



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Valuing the Police: Preparedness Inspection

**Cumbria Constabulary
July 2011**

Purpose of the review

The Police Service, along with all other parts of the public sector, is facing its biggest financial challenge in a generation. This could be seen either as an opportunity to innovate and refresh – or as a reason to continue as is and see services cut back.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has been heavily involved in monitoring the Service's reaction and preparedness for cutting crime while reducing costs. As part of this, in Spring 2011 we carried out an inspection of all 43 forces and authorities in England and Wales, to assess:

- how they are planning to meet the financial challenge; and
- what the impact will be on the service they provide to the public.

This report summarises the findings for Cumbria Constabulary. A thematic report, *Adapting to Austerity*, which brings together findings from all 43 forces, is also available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

Findings for Cumbria Constabulary

What is the financial challenge in Cumbria?

Cumbria Constabulary and Cumbria Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£18.7m** cash reduction to their budget over the four years of the comprehensive spending review period (2011/12–14/15). In real terms (ie when inflation is taken into account), this equates to 13% of their gross revenue expenditure.

Are the force and authority prepared to meet this financial challenge?

The force and authority showed that they clearly understood the scale of the challenge facing them, and have considered a full range of options in developing a plan to meet it. They have produced a strategic four-year financial forecast, which outlines the estimated savings from an agreed change programme. Programme and project management structures were in place to implement this, with well-defined roles and responsibilities.

In addition, there was clear evidence that both chief officers and authority members were actively involved in the governance of the change programme. The authority had also changed its meeting structures to ensure that it provides effective oversight and monitoring of progress against the financial forecast.

What will be the impact on the number of police officers and staff?

Cumbria Constabulary planned to make the following changes to its workforce numbers.

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	1,238	826	111
31 March 2015 (proposed)	1,150	600	105

March 2010 figures have been used as the baseline, because most forces began a recruitment freeze in that year, and as a result workforce numbers started to fall. The proposed figures shown for March 2015 were provided to HMIC by the force in June 2011.

The force and authority's plans for the workforce will continue to be refined as the change programme progresses.

What will be the impact on service to the public?

Each planned change is reviewed to assess the potential impact on the service that the public receive from the force. These reviews also look at potential risk to force performance, as well as the effect on public confidence levels in the police.

The authority and force have communicated jointly with the public and other stakeholders about the changes to policing. There were plans for public consultation during 2011, in order to collect feedback that can be used to help shape the change programme.

Does the force have targets to reduce crime and ASB?

The first job of the police is to reduce crime and keep the peace; and in 2010, Theresa May, the Home Secretary, stated that she expects forces and authorities to make financial cuts while still reducing crime and without damaging the front line.

Cumbria's *Policing Plan* includes objectives to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the coming year.

