



# **HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland**

## **Improving Policing across Scotland**

**16 October 2014**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

## **HMICS Publish Inspection of Local Policing in Fife**

Effective local policing is being delivered to the communities of Fife and the area continues to be a safe place in which to work and live, says HMICS in a report published today (Thursday, October 16, 2014).

However it found that morale among officers and police staff has been affected by the swift pace of transition to a single service and highlights the need to establish normal working patterns for senior staff.

The report encourages more local discussion so plans better reflect communities and council structures and recommends greater involvement by local authorities and community planning partners in agreeing future local policing performance measures.

The HMICS Report, Local Policing + Pilot Inspection of Fife Division, is the first of its kind to be undertaken and will inform the rolling programme under which all 14 local policing divisions of Police Scotland will be inspected to assess their state, effectiveness and efficiency.

This will provide a consistent means of assessing the quality of local policing across Scotland and HMICS will publish reports on how well each Division in Police Scotland is delivering against local priorities and keeping people safe.

At the time of the Fife inspection, there had been a rise in reported crimes and detection rates had fallen slightly but both were still above the national average.

HM Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland, Derek Penman, said: "The Division is led by an experienced team that has a good blend of skills and who are committed to delivering a quality policing service for the people of Fife. It has benefitted from increased access to specialist resources as a result of the introduction of the single

service and the Division has some areas of good practice which could be shared across the country. These include their enhanced community engagement model with Fife Council and a campaign where working with the local media returned positive results.

“We were impressed by the local scrutiny provided by elected members from Fife Council over stop and search, which led to the Division taking on a national pilot intended to improve practices across Scotland.

“The Division faces some challenges and we have identified areas for improvement, with the report containing five recommendations for Police Scotland and three for Fife Division.”

Some of the recommendations relate to working with partners, local authority and community leaders in the development of the local policing plans which reflect local priorities and providing updates to communities on the progress made.

In addition, the local police commander should carry out de-briefs following the use of specialist resources, closely monitor annual leave and the need to cancel days off, and as a priority conclude and implement his review of local structures.

Police Scotland is urged to review its staff engagement processes so that employees feel confident to raise issues for discussion, receive feedback and take part in the change process. It is also urged to expedite plans for a staff survey.

Mr Penman added: “The delivery of local policing was a key element of Police Reform with the stated aims of protecting and improving local service, creating more equal access to specialist support and building on links between police services and their communities. We have therefore taken the opportunity during this inspection to comment on the extent to which these reform objectives are being achieved.

“Effective local policing is fundamental to the success of Scottish policing. It is the part of policing that interacts with the public on a daily basis and is essential in building good relations with persons, localities and communities in Scotland.

“Local scrutiny and engagement are also essential to its success, through the identification and agreement of local priorities and holding the local commander to account for their delivery”.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **Key Findings and Recommendations from the Report are listed below.**

The HMICS Report Local Policing+ Pilot Inspection of Fife Division is available to download at the HMICS website [www.hmics.org](http://www.hmics.org) from 11.00hrs, October 16, 2014.

To arrange an interview with HM Inspector of Constabulary Scotland, Mr Derek Penman QPM, or to request a photograph, please contact:

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## **KEY FINDINGS**

### **Outcomes**

- Overall there has been a rise in reported crime and detection rates have fallen slightly.
- Fife remains a safe place with the number of crimes per 10,000 of population currently below the national average and detection rates currently above the national average.
- There is an opportunity for Police Scotland and its partners to work collaboratively in conducting surveys to agree what data is needed in support of local policing and what can be best provided nationally and locally.

### **Leadership & Governance**

- Local scrutiny arrangements are in place with evidence of effective practice.
- The Local Policing Plan is based on a good balance of analytical research and community consultation with a clear hierarchy linking national and local priorities.
- There is an opportunity for the local authority and partners to be involved in setting measures for local priorities.
- While the national adoption of standardised Multi-Member Ward Plans has been helpful in promoting localism, stakeholders suggested that Fife Division would benefit from a rationalisation of these plans and the introduction of sub-local policing plans that better reflect localities, partnership service delivery and support place based approaches.
- There is clear evidence of effective policing through a structured tasking and coordinating process.
- The Division is led by an experienced team that has a good blend of skills and experience and are committed to delivering a quality policing service for the people of Fife.
- There is a need to establish normal working patterns for senior staff to ensure resilience and the sustainability of the new ways of working.
- There has been a positive contribution from the nominated SPA lead with respect to national projects that had implications for the Fife area.

### **Planning & Processes**

- Fife Division has benefited from increased access to specialist resources as a result of police reform.
- Ambiguity exists over the responsibility for debriefing specialist staff and collating and evaluating their contribution to local policing.
  - The Enhanced Community Engagement Model is effective practice in taking policing closer to local communities.
- Police Scotland has worked hard to rationalise the number of policies and procedures, but this has caused concerns about the volume of information being provided to officers and staff.

- The introduction of national approaches has resulted in some increases in bureaucracy, but this should be resolved with the introduction of integrated ICT systems.

### **People**

- The transition to a single service has been made swiftly and has not detracted from the delivery of local policing, however the pace and nature of change has affected the morale of officers and staff and more needs to be done to improve internal communication and engagement processes.
- Police Scotland should expedite plans for a staff survey to understand staff concerns and establish a baseline for improvement.
- Officers and staff have a strong sense of local identity and affinity with the communities of Fife.
- There is a commitment to mainstreaming equalities throughout every aspect of local policing.
- There is a good understanding of the diversity of communities and established links with community groups through the equalities officer and community officers.
- The Division has introduced a talent management programme to provide opportunities for selected individuals to develop their skills and experience.

### **Resources**

- Local policing structures are undergoing a process of change to implement national guiding principles and structures. The change is not fully implemented and is subject to review.
- Community and response teams are operating below set staffing levels but are still meeting response times for incidents.
- The national approach for the gathering of intelligence with a focus on serious and organised crime has created some gaps in relation to the gathering of intelligence about local priorities.

### **Partnerships**

- There is a strong tradition of partnership working in Fife, built on good working relationships, which have been maintained during the transition. The Division is committed to partnership working and supporting a shared services approach.
- Feedback from partners suggests a lack of local consultation in the design and implementation of national approaches by Police Scotland.

## **REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1:** Police Scotland should work collaboratively with local authorities and community planning partners to identify what public survey data is needed to support local policing and community planning outcomes and agree what should be provided nationally and locally.

**Recommendation 2:** Police Scotland should reconsider the requirement for Multi Member Ward Plans for 2015-16 and empower local commanders and local scrutiny groups to develop sub-local policing plans that better reflect localities, partnership service delivery and support place based approaches.

**Recommendation 3:** Police Scotland should ensure that its methods of data collection are sufficiently flexible to provide a range of information that meets the requirements of local plans, sub-local plans and supports place based approaches.

**Recommendation 4:** Police Scotland should consider ways to involve local authorities and community planning partners in the identification of key measures for the agreed priorities within local policing plans and single outcome agreements and should regularly update communities on their delivery through effective local public performance reporting.

**Recommendation 5:** The Divisional Commander should introduce a debriefing process to gather intelligence and capture the outcomes from Operational Support Division resources when deployed in Fife Division. This should be used to inform an assessment of the effectiveness of the OSD activity and its contribution to local priorities.

**Recommendation 6:** The Divisional Commander should monitor divisional practices in relation to the cancellation of rest days and the management of TOIL and annual leave across Fife.

**Recommendation 7:** Police Scotland should review internal engagement processes to ensure that key messages are understood by officers and staff and that they are able to raise issues for discussion, receive feedback on the outcomes, and have the opportunity to participate in change.

**Recommendation 8:** The Divisional Commander should complete the review of local policing structures in Fife as quickly as possible and should take account of the views of officers, staff and stakeholders.

**END**