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HM INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY IN SCOTLAND

# **Strategic review of policing the Commonwealth Games 2026 – terms of reference**

December 2025

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# HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland

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HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) is established under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012<sup>1</sup> and has wide ranging powers to look into the 'state, effectiveness and efficiency' of both the Police Service of Scotland (Police Scotland) and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA).

We have a statutory duty to ensure that the Chief Constable and the SPA meet their obligations in terms of best value and continuous improvement. If necessary, we can be directed by Scottish Ministers to look into anything relating to the SPA or Police Scotland as they consider appropriate. We also have an established role in providing professional advice and guidance on policing in Scotland.

- Our powers allow us to do anything we consider necessary or expedient for the purposes of, or in connection with, the carrying out of our functions
- The SPA and the Chief Constable must provide us with such assistance and co-operation as we may require to enable us to carry out our functions
- When we publish a report, the SPA and the Chief Constable must also consider what we have found and take such measures, if any, as they think fit
- Where our report identifies that the SPA or Police Scotland is not efficient or effective (or best value not secured), or will, unless remedial measures are taken, cease to be efficient or effective, Scottish Ministers may direct the SPA to take such measures as may be required. The SPA must comply with any direction given
- Where we make recommendations, we will follow them up and report publicly on progress
- We will identify good practice that can be applied across Scotland
- We work with other inspectorates and agencies across the public sector and co-ordinate our activities to reduce the burden of inspection and avoid unnecessary duplication
- We aim to add value and strengthen public confidence in Scottish policing and will do this through independent scrutiny and objective, evidence-led reporting about what we find.

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<sup>1</sup> [Chapter 11, Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2012.](#)



Our approach is to support Police Scotland and the SPA to deliver services that are high quality, continually improving, effective and responsive to local needs.<sup>2</sup>

**This strategic review will be undertaken by HMICS under section 74(2)(a) of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 and will be laid before the Scottish Parliament under section 79(3) of the Act.**

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<sup>2</sup> HMICS, [Corporate Plan 2025-28](#), March 2025.



# Our strategic review

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## Introduction

1. HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) has committed to an independent strategic review of specific aspects of the policing of Commonwealth Games 2026 (CWG26) as part of its published scrutiny plan for 2025-28.
2. The Commonwealth Games are set to return to Glasgow in 2026, marking a major international sporting occasion. While this event will be more streamlined compared to the 2014 Games, it remains a significant event on the global sports calendar. The Games will feature 10 sports across four existing venues in and around the Glasgow area. Approximately 3,000 athletes from 74 nations are expected to participate, alongside large numbers of spectators attending the events. Although the Games will be hosted in Scotland, they involve complex UK wide and international considerations, particularly regarding the security arrangements for athletes, spectators, and international dignitaries. Police Scotland will be required to deliver a substantial policing operation to support the Games, while continuing to maintain routine policing services across the country.

## Aim

3. The aim of this strategic review is to provide independent assessment of the state, effectiveness and efficiency of policing arrangements for the CWG26 with focused assurance work across the following key areas:
  - governance arrangements;
  - level of preparedness;
  - resource planning, and
  - business as usual policing arrangements.

## Background

4. Glasgow will host the Commonwealth Games for the second time in 11 years, with the Games taking place from 23 July to 2 August 2026. There will be four main venues situated across the Glasgow area. It will be the biggest international event in Scotland since the United Nations Climate Change Conference, referred to as COP26, which was held in Glasgow in 2021.



5. Glasgow 2026 Limited will deliver the Games with an anticipated budget of £150m. The body will fund policing costs. Under Operation Lannair, Police Scotland will police the Games and the King's Baton programme through Scotland. Police Scotland is responsible for developing and implementing the policing plan for the Games, working in close partnership with key partners and stakeholders.
6. As the UK's second largest police service, with over 16,000 officers and more than 5,000 staff, Police Scotland brings extensive experience in managing major events. Since its establishment in 2013, the service has successfully delivered policing operations for a range of high profile occasions, including:
  - the Commonwealth Games 2014
  - the 2014 Ryder Cup
  - the European Athletics Championship 2018
  - the visit of the President of the United States in 2018 and 2025
  - COP26 held in Glasgow.
7. Police Scotland has formed a Strategic Oversight Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable for Operational Policing with the strategic aim of working with partners to deliver a safe and secure Commonwealth Games, while minimising the impact on the wider community. A command structure has also been developed with police Gold and Silver Commanders appointed and a core planning team established.
8. The Scottish Police Authority (SPA) has statutory functions that include maintaining Police Scotland and holding the Chief Constable to account. The SPA has established a Commonwealth Games 2026 Policing Oversight Group, which is a member-led advisory group that comprises representatives from the SPA and Police Scotland. HMICS has been invited to attend the group as observers. The group first met in March 2025 and meet bi-monthly to scrutinise Police Scotland's preparedness for the Games.



## Terms of Reference

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### Scope, objectives and outcomes

9. The scope of this strategic review is a focus on Police Scotland's preparedness and planning for the games, with particular attention paid to the planned operations to police the Games. In addition, it will focus on the impact of the event on the provision of normal policing services to the communities across Scotland.

### Objectives

10. The intended objectives of this review and its publication are to assess:
- the governance structure and arrangements for the games
  - planning arrangements and preparedness for the games, including local and specialist policing
  - the effectiveness of testing and exercise planning
  - security assessments and planning (including counter terrorism)
  - business as usual capacity and capability arrangements for non-Games related policing activity
  - arrangements for monitoring and supporting staff wellbeing
  - Police Scotland's coordination, management and mobilisation of resources including mutual aid support.
11. We will review whether any mutual aid requests have been made of any other Home Office police forces to support safe delivery of the policing operation.<sup>3</sup>

### Exclusions from scope

12. The SPA has instructed an independent auditor to carry out a review of the design and operational effectiveness of the controls relating to the SPA and Police Scotland's planning for the Games – which will include examination of the financial management and costs related to policing for the Games. As a result, we will not focus on financial arrangements for the Games. We will however liaise with the auditor to satisfy ourselves that financial management is satisfactory.

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<sup>3</sup> Home Office Police Forces comprise the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales. Mutual Aid relates to the sharing of police officers and resources between police forces to support large scale operations.



13. In relation to post Commonwealth Games activity, HMICS focus will be on the planning arrangements to effectively manage residual issues that exist following the conclusion of the event including organisational and operational learning. It is not our intention to undertake scrutiny of post Games impact other than as outlined above.

## User Perspective

14. As set out in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, HMICS has a duty to demonstrate continuous improvement in user focus, i.e. involving users in the scrutiny process. HMICS will engage directly with key governance groups and stakeholders including the SPA, Police Scotland, Scottish Government, independent auditors, and police staff representatives.

## Methodology

15. We will use the HMICS Inspection Framework, which is based on the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model and Best Value Characteristics, to conduct the review.
16. The Inspection Framework will provide a structure for the review, which will be risk based, proportionate and focused on improving the delivery of policing in Scotland. We will structure our inspection around our objectives and the key themes of:
  - Leadership and vision
  - Delivery
  - Outcomes
17. To support the strategic review and to facilitate appropriate access to people and information a single point of contact has been identified by Police Scotland. We will carry out the following activities during the review:
  - Liaison with the SPA, Police Scotland and engagement with key stakeholders
  - Examination of relevant documentation including strategies, policies, procedures and plans
  - Interviews with strategic policing leaders
  - Observation at relevant governance and planning meetings
  - Observation at relevant training and exercising events.



18. We will provide feedback to Police Scotland and the SPA during the course of this review, and prior to publication, on any matters we consider may have a significant impact on planning for the Games.

### Publication and reporting timescales

19. Following conclusion of our review and analysis, we anticipate publication of a report on our findings in May 2026, in sufficient time for it to be considered ahead of the delivery phase of the Games. It is accepted that certain details will be omitted from our published report where these relate to specific operations related to ensuring the safety and security of the event, its participants, spectators, and the wider community.
20. Our report subject of the aforesaid safety and security considerations will be published in terms of section 79 of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. A copy of the report will be provided to the Chief Constable, the SPA, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and laid before the Scottish Parliament. A copy will also be made publicly available on the HMICS website.
21. For further information about this strategic review please contact Ray Jones, Lead Inspector ([hmic@hmic.gov.scot](mailto:hmic@hmic.gov.scot)).

### **Craig Naylor**

HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland

December 2025