



Federation reaction to HMIC report

20.07.10

Responding to the two reports released today (Tuesday 20th July), the HMIC report 'Valuing the Police' and the Joint report, 'Sustaining value for money in the police service', Paul McKeever, Chairman, Police Federation of England and Wales says;

"There is much in these reports to welcome, most notably the need to protect frontline policing, and the recommendations already starting to be embraced by some forces for better shared procurement and collaboration. These common sense solutions are to be expected now the HMIC is under the leadership of Sir Denis O'Connor.

"Where the HMIC report may give some concern is the fact that considering investment in policing has gone up by over 47% in a decade, only 11% of police are visibly available to the public. That is not necessarily surprising when you consider we are a 24/7, 365 days a year service. More worrying is that the report warns that savings greater than 12% would lead to a further reduction in frontline police availability. That could have serious consequences for the level of service we are able to provide.

"We accept that in the current fiscal climate, economies need to be made, but everything must be done to protect frontline services which ensure the public gets the service the public wants – more police officers on their streets. The HMIC report highlights that 80% of forces aren't sufficiently prepared for the cuts but with such a multitude of ideas being flanked as the possible way forward you'd be hard pushed to blame them for not knowing which path to pursue. What is needed is a consistent approach to efficiency savings across the 43 forces in England and Wales, driven nationally, but managed locally to ensure chief officers have the flexibility needed to serve different communities in different areas.

"There are challenging times ahead and all those who have a genuine interest in ensuring the British police service remains the envy of the world must work together; to ensure we do not make short-term rushed financial decisions to make small savings which could have a detrimental impact on the service we are able to provide. These reports make clear that in the first instance efficiency savings without the need to start cutting back on staff must be explored. We support that entirely. Losing police officers is not an option where public safety and security is concerned."