RESPONSES BY THE PCC TO HMIC INSPECTIONS OF MERSEYSIDE POLICE

INSPECTION DETAILS

Title of Inspection
Responding to austerity – Merseyside Police

Date Inspection Published
July 2014

Deadline for Response
2nd September 2014

Type of Inspection:
☑ Merseyside specific
☐ National
☐ Follow up
☐ Thematic
☐ Partner Inspection

Is Merseyside Police quoted?
☑ Yes
☐ No

Recommendations?
☑ National
☐ Local

FORCE RESPONSE:

It is pleasing to note that HMIC are reassured by the level of detail that underpins the Force’s saving plans and by the leadership team’s ability and determination to make changes while fighting crime and keeping local communities safe. This is reflected by the overall ‘GOOD’ judgment received by the Force. This was awarded on the basis that the Force is on track to meet its financial challenge from the CSR period and for the following year 2015/16. The Force is also planning for further funding reductions and future financial pressures. In addition, HMIC recognise that the Force has an understanding of the issues we face and a comprehensive and well-managed change programme to achieve the savings required.

It is also noted that despite austerity measures, HMIC comment that the Force’s response to emergency and priority calls has improved and continues to meet targets. In addition, recorded crime has reduced by 6% whilst satisfaction with the overall service provided by the Force – 86.9% - is higher than the national average.

In accordance with HMIC’s recommendations we will continue to review our savings plans including options for collaboration with other forces and organisations. In meeting the savings requirement, we will continue to prioritise delivery of neighbourhood policing as a means of fighting crime and protecting our communities.
PCC RESPONSE TO THE REPORT:

I welcome this report as it records the effective and efficient work being undertaken by Merseyside Police to manage the impact of the savage cuts to their budget imposed by the Coalition government. The Chief Constable, his senior team, staff associations and trade unions have worked hard to protect frontline policing and I have been privileged to be able to support the Force as they have continued to deliver a first class service to the people of Merseyside.

I am pleased that HMIC have acknowledged this commitment and the professionalism demonstrated here which has led to the award of the overall ‘GOOD’ judgement. Since 2010, Merseyside Police have implemented a cut of £60million to their budget of around £330million. It is anticipated that, unless there is a change of policy or government, a further cut of £40million will be required which will result in an overall loss of 40% of its staff - that is police officers, PCSOs and staff combined.

In line with HMIC’s recommendations I am confident that Merseyside Police will continue to review savings plans and will examine opportunities for collaboration. However, it is of great concern that there is little recognition at a national level of the ability of this Force to continue to meet in its entirety the call for resources to be available for the National Policing Requirement. This resource commitment is determined by Ministers and defined by the Strategic Policing Requirement.

Merseyside Police and I as the Commissioner are required to have regard to the Strategic Policing Requirement in setting the budget and deciding how the budget is allocated.

Ministers have an equal responsibility. If they will the end in the name of national security and call it the Strategic Policing Requirement then they must also will the means to those charged with carrying out the policy.

Cuts notwithstanding, I will work with the Chief Constable and partner agencies to continually review all of the ways in which we can improve the safety and security of the public on Merseyside.

Jane Kennedy, Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner

DATE RESPONSE SENT: 2nd September 2014

(Responses to be sent to sofs.section55responses@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk & PCC@hmic.gsi.gov.uk)