PCC's priorities, as set out in the police and crime plan.
- The constabulary has identified it needs to save £10.4m by 2017/18 and has already developed outline plans that it will review and refine over the next two years.
- The constabulary has access to reserves to invest in building a sustainable and affordable policing structure for the future.
- However, a change in government policy for allocating funding potentially could result in a significant funding cut. Should this occur, the constabulary's ability to achieve savings without using reserves will reduce the long-term impact this could have on the service it provides to the public.

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 its 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 way the constabulary currently works and polices Cumbria has supported the successful achievement of savings that will meet the requirements during the spending review period.

Community policing is the cornerstone of Cumbria Constabulary's service. Over the spending review period the constabulary has protected its frontline strength, whenever possible. Although the constabulary plans result in a reduction of police officers over the spending review period, only a small number of these are frontline roles. The constabulary has increased the proportion of the workforce in frontline roles over the period by making most of its savings from business support functions.

Currently, local policing is provided across three territorial policing areas: North, West and South. The constabulary has recently restructured its neighbourhood policing teams by reducing them from 21 to 10 (four North, three South, three West) and from five areas of command to two (crime and territorial), each headed by a chief superintendent. While considering the financial challenge, this restructure has been planned against an assessment of threat, risk and harm, and consultation with the public has taken place through annual surveys. No key issues have been raised from the public or partner agencies, and victim satisfaction remains high. The new structure aims for consistency across the whole large geographical area.

The command structure has also been changed, reducing the number of assistant chief constables and chief superintendents by half and the number of directors from seven to two.

While the way that policing currently is provided has served Cumbria well over the spending review period, the constabulary has undertaken a detailed review of the demands placed on local policing in light of the requirement to reduce costs and meet future saving requirements. It recognises that it will need to manage its resources in different ways. It has also reviewed the way that its infrastructure (IT, fleet and estates assets) can better support operational policing teams in the future.

Collaboration

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

Cumbria Constabulary is part of the North West Regional Organised Crime Unit collaboration. This results in a collective capability to tackle serious organised crime that crosses county borders within the region. The constabulary's most substantial police collaboration during the spending review period has been with Lancashire Constabulary. This provides learning and development opportunities to both forces. It is also achieving savings for the constabulary by benefiting from the economies of scale and sharing best practice.

Collaboration has been sought with a range of policing and partner agencies and the constabulary has identified a number of further opportunities. The potential benefits of collaboration with other public sector service providers in Cumbria are recognised by the constabulary. However, in exploring the opportunities in more detail, the constabulary has decided not to pursue them. Its savings strategy is to gain efficiency savings from internal reviews before further developing collaborative opportunities. A business case for any potential collaborative or partnering opportunity needs to demonstrate a return on investment, whether through additional savings or operational benefit. The constabulary has a range of examples where collaboration has not been pursued mainly because the business cases did not show the required level of return on investment.

The constabulary expects to spend 2 percent of its net revenue expenditure on collaboration, which is lower than the 11 percent figure for England and Wales. Collaboration is expected to contribute to 3 percent of the constabulary's savings requirement, which is below the 10 percent figure 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 plans that can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public, and prepare for future funding reductions.

Cumbria Constabulary has made substantial improvements to its workforce planning process by introducing more sophisticated profiling in 2013/14. By continuing its zero-based budgeting approach, it has balanced its budget in 2014/15, without using financial reserves to bridge the funding gap, and it has also met the PCC's commitment to maintain police officer numbers.

The constabulary has a robust mechanism to ensure that the current and projected

workforce model matches organisational and financial requirements. The individual plans and the single overall business plan clearly are linked. This overall business plan outlines the strategic requirements for change, setting out priority areas, and detailing the timeline for achievement of future savings and the PCC's objectives. Each part of the plan has a supportive implementation element such as the human resources workforce establishment report, which includes projections up to 2018 and identifies the mix and skills required in the workforce.

New business cases set out the benefits, costs and workforce implications. Evaluations are carried out after implementation to make sure that the original benefits described have been realised.

The constabulary already is doing some work on projections to the year 2020. These projections are aligned to financial forecasts and the constabulary's infrastructure strategies (IT, estates and fleet). The various initiatives planned until 2017/18 demonstrate a clear understanding of how the constabulary will evolve over time.

The constabulary has developed its own business improvement methodology, which has been applied to all reviews undertaken. This considers current demand and processes, and adopts an approach to reducing demand and improving efficiency. Peer assessment has been considered to help the constabulary understand if some operational areas need improvement, for example, the triage arrangements that are similar to a multi-agency safeguarding hub; these are to be assessed by Lancashire Constabulary.

Through a process of evolution, Cumbria Constabulary is ensuring that the reviews and changes being introduced will result in an affordable and sustainable way of providing community policing. A certain level of investment is required in its infrastructure to support the workforce in the future. It has an overarching plan that recognises the interdependencies, and these are timetabled to make sure they are implemented in a coordinated manner. The constabulary is to refine its change programme with the findings of the demand review it completed in March 2014. This should provide it with a more accurate projection of the workforce model it will require to meet both the financial and community policing demands for the long term.

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

- changing in business support across all business support functions;
- changes to local policing;
- shift pattern changes;
- use of business improvement methodologies;
- zero-based budgeting.

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

- improved call management;
- better alignment of resources to demand;
- use of business improvement methodologies;
- shift pattern changes;
- zero-based budgeting.

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

As part of the change programme, a training needs analysis is carried out for each review Cumbria Constabulary undertakes. This informs the learning and developmental requirements of the workforce.

The constabulary places great importance on attendance. Regular reports to senior officers and staff provide information on the current cost of sickness, detailing the number of hours lost for each function which is translated into the monetary cost. As a result of this work, the constabulary has seen a downward trend in the levels of sickness among both police officers and staff

Senior management and the leadership programme clearly recognise that engagement, communication and continuous improvement are essential to provide sustainable solutions. The constabulary has a family feel and the workforce is loyal to the organisation. Providing sustainable solutions is a priority for them. Although the workforce is informed about changes, the process of change and continuous improvement is largely implemented by the change team.

The constabulary's understanding of the culture of the workforce varies. Staff surveys are not conducted on a regular basis. There is no systematic use of either formal or informal channels of engagement. Without other sources of information to provide an evidence base for leadership development and staff welfare, there is a risk that the workforce will not take ownership of the changes required to provide policing more efficiently and effectively in the future.

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, PCSOs and police staff employed.

However, we also 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 negotiate for services (e.g. for cleaning). The constabulary plans to make 22 percent of its savings from non-pay over the spending review period. This is lower than the value for England and Wales.

Cumbria Constabulary has taken steps to reduce non-pay costs and has achieved savings in all non-pay areas. In 2013/14 this resulted in approximately £0.9m in savings. HMIC value-for-money profiles were used to benchmark costs. The profiles highlighted areas where the constabulary's costs were comparatively higher in order to target non-pay saving opportunities. The constabulary has also adopted a zero-based budgeting approach. This is an accounting tool that requires the constabulary to identify each function's objectives, and to develop options for their provision that are evaluated against costs and performance in order to set priorities. This approach is supported by chief officers and was used to prepare the 2014/15 budget.

Incorporated into the estates and fleet strategies are rationalisation programmes to manage the costs of high-value assets. For example, within the estates strategy, the constabulary has taken a whole-life view of costing for all assets using initial capital costs plus the whole-life maintenance cost and repair liability over the lifetime of the asset.

The constabulary has comparatively high non-pay costs compared with other forces in England and Wales. It may be able to reduce these further and gain economies of scale that have not been achieved to date.

As with other forces, most of the savings come from reducing the workforce. Cumbria Constabulary made an early start on this in 2010 when it slowed its recruitment of new police officers and police staff; it has since reduced the number of police staff.

The constabulary plans to make 78 percent of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is higher than in other forces.

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.

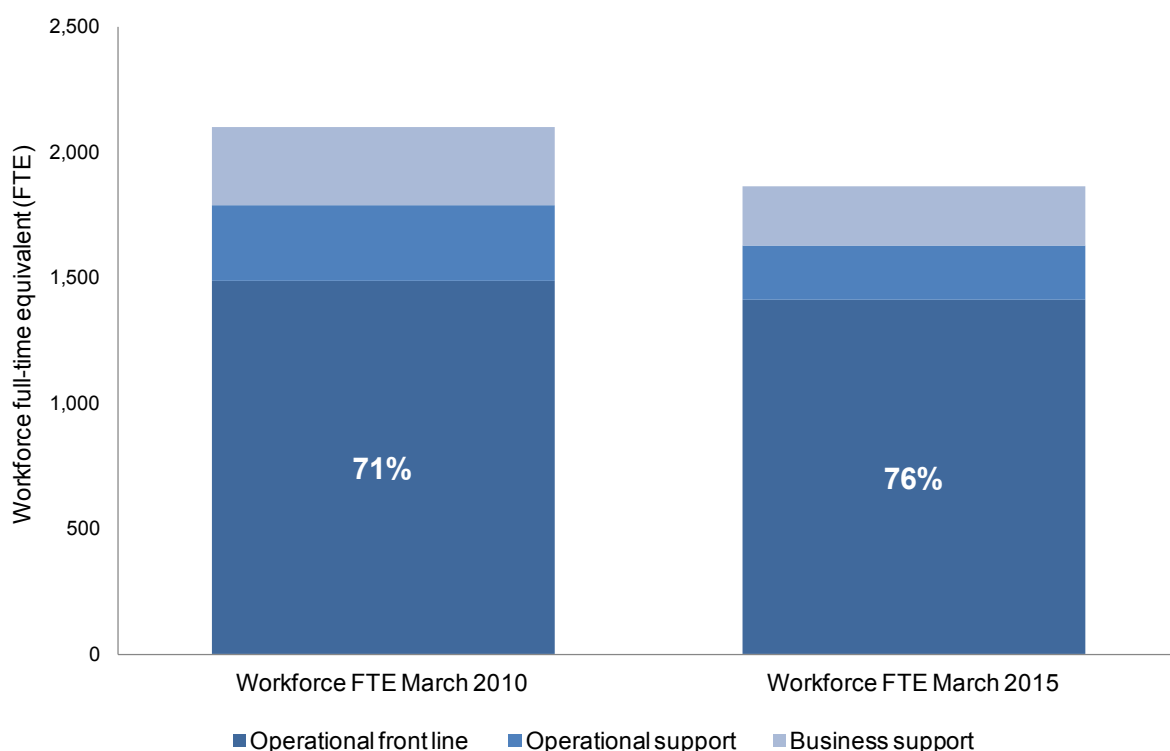
Please note, these figures are rounded.

	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Constabulary change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police officers	1,238	1,137	-101	-8%	-11%
Police staff	826	631	-195	-24%	-17%
PCSOs	111	95	-16	-15%	-22%
Total	2,175	1,863	-312	-14%	-14%
Specials	115	150	35	30%	44%

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 Cumbria Constabulary.



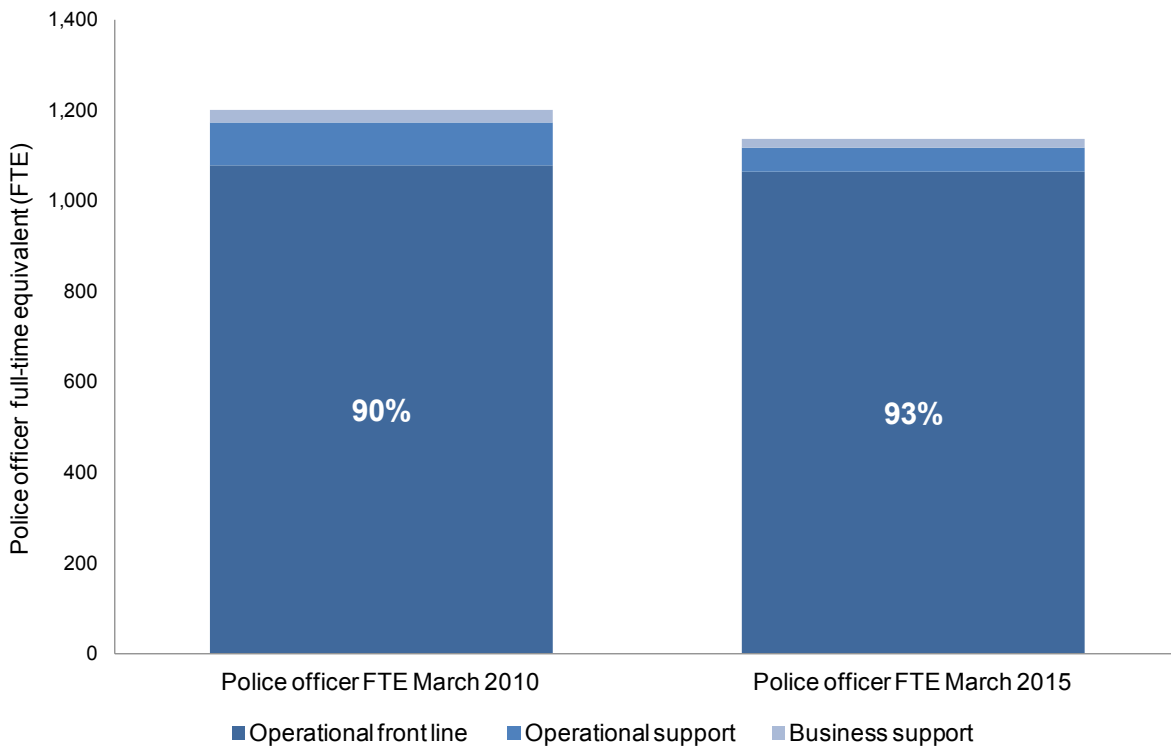
Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of workforce on the front line from 74 percent in March 2010 to 78 percent in March 2015.

The number of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the constabulary’s total workforce) working on the Cumbria Constabulary front line is projected to reduce by 74 between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 1,486 to 1,412).

Over the same period, the proportion of Cumbria Constabulary’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is projected to increase from 71 percent to 76 percent. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74 percent to 78 percent.

The number of Cumbria’s police officers in frontline roles is planned to reduce by 14 from 1,077 in March 2010 to 1,063 by March 2015, as the following chart shows. The proportion of those remaining on the front line is projected to increase from 90 per cent to 93 per cent. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89 percent to 92 percent and shows that Cumbria 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

- Cumbria Constabulary's workforce structure has successfully matched the needs of the organisation to date, increasing the proportion of the workforce allocated to frontline roles and meeting its savings requirement over the spending review period.
- To ensure that it can provide community policing services effectively in the future, the constabulary has a coherent change programme mapped out. Once refreshed with the demand review findings, this will provide the constabulary with a clear projection of the resources required to support its future policing needs while required future savings.
- The constabulary may be able to realise additional savings and operational benefits from collaborative opportunities over the next four years.
- The robust change programme, using business improvement tools, has driven efficiencies and savings, ensuring benefits are realised. The constabulary has focused savings primarily in support areas. This has resulted in a 24 percent reduction in police staff numbers with minimal reductions in officer numbers over the spending review period.
- The constabulary has achieved approximately 22 percent of its savings by reducing its non-pay costs, although these are still comparatively high. It has introduced a plans to identify further savings.
- Over the spending review period the constabulary plans to reduce the number of police officers by 8 percent which is a smaller reduction than for England and Wales. The planned proportion of officers working in frontline roles by March 2015 is 93 percent which is in line with the plans 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?

At a strategic level, Cumbria Constabulary has an annual planning cycle in place. This is informed by its organisational needs using demand, risk, threat and harm assessments. These are updated on a monthly basis and reviewed regularly.

Daily performance is managed through the daily management meeting in each territorial policing area. As well as reviewing previous actions, these meetings examine recorded crimes and priority crimes, such as missing and vulnerable persons and public protection issues, as well as the quality of service being provided to the public.

The constabulary assessed its overall demand by analysing a 12-month period ending in March 2014. This included a detailed assessment of all requests for, and responses to, calls for service, as well as community safety concerns, response to incidents, dealing with crime, case file preparation and demand from partner agencies. The assessment was comprehensive and captured data for internal, statutory and future demand.

The constabulary's demand management is becoming more sophisticated. As a result of the review of demand, it has identified that there is some inefficiency in the way it is currently providing policing. It has set out those areas where demand could be reduced. This includes a review of the growth in public safety issues where policing services are called upon as a last resort, rather than the appropriate services attending and dealing with the incident. Further improvements have been identified and are still to be agreed. As a result of the comprehensive information now available, the constabulary is reviewing its attendance policy. It is considering whether it can provide advice and guidance over the telephone for less serious incidents, such as low-level investigations, rather than sending an officer in person. Also, it is assessing the additional support that officers could provide to the centralised communication centre to maintain the quality of service,

The constabulary has recently renegotiated with the North West Regional Organised Crime Unit to reduce the level of resources it commits to meeting national demands. Overall, the total regional capability remains unchanged.

How efficiently does the constabulary allocate its resources?

The chief constable and the PCC have a commitment, which runs throughout the organisation, to maintain the style of community policing provided in Cumbria, as well as its ethos and structure. The constabulary's focus is on minimising the impact on frontline policing resources; to date it has reduced the number of management roles rather than frontline staff whenever possible. This means that the public has not seen a detrimental impact on the workforce allocated to community policing. The constabulary is considering whether it may be over-attending calls, and it is currently looking at whether or not its quality of service could actually be improved by reducing response times. For example, it could arrange a later convenient time to visit a caller about a less serious incident.

The recent establishment of the centralised communications centre, which the constabulary brought forward from its 2015 plans, is a positive step towards ensuring that there is sufficient capacity and capability for frontline support functions. The constabulary has identified that the centre is a critical area of business. In order to make the best use of officer time and to improve their response, the constabulary has decided it needs to change the constabulary culture from one of asking for available resources to attend incidents to one that is a 'command and control' culture. The structure of the new centre brings all communications staff into one close-working environment. This allows closer supervision and operators have access to a wider range of advice and guidance from experienced colleagues.

All reviews consider threat, harm and risk, and the crime command review the constabulary undertook highlighted that additional resources were required in public protection policing areas. Resources were reallocated accordingly. Similarly, roads policing units, armed response officers and territorial support groups were assimilated into the three territorial policing areas to increase the availability of officers in local areas. In addition, the constabulary has established a number of work streams throughout the organisation to look beyond incoming calls for service. Three dedicated problem-solvers work within each of the territorial policing areas looking at long-term problem-solving and preventive measures. Neighbourhood policing teams also prevent crime by working with colleagues from partner agencies, particularly to reduce anti-social behaviour. For example, one of the teams works with local care homes that manage children in the care of social services. By setting out expected standards of personal conduct and explaining what the police can do to protect them from harm, the teams have developed an arrangement that keeps young people safe. This has resulted in a reduction of calls to the police about anti-social behaviour in the area.

The introduction of restorative justice and community resolutions are successful initiatives that have reduced bureaucracy. These mean that the workforce is able to work more efficiently and use a degree of discretion.

The constabulary has developed a business plan that aims to make the IT provision more effective for operational staff. Setting out how staff can access constabulary IT on mobile systems (e.g. tablets and laptops). The plan to implement this has involved a consultation process with frontline officers. The constabulary has recognised that the provision must allow officers to work offline if it is to be fit for purpose now and in the future. Other opportunities that allow officers to work more efficiently have been identified, such as the use of webcams to take statements, which could then be fed into the court IT systems. This could reduce the workload for officers significantly. However, the IT systems are not currently integrated. This is creating additional work for officers and the systems do not support the front line efficiently. Addressing this is particularly important when reducing levels of support staff.

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.

Cumbria Constabulary has adopted a coherent performance framework, led by a chief officer, with regular conferences where the wider performance of the constabulary is examined. As well as the traditional crime and detection rates, the framework also focuses on how support departments contribute to performance and service provision.

On the front line, performance management is supported by meetings that take place every five weeks between supervisors and staff to discuss priorities and performance with a focus on achieving the goals set out in the police and crime plan.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether Cumbria Constabulary 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, Cumbria had maintained the same target response times of 10 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	94.0
Percentage of rural emergency calls on target	88.0	87.0
Percentage of priority calls on target	77.0	81.0

Over the spending review period, attendance for urban emergency and for priority calls has improved.

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 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 force. HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the constabulary had affected the visibility of the police in Cumbria.

In 2014, Cumbria Constabulary allocated 70 percent of its police officers to visible roles. This is 1.7 percentage points higher than the number allocated in 2010, and above the figure for most other forces (which was 56 percent across England and Wales).

Police visibility is further enhanced by PCSOs, who principally support community policing. Looking at the proportion of police officers and PCSOs, Cumbria Constabulary allocated 71 percent of these staff to visible roles in 2014. This is 0.9 percentage point higher than it allocated in 2010, but considerably 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

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.

public had noticed any difference in the way their area is being policed. Of those people surveyed in Cumbria, 7 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, 95 percent of respondents in Cumbria said they felt safe from crime where they lived, compared to 84 percent of respondents in England and Wales. Finally, 6 percent 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 (which includes the first three years of the spending review), Cumbria Constabulary reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 10 percent, compared with 14 per cent in England and Wales. Over this period, victim-based crime (i.e., crimes where there is a direct victim such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) reduced by 7 percent, compared with 14 per cent in England and Wales.

Looking just at the past 12 months, recorded crime (excluding fraud) rose by 5 percent, which is higher than the figure for England and Wales (a 1 percent reduction).

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. The table below shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Cumbria (per head of population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to March 2014	Rate per 1,000 population	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
Crimes (excluding fraud)	48.1	61.1
Victim-based crime	41.7	54.3
Sexual offences	0.8	1.1
Burglary	4.6	7.8
Violence against the person	10.5	11.1
ASB incidents	47.8	37.2

It is important that crimes are effectively investigated and that the perpetrator is identified and brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to identify who has committed a crime, it can be described as detected. Cumbria Constabulary's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2014 was 35 percent. This is above the England and Wales detection rate of 26 percent.

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in the Cumbria 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, 89.4 percent (\pm 2.6 percent) of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Cumbria Constabulary. This is higher than the England and Wales figure of 85.2 percent (\pm 0.2 percent).

Changes to how the public can access services

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services.

Keeping the public informed is important for preventive policing. In some communities, advising the public on the risks of leaving unsecured properties and vehicles is a continuing issue. To raise awareness among isolated rural communities, the Cumbria Constabulary community messaging service uses text message alerts to provide an early warning system to the public on developing crime issues.

The constabulary has retained its single shared access point in Carlisle. It has substantially reduced the number of police stations and front counters from 5 police stations and 21 front counters in 2010/11 to 1 police station and 11 front counters in 2013/14, after a front-counter review that was fully implemented in 2013/14. Future plans for the estates strategy show support for operational policing teams and includes the following: a new police station for South Cumbria; re-development of the headquarters site to provide a multi-agency centre; and exploring opportunities to increase shared accommodation to improve access to police services for the community.

The constabulary is currently developing its approach to engaging with the public. It is moving to a model of providing face-to-face services in public places, such as supermarkets and central locations for the population, rather than in police stations. It is also developing an online crime-reporting facility, although this is in the early stages of development. The aim of this change is to ensure that engagement with the public takes place in accordance with a consistent corporate standard. Social media is used to send messages to the public, such as at the annual Appleby Fair, an event attended by 30,000–40,000 members of the travelling community. It is also used as a marketing tool to support the management of community perceptions and for prevention work.

Summary



Good

- Cumbria Constabulary has an extensive understanding of its demands after it conducted a comprehensive review. It also has a good understanding of the risks it faces. The potential for harm and threats is assessed systematically.
- Resources are allocated to the constabulary's priorities and where the need is greatest. These assessments are embedded in the change programme reviews.
- As a result of the review of its demands, inefficiencies have been highlighted in the way policing currently is provided, and have been opportunities identified to manage demand actively.
- Community policing is the constabulary's priority. It increases the proportion of the workforce allocated to the front line and maintains consistently high levels of victim satisfaction with the service provided.

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.