



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Responding to austerity

Lincolnshire Police

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How well does the force provide value for money?

Overall judgment

Lincolnshire Police has demonstrated a good response in meeting its financial challenge over this spending review period, achieving substantial savings in extremely difficult circumstances. The force has the lowest workforce costs in England and Wales, and makes extensive use of collaboration and outsourcing to maximise efficiency. Its options to achieve future savings in this continuing era of austerity, without cutting its frontline workforce and eroding neighbourhood policing, are extremely limited.

Good

Summary

Lincolnshire Police is on track to achieve its required savings of £20.0m over this spending review period, with plans in place to achieve further savings in 2015/16. It is a low income and efficient force, so faces a particularly difficult challenge. The force has made good progress in meeting its financial challenge. It has developed a detailed change programme which has allowed it to reduce costs while continuing to fight crime. Over the next two years it is maintaining the front line and sustaining service provision.

Despite this positive response, HMIC has concerns about the ability of the force to maintain its current level of service to the communities of Lincolnshire beyond 2016. Having taken decisive action to close the funding gap over the current spending review, the force has fewer options to achieve further savings. The force has put in place a second major change programme which has three key elements: reducing demand on the front line; improving IT to make better use of police time; and changing the workforce mix. However, the force estimates that these alone will not identify the savings required to meet the projected gap.

However, there is now a more stable leadership team in place, who are leading and engaging with staff. But given the size of the funding gap it is difficult to consider how the force can continue to provide local policing in the same way or provide the same level of service to the public in the future. We will continue to monitor progress closely.

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

Good

The force has a good track record of achieving planned savings. It has clear plans to achieve savings in 2014/15 and achieve the £20.0m savings required over the spending review.

Using a combination of savings and reserves, the force plans to achieve £2.1m in 2015/16.

The force has two years to change the way it polices Lincolnshire so that it can achieve the savings required by 2017. It has already identified some limited opportunities to achieve savings; after that it may need to reduce its workforce.

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

Outstanding

The way the force provides policing has allowed it to meet its savings requirement while implementing the PCC's priorities.

The force has made extensive use of outsourcing and collaboration to contribute 31 percent of its savings – a significant achievement.

The way policing is currently provided is not adaptable for the savings forecast beyond 2016. The force will need to look beyond these arrangements; this is likely to result in reductions in police officer numbers.

Lincolnshire achieved a material amount of its savings by reducing non-pay costs. It also increased the proportion of officers in frontline roles – this is commendable.

To what extent is the force efficient?

Good

The force has a rigorous approach to analysing demand for response, investigative and neighbourhood teams. This includes working with partners such as local councils.

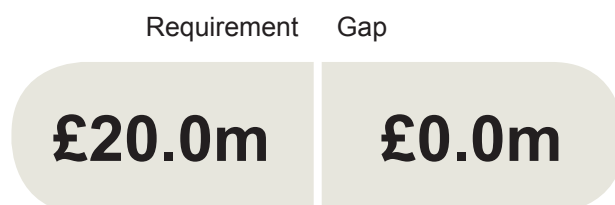
The force analyses demand received through its control room and uses a decision model to help staff to decide how best to resolve a call.

The force has recently invested in its IT provision but the full benefits are yet to be realised.

The force in numbers

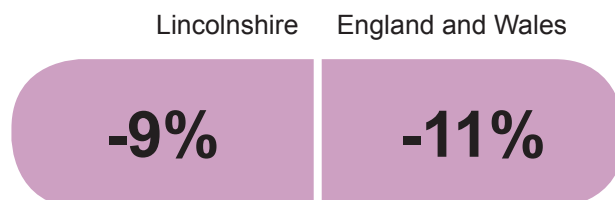
Financial position

The force's savings requirement

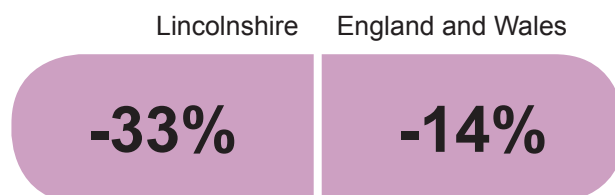


Providing policing

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



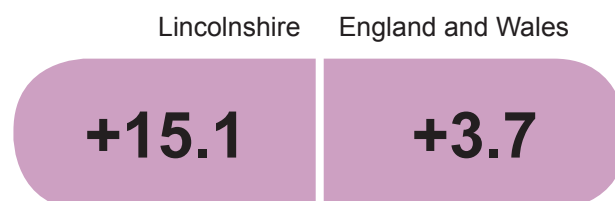
Planned change in total workforce numbers 2010/11 – 2014/15



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

Lincolnshire

England and Wales

£79.7**£117.7**

Workforce cost per head of population
2013/14

Lincolnshire

England and Wales

£99.2**£168.1**

Change in recorded crime
2010/11 – 2013/14

Lincolnshire

England and Wales

-19%**-14%**

Victim satisfaction 2013/14*

Lincolnshire

England and Wales

83.9%**85.2%**

*Confidence intervals: $\pm 1.9\%$ for Lincolnshire; $\pm 0.2\%$ 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 force is achieving value for money. To answer this question we looked at three areas:

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

To what extent is the force 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

Lincolnshire Police has identified that it needs to save £20.0m 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 that for England and Wales; but HMIC considers that Lincolnshire faces a more difficult challenge. This is despite the fact that it attracts a lower central funding contribution and higher local funding than many other forces which means that central funding cuts have less impact on Lincolnshire compared to other forces.

The scale of the challenge

Lincolnshire faces a particularly difficult challenge as it already has very low costs, has a small workforce, and has either outsourced functions or collaborated with other forces in most areas of policing. Lincolnshire Police:

- has overall workforce costs which are lower than all other forces in England and Wales, with all areas being well below average;
- has the lowest number of workforce per head of population in England and Wales; the force has the lowest number of staff per head of population; and second lowest number of officers per head of population in England and Wales; and
- has achieved the majority of its savings from non-pay costs which equates to 79 percent of savings over the spending review period. This is unique amongst forces where the average savings from non-pay costs in England and Wales is 29 percent. This is commendable.

Savings plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16

Lincolnshire Police has clear plans to achieve the £2.5m savings required in 2014/15. The force has plans to achieve £0.6m of the £2.1m savings required in 2015/16. It plans to use £1.5m of reserves; these came from underspends in an earlier year.

The force has a good track record of achieving its savings plans. It has generally made prudent assumptions about grant reductions, inflation, staff costs and precept when assessing the size of the financial challenge this year and next. It has a balanced budget, with its limited use of reserves, and this means that the force now has up to two years to review, plan and implement changes to the way it provides policing.

One area of risk identified by the force in setting out its budget decisions is whether the county council continues £1.5m of funding for 49 PCSOs. Without this funding the force could not sustain this number of PCSOs in its budget. This is an area of concern and although the force has assessed how PCSOs could be best used in areas of greatest need, any decision to reduce numbers would be a difficult one, as they are highly valued by their communities.

Outlook for 2016 and beyond

The force's medium-term financial plan sets out the savings requirement to 2017/18. The scale of the future challenge means that the force is reaching a critical point for service provision. Although the force has started to identify some savings from improved productivity, better technology and a change to its workforce mix, this will not be enough to meet the future budget gap without also reducing the workforce. The force understands that there are fewer savings to come from the non-pay budget, and most savings need to come from pay. Realistically, because of how the organisation is configured, this will likely come from reducing officer numbers.

Although the level of general reserves (£5.7m) is deemed appropriate against an assessment of risks, the PCC has insufficient reserves to provide the force with a degree of financial security beyond the short term.

The leadership team is focused on the issue and all are aware of the challenges from 2016 and beyond. The wider workforce is focused on achieving the priorities of the police and crime plan, while the force leadership concentrate on planning for the longer term.

Summary



Good

- The force has a good track record of achieving planned savings. It has clear plans to achieve savings in 2014/15 and achieve the £20.0m savings required over the spending review.
- It is developing plans to achieve £2.1m in 2015/16 through a combination of savings and reserves while carrying out the PCC's police and crime plan.
- The force has two years to change the way it provides policing to achieve savings required by 2017. It has already identified opportunities to achieve some savings but has limited options before turning to workforce reductions.

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

HMIC looks at how the force is structured to provide policing. We ask if this is affordable as the force responds to their financial challenge. We look at what the force 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 force provides policing

From an early stage in the spending review period during 2010, the force slowed its recruitment of new police officers and reduced the number of police staff it employs.

From April 2012, the force transferred a large proportion of its business support and some operational support functions (such as call handling, human resources and finance) to a private sector business partner, G4S. This arrangement is for an initial period of ten years and has contributed £3.4m per year to the force's savings requirement since the contract started. In addition, specific budget areas are managed by G4S on behalf of the force – these are known as managed and monitored budgets – and include such things as fuel and utility costs. The management of these budgets has also contributed £2.4m each year to the savings achieved by the force.

The force also restructured how it worked. It moved away from having three distinct policing areas, each providing policing within geographic boundaries, to a single force model (where officers and functions operate across a force rather than being provided within geographic areas).

Partly in response to feedback from the front line, in February 2013 the force re-established two basic command units. This has improved leadership while continuing to control spending and looking for savings opportunities. The mix of skills and experience are considered to be appropriately balanced between response, neighbourhood and investigations. As a result the force is flexible and able to adapt to the policing needs of the public.

The way that the force currently provides policing meets the requirements of the police and crime plan and other assessed demands. The method is fully developed, and resourced, and is affordable within the force's budget. But it is not adaptable enough against the future savings requirements the force is forecasting. The challenge for the future is to reduce and manage demand better within the resources available and this is part of the force's new change programme. The force is currently listening and talking to the public about what calls they want the police to attend and whether there are alternatives on occasions, such as initial phone investigations. This will help the force develop its understanding of the sources of demand in the control room. It will also have implications on decisions about how it will provide local policing in the future.

Collaboration

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

Lincolnshire Police is a member of the East Midlands Special Operations Unit. This is a long-standing regional force collaboration which tackles serious organised crime and domestic extremism and terrorism, and investigates major crime, including homicides and kidnap.

The force is very active in working with regional forces to ensure its existing collaborations are achieving planned savings or increased resilience or both. The force has a strong commitment to continue to work with other forces in the East Midlands region. It is currently involved in developing a four force collaboration which encompasses criminal justice arrangements. It is recognised that it is difficult to find the level of investment required in the first place, however the forces have been successful in bidding for £1.4m of Home Office innovation funding. This will support the implementation of regionalised criminal justice arrangements across four of the forces by March 2016.

In addition a regional specialist operations command team has recently been established. This will build and implement a new way of providing certain policing services, including armed response, roads policing, dog units, public order and command. This will enhance further capacity and capability as well as identifying savings and more efficient ways of working.

In 2012, the force entered into a strategic partnership with G4S and outsourced a number of business support and operational functions. The force has also transferred a significant number of police staff to G4S. Many former police staff are now employed by this company. This accounts for the vast majority of its planned police staff reductions, which are considerably higher than all other forces over the spending review period. Business support and operational functions, through G4S, are providing the service they are contracted to provide. Well-established links are in place across this strategic partnership, and good governance processes exist with both the force and the PCC. This is a ten-year contract which saves money and brings a more efficient approach. But it also reduces the force's flexibility on the options it can develop to provide policing in the future.

In 2014/15 the force plans to spend 24 percent of its net revenue expenditure on collaboration, which is considerably higher than the 11 percent figure for England and Wales. Collaboration is expected to contribute to 31 percent of the force's savings requirement, which is considerably higher 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 which can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and help prepare for future funding reductions.

The force's current and projected workforce matches its organisational and financial requirements until the end of the spending review period. It also supports the implementation of the police and crime plan priorities. Chief officers' oversight of the change management programme is strong and is linked to the budget setting and monitoring processes. Workforce planning supported by robust governance arrangements is in place. However, the force acknowledges that from 2016/17 onwards, making further savings will be extremely challenging. It has implemented a second change programme to manage and achieve savings by 2017/18. This change programme has already started to look at different options to close the budget gap. It has identified that up to £3m of the savings needed will come from its planned policing transformation programme initiatives, which will not have an effect on workforce numbers. The force is also looking at further changes to its workforce mix by, for example, converting police officer posts to civilian investigator roles and by reconsidering their G4S contract to ensure the right resources are in the right place.

Due to the nature of its G4S contract, the force also has the added benefit of a strong project and commercial management team ethos. This has processes and systems to ensure that savings are taken out and that post implementation reviews are conducted. These reviews identify lessons to be learnt and the realisation of further benefits. The remit of the commercial partnership team has been extended to include the monitoring and management of other regional collaborations, for example occupational health, and it is now involved in other force contracts.

A number of members of staff have been trained in business improvement methods using the principles of cutting costs while improving service and process quality. The force is scrutinised, for example by local partnerships, and it invites academic studies, applies good practice identified by the College of Policing, and benchmarks itself against other forces.

In spite of the force's efforts to work more efficiently and effectively to safeguard front line roles, it will need to reduce the workforce to find the level of savings still required. The senior leadership team plan to consider how local policing could be provided differently in the longer term and the impact this could have on the level and quality of service that can be provided to the people of Lincolnshire. The budget will be re-profiled to reflect these anticipated changes and recruitment plans adjusted to take these into account.

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

- outsourcing or working with the private sector;
- improved procurement and contract re-negotiation;
- collaboration with other forces;
- structural changes in local policing; and
- priority-based budgeting.

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

- outsourcing or working with the private sector;
- collaboration with other forces;
- better alignment of resources to demand;
- improved call management; and
- use of business improvement methodologies.

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

The force has identified the cultural shift needed in the workforce to support change. It is developing a programme of activity which supports this. This includes, for example, chief officers doing interviews on the intranet and a focus on leadership contact with a series of road shows led by chief officers, where the key themes are communication, empowerment and future direction.

In January, the force conducted a “Make a Difference” survey which was aimed at increasing its understanding of what is done well and what could be improved in the force. This survey is yet to be fully analysed and published. There is also a “Make a Difference” website page for ideas to be posted. Although an acknowledgment is received, further feedback on any ideas submitted is limited. G4S also conduct staff surveys and have introduced a new communications strategy which includes a new staff magazine. All staff have access to both the G4S and force intranet systems.

The force has a number of health and well-being indicators which include sickness rates, data from the employee care scheme, and occupational health data. The force has a sickness absence target of no more than eight days for each person each year. This is being achieved although long-term sickness remains an issue and has recently worsened.

The force is working on a new sifting and assessment system to improve efficiency in occupational health referrals.

How is the force 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 also expect forces 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 for services such as cleaning. The force plans to make 79 percent of its savings from non-pay, which is higher than for all other forces.

The force has a very effective approach to reducing non-pay costs. This is through its contract with G4S, and also through increasing savings on budgets which are monitored and managed by this strategic partner. These budgets include premises, ICT and fleet. The force has also reduced capital financing costs by cutting its capital spend to lower the interest charges, and through its overall financial management. This has enabled the force to make more savings from its non-pay budget than any other force in England and Wales over the spending review. As a result it has been able to protect frontline policing.

Unlike most other forces, fewer savings have come from reducing the workforce numbers. Lincolnshire Police has slowed its recruitment of new police officers and held vacancies. The force has also transferred a significant number of police staff to G4S, because many functions are now provided through an outsourcing arrangement.

The force plans to make 21 percent of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is lower than other forces.

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

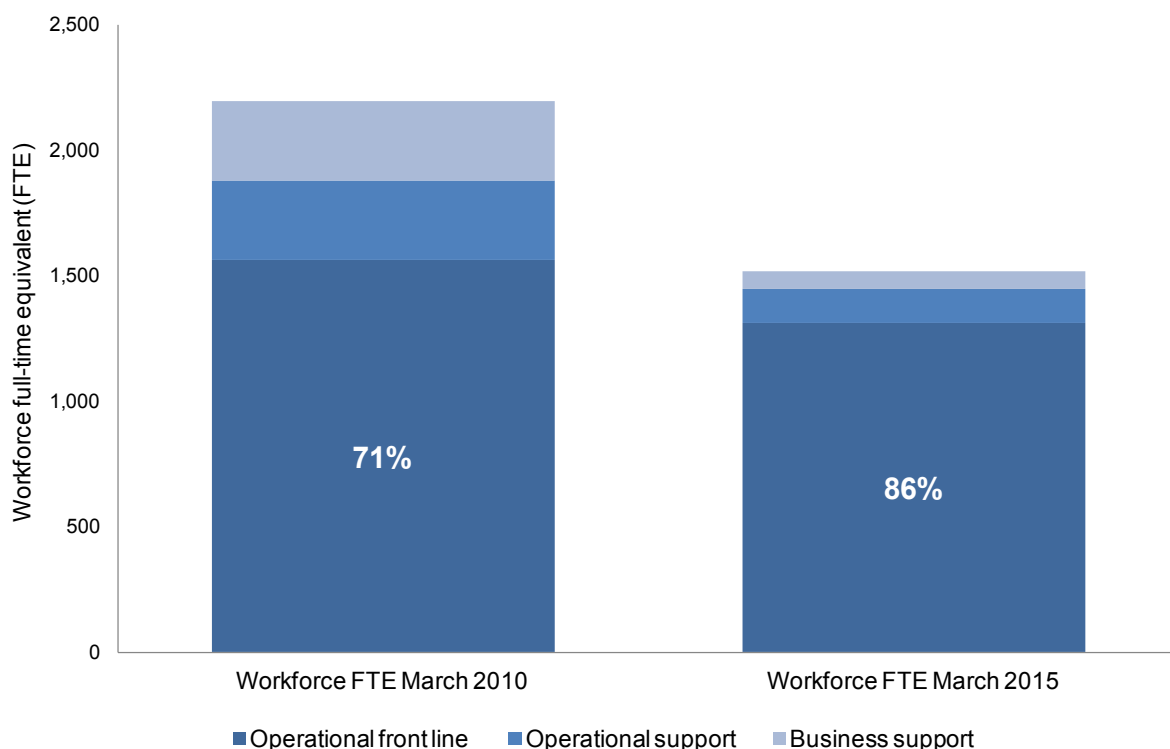
Please note, these figures are rounded.

	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Force change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police officers	1,206	1,100	-106	-9%	-11%
Police staff	917	270	-647	-71%	-17%
PCSOs	149	149	0	0%	-22%
Total	2,272	1,519	-753	-33%	-14%
Specials	163	300	137	84%	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 Lincolnshire Police.



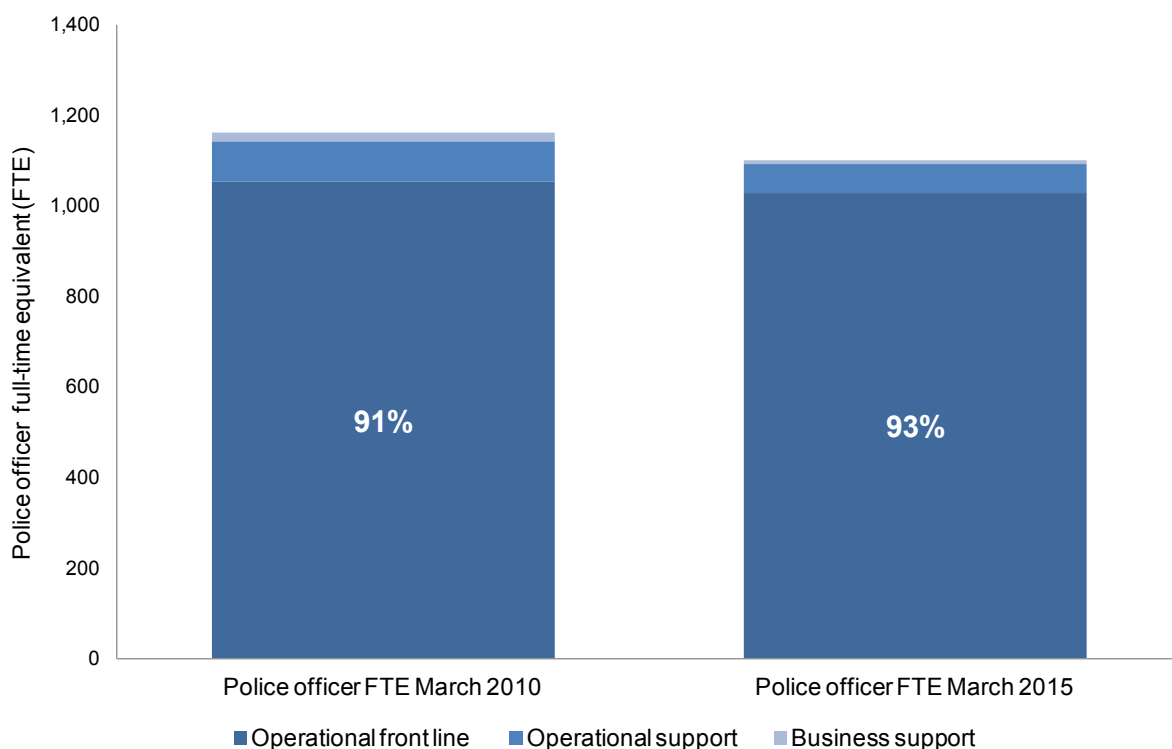
Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of workforce on the front line from 74 percent in March 2010 to 78 percent in March 2015.

The number of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the force’s total workforce) working on the front line is projected to reduce by 250 between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 1,561 to 1,311).

Over the same period, the proportion of Lincolnshire’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is projected to increase considerably from 71 percent to 86 percent. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74 percent to 78 percent.

The number of Lincolnshire’s police officers in frontline roles is planned to reduce by 25 from 1,052 in March 2010 to 1,027 by March 2015, as the following chart shows. The proportion of those remaining on the front line is projected to increase from 91 percent to 93 percent. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89 percent to 92 percent and shows that Lincolnshire Police is successfully protecting frontline crime-fighting roles as it makes these cuts. This is commendable.

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



Outstanding

- The way the force has provided its policing services over the spending review has allowed it to meet its savings requirement while also implementing the PCC's police and crime plan.
- The force has made extensive use of outsourcing and collaboration to contribute 31 percent to its saving requirement – a considerable achievement.
- The way policing is currently provided cannot be adapted for the savings requirements forecast beyond 2016. The force will need to look beyond these arrangements and this is likely to result in reductions in police officer numbers.
- Lincolnshire has achieved 79 percent of savings by reducing non-pay costs over the spending review. At the same time it has increased the proportion of officers in frontline roles which is commendable.

To what extent is the force efficient?

HMIC looks at how the force 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 force understand and manage demand?

At a strategic level the force has an annual joint assessment of threats and risks which it carries out with an extensive range of partners, including statutory and voluntary sector partners. This is refreshed on a regular basis.

The force has already undertaken a detailed analysis of demand received through its control room. The aim is to manage this demand better through a decision model known as THRIVE (threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerable and engagement). This model helps staff to decide how best to resolve a call. The aspiration is to resolve as many calls as is appropriate at the point of contact in order to reduce demand on other areas of business.

The force is supplementing this analysis of demand with the public's opinion on different ways of resolving different calls for a police response. The force has adopted a rigorous approach to analysing demand which extends to demand on the response, the investigative, and the neighbourhood teams. It has just begun to consider demand for specialist units. This analysis has included input from other partners too, for example by involving the local council in the neighbourhood demand analysis. It is yet to implement solutions but it will focus on managing down internally generated demand, repeat callers and service recovery.

HMIC recognises the importance of the detailed analysis that the force is undertaking to manage demand. It expects the force to combine this knowledge with that already learnt from the outsourcing due diligence process, to understand fully the totality of its demand. HMIC would encourage the force to pursue opportunities to manage down some aspects of demand in the short term. At the same time it should decide on an overall approach for the long term. This should aim to make sure that the way it provides policing is sustainable for the future.

How efficiently does the force allocate its resources?

The structure by which the force provides policing and allocates its resources is designed to respond to the force's assessment of demand and emerging threats. The force has assessed each of its police officer and staff posts against a risk score and understands the impact on service levels if these critical roles are left vacant. Workforce and financial plans are co-ordinated and recruitment has been prioritised for vacancies in critical posts. The force has allocated officers and staff using a resource and demand modelling tool. This assesses the totality of demand and includes the effects of increased migrant workers and an aging population. This tool does rely to some extent on professional judgement. The force knows that at times community beat managers and PCSOs, as well as other specialist policing teams, are required to respond to incidents, taking them away from their core or community assurance roles.

The force recognises that its deployment process (the way it attends to calls for its services) is not as efficient as possible and there are examples of 'over servicing' incidents. This is being reviewed from the control room perspective but the force needs to assure itself that other opportunities to manage demand coming into the force from all other sources are reviewed too.

The force allocates resources to local crime prevention and partnership working. It has seconded officers in the seven district councils supporting anti-social behaviour reduction. A senior police officer has been seconded into the county community safety directorate for several years. The force is examining the impact of other (primarily) public services providing a reduced service, such as the ambulance service. It has a service level agreement with East Midlands Ambulance Service. The force is also supporting the trial of a 'triage' car, which is staffed by a mental health worker and a paramedic, assessing situations in an expert way and providing a specialist response to calls to people suffering from mental health issues.

The force's IT provision is being transformed although this will take time to embed. The limitations of some of the outdated systems that are used and the timetable for IT changes for operational officers have had an adverse impact on the way the force has provided policing.

In 2014/15 the force must lose more staff to balance its budget but at the same time it must maintain sufficient officers and staff to provide policing effectively. It is important that it continues to assess what its critical posts are. The force has a strong commitment to retaining officer numbers with the vast majority in frontline roles. The way the force manages demand and uses its workforce to respond to demand will need to improve over the coming two years if it is to maintain the quality of service it provides to the public.

How does the force 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 force's decision.

Lincolnshire Police is becoming less target-driven and more focused on providing a quality service. The force's processes to monitor outcomes and performance are robust. It has a comprehensive performance framework which supports monthly and quarterly assessments on progress. The commercial partnership team constantly reviews G4S performance and there are regular performance governance meetings with the PCC.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether Lincolnshire 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, Lincolnshire had retained the same target response times of 15 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 4 hours.

The following table compares the force's performance in 2010/11 to 2013/14.

Calls for service	2010/11	2013/14
Percentage of urban emergency calls on target	88%	81%
Percentage of rural emergency calls on target	85%	80%
Percentage of priority calls on target	90%	68%

Over the spending review, attendance for emergency calls has declined for both urban and rural areas. Attendance for priority calls has also 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 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 force had affected the visibility of the police in the Lincolnshire area.

In 2014, Lincolnshire Police allocated 58 percent of its police officers to visible roles. This is two percentage points lower than the number allocated in 2010, but higher than 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, Lincolnshire Police allocated 62 percent to visible roles. This is 1.6 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 Lincolnshire, 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, 86 percent of respondents in Lincolnshire said they felt safe from crime where they lived, compared to 84 percent of respondents in England and Wales. Finally, 5 percent of respondents in Lincolnshire 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 recorded crime. Between 2010/11 and 2013/14 (which includes the first three years of the spending review), Lincolnshire Police reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 19 percent, compared with 14 percent in England and Wales. Over this period, victim-based crime (that is, crimes where there is a direct victim, such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) reduced by 20 percent, compared with 14 percent 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.

Looking just at the last 12 months, recorded crime (excluding fraud) fell by 3 percent, which is a larger reduction than the average figure for England and Wales (reduction of 1 percent).

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 Lincolnshire (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)	50.0	61.1
Victim-based crime	44.8	54.3
Sexual offences	0.9	1.1
Burglary	7.4	7.8
Violence against the person	7.8	11.1
ASB incidents	30.3	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 a detection. Lincolnshire Police's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2014 was 26 percent. This is in line with 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 Lincolnshire force 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, 83.9 percent (± 1.9 percent) of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Lincolnshire Police. This is broadly in line with the England and Wales figure of 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 its policing services.

The estate strategy is reviewed on an annual basis and a process used to assess its operational value against running costs. During the spending review period the force has disposed of one property but does not plan to dispose of any others. Front counters are staffed by town enquiry officers through the G4S contract. While the number of front counters has been reduced to twenty – a decrease of eight across the force area – opening hours are being reviewed to improve consistency, and the force is keen to use volunteers to support this. There is only one shared access point and there appears to be little appetite from partners to introduce more.

The force has a number of projects that it has either implemented recently, or plans to start this year, to improve how the public can make contact and get information. For example, victims will be able to track their crime and access updates through a victim care hub. The force has successfully piloted an initial voice recognition system in the switchboard which makes more use of telephone menus; this will be rolled out across the organisation in May.

Summary



Good

- The force has a rigorous approach to analysing demand for response, investigative and neighbourhood teams which includes engagement with partners such as local councils.
- The force has also undertaken a detailed analysis of demand received through its control room and uses an organisational decision model to help staff to decide how best to resolve a call.
- The force has recently invested in its ICT provision but the full benefits are yet to be realised.

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