



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

**Valuing the Police:
Preparedness Inspection**

**Surrey Police
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 Surrey Police. A thematic report, *Adapting to Austerity*, which brings together findings from all 43 forces, is also available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

Findings for Surrey Police

What is the financial challenge in Surrey?

Surrey Police and Surrey Police Authority reported that they are facing a **£29.7m** cash reduction to their budget over the four years of the comprehensive spending review period (2011/12–2014/15). In real terms (ie when inflation is taken into account), this equates to 12% of their gross revenue expenditure.

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

Surrey Police and Surrey Police Authority have had to contend with financial challenges for the past two to three years, which has given them recent experience in making savings. In 2010 they put in place a new single command local policing model with centralised support functions. This saved the organisation over £10m during 2010/11 and forms a platform for future cost reductions.

The force and authority clearly understood the scale of the new challenge facing them over the comprehensive spending review period, particularly around the potential impact on service delivery. They considered a full range of options in developing a proactive and detailed cost reduction plan to address the financial challenge. This identified where and when the force will realise savings over the next four years.

At the time of inspection, there was an unidentified savings gap of £5.2m. Following reassurances, HMIC is confident that the force and authority will take the necessary steps to ensure that the gap is closed. The force and authority have very sound arrangements in place for programme management and oversight of progress against the plan.

To further support the savings programme, the force has joined West Midlands Police

in a national project to consider the savings opportunities that might be achieved through partnering with the private sector on a range of services.

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

Surrey have planned that their workforce will change as follows:

	Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO
31 March 2010 (actual)	1,890	2,092	224
31 March 2015 (proposed)	1,959	2,184	222

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.

Surrey Police began a significant restructuring in 2009. A number of senior and middle management posts were kept vacant in order to provide the flexibility needed to redesign the workforce mix. Therefore, the figures shown above may be different to those provided to the public by the force, but reflect a workforce with a significantly reduced management structure.

Over the next four years the force and authority have made a commitment to increasing their police constable numbers by up to 200 prioritising these into service delivery roles.

What will be the impact on service to the public?

The force and authority have a clear vision for policing over the next four years, which prioritises service delivery to the public. The force recognised the potential that the cuts could have an impact on the service they deliver to their communities. It has taken effective action to mitigate this risk, including increasing the number of frontline constables and streamlining support (back office) services. The force and authority are committed to reducing costs while increasing frontline policing visibility and availability. However, the authority has not set the force any specific targets to reduce crime or anti social behaviour.

A comprehensive communications strategy was in place to inform staff, stakeholders, external partners such as local authorities and the wider public of the proposed organisational changes. Public consultation had taken place and there was evidence that feedback from this was influencing 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.

Surrey's *Policing Plan* signifies thier intent to reduce levels of serious crime and to tackle ASB.