



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

**Valuing the Police:
Preparedness Inspection**

**Norfolk 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 Norfolk 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 Norfolk Constabulary

What is the financial challenge in Norfolk?

Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£24.5m** 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 have already been successfully reducing costs and improving performance over the last four years. The force has undertaken a major modernisation programme in which every area of the business has been examined and changed. This includes the pioneering introduction of a single local policing command and the cost saving centralisation of support (back office) functions. The force has re-invested savings into frontline policing, making Norfolk one of the safest communities in the country.

The force and authority fully understood the scale of the comprehensive spending review challenge, particularly the impact it could have on service delivery. They have considered a full range of options to meet this challenge over the next four years. The change plan, which places collaboration with neighbouring force Suffolk Constabulary at its heart, has been described by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary as 'exemplary'.

Norfolk's plan identified in detail where and when the force intends to realise savings over the next four years, with progress overseen by both the force and the police authority. The force plans to make significant savings through its collaboration with Suffolk Constabulary where the two forces will share their business support (eg

human resources, IT and finance), operational support (eg joint custody provision) and protective services (eg tackling serious organised crime) functions. The Norfolk and Suffolk collaboration proposals are some of the most ambitious and well planned in the country. The force has clearly laid out its expectation that the fall in workforce numbers will be offset by more efficient working and resourcing.

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

Norfolk have planned that their workforce will change as follows:

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	1,662	1,119	275
31 March 2015 (proposed)	1,500	894	230

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?

The force and authority recognised that their planned changes might have an impact on the service they deliver to their communities. To counter this, they have identified specific areas of the business where they can reduce costs, while increasing police officer visibility and availability to the public.

The force had a positive media strategy in place. It was also using comprehensive communications plans to inform stakeholders, partners and the public of the proposed changes.

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.

Norfolk's *Policing Plan* includes priorities to reduce crime and ASB in the coming year.

