

Committee(s): Police Performance and Resource Management Sub-Committee	Date(s): 9 th September 2013	Item no.
Subject: HMIC Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge	Public	
Report of: Commissioner of Police POL 36/13	For Information	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This report presents for your Sub Committee's information a summary of the main findings of two HMIC reports, both published on the 18th July 2013 following the recent "Valuing the Police 3 Inspection". The national report is supported by bespoke reports for every police in the country.</p> <p>The national report found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) on the whole forces responded well to the challenge; (b) the majority of forces have made cuts whilst preserving their front line officers and staff; (c) Some forces have reconfigured their neighbourhood teams to include response and investigative work, possibly to the detriment of preventative work; (d) disappointment with the progress of collaborations between forces; (e) there are five named forces who will find meeting further financial challenges extremely difficult, either due to their size or to the relatively poor quality of their response to the initial challenge. <p>The City of London bespoke report found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Force had responded well to the challenge; (b) City of London Police were one of only a few forces where the number of staff overall in frontline posts has fallen. (c) The Force is managing future risk, however, it should be able to make further cuts should that be necessary. <p>Recommendation</p> <p>It is recommended that your Sub Committee receives this report and notes its contents.</p>		

Main Report

Background

1. This report presents for your Sub Committee's information a summary of the main findings of two HMIC reports, both published on the 18th July 2013 following the recent "Valuing the Police 3 Inspection". The main report, *Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge* runs to 161 pages and presents the analysis of the results of the Valuing the Police 3 inspection from every police force. The second report is much shorter, and is bespoke to the City of London Police. HMIC has published a personalised report for each police force.
2. These reports are the third in a series that commenced with a national report '*Adapting to Austerity: A Review of Police Force and Authority Preparedness for the 2011/12 – 14/15 CSR Period*', which was followed last year by '*Policing in Austerity: One Year On*' of which your Sub Committee received a report (Pol 51/12 refers).
3. The latest inspection was designed to answer three questions:
 - (i) Have forces risen to the challenge of the spending review?
 - (ii) What has been the impact on the workforce and service delivery to the public?
 - (iii) How are forces managing future risk?

Current Position

4. The main report's principal findings are as follows:
 - (a) Overall, the response of police forces to the financial challenge has been good. Forces had to save £2.4bn over the spending review period (an average of a 17% reduction). Whilst forces' plans predict savings of £2.31bn, HMIC is confident that the residual gap of £116m will be closed by the end of the end of the CSR period.

The City of London Police was the only force in the country to reduce its financial challenge through pursuing and securing additional funding streams. This is not acknowledged in the national report but is referred to in the City of London report. Instead, the national report places the Force in the category of forces that faced a

lesser challenge compared to some forces. This is despite representations being made at the time of the inspection and following the inspection during the formal feedback process that the Force's innovative approach to reducing the funding gap should not be viewed as the Force facing a lesser challenge.

Forces cited in the report as responding very strongly to a comparatively difficult challenge are Hampshire, Greater Manchester, Lincolnshire, Northumbria and West Midlands. The City of London police are deemed to have delivered a proportionate response to a comparatively modest challenge.

- (b) Most forces have plans in place to balance their books by the end of the CSR, and whilst substantial changes have often had to be made, forces on the whole have achieved this by increasing the proportion of the workforce on the frontline as well as achieving crime reductions and increased victim satisfaction.

Whilst the City of London Police has also increased the proportion of staff and officers dedicated to frontline duties as defined by HMIC, the proportion within CoLP is lower than other forces. The Force did reduce the number of support posts, after analysis conducted as part of the City First Change Programme. However, this is not straightforward as many of the posts held by civilian staff are actually operational in nature, such as intelligence analysts/ officers which are classed as 'frontline'. So whilst the City First Change Programme was underway, growth in new areas due to new funding streams coming on line, such as National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB), and other areas of ECD then increased the number of posts held by civilian support staff. As explained, these are not however, all 'support' posts but some are classed as frontline. Additionally, in a number of specialist units, it was not possible to reduce the number of support posts simply owing to 'critical mass' and Units already operating at the smallest viable size, to provide the required services. An example of this is the Covert Authorities Bureau which has certain role requirements in order to comply with legislation. The fact, therefore, that the Force has reduced its officer numbers whilst maintaining the number of people in support posts has resulted in the Force being shown in an unflattering positioning in the national comparison tables. However, the business of the Force is such that many civilian support staff hold operational roles.

- (c) HMIC is concerned that some forces (not identified) have chosen to make savings by broadening the remit of neighbourhood policing

teams to include tasks traditionally carried out by response officers and investigators. HMIC feels this could prejudice preventative work and impact negatively on service delivery to the public.

Whilst the Force did restructure its Wards teams as part of the City First Change Programme, the neighbourhood policing function was not brigaded with other parts of Uniform Response policing or investigative work and was kept as a discrete area of policing.

- (d) HMIC is deeply disappointed with progress on collaboration, with most forces still making less than 10% of their savings from opportunities presented by working with other forces and partners.

Your Sub Committee Members will be aware that the Force extensively explored a number of collaboration opportunities as part of the City First Change Programme, principally with the British Transport Police in the provision of Learning and Development and Professional Standards. Although the Force chose not to pursue those opportunities, it did so with a sound rationale. This was presented in reports to your Grand Committee in July 2012 (Pol 40/12 refers) and more recently in January 2013 (Pol 2/13 refers). However, the extensive work carried out during the assessment of collaboration opportunities resulted in significant savings for the Force. HMIC notes that forces cannot “afford the luxury of failing to collaborate” in the future. The Force does not view its decision not to pursue certain collaborations as a luxury, but as operational expediency.

One of the areas HMIC found particularly disappointing with respect to collaboration was the provision of IT services, citing that whilst forces were pursuing some interesting avenues, nationally the picture is fragmented.

- (e) HMIC considers five forces¹ will find it extremely difficult to cope with further cuts post 2015 either because of their size or local circumstances, which means making further savings will be inherently challenging or because their initial response to the financial challenge was weaker than other forces.

5. The national report makes 10 recommendations; some are specifically aimed at forces whilst others are intended for the Home Office and the

¹ West Yorkshire Police; South Yorkshire Police; Northamptonshire Police; Lincolnshire Police; Bedfordshire Police. All five forces were identified in national media following the publication of the report.

College of Policing. Recommendations made by the report relevant to forces are:

- (i) **Recommendation 1** - All chief constables and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) should review their plans to deliver savings to ensure they are doing all they can to continue to reduce crime and protect the front line while balancing their budgets.

The Force will formally review City First in the autumn. Additionally, City Futures will ensure that the Force continues to explore and implement new and innovative ways of making savings and continuing to work effectively to address criminality, within budget.

- (ii) **Recommendation 2** - Chief constables and PCCs planning to reduce the proportion of their workforce and/or police officers on the front line should assess whether they have taken the decisive action seen in many forces in order to maintain their crime fighting capacity.

Whilst the Force has reduced officer numbers, the Force is confident that this will not in the longer term adversely affect its crime fighting capacity or capability.

- (iii) **Recommendation 3** - The Police IT company should urgently work with forces and PCCs to provide an IT capability that supports the frontline officer and delivers better value for money.

Your Sub Committee Members will be aware that the Force's recent application to join the East Coast Information Systems group was declined. The Force is exploring alternative opportunities to improve its provision of information services and will engage willingly with any central plans or initiatives to deliver improved IT, more efficiently. The Force is continuing with the Athena project, which is a new Crime and Intelligence System, along with a number of other Forces nationally.

- (iv) **Recommendation 4** - Chief constables and PCCs should review their plans for collaboration. In particular they should consider whether there is scope to deliver better value for money and improved capability and capacity through joint working with other forces, the public and/or the private sector.

The Force's position vis-à-vis collaboration has already been articulated (see paragraph 4(d)). Whilst the Force does not discount the possibility of future collaborations, and will actively seek them out where it is operationally right to do so, there are no immediate plans to enter into any collaborations additional to those that already exist.

- (v) **Recommendation 5** - Chief constables and PCCs delivering less than 10% of their savings through collaboration should assess whether there is scope to improve on this position.

As immediately above, at the present time the Force does not believe there is scope to improve on the current position.

(Recommendations 5 - 9 all relate to the Home Office and College of Policing and are not reproduced).

- (vi) **Recommendation 10** - Police forces, the Home Office, HMIC and the College of Policing should all work together to develop a longer term approach for policing in an era of sustained budget reductions. Specifically, this should address:

- How best to assess demand in the context of falling recorded crime; and
- How best to distribute resources in a period of continuing austerity which maximises all forces' chances of withstanding further reductions and incentivises forces and PCCs to deliver efficient and effective policing.

Main Challenge for City of London Police

6. As previously mentioned in paragraph 4, the Force has secured additional funding streams. However, in the report relating specifically to City of London Police, the HMIC have highlighted this as risk, as a third of the Force's income comes from funding streams that are reviewed annually and could be withdrawn. However, they acknowledge that "..... This is a potential risk but one the force is aware of and is mitigating, primarily by making use of temporary contracts".
7. The Force will continue to work closely with Police Committee and will engage with all relevant agencies and organisations to ensure that it is best placed to provide a best possible service to the City of London, fight crime and operate within budget.

Conclusion

8. The Force acquitted itself well in the inspection and this is borne out by the both the national report and the bespoke City of London report. It is unfortunate that HMIC did not recognise that the Force's innovative approach to private funding did not change the scale of the original challenge the Force faced. The City of London Police will note the recommendations and as indicated within the report and take action where appropriate.

Background Papers:

- **Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge**, Published by HMIC 18th July 2013
- **The City of London Police's Response to the funding challenge**, Published by HMIC 18th July 2013

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