



News Release

Under embargo until Wednesday 25 November 2009

Lancashire Police Authority is 'performing well'

Lancashire Police Authority 'performs well', according to an independent new report released today by the Audit Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC).

On a scale from one to four the joint inspection team assessed the Authority's performance as 'three – performing well' .

Inspectors found the Authority is doing a good job in key areas covered by the assessment. It has a good strategic overview and is effective at monitoring the Constabulary's performance and plans to improve. The Authority also understands communities' needs across Lancashire and makes sure that they are properly reflected in local policing to such an extent that the joint inspectorates' felt they excelled in this area. The Authority has played an important role in improving how Lancashire Constabulary recruits and retains a workforce that better reflects the county's diverse population

Lancashire Police Authority comprises 17 members (nine councillors and eight independent members), and is responsible for securing an efficient and effective police force for Lancashire and holding the Chief Constable to account.

The Audit Commission's Tom Keena, spokesperson for the joint inspection team, said:

'Residents can be confident that their Police Authority is doing a good job in supporting Lancashire Constabulary's aim to 'consistently be the best police force in the country'. The Authority provides good strategic leadership and effective independent scrutiny of the Force. With a tough financial climate ahead, this leadership will be vital to ensure the Force achieves best possible value for money, while continuing to provide the services local people need.'

Strengths include:

- Playing the lead role in the key strategic decisions which influence policing in the county



- Excellent understanding of the diverse communities within Lancashire and provides feedback on its consultations to help people understand the background to policing decisions
- A robust and confident approach to appointing senior officers
- Effective planning to ensure that money is spent on priorities, addresses risks and meets community needs – therefore delivering value for money
- Monitors complaints effectively and promotes high standards of behaviour within the Constabulary and among its own membership

Areas for improvement include:

- Setting the strategic direction within a tighter economic climate and working with the constabulary to develop a long term plan for policing in Lancashire
- Building on the investment to consolidate its arrangements around tackling terrorism, serious crime and other major challenges to public safety (protective services) to ensure Lancashire Constabulary continues to deliver good value for money

Following today's report Lancashire Police Authority will plan what it needs to do to improve its services to meet the changing needs of its communities.

Copies of the report are available from Lancashire Police Authority or from the Audit Commission website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk and the HMIC website www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Lancashire Police Authority is one of 43 Police Authorities in England and Wales. It is responsible for securing an efficient and effective police force for Lancashire and holding the Chief Constable to account. The Authority has a clear vision set out in the Lancashire Local Policing Plan 2009-12. This sets out policing policy and it is agreed annually by the Authority with the Constabulary. Priorities are neighbourhood policing; quality; diversity and protecting people.

2. Police authority inspection provides a simple report in a straightforward way about how well each police authority is performing. It encourages police authorities to focus on continuous improvement and provides a robust independent challenge to stimulate positive change. Ultimately it is about working to improve the quality of services police authorities provide to local people.



3. The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high-quality local services for the public. Our remit covers around 11,000 bodies in England, which between them spend more than £180 billion of public money each year. Our work covers local government, health, housing, community safety and fire and rescue services.

4. As an independent watchdog, we provide important information on the quality of public services. As a driving force for improvement in those services, we provide practical recommendations and spread best practice. As an independent auditor, we ensure that public services are good value for money and that public money is properly spent.

5. For further information about the Audit Commission, visit our website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk

6. HMIC is an independent inspectorate, inspecting policing in the public interest and rigorously examines the effectiveness of police forces and authorities to tackle crime and terrorism, improve criminal justice and raise confidence.

7. For further information about HMIC, visit our website www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic

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