



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Responding to austerity

Gloucestershire 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?	11
To what extent is the constabulary efficient?	20
Our judgments	26

How well does the constabulary provide value for money?

Overall judgment

Gloucestershire Constabulary will meet the financial challenge set out by the spending review. It is looking to the future so that it will be able to sustain its policing services in the face of further funding cuts.

Good

Summary

Gloucestershire Constabulary is not only on track to meet its financial challenge set out by the spending review period but also has plans in place to achieve further significant savings over the next two years, to March 2017.

Overall, the constabulary understands the issues that it is facing. It is developing new structures for providing policing that will align resources to demand and ensure a focus on frontline policing and crime-fighting activities. HMIC found that the constabulary is well managed and has a clear plan for the future.

While making savings, the constabulary has maintained a focus on fighting crime and has achieved a higher reduction in crime over the spending review than the figure for England and Wales. In addition, overall crime levels remain lower than elsewhere.

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?

Good

HMIC is confident that Gloucestershire Constabulary will reduce its spending and make the required savings by the end of the spending review period and that plans are in place to save a further £2.5m in 2015/16. It is also planning further ahead, and has plans in place to achieve another £6.8m of anticipated savings in 2016/17.

The constabulary already has a strong track record of achieving the savings it planned to make and has strong financial management.

The constabulary is developing plans to change the way it is structured to enable it to cope with further cuts and continue to provide effective policing.

Good

The constabulary has already made significant savings from changing the way it manages policing; particularly from reducing the costs of support services. It has worked hard to limit the cuts to jobs and find savings from non-pay areas.

It has reviewed its current organisation and is implementing a new way of providing policing that will enable it to continue to tackle priorities with fewer resources, as well as coping with further budget cuts in the future.

The constabulary has worked well to collaborate with neighbouring Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Wiltshire Police. The joint policing operations are set to achieve savings and provide a better service in Gloucestershire.

Good

When the spending review started Gloucestershire Constabulary was already being run efficiently and with comparatively low costs. It has continued to make cuts to its spending.

The constabulary is in the process of carrying out a detailed review of all of its demand. The results of the demand and resourcing analysis will inform the new structure being implemented. Enabling it to achieve its entire savings requirement and protect frontline policing and crime fighting.

The constabulary has seen a bigger overall reduction in crime over this period than the figure for England and Wales, although over the last 12 months the rate of reduction has slowed, and victim satisfaction remains below that of England and Wales.

The constabulary in numbers



Financial position

The force's savings requirement

Requirement Gap

£19.8m

£0.0m



Providing policing

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

Gloucestershire England and Wales

-10%

-11%

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

Gloucestershire England and Wales

-14%

-14%

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

Gloucestershire England and Wales

+1.0

+3.0

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

Gloucestershire England and Wales

+2.4

+3.7



Efficiency

Police officer cost per head of population
2013/14

Gloucestershire

England and Wales

£98.6

£117.7

Workforce cost per head of population
2013/14

Gloucestershire

England and Wales

£137.9

£168.1

Change in recorded crime
2010/11 – 2013/14

Gloucestershire

England and Wales

-17%

-14%

Victim satisfaction 2013/14*

Gloucestershire

England and Wales

82.4%

85.2%

*Confidence intervals: $\pm 1.7\%$ for Gloucestershire; $\pm 0.2\%$ 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 Gloucestershire 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

Gloucestershire Constabulary has identified that it needs to save £19.8m 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 16 percent is lower than the 18 percent figure for England and Wales.

The scale of the challenge

Gloucestershire's savings requirement is lower than elsewhere and HMIC considers that it faces a moderate challenge. However, as a small constabulary it does not have the benefits of economies of scale and, as a low-cost constabulary, it has fewer opportunities to make further efficiencies. This is because:

- it spends less per head of population than most other forces in England and Wales;
- the number of police officers is broadly in line with the figure for England and Wales and the number of police staff per head of population is lower than most other forces in England and Wales; and
- the cost of police staff (including PCSOs) per head of population is lower than most other forces in England and Wales.

Savings plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16

For 2013/14, Gloucestershire Constabulary exceeded its savings target of £5.1m, as some plans achieved savings ahead of schedule. The constabulary has clear plans in place to achieve all of the savings needed in 2014/15 (£2.8m) and 2015/16 (£2.5m).

Outlook for 2016 and beyond

Gloucestershire Constabulary has made some predictions about future savings that will be required through to 2017/18, based on prudent assumptions about likely grant reductions, cost increases and precept increases. It estimates that it will need to make a further £6.8m savings in 2016/17 and it already has plans in place to make these savings.

The constabulary's approach for the future is to introduce a new way of structuring policing. It is in the process of carrying out a comprehensive organisational review which will result in a new operating model. The constabulary is, at the same time, looking at redesigning the back office services to support the new model. The PCC has taken a decision to increase the amount of money held in the police general reserve to provide for the uncertainty on the savings needed beyond 2016/17.

Summary



Good

- HMIC has confidence that Gloucestershire Constabulary will reduce its spending by the required amount to the end of the spending review period and has plans in place to save a further £2.5m in 2015/16. It is also planning ahead and has plans in place to achieve another £6.8m of anticipated savings in 2016/17.
- The constabulary already has a strong track record of achieving the savings it has planned to make and it has strong financial management.
- The constabulary is developing plans to change the way it is structured to enable it to cope with further cuts and continue to provide effective policing.

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

Gloucestershire Constabulary is a relatively small constabulary covering a compact geographical area. It has already moved to a single constabulary-wide policing structure split with neighbourhood resources into six local policing areas (LPAs), aligned to local authority boundaries, with response and specialist units support at the centre. The constabulary is in the process of redesigning and implementing a new policing structure. It is still retaining the efficiency benefits of the existing structure and creating response 'hubs'. These are designed to ensure quicker and more effective deployment of police officers to incidents, through a 'borderless' approach, which will ensure that the nearest available and most appropriate resource can be used to respond to an incident.

Over the spending review period, the constabulary will have achieved the majority of its savings through a reduction in staffing. The constabulary was already operating efficiently; it has fewer officers per head of population and spends less on policing than the figure for England and Wales. However, it recognised that continuing reductions in its budget meant that it needed to find ways of operating effectively with reducing resources. It has carried out a comprehensive review of policing and developed a model which will make the best use of its decreasing police officer and staff numbers and, in addition, will be capable of coping with further future reductions as necessary. The constabulary expects to find the majority of its future savings through to 2017 from implementing this new operating model.

Collaboration

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

The constabulary has a number of collaboration arrangements predominantly with forces in the south west region.

The constabulary is working constructively in a tri-force collaboration with Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Wiltshire Police, to carry out jointly specialist operations including cross-border patrol and response to firearms incidents, roads policing and use of police dogs. There is a single head of tri-force operations funded by all three forces on a proportionate basis. The aim is to provide borderless specialist operations that achieve

efficiencies and savings. The collaboration began in April 2014 and it is estimated that nearly £4m worth of resources have been freed up for reallocation into other areas of frontline policing across the three forces. The savings for Gloucestershire are estimated to be £0.9m.

Gloucestershire is also part of the southwest regional procurement unit, which includes four of the five police forces (Avon and Somerset Constabulary is not part of this group as it undertakes procurement as part of a public sector joint venture collaboration) in the region and has been operating effectively since April 2012. Wherever possible, all four forces join together to create a larger and more cost effective contract to get better value for money. There is an intention that, over time, all contracts will be let jointly. There is an agreement that all forces will procure goods and services together, irrespective of whether benefits will be realised for all. It may be that a force cannot make the same level of savings as another in every contract, but over the totality of contracts, significant savings will be made.

The constabulary works well with its partner organisations in Gloucestershire. The driving force is the PCC's police and crime plan. Each of the key priorities is shared among leaders from a range of public services and the voluntary sector. A county-wide multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) supports vulnerable victims of crime and an anti-social behaviour (ASB) project combines the resources of police and local authorities in tackling problems using the new legislation. The successful 'great expectations' programme is discouraging young offenders from committing more crime and building the confidence and self-esteem of young people.

Collaboration is increasingly being seen by the constabulary as a key element to working more efficiently and finding the level of future savings needed while maintaining effective levels of policing. In 2014/15, the constabulary expects to spend 8 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 4 percent of the forces savings requirement, which is lower than 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 which can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and prepare for future funding reductions.

The constabulary's change programme has evolved over time to reflect the budget that is available. Previously, it has made significant savings from reviews of support services and has reduced spending on back office functions in order to try and prevent cuts to frontline policing as far as possible. It recognises that in some areas, cuts have been too severe and have left the constabulary with insufficient capacity to support the operations effectively and

the ambitious change programme. The constabulary recently has recruited additional staff to support the leadership team in making the change needed.

The constabulary carried out a comprehensive review of how policing was provided. This led to the design of the core elements of the new structure and the decisions to focus additional resources into priority areas such as safeguarding and proactive policing.

The new model for policing is being developed and implemented incrementally, with extensive work being undertaken to understand demand and align resources to respond to that demand.

Final decisions on the precise structure have not yet been made. The constabulary has a range of options and intends to involve key staff in designing the best fit as the structure evolves. At the time of the inspection, the two chief superintendents with responsibility for crime and local policing respectively are in place and are working with the constabulary's transformation team to develop the underlying structures, based on the analysis of demand. Better use of technology, estates and collaboration are seen as the key themes to make the new force structure as effective as possible.

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

- changing the way business support, such as human resources and finance are provided;
- structural change in the way it provides operational support and functions;
- changing the way it provides local policing;
- changing the way specialist policing services such as protective services are provided; and
- improving call management.

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

- better alignment of resource to demand;
- deployment across the constabulary rather than within internal boundaries;
- use of mobile data;
- streamlining processes and reducing bureaucracy; and
- using predictive technology to better inform the allocation of resources to crime areas.

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

The constabulary has worked hard to share information about the organisational changes taking place and those planned. It intends to involve staff in developing the details of the new structure.

Staff surveys are undertaken regularly in the areas that are being considered for change. This allows those facing the change to understand the proposals and to influence the rationale for changes. The surveys enable the constabulary to communicate a clear and consistent message, as well as gaining feedback from staff directly involved in the proposals. However, there has not been a constabulary-wide survey for two years. The constabulary is engaging staff through workshops and forums. The senior leaders are aware of the scale of the challenge to engage with staff and keep them involved in the change process.

The constabulary held several leadership days that have been hosted by the chief officers for all managers. These events have covered topics such as financial information about the force. The presentations have been made available online and an open online forum is available for all staff to post opinions and questions.

There is a good relationship with the police federation and trades unions, and the constabulary has embarked on a series of workshops with staff bringing in external consultants to bring about change and communicate the design of the model. This work has improved understanding for staff and helped to involve those directly affected in shaping the design.

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.

However, we do expect forces also to 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 into for services such as cleaning. Over the spending review period the constabulary plans to make 24 percent of its savings from non-pay; this is lower than the 29 percent figure for England and Wales.

To date, the constabulary has achieved non-pay savings by rationalising some of the way it uses its buildings. The joint procurement unit has also enabled it to reduce costs on a range of its contracts.

Further savings in non-pay are planned, with a review of the way it uses its buildings running alongside the development of the new constabulary structures. The constabulary intends to ensure that it makes the most efficient use of all of its estate, investing where necessary in buildings, paid for by disposing of buildings which are no longer needed. The approach of the constabulary is to centralise most functions not directly required for neighbourhood policing; wherever possible, at the headquarters site. The new custody suite adjacent to the police headquarters is a good example, where the constabulary has rationalised a number of smaller, less suitable custody units into one centralised single site with 50 cells.

In common with other forces, most of the savings comes from reducing the workforce. Gloucestershire Constabulary made an early start to this in 2010 when it slowed its recruitment of new police officers and carried out a review of support services. This led to a reduction in staffing and spend within support services. Overall, the constabulary plans to make 76 percent of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is a higher proportion than the figure for other forces in 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.

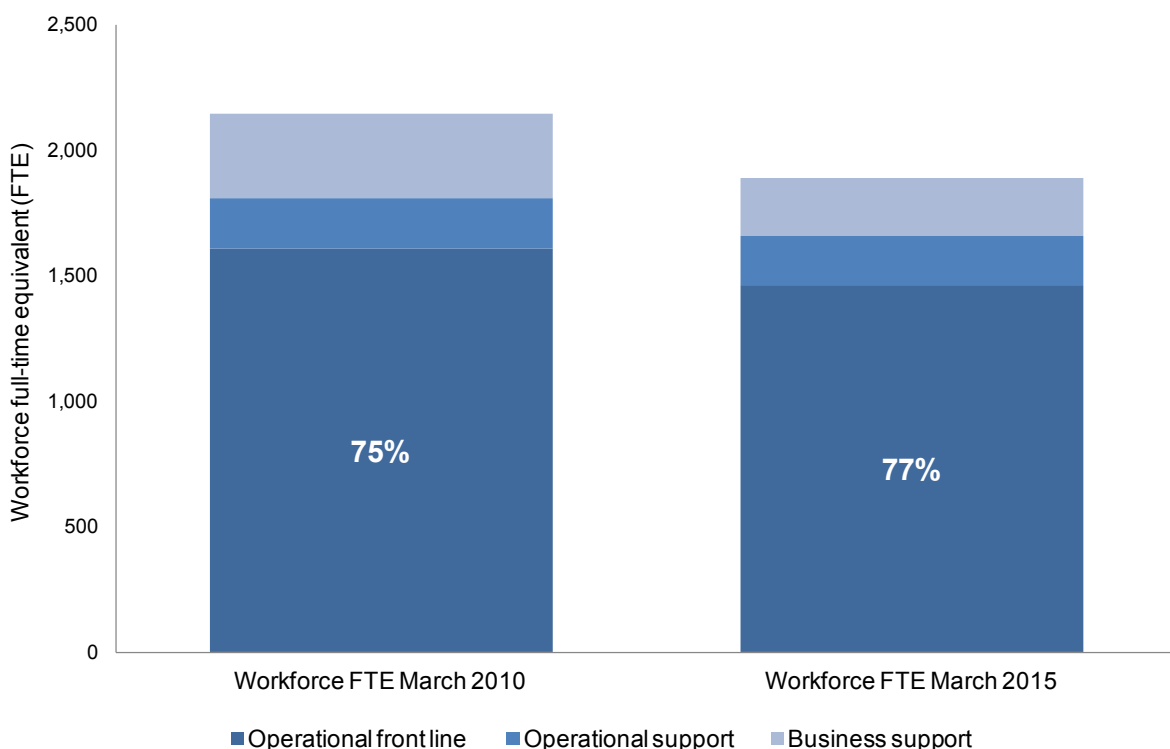
	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Constabulary change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police officers	1,309	1,176	-133	-10%	-11%
Police staff	729	589	-140	-19%	-17%
PCSOs	148	124	-24	-16%	-22%
Total	2,185	1,889	-296	-14%	-14%
Specials	167	200	33	20%	44%

Over the spending review period, the projected proportional reduction in Gloucestershire Constabulary’s workforce is in line with the figure for England and Wales. However, the proportion of police officers is similar and the number of PCSOs planned to be lost is smaller than the figure for England and Wales. However, the planned proportion of police staff to be lost is higher.

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 Gloucestershire Constabulary.



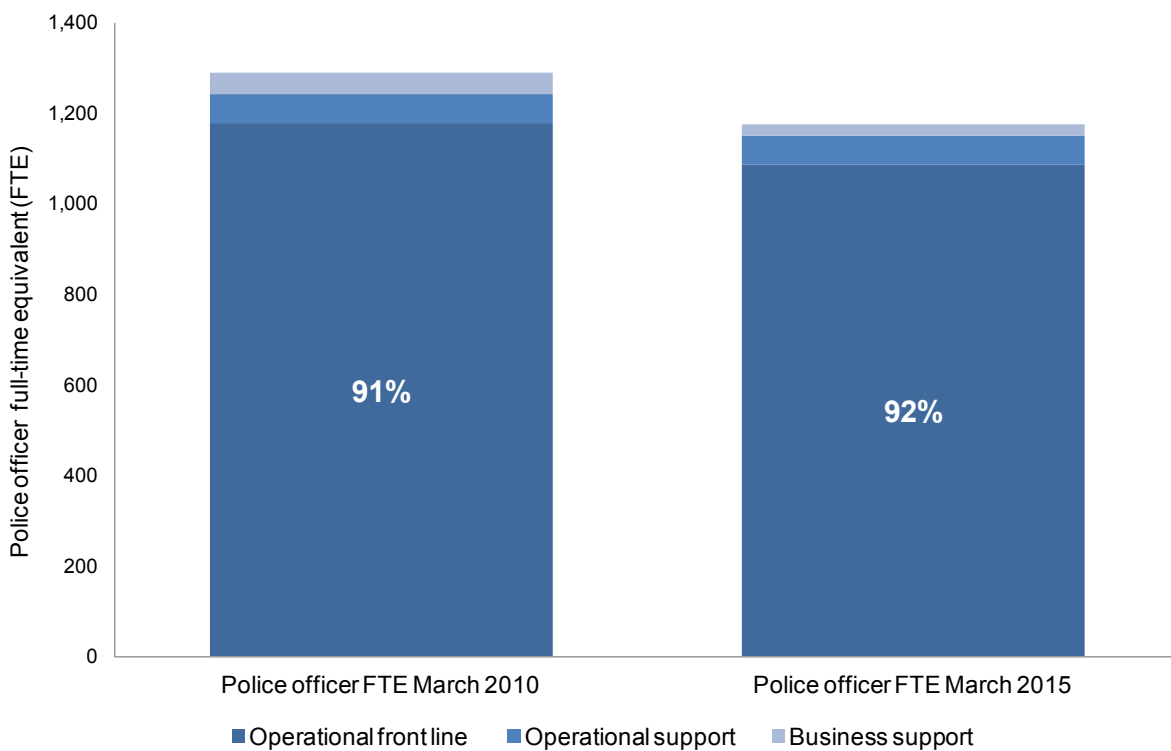
Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of workforce on the front line from 74 percent in March 2010 to 78 percent in March 2015.

The number of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the constabulary’s total workforce) working on the front line is projected to reduce by 147 between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 1,607 to 1,460).

Over the same period, the proportion of Gloucestershire’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is projected to increase from 75 percent to 77 percent. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74 percent to 78 percent.

The constabulary plans to reduce the number of Gloucestershire’s police officers in frontline roles by 91 from 1,177 in March 2010 to 1,086 by March 2015, as the next chart shows. The proportion of those remaining on the front line is projected to increase from 91 percent to 92 percent. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89 percent to 92 percent and shows Gloucestershire Constabulary is protecting frontline crime-fighting roles successfully 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 already made significant savings from changing the way it manages policing; particularly from reducing the costs of support services.
- It has carried out a comprehensive review of its current organisation and is implementing a new way of providing policing. This will enable it to continue to tackle priorities with fewer resources and means it will be capable of coping with further budget cuts in the future.
- The constabulary has worked well to collaborate with neighbouring Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Wiltshire Police. The joint policing operations are set to achieve savings and provide a better service in Gloucestershire.
- Although the bulk of savings have been made from staffing costs, the constabulary has worked hard to limit the cuts to jobs and find savings from non-pay areas, such as making better use of police buildings and joining with other police forces to buy goods and services together, to get better value for money.
- The constabulary is protecting its numbers of police officers and PSCOs, and plans to lose proportionally fewer than the figure for England and Wales, by March 2015.

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?

The constabulary is carrying out a detailed analysis of its demand, known as 'operation snapshot'. It is examining seven days of calls to the police control room over a period of time to examine not only the volume and the sources of the demand but also to examine the difference on each day of the week and any seasonal variations. The assessment will be extended to include demand coming directly into the public protection team from partner referrals during the summer of 2014.

This analysis of demand will inform the development of the new policing model and is a major part of the change programme. This will ensure that the constabulary is able to manage the range demands on police time and that the new model is capable of effectively providing all necessary policing services.

A detailed assessment of policing challenges that need to be addressed continuously is undertaken every year as part of the constabulary's strategic assessment process and is reflected in the chief constable's plan. Included in this are national issues affecting the constabulary, such as the policing of two royal households by the constabulary.

How efficiently does the constabulary allocate its resources?

Gloucestershire Constabulary carried out a review of neighbourhood policing 18 months ago. This resulted in the redistribution of resources from some neighbourhood areas to others, aligning resources against demand, crime and other relevant criteria. Prior to the review, each neighbourhood policing area had been allocated the same number of police officers and PCSOs regardless of need. This redistribution has resulted in a more targeted approach, enabling those areas with greater demands to provide a better service. The constabulary has also made alterations to the structure of its protective services in response to an assessment of demand and risk.

The approach to resource allocation is now becoming even more sophisticated as the constabulary prepares to implement its new structures for providing policing. The constabulary has commissioned an external consultancy to undertake a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to modelling how best to allocate resources to meet threats and risks from demand. It will test a variety of scenarios to inform the development of the new

operating model. Profiling call-handling, response policing and custody processing are underway and will include identifying the best shift patterns to meet demand.

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.

There has been a strong focus on the importance on neighbourhood policing in Gloucestershire. A high proportion of resource has traditionally been allocated to neighbourhood teams, focused on prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour. The new operating model maintains this focus and plans to improve the problem-solving skills of staff and, at times of high demand, deploy neighbourhood officers to emergency or priority incidents more often. The PCC has given a public commitment that there will not be a reduction in frontline staff before the end of March 2017.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether Gloucestershire 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, Gloucestershire had maintained the same target response times of 10 minutes for calls classed as 'emergency' (also known as Grade 1). 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	91	81.7
Percentage of priority calls on target	86	86.6

Over the spending review, attendance for emergency calls has declined but for priority calls it 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 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 Gloucestershire area.

In 2014, Gloucestershire Constabulary allocated 62 percent of its police officers to visible roles. This is 5.2 percentage points higher than the number allocated in 2010, and higher than the 56 percent figure for England and Wales.

Police visibility is enhanced further by PCSOs, who principally support community policing. Looking at the proportion of police officers and PCSOs, Gloucestershire Constabulary allocated 65 percent to visible policing roles. This is 4.3 percentage points higher than it allocated in 2010, and 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 Gloucestershire, 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, 89 percent of respondents in Gloucestershire said they felt safe from crime where they lived, compared to 84 percent of respondents in England and Wales. Finally, 7 percent said they felt safer from crime than they did two years ago, compared to 9 percent of respondents in England and Wales.

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.

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), Gloucestershire Constabulary reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 17 percent, compared with a reduction of 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 16 percent, compared with a reduction of 14 percent in England and Wales.

Looking just at the 12 months to March 2014, recorded crime (excluding fraud) has broadly remained constant, compared to the 1 percent reduction for 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. The table below shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Gloucestershire (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)	49.0	61.1
Victim-based crime	45.0	54.3
Sexual offences	1.0	1.1
Burglary	8.6	7.8
Violence against the person	7.1	11.1
ASB incidents	42.6	37.2

It is important that crimes are investigated effectively and the perpetrator identified and brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to identify who has committed a crime, it can be described as detected. Gloucestershire Constabulary's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2014 was 23 percent. This is lower than the England and Wales's sanction detection rate of 26 percent.

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in the Gloucestershire 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, 82.4 percent (± 1.7 percent) of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Gloucestershire Constabulary. This is lower than the England and Wales figure of 85.2 percent (± 0.2 percent.)

Changes to how the public can access services

Like other forces, Gloucestershire Constabulary is making use of the internet and social media to communicate with the public and is developing different ways for the public to contact the police.

The constabulary has also considered the potential impact of new communication routes into the service by mapping out the level of contact received via phone calls, web chat and social media. The constabulary's external website is being re-designed to provide information that the public requires and to signpost visitors to the most appropriate social media, such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, used to communicate with the public.

The new constabulary structures aims to improve services supported by a wider choice of ways for the public to contact the constabulary, including 'e-policing'. One of its four current priorities: "putting the public at the centre of service provision", is helping develop the new approach to call handling. The constabulary is seeking to deal with more calls at the first point of contact through its 'incident assessment unit.' Specially trained staff will provide the answer the public's needs without necessarily sending an officer to attend where this is not necessary. The aims of dealing with calls better are to not only reduce demand, but also improve levels of public satisfaction with the service they get from the police. With comparatively low satisfaction rates from the national victim of crime survey, the constabulary is expecting an improvement from its new team when it begins in June 2014.

By offering a range of contact options the constabulary has been able to reconfigure its estate. Over the spending review, the constabulary plans to reduce the number of police stations from 30 to 5, while the number of front counters are planned to reduce by one to seven. By 2015, the constabulary plans to have 16 shared access points.

Summary



Good

- Gloucestershire Constabulary started this spending review period as a comparatively low-cost and efficiently-run organisation and it has continued to make cuts to its spending.
- The constabulary is in the process of carrying out a detailed and comprehensive review of all of its demand and the way in which it currently allocates resources to meet this demand.
- The results of the demand and resourcing analysis will inform the new structure being implemented, enabling the constabulary to achieve the requisite savings while protecting frontline policing and crime fighting.
- The constabulary has seen a greater reduction in crime over this period than the figure for England and Wales, although over the last 12 months the rate of reduction has slowed and victim satisfaction remains below the average.

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.