

HMIC – Policing in Austerity and PEEL

Purpose of report

For information and discussion.

Summary

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has been leading a debate in policing circles about how the service should address further budget reductions. It has also introduced a new assessment process for police forces – police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy programme or PEEL. Adam Pemberton from HMIC will attend the Board meeting to brief members on both these strands of HMIC work.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

- (a) Note HMIC's work on policing in austerity and the inspection of police forces;
- (b) Explore whether there are any shared objectives between HMIC's work on policing in austerity and the LGA's work on reforming the funding for local government and greater devolution of power to local areas; and
- (c) Consider how the PEEL assessments of individual forces could be made more useful to local authorities.

Action

Officers to progress as directed.

Contact officer: Mark Norris
Position: Principal Policy Adviser, LGA
Phone no: 020 7664 3241
E-mail: mark.norris@local.gov.uk

HMIC – Policing in Austerity and PEEL

Background

1. HMIC published its first report in 2011 into how police forces were responding to the reductions in central government funding announced in October 2010. Further reports have followed at the rate of one a year, and have tracked how forces are making the savings they need to meet these budget reductions and what effect this has had on the services the police provide to the public. The 2014 report, *Policing in Austerity: Meeting the Challenge*, highlighted a number of difficulties and risks that police forces are likely to face with additional budget reductions in the next spending review period. It also called for a considered and open debate about how policing is best funded and organised in the future.

The national debate on policing in austerity

2. Following publication of *Policing in Austerity: Meeting the Challenge* HMIC established the National Debate Advisory Group to lead this debate. The group brought together experts from across the police service to discuss a number of questions. Representatives from the College of Policing, police and crime commissioners, chief constables, police officer representative bodies, academics, voluntary sector and other organisations in fields relevant to crime prevention and civil servants were brought together to consider a range of options for the future of policing in a time of further budget reductions.
3. The questions put together by the National Debate Advisory Group for discussion covered: the role and mission of the police service in the future; what functions should be provided locally, what regionally and what nationally; what models of integrating local public services to prevent and reduce crime could be adopted more widely; how should central government grant be distributed and what freedoms and flexibilities should there be to raise additional funds; and, at what point might a force be unviable.
4. The debate on these issues took place on 5 March 2015. This included presentations on the changing demands facing the police, in particular the analysis conducted by the College of Policing of the work undertaken by forces. On a typical day, in an average force, the College estimated officers will make 50 arrests, deal with 101 anti-social behaviour incidents, respond to 12 missing person reports, deal with 9 road traffic collisions and respond to 14 incidents linked to mental health issues. At the same time this average force will be supporting around 2,700 families in the troubled families programme, approximately 1,600 domestic abuse victims, 1,000 children on Child Protection Plans, and managing 1,189 sexual and violent offenders.
5. Much of the discussion at the event on 5 March concluded, as did *Policing in Austerity: Meeting the Challenge*, that with no immediate end in sight to austerity, and opportunities for savings and efficiencies fewer due to reductions that had already been made, more radical changes would be needed in the future. Greater multi-agency working to intervene early to prevent crimes being committed in the first place thereby reducing demand, targeting activity at problems linked with offending and re-offending and increased collaboration between forces and other public services were all identified

as important ways forward. There was also discussion around providing forces with greater financial flexibility and the ability to raise more funding locally. It is likely that the report on the options for the future of policing will pick up on all these elements when it is published on 5 June.

6. As members will recognise there is considerable overlap with the themes and points identified in HMIC's national debate and those the LGA has been making in its Rewiring Public Services and the First 100 Days campaigns. Joint work with HMIC, the National Police Chiefs' Council and police and crime commissioners may therefore add weight to the changes the LGA is pushing government to make around devolution of powers and providing local areas with greater financial flexibility. The level of overlap is something members may wish to explore with HMIC at the meeting.

Police Effectiveness Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Inspections

7. The PEEL programme of inspections has been introduced by HMIC to give the public the information they need to be able to judge the performance of their force and policing as a whole. In recent years HMIC has undertaken inspections on specific subjects or services, but even when combined these do not provide a rounded assessment of the 43 forces in England and Wales, so PEEL has been developed to fill this gap. The 2014 PEEL assessment piloted the approach with evidence drawn together from annual all-force inspections carried out by HMIC. The assessment looked at three areas:
 - 7.1 The effectiveness of a force in carrying out its responsibilities, including cutting crime, protecting the vulnerable, tackling anti-social behaviour, and dealing with emergencies.
 - 7.2 The efficiency of the force in relation to how it provides value for money.
 - 7.3 The legitimacy of the force and whether it operates fairly, ethically and within the law.
8. HMIC established a stakeholder advisory group to work with them on the methodology to be used for the assessment of forces' effectiveness, with Cllr Sophie Linden representing the Board on this group.
9. The first PEEL assessment for each force was published on 27 November 2014. Under the assessment HMIC gave a graded judgement on how the force had performed in some of the areas related to effectiveness and efficiency. The 2015 PEEL assessments will see graded judgements made across all the areas related to effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy. These graded judgements describe forces' performance as outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate. For the 2014 assessments 39 forces were judged as good, one as outstanding and three as requiring improvement. Information is available for each force on the HMIC website. This force information provides a summary of the force performance against the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy criteria. More detail is available under these headings against the questions that HMIC used as part of the assessment process.
10. The PEEL assessment information is of greatest direct relevance to police and crime panels and their scrutiny of police and crime commissioners. HMIC gave a presentation

at the training event for panels that the Board ran in November 2014 on the PEEL assessment and what information would be available as a result, and information was circulated to panel officers about the PEEL assessments. Members' views are sought on how the PEEL assessments could be made more helpful to local authorities.

Next steps

11. Members are invited to:
 - 11.1 Note HMIC's work on policing in austerity and the inspection of police forces;
 - 11.2 Explore whether there are any shared objectives between HMIC's work on policing in austerity and the LGA's work on reforming the funding for local government and greater devolution of power to local areas; and
 - 11.3 Consider how the PEEL assessments of individual forces could be made more useful to local authorities.

Financial Implications

12. There are no financial implications arising from this report, and any work identified will be met from existing resources.