



RESPONSE BY THE PCC TO HMIC INSPECTIONS OF CLEVELAND POLICE

INSPECTION DETAILS

Title of Inspection

Policing in Austerity: Meeting the Challenge

Date Inspection Published

22 July 2014

Type of Inspection:

- Cleveland Specific
 Follow Up
 Partner Inspection

- National
 Thematic

Is Cleveland Police quoted in the Report?

Yes

No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2010, the Government announced that central funding to the Police Service in England and Wales would reduce by 20% 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 HMIC found in the fourth year. The inspection focused on how well the force is achieving value for money. To answer this question HMIC looked at three areas:

- To what extent is the force taking the necessary steps to ensure there is 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 THE inspection, HMIC 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.

HMIC 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.

HMIC came to the following conclusions as a result of their assessment of Cleveland Police in the three areas:

To what extent is the force taking the necessary steps to ensure there is a secure financial position in the short and long term? (HMIC Judgement – Outstanding)

The report states: “The force already has a strong track record of achieving planned savings. Cleveland was set a tough financial challenge. A strong vision and effective leadership has enabled it to achieve the bulk of the savings requirement and there are clear plans in place to achieve the balance in 2014/15. The force is developing outline savings plans that extend beyond 2016. Successful partnering and collaboration with other organisations continue to play a vital role in these plans.”

To what extent has the force an affordable way of providing policing? (HMIC Judgement – Good)

The report states: “The force makes good use of working with others to achieve better value for money. Collaboration with other forces and the private sector is well-established in Cleveland and has contributed considerably to its savings. It has, and will continue to, achieve considerable savings. The force has made good overall progress in implementing its change programme. The new structure for policing has enabled it to function with considerably fewer officers and staff. The changes have taken place with minimal impact on the service to the public. There is a clear future vision involving partnership working and IT-enabled change. This will help Cleveland to provide an affordable, effective and sustainable resource model.”

To what extent is the force efficient? (HMIC Judgement – Good)

The report states: “The force has a good understanding of demand and has used this to reshape the way it provides policing. It is working innovatively to improve further its overall understanding of demand by incorporating information from partners. This will enable it to identify and include greater efficiencies in the way it uses resources. Cleveland is set to lose proportionately more police officers than other forces, but the proportion working on the front line has increased. Over the spending review the force has reduced crime, although crime levels remain higher than elsewhere. Both crime and detection rates are higher than the figures for England and Wales.”

Overall Judgement

How well does the force provide value for money?” (HMIC Judgement – Good)

The report states: “HMIC found that Cleveland Police has made excellent progress in achieving the savings it needs while working hard to protect its frontline crime-fighting roles. It has had one of the biggest reductions in police officer numbers and transformed the way it provides policing to get better value for money from fewer resources. Cleveland Police has made excellent progress in getting itself into a secure financial position. It is working hard to reduce costs and to provide a value-for-money service to its local communities.

“The force faced a difficult challenge. It needed to save 215 of its total spending over the four years of the spending review. It responded well and is on track to make all the savings it needs, as well as having found more savings for 2015/16. Importantly, the force has started to develop ambitious plans for achieving savings beyond 2016. The changes being put into place are an ambitious approach to transform the way the force provides policing, involving considerable change to the way the force works. The force has carried out extensive assessments of the demands and the risks that it faces, which it is using to redistribute resources and to reshape the way it provides policing. Frontline crime-fighting roles are being protected as it makes the cuts and neighbourhood policing remains the foundation of the force’s approach. Cleveland is making good use of its partnerships and collaboration with other organisations to ensure that savings are being made without damaging the service to the public. Cleveland Police is well placed to face the future financial challenges.”

FORCE RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Comment by the Chief Constable of Cleveland Police Jacqui Cheer:

“A great deal of work and planning has taken place over the last few years to respond to the financial challenges we have faced and I’m pleased that HMIC has recognised these efforts. “Our restructured Force model makes sense as it allows us to be more streamlined and efficient with the resources we have available whilst delivering frontline policing, which will continue to be our aim. I want to say a huge thank you to our officers, staff and partner agencies for working through our change process and helping us to implement our new structure, whilst continuing to provide a good service to the public. Our future plans have been shown to be strong and effective, but we do still have a long way to go and some difficult decisions still have to be made. Cleveland Police has faced a number of challenges over recent times and I hope that this report shows the tremendous achievements in the face of adversity. It’s really important to me that the public can see that we have moved on from the past and that we are equipping ourselves for the best possible future.”

PCC RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Comment by the Police & Crime Commissioner, Barry Coppinger:

“Everyone in Cleveland Police should be proud of what HMIC has found during this inspection as it truly reflects a police force which has faced its challenges head on and worked innovatively to find solutions. Cleveland Police has not buried its head in the sand in the face of relentless cuts; it has found new ways of working with neighbourhood policing as its cornerstone. I’m pleased that the energy and drive of officers at the helm of the Force and the improvements they have made have been recognised and that collaborative efforts and partnerships have been applauded.”

However we need to recognise that significant financial challenges remain for the Force over the next few years, and I will continue to scrutinise the accounts to ensure that the progress made so far continues.