



## DEBATE PACK

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# Opposition Day Debate: Policing

By Benjamin Politowski

## Wednesday 4 November 2015 House of Commons Chamber

For the 9<sup>th</sup> allotted Opposition Day Debate occurring on the afternoon of Wednesday 4 November, the subject *Policing* has been chosen. The proceedings of this debate may be watched on [parliamentlive.tv](http://parliamentlive.tv)

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most, but not all, non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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### Summary

Policing in the UK is a devolved issue: the Home Office is responsible for the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales as well as the British Transport Police.

Police Scotland is controlled by the Scottish Government through the [Scottish Police Authority](#). The [Police Service of Northern Ireland](#) is controlled by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Proposals for reform of the police and police funding in England and Wales have been controversial with arguments over the potential impact this will have on police numbers and crime rates.

Police officer numbers in the forces in England and Wales are now at their lowest since 1987 (see section 1.1).

The existing arrangements for police funding have been criticised as being complex and lacking transparency. In July 2015, the Government issued a consultation on the reform of police funding in England and Wales. The consultation is available to view on GOV.UK: [Reforming police funding arrangements in England and Wales](#). The consultation is closed and the responses being analysed.

# 1. Relevant Statistics

## 1.1 Police Numbers

### England & Wales

There were 128,818 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in the 43 police forces of England and Wales on the 31 March 2015. This was a decrease of 1,091 (0.9%) compared to the previous year.

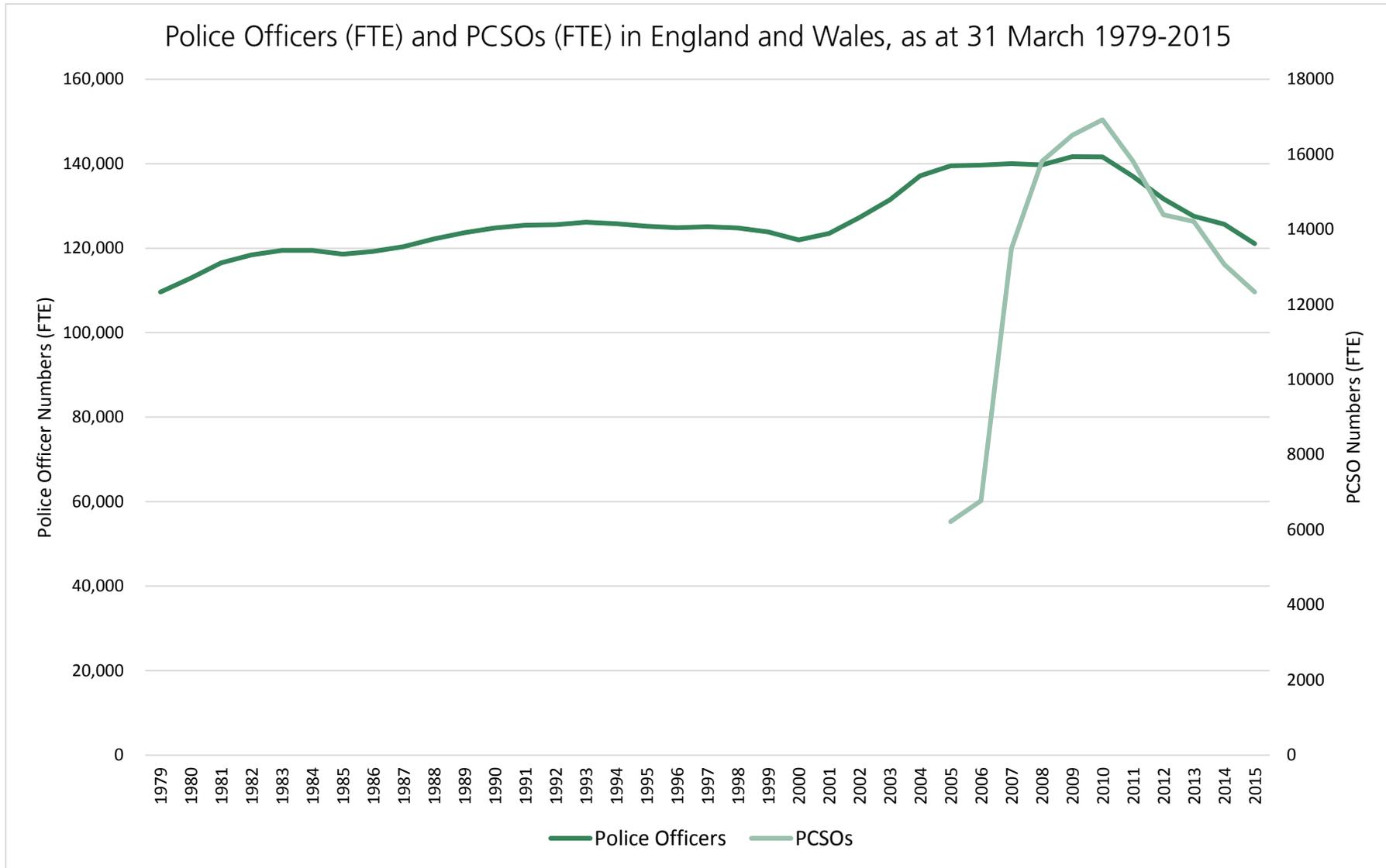
In addition there were 292 central service secondees and 2,877 British Transport Police officers.

Since March 2003 the headline number of police officers in England and Wales has included those who are on a career break or maternity/paternity leave. If this group are excluded, to allow for longer term comparisons, then the number of officers at March 2015 was 121,078; the lowest level since March 1987.

Since 2010 there are nearly 17,000 fewer FTE police officers, a reduction of nearly 12%.

Police forces recruited 5,589 officers in the 12 months to March 2014, with 6,904 officers leaving during the same period.

The following page shows a graph of the number of FTE police officers since 1979 (excluding those on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave) and the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) since 2005. Data for individual forces is provided in an accompanying spreadsheet to this debate pack.



## 1.2 Funding

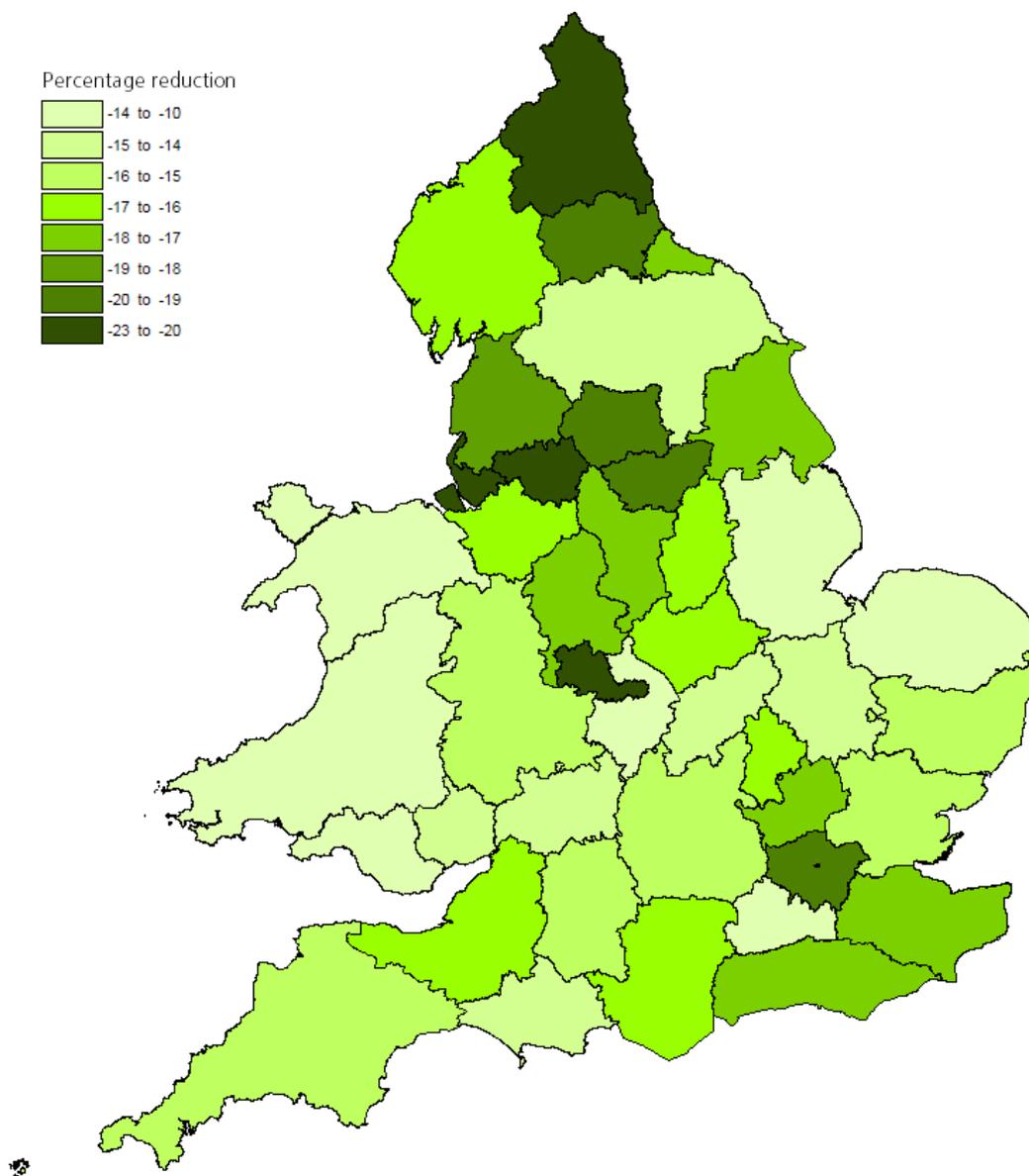
PCCs in England and Wales can raise funds locally through council tax precepts. The large differences between the proportions of funding raised through council tax means that the effect of the reduction in central government grant on individual forces has varied. Those most reliant on government funding have been most affected.

The NAO analysis shows that real-terms funding once local taxation had been taken into account saw a much wider range between individual forces. The average reduction for all forces was 18% but the range for individual forces was a real terms reduction of 12% for Surrey, which has the lowest reliance on central government funding, to 23% reductions for Northumbria and West Midlands, the two forces most reliant on government grant.

The map below shows which police forces in England and Wales are most affected by the real terms reduction in police funding between 2010/11 – 2015/16.

For more information on police funding please see the Commons Library Breifing Paper, [Police Funding](#).

**Real terms reduction in police funding – central government grant and council tax precept – 2010/11 to 2015/16**



## 2. Parliamentary Business

### 2.1 Parliamentary Questions

The following is a small selection of recent PQs relevant to this debate. To search for more parliamentary business relating to this, or any other topic, please use [Parliamentary Search](#).

#### **Police: Cumbria [12050]**

**Asked by: Mr Jamie Reed on 15 October 2015**

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to set out in the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review that police budgets in Cumbria should not be reduced.

**Answered by: Greg Hands on 20 October 2015**

Police reform is working and crime is down by more than a quarter since 2010, according to the independent Crime Survey for England and Wales.

As with other spending decisions, no decisions have been taken on police funding beyond 2015/16. Future funding levels will be subject to the outcome of the Spending Review later this year.

#### **Police: Finance [10537]**

**Asked by: Kane, Mike on 17 September 2015**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of funding within police budgets to deal with non-crime demands, such as cases involving missing persons.

**Answered by: Mr John Hayes on 12 October 2015**

Police and Crime Commissioners, working with their Chief Officers, are responsible for allocating funding according to local priorities. This includes providing resources for cases involving missing persons. The Government is clear that the way that funding is allocated is currently opaque and out of date and have consulted on a new model to ensure fairness and transparency. The consultation closed on 15 September and responses are being analysed. The consultation drew on the recently published College of Policing report "Estimating demand on the police service" which included analysis of non crime demand. The report is available on the College of Policing website.

## Police: Finance [[10335](#)]

### **Asked by: Mike Kane on 15 September 2015**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to ensure that the ongoing police funding formula consultation contains an adequate equality impact assessment.

### **Answered by: Mike Penning on 12 October 2015**

The consultation on police funding arrangements closed on 15 September and the responses are being analysed. The Government will consider these responses carefully to determine what changes, if any, are required. At this stage final force-level allocations have not been set and will not be determined until we have completed our analysis. We will continue to engage with policing partners during this process and intend to provide information, including exemplifications of future allocations, as these develop.

Alongside the development of the new funding model, we are developing a Policy Equalities Statement which will set out how this work has been completed in compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty

## Police: Finance [[10536](#)]

### **Asked by: Jack Dromey on 16 September 2015**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she will provide the information on the police formula requested by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands; and how the exemplifications described in Annex A of her Department's letter of 15 September 2015 will affect that force.

### **Answered by: Mr John Hayes 12 October 2015**

The consultation on police funding arrangements closed on 15 September and the responses are being analysed. The Government will consider these responses carefully to determine what changes, if any, are required. We will continue to engage with policing partners during this process and intend to provide information, including exemplifications of future allocations, as these develop. At this stage final force-level allocations have not been set and will not be determined until we have completed our analysis.

## Police Funding Formula [[HC Deb 12 Oct 15 cc1-3](#)]

### Oral Questions to the Home Secretary, 12 October 2015

**Nick Smith (Blaenau Gwent) (Lab):** What modelling has been conducted by her Department on the potential effect on individual police forces proposed changes to the police funding formula. [901481]

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mrs Theresa May):** How funding should be allocated to the police in future is a complex and important matter, and we conducted a detailed analytical review before launching a public consultation on reform of the current funding arrangements. We have considered carefully the responses received from that consultation, and my right hon. Friend the Policing Minister has written to all police and crime commissioners and chief constables with refinements to the proposed model in the light of the feedback received.

**Nick Smith:** In 2013-14, just 22% of the 7.3 million emergency and priority incidents that the police responded to were crime-related. The police are being asked to shoulder the workload caused by cuts in other Departments, and the Public Accounts Committee has stated that the Home Office has no data about that added burden. How will the Home Office work with other Departments to ensure that the impact of spending decisions is not borne wholly by the police service?

**Mrs May:** The Home Office is already working with other Departments to ensure that, if matters are better the responsibility of other Departments, those other Departments take them on board. A good example is what we have been doing for people with mental health needs. We have worked with the Department of Health, and it has provided funding to ensure more places of safety that are not police cells. We have significantly reduced the use of police cells for those in mental health crisis or with mental health problems. As a result resources have been released for the police and, crucially, there are much better outcomes for people with mental health problems and issues.

**Damian Green (Ashford) (Con):** Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is important for police forces to spend their money effectively, and that the police innovation fund helps them to do that? Does she share my delight that Kent police have decided to issue every front-line officer with a body-worn camera that increases the effectiveness of police patrolling, as well as helping to keep officers safe?

**Mrs May:** My right hon. Friend makes a good point, and I commend him for the work on the innovation fund that he did when he was Policing Minister. This is an important development and he is right to welcome and commend Kent police for what they are doing with body-worn video cameras. That is an important step forward. We are also looking at the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 to ensure that every part of the system can support the use of evidence from body-worn video cameras. I am sure the whole House recognises that that important step forward is of benefit to the police but also to victims.

**Keith Vaz (Leicester East) (Lab):** Chief Constable Steve Finnigan of Lancashire police recently described the cuts to policing as “nothing short of madness”. Although I welcome the Government’s decision to consult on the funding formula, and the Policing Minister’s ability to engage with local forces, under the proposed model a constabulary such as Leicestershire could lose up to £700,000 a year, while others would gain. Does the Home Secretary agree that it is time to make the case to the Chancellor that the Home Office should be a protected Department because it deals with the security and safety of the British public?

**Mrs May:** I am interested in the right hon. Gentleman’s question. In his capacity as Chair of the Home Affairs Committee he has previously questioned the funding formula for policing, and indicated that an alternative formula might be a better way forward. That is what we are doing; we are trying to find a formula that will work across police forces, and that is why we held and responded to a public consultation. As I said earlier, my right hon. Friend the Policing Minister has written to police and crime commissioners and chief constables with a revision of that formula, and he will discuss the matter with them.

**Mr Philip Hollobone (Kettering) (Con):** Northamptonshire police have been particularly innovative in finding joint operational and cost-saving initiatives with the local fire service, but it faces a particular challenge involving violent crime. How might those two important factors be factored into the new police funding formula?

**Mrs May:** I welcome my hon. Friend’s comments on Northamptonshire police, who have indeed been very innovative. They have been at the forefront of work to join together the police force and the fire authority to ensure savings and a better service for the people of the county of Northamptonshire. We are trying to adopt a funding formula that is simpler than the previous one, that is fair across the board and that people can look at and understand; a funding formula where people can appreciate why the elements are in there. That cannot be said of the current funding formula.

## Police Funding [[HC Deb 6 July 2015 cc6-7](#)]

### Oral Questions to the Home Secretary, 6 July 2015

**Andy McDonald (Middlesbrough) (Lab):** What assessment she has made of the level of regional variation in real-terms funding changes for police forces. [900743]

**The Minister for Policing, Crime and Criminal Justice (Mike Penning):** The way the funding formula works means that there is no change based on the region someone is in.

**Andy McDonald:** The Government have made vague references to a review of the grossly unfair police funding formula, but there is no confirmation as yet of when it will conclude. Cleveland, which has one of the highest numbers of crimes per head of population, has experienced a reduction of 18% in overall funding since 2010, whereas Surrey, which has one of the lowest numbers, has experienced a reduction of 12%. That shows how Cleveland has been disadvantaged by cuts being made with no account taken of local need and circumstances. What assistance will the Minister give to forces that are struggling to keep officers on the front line, pending the review?

**Mike Penning:** The funding formula for 2015-16 has been announced. Crime in Cleveland has dropped by 12%, which is what I think the hon. Gentleman was alluding to. We will consult this summer on the new funding formula for 2016-17 so we have a fairer formula than that which we inherited from the Labour party.

**Helen Whately (Faversham and Mid Kent) (Con):** What discussions has the Secretary of State had with her counterparts in France to avoid a repeat of the disruption last week in Calais, which placed such an onerous burden on the Kent police and the people of Kent?

**Mike Penning:** My ministerial colleagues and the Secretary of State have many conversations with their French counterparts at all levels, particularly in Calais.

[900759] **Rosie Cooper (West Lancashire) (Lab):** The Lancashire police federation is clear that further cuts to police budgets will soon result in policing becoming reactive, with only the capacity to deal with 999 calls. Given that 83% of Lancashire police's work does not generate a crime number, who is going to pick up the work that the police cannot do because of the cuts?

**Mike Penning:** What we have proven since 2010 is that police forces can do better with less and they are being much more efficient around the country, including Lancashire where crime is down by 10%. The funding formula for 2015-16 is out, so forces know exactly what they can spend, and the 2016-17 consultation will start soon. You never know: Cleveland may do better. There will be winners and losers, but I hope it will be fairer.

**Mr Philip Hollobone (Kettering) (Con):** Crime levels overall in Northamptonshire have fallen substantially in the past five years, despite a very difficult funding background. However, violent crime remains stubbornly high. Might the funding available for our police forces reflect levels of violent crime?

**Mike Penning:** One of the things we definitely want is for hon. Members, the police and crime commissioners and local communities to be part of the consultation, and my hon. Friend's comments could well be part of that commentary.

**Jack Dromey (Birmingham, Erdington) (Lab):** Recorded crime has risen in the west midlands and Northumbria and fallen in Surrey, yet West Midlands police and Northumbria police have been hit by Government cuts twice as hard as Surrey police. The Prime Minister now talks of fairness in one nation, but how can it be fair that the areas of highest need are the hardest hit by his Government?

**Mike Penning:** The funding reductions were the same across the country. We are making sure—I hope Her Majesty's Opposition take part in this—that we look very carefully at the changes we are proposing to funding and the funding formula. I look forward to sitting with the hon. Gentleman, which he has not taken the time to do in all the time I have been the Minister for Policing, Crime and Criminal Justice, and talking about the funding formula that he goes on and on about.

## 2.2 Debates

### Westminster Hall: West Midlands Police Funding

On 9 September 2015, a Westminster Hall Debate was held on the motion, 'That this House has considered funding for West Midlands Police'. West Midlands is the force most affected by the real terms reduction in funding. The member in charge of the debate was Richard Burden. The text of the debate may be read in Hansard at:

[HC Deb 9 September 2015 cc89-112WH](#)

### Westminster Hall: Police Numbers (Wales)

On 24 February 2015, a Westminster Hall Debate was held on the motion, 'That this House has considered police numbers in Wales'. The member in charge of the debate was Chris Evans and the full text of the debate may be found at:

[HC Deb 24 February 2015 cc66-72WH](#)

## 2.3 Early Day Motion

### EDM 537: Merseyside Police Funding

That this House expresses strong concern that Merseyside Police is being forced to consider cutting jobs, disbanding its mounted section and its basic command unit structure, which has served Merseyside well for over 40 years; notes that Merseyside Police estimates that it will face grant cuts of four per cent for each of the next three years, which will result in the Force having to cut a further 1,300 police officer and staff posts by 2018-19; is alarmed that following the comprehensive spending review announcement scheduled for 25 November 2015, grant reductions could increase to over five per cent; further notes that these proposed cuts would come on top of the 1,600 posts cut since 2010; is deeply concerned that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, Jane Kennedy, has rightly felt it necessary to point out that these cuts will inevitably lead to a reduction in Merseyside Police's ability to investigate sex offences, hate crimes and serious and organised crime; and calls on the Government, in the interests of public safety, not to make any further cuts to Merseyside Police's grant.

Primary sponsor: George Howarth, 19 Oct 2015 | 537 (session 2015-16)

## 3. Press Release from HMIC

### HM Inspectorate of Constabulary

#### **Forces' future efficiency must improve to meet financial pressures, 19 October 2015**

The police service faces major challenges in the years ahead from reduced budgets, fewer officers and more complex crime, according to a report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC).

Report – [PEEL: police efficiency in 2015](#)

This inspection looked at how well forces understand the demand for their service and how well they match their resources to that demand and provides an assessment of their efficiency. The report is accompanied by separate reports on each force, based on inspections carried out from March to June 2015 and data provided by forces on their spending plans for future years. HMIC graded five forces as 'outstanding', 29 were 'good', eight as 'requires improvement' and for the first time, one force has been found to be 'inadequate'.

HMI Mike Cunningham, who led the inspection, said:

"Police forces have been through change on an unprecedented scale since 2010. It is a tribute to the leadership of the police service and to officers, PCSOs and staff in all forces that the service has, on the whole, been able to absorb that change while measured crime has continued to fall and public satisfaction with the police has been maintained.

"The next five years will be more challenging for forces as they strive to make further reductions in budgets and workforce, while dealing with increasingly complex crime. Policing is entering uncharted waters.

"Forces have made great strides in assessing the current demand for their service, however they need to improve their ability to forecast demand. Only by achieving this level of understanding can forces make informed decisions on how to make best use of their resources. Typically forces think in terms of numbers of officers and staff when developing workforce plans, rather than their skills and capabilities that will be required in the future. They need to start building their capability now, informed by a clearer understanding of future demand."

This comes at a time of great financial uncertainty for the police service, with the outcome of the review of the police funding formula yet to be announced and the overall level of funding to be announced in the next Spending Review not due until November.

Most forces have a good understanding of the current demand for their service and they know their current capacity (the costs and numbers of their workforce). Too many forces have a weak understanding of their current capabilities (that is, the skills their workforces have).

Forces have little understanding of their future demand and the capability they need to meet it. The future planning and modernisation that is taking place in forces is driven by capacity – how much money

forces will have and how many people they can afford to employ, rather than what forces are likely to have to do.

Forces need to improve their understanding of future demand and link it to their financial and organisational planning, so that they are in a fit shape to face their future challenge.

Forces' IT needs to improve considerably – HMIC has commented on this in previous reports. Too many systems are weak and ageing, and the service is not optimising the use of IT to make them efficient.

Forces are planning large reductions in their budgets and workforce, but at the time of the inspection both the outcome of the Spending Review and the Government's consultation on changes to the police funding formula were unknown. The robustness of forces' financial planning varies considerably and forces are planning large reductions in their reserves in the years ahead. The reductions in forces' workforces are likely to lead to a further erosion in neighbourhood policing.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary Sir Thomas Winsor said:

"In order to ensure significant improvements in forces' understanding of future demand, workforce capability and capacity, availability and means of deployment of resources, and what needs to be done to boost efficiency, HMIC is developing a template force management statement. Each force will be required to produce an annual statement covering all these areas, projecting demand, capacity, capability and efficiency improvements for 4-5 years ahead. Force management statements will follow a national template but be sensitive to and reflective of local circumstances, including principally the police and crime plan issued by the police and crime commissioner."

As forces' budgets reduce further, without significant efficiency improvements, some forces could become financially unsustainable or operationally unviable; it is conceptually possible that even an efficient force could become financially unsustainable or operationally unviable if its funding does not match the plans of its police and crime commissioner.

Whilst forces are likely to face considerable pressures to maintain and improve service with reduced budgets, their most promising way of meeting those pressures will come from significant advances in efficiency and a more skilful workforce led by leaders of high ability.

## 4. Media Articles

The following is a small selection of recent press and media articles relevant to this debate. Please note: the Library is not responsible for the views expressed in, nor the accuracy of, external content.

**Independent, 3 November 2015**

[Police cuts: Commissioners threaten to sue Government over 'unjustified' budget reforms](#)

**BBC News, 3 November 2015**

[Police chiefs threaten Home Office with legal action over reforms](#)

**The Guardian, 3 November 2015**

[Crime commissioners threaten legal action over police cuts](#)

**The Telegraph, 3 November 2015**

[Private security firm paid to fill void left by police cuts](#)

**Independent, 30 October 2015**

[Police Cuts: PCSOs step in as forces plan for major staffing cuts](#)

**Telegraph, 20 October 2015**

[Bobbies on the beat could vanish, warns police watchdog](#)

**The Guardian, 4 September 2015**

[Police force threatens to sue Theresa May over funding plans](#)

**Telegraph, 2 September 2015**

[Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe says he will 'fight' over police budget cuts](#)

**Guardian, 31 August 2015**

[Police force could lose 22,000 jobs under new spending cuts](#)

**BBC, 20 July 2015**

[Police forces must reform to survive cuts, says new chief](#)

**Guardian, 7 March 2015**

[Tory cuts will increase risk of terror attacks – police chief](#)

**Telegraph, 3 February 2015**

[Scotland Yard could be forced to cut frontline police officers](#)

**Guardian, 18 October 2014**

[Police budget cuts: unpaid volunteers now used in key roles](#)

## 5. Further Information

### 5.1 Parliamentary Briefings

Commons Library Briefing, [Crime \(Social Indicators\)](#), SN02617

Commons Library Briefing, [Police Funding](#), CBP7279

Commons Library Briefing, [Police Numbers \(Social Indicators\)](#), SN02615

Commons Library Debate Pack, [Police and Fire Shared Services](#), 2015/87

POST Note, [Trends in Crime and Criminal Justice](#), PN0507

POST Brief, [Body-Worn Video in UK Policing](#), PB0014

### 5.2 Home Affairs Committee

The Home Affairs Committee currently have an open inquiry into the [Reform of the Police Funding Formula](#). Written evidence submitted to the committee so far may be viewed on the committee's internet pages. They are hearing oral evidence in relation to this inquiry on Tuesday 3 November at 1445hrs. The evidence session may be viewed live, and after the event, on [parliamentlive.tv](#)

The committee previously heard oral evidence in relation to the police funding formula in relation to their inquiry into Psychoactive substances; the proceedings of this session may be read at [HC 361 15 September 2015, questions 85-121](#).

### 5.3 HMIC

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) independently assesses individual police forces and policing generally across England and Wales. They publish a range of reports on their website, including:

#### **PEEL: police efficiency in 2015**

A national overview and individual force reports as part of the annual inspection into all forces in England and Wales. The reports consider the question: how efficient are the police at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

#### **Reshaping policing for the public**

25 June 2015 – a discussion paper on the options for the future of policing in England and Wales

### 5.4 Other

Garside, R., [Falling Police Numbers: The longer view](#), (Centre for Crime and Justice Studies) 19 May 2015

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