

Grampian Police and Grampian Joint Police Board

Best Value Audit and Inspection



Prepared for the Accounts Commission and Scottish ministers
February 2011

The Accounts Commission

The Accounts Commission is a statutory, independent body which, through the audit process, assists local authorities in Scotland to achieve the highest standards of financial stewardship and the economic, efficient and effective use of their resources. The Commission has four main responsibilities:

- securing the external audit, including the audit of Best Value and Community Planning
- following up issues of concern identified through the audit, to ensure satisfactory resolutions
- carrying out national performance studies to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local government
- issuing an annual direction to local authorities which sets out the range of performance information they are required to publish.

The Commission secures the audit of 32 councils and 45 joint boards and committees (including police and fire and rescue services).

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland

HMICS operates independently of police forces, police authorities and the Scottish Government and exists to monitor and improve the police service in Scotland. HMICS does this on behalf of the Scottish public by:

- monitoring, through self-assessment and inspection, how effectively the police service in Scotland is fulfilling its purpose and managing risk
- supporting improvement by identifying good practice, making recommendations and sharing our findings in order to achieve better outcomes for Scotland's communities
- providing advice to Scottish ministers, police authority and joint board members and police forces and services.

Even though HMICS is independent of the Scottish Government, ministers can call upon the Inspectorate to undertake particular pieces of work.

Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. It provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission. Together they ensure that the Scottish Government and public sector bodies in Scotland are held to account for the proper, efficient and effective use of public funds.

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Commission findings

1. This is the third audit and inspection report on the performance by a police authority and force of their statutory duties on Best Value and Community Planning. It has been produced jointly by the Controller of Audit and Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland. The Accounts Commission accepts the report from the Controller of Audit on the Grampian Joint Police Board ('the board'). In accordance with the Commission's statutory responsibilities, these findings relate only to the Best Value audit of the board.

2. The Commission welcomes evidence of the elements of best value that are demonstrated by the board. In particular, the Commission welcomes the report's conclusions that:

- the board has a good understanding of its role and has established an active involvement and positive partnership with the force in developing a shared vision and a clear set of priorities
- the board's oversight ensures that the operations of the force are clearly aligned with the agreed priorities
- board members actively question and challenge the force on both strategic and operational matters in a constructive way that focuses on supporting improvement
- the board plays an effective community leadership role on local policing issues, and clearly demonstrates that it works to meet the needs of communities at both a strategic and local level.

3. We welcome the board's awareness of its own improvement needs and commitment to addressing these. As the board continues to seek further development and improvement, we recommend that it considers the following areas. In particular:

- further development of its role in longer-term strategic financial planning, and the use of its scrutiny role to ensure the best use of resources. The board also needs to develop its leadership and challenge role to help realise further efficiencies through various partnership and shared services initiatives
- development of a more active role in informing and agreeing continuous improvement priorities and monitoring progress, and providing more strategic leadership on sustainability and equalities issues
- effective arrangements for an independent custody visiting scheme must be implemented quickly
- ensuring that its contribution to accountability and governance, and its effective partnership with the force, is properly reported to the public
- in continuing to review its governance arrangements, the board should address the fact that it is not good scrutiny practice for the convener to chair its two main subcommittees.

4. The Commission gratefully acknowledges the co-operation and assistance provided to the joint audit and inspection team by the elected members of Grampian Joint Police Board, the chief constable and officers of Grampian Police, and other officials and community planning partners.

5. The board should produce a plan that addresses the improvement agenda set out in the joint audit and inspection report. We encourage the board to engage with these findings as a tool for stimulating further improvement in its operation.

6. The Commission welcomes the continued joint approach with HMICS on these police audit and inspection reports, and the significant contribution that this is having to stimulating more effective and streamlined scrutiny and to driving commitment to securing best value.

HM Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland findings

1. As Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland, I hold a statutory responsibility to inspect both Grampian Police and Joint Police Board. Complementary to the findings of the Accounts Commission on the Best Value and Community Planning performance of the Grampian Joint Police Board, I offer the following comments on the performance of Grampian Police.

2. My overall assessment of Grampian Police is that it is performing well and that the force demonstrates many of the elements of best value. Grampian Police benefits from an effective and appropriately challenging working relationship with Grampian Joint Police Board and they have worked in tandem to determine a strategic direction which has community policing as its cornerstone. The force executive provides strong leadership and have created a culture of performance improvement within the organisation. Crime rates are falling within the Grampian Police area and levels of public satisfaction are high and improving. During 2010, the force introduced a new policing model which has delivered increased numbers of officers working and patrolling within local communities.

3. There is scope for the force to improve in certain areas. In particular:

- the force should make efforts to better understand the causal factors which are reflected in the rise in racially motivated crime and complaints against the police
- there is scope for the force to improve performance reporting by incorporating more comparative information and to report performance in a balanced way
- the force should have a better understanding of the costs of specific policing activities to inform difficult decisions about where resources will need to be directed in future to sustain performance in priority areas.

4. I look forward to receiving a plan from Grampian Police which addresses the improvement agenda set out in this joint audit and inspection report.

5. I also wish to acknowledge my gratitude for the co-operation and assistance afforded to the joint audit and inspection team by the elected members of Grampian Joint Police Board, the chief constable and officers of Grampian Police and other officials and community planning partners.

6. The joint audit and inspection approach adopted in the preparation of this report continues to develop and is contributing towards a more effective scrutiny regime that demonstrates our commitment to achieving best value in Scottish Policing.

Introduction



This joint report is made by the Controller of Audit to the Accounts Commission under section 102(1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) under section 33 of the Police (Scotland) Act 1967.

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 introduced new statutory duties relating to Best Value and Community Planning. Its provisions apply to local authorities, including police authorities, and require specifically that:

- councils and police authorities secure Best Value (defined as achieving continuous improvement in the performance of functions)
- police authorities and chief constables participate in the community planning process.

The Act also amended the audit arrangements set out in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to cover Best Value and gave powers to the Accounts Commission to examine Best Value in police authorities. HMICS has a statutory duty under section 33 of the Police (Scotland) Act 1967 to inspect police forces and common police services, and to report to ministers on their state and efficiency. The 2003 Act extends this to include provision for HMICS to inquire into and report to Scottish ministers on whether a local authority is carrying out its functions both as a police authority and in relation to a number of matters including Best Value.

The 2003 Act is supported by more detailed statutory guidance on Best Value and Community Planning, and a series of advisory notes on specific topics such as elected member leadership. This guidance is designed to be descriptive rather than prescriptive, defining the goals that organisations should aim for but

allowing them local discretion on the methods and routes they use. The Scottish Government has issued further guidance for police authorities and forces. This guidance includes *Justice Department Circular 11/2003 Best Value Guidance* and *Guidance for Members of Police Authorities and Joint Boards*, June 2007.

The scope of Best Value and Community Planning is broad and the guidance and statute indicate that a successful police authority will:

- work in tandem with the chief constable to develop a clear set of priorities that respond to the needs of the community in both the short and longer term
- be organised to support the delivery of these priorities
- meet, and clearly demonstrate that it is meeting, the community's needs
- operate in a way that drives continuous improvement in all its activities.

Similarly, a successful police force will:

- work with its partners and the police authority/police authorities to develop a clear set of priorities that respond to the needs of the community in both the short and longer term
- be organised to deliver these priorities
- meet, and clearly demonstrate that it is meeting, the community's needs
- operate in a way that drives continuous improvement in all its activities.

The key objectives of this joint audit and inspection were to:

- assess the extent to which the Grampian Joint Police Board and Grampian Police are meeting their duties under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and complying with Scottish Government guidance
- agree planned improvements with the local authorities, force and the board, to be reviewed by external auditors and HMICS on an ongoing basis.

As Best Value and Community Planning encompass a wide variety of activities, it is not realistic to audit or inspect everything in depth. For this reason we plan our detailed work in two ways:

- Where possible we draw on the findings of other scrutiny processes, such as the work carried out by other inspectorates.
- We select certain aspects of the force and board's performance for detailed investigation. We use a wide range of sources, including the force and board's own assessment of their performance, reports issued following external audit and inspections and the Scottish Policing Performance Framework (SPPF) to assess risks and scope our work to inform this selection.

Our joint report reflects this proportionate approach, with detailed commentary in some areas and limited coverage in others. It also presents the picture we found at the time our main audit and inspection work was conducted, in June and July 2010. The report includes a corporate assessment of the joint board and the force, while the performance assessment covers only the force.

We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation and assistance provided to the team by Councillor Martin Greig, Convenor of Grampian Joint Police Board; Chief Constable Colin McKerracher, Grampian Police; Jane MacEachran, Clerk to the Board; and all other elected members and staff involved. We are also grateful to the representatives of the three councils and the force's community partners who agreed to participate in the audit and inspection process.

The tripartite arrangements and police authorities' leadership role

The force is governed through a tripartite arrangement between the chief constable, the joint police board ('the board'), and Scottish ministers. As the force covers more than one local authority area, a joint police board comprising members from the three constituent authorities acts as the police authority. Scottish ministers retain overall responsibility for policing policy at national level. Grampian Joint Police Board is responsible for setting the police budget, holding the chief constable to account and ensuring that best value is achieved. The chief constable is responsible for the operational aspects of policing within the force area.

The effect of these arrangements is that the board and the chief constable, although they have different roles, must work in tandem to achieve best value. In this report, we only make judgements on the board and force, but all parties to the arrangement, including the Scottish ministers, have responsibility for the overall performance of the police service.

Constituent authorities are responsible for appointing the members of a joint board and for allocating funding. The board is a separate legal entity and councils have no separate residual responsibilities beyond appointing members and funding. However, in practice, the constituent councils, primarily Aberdeen City Council, provide administration support, clerking services, and training and development for board members.

The existing guidance for policing (*Circular 11/2003* and *Guidance for Members of Police Authorities and Joint Police Boards*, June 2007) sets out expectations of the board. This can be found at [Appendix 1](#) of this report.

Summary



Overall conclusions

1. Grampian Police and the Grampian Joint Police Board have many of the key elements of best value in place. The force and the board have an effective working relationship and have a shared vision for policing in Grampian, based on agreed priorities. The vision and priorities are clearly articulated in the force's strategies and plans. The systems and processes which support the delivery of best value are sound overall, though there are some areas requiring improvement.

2. The joint police board demonstrates many of the characteristics of best value and continues to develop its approach to governance and scrutiny. Board members actively scrutinise the performance of the force, have a good understanding of their local communities and work in partnership with the chief constable to help shape the policing priorities for the area.

3. There are some areas where improvement is required. The board must ensure it implements an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme (ICVS) as a matter of priority. It is currently the only board in the UK not to have an operational scheme in place. It also needs to become more proactive in working with the force to develop a long-term financial strategy.

4. There is a culture of continuous improvement within the force and the force executive provides strong leadership, with a clear vision for the future based around community policing. The force has a well-defined structure and sound governance arrangements. Force priorities are clearly linked to force operational strategy and are reviewed, refreshed and published annually within its strategic plan *Platform for Success*. The force's performance management arrangements are sound, but can be improved by using more comparative information to report performance more effectively and in a more balanced way.

5. Service performance is good, the level of recorded crime is reducing overall and in 2009/10 was at its lowest level for seven years for crimes of violence, indecency, dishonesty, and reckless behaviour. Satisfaction rates with the force are high and improving. The force and its partners are making good progress on most of the shared policing priorities captured in the Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) covering public sector organisations in the council areas of Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray. Drug enforcement performance declined between 2008/09 and 2009/10 and there have been increases in racially motivated crime and complaints against the police.

6. The force has a track record of strong financial management and has sound financial controls in place and has reported efficiency savings in excess of targets. Like all public sector organisations, the force is now facing severe financial pressures and has taken a number of short-term measures to deliver some savings. The force recognises that it needs a better understanding of what specific activities cost in order to inform difficult decisions about where resources will need to be directed in order to sustain performance in priority areas. The force is currently developing a long-term strategy, setting out how it intends to deal with these pressures.

7. In April 2010, the force introduced a new policing model, based on feedback from the public. 'Local Policing – Closer to You' saw the reorganisation of traditional response and community policing resources into policing teams based in local communities across the force to increase visibility and support community engagement. Aberdeen Division has carried out an interim '90-day review' of the new model and has identified that some operational refinements are needed to improve its effectiveness. It plans to carry out a further review in April 2011 to assess the impact of the new arrangements.

Part 1. Corporate assessment



Vision and strategic direction

Grampian Joint Police Board

The board is actively involved in helping to shape the strategic vision and priorities for police services in Grampian.

8. Board members are actively involved in developing the force's strategic priorities. The board is involved at various stages to help shape the policing priorities, which are set out in the force's strategic plan *Platform for Success*.

9. At a local level, board members help to shape policing priorities during the year through their attendance at area committees and through informal contact with divisional commanders and their staff. At a corporate level, they attend the force's annual conference and the senior managers' conference and take part in the annual planning day, together with key strategic partners and senior police officers, to determine force priorities for the year ahead. Board members have an active role in scrutinising the force's use of resources and are involved in the community safety partnerships. These partnerships help to develop the policing priorities contained within the SOAs which identify the priorities for public sector agencies in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray.

10. The board also helps set the strategic direction of the force through its annual appraisal of the chief constable's performance. As part of his Performance Development Review (PDR), the chief constable agrees a series of objectives with the convenor and the two vice-convenors, which are subject to the endorsement of the board. These objectives help set the wider strategic agenda for the force as a whole.

Grampian Police

The force has a clear vision and strategic direction, which is informed by community consultation and dialogue with partner agencies. The force's strategic plan *Platform for Success* has evolved over the past five years and is refreshed on an annual basis to update the force's priorities, values and principles.

The force has a clearly defined planning cycle and force priorities contain a mix of national policing priorities, local issues and business support objectives. Force priorities link directly to the force control strategy.

11. At a strategic level, the force is led by a force executive which demonstrates strong and effective leadership. The force executive drives force operational activity and strategic delivery using robust management arrangements.

12. The force's strategic plan *Platform for Success* clearly articulates the force's vision and strategic direction and is reviewed, refreshed and published on an annual basis. The annual review is informed by widespread consultation with local communities and partner agencies and consideration of emerging national and local issues.

13. The force has identified nine strategic priorities for 2010/11 in partnership with the board ([Exhibit 1](#)). These cover both outward-facing operational priorities and internal business support priorities. All of the operational priorities are clearly articulated within the force control strategy and this helps to ensure that they are communicated clearly and consistently to staff.

14. Priorities are communicated effectively throughout the force and are evident in the divisional and departmental business area plans. This strengthens the understanding of strategic priorities at a local level and

helps to ensure that the force directs operational activity and resources towards priority areas. We found that knowledge and awareness of force priorities among staff was good. The priorities are also clearly highlighted on the force's website and are easily accessible to members of the public.

15. The force is committed to community policing and community engagement. During 2010, the force adopted a new policing model called 'Local Policing – Closer to You' ([Exhibit 2, page 12](#)).

16. The model combines 24/7 response and community officers into a joint team based in the local community. This aims to provide enhanced levels of visible patrol and problem solving at a beat level, while maintaining the appropriate coverage for response work. The new arrangements also seek to improve the force's engagement and communication with local communities.

17. The project plan supporting the delivery of 'Local Policing – Closer to You' acknowledged the need to devise qualitative performance measures to help assess the effectiveness of the new policing model. The force has access to some qualitative data from focus groups, which supported the development of the community engagement strategy, but it does not have a baseline against which it can measure the impact of the new arrangements.

18. During the summer of 2010, Aberdeen Division carried out an interim '90-day review' of the new arrangements to assess how they were bedding in. The review found that local policing teams were carrying out more proactive policing activity within communities, which had, in turn, led to increased demand on resources. The force plans to further review and refine specific operational practices to balance the demands on local policing teams. The review also identified the need to develop

a property strategy to support local policing teams and revise how it deploys its resources at an operational level. This included the need to review the allocation of officers across the local teams, review the shift patterns and improve the supervision arrangements. In April 2011, the force will conduct a further, more comprehensive review of the policing model to better assess the impact of the new arrangements.

Governance and accountability

Grampian Joint Police Board

Board members have a good understanding of their role and the basic governance arrangements are sound. The board is aware of where further improvements are required and has been implementing changes to its governance arrangements during 2010.

The board does not currently have an operational ICVS in place.

19. The board has 15 members, made up of six councillors from Aberdeen City Council, six from Aberdeenshire Council, and three from Moray Council. It meets six times per year, at various locations throughout the region, and the convenor is a councillor from Aberdeen City Council. Two main subcommittees support the board. The Stewardship subcommittee¹ considers continuous improvement initiatives such as audit, thematic inspections and best value, and a Complaints subcommittee², which meet four times per year. There are also subcommittees for urgent business and personnel, which meet as and when required.

Exhibit 1

Force strategic priorities 2010/11

- **Antisocial behaviour** – We will deal with unacceptable conduct, which negatively impacts on the quality of life within the communities we serve, in conjunction with local authority strategies.
- **Community focus** – We will engage and work with partners and the community to deliver improved policing services based on the principles of a community-focused approach.
- **Public protection** – We will safeguard children, young persons and vulnerable adults, from risk of physical, emotional and sexual abuse or neglect and effectively manage offenders through the development of internal partnership processes.
- **Road casualty reduction** – We will achieve a steady reduction in the numbers of those killed or seriously injured, with the ultimate vision of a future where no one is killed on the roads in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray and the injury rate is much reduced.
- **National security** – We will counter the threat from terrorism and domestic extremism.
- **Serious organised crime and drugs** – We will reduce the harm caused by serious organised crime, and in particular controlled drugs, within the communities we serve.
- **Violence** – We will target violence and make Grampian a safer place to visit, work and live in.
- **Efficiency and productivity** – We will maximise frontline resources through effective and efficient resource and financial management to ensure suitably trained staff are in place to deliver our mission.
- **Force reputation and standards** – We will maintain professional and ethical standards of behaviour from all staff in order to improve the delivery of quality policing services and to enhance public trust and confidence.

Source: *Sustaining and Developing our Platform for Success 2010/11*, Grampian Police, 2010

20. The board's two main subcommittees on stewardship and complaints operate effectively by scrutinising force performance, but the convenor of the board currently also chairs both subcommittees. This is not good practice, as part of the remit of the subcommittees is to scrutinise the performance of the force and the board. There is

also a risk that the public perception of independent scrutiny, which is particularly important for the chairing of the Complaints subcommittee, may be undermined. Other police boards typically share these responsibilities among various councillors. This helps to spread the workload, but it also helps to demonstrate the presence of independent checks and balances.

¹ The Stewardship subcommittee deals with internal and external audit reports (including approval of audit plan), oversees adequacy of the force and board's financial systems, policies, practices, and compliance with relevant statutes, standards and guidance, best value, risk management and the implementation of HMICS and Accounts Commission recommendations.

² The Complaints subcommittee provides oversight of how complaints are handled by the force and considers complaints against chief officers.

21. Grampian Joint Police Board does not currently have an operational ICVS in place. Police boards have to organise and oversee the delivery of independent custody visiting in consultation with chief officers. They must therefore ensure that they have effective procedures in place to establish and maintain ICVS, including the allocation of appropriate resources to this function. Independent custody visitors check on the standards in which people are held in custody, enhancing the accountability and transparency of police among the communities they serve. Visitors play a vital role in raising standards in custody and the fair treatment of detainees.

22. The absence of an ICVS represents a significant risk to the board and force. In the event of a custody issue arising, they may be unable to provide an adequate level of independent public assurance of the force's custody arrangements.

23. The board is the only police board in the UK not to have such an operational scheme in place. There have been several attempts to establish an ICVS over the years since the duty was introduced, but these have all failed. The board set up an ICVS subcommittee in January 2010, with the aim of having an ICVS in place during 2010. In September 2010, the board agreed an action plan and has recently been taking action to attract, vet and train potential custody visitors.

24. Until June 2010, public access to board agendas, minutes and reports has been limited and this has compromised transparency and public accountability. The board has now launched a new web page in order to make these documents publicly available.

Exhibit 2

'Local Policing – Closer to You': A community-focused policing model

This model will introduce local policing teams across all communities in the Grampian Police area with local officers working with partner agencies and the communities, responding to local needs.

Our new approach will be launched under the title 'Local Policing – Closer to You', involving the key activities of 'Consult, Listen, Respond and Feedback'.

'Consult and Listen' reflects the need for effective engagement between local police officers, local communities and partners, with a view to identifying and agreeing those local issues which need to be resolved.

'Respond' will be driven through a set of locally based policing teams which will operate within clearly defined areas, engage effectively with communities, and deliver policing to a set of standards.

Twenty-four local policing teams will operate across the Grampian Police area, each led by a local policing inspector. These officers will be empowered to work with their communities and partners to deliver quality local services.

'Feedback' will be the responsibility of local policing inspectors who will inform communities of progress made against agreed issues through the provision of the 'Local Policing Update'.

Source: *Community Focus: Local Policing – Closer to You, Overview and Delivery Plan*, Grampian Police, March 2010

25. The board recognised that further improvements could be made to its governance arrangements and instigated a review in 2009. As a result, the board agreed to set up additional subcommittees early in 2010 to deal with urgent business and oversee the introduction of an ICVS. These new arrangements are designed to help board members focus on key issues by devolving some areas of business to the subcommittees. The board plans to review the governance arrangements in the second quarter of 2011. The board has also started to identify individual board members to act as 'champions' for particular areas of interest. One board member, for example, takes a lead role on road safety matters. This is a potentially useful initiative, helping to encourage a degree of specialisation within the board and strengthen its capacity

to provide independent scrutiny on specific issues. The intention is to complement and not replace the more formal governance arrangements of the board. However, some board members have expressed concerns that this could weaken corporate responsibilities or encourage individuals to become 'spokesperson' for particular departments and compromise their independent scrutiny role. The board will therefore need to review the effectiveness of these arrangements to assure itself they are having the desired impact.

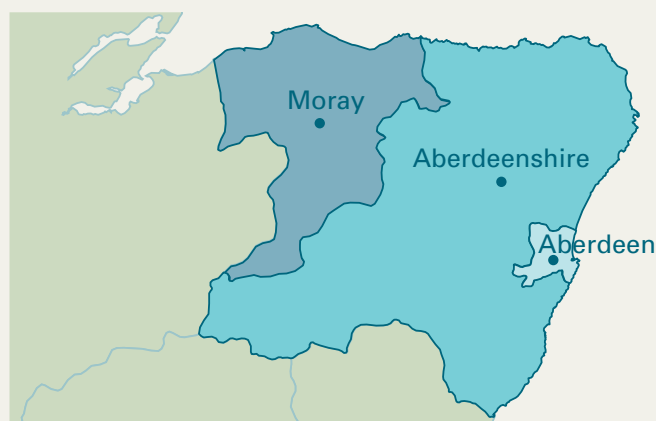
26. The role and responsibilities for the convenor and vice-convenors are clearly defined, but the board only recently agreed role descriptions for other board members in November 2010.

27. The force and clerk provide training for new board members and the force helps develop members' knowledge of policing matters through a series of presentations and site visits. The board has identified that it needs to have a more structured approach to training and development. In September 2010, the board agreed to introduce a series of training sessions following every second board meeting. These are scheduled to commence in early 2011. In addition, the clerk's office is considering how best to engage members in identifying ongoing development needs. The clerk and her staff are also currently reviewing the training provided by members' constituent councils as part of a training needs analysis for members.

28. Aberdeen City Council provides administrative and legal support for the board. Approximately five per cent of the clerk's time, and up to ten per cent of the depute clerk's time, is devoted to supporting the police board, however this can vary depending on competing demands. The administrative arrangements are generally good, board agendas and reports are well structured and the board maintains a log of outstanding actions to ensure actions are progressed. There is, however, a lack of capacity to provide any research support to help members carry out their independent scrutiny role. A recent review by the internal auditor has identified a range of options for improving this capacity and managers in Aberdeen City Council are currently considering this report.

29. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of the new governance arrangements, but the changes being made indicate a commitment to continuous improvement. In September 2010, the board approved a new report template designed to highlight key information such as financial implications, service and community impact and equalities issues. A new members' handbook, containing key documentation, advice and guidance notes, is being

Exhibit 3 The force area



Source: Audit Scotland

developed to assist board members in fulfilling their roles. The board plans to review the effectiveness of the new approach in the second quarter of 2011.

Grampian Police

The force has an effective governance structure and strategic delivery is managed through monthly Force Executive Board (FEB) meetings, supported by a range of other mechanisms.

30. The force is divided into three geographical policing divisions which are coterminous with the council areas of Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray (Exhibit 3). The three divisions are responsible for the delivery of frontline policing services and are supported by corporate headquarters departments. Each division is led by a police commander of either superintendent or chief superintendent rank.

31. Aberdeen's position as the UK hub of the North Sea oil industry provides a degree of economic stability to the region, but also brings specific challenges for Grampian Police. The force has policing responsibility for incidents occurring within the North Sea oil and gas fields and events such as the two helicopter crashes

demonstrate the extra demand on resources that incidents of this nature bring. Some shore-based installations associated with the petro-chemical industry carry further responsibilities for the force due to the threat to the UK energy infrastructure should they be subject to terrorist attack. Additionally, the location of the royal residence within the force area requires the force to allocate resources to assist the protection of the royal household at Balmoral.

32. At a strategic level the force is led by the force executive, which manages strategic delivery, operational priorities and performance using a well-established programme of business meetings. The force executive comprises the chief constable, deputy chief constable, two assistant chief constables, a director and deputy director of corporate services. All members of this group, together with divisional commanders and department heads, sit on the FEB, which considers broader strategic issues and monitors force performance. A range of other corporate mechanisms supports the monthly FEB meetings, including a Programme Board, a Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group and performance management meetings.

33. The force also has a Development and Governance Department. This department underpins the governance arrangements and is responsible for production of internal policies, guidance and procedures on a range of issues including risk management and corporate planning.

34. Senior officers are given strategic and tactical responsibility for priority areas, and this strengthens the understanding of the priorities throughout the force. Divisional commanders and department heads develop business plan objectives on a yearly basis, which support the overall force objectives. Each business area plan owner is required to complete task records throughout the year to document their progress towards achieving these objectives. This helps to ensure ownership and provides a visible force lead or champion for each priority area.

35. The force has a well-developed approach to risk management and compiles a comprehensive risk register annually. The register describes all risks identified within business areas plans and includes force priorities, local challenges, project risks and emerging issues. The use of business area plans to assess risks, together with the full force risk register, ensures that risk is properly assessed at all levels within the force. All risks identified as 'significant' are reported to each meeting of the joint police board and the force provides updates to board members, which describe the measures taken to mitigate the risks.

36. Force performance data is available to members of the public on the force's website www.grampian.police.uk where force-wide and divisional quarterly performance monitoring reports appear in their entirety. Performance reporting is covered in more detail in paragraphs 52 to 63.

Community engagement

Grampian Joint Police Board

Board members have a good understanding of the policing needs of their communities, and receive regular feedback on user satisfaction and complaints.

37. Board members have a good understanding of the needs of their local communities in terms of policing services. At a strategic level, they have reflected the community's long-standing desire for a more visible policing service through their input to shape the 'Local Policing – Closer to You' strategy. There is also evidence that they help, on a day-to-day basis, to ensure that community views shape local policing services, for example through regular member surgeries and by attending community meetings and feeding these views back to the force.

38. Board members also have good working relationships with divisional commanders and engage regularly with local policing team inspectors to communicate and challenge on neighbourhood issues. For example, in Aberdeenshire, board members influenced the local approach to road safety measures.

39. The board also receives other forms of feedback from the community on policing services. Each month, the force carries out a telephone survey of around 200 individuals who have contacted them and the results are included in each quarterly performance report. Board members also receive summarised information on complaints³ in the quarterly performance reports and consider more detailed reports in addition to considering individual cases at the complaints subcommittee.

Grampian Police

The force engages effectively with the community and has a strong commitment to community policing. It captures the views of communities in a structured manner and uses them to inform the force's strategic planning process. The force's community charter clearly sets out its commitments, but does not contain measures to help it assess whether these commitments are being met.

40. The force consults regularly and effectively with members of the public using community groups and key contacts. Feedback had indicated that people wanted increased police visibility in their local communities. This dialogue was a significant driver in the development of 'Local Policing – Closer to You', which was introduced in April 2010.

41. Officers from local policing teams are required to attend all community meetings and record the matters arising from these meetings on a community engagement database. This ensures that issues are logged, tracked and actioned in a systematic way and inform the strategic planning process.

42. The force has incorporated a Communities Charter into the latest version of *Platform for Success*. The charter sets out the force's commitment to the community and contains eight pledges, which members of the public are able to access online. (Exhibit 4).

43. The charter clearly articulates the force's commitments to the community and has the potential to strengthen further the relationship between the force and the communities it serves. The force recognises that it needs to continue with existing work to develop a set of

³ Quarterly performance reports record the number of complaints about police officers and police staff and service complaints received each quarter and the outcome of the complaints. The Complaints subcommittee provides oversight of how complaints are handled by the force and consideration of complaints against chief officers.

Exhibit 4

Communities Charter commitments

We will:

- make sure you know who your local officers are
- make it easy for you to contact us
- be visible and provide reassurance
- attend local meetings and involve communities
- help communities tackle their local problems
- keep you up to date with local policing services
- tell you how we are dealing with community concerns
- work with others to solve local problems.

Source: *Platform for Success*, Grampian Police

performance objectives and measures so that it can assess whether it is meeting its commitments and report these to the board and the public.

44. The force has made significant efforts to engage with some traditionally 'hard to reach' groups within the community. It has increased its engagement with the black and minority ethnic (BME) owned business community in Aberdeen and has actively encouraged the reporting of racially motivated crime, for example with a marketing campaign focusing on local BME owned businesses. Similar engagement efforts have also been taking place in Moray where divisional officers have forged links with the gypsy/travellers community. In Aberdeenshire, the force works closely with the council while the diversity liaison officer works closely with Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Scotland to progress joint training on homophobic hate crime in schools.

Partnership working

Grampian Joint Police Board

Board members are actively involved in community safety partnerships and help to provide community leadership on policing issues. They also work with local divisional commanders and senior officers to identify and develop solutions to local issues. The board's role in providing strategic direction on shared services is limited.

45. Board members are members of the three community safety partnerships covered by the Grampian Police force area. These partnerships help to determine the key strategic objectives for local policing services and inform the relevant priorities contained within the SOAs, which cover partnership work in the council areas of Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray. Board members monitor performance throughout the year using quarterly performance reports.

46. The force and board's constituent councils work in partnership to share services at a local level, for example by sharing research and analysis support in the form of a partnership analyst post.

47. The role of board members in actively driving the force's strategic approach on shared services is limited. Although the board receives regular update reports on major projects, there is limited evidence of board members providing strategic direction on shared services. Board members have been involved in continuing discussions on the force's future co-location plans with Grampian Fire and Rescue. However, to date, these discussions have not resulted in shared accommodation.

Grampian Police

The force maintains effective working relationships with partners and is achieving positive local outcomes through partnership working at both a strategic and local level.

48. Improving outcomes indicate that the force works effectively with its partners and our survey of partner agencies highlighted that the force has strong working relationships in place. Partnership objectives feature in the force's quarterly performance reports, which contain a core set of outcome measures common to the three SOAs covering the Grampian area.

49. At a strategic level the force's partnership activity is led by the chief constable, who is a member of the North East of Scotland Chief Executive Forum. This is a multi-agency group, which seeks to provide the leadership and direction required to drive partnership activity across the region. Three core strands, service improvement, integration of services and greater efficiencies, underpin the group's work.

50. The force is actively involved in all of the community safety partnerships in Grampian. The partnerships produce their own strategic and tactical assessments and partner agencies share analytical support. All divisions have effective information-sharing protocols in place to support the exchange of necessary information between partners.

51. There are also positive examples of partnership activity at the local level. The force has supported local partnerships by investing resources in community projects. For example, in addition to seconding officers to each of the three local authorities, the force has seconded officers to the Grampian Regional Equality Council and Aberdeen Foyer, a charity that alleviates homelessness.

Performance management and improvement

Grampian Joint Police Board

Board members actively scrutinise force performance using quarterly performance reports. The board's public performance reporting and prioritisation and monitoring of continuous improvement activity is limited.

52. The board receives Quarterly Performance Reports (QPRs) from the force, which provide an overview of performance and reflect national policing priorities, local SOA objectives and the priorities set out in *Platform for Success*.

53. The reports provide members with much of the information they need to monitor the force's performance. Board members actively question and challenge senior police officers at board meetings on both strategic and operational issues. This scrutiny and challenge is constructive and focused on supporting improvement.

54. The QPRs provide a clear summary on many areas of force performance for board members, but some aspects of the performance management framework could be improved. These are covered in more detail in paragraphs 60 to 65.

55. Scrutiny by the Stewardship subcommittee is less focused. The subcommittee uses audit and inspection reports to scrutinise performance and actively questions the force on matters in these reports. However, on other matters, there is a tendency for members to focus on matters of detail rather than challenging on more strategic or significant issues. For example, there are normally very few questions on the regular updates on the strategic risk register, but much comment on any proposals to write-off debts, even for relatively small amounts.

56. The board does not produce an annual performance report and does not feature in the force annual performance report. This means that it is falling short of its public performance reporting responsibilities. Although board members review the force's annual report, they do not provide direct input to the publication. Other police boards typically have a section in force annual reports and this represents an endorsement for the content of the report and/or summarises the board's activity and impact over the year. The absence of the board in the annual report means that their contribution to the governance and accountability of the force is not visible to the public.

57. The board does not have a clear role in directing or monitoring the force's continuous improvement activity. The board receives update reports on individual projects and initiatives and the Stewardship subcommittee considers the force's review programme. There is little evidence to suggest that the board plays an active role in identifying continuous improvement priorities or in monitoring progress on HMICS inspection actions.

Grampian Police

The force's performance reporting arrangements are well structured. Performance reports would support scrutiny and public performance reporting more effectively if they included more comparative information and were more balanced in reporting negative performance.

The force is committed to service improvement and carries out targeted internal reviews and inspections, which are focused around force priorities.

58. The force's performance management arrangements demonstrate a clear integration of strategic priorities, performance monitoring, and public performance reporting. Performance reports cover measures at both divisional and force-wide level and are published on the force website.

59. QPRs contain a good mix of national, regional and local performance measures. The reports are well structured and use a helpful 'traffic light' colour-coding system for a number of measures to help highlight areas of strong or poor performance. The performance report for the fourth quarter for each year forms the force's annual report. Both the force and the board use the reports to monitor performance and this aids the transparency of performance reporting.

60. The reports could be improved as they do not routinely contain 'benchmarks' to help the reader gain a more informed assessment of performance. Board members and the public would be in a better position to assess overall performance if the measures were reported alongside national figures or trends and against specific local objectives, where appropriate.

61. Performance reporting could also be more balanced in the way key issues are presented. Information about both good and poor performance is contained within the report, but the presentation of this information can be quite different. Annual reports clearly highlight areas of strong performance, but areas of poor performance are not highlighted in the same way. For example, the 2009/10 annual report highlights the reduction in all road traffic collision fatalities since 2008/09, but does not give the same prominence to the increase in the number of racist incidents and racist crimes over the same period.

62. Our review of performance reports to the board and the force executive also showed that areas of negative performance are routinely accompanied by explanations of potential causes. This is entirely appropriate, but the explanations in reports we reviewed invariably contained a positive interpretation or explanation of the data being presented. Where performance problems are identified, a fuller explanation of the factors including the challenges facing the force might prompt constructive challenge by board members and help facilitate management intervention.

63. The force has a Development and Governance Department that supports continuous improvement activity. The department uses a systematic approach to both challenge and support the force and acts as an in-house improvement service. Areas of force business linked to force priorities and suitable for improvement activity are identified from divisional and departmental business plans and reviews are then approved by the force executive. This process ensures that improvement activity is linked to force priorities.

Use of resources

Grampian Joint Police Board

The board is meeting its responsibilities by approving annual budgets and in monitoring expenditure and efficiency savings throughout the year. However, with the prospect of significant reductions in the resources available to the force, the board needs to become more proactive in long-term financial planning, and seeking assurance that the force is using its resources efficiently.

64. Board members are fully involved in approving the annual budget for the force and in monitoring expenditure throughout the year. A Budget Working Group, which consists of members and officers, helps set the annual budget, and the board approves its proposals. The board considers revenue and capital budget monitoring reports at each board meeting and these are actively scrutinised by members. The QPRs also provide monitoring information on staffing resources, including sickness absence and turnover. Board members also receive information on efficiency savings, through the Budget Working Group and reports submitted to board meetings.

65. The board has supported shared services, such as the new Child Protection Unit within Moray, the location of community officers within new schools in Aberdeen and through involvement in continuing discussions on the force's future co-location plans with Grampian Fire and Rescue. However, members recognise that there remains significant scope for further shared services in areas such as procurement and fleet management.

66. In the context of major reductions in public expenditure, board members need to become more proactively involved in long-term financial planning. It is widely recognised among members and officers that the current levels of expenditure are not sustainable. In response, the board extended the remit of the Budget Working Group to include medium-term financial planning in January 2010. The scale of the current financial pressures means that efficiency savings alone are unlikely to be sufficient to balance the budget. The board will therefore have a crucial role in providing challenge and seeking assurance that the force is making optimal use of resources, to improve productivity and sustain key services while making efficiencies and reducing expenditure.

Grampian Police

The force has a track record of strong financial management, has sound financial controls in place and has reported efficiency savings in excess of targets in recent years.

Like all public sector organisations, the force is now facing severe financial pressures. The force recognises that it needs a better understanding of what specific activities cost to inform difficult decisions about where resources will need to be directed, in order to sustain performance in priority areas. The force is currently developing a long-term strategy, setting out how it intends to deal with these pressures.

Managing finance

67. Grampian Police had a net revenue budget for 2009/10 of £109.8 million, representing a net increase of around £4.5 million on the previous year. The force's gross expenditure per capita is the lowest in Scotland (Exhibit 5, overleaf).

Exhibit 5

Gross expenditure per capita population on Scottish policing

Gross expenditure per capita population	2008/09 £'s	2009/10 £s
Central	221	225
Dumfries & Galloway	277	279
Fife	235	235
Grampian	236	218
Lothian & Borders	292	311
Northern	223	237
Strathclyde	265	268
Tayside	241	241
Scotland	258	262

Source: Annual accounts of police boards

68. The force has strong financial controls in place and sound processes for setting and monitoring budgets. The force executive considers monthly monitoring reports. In addition, the deputy director of corporate services and the assistant chief constable also hold quarterly meetings with business area heads to review progress against their business plans.

69. The force has a good record in terms of savings, and has exceeded its savings targets in recent years. In 2009/10, for example, the force reported total savings of £4.4 million, against target of £3.3 million. Savings in 2009/10 have come from a range of initiatives, including reduction of overtime.

70. This strong financial performance has been achieved in a period of growth and increasing resources, for example, the number of police officers has increased from around 1,200 to just over 1,600. The force recognises that the current financial challenges mean that this level

will not now be sustainable. The force has put a number of short-term measures in place to achieve savings. For example, tight controls have been introduced to actively manage vacancies, where a panel must approve any proposals to fill any vacant posts. All divisions have had their devolved budgets cut by ten per cent. There are also tight controls on overtime and the force has reported savings covering both police officers and support staff.

71. The force has strong budgetary control, but, in common with forces across Scotland, has a less developed understanding of the costs of specific policing activities, for example the cost of targeting drug dealing. This makes it difficult to evaluate the relationship between the resources invested and the outcomes achieved by that investment. Prior to the introduction of 'Local Policing – Closer to You', the force conducted work to identify the potential benefits of the new policing model. This work would have been enhanced by a fuller analysis of the potential costs

of the new model and any associated efficiency savings. The force has recognised that improvement is needed in this area and a good understanding of costs will be essential to inform decision-making in the current financial climate.

Managing people

72. The force actively manages its workforce and responds to issues raised by staff. To get feedback from staff, the force carried out staff surveys in 2005 and 2008. The response rate for the 2008 survey was relatively poor with 40 per cent of staff responding compared to 61 per cent in 2005. However, the results from the surveys show that morale within the force is good and staff are generally satisfied with their place within the organisation. The survey highlighted a number of areas for improvement, including the need to better allocate resources. The force responded by forming working groups to progress highlighted improvement areas, each with staff representation and a senior manager as a strategic lead.

73. The force performs well in terms of sickness absence rates. In 2009/10, the proportion of working days lost due to absence in Grampian was lower than the Scottish average for both police officers and police staff. In 2009/10, the absence rate for police officers was 3.5 per cent compared to a Scottish average of 4.1 per cent, and the absence rate for police staff was 4.5 per cent compared to a Scottish average of 5.0 per cent.

74. In 2009, the force conducted a training review, which highlighted a potential mismatch between the force priorities and the training being offered to staff. In response, the FEB approved a number of recommendations early in 2010, including the introduction of a group tasked with reviewing training requests to ensure that they align with force priorities.

75. When setting up 'Local Policing – Closer to You' the local policing teams were all allocated broadly the same level of resources and this has caused some difficulties in terms of resilience with a few areas experiencing significantly higher levels of demand than others. This has resulted in some resource pressures as officers are called away from their own local policing team area to assist with high-priority calls in busier neighbouring areas. A review of the new policing model was carried out during the summer of 2010 and senior officers have identified that some reallocation of resources across policing teams is necessary.

Managing assets and other resources

76. The force maintains an asset register but does not have a long-term asset strategy linked to its strategic priorities and objectives. The force has made some progress on sharing buildings with public sector agencies. For example, several of the new neighbourhood policing teams are located in school buildings around the area.

77. For some years, the force has sought to re-locate to a new headquarters building and has invited various partner agencies to collaborate in the project. The force has clearly been driven in their desire to collaborate in the proposed headquarters development by a clear sense of best value and the need to demonstrate value for money and provide a saving to the public purse. On a number of occasions, however, prospective partners have withdrawn support for the project and the situation remains unresolved. This remains a matter of some frustration for the force.

78. Beyond shared accommodation, the force has made limited progress in sharing other 'back office' functions such as procurement, payroll services and fleet management.

Planning for the future

79. Like all public sector organisations, the force faces significant financial challenges and, at the time of our audit and inspection, the force did not have a long-term strategy setting out how it planned to deal with these challenges.

80. In summer 2010, the force formed a Service Reconfiguration Programme team to ensure that all possible cost and efficiency saving options are being fully explored. The team is examining all aspects of force business and reports to the force executive. The force has also put arrangements in place to brief staff on the financial future of the organisation and the steps it is taking to address the challenges it faces.

81. The force is now developing a longer-term strategy for change, setting out how it intends to respond to the anticipated reductions in public sector budgets. Given the likely scale of the reduction in budgets, the force, the board and its partners will need to consider the strategic vision for policing priorities in Grampian and critically assess how it will deploy the more limited resources if it is to sustain performance in priority areas.

Equalities

Grampian Joint Police Board

The board's role in providing strategic direction or oversight on the equalities agenda is under-developed.

82. The board has had statutory equality schemes in place for gender, race and disability and received monitoring reports for 2009 and 2010, though there is little evidence to suggest it has been actively monitoring these. On 2 July 2010, the board approved a Single Equality Scheme which covers all equalities groups and replaced the individual schemes.

83. The board receives half-yearly equality performance reports on the force's single equalities scheme and regular reports on workforce statistics and trends, but there is little evidence of active scrutiny or challenge of this information.

84. The board has taken limited steps to mainstream equalities. In March 2010, it approved new terms and conditions covering the force to ensure compliance with equal pay legislation and to deliver an appropriate job evaluation scheme. A number of board members involved in the appointment of chief officers have undertaken specific training on equalities issues.

85. In September 2010, the board agreed to introduce a new format for reports by the end of 2010. The new format will require all reports to highlight any equality issues related to the subject of the report.

86. The board needs to provide clearer leadership on equalities issues. It also needs to consider whether it has appropriate measures in place in order to assure itself that any equalities related activity is having the desired impact.

Grampian Police

The force is making good progress in supporting the mainstreaming of equalities. It has invested in developing strategies, systems, processes and standard operating procedures. The force now needs to develop indicators to assess the impact of the investment it has made.

87. The force's Single Equality Scheme 2008–11 extends previous measures, which covered race, gender and disability, to include age, religion, faith and sexual orientation. The force developed the scheme after extensive consultation with staff, community groups and service users.

A diversity group reviews progress on a quarterly basis and the force carries out an annual review of the scheme. The force's aim is to have one 'living document' and action plan to embed equalities considerations into everyday work.

88. The force engages constructively with a range of community groups, including community partnership groups, lay groups, inter-faith groups and other voluntary sector support groups and has diversity and gypsy/traveller liaison officers in the three divisional areas. The force also provides a seconded liaison officer to the Grampian Race Equality Council (GREC) and in June 2009, the force was awarded the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) charter mark.

89. The force has a range of systems and process in place to support the mainstreaming of equalities. It carries out Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) for all policies and procedures and it is currently reviewing and updating its EQIA process. In common with other forces, 'respect for diversity' is a core competency within the performance and development review system for staff and it has trained staff. In March 2010, the force delivered EQIA training, and is also involved in the national steering group on diversity training.

90. The composition of the workforce is changing and is in line with the other forces in Scotland. There has been a rise in female officers since 2004/05, 26.4 per cent of the force were women in 2009/10 which is exactly the same as the Scottish national average. The number of officers with declared ethnicity has increased to 1.6 per cent, again this is exactly the same as the Scottish national average in 2009/10.

Sustainability

Grampian Joint Police Board

The board does not have a clearly articulated approach to sustainability.

91. There is limited evidence to suggest that the board has considered its statutory responsibilities to support sustainability in a strategic or structured way. It has shown interest in a number of force initiatives, but these have been considered on a case-by-case basis and there is limited evidence to suggest that the board has set a strategic direction on how it might support sustainability.

92. The board can highlight some individual measures which aim to have a positive environmental impact, for example by reducing energy consumption through car-sharing and video-conferencing. However, these are largely initiatives taken by the force, rather than being driven by any overarching strategic approach agreed by the board. To date there is no evidence that the board has monitored the impact of the measures or the overall trends in the force's energy consumption.

93. There is little evidence that the board has considered what actions it might take to consider the economic or social elements of sustainability. The vision underpinning 'Local Policing – Closer to You' which represents a shift from responsive to preventative policing, supports some of the broader requirements of sustainability, particularly in terms of social sustainability. However, it is not clear that the board has made these links or considered the impact of the policing model from the sustainability perspective.

94. The majority of board members who responded to a survey carried out to inform the audit considered that appropriate sustainability strategies

are in place, but the board has not formally considered or approved a clear force vision on sustainability. The absence of a strategic approach to sustainability limits the board's capacity to provide effective strategic direction and scrutiny in this area.

Grampian Police

The force does not have a coherent strategic approach to sustainability. It is making some progress in terms of environmental sustainability and there are also examples of activity which might be considered to support social and economic sustainability, but these do not take place within a structured framework.

95. Like equalities, sustainability is one of the 'cross-cutting' responsibilities under Best Value. In common with other forces, Grampian does not have a strategic approach for how it intends to fulfil this duty. There are several examples of force activity, which contribute to sustainability, but there is no evidence to suggest these are part of a wider strategic approach. *Platform for Success* contains some reference to environmental sustainability but does not include any detail beyond a commitment to reduce energy consumption and increase waste recycling. There are limited performance measures in place to help the force assess its performance in this area.

96. The absence of a strategic framework means that the force has not set a clear direction for how it intends to support sustainability. This means there is a risk that the force is not planning its activity in a coordinated way and not prioritising or monitoring the work effectively. It also means that the force is not able to assure itself that its actions are having the desired impact and becoming embedded into the culture of the organisation.

97. In terms of environmental sustainability, the force established an environmental action group in 2009. This meets every other month and is involved in promoting a range of 'green' activities such as car-sharing, turning off lights, energy awareness and video-conferencing to reduce unnecessary travel. The force, along with all other Scottish police forces, is involved with the Carbon Trust to develop its carbon management plan.

98. The introduction of 'Local Policing – Closer to You' is an example of the force's commitment to local communities which supports social sustainability, though it is not clear that the force has considered it from this perspective. Senior officers within the force are confident that 'Local Policing – Closer to You', delivered in partnership with other agencies, will provide a degree of community resilience which will, in turn, result in enhanced outcomes for those communities. There are other examples of activities which support social sustainability at the local level through crime prevention measures and diversionary activities. These include the work of the police architectural liaison officer who works with partners to promote crime-prevention through environmental design.

99. In terms of economic sustainability, the force intends to enhance the use of the special constabulary and better integrate the Third Sector into force business. The aim of this is to help ensure that community involvement in the delivery of services becomes mainstreamed, while providing clear economic benefits. The next phase of the force's vision is to approach the private sector to attempt to secure funding for neighbourhood projects through the various corporate community responsibility programmes. This approach has the potential to produce favourable results in the future given the number of multinational companies linked to the oil industry with a presence in the area.

100. The force and the board should review their approach to sustainability in order to set a clear strategic direction and put systems and processes in place to help them review progress and monitor impact. There are examples of activity that support the three elements of sustainable development. However, in the absence of a strategic approach, there is a risk that these activities are not prioritised, coordinated and monitored effectively. The force and the board need to do more to articulate their commitment to sustainability and to develop systems and process that demonstrate the impact of the full range of sustainability activities taking place within the force.

Part 2. Grampian Police performance assessment



Delivering policing plan outcomes

The force and its partners are making good progress on most of the area-wide priorities in the SOAs covering Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray.

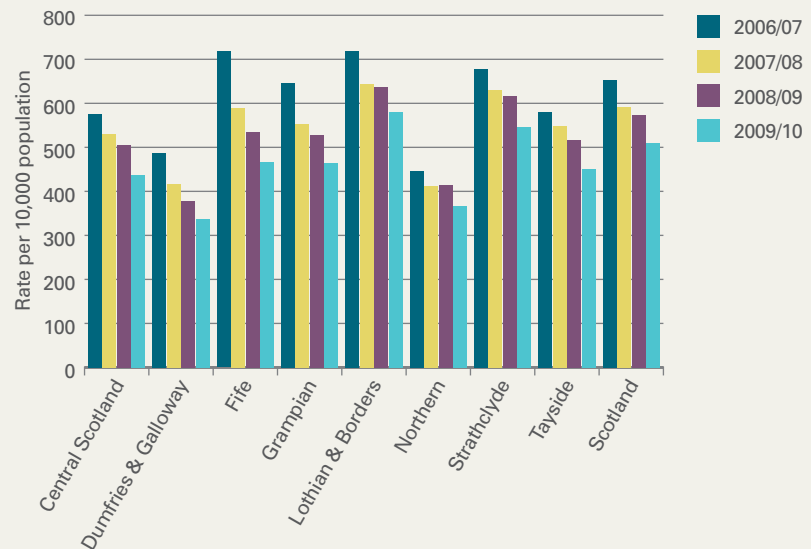
There has been an overall reduction in recorded crime since 2006/07, and crimes of violence, indecency, dishonesty, and reckless behaviour are at their lowest level for seven years. Detection rates have been sustained and are around the national average. Drug enforcement performance declined between 2008/09 and 2009/10 and there have been increases in racially motivated crime and complaints against the police.

101. The force's strategic plan *Platform for Success* defines the force vision and strategic direction. The plan has evolved over the last five years and it is updated on an annual basis to reflect force values, objectives and community priorities. The force's priorities are reducing violent crime and antisocial behaviour, national security, public protection, controlled drugs (which from 2010/11 also includes serious and organised crime), road casualty reduction, community focus and force reputation.

102. Force performance is reported through QPRs and an annual report which share a common structure and are based around the four areas of policing identified within the SPPF. The performance reports also contain a core set of ten performance measures, which are common to the three SOAs and cover the force area and reflect the force's strategic objectives.

103. The force and its partners can demonstrate progress on these ten measures, the majority of which show a positive direction of travel between 2008/09 and 2009/10. This improvement includes positive progress on reducing antisocial

Exhibit 6
Recorded crimes per 10,000 population 2006/07–2009/10



Source: HMICS (data for SPPF annual performance reports)

behaviour, youth crime and crimes of violence. Further work is needed however to sustain the recent improvements to road safety.

Recorded crime

104. Overall, performance in terms of recorded crime is good. In 2009/10, the number of recorded crimes per 10,000 population in Grampian was lower than the Scottish average (Exhibit 6).

105. The level of recorded crime in Grampian is falling and there has been a 25.8 per cent reduction in recorded crimes of violence, indecency, dishonesty, and reckless behaviour between 2006/07 and 2009/10.

106. Between 2006/07 and 2009/10, the total level of recorded crime across Scotland fell by 19 per cent. The reduction in Grampian was greater than the Scottish average for crimes of indecency and for fire raising, malicious and reckless conduct but less than the average for crimes of violence and dishonesty.

Detection rates

107. The overall crime detection rate in Grampian in 2009/10 was 48 per cent, one per cent lower than the Scottish average.

108. The force has improved the detection rates for crimes of violence, indecency, dishonesty and fire raising, vandalism and reckless behaviour (Crime Groups 1–4) since 2006/07 (Exhibit 7, overleaf).

109. The force detection rates between 2006/07 and 2008/09 were better than the Scottish averages for crimes of violence and fire raising, malicious and reckless conduct, but below average for crimes of indecency and dishonesty. However, in 2009/10 the force's detection rates for these crimes were above, or equal to the Scottish averages.

110. The sections that follow consider the force's performance on its strategic priorities of reducing violent crime and antisocial behaviour, national security, public protection, controlled drugs, road casualty reduction and community focus and

force reputation. Where possible the assessment draws on performance measures over a four-year period and makes comparisons with the Scottish average where appropriate. The force's other strategic priority, efficiency, has been covered in part one of this report.

Violence

The force is performing consistently well in reducing crimes of violence. These are at their lowest level for seven years and detection rates are improving.

111. The force has performed well in its efforts to reduce violent crime and offences have fallen consistently over recent years. In 2009/10, crimes of violence in Grampian were at their lowest recorded level and detection rates were at their highest for seven years.

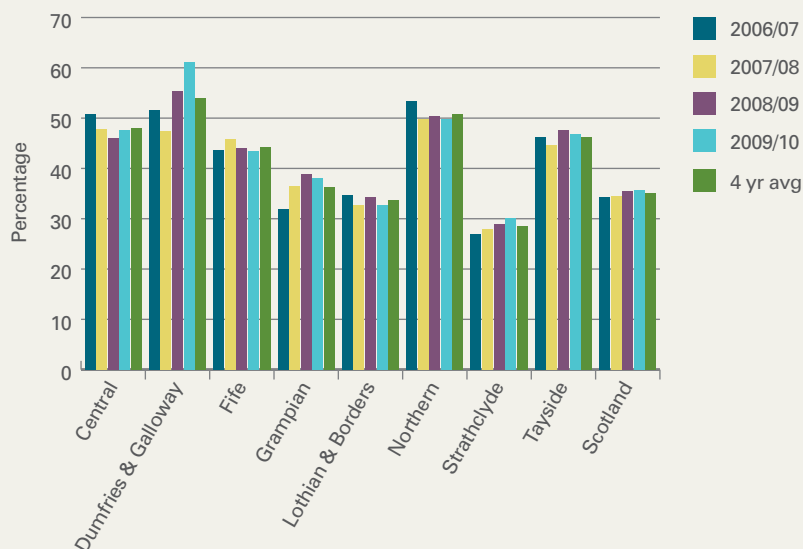
112. The number of recorded crimes of violence fell by 17.6 per cent between 2006/07 and 2009/10. The average detection rate in Grampian between 2006/07 and 2008/09 was 70.4 per cent, significantly better than the Scottish average (Exhibit 8).

113. In 2009/10, there was 14 violent crimes per 10,000 head of population in Grampian, this is significantly lower than the Scottish average of 22. The detection rate in 2009/10 was 84 per cent, which is significantly better than the Scottish average of 67 per cent.

114. During 2009/10, the number of serious assaults fell by 17.8 per cent and the detection rate improved significantly, rising by 14.5 per cent to 90.3 per cent. The force attributes this to proactive policing of new licensing legislation, improved arrangements around door stewarding supported by the Security Industry Authority and by targeting policing around the city and town centres and the weekend night-time economy.

Exhibit 7

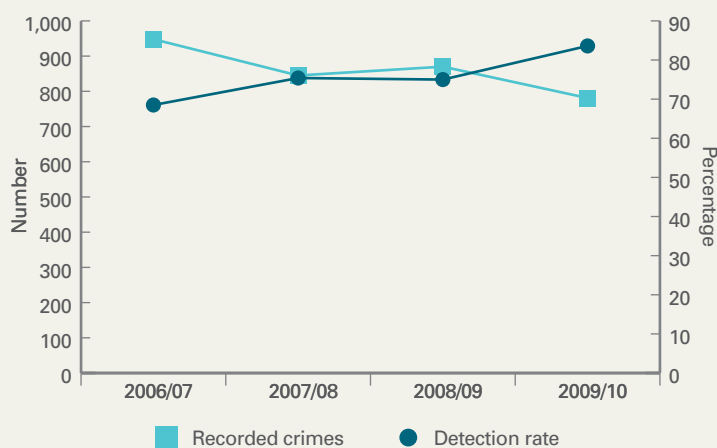
Detection rates for crime groups 2006/07–2009/10



Source: HMICS (data for SPPF annual performance reports)

Exhibit 8

Crimes of violence 2006/07–2009/10



Source: SPPF annual performance reports and Grampian Police annual performance reports

Antisocial behaviour

Antisocial behaviour in Grampian is reducing although detection rates are generally below the national average. The force has been successful in addressing its priority of reducing vandalism. The force works well with its partners in reducing youth-related antisocial behaviour but needs to evaluate the ongoing impact of its diversionary activities for young people more effectively.

115. In 2009/10, antisocial behaviour community crimes⁴ in Grampian fell to their lowest level since 2004/05. This downward trend is encouraging and reflects a concerted effort by the force and its partners to link to the four pillars of the government's antisocial behaviour strategy: prevention, integration, engagement and communication.

116. During 2009/10, there was a significant reduction in the number of recorded antisocial behaviour offences, which fell by 12.5 per cent. Detection rates remained relatively constant over the same period at around 52 per cent. These were below the national average of 67 per cent and the lowest level in Scotland for 2009/10.

117. Vandalism is currently at its lowest level for the past three years. The force has prioritised the reduction of vandalism and has supported this in a number of ways, including a specific vandalism review team. This has been successful and the number of recorded vandalism crimes reduced by 1,850 during 2009/10 to 6,824. Over the same period detection rates also dipped from 31.5 to 28.3 per cent and this is an issue the force needs to address if it is to sustain positive outcomes.

Exhibit 9

'CONTEST 2' strands

- Prevent – terrorism by tackling its causes and the radicalisation of individuals
- Pursue – terrorists and those who sponsor them
- Protect – potential targets of terrorism
- Prepare – to respond to the consequences of a terrorist incident, in order that any disruption is minimised

Source: 'CONTEST 2' Counter Terrorism Strategy, UK Government

118. Detected youth crimes in Grampian decreased by 16 per cent during 2009/10 and the number of children and young people responsible for these crimes also fell by more than 200 during this period. The force's Youth Justice Management Unit has made an effective contribution to this positive trend and is continuing to further strengthen its approach and engagement with partner agencies.

119. The force has worked particularly well with some of its community safety partners to make an impact on antisocial behaviour. Through the Aberdeenshire Community Safety Partnership, the force helped support over 60 'street sports' sessions across Aberdeenshire. These acted as diversionary activities to reduce youth disorder over the summer period and also provided opportunities for partners to give advice on lifestyle issues. As would be expected, these diversionary activities have an immediate positive impact on antisocial behaviour, but the force and its partners need to have more effective arrangements in place to evaluate whether these actions are supporting a more sustained, longer-term improvement in antisocial behaviour.

National security

The force is working with partners to continue to review and develop contingency plans and support national security strategies.

120. The force is committed to the UK Government strategy 'CONTEST 2' (Exhibit 9) and has carried out work in the four strands, 'Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare'. In 2009/10, the main emphasis has been in relation to 'Prevent' where substantial progress has been made on the formation of multi-agency structures to develop responses to potential vulnerabilities and 'Delphinus'⁵ groups are now in place in each of the three local authority areas.

121. The force and its partners continue to develop a range of contingency plans, both locally in terms of potentially vulnerable sites and nationally relative to joint Scottish or UK policing responses. This is particularly relevant to the unique position Grampian Police has in relation to the North Sea oil industry and the additional demand this brings to the force.

⁴ Consistent with Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) performance monitoring data, antisocial behaviour crimes are defined as actions that demonstrate a 'disregard for community/personal wellbeing, acts directed at people, environmental damage and misuse of public space.

⁵ 'Delphinus' groups are multi-agency groups based on community safety partnership structures. They are briefed on local threats and vulnerabilities with a view to developing appropriate responses tailored to the local context.

Public protection

The force is working with partners to protect vulnerable people, but needs to develop performance measures so that it can better assess its performance in this area. The number of reported racist incidents and racially motivated crimes has increased significantly, though detection rates have improved.

122. The force is committed to working with partners to improve the protection of children and adults and the monitoring of offenders, to reduce domestic abuse and in supporting the 'Getting It Right For Every Child' agenda. The force and its partners have implemented the recommendations arising from previous HMle Inspections into the provision of services for the protection of children within the three local authorities, as well as the review of the North East of Scotland Child Protection Committee. We found evidence of good joint working with partners to develop the different strands of public protection to meet the significant challenges around child protection.

123. Force performance reports do not include specific and measurable objectives or performance measures in relation to child protection matters, although the management of dangerous offenders is reported as part of the SPPF data.

124. The number of racist incidents in Grampian increased from 440 in 2006/07 to 564 in 2009/10. The number of reported racially motivated crimes has almost doubled from 449 in 2006/07 to 879 in 2009/10. The detection rate for these crimes has improved significantly from 59.9 per cent in 2006/07 to 69.3 per cent in 2009/10 and was better than the Scottish average of 66.5 per cent.

125. The force considers that part of the increase in incidents and crimes is a result of their efforts to improve reporting mechanisms, raise awareness and improve public confidence in this area. It has also cited changing demographics in the population mix in Aberdeen as an influencing factor. The force needs to further analyse the reasons for the increases so that it can understand what lies behind them and respond appropriately.

126. The force's annual performance report contains limited measures on public protection beyond the statistics relating to racially motivated incidents and crimes. It should consider making better use of measures to help manage performance and support effective scrutiny in this area, for example domestic abuse and child protection issues.

Controlled drugs

Overall, performance declined in all aspects of drug enforcement during 2009/10. This downturn in performance is set against a backdrop of above average drug dependency rates within parts of the force area. This trend was also observed in a number of other Scottish police forces.

127. The force has made controlled drugs a priority for a number of years. Between 2008/09 and 2009/10, the total number of drugs possession charges fell from 2,235 to 1,836. The reduction was most marked in relation to the supply and possession of Class A drugs where the number of offences for supply and possession has fallen from 586 in 2006/07 to 435 in 2009/10. The amount of drugs seized also fell between 2006/07 and 2009/10.

128. A force-wide initiative carried out during the fourth quarter of 2009/10 to generate more activity, resulted in an increase in supply and possession charges during that period. Despite

this, the force fell short of the previous performance in this area of business over the full year.

129. Aberdeenshire suffered the second highest rate of cocaine-related deaths in Scotland in 2007. In Aberdeen the proportion of the population hospitalised for drug-related conditions is higher than the Scottish average, yet drug-related deaths within the force area fell from 46 in 2008/09 to 39 in 2009/10. This may be indicative of partnership activity aimed at combating drugs misuse beginning to have an impact.

130. The national process for identifying and mapping serious and organised crime groups (OCGs) has been embraced by the force and is reflected in the change to this priority in *Platform for Success* 2010/11. The force has restructured its Crime Management Operations to manage this transition and deliver on the Scottish Government strategy 'Letting Our Communities Flourish'. New Major Investigation Teams will support efforts to tackle serious criminality and aim to make Grampian a hostile environment for criminals. It is important that the force maintains focus on drugs while also addressing wider criminality of the OCGs and develops appropriate performance measures to track and report on progress.

Road casualty reduction

The force has achieved small year-on-year reductions in road fatalities. The number of accidents resulting in death or serious injury increased significantly between 2006/07 and 2008/09, though it fell slightly in 2009/10. Although the force works with partners to target drivers who present the greatest risk and reduce collisions, overall roads policing activity has reduced, resulting in falls in detected and drink driving offences between 2008/09 and 2009/10.

131. The total number of road traffic accidents resulting in death or serious injury rose sharply between 2006/07 and 2008/09, though this fell between 2008/09 and 2009/10 ([Exhibit 10](#)). Most of the increase was a result of the increase in adults seriously injured which rose from 188 to 343 over a three-year period.

132. Between 2006/07 and 2009/10, the total number of people killed fell by 32 from 62 to 30, and the number of children who were killed or seriously injured fell from 23 to 22. In 2009/10 the number of people killed or seriously injured per mVkm⁶ was higher in Grampian than anywhere else in Scotland. The force has been concerned at the high level of young drivers who have been involved in traffic collisions and has been focusing its attention in this area. Work with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) on a Young Driver Diversion Scheme is being trialled during 2010/11.

133. The number of detected offences which are known to contribute towards road casualties⁷ all fell between 2008/09 to 2009/10 and detected road traffic offences overall fell from 21,449 to 15,612. There has also been a reduction in the number of drink drivers brought to justice, which fell from 1,071 in 2008/09 to 881 in 2009/10.

134. The number of proactive enforcement operations, high visibility patrols and the numbers of people receiving education activity also fell between 2008/09 and 2009/10.

135. It is important that the force considers whether it is committing sufficient resources to continue the recent improvement in performance on road casualties. Although 2009/10 offered an improvement on the previous year, it was still higher than 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Exhibit 10

Road traffic accidents in Grampian



Source: Grampian Police annual performance reports

Force reputation, standards and community focus

Force performance on answering and dealing with emergency and non-emergency calls is improving and the force is responding to emergency incidents more quickly. Public confidence in the force is slightly below the national average but satisfaction rates are high and improving. Complaints against the police are increasing year-on-year.

136. The force is improving its responsiveness to emergency calls. In 2006/07 it answered 89.9 per cent of 999 calls within ten seconds and this has risen to 96.2 per cent in 2009/10. This exceeded the national target of 90 per cent, and was better than the Scottish average of 94.7 per cent.

137. The force responded to 92.4 per cent of emergency incidents within its target response times in 2009/10. The force also exceeded its ten-minute response target and average emergency response times have improved year-on-year.

138. The force answered 97.6 per cent of non-emergency calls in 2009/10 and 90.9 per cent of these were answered in under 40 seconds. This is an improvement in performance compared to 2008/09, in this critical initial contact.

139. The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey data for 2009/10 reported on public confidence on a number of aspects of forces nationally ([Exhibit 11, overleaf](#)). This indicated that public confidence in the Grampian force was slightly below other forces across Scotland.

140. The people of Grampian are generally positive about the force. In 2009/10, the satisfaction rates in Grampian covering initial contact, the actions taken by officers to resolve enquiries, the way in which people were treated and overall satisfaction with the way in which the force dealt with the matter were the highest in Scotland. The force had adopted a phone survey methodology, which attracted a higher response rate compared to other forces who

⁶ Million vehicle kilometres travelled.

⁷ This includes dangerous driving, careless driving, the use of mobile phones, speeding and seatbelt offences.

typically use a postal survey. In 2009/10, satisfaction rates improved for all of these indicators apart from one. Public satisfaction with the way the force dealt with matters overall improved from 84.3 per cent in 2008/09 to 86.0 per cent in 2009/10, but the proportion of people who felt they had been kept adequately informed fell slightly.

141. The number of complaints against police officers has increased year-on-year (Exhibit 12) and has risen by 69 per cent between 2006/07 and 2009/10.

142. In 2009/10, there were 31 complaints per 10,000 incidents; this was significantly higher than the Scottish average of 17.5 and was the second highest in Scotland. The force considers that members of the public have confidence in the force’s willingness to deal with complaints and are therefore more prepared to make complaints. Evidence suggests that the force is meticulous in recording complaints and this, coupled with changes in recording processes, may account for some of the increase. However, other forces are also implementing changes to recording systems but have not experienced the same level of increase. The Police Complaints Commissioner will examine this issue in depth in his annual report and provide a comparison with other Scottish forces.

143. Between 2006/07 and 2009/10, the proportion of reports the force submitted to the procurator fiscal within the 28-day deadline rose from 80.7 per cent to 94.5 per cent. This was significantly better than the Scottish average of 88.6 per cent.

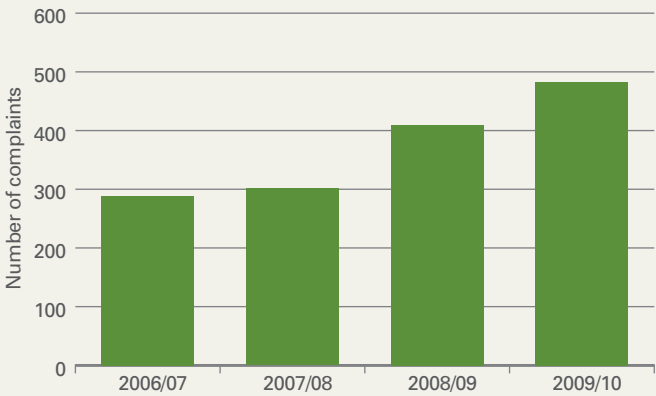
144. Performance in terms of reports submitted to the Children’s Reporter has also improved but was slightly below the national average in 2009/10. The force submitted 79.5 per cent of reports within 14 days in 2006/07 and this has risen to 82.5 per cent in 2009/10.

Exhibit 11
Public confidence

Public confidence in the force’s ability to ...	Grampian (%)	Scotland (%)
Prevent crime	48	48
Respond quickly to appropriate calls and information from the public	56	58
Deal with incidents as they occur	59	61
Investigate incidents after they occur	66	68
Solve crimes	61	60
Catch criminals	57	57

Source: *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2009/10*, Scottish Government, November 2010

Exhibit 12
Complaints



Source: Grampian Police annual performance reports

Part 3. Improvement recommendations



The improvement programme

145. Continuous improvement in public services and local governance are central to the Best Value and Community Planning Policy Framework. In striving to achieve the highest possible standards of service, members of the joint board must focus on key policy objectives and the needs of service users and

communities. This requires a culture where areas in need of improvement are identified and openly discussed and in which service performance is constructively challenged.

146. Grampian Police and the Joint Board are aware of the key areas where improvements are needed and are addressing them.

147. Grampian Joint Police Board and Grampian Police must work together and take shared responsibility in order to deliver best value to the communities of Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, and Moray. The table below sets out the key areas where the force and the board need to improve.

Improvement agenda

Grampian Joint Police Board

- 1. The board must ensure that it delivers an effective ICVS.
- 2. The board needs to become more proactive in long-term resource planning to help ensure priority areas are resourced appropriately.
- 3. The board should complete the review of its current governance and implement any improvement actions, including the current arrangements for chairing the complaints and stewardship subcommittees.
- 4. The board should consider recommendations of the review of the administrative support and training and development arrangements to ensure these are being resourced appropriately.
- 5. The board should engage more proactively with the force on the prioritisation, scope and monitoring of improvement work.
- 6. The board should strengthen its leadership and scrutiny of equalities issues.

Grampian Police

- 1. The force needs to get a clearer understanding of the costs of areas of activity in order to demonstrate the link between resources and results, and help to inform decisions about how resources are prioritised.
- 2. The force should use more comparative information to improve the quality and balance of performance reporting.
- 3. The force needs to develop outcome-focused equalities measures in order to assess the impact of its work in this area.
- 4. The force needs to further analyse the reasons for the increase in complaints and racially motivated crime and respond accordingly and assess whether it is deploying resources appropriately on tackling controlled drugs and road traffic accidents.

Joint improvements

- 1. The board and the force should review the content of the annual public performance report to ensure that it provides a summary of the board’s activities and its impact.
- 2. The board and the force should develop a strategic approach to sustainability to ensure that the economic, social and environmental aspects are considered.

Appendix 1.

Expectations of police authorities

The Scottish Government has issued two main sources of guidance on the role of elected members and police authorities:

- Circular 11/2003, *Implementing Best Value in the Scottish Police Service*, issued in December 2003.
- *Guidance for Members of Police Authorities and Joint Police Boards*, issued in June 2007.

Taken together, these two documents set out six main areas of activity for police authorities and their members:

- Police authorities need to pursue best value in tandem with chief constables who are responsible for police operations in their force. Members of the police authorities should take joint responsibility for the overarching plan to achieve best value and other duties in the force, and work with the chief constable to ensure that it is carried out effectively.
- Best value requires elected members and senior managers to develop a vision of how best value will contribute to the corporate goals of the authorities, inform the direction of services and be communicated to staff.
- Police authorities are expected to demonstrate responsiveness to the needs of the public and other stakeholders. Plans, priorities and actions should be informed by an understanding of those needs. Police authorities may make clear publicly how they engage and work with chief constables delivering, and reporting on, best value. They have a particular role to play in ensuring effective public consultation on aspects of policing.
- It is a matter for each authority to determine how it fulfils these roles. However, one option might be for the police authorities to contribute to and endorse the chief constable's annual plan.
- Members of the police authorities should be able to demonstrate that they are making the best use of public resources and demonstrate an approach to review that is rigorous, robust and covers all aspects of their work.
- Police authorities need to make sure that the force collects and reports good-quality performance data to them. Police authorities should analyse the data and any accompanying commentary. They may then want to investigate further by asking questions of the chief constable as part of a continuous discussion and review of force performance.

Grampian Police and Grampian Joint Police Board

Best Value Audit and Inspection

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ISBN 978 1 907916 16 8

Printed on Revive 100 Uncoated, a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified recycled grade containing 100% post consumer waste and manufactured at a mill certified with ISO 14001 environmental management standard. The pulp used in this product is bleached using an Elemental Chlorine Free process (ECF).

