



West Mercia Police has made good progress in achieving its savings for the comprehensive spending review period.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has today published a report on West Mercia Police's progress in meeting the challenges of the 2010 comprehensive spending review.

A thematic report, *Policing in Austerity: One Year On*, found that police forces across England and Wales have risen to the financial challenge of the spending review, cutting their spending while largely maintaining the service they provide to the public; but HMIC has some concerns about whether all forces have transformed their efficiency to the extent that this can be sustained through the next three years (and into future spending reviews).

Based on the data provided by the force, HMIC found that:

- West Mercia Police needs to save £31 million between March 2011 and March 2015. By spring 2012, they had planned how to save 36% of this.
- The force is planning to cut its total workforce number (i.e. police officers, police staff and police community support officers) by 820 between March 2010 and March 2015.
- 240 of these will be police officer posts; this means there will be 10% fewer officers in West Mercia (which is in line with the average officer reduction across England and Wales).
- By March 2015, 70% of West Mercia Police's total workforce will be in frontline roles. This is a lower percentage than in most other forces. However, the proportion of police officers in the frontline roles increases over the same period (from 87% to 91%). This means that by 2015 there will be a higher proportion of officers on the front line than in most other forces.
- While overall crime rates fell across England and Wales as a whole over 2011, they stayed the same in West Mercia.
- 85% of victims in West Mercia were satisfied with the service they received from the police, which is above the national average.

HM Inspector of Constabulary for the Western Region, Dru Sharpling, said:

"West Mercia Police has a history of achieving efficiencies, which has stood them in good stead to understand and address the financial challenge of the comprehensive spending review."

“The force are in a good position to make the savings they need to by March 2015, and have sufficient reserves to meet any shortfall.

“As the force develops its plans to close the rest of its funding gap it should continue to focus on maintaining the proportions of its workforce and in particular police officer in frontline crime fighting roles. This will enable the force to achieve crime reduction and make its communities safe.”

The full report for West Mercia Police, along with the national thematic review ‘Policing in austerity: One year on’, can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk

Notes to editors

1. The full thematic report ‘Policing in austerity: One year on’ and supporting material can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk
2. The review ‘Adapting to Austerity’ published in July 2011 and the accompanying force reports can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk
3. In October 2010, the government announced that the central funding provided to the police service would reduce by 20% in the four years between March 2011 and March 2015.
4. For further information, or to request an interview, HMIC’s press office can be contacted during office hours from 8:30am – 5:30pm Monday – Friday on 0203 513 0600.
5. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is an independent inspectorate, inspecting policing in the public interest, and rigorously examines the effectiveness of police forces and authorities to tackle crime and terrorism, improve criminal justice and raise confidence. HMIC inspects and regulates all 43 police forces in England and Wales together with other major policing bodies such as the Serious Organised Crime Agency, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the British Transport Police and HMRC.
6. HMIC’s out-of-hours press office line for urgent media enquiries is 07836 217 729.
7. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) carried out an inspection of all 43 police forces in England and Wales in Spring 2011, to see how they were planning to meet this financial challenge. When the results were published in July 2011 (search for ‘Valuing the Police’ on www.hmic.gov.uk), we committed to returning one year later to report on progress, and to assess whether there had been any impact on the service provided to the public.