HMICS

Local Policing+ Inspection Programme Inspection of Aberdeen City Division

May 2015
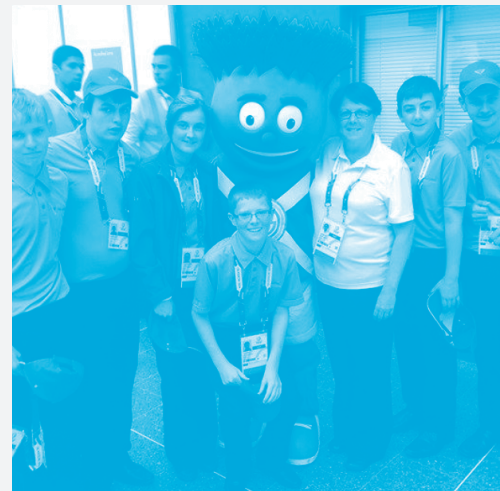
Improving Policing Across Scotland

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland

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

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

- Our powers allow us to do anything we consider necessary or expedient for the purposes of, or in connection with, the carrying out of our functions.

- The SPA and the Chief Constable must provide us with such assistance and co-operation as we may require to carry out our functions.

- When we publish a report, the SPA and the Chief Constable must also consider what we have found and take such measures, if any, as they think fit.

- Where we make recommendations, we will follow them up and report publicly on progress.

- We will identify good practice that can be applied across Scotland.

- We work with other inspectorates and agencies across the public sector and co-ordinate our activities to reduce the burden of inspection and avoid unnecessary duplication.

- We aim to add value and strengthen public confidence in Scottish policing and will do this through independent scrutiny and objective, evidence-led reporting about what we find.

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

This inspection was undertaken by HMICS in terms of Section 74(2)(a) of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 and is laid before the Scottish Parliament in terms of Section 79(3) of the Act.

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[1] Chapter 11, Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.
[2] HMICS, *Corporate Strategy 2014-17* (2014).

Contents

Our inspection

This inspection, which forms part of our published scrutiny programme,[3] is the second in our Local Policing+ inspection programme. It follows our first local policing inspection of Ayrshire Division and our pilot inspection in Fife. This inspection aims to **assess the state, effectiveness and efficiency of local policing in Aberdeen City Division**.

Effective local policing is fundamental to the success of Scottish policing. It is the part of policing that interacts with the public on a daily basis and is essential in building good relations with persons, localities and communities in Scotland.[4] Strong local relationships strengthen the legitimacy of Police Scotland to carry out its function and support communities to improve their safety and well-being. Effective local scrutiny and engagement are also essential to the success of policing, through the identification and agreement of local priorities and holding the local commander to account for their delivery.

Localism was reflected in the three objectives of police reform: (i) to protect and improve local services; (ii) to create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity; and (iii) to strengthen the connection between police services and communities.[5] We have therefore taken the opportunity during this inspection to comment on the extent to which these reform objectives are being achieved.

Inspections of policing are based on our framework which ensures a consistent and objective approach to our work. This framework considers six overarching themes:

- Outcomes
- Leadership and governance
- Planning and process
- People
- Resources
- Partnerships

The framework is supplemented by our on-going scrutiny risk assessment to identify issues relevant to local policing divisions or which are of particular national importance. This allows each inspection to focus on specific issues that are topical at that point in time or are particularly relevant to the local area.

Supplementing this approach is the + element of our programme. This provides us the opportunity to conduct an in-depth examination of specific themes or subjects through the lens of local policing and comment on their state, efficiency and effectiveness, both locally and nationally. During our inspection of Aberdeen City Division, we examined Police Scotland's arrangements for the management of adults, children and young people who are reported missing. Our report on missing persons will be published separately.

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[3] HMICS, *Scrutiny Plan 2014-15* (2014).
[4] Policing principles, section 23(a) Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.
[5] Scottish Parliament, *Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill: Policy Memorandum* (2012).

During our inspections of each local policing division in Scotland, we intend to take the opportunity to inspect police custody facilities located in that division. Our local policing inspection of Aberdeen is the first in which we have done so and a report of our inspection is published separately. These regular inspections of custody follow on from our thematic inspection of police custody arrangements in Scotland, published in 2014, and contribute to the United Kingdom's response to its international obligations under the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).

In response to our inspection, Police Scotland will be asked to create an action plan so that our recommendations are addressed and that good practice is disseminated across Scotland to promote continuous improvement. We will monitor progress against this plan and publish our findings as part of our annual reporting process.

We carried out our inspection between November 2014 and March 2015. We sought evidence from a range of sources including surveys of stakeholders and councillors involved in local scrutiny of policing; a review of data, strategies, policies and procedures; observation of community council meetings and of divisional processes and meetings, including those done in partnership with other agencies; and more than 40 interviews and focus groups with police officers and staff, elected officials and partners. The performance data cited in this report was the data available at the time of our inspection, but it should be noted that performance may have fluctuated since our inspection took place.

HMICS wishes to thank Chief Superintendent Adrian Watson, Divisional Commander for Aberdeen City, and the officers and staff of the division, as well as members of the public, councillors and other stakeholders for their support and co-operation during our inspection.

Our inspection team was led by Laura Paton, supported by Brian Plastow, Frank Gallop, Tina Yule and Caroline Logan. Additional support was provided by Richard Whetton of the Improvement Service. Executive lead was provided by the Assistant Inspector of Constabulary, Andy Cowie.

Derek Penman QPM
HM Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland
May 2015

Key findings

Outcomes

- Aberdeen City Division is delivering an effective policing service. People in Aberdeen are less likely to be the victim of a crime than in previous years, and where they are a victim of a crime, the crime is more likely to be detected than previously.

- Feedback from service users is sought regularly in accordance with national policy. Satisfaction rates for Aberdeen fall slightly below the national rate, but more recent data suggests the division's satisfaction rates are rising. A key area for improvement for both the division and Police Scotland is in providing updates to complainers about the progress of the incident they reported to the police.

- The volume of complaints about policing in Aberdeen has reduced and the ratio of complaints per officer in Aberdeen is below the national rate.

Leadership and governance

- The public and local partners influence the division's local priorities and the local policing plan. This plan aligns to national policing priorities, as well as to other local strategies such as Aberdeen's Single Outcome Agreement.

- Some local stakeholders remain unaware of the local policing plan suggesting there is still work to be done in promoting the plan and demonstrating its relevance and benefit to communities.

- There are 13 multi-member ward plans but these do not correspond to community policing areas which are felt to be more reflective of identifiable local communities.

- Reports to the local scrutiny committee do not cover all local objectives and the data supplied in the reports is not always current.

- Councillors in Aberdeen are concerned that national decisions about policing which have an impact locally are made without assessing the local impact and without sufficient consultation. While they feel this has improved recently, it is still not as effective as it could be.

- While Police Scotland has directed officers to record their working time, this has not yet been sufficient to ensure compliance among some senior staff.

- There is effective and visible leadership in the division. Those in supervisory positions, including the senior management team, are viewed as approachable and supportive. Communication within the division is good.

- Staff in Aberdeen feel listened to and say their ideas and feedback are encouraged. Staff feel valued and good work is recognised.

- Performance information is viewed as a management tool. Managers successfully isolate officers at inspector rank and below from information about key performance indicators and targets. The majority of officers feel the division's activities are intelligence-led, rather than performance-driven.

- The division communicates well with its partners and with the public in Aberdeen. It has an effective process to record and monitor community engagement.

- No decision has yet been made on whether to progress the proposed merger of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire and Moray Divisions. In the absence of a business case outlining the benefits and dis-benefits of a merger, we have been unable to make our own, evidence-based assessment but will continue to monitor the proposal.

Planning and process

- The Interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD) is seen as a useful tool to manage referrals of children and adults at risk to other agencies. However, there is a lack of definitive guidance on thresholds and the degree of concern that must exist before incidents are entered onto the database.

- There is a lack of clarity about the circumstances in which it is appropriate to conduct joint investigative interviews of child victims and witnesses. However, this should be addressed by Police Scotland's plans to develop a standard operating procedure on joint investigative interviews.

- The Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse is being piloted in Aberdeen. Early feedback from officers involved in the scheme suggests they view it as a useful tool in their efforts to prevent domestic abuse.

- The division is seeking to learn and continuously improve its service delivery. An effective divisional improvement plan is in place. While still at the early stages, the plan shows the division is aware of areas for development and is taking steps to address them.

People

- The most significant challenges facing Aberdeen City Division relate to the recruitment and retention of staff. The division has lost experienced officers to the oil and gas industry and struggles to recruit locally.

- The division has the highest proportion of new recruits (probationers) in Scotland and its workforce is therefore less experienced than that of other divisions. The division successfully managed an influx of probationers in 2014 by creating a Tutor Unit to support their development.

- Many probationers assigned to the division are from outwith the North East area. They face challenges in finding appropriate and affordable accommodation as the cost of living is higher than elsewhere in Scotland. The division is, however, working with partners to identify affordable housing opportunities.

- Officers and staff feel training and development opportunities have been more limited in recent years. They feel there is an over-reliance on online training which many feel is not as effective as traditional methods.

- Aberdeen City Division is managing absence effectively and has the lowest absence rate in Scotland for both officers and staff.

- Morale among officers is higher in Aberdeen than in other divisions we have inspected to date. Officers attributed their good morale to a sense of team spirit and working in a supportive environment where their efforts are valued.

- Morale is not as high among police staff who continue to be concerned about job security and who feel their contribution to policing is not as valued by Police Scotland as that of officers.

Resources

- The community policing model in Aberdeen City is working effectively and is meeting local needs.

- The use of police officers to provide security at courts does not appear to be cost-effective.

- There is an impressive record of co-location with operational bases in council premises, libraries, schools and health centres. This helps community policing teams to have a visible presence in their local areas.

- Body worn video cameras are seen as a useful tool by officers in Aberdeen. However, the cameras have not yet become embedded in their daily practice.

Partnerships

- Partnership working is embedded within Aberdeen City Division and is effective. The division's leaders hold key positions in the local partnership environment.

- Partners have been frustrated by poor communication and a lack of consultation in relation to national decisions made by Police Scotland that have a local impact.

- Young people involved in the Police Scotland Youth Volunteer Programme told us the programme helped them to develop skills and had improved their confidence and their relationship with the police. The programme also received positive feedback from the young people's parents as well as the wider community.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Police Scotland should ensure that progress against all objectives in local policing plans is measured and reported to local scrutiny committees at an appropriate stage each year.

Recommendation 2

Police Scotland should ensure that the Analysis and Performance Unit helps divisional commanders to provide data to local scrutiny bodies that is current enough to support effective local scrutiny of policing.

Recommendation 3

Police Scotland should examine the effectiveness of the existing guidance given to officers on the use of body worn video cameras.

Recommendation 4

Police Scotland should provide appropriate access to its information management systems for those analysts working in partnership with the police.

Effective practice

Aberdeen City's divisional improvement plan has helped to identify the division's strengths and areas for development. The plan supports continuous improvement in the policing of Aberdeen. We consider it to be an example of effective practice and we welcome the division's commitment to self-assessment (see paragraph 80).

The division's early intervention management process is an example of effective practice in learning from complaints (see paragraph 83).

The Tutor Unit, set up to manage and support a large number of probationers who joined the division over a short period of time, is an example of effective practice (see Case study – Tutor Unit on page 39).

The Community Safety Hub, a local initiative involving Police Scotland, Aberdeen City Council, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and other agencies, is an example of effective partnership working (see Case study – Community Safety Hub on page 52).

Context

Police Scotland

1. Police Scotland was established on 1 April 2013 and is responsible for policing across Scotland.

2. Police Scotland is led by Chief Constable Sir Stephen House QPM and at the time of our inspection comprised 17,254 full-time equivalent police officers, 5,619 full-time equivalent police staff and 1,135 special constables.[6] The Chief Constable is supported by a command team of four Deputy Chief Constables, seven Assistant Chief Constables and five Directors of Services.

3. The Chief Constable is responsible, and must account to the Scottish Police Authority, for the policing of Scotland.[7]

4. Police Scotland's statutory purpose is to improve the safety and well-being of persons, localities and communities in Scotland[8] and is summarised by the service's strategic focus on 'Keeping People Safe'.

5. Police Scotland's priorities are outlined in its Annual Police Plan.[9] These are aligned to the strategic police priorities set by the Scottish Government and the strategic objectives outlined by the SPA in its three-year plan.[10]

6. Local policing is led by a Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) and three Assistant Chief Constables (ACCs) who are responsible for the local policing divisions within the North, East and West regions of Scotland. At the time of our inspection, a fourth ACC was temporarily responsible for the national functions of custody, criminal justice and call handling, which all support local policing.

7. Currently there are 14 local policing divisions across Scotland, each headed by a Local Police Commander at Chief Superintendent rank, who has a statutory role to ensure that local policing in each area is responsive, accountable and tailored to meet local needs. The divisions are further divided into 32 local policing areas which mirror all local authorities across Scotland. Local commanders must prepare and submit a local police plan to the relevant local authority for approval.

8. Alongside the local policing divisions, there are two specialist divisions. These are Specialist Crime Division, providing specialist investigative and intelligence functions; and Operational Support Division, providing specialist functions such as roads policing and armed policing.

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[6] See Scottish Government, *Police Officer Quarterly Strength Statistics Scotland, 31 December 2014* (2015); Police Scotland, *HR Performance Report February 2015* (report submitted to a board meeting of the Scottish Police Authority on 24 February 2015). All figures correct as at 31 December 2014.
[7] Section 17(1), Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.
[8] Section 32(a), Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.
[9] Police Scotland, *Annual Police Plan 2014/15.*
[10] SPA, *Strategic Police Plan* (2013).

Aberdeen City Division

9. Situated in the north east of Scotland, the boundaries of Aberdeen City Division match those of Aberdeen City Council. The division is the smallest in Police Scotland in geographic terms and the second smallest in resourcing terms. The division serves around 227,130 people in a council area which is the fourth most densely populated in Scotland. In recent years, Aberdeen has seen a greater than average growth in its population and its population is projected to increase more than any other council area in Scotland over the next 25 years.[11] Strikingly, one in six people living in Aberdeen were born outside of the UK. Aberdeen also has a significant transient population due to the large number of offshore workers and students as well as people commuting into the city from surrounding areas for work and recreation.

10. Aberdeen is often perceived as an affluent area with a vibrant economy, linked to its role as a key international hub for the oil and gas industry. While the extent of the impact of the recent drop in oil prices is not yet known, Aberdeen's unemployment rate is currently the second lowest in Scotland and its average gross weekly earnings in 2014 were significantly higher than the Scottish average.[12] Nonetheless, 22 of Aberdeen's 267 data zones are among the most deprived in Scotland.

11. Aberdeen City Division is divided into two command areas: North and South. Each is led by an Area Commander of Chief Inspector rank who has responsibility for all day-to-day policing functions in that area. Command areas are further divided into community policing areas, each managed by a Community Policing Team led by an Inspector. There are 13 such teams in Aberdeen, as well as one additional team which is responsible for liaison with the oil and gas sector. Community policing teams are responsible for responding to calls in their local area and are encouraged to work in partnership with communities and local service providers to resolve local challenges.

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[11] National Records of Scotland, *Population Projections for Scottish Areas* *(2012-based)* (2014).
[12] Office for National Statistics, *Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2014 Provisional Results* (2014).

Outcomes

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Key findings

■ Aberdeen City Division is delivering an effective policing service. People in Aberdeen are less likely to be the victim of a crime than in previous years, and where they are a victim of a crime, the crime is more likely to be detected than previously.

■ Feedback from service users is sought regularly in accordance with national policy. Satisfaction rates for Aberdeen fall slightly below the national rate, but more recent data suggests the division's satisfaction rates are rising. A key area for improvement for both the division and Police Scotland is in providing updates to complainers about the progress of the incident they reported to the police.

■ The volume of complaints about policing in Aberdeen has reduced and the ratio of complaints per officer in Aberdeen is below the national rate.

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Results

12. A key outcome for local policing is to ensure communities are safe from crime, disorder and danger.[13] We have examined available management information and performance reports relating to Aberdeen up to December 2014. We have reviewed whether and the extent to which the division has reduced crime across Groups 1 to 5 (information about how crime is grouped is included at Appendix 1).

13. When considering recorded crime data in Aberdeen, the findings of our recent audit of crime recording should be taken into account.[14] In Aberdeen, we found that 93% of incidents were closed correctly and 98% of crime was counted and classified correctly. The division achieved higher rates of compliance than Police Scotland as a whole: across Scotland, 92% of incidents were closed correctly and 94% of crime was counted and classified correctly.

14. The following tables provide data about recorded crime in Aberdeen City Division in 2012-13, 2013-14 and the first nine months of 2014-15. Data for Scotland as a whole is provided for comparative purposes.

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[13] Scottish Government, National outcomes (2007).
[14] HMICS, _Crime Audit 2014_ (2014).

Table 1 – Crimes and offences 2012-13 and 2013-14[15]

| Crimes | Aberdeen City Division | | | | Scotland |
	2012-13	2013-14	Total change	% change	% change
Group 1	321	317	-4	-1.2	-9.9
Group 2	468	402	-66	-14.1	11.8
Group 3	8,759	8,815	56	0.6	1.0
Group 4	3,317	2,715	-602	-18.1	-8.5
Total Groups 1 to 4	12,865	12,249	-616	-4.8	-1.6
Group 5	2,770	3,141	371	13.4	1.3
Total Groups 1 to 5	15,635	15,390	-245	-1.6	-0.9
Group 6	NDA[16]	9,999	NDA	NDA	NDA
Group 7	NDA	10,655	NDA	NDA	NDA

Table 2 – Crimes and offences April to December 2013 and April to December 2014[17]

| Crimes | Aberdeen City Division | | | | Scotland |
	April-December 2013	April-December 2014	Total change	% change	% change
Group 1	226	211	-15	-6.6	-5.8
Group 2	304	338	34	11.2	4.9
Group 3	6,831	5,634	-1,197	-17.5	-7.0
Group 4	2,067	1,978	-89	-4.3	-5.3
Total Groups 1 to 4	9,428	8,161	-1,267	-13.4	-6.0
Group 5	2,339	2,142	-197	-8.4	-3.1
Total Groups 1 to 5	11,767	10,303	-1,464	-12.4	-5.3
Group 6	7,685	6,922	-763	-9.9	-13.5
Group 7	8,265	7,898	-367	-4.4	-34.6

15. During 2013-14, there were 4.8% fewer crimes involving victims[18] in Aberdeen than in the previous year, compared to a 1.6% reduction nationally. This trend has accelerated in the year-to-date figures for Aberdeen in 2014-15: there has been a 13.4% reduction in Group 1 to 4 crimes, compared to a 6% reduction nationally.

16. While there has been an overall reduction in crimes of violence (Group 1) in 2014-15, serious assaults and robberies (including assault with intent to rob) have increased compared to the previous year (2.1% and 3% respectively). However, detection rates for both crime types have also increased: the detection rate for serious assaults has increased by 7.6% on the previous year and for robberies by 12.8%. Overall, the division's detection rate for crimes of violence is 89.6%, above that of Police Scotland nationally (85.2%). The division attributes the overall reduction in violence to effective

[15] Scottish Government, *Recorded Crime in Scotland 2012-13* (2013) and *2013-14* (2014); and Police Scotland, *Management Information Police Division Report: year end 2013/14* (2014).
[16] NDA = no data available. Prior to 2014, this data was published in the Scottish Police Performance Framework and was based on returns for each of the legacy forces, not by local policing division.
[17] Police Scotland, *Management Information Force Report: Quarter 3, 2014/15* (2015) and Police Scotland, *Management Information Division Area Report: Quarter 3, 2014/15* (2015).
[18] Crimes in Groups 1 to 4 are generally described as those involving victims.

partnership working via initiatives such as Operation Oak, a city centre safety strategy (see Case study – Operation Oak).

17. Aberdeen City Division has experienced an 11.2% increase in sexual crimes (Group 2) in 2014-15, compared to a national increase of 4.9%. The division is one of nine divisions in Scotland that have experienced an increase in sexual crimes and it attributes some of this increase to a more proactive investigatory approach to these crimes which encourages reporting, as well as to greater confidence among victims in reporting sexual crimes to the police. This is substantiated to some extent by the fact that some of the increased volume relates to historic crimes which only now victims have felt able to report. The division has increased its detection rate for sexual crimes to 76%, just below the national detection rate of 77.9%.

18. After a small increase in 2013-14, the division has seen a large decrease of 17.5% in the volume of crimes of dishonesty (Group 3). This fall in Group 3 crime has been accompanied by an increase in the detection rate – the division detects 39% of crimes of dishonesty, compared to a national detection rate of 35.2%.

19. Aberdeen City Division has identified seven key priorities for 2014-15 which are set out in its local policing plan (see paragraph 37). Attached to each priority are a number of objectives that provide a means of assessing the extent to which the division has successfully addressed its priorities. Progress against these priorities in the period April to December 2014 is shown in Table 3. Measuring progress against some objectives is based on data already gathered by Police Scotland. Some measures are more qualitative in nature and the division would benefit from making information publically available regarding what progress is being made. For example, in relation to the national security priority, one objective is to deliver training and briefings to organisations, community groups and partner agencies in support of the four strands of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy (Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare). While the local policing plan itself states that inputs have been delivered to the public, private and third sectors regarding counter-terrorism, there is no information on what further progress has been made in relation to this objective in 2014-15 in, for example, reports to the local scrutiny body. This issue is discussed further at paragraph 46.

Table 3 – Performance against local policing objectives for Aberdeen City Division

Priority	Objective	Progress (April to December 2014, compared to same period in previous year)
Antisocial behaviour	Reduce the number of incidents of antisocial behaviour reported by members of the public	Antisocial behaviour incidents reported to the police have fallen 8.4% compared to the previous year
	Decrease the number of complaints regarding youth disorder	No data available[19]
	Decrease instances of vandalism	Vandalism incidents have decreased 23.2%
Housebreaking	Reduce the level of all forms of housebreaking	Housebreaking has fallen 25.4%
	Increase the detection rate for all forms of housebreaking	The detection rate has increased 3.2%
National security	Increase community engagement and intelligence in support of the counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST)	No data available
	Deliver training and briefings to organisations, community groups and partner agencies in support of the four strands of CONTEST (Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare)	No data available
	Co-ordinate the work within the Divisional Action Plan through the Divisional CONTEST Multi-Agency Group	No data available
Protecting people	Deliver and embed GIRFEC into the practices of officers and staff across the division	No data available
	Enhance child protection by ensuring police attend partner agency child protection hearings	Police have attended 100% of child protection case conferences
	Work together with partners to protect adults at risk as effectively as possible	No data available
	Increase detection rates for crimes of domestic abuse and sexual offences	The detection rate for domestic abuse has increased 13.2%[20]; the detection rate for sexual crimes has increased 4.7%
Safer roads	Decrease the number of persons killed or serious injured on our roads	The number of people killed or seriously injured has decreased 10.7%
	Increase the enforcement activities and visibility on our streets and roads	Dangerous driving detections have fallen by 5.3%; drink/drug detections have risen by 7.7%; speeding detections have risen by 22.3%; seat belt detections have fallen by 35.8%; mobile phone detections have risen by 8.3%
Serious and organised crime	Increase the use of proceeds of crime legislation to deprive serious organised crime groups of assets	At 31 December 2014, the division had recorded asset seizures of £2.5 million, compared to less than £1 million in the previous year
	Increase the detection rate for the supply of drugs	The detection rate for drugs supply and production increased by 7.6%
Violent crime	Decrease the number of assaults	The number of serious assaults rose by 2.1%, while the number of common assaults fell by 3%. Overall, assaults fell by 2.8%
	Increase the detection rate for crimes of violence	The detection rate for Group 1 crime has increased by 15.2%
	Decrease the number of robberies	The number of robberies has risen by 3%

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[19] See paragraph 21 for further information on youth offending.
[20] Source: Police Scotland.

20.   Table 3 shows that, where data is available, the division has made good progress in addressing the majority of its priorities. The division has not achieved its objective of decreasing the number of robberies, but it is worth noting that robberies across Scotland have increased in the first three quarters of 2014-15 and that the national increase is slightly greater than that in Aberdeen (3.4% compared to 3%).

21.   The division has made good progress in addressing antisocial behaviour with a reduction in antisocial behaviour incidents reported to the police and a reduction in vandalism. Although there is no publically available data on whether the number of complaints regarding *youth* disorder is decreasing, there have been reductions in the number of children and young people who offend in the division and the number issued with formal warnings.[21] The number of children in Aberdeen referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds has also fallen in recent years, from 138 in 2011-12, to 111 in 2012-13 and 88 in 2013-14.[22] The division has multiple partnership initiatives aimed at engaging young people and diverting them from crime, and works with partners at a strategic level to deliver the Aberdeen Youth Justice Strategy.

22.   Progress against the division's antisocial behaviour priority – as well as reductions in crime more generally – have been attributed in part by the division to the success of the Community Safety Hub, a partnership initiative between agencies including Aberdeen City Council, Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (see Case study – Community Safety Hub, page 52).

23.   In the first three quarters of 2014-15, the crime rate for crimes in Groups 1 to 5 per 10,000 population in Aberdeen City Division was 453.6. While this is the third highest rate in Scotland and is higher than the national crime rate, it nevertheless represents a 12.4% reduction on the same period in the previous year.

24.   The division's detection rate for crimes in Groups 1 to 5 was 50.6% in the first three quarters of 2014-15, compared to 47.8% for the same period in the previous year. This detection rate is slightly above the national detection rate (50.0% in 2014-15) and is above that of some divisions with a lower volume of crime.

Chart 1 – Crimes (Groups 1 to 5) per 10,000 population

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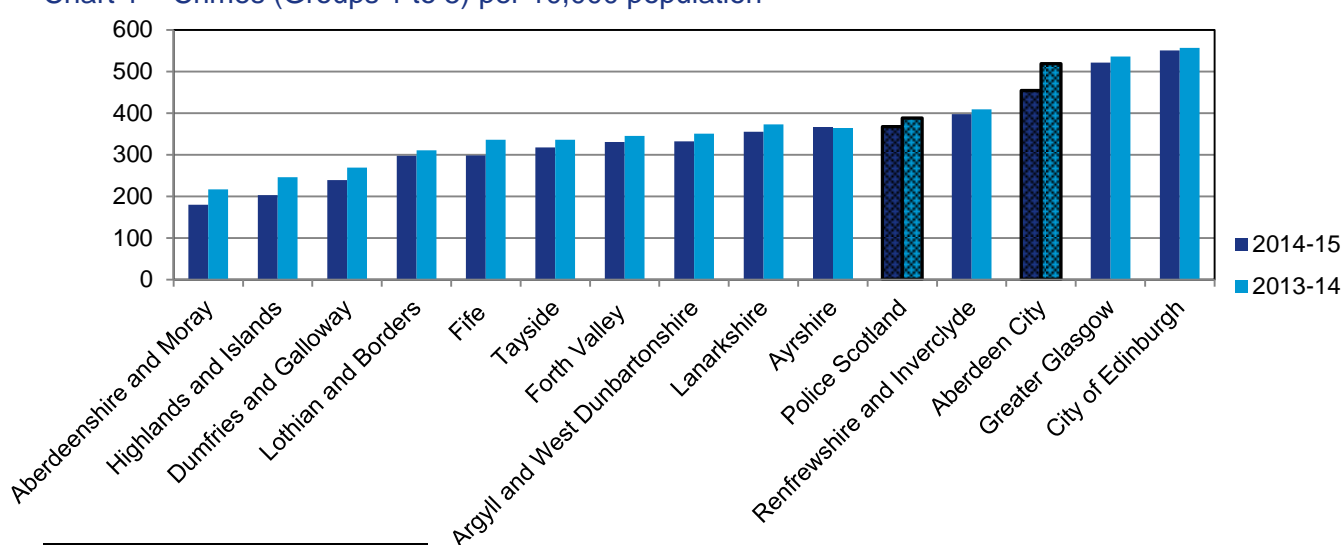
[21] The exact extent of these reductions cannot be confirmed as Police Scotland draws the data on youth offending from its Interim Vulnerable Persons Database and has cautioned that some changes in the data may be a result of changes to recording practice.

[22] Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, *Online Statistical Dashboard 2013-14.*

Case study – Operation Oak

During our inspection, we found a consensus among police officers and stakeholders that there had been a transformation in recent years in terms of city centre safety. This transformation has resulted in the city being the first in Scotland to be awarded Purple Flag status, a national accreditation which recognises cities and town centres that excel in managing the evening and night time economy. The bid for accreditation was led by Aberdeen Inspired with support from Police Scotland, Aberdeen City Council and other organisations. Aberdeen Inspired is the city centre's Business Improvement District which represents over 750 city centre businesses.

The division has credited Operation Oak with contributing to improved safety outcomes in the city centre. The objectives of Operation Oak are, through partnership working and proactive policing, to:

- reduce violent crime
- reduce antisocial behaviour and alcohol-related disorder
- reduce retail crime
- improve personal safety and wellbeing.

Under Operation Oak, the police seek to proactively target and manage violent offenders in the city centre, deploy targeted and intelligence-led police patrols, and help businesses to minimise the risks of becoming victim to retail crime. Divisional staff told us that working with partners in the business community provided the police with intelligence which they would not previously have had.

Aberdeen City Division has allocated dedicated resources to delivering Operation Oak and holds weekly meetings chaired by an Inspector and attended by various divisional units and partners. During the meeting, the previous week's incidents are reviewed and plans are made and tasks allocated for the upcoming weekend. There are also monthly meetings to review the progress of Operation Oak chaired by a Chief Inspector and attended by local businesses, Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and voluntary sector organisation such as Street Pastors. A more robust approach to licensed premises, including regular visits, and the enforcement of licensing law has seen Operation Oak deliver additional benefits and has contributed further to a decrease in violent and antisocial behaviour incidents.

The division has reported that compared to the previous year, in 2013-14 Operation Oak contributed to:

- a 32% reduction in serious assaults
- a 25% reduction in common assaults
- a 35% reduction in robberies
- a 64% reduction in thefts from motor vehicles
- a 15% reduction in general thefts
- a 15% reduction in vandalism.

When accredited with its Purple Flag status, Aberdeen city centre was particularly commended for strong stakeholder engagement and high levels of partnership collaboration. The city's Purple Flag status was renewed in early 2015.

Chart 2 – Detection rates for Crime Groups 1 to 5
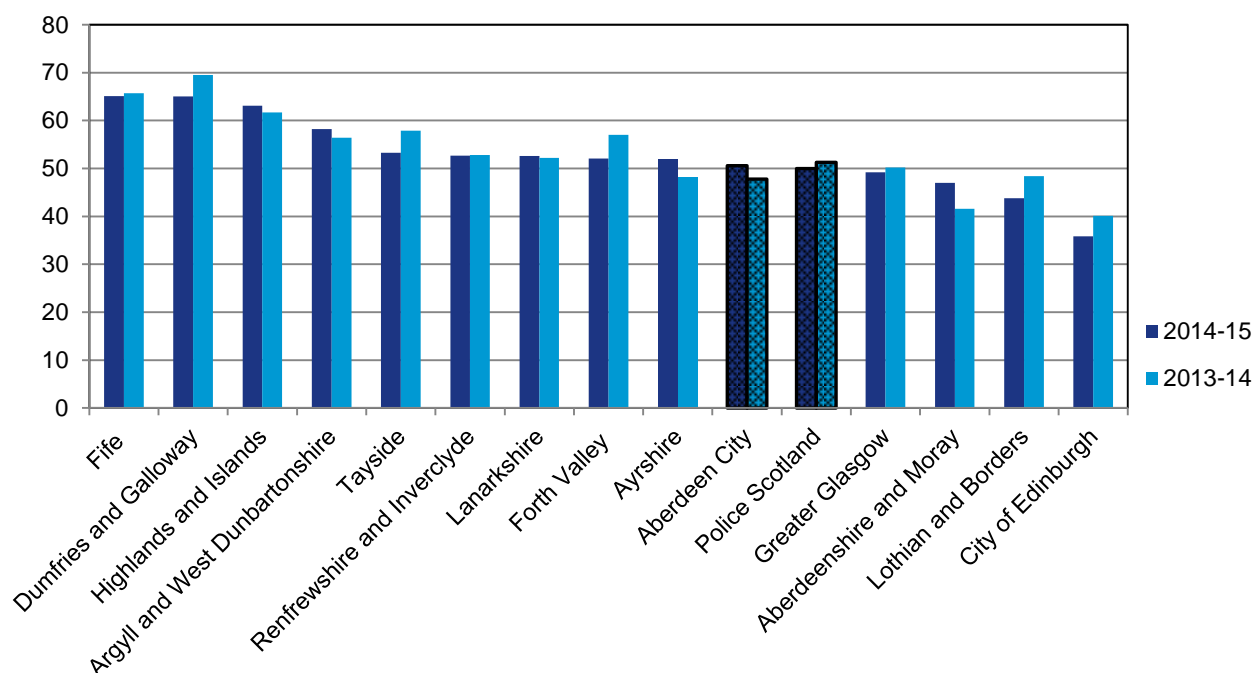
25.   Overall, there has been a reduction in the volume of crime and disorder in Aberdeen City Division and the division has increased its detection rates, thereby contributing to a key aim of police reform: to protect and improve services.

Public confidence and satisfaction

26.   A key mechanism by which Police Scotland measures its performance is through surveys to assess the extent to which users are satisfied with the service they receive. The User Satisfaction Survey is conducted by each division on a monthly basis and involves seeking the views of members of the public who have contacted the police to report crimes or incidents. The survey is conducted by police officers or staff who telephone a randomly selected sample of service users. In Aberdeen City Division, at least 40 service users are contacted each month.

Table 4 – Public confidence and satisfaction[23]

	Aberdeen City		Scotland	
	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15
Public confidence in the police[24]	76.0%	74.4%	78.9%	78.9%
User satisfaction with the police service provided[25]	84.5%	82.4%	82.4%	83.2%

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[23] Data for 2013-14 is October 2013 (the month the survey was introduced) to March 2014. Data for 2014-15 is year to date (April to December 2014).
[24] Percentages given are those users whose confidence in the police was very high or fairly high.
[25] Percentages given are those who were satisfied (very satisfied or fairly satisfied) with the service provided.

27.	Table 4 shows that the majority of service users in Aberdeen are satisfied with the service provided and that their confidence in the police is high. Confidence and satisfaction levels in Aberdeen in 2014-15 are slightly below those in Scotland generally although the most recent monthly data indicates that satisfaction and confidence rates in the division are rising. During the survey, service users are asked several questions including whether they felt they were adequately informed about the progress of the incident they reported. This is the question that consistently yields the poorest results. Between April and December 2014, only 61.5% of users in Aberdeen said they were adequately informed, compared to 65.4% nationally. The division is aware that this is an area in which performance must be improved and reminders have been sent to officers to ensure that they update service users on the status of incidents. It is essential that the division, and Police Scotland, achieve improvements in this area given the forthcoming implementation of the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014, the general principles of which state that victims and witnesses be able to obtain information about what is happening in criminal investigations or proceedings. We have previously recommended that Police Scotland create and publish details of the service that members of the public can expect to receive when they call the police and that this should be supported by clear internal guidance which focuses on quality of service.[26] We will continue to monitor implementation of this recommendation and the extent to which service users are kept informed on the progress of their case during our local policing inspection programme.

28.	While Aberdeen City Division performs slightly less well in the User Satisfaction Survey than Scotland as whole, during our inspection we conducted our own stakeholder survey and spoke to several partner organisations and elected officials. Generally, they viewed the division positively with the majority saying that the division performed well and had good relationships locally.

Complaints about the police

29.	The number of complaints about police officer and staff conduct and the quality of the police service provide further indicators of public satisfaction and confidence in policing. Overall responsibility for monitoring and scrutinising the complaints process lies with the SPA through its Complaints and Conduct Committee. Reports regarding complaints are submitted to the Committee from Police Scotland's Professional Standards Department.

30.	Complaints fall into two categories. The first relates to complaints about specific officers or staff members and are referred to as 'complaints about the police'. The second relates to complaints about the organisation generally rather than individuals. These are known as 'quality of service complaints' and may refer to complaints relating to policies or procedure, service delivery or service outcomes.

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[26] Recommendation 1, HMICS, *Review of Legacy Inspection Recommendations* (2014).

Table 5 – Complaints[27]

	Aberdeen City			Scotland		
	April to December 2013	April to December 2014	% change	April to December 2013	April to December 2014	% change
Complaints about the police	208	167	-19.7	3,495	3,917	12.1
Quality of service allegations	46	33	-28.3	650	831	27.8

31. Table 5 shows that the number of complaints about the police in Aberdeen City Division has fallen 19.7% in the three quarters of 2014-15 compared to the same period the previous year. At the same time, complaints about the police in Scotland rose 12.1%. Some complaints feature multiple allegations and on this measure too Aberdeen performed better than Police Scotland nationally. Police Scotland also records the rate of complaints per 100 officers each month. In December 2014, the rate of complaints was lower in Aberdeen (2.4) than in Scotland (2.7).

32. While there were no recurring themes in complaints about policing in Aberdeen, we were pleased to note the division has in place a process by which officers who have been the subject of multiple complaints are identified. This process allows any training or welfare issues to be identified and addressed (see paragraph 83 for further details).

33. In our report on local policing in Ayrshire, we recommended that Police Scotland should ensure that reports containing data on complaints are supplied to local scrutiny committees. This is in accordance with section 45(5) of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. We were pleased to note that complaints data is routinely supplied by Aberdeen City Division to its local scrutiny committee.

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[27] Police Scotland, *Complaints about the police – statistical return*, Report to the SPA Complaints and Conduct Committee (February 2015). In Table 5, 'complaints about the police' refers to the number of complaints, each of which may have more than one allegation. In relation to quality of service however, the data provided relates to the number of allegations made, rather than the number of complaints.

Leadership and governance

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Key findings

- The public and local partners influence the division's local priorities and the local policing plan. This plan aligns to national policing priorities, as well as to other local strategies such as Aberdeen's Single Outcome Agreement.

- Some local stakeholders remain unaware of the local policing plan suggesting there is still work to be done in promoting the plan and demonstrating its relevance and benefit to communities.

- There are 13 multi-member ward plans but these do not correspond to community policing areas which are felt to be more reflective of identifiable local communities.

- Reports to the local scrutiny committee do not cover all local objectives and the data supplied in the reports is not always current.

- Councillors in Aberdeen are concerned that national decisions about policing which have an impact locally are made without assessing the local impact and without sufficient consultation. While they feel this has improved recently, it is still not as effective as it could be.

- While Police Scotland has directed officers to record their working time, this has not yet been sufficient to ensure compliance among some senior staff.

- There is effective and visible leadership in the division. Those in supervisory positions, including the senior management team, are viewed as approachable and supportive. Communication within the division is good.

- Staff in Aberdeen feel listened to and say their ideas and feedback are encouraged. Staff feel valued and good work is recognised.

- Performance information is viewed as a management tool. Managers successfully isolate officers at inspector rank and below from information about key performance indicators and targets. The majority of officers feel the division's activities are intelligence-led, rather than performance-driven.

- The division communicates well with its partners and with the public in Aberdeen. It has an effective process to record and monitor community engagement.

- No decision has yet been made on whether to progress the proposed merger of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire and Moray Divisions. In the absence of a business case outlining the benefits and dis-benefits of a merger, we have been unable to make our own, evidence-based assessment but will continue to monitor the proposal.

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Policing priorities – national to local

34. The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 sets out the strategic planning framework for policing and the process by which policing priorities should be determined. The Act creates a hierarchy of plans which link national and local priorities (see Figure 1). While the Scottish Government determines strategic priorities for policing, the Act states that the SPA must prepare a strategic police plan setting out objectives for the policing of Scotland. These objectives include making communities safer, reducing harm and providing an effective and efficient policing service that promotes continuous improvement. The Act requires the Chief Constable to prepare an annual policing plan which describes arrangements for the policing of Scotland and how those arrangements will contribute towards the objectives set by the SPA.

35. The Act also requires local commanders to prepare local policing plans which set out the priorities and objectives for the policing of local authority areas, and describe how those objectives will be achieved. Local commanders must involve the local authority in the development of the local policing plan and must submit the plan to the local authority for approval.

Figure 1 – Priorities and objectives for Police Scotland

Annual policing plan

36. In April 2014, Police Scotland published its second Annual Police Plan, with a clear focus on 'keeping people safe'.[28] The plan sets out four priorities for policing (see Figure 1) and describes how they support the strategic policing priorities and the strategic police plan.

Local policing plan

37. Because its boundaries are shared with Aberdeen City Council, there is one local policing plan for Aberdeen City Division. The plan identifies seven priorities for 2014-17 which are supported by 19 objectives. In relation to each priority, the plan describes why the priority was chosen and the activities that will be undertaken to address the priority. The seven priorities are:

- antisocial behaviour
- housebreaking
- national security
- protecting people
- safer roads
- serious and organised crime
- violent crime.

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[28] Police Scotland published a new Annual Police Plan for 2015-16 in April 2015, but references in this report are to the 2013-14 plan which was in place at the time of our inspection.

38.   The local policing plan also describes how these priorities were identified. Other local policing plans examined by HMICS tend to state that priorities were identified as a result of feedback gathered during a public survey. The plan for Aberdeen City Division compares favourably in that it too relies on the results of a public survey, but also cites other sources including:

- strategic assessments of policing
- strategic assessments for community planning and community safety in Aberdeen
- analysis of local crime trends and information
- on-going consultation with community councils, key individual networks, elected officials and communities.

39.   In our surveys of councillors involved in local scrutiny and other stakeholders, we asked how effectively the division had consulted on the content of the local policing plan. Councillors told us that the division had effectively consulted them and that they were satisfied that the plan reflected local priorities. The views of other stakeholders, including partner organisations, were more mixed, with only around half saying they had been consulted. It was clear from responses to our survey that some stakeholders are still unfamiliar with the planning process and are unaware of their ability to influence the content of the police plan. Some respondents were unaware of the existence of local policing plans. While the local policing plan process is still fairly new, the responses to our survey suggest there is still work to be done in promoting local policing plans and demonstrating their relevance and benefits to communities. We welcome recent initiatives by the division, such as stakeholder engagement events for councillors and partners held in December 2014, as a means of sharing information about policing activity and seeking feedback. This type of activity contributes to the implementation of a recommendation made in our report on local policing in Ayrshire, that Police Scotland review its engagement process for the development of local policing plans to ensure meaningful involvement by local authorities in the identification and setting of local priorities.[29]

40.   We have examined the local policing plan for Aberdeen and are satisfied that it meets the requirements of the 2012 Act (see Appendix 4). The Aberdeen plan broadly follows the standard format adopted by Police Scotland for all local policing plans. The plan itself sets out how priorities for Aberdeen link to and support national priorities and outcomes and this was supported by our own analysis (see Appendix 3). The plan does not however make reference to priorities set in the previous year's plan, if and how these have changed, or what progress was made. The inclusion of such information in local policing plans would support transparency and accountability. Future policing plans would also benefit from an improved articulation of the outcomes the division and its partners are trying to achieve so that success may be more easily measured.

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[29] Recommendation 2, HMICS, *Local Policing+ Inspection Programme: Inspection of Ayrshire Division* (2015).

41.   While well-evidenced, the local policing plan did not initially receive approval from the local authority as is required under the Act. The local authority did not object to the content of the plan itself, but to wider policing issues including a perceived lack of consultation by Police Scotland regarding the proposed closure of the control room in Aberdeen. The Act is silent as to the implications of a plan's non-approval. In this case, the division continued to work to the plan pending approval from the council which was finally given on 14 May 2014 with no amendments to the plan as first presented.

Multi-member ward plans

42.   The three-year local policing plan is supported by 13 multi-member ward plans, each containing three or four priorities identified through consultation and which are refreshed annually. There is a large degree of consistency in the priorities identified in each ward area – the priorities most often cited were drug supply and misuse; crimes of dishonesty; violence and antisocial behaviour; and road safety. All ward priorities are reflected in the local policing plan priorities.

43.   The ward plans set out the priorities identified, as well as the activities which have already taken place in the local area to address concerns raised by the public and planned activities. Like many multi-member ward plans in other local authority areas in Scotland however, the plans do not feature local objectives nor performance information which would allow communities to assess the impact of activities, measure progress and hold community policing teams to account.

44.   In our inspection of local policing in Fife Division, we recommended that Police Scotland review its planning processes and empower local commanders and scrutiny bodies to agree sub-local policing plans that better reflect local communities, rather than rigidly following multi-member ward boundaries. We understand that Police Scotland has reviewed multi-member ward plans and will pilot 'local community plans' in Fife and some other divisions in 2015-16. These area plans will better reflect local communities. We believe such a change may also benefit Aberdeen City Division where some officers and stakeholders told us that the ward plans did not reflect identifiable local communities and the community policing team structure.

Local scrutiny

45.   One of the aims of police reform was to strengthen the connection between the police service and communities. The 2012 Act sought to do this by establishing a formal statutory relationship between the police service and each local authority in Scotland and involving more elected members in scrutiny of policing. Section 45 of the Act provides for a local commander to be designated for each local authority area and for the development of the local policing plan. It also sets out a role for the local authority in monitoring and providing feedback to the local commander on the policing of its area. The Act does not, however, set out a mechanism by which such monitoring and the provision of feedback must take place.

46. Aberdeen City Council has chosen to allocate this function to its Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee.[30] The Committee is made up of 19 councillors and meets approximately every two months to scrutinise the delivery of policing in Aberdeen and provide feedback to the local commander. The commander provides regular reports to the Committee setting out progress against local and national priorities. The reports provide information on how the objectives set out in the local policing plan are being addressed as well as the results of police activity. For example, the commander's most recent report describes how a dedicated team of officers has been established to target housebreakings and that this has contributed to a reduction in the number of housebreakings as well as an increase in the detection rate. Some of the objectives set out in the local policing plan with qualitative measures have not featured in the commander's report to the Committee however, making it difficult for the Committee to monitor delivery of the plan (see paragraph 19). While the manner of reporting is agreed with the Committee, and the division has invited councillors' views on what format reporting should take, the commander and the Committee should consider ensuring that progress against all objectives is measured and reported on at some stage each year. This will be relevant to other divisional commanders and local scrutiny bodies whose local policing plans also feature objectives with qualitative measures.

> **Recommendation 1**
> Police Scotland should ensure that progress against all objectives in local policing plans is measured and reported to local scrutiny committees at an appropriate stage each year.

47. The data included in the commander's reports is supplied by Police Scotland's Analysis and Performance Unit. The performance reporting cycle does not match the local scrutiny meeting cycle which means that data presented to some local scrutiny meetings can be out of date. For example, the report considered by the Committee at its meeting in January 2015 only included data up to September 2014.

> **Recommendation 2**
> Police Scotland should ensure that the Analysis and Performance Unit helps divisional commanders to provide data to local scrutiny bodies that is current enough to support effective local scrutiny of policing.

48. During our inspection, we attended a meeting of the Committee at which it considered the commander's regular report as well as a proposal to merge Aberdeen City Division with Aberdeenshire and Moray Division. We also surveyed councillors who had been involved in local scrutiny and interviewed the Committee's convener and vice-convener to discuss their scrutiny role and their views on policing in Aberdeen. Councillors were positive about the local policing service in Aberdeen and the contribution police made to community partnerships. They reported very good relationships with the divisional commander and his management team. Councillors found the commander to be accessible and appreciated frequent informal opportunities to discuss policing in Aberdeen in addition to the formal scrutiny process.

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[30] This function was performed by the Social Care, Wellbeing and Safety Committee until autumn 2014.

49. Councillors were less positive about their ability to comment on or influence national decisions about policing that have an impact locally. They were concerned that such decisions are made without assessing the local impact, and without sufficient consultation, citing Police Scotland's plan to close the control room in Aberdeen as one example. While councillors said they felt national communication and consultation had improved, it was not yet as effective as it could be.

> ### Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee
>
> Aberdeen City Council has stated that the role of its Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee in respect of providing local scrutiny of policing is to:
>
> - comment on the strategic police plan
>
> - respond to consultation by the Chief Constable on the designation of a local police commander
>
> - be involved in the setting of priorities and objectives for the policing of Aberdeen
>
> - specify policing measures the Council wishes the local commander to include in a local policing plan
>
> - approve a local policing plan
>
> - monitor service provision and delivery in Aberdeen and provide feedback to the local commander
>
> - consider reports, statistical information and other information about the policing of Aberdeen
>
> - agree, with the local commander, modifications to an approved local policing plan at any time
>
> - liaise with the local commander with regarding to the community planning duties of the Chief Constable.

50. Prior to the creation of a single police service, around 1 in 8 local councillors had a formal role in the scrutiny of policing.[31] At present, almost 1 in 2 of Aberdeen's councillors have such a role, thereby strengthening the connection between local communities and policing. Aberdeen City Division has sought to further strengthen the connection between policing and local communities via its model of policing and engagement. Each community policing team within the division is led by an inspector who is known to community councillors. The inspector, or a member of the team in his or her absence, attends community council meetings to share information and to listen to councillors. The division is currently falling short of its goal of attending 90% of community council meetings, but general feedback from the councils is positive. During our inspection, we attended three community council meetings. The police were present at all, and provided a useful update to councillors on policing in their area.

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[31] Scottish Parliament, *Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill: Policy Memorandum* (2012), paragraph 45.

Scottish Police Authority engagement

51. The SPA has an important role to play in supporting local scrutiny and understanding the interest of local scrutiny bodies in issues beyond setting the local policing plan. We have previously described steps the SPA is taking to strengthen its engagement with local scrutiny bodies.[32] The SPA has nominated a board member to liaise with Aberdeen's Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee and local councillors are aware that they can discuss concerns, particularly around national decisions by Police Scotland, with that board member. The board member has focused on developing a relationship with councillors and is keen to provide information to the Committee about the role of the SPA and how its role links with and can support local scrutiny.

Leadership

52. The division is led by a chief superintendent, supported by a senior management team made up of two superintendents (one leading on operations and one on support) and a detective superintendent leading on crime who is shared with Aberdeenshire and Moray Division. Each of the division's two area commands are led by a chief inspector. The division's experienced senior management team has been stable since its creation on 1 April 2013 with little turnover. The management team are local to the area having previously worked with Grampian Police, and are committed to delivering an effective and efficient police service.

53. In our local policing inspections of Fife and Ayrshire Divisions, we noted that many senior officers did not record their working hours on systems which are designed to ensure officers comply with working time regulations as required by service policy. We remain concerned about officer welfare and resilience given a lack of monitoring of working hours and evidence of a culture of long hours in the divisions we have inspected to date. These concerns have been echoed by the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents. In Aberdeen, senior officers were also not universally recording their working hours as is required. Various reasons were given for not recording working time, including personal commitment and professional pride, rather than any divisional culture of long hours, and an acknowledgement by some that they would struggle to take any time owed. While Police Scotland has directed officers to record their working time, this has not yet been sufficient to ensure compliance and we remain concerned that the service is not effectively monitoring working hours which would allow it to reassure itself as to the welfare and work-life balance of its officers. An accurate account of working hours will also help the organisation understand its resourcing requirements and plan a sustainable service more effectively. We understand from Police Scotland that work is on-going to address issues relating to working time and recommendations will shortly be submitted to the force executive and the SPA for consideration and implementation. We will monitor the outcome of this work in future inspections.

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[32] HMICS, *Local Policing+ Inspection Programme: Inspection of Ayrshire Division* (2015), paragraph 71.

Direction, control and management of performance

54. There are effective governance and management arrangements within the division. The divisional commander chairs daily tasking and co-ordinating meetings at which recent incidents and crimes are reviewed, upcoming events are discussed and resources are reviewed and allocated. This ensures oversight of daily activity at a senior level. The division reviews its performance at weekly and monthly meetings. We attended several of these meetings during our inspection and found them to be focused and well-chaired. There was an emphasis on continuous improvement and recognising good work.

55. Oversight of performance is supported by Police Scotland's performance management framework. This framework is made up of key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets covering a range of police activity. Data is gathered electronically using the Scottish Management Information System (SCOMIS) which allows performance across Scotland to be monitored and compared. Divisions are provided with weekly and monthly reports from SCOMIS to support intelligence-led policing. As well as the national KPIs and targets, each of the 14 local divisions identified two additional KPIs that were particularly relevant to their area. Progress against these KPIs is monitored nationally. In 2014-15, Aberdeen City Division's additional KPIs were to reduce housebreaking and to reduce the theft of motor vehicles. As noted above, housebreaking has dropped 25.4% in 2014-15 and theft of motor vehicles has dropped 17.3%.

56. Within Police Scotland, the divisional commander is accountable to the force executive for the effective and efficient policing of Aberdeen City Division. The commander reports to the Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) with responsibility for Local Policing North and to the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) with responsibility for Local Policing. The DCC chairs monthly meetings at which the performance of the 14 local policing divisions is scrutinised.

57. In our previous local policing inspection in Ayrshire Division, some officers described pressure to achieve performance targets. We saw no evidence of this in Aberdeen City Division. In Aberdeen, Police Scotland's performance management framework is viewed by the senior management team as a management tool and the team has successfully isolated officers – generally at inspector rank and below – from information about key performance indicators and targets. Frontline officers are aware of policing priorities, but are not aware of targets. There was some limited awareness of targets among those officers working in the public protection unit, but generally officers in Aberdeen told us their activities are intelligence-led, rather than performance-driven. Whereas officers in other divisions frequently refer to areas of activity that are 'red' or 'green', we did not hear this language used in Aberdeen. This lack of awareness of the details of the performance framework has not affected the effectiveness of the policing service in Aberdeen given the positive results achieved (see Outcomes).

Visibility and communication

58. We found there to be effective and visible leadership in Aberdeen City Division. The senior management team are positive role models who successfully communicate the mission and vision of the police service to its staff. In late 2014, the management team identified visibility as an area for improvement and took several steps to address it. This included an open invitation to officers to attend the daily tasking and co-ordinating meeting with the aim of ensuring that all officers attend over a period of

a few months. We attended two of these meetings during our inspection and met sergeants and constables who had taken up this invitation. They said that attending the meeting had helped them understand how their work contributes to the division's overall strategy, and appreciated the opportunity to meet senior leaders.

59. The division has instituted a process to record management team visibility. Visits to community policing teams or specialist units are recorded, as is any feedback received from staff and resulting actions. Visits are recorded on a spreadsheet which is monitored so that any gaps can be identified and addressed.

60. Communication within the division was good. Leaders within the division know their teams well, and are seen as approachable and supportive. Staff said they felt listened to and said that their ideas and feedback are encouraged. Staff feel valued and good work is recognised. Supervisors and senior managers frequently provide feedback to staff, and good work is highlighted at the daily tasking and co-ordinating meeting and included in briefings to all staff. The senior management team attend meetings of divisional sergeants regularly, as well as shift briefings. There is a quarterly leadership meeting attended by those at inspector level and above. Chaired by the divisional commander, the meeting is an opportunity to hear presentations about specific areas of work, to share information and to provide feedback to the commander. The divisional commander also uses a newsletter and podcasts to communicate with staff, and the podcasts in particular were appreciated because staff felt they were more personal than email.

61. We asked staff to describe the culture of Aberdeen City Division and their comments were overwhelmingly positive (see Figure 2). They described a division which is supportive and nurturing, where work is values-based and where staff feel empowered. Morale was better in Aberdeen than in other divisions we have inspected to date.

Figure 2 – The culture of Aberdeen City Division, as described by its officers and staff

62. While communication within the division was viewed as effective, officers and staff were less positive about communication within Police Scotland nationally. Like councillors and other local partners, officers and staff perceived there to be a 'one size fits all' approach. While they understood the need for consistency within a national organisation, they felt frustrated by poor communication of decisions and policies and a lack of consultation.

63. The division communicates well with external audiences including partner organisations and the public via the media. While some within the division recognised there is scope to make more use of social media, the division is using traditional media well. Opportunities are sought to promote policing initiatives, to highlight partnership working and to reassure the public. For example, one local newspaper carries a regular 'On the beat' column. The column has featured various chief inspectors or inspectors describing their role and different aspects of policing. Recent columns have included the role of the Divisional Intelligence Unit and how the police gather and use intelligence, and a column on the work of the city centre policing team.

Community engagement

64. Community engagement is essential to effective local policing. On-going engagement allows the police to hear from communities about issues that concern them, and helps build and maintain public confidence in the police. Aberdeen City Division has adopted a model for local policing which involves teams of officers being based in local communities. There is no distinction between 'response' and 'community' officers in Aberdeen unlike in many other divisions. Officers in community police teams perform a dual role, responding to calls in their local area, and carrying out proactive community policing such as high visibility patrols and community engagement. This policing model appears well-suited to a densely populated division and is working effectively.

65. The officers we spoke to in Aberdeen described a greater attachment to and familiarity with their local communities than officers we spoke to in other divisions. Each community policing team is led by an inspector who was usually well-known and accessible to the local community council and seen as a focal point for the area. The teams produce quarterly updates on policing in their area and these are disseminated to community councils, and key venues such as libraries and community centres. The quarterly updates also identify and provide contact details for the local inspector.

66. Aberdeen City Division has a mechanism by which it records its engagement with communities (see Case study – Community Engagement Database). This allows feedback from the community to be captured and acted upon. We believe this is a useful tool to monitor the level and quality of engagement with the community, and to demonstrate to communities that their concerns are being addressed.

67. The division also seeks the views of the public via City Voice, an initiative developed by community planning partners in Aberdeen to capture the views of local residents. A questionnaire is sent to around 1,000 residents three times a year. In the latest questionnaire to be issued, Aberdeen City Division is seeking views on the continued relevance of local policing priorities, whether any new priorities have emerged, and how safe the public feel compared to the previous year.

Case study – Community Engagement Database

The division seeks to record and monitor its interactions with the public on its Community Engagement Database. Such interactions may include attending a community council meeting or a meeting with a voluntary sector organisation, delivering a presentation at a youth group or visiting a community centre. The interactions are recorded on the database as well as any issues or concerns raised. The database allows tasks to be created based on these concerns, and allocated to a specific officer to follow up. The resulting action and any update or outcome is also added to the database, allowing the division to demonstrate how it acts upon feedback from the public.

Entries on the database can be analysed for key themes, or to identify particular communities where engagement is effective or could be improved. The volume of engagements recorded on the database can also be used to measure the division's overall performance in relation to community engagement. Analysis of the database in late 2014 had shown that the volume of engagements had reduced, and the division is exploring whether this is because *recording* of engagements has fallen or whether community engagement itself has dropped. The division has reminded officers about the need to record their interactions with the public, and improved recording will allow the division to address any gaps in engagement.

The database is also used to record key individual networks (KINS). This is a list of key individuals in Aberdeen and their contact details. Key individuals may include councillors or other community representatives, such as religious leaders or someone who can facilitate access to a particular minority group. The police can use key individuals to disseminate information to those groups or to seek their views on particular issues or in the event of a critical incident. The consent of individuals is sought before they are added to the database, as well as information on when and how they prefer to be contacted.

Proposed merger of divisions

68. In December 2014, Police Scotland announced a proposal to merge Aberdeen City Division with Aberdeenshire and Moray Division. The two divisions formerly made up Grampian Police and, as such, have common systems. The two divisions already share some resources including, for example, a Detective Superintendent and some units falling within his remit including those covering intelligence and organised crime. The divisions also share some business support functions.

69. In January 2015, the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee of Aberdeen City Council considered the proposal to merge the divisions and voted not to support it. Councillors felt that Aberdeen, as Scotland's third city, merited a dedicated divisional commander. They were concerned that a senior management team covering two divisions and three local authorities would be less accessible and less able to maintain the current contributions to partnership working in Aberdeen. Councillors were also concerned about the possibility of the divisional headquarters being located outside Aberdeen. They queried whether there were alternatives to merging the divisions, such as increased sharing of resources across divisional boundaries.

70. During our inspection, we spoke to some officers and staff who shared these views. In particular, they were concerned about the resilience of the senior management team in the event of a merger. Many officers and staff felt the merger would not affect them: they simply saw it as a return to former ways of working. Others identified benefits in merging the divisions, particularly in relation to the sharing of specialist units across current divisional boundaries.

71. Currently, Police Scotland has made no decision on whether to progress with the merger. In the absence of a business case outlining the benefits and the dis-benefits of the merger, we have been unable to make our own, evidence-based assessment but will continue to monitor the proposal. We do however note the perception of councillors in Aberdeen who felt that Police Scotland's approach to consulting on this proposal was better than its consultations on previous national decisions which had an impact locally.

Planning and process

Process

72. The creation of a national police service has brought about standardisation of key processes to ensure a consistent approach to service delivery. Consistency has improved significantly within Police Scotland since 1 April 2013 and work is on-going to improve this further.

73. There are challenges in introducing new processes and officers we spoke to in both Fife and Ayrshire Divisions expressed concern about increasing bureaucracy that affected their ability to effectively manage their workload. Officers in Aberdeen were less concerned about bureaucracy generally, but did share concerns expressed in Fife and Ayrshire about the Interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD). This database was introduced to capture, assess and share information and intelligence about vulnerable persons. Officers are required to submit an iVPD entry in relation to any incident where there are concerns for children or vulnerable adults and victims of domestic abuse or hate crime. While officers saw the database as a useful tool to support referrals of vulnerable persons to other agencies, there was some confusion as to the thresholds, and the degree of concern that must exist, for submitting an entry to iVPD. Officers felt they lacked guidance on when to use the database, and almost all officers told us they 'erred on the side of caution' and were reluctant to use their discretion. As a result, they feared that the database, and other agencies, will receive more referrals. They are concerned that this will mask those cases where people are genuinely at risk. Officers were also concerned that the database is being used to generate performance data, a purpose for which it was not designed. We explored iVPD further in our inspection of the management of missing persons in Aberdeen City Division and will publish our findings separately.

74. There were also concerns among officers in Aberdeen about joint investigative interviews. Children (or vulnerable adults) who are the victim of or witness to a crime may be jointly interviewed by police and social work. Joint interviews involve more than one agency, must adhere to guidance issued by the Scottish Government and are more resource intensive. The interviews require careful planning and those carrying out the interviews must have specialist training. Officers in Aberdeen told us

that it can be difficult to co-ordinate availability of both trained police officers and social workers to meet the demand for joint interviews. They felt that joint interviews were sometimes being used for minor incidents that did not merit a joint interview process. They felt there was a lack of clarity on when joint interviews should be used. National guidance on child protection states that joint investigations are normally undertaken in cases involving familial abuse; where a child is looked after by the local authority; where there are particular difficulties in communicating and it is considered that social workers or other staff could contribute effectively to the investigation; or in any other circumstances, where it is agreed jointly by police and social work that a joint approach would be beneficial.[33] The threshold for conducting joint investigations, and joint investigative interviews, is therefore fairly high and the guidance does not anticipate that joint investigative interviews will be used in all cases involving child victims or witnesses. We welcome work by Police Scotland to develop a standard operating procedure on joint investigative interviews. This work should take account of the concerns we identified in Aberdeen, and provide further guidance to staff on the circumstances in which joint investigative interviews are required.

75. Aberdeen City Division was selected as one of two divisions within Police Scotland to pilot the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse, a new process designed to support those at risk of domestic abuse.

Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse

Aberdeen City and Ayrshire Divisions were chosen by Police Scotland to pilot the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse. The purpose of the scheme is to establish a process by which information may be disclosed which enables a partner of a previously violent or abusive individual to make an informed choice about whether and how to continue their relationship. Under the scheme, there are two possible routes to disclosure: the right to ask; and the power to tell.

Under the right to ask, a person may make an application to Police Scotland for information about an individual who they suspect may have a history of violent or abusive behaviour towards a previous partner. The applicant may be the current partner of the person who is suspected of abusive behaviour, or a third party such as the parent of the current partner. Where the application is made by a third party, it will usually be the current partner to whom a disclosure is made. Under the power to tell, Police Scotland may disclose information or intelligence it has received to a person who is thought to be at risk from a partner.

Information is only disclosed where there is a credible risk of harm. A decision whether to disclose information is not made by the police alone but by a Decision Making Forum which is chaired by the police and made up of partner agencies. In Aberdeen, members of the forum include Aberdeen City Council (including representatives of criminal justice social work and education), NHS Grampian and voluntary sector agencies such as Advocacy Service Aberdeen, Grampian Women's Aid and Aberdeen Cyrenians.

Police Scotland has sought to promote the existence of the scheme through the media and by distributing leaflets and posters. Right to ask applications may be made online via the Police Scotland website, or by contacting the police at a police station, via 101, or by asking any police officer or member of police staff. Applicants may also be referred to the police by a partner agency.

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[33] Scottish Government, *National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland* (2014).

76. In our inspection of local policing in Ayrshire, officers were concerned that they had an increased volume of citations to serve and that this was impacting their ability to carry out other duties.[34] Previously, citations would have been served by police staff in legal document server posts. Police Scotland has removed such posts however in anticipation of more efficient criminal justice processes such as, for example, the greater use of postal citations. In 2013-14, Aberdeen City Division processed 22,000 legal documents. Officers in Aberdeen echoed the concerns of officers in Ayrshire, saying that there was scope for greater efficiency in the citations process, including the use of postal citations. Officers also said courts will schedule several trials for one day and then proceed with one – this was frustrating when their attendance at court for a trial that did not proceed had resulted in rest days being cancelled. Officers also felt there was greater scope to agree their evidence in advance of trial so that they did not need to attend court. We will continue to monitor the impact of criminal justice reform as we progress our Local Policing+ inspection programme.

Planning and support

77. The Divisional Co-ordination Unit (DCU) manages the division's support and planning functions. It performs a variety of roles to support the work of the division, including events and operations planning. The DCU will also request additional resources from Police Scotland's Operational Support Division, thereby giving Aberdeen access to national, specialist resources which supports the objectives of police reform.

78. The DCU administers key processes such as the divisional risk register and supports the division's approach to business planning and governance. The division has developed a business planning cycle which identifies various activities that must be completed on a monthly, quarterly, biannual or annual basis. Activities include reviewing the risk register and business plan, undertaking various audits, submitting reports to the local scrutiny body and undertaking formal engagement with divisional staff. This business planning cycle is a simple but effective means of ensuring the division is managing its business well and in a timely manner.

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[34] Citations are notifications to witnesses that they must attend court to give evidence.

Divisional learning

79.   The division has an effective approach to continuous improvement. The senior management team are proactive in identifying good practice elsewhere and assessing what value it may have in Aberdeen. Feedback from divisional staff is encouraged as are ideas for improving how policing is delivered.

80.   HMICS has published an inspection framework which sets out what we expect to find when we examine policing in Scotland. Aberdeen City Division has used our inspection framework as the basis of a divisional improvement plan. The division has assessed itself against each of our framework headings (outcomes, leadership and governance, planning and process, people, resources and partnerships). This has helped to identify the division's strengths as well as highlighting areas for improvement. The division has identified and allocated multiple actions to support improvements and the plan is reviewed regularly to ensure actions are progressed and the desired outcome is achieved. While it had only recently been introduced at the time of our inspection, we found that this improvement plan has supported continuous improvement within the division. We are encouraged by the division's commitment to self-assessment and we believe its improvement plan to be an example of **effective practice** which may benefit other divisions within Police Scotland.

Service standards, public satisfaction and confidence

81.   Public satisfaction with and confidence in policing are key outcomes for Police Scotland that require robust evidence gathering and monitoring processes. As noted at paragraph 26, Aberdeen City Division follows a national process, known as the User Satisfaction Survey, to gauge levels of confidence and satisfaction in its service. The division also follows a national consultation process to help identify local policing priorities.

82.   While we welcome the introduction of consistent data collection processes across Police Scotland, we have previously expressed concern that processes are conducted by police officers and individuals may not always feel confident in expressing their opinions about policing directly to them.[35] We are therefore pleased to note that Aberdeen City Division does not rely solely on these internal processes but also uses City Voice to survey local residents (see paragraph 67). As well as ensuring greater independence and transparency, using this survey allows the division to link its consultation activities with that of local partners. While many of the questions asked in Police Scotland's consultation and the City Voice survey are not comparable, there are a few questions which are broadly similar but which have achieved quite different results. For example, using Police Scotland's national consultation process, people in Aberdeen were asked whether they were aware they had a dedicated community policing team in their local area: 74% of respondents said yes. Only 48% of respondents said yes to a similar question asked in the City Voice survey. This reaffirms the need for Police Scotland to develop a robust and reliable method for gathering service user views. We will examine public satisfaction with policing, and how it is assessed, more widely as part of our forthcoming continuous improvement review of strategic planning and performance management.

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[35] See HMICS, *Local Policing+ Inspection of Ayrshire Division* (2015), paragraphs 84-85.

Complaints handling

83.   Complaints handling is a national function co-ordinated centrally by the Professional Standards Department. The complaints procedure is described on the Police Scotland website.[36] In Aberdeen, all complaints are reviewed by the Chief Inspector (Support) who is able to identify any themes and learning. In addition to the standard complaints procedure, Aberdeen City Division has put in place a process by which officers who have been the subject of four or more complaints (whether substantiated or not) in a 12-month period are identified. This process, known in the division as early intervention management, is designed to be supportive rather than disciplinary in nature. For example, the division may discover that an officer who has been the subject of multiple complaints has underlying training needs or unidentified welfare issues. The early intervention management process allows those needs or issues to be identified and addressed appropriately. We found this process to be **effective practice** and welcome Police Scotland's intention to roll it out nationally.

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[36] http://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/police-scotland/complaints-about-the-police/.

People

Key findings

- The most significant challenges facing Aberdeen City Division relate to the recruitment and retention of staff. The division has lost experienced officers to the oil and gas industry and struggles to recruit locally.

- The division has the highest proportion of new recruits (probationers) in Scotland and its workforce is therefore less experienced than that of other divisions. The division successfully managed an influx of probationers in 2014 by creating a Tutor Unit to support their development.

- Many probationers assigned to the division are from outwith the North East area. They face challenges in finding appropriate and affordable accommodation as the cost of living is higher than elsewhere in Scotland. The division is, however, working with partners to identify affordable housing opportunities.

- Officers and staff feel training and development opportunities have been more limited in recent years. They feel there is an over-reliance on online training which many feel is not as effective as traditional methods.

- Aberdeen is managing absence effectively and has the lowest absence rate in Scotland for both officers and staff.

- Morale among officers is higher in Aberdeen than in other divisions we have inspected to date. Officers attributed their good morale to a sense of team spirit and working in a supportive environment where their efforts are valued.

- Morale is not as high among police staff who continue to be concerned about job security and who feel their contribution to policing is not as valued by Police Scotland as that of officers.

Recruitment and retention

84.   Perhaps the most significant challenges facing Aberdeen City Division relate to the recruitment and retention of staff. While changes to national policies on attendance management and performance have resulted in an increase in officers retiring on ill-health grounds, Aberdeen has experienced a proportionately greater loss of officers than any other division in Scotland in recent years. Faced with a buoyant local economy and lucrative opportunities in the oil and gas industry, combined with changes to their terms and conditions, several experienced officers have left the police service. In 2014, 78% of police officers who left Police Scotland from Aberdeen City Division resigned before they had reached pensionable service. This compares with 52.4% for the North region as a whole.[37]

85.   Until recently, the division operated with a high proportion of vacancies. Police Scotland has sought to fill the vacancies in Aberdeen by allocating probationers to the division. However, it has faced challenges in recruiting local people to replace those officers who have left. Given the availability of well-paid jobs in the oil and gas industry, Police Scotland has struggled to successfully target recruitment at those already living in the North East. Moreover, we heard that local recruitment efforts, such as targeting local career fairs, have been hampered by a lack of capacity in Police Scotland's human resources. As a result, most vacancies have been filled by probationers from outwith the area.

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[37] The North region includes the divisions of Aberdeenshire and Moray, Highland and Islands and Tayside, as well as Aberdeen City. No national figures were available for comparison.

86. Aberdeen has the highest proportion of probationers than any other local policing division. The division is therefore comparatively inexperienced. Some officers we spoke to during our inspection felt that this lack of experience had an impact on service delivery and they were particularly concerned at the loss of experienced officers to support and mentor probationers. Following their initial training period at the Scottish Police College, probationers in Aberdeen are usually allocated to a tutor constable who will provide guidance and mentoring but we heard that some tutor constables have only just completed their own probationary period. In 2014, the division experienced an influx of probationers to fill vacancies and, to help manage this, established a Tutor Unit. This was an effective, short-term initiative which can be redeployed by the division should it experience another similar influx.

Tutor Unit

In 2014, Aberdeen City Division experienced an influx of probationers. This influx came at a time when the division already had a relatively inexperienced workforce and a number of experienced officers had left the police service to take up opportunities in the oil and gas industry. The division therefore identified a risk that the new probationers may not receive a sufficiently thorough and consistent level of 'on the job' training on arrival from the Scottish Police College. To manage this risk, the division established a Tutor Unit. Probationers would be allocated to the unit for four weeks prior to being allocated to a community policing team and an individual tutor. The purpose of the Tutor Unit was to build on probationers' theoretical knowledge gained at the College by developing their abilities to undertake effective operational duties and to enhance their knowledge of the various support and specialist functions of the division. At the same time, tutor constables assigned to the Unit would be able to develop their own mentoring and supervisory skills.

The Tutor Unit was operational for four months during 2014 and was staffed by a sergeant and eight tutor constables. Around 40 probationers progressed through the Tutor Unit.

The sergeant leading the Tutor Unit reviewed its effectiveness, seeking feedback from operational inspectors and sergeants as well as probationers. The feedback was positive, with officers saying they felt the Tutor Unit had fulfilled its purpose and that probationers made significant progress while assigned to the unit. The sergeant has made recommendations based on the review, including that the division redeploy the unit should the division experience a similar influx of probationers in the future. We consider the Tutor Unit to be an example of **effective practice**.

87. In addition to the high number of probationers, there are multiple vacancies at sergeant level in the division – more than a third of sergeant posts are filled by those on temporary promotion. While we may have expected this lack of experience at supervisory level to be a significant concern to constables and to have impacted negatively on performance or morale, this was not the case. Morale is good, the division is performing well, and very few constables raised any concerns about inexperienced supervisors with us. Most officers were content with the supervision received, and new and temporary sergeants said they were well-supported by their more experienced colleagues and their own supervisors.

88. Many probationers allocated to Aberdeen to fill vacancies are new to the area and are surprised at the cost of living. They struggle to find affordable accommodation and several probationers have made the decision to live in areas where accommodation is more affordable and to commute long distances to and from work (several officers expressed concern about their welfare while driving home after a long and difficult shift). Because of the cost of living, there is an expectation that some probationers will submit transfer requests. The division already has a high number of transfer requests pending from officers who say they cannot afford to live in Aberdeen or the surrounding area. The continual allocation of probationers to Aberdeen to fill vacancies will perpetuate the division's challenges around retention and inexperience and is not therefore a sustainable solution.

89. The division has sought creative solutions to its recruitment and retention challenges. For example, those officers who leave the service before retiring are able to return within one year with minimal retraining. The division has also sought to address the cost of living: difficulties in finding affordable accommodation in the North East are not unique to the police service and the division has worked with its public sector partners to identify solutions. The division is currently working on two partnership initiatives which will secure some affordable accommodation for police officers and other key workers.

90. There is however a limit to what the division itself can achieve. Until recently the division has not benefited from more extensive corporate support to gather and analyse data, and to identify solutions to its human resources challenges. The divisional Superintendent (Support) has put forward proposals to address recruitment and retention issues and these are being considered by a newly established working group for the North region which will receive corporate human resources input. Via this working group, Police Scotland must consider what action it can take to identify sustainable solutions that benefit Aberdeen and the North East more generally. For example, Aberdeen would benefit from targeted recruitment campaigns and a guarantee for prospective local recruits that they will be allocated to their 'home' division. Consideration of any solutions should take account of proven pre-reform arrangements to recruit officers to hard-to-fill areas, as well as wider concerns about the loss of experienced local policing officers to specialist divisional units and regional hubs (see paragraph 114). Solutions should be considered in consultation with staff associations. Police Scotland may also benefit from national monitoring of divisional attrition rates in addition to its current monitoring of absence rates so that retention issues such as those in Aberdeen are identified and addressed early. While we welcome the establishment of the working group, we note that some recruitment and retention issues faced by the North region will be common to other areas in Scotland (such as Argyll) and the group's work and outputs may have broader relevance.

91. Alternative employment opportunities and a high cost of living affects the recruitment of police staff as well as officers. Many police staff have already taken voluntary redundancy or early retirement and others have left the service due to concerns about job security. While we heard that there can be delays in replacing those who have left, we understand that Police Scotland must balance the need to fill vacancies with the need to redesign future services and meet ambitious savings targets.

Skills and development

92.   Police Scotland does not yet have in place a national appraisal system.[38] Pending the introduction of a national system, staff in Aberdeen receive appraisals under the legacy performance review system used by Grampian Police. Staff told us they were content with this system in the meantime, although some individuals noted that their objectives were not reviewed mid-year if they changed roles. This meant that the end of year appraisal may focus on objectives that were no longer relevant to their role and which they were therefore not capable of achieving. The division should ensure that all staff have relevant objectives which are updated should their roles change.

93.   Some officers were concerned about the lack of promotion opportunities within the division, and fear having to move away from the area to progress. While the reduced number of senior positions is not unique to Aberdeen, the concentration of senior positions in the central belt means the problem may be felt more acutely in Aberdeen and in other, more remote divisions. Given the reduction in opportunities for progression, the division itself is aware of the need to improve lateral development of officers. With recent changes to officer terms and conditions meaning that officers will now have longer periods of service than previously, we welcome the consideration being given by Police Scotland to how officers are developed throughout their careers.

94.   Some officers and police staff felt training and development opportunities have been more limited in recent years. They feel there is an over-reliance on online training which many staff told us was not as effective as traditional training methods. This echoes comments by officers in Ayrshire who felt there was too much emphasis on self-learning online and insufficient opportunities to ask questions of 'experts'. We will continue to monitor access to training and evaluation of training methods as part of our scrutiny programme.

Staff wellbeing

95.   The division holds a monthly meeting that focuses on health and safety matters. The meeting is attended by senior officers within the division as well as representatives from unions and staff associations. Staff wellbeing and health and safety related risks are discussed at the meeting and there is an action log associated with the meeting to ensure issues are followed up and outcomes reported back. We observed the meeting during our inspection and also met with staff associations. We received positive feedback from them about the division's senior management team who they said were approachable and responsive.

96.   The division also monitors staff wellbeing by reviewing their hours worked. In contrast to the longer hours worked by the senior management team (see paragraph 53), officers' hours and entitlement to rest days and annual leave were well-managed by the divisional resource manager. Officers we spoke to during our inspections of both Fife and Ayrshire had been very concerned about the frequency with which rest days were cancelled, the number of days classified as 'red'[39] and the loss of weekend rest days that were reallocated to midweek. Officers in Aberdeen were concerned about

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[38] In our local policing inspection of Ayrshire Division, we noted the absence of a national appraisal system and recommended that Police Scotland expedite the introduction of such a system. See, HMICS, *Local Policing+ Inspection Programme: Inspection of Ayrshire Division* (2015), Recommendation 4.

[39] Red days are dates on which there is a known pressing need or demand for officers. Approval of an Assistant Chief Constable is required in order to designate a day as 'red'. There is a restriction on the application of any TOIL, re-rostered rest days and/or annual leave (that is not within a provisional leave period). A senior level of authorisation within the division is required before time off can be granted on these date.

these same issues but to a lesser extent. They appreciated efforts by the management team and the resourcing manager to apply operational base levels flexibly.

97. The main concern of officers in Aberdeen was the introduction of a new approach to allocating annual leave. They viewed this policy as being imposed on them from the centre without consultation. While they understood a national organisation's desire for national processes, they felt the new policy had been poorly communicated and did not take account of local circumstances.

98. The absence rate for both police officers and police staff in Aberdeen is the lowest of any division in Scotland. The division has cut the proportion of working days lost through sickness, absence or injury for police officers from 4.1% in 2013-14 to 2.8% in 2014-15 (compared to 4.3% for Police Scotland). Similarly, the proportion of working days lost for police staff in Aberdeen has dropped from 3.5% in 2013-14 to 1.8% in 2014-15 (compared to 4.7% for Police Scotland). In 2014-15, the division with the second lowest proportion of days lost through sickness, absence or injury by police staff was Aberdeenshire and Moray with 3.5%.[40]

99. The division attributes its low absence rate to robust absence management and a culture of supporting staff to return to work. The division conducts return to work interviews and has, when necessary, conducted home visits to identify what support can be provided to return to work. The division has also sought to minimise absence through accommodating requests for flexible working patterns where those patterns meet the needs of the division as well as officers.

Motivation and job satisfaction

100. We found morale among officers in Aberdeen City Division to be good. This was in contrast to what we found in our local policing inspections in Fife and Ayrshire. Factors which negatively impacted morale in those divisions were either not present in Aberdeen, or were present to a much lesser extent. Officers in Aberdeen were content with the community policing model in operation in the division,[41] they felt listened to, supported and valued by their supervisors, and they felt a strong sense of team spirit. Strong and visible leadership contributed to their feelings of wellbeing (see paragraph 58 and Figure 2).

101. During our inspection we spoke to many police staff and to Unison, the union which represents many police staff. We found that morale was not as high among police staff who continue to be concerned about job security. While police staff appreciated the support offered by divisional leaders, they felt the contribution they make is not as valued by Police Scotland as that of officers. Some police staff were line managed by people outwith the division which resulted in limited communication and support. Police staff highlighted poor consultation and communication generally as key areas of concern. We were told that police staff are leaving the organisation due to uncertainty about their future and were often not replaced. Remaining staff told us this simply added to their workload. Some staff felt that the low staff absence rate was due to staff being too afraid to take time off in case they lost their job, and because they know their absence will contribute to the workload of their colleagues who are already struggling.

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[40] Proportions are year-to-date figures for April to December in both 2013-14 and 2014-15.
[41] See paragraphs 64 and 110 for more information on the community policing model.

102. Following our inspection of Ayrshire Division, we recommended that the SPA should commission Police Scotland's planned staff survey as soon as practicable and ensure that it is undertaken independently.[42] This recommendation is being implemented and we encourage both the SPA and Police Scotland to address any concerns raised by both officers and police staff.

103. Aberdeen City Division has a useful exit questionnaire and interview process under which all those leaving the police service have an opportunity to complete an exit questionnaire and/or speak to a supervisor about their reasons for leaving. Questionnaires and exit interviews are regularly analysed to identify any themes and necessary actions. This process has been particularly useful in Aberdeen as it has experienced a higher than average rate of officers leaving the police service due to

      more lucrative opportunities in the oil and gas sector. Nationally, Police Scotland is developing a standard operating procedure on exit interviews and a means by which information about those leaving the service and the reasons for their departure are collated. In developing its national processes, Police Scotland could draw on the existing process in Aberdeen.

Equalities

104. The division has identified the need to further develop diversity within its workforce in its divisional improvement plan. It has begun work on equality and diversity action plans which it hopes will support the creation of an inclusive culture and assist with recruitment and retention of staff from diverse backgrounds. The division will benefit from a proposal to appoint a Diversity Recruitment Officer for the North region who can target recruitment activity among minority communities. Given that 1 in 6 people living in Aberdeen are born outside the UK, a diverse and representative workforce may further strengthen community confidence and trust in the police service. Targeted recruitment will not only help build a more representative workforce, but may also assist with the area's more general recruitment challenges.

105. As at 24 March 2015, 33% of all divisional officers were female, but only 19% of inspectors and 18% of sergeants were female.[43] The Superintendent (Support) for the division is also deputy chair of the Scottish Women's Development Forum, and has recently established a local Women's Development Forum for the North region. Its first meeting was attended by staff from Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire and Moray Divisions, and subsequent meetings were opened to those from Tayside and Highland and Islands Divisions, as well as women working in specialist roles located in the North. The forum's role is to promote the recruitment, retention and progression of women in the service and to provide a network of support to women in the North. The group is still in its infancy and while issues such as under-representation are likely to be considered, its exact remit is still to be determined.

106. The division regularly monitors the composition of the workforce and has noted that the proportion of female probationers is lower than the proportion of female officers in the division as a whole. While this may suggest that the future trend of female officers in supervisory ranks may be downward, the division has undertaken work to mentor staff towards promotion in recent years, with an emphasis on ensuring the division is encouraging and supporting female officers. The number of women in supervisory positions has been consistent during this time and will continue to be monitored.

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[42] HMICS, *Local Policing+ Inspection Programme: Inspection of Ayrshire Division* (2015).
[43] Source: Police Scotland.

107.   In terms of service delivery that meets the needs of all communities, the division has begun a review to understand its diverse communities. The division currently has no lay advisory group which legacy forces often had in place to support effective policing of minority communities. However, the division is able to use its key individuals network (see Case study – Community Engagement Database) to seek input from minority communities when required. The database can also be used to record and monitor activities that seek to deliver equality and diversity outcomes.

Resources

Key findings

■ The community policing model in Aberdeen City is working effectively and is meeting local needs.

■ The use of police officers to provide security at courts does not appear to be cost-effective.

■ There is an impressive record of co-location with operational bases in council premises, libraries, schools and health centres. This helps community policing teams to have a visible presence in their local areas.

■ Body worn video cameras are seen as a useful tool by officers in Aberdeen. However, the cameras have not yet become embedded in their daily practice.

108. Aberdeen City Division has 552 officers to meet local demand. While the majority of local officers work within community policing teams, local officers also work within specialist units such as the Violence Reduction Unit, the Criminal Investigation Department and the Public Protection Unit which includes a Divisional Rape Investigation Unit and a Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit. The division also has access to specialist resources at a regional (576) and national (1,399) level (see Figure 3).[44] Examples of national support include Air Support or the Mounted Unit. Regional and national resources may not be immediately available to Aberdeen as they are subject to competing demands from other divisions.

Figure 3 – Resources available to Aberdeen City Division

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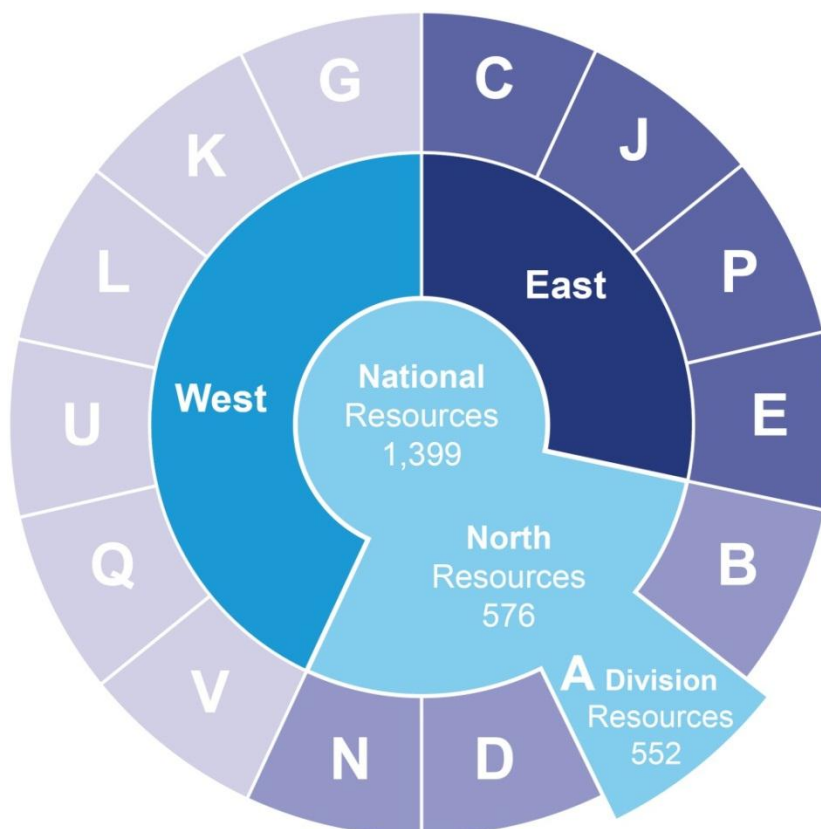
[44] Police Scotland, *Officer Numbers Quarterly Fact Sheets: Quarter 3 – 31st December 2014.*

109. In response to our surveys of stakeholders and of councillors involved in the scrutiny of local policing, we received many positive comments about the division's ability to draw on national resources for support which may not have been available prior to reform. Those most visible to the public, and therefore most often mentioned in our survey responses, were police horses and the force helicopter.

110. In 2013, Police Scotland introduced 'Guiding Principles for Local Policing' to support consistency in the deployment of resources across divisions. In urban and suburban areas, the principles advocate an approach where teams of community and response officers work together to meet local demand. Response officers focus on attending emergency calls, while community officers take a more proactive role and address local priorities. Aberdeen City Division has, however, chosen to maintain a community policing model in which officers perform a dual response and community role. We found this model to be working effectively and meeting local needs.

111. In previous local policing inspection reports, we have commented on the 'task not ask' approach introduced by Police Scotland's Contact, Command and Control Division under which control rooms direct the nearest available policing resource to attend calls from the public. In Aberdeen, the control room allocates priority calls to officers, but other calls are allocated to community policing teams via the team's sergeant. This approach appears to be working effectively in Aberdeen.

112. The operational base level is the resource required by the division to meet anticipated operational demand. In Aberdeen, the base level is 560. The division is therefore operating slightly under its base level, with 552 officers, an improvement on the same period the previous year when the division had only 522 officers.[45] Despite this recent increase in divisional resources, we noted that the division's ability to deliver its community policing resources to their fullest potential may be impeded by frequent abstractions from community policing.

113. Abstractions involve redeploying an officer from their planned duties to fill another role. Those officers who are most often redeployed to other duties are those from community policing teams rather than specialist units. In Aberdeen, officers were mostly abstracted due to a lack of staff in Custody Division, the desire for officers to provide security at court and, to a lesser extent, the need to cover absence of other officers at the airport. We have previously highlighted the reliance of Custody Division on local policing officers to provide support.[46] This issue appears to be more acute in Aberdeen however as Custody Division is operating with several vacancies and local policing officers are being used routinely rather than to meet additional demand. We were surprised at the number of officers abstracted for duty at courts in Aberdeen (including the High Court, Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court). In addition to two members of police staff, five police officers may carry out court duties each week day. Specific officers and staff are allocated to these duties, but must be replaced by other officers when they are absent (for example, when they are on leave or at a training course). While one of the officers manages a court standby process (under which officers are able to continue to work at a police office within 30 minutes of the court while waiting to be called as a witness), other officers provide security at the courts. The division estimated that more than 10,000 officer hours are spent providing security each year. However, a review of the incident and crime recording systems showed that only 39 incidents were logged at court in 2013, resulting in 24

[45] Police Scotland, *Officer Numbers Quarterly Fact Sheets: Quarter 3 – 31st December 2013.*
[46] HMICS, *Thematic inspection of police custody arrangements in Scotland* (2014). See also *HMICS, Local Policing+ Inspection Programme: Inspection of custody centre located in Aberdeen City Division (2015).*

crimes being recorded. In 2014, there were 50 incidents resulting in 17 crimes. While courts may require additional security, this should be provided by the police on a risk-assessed basis and should not be routine. The low volume of incidents and crimes that take place at court suggest that security may be more cost effectively provided by those other than police officers. This is an issue which we will continue to monitor in our local policing inspection programme.

114.   Many officers we spoke to were also concerned that the creation of specialist units at divisional and regional levels, while welcome in principle, are nonetheless drawing their staff from community policing teams. These specialist units deal with specific issues such as rape, domestic abuse and child abuse. As well as the creation of divisional units, some regional hubs for the North have been located in Aberdeen. Given the cost of living in Aberdeen, these hubs are more likely to attract staff from Aberdeen City Division (or nearby Aberdeenshire and Moray Division), rather than Highland and Islands or Tayside Divisions, meaning that Aberdeen may lose proportionately more experienced staff than other divisions in the North.

115.   The drawing away of resources from community policing teams to staff specialist units has been raised as a concern in our previous inspections of local policing in Fife and Ayrshire. We welcome an on-going review by Police Scotland of some of these units which we would expect will result in an appropriate balance being struck between the needs of community policing and the need for some incidents to be managed by those with specialist expertise. Specialist units should only be created where particular expertise is required and where the volume of incidents merits the allocation of specialist resources. Police Scotland's review should also consider how best to strike the appropriate balance between ensuring officers working in units develop expertise, but without deskilling them in other areas or deskilling other officers in the work covered by units.

Physical assets

116.   The division has a good overview of its estate and has a local asset management plan that follows a national template. The local plan has clear links to national priorities for rationalisation of the property estate, removal of leased properties and a focus on co-location with partners. There is an impressive record of co-location with operational bases in council premises, libraries, schools and health centres. This helps to ensure that community policing teams have a visible presence in their local areas.

Body worn video cameras

117.   Unlike most other officers in Police Scotland, officers in Aberdeen City Division have access to body worn video cameras. The cameras were initially piloted in two communities in Aberdeen by legacy Grampian Police before being rolled out across the division. They can be used to record incidents and crime scenes, and the footage can be used as evidence in court proceedings.

118.   While Police Scotland's standard operating procedure for body worn cameras recommends that all officers in the division use the cameras at all times when deployed on operational duties, the procedure also indicates that the use of cameras is 'incident driven'. This means that use of the cameras is not mandatory and they are not switched on all the time. The procedure says that, 'officers who wish to record an incident should start recording on their approach and continue to record until such time as their involvement in the incident is completed'. The procedure notes that, ideally, those being filmed will be informed of the fact, but acknowledges that in some

cases the immediate or serious nature of the incident may preclude this. Officers cannot view the footage while on patrol but must wait until returning to the police station to download the footage. Footage is governed by an information security framework and is deleted after 31 days unless it has been deemed to be of evidential value.

119. The use of body worn cameras is designed to secure benefits including:

   ■ deterring crime, improving detection rates and increasing convictions;

   ■ improving efficiency by reducing officer time gathering and preparing other forms of evidence and appearing at court;

   ■ reducing the number of complaints made about the police, with cameras providing additional evidence in any complaint that requires investigation.

120. Reviews of the use of body worn cameras in Aberdeen have identified significant benefits including a reduction in assaults on officers, and evidence in the event of spurious complaints against the police.[47] In terms of efficiency, a key benefit has been a reduction in the need for officers to attend court to give evidence. In 2013-14, body worn camera footage was presented as evidence in 191 police reports where the fiscal had taken formal proceedings. Of the 191 cases, 75 resulted in early guilty pleas meaning that 274 police witnesses and 199 civilian witnesses in those cases were not required to attend court to give evidence.[48] As well as saving time for witnesses, early guilty pleas will have resulted in savings for courts.

121. During our inspection, we asked officers about their use of body worn video cameras. Officers felt they were a useful tool, but admitted that the cameras had not yet become embedded in their daily practice. We found that some officers did not always take cameras with them on patrol and there were inconsistencies between officers as to which incidents they would choose to record. The non-routine use of cameras was identified by the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) in a recent investigation into a serious injury following police contact in Aberdeen.[49] PIRC noted that although around 19 officers attended the initial incident, only around half were wearing body worn video cameras and none of the officers had activated their cameras. There was therefore no video footage of the incident for PIRC to review. The routine use of cameras and the consistent availability of video evidence may prevent observers drawing unfair inferences about how an incident was managed. To help address inconsistencies in the use of body worn video cameras, Police Scotland should review the effectiveness of its existing guidance to officers on their use.

122. Officers we spoke to had mixed views about the type and quality of the equipment: some thought it was good, while others felt there was scope for minor improvement. For example, some officers said the cameras fell off too easily, while others said it would be better if they could view the footage on-site, rather than at the end of their shift.

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[47] An evaluation conducted shortly after body worn cameras were introduced in Aberdeen showed only one officer wearing a camera had been assaulted but that, given the number of officers using cameras and the number of assaults against officers generally, assaults on 18 officers wearing cameras would have been expected. ODS Consulting, *Body Worn Video Projects in Paisley and Aberdeen* (2011).
[48] Source: Police Scotland.
[49] PIRC, *Serious injury following police contact in Aberdeen on 26 October 2014* (published 30 April 2015).

123. The Scottish Government's Digital Strategy for Justice notes that 'Police Scotland has commissioned a full business case to determine the precise policy, practical and fiscal requirements of body worn video cameras, utilising as up-to-date technology as possible, with the intention of implementing a national roll-out thereafter.'[50] In light of a possible national roll-out, we have been assured by Police Scotland that it will carefully consider the experience of officers using cameras in Aberdeen, as well as evidence about benefits from forces in England and Wales which have trialled the technology.

> **Recommendation 3**
> Police Scotland should examine the effectiveness of the existing guidance given to officers on the use of body worn video cameras.

Financial assets

124. Arrangements for the local management of financial assets are similar to those we found in Fife and Ayrshire. The divisional commander has little influence over the budget as officer numbers are fixed and, combined with police staff, account for the vast majority of the divisional costs (98.5%). The most significant area for discretion is the overtime budget which can be used to target operational demand. Overtime spend was within budget at the time of our inspection. There is effective monitoring of the divisional budget with, for example, close monitoring of overtime claims. A recent review of overtime showed that 239 of 367 overtime hours were spent on court-related overtime. Further analysis showed only 16 of those hours were productive (i.e. when officers were actually used at court). This highlights scope for further efficiencies in the criminal justice reform programme.

125. The division receives external funding from partners for some initiatives, such as Operation Maple, as well as a contribution from Aberdeen City Council to two school-based officer posts.[51]

Managing information and intelligence

126. The division has structures and processes, which it shares with Aberdeenshire and Moray Division, to support the gathering and management of intelligence. We did not review the arrangements in Aberdeen given our recent inspection of intelligence.[52]

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[50] Scottish Government, *The Digital Strategy for Justice in Scotland* (2014).
[51] Operation Maple is designed to reduce violence and antisocial behaviour in Aberdeen City, to increase the number of people charged with being concerned in the supply of controlled drugs and to increase diversionary work. The division works with criminal justice social work to deliver these objectives.
[52] HMICS, *Inspection of the Management of Intelligence in Ayrshire Division and the National Intelligence Bureau* (2015).

Partionships

127. There is effective partnership working in Aberdeen. Partnership working is embedded within the division and we regularly heard officers of all ranks and police staff referring to their role within various partnership initiatives. In our survey of stakeholders and in interviews with key partners, we heard positive feedback about the division's contribution to partnership working. They described effective working relationships at strategic and operational levels. The division's leaders hold key positions in the local partnership environment and one local stakeholder told us that, 'few, if any, had done more to drive partnership working in Aberdeen than the divisional commander'.

128. Police Scotland has a duty to participate in community planning in each local authority area. We found that Aberdeen City Division is an active partner in the community planning partnership. The divisional commander is Vice Chair of the Community Planning Aberdeen Board, while the Superintendent (Operations) is Vice Chair of the Community Planning Aberdeen Management Group and the Superintendent (Support) is Chair of the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

129. The division is party to Aberdeen's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and the priorities identified in the SOA are reflected in the local policing plan. However, the measures against which success will be monitored in the SOA are slightly different from the objectives in the local policing plan and those that are reported on to the local scrutiny committee. There may be benefit in more closely aligning these measures.

130. The division has a chief inspector who leads on partnerships, as well as an inspector who is based at the Community Safety Hub and who focuses on community safety issues generally. The division has two school-based officers who are part-funded by Aberdeen City Council, and two school liaison officers. The two-school based officers are managed by their local community policing teams and their roles vary according to the needs of the schools in which they are based. The officer based at Northfield Academy focuses on developing relationships with young people who come to the attention of the police, and the young people's families. He works one-to-one with young people who offend and has developed and supported various initiatives to support positive outcomes for young people. One such initiative is Northfield Youth Action Group which has brought together several community safety partner agencies to prevent antisocial behaviour by developing various diversionary activities for young people. The group has prompted activities such as Project Fit, where young people

can access sporting and development opportunities a few nights each week. Initiatives such as this received positive feedback in our stakeholder survey, but do sometimes rely on the commitment of individual officers for their success.

131. The division also benefits from a community policing inspector who acts as a liaison with the oil and gas and renewable energy industries, a substantial community in Aberdeen (there are, for example, around 27,000 people working offshore at any one time). The inspector is responsible for the entire offshore industry, stretching beyond Aberdeen's boundaries, and works with private industry to ensure that contingency plans for major incidents align and to test those plans through exercises.

132. During our inspection, we heard about multiple operations and initiatives, the majority of which had a partnership element. Some of the initiatives have already been described above, including Operation Oak, the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse and Northfield Youth Action Group. Other initiatives are highlighted below. While we were impressed at the extent to which joint working has developed in Aberdeen, we are concerned about the sustainability of some initiatives which appear to be dependent on the contribution and commitment of individual officers.

> ### Operation Begonia
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> Operation Begonia is a multi-agency initiative led by Aberdeen City Division to address on-street prostitution. The division works with partners including criminal justice social work and voluntary sector agencies such as Drugs Action and Cyrenians to reduce the number of women involved in on-street prostitution and support them via referrals to appropriate agencies.

133. The division has also worked with its public sector partners in the North East to identify and develop solutions to local issues such as affordable accommodation for key workers. One forum where such issues can be discussed is the North East Public Sector Chief Officers' Group, attended by the divisional commander.

134. The division also has an active role in Aberdeen's Community Safety Hub, a flagship partnership initiative that has received attention nationally and about which local stakeholders are overwhelmingly positive (see Case study – Community Safety Hub). We visited the Hub during our inspection, spoke to staff from various agencies working there and observed the daily tasking meeting. Aberdeen City Division has several officers based at the Hub, including an inspector, a sergeant, constables and a member of police staff. The division also part-funds a community safety analyst post. There are currently three analysts who prepare the reports that support the daily tasking meetings as well as other analytical products. Previously there were four analysts, one of whom was a member of Police Scotland staff. This post was withdrawn from the Hub as a result of national changes to the deployment of Police Scotland analysts. Partners in Aberdeen were frustrated at the lack of consultation about this change in resourcing and are concerned that the current arrangement under which the division part-funds a remaining analyst post may end in 2016. Partners in the Hub were further concerned by a lack of consultation on national decisions taken by Police Scotland and a failure to assess the local impact of such decisions when Police Scotland recently decided to withdraw a call handling service which supported the council's Antisocial Behaviour Investigation Team (ASBIT), a key partner in the Community Safety Hub. Under this service, the police control room

could allocate calls about antisocial behaviour to ASBIT. Now, these calls will be allocated to officers and ASBIT must set up an alternative call handling and tasking system.

135.   Community safety analysts based at the Hub – who are employed by Aberdeen City Council – have restricted access to SCOMIS, Police Scotland's information management system. They can only access data at divisional or area command level which does not support the more detailed analysis of ward or neighbourhood issues that is essential to their role and the work of the Hub. They are still able to use legacy Grampian systems to analyse data at ward level but are concerned about the continued availability of these systems when i6 is introduced.[53] While Police Scotland has begun to review the access that partner analysts have to its data and systems, this work should be expedited to maximise the effectiveness of partnership working.

Recommendation 4

Police Scotland should provide appropriate access to its information management systems for those analysts working in partnership with the police.

Case study – Community Safety Hub

The Community Safety Hub was established in 2013 with the aim of delivering improved community safety outcomes in Aberdeen. The Hub was established by Aberdeen's Community Safety Partnership following recognition by the partners that working on common goals independently of one another resulted in duplicated or disjointed efforts. Partners felt that improved outcomes could be achieved more efficiently if partners worked together to share information and expertise. The Hub focuses on improved safety outcomes in relation to antisocial behaviour, community fire safety and violence. These issues were identified in the Community Safety Partnership's Strategic Assessment 2013-16. The strategic assessment approach to community safety was championed by the divisional commander and the division has been a key partner in the development and operation of the Hub. Other partners include:

■   Aberdeen City Council services including housing, city wardens, Antisocial Behaviour Investigation Team, trading standards and social work

■   Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

■   NHS Grampian.

At the Hub, professionals from a range of agencies are co-located and work together to improve community safety. The key process is a daily tasking and co-ordination meeting, usually chaired by a police sergeant from Aberdeen City Division. The purpose of this meeting is to review incidents from the preceding 24 hours (or, on Mondays, from the preceding weekend) and identify actions that partners can take immediately to address incidents and to prevent their repetition or escalation. A report is submitted to partners and considered at the meeting. The report covers incidents relating to antisocial behaviour, breaches of antisocial behaviour orders, underage drinking, youth disorder, noise complaints, wilful fires, accidental house fires and motorcycle annoyance. These incidents will have been

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[53] i6 is an integrated police ICT system which will replace the separate ICT systems used by the legacy forces. It is designed to deliver common policing practices and a more effective and efficient way of recording, managing and using information.

identified by partners, including the police, fire and rescue, or the council's Antisocial Behaviour Investigation Team. Examples of actions agreed at the meeting are police or city warden patrols in a particular area, joint visits (e.g. housing and police), referrals to social work and home fire safety visits. The daily tasking meeting is supplemented by a monthly tasking and co-ordinating meeting which has a more strategic focus.

An internal evaluation of the work of the Hub has been conducted. While it is difficult to identify a causal link between the establishment of the Hub and reductions experienced in antisocial behaviour, violent and fire-related incidents, a survey of professionals involved in the work of the Hub has identified positive feedback.

During our own inspection, the Community Safety Hub was frequently identified as an example of good practice in partnership working. Those working at the Hub said co-location and joint working had increased their awareness of the roles and responsibilities of other agencies which in turn had helped them identify alternative and more effective means of addressing issues. They said there was a greater degree of familiarity and trust between the organisations, and that the daily tasking process provided impetus to their work. They felt the Hub's work was evidence-led and that partners were committed to achieving positive outcomes. The general consensus was, 'how did we manage without the Hub?'

We consider the Community Safety Hub to be an example of **effective practice** and welcome efforts by those working at the Hub to assess the scope for its future development, including the need for more regular involvement by some partners such as health and social work.

136.   While we found effective partnership working in Aberdeen, there is also an acknowledgement among partners that joint initiatives may be under threat as public sector organisations seek to make savings. They feared a 'retraction into silos' which would be contrary to public sector reform in Scotland and its emphasis on prevention, partnership, people and performance. The division's senior management team, for example, acknowledged that more work is needed around place-based services. There is a fear among stakeholders that innovative local projects may be inhibited in light of the limited discretion divisional commanders have over their budgets. This is an issue which we will continue to monitor in our forthcoming local policing inspections.

Case study – Collaborative Outcomes Learning Tool

Aberdeen City Division has worked with Robert Gordon University to develop a training resource suitable for use by a range of partner agencies to help improve multi-agency responses to public protection issues such as adult and child protection, domestic abuse, mental disorder and radicalisation. The Collaborative Outcomes Learning Tool (COLT) is a web-based interactive product that follows a fictional family through a number of challenging public protection scenarios. Professionals from agencies such as the police, social work, nursing, medicine, fire and rescue services and education provide insight into their concerns and potential actions to support the family. The tool can be used in multi-agency training sessions to increase professionals' awareness and understanding of each other's role when responding to challenging situations.

During our inspection, some partner organisations commented positively on this tool, saying that it had helped them understand the roles and responses of various agencies in relation to the same incident. The tool has gained international recognition with the division and Robert Gordon University being asked to present it at an international policing conference in the Netherlands. The tool has also been nominated for the Educational Multimedia Award at the Learning on Screen Awards 2015. Aberdeen City Division and Robert Gordon University have identified scope for the tool to be used more extensively within Scotland including in, for example, probationer training at the Scottish Police College.

Case study – Project Know More

The division has developed various approaches to tackling substance misuse. For example, in response to an increase in the use of new psychoactive substances ('legal highs') in one area within Aberdeen, as well as a number of local school pupils being admitted to hospital after taking these substances, the division developed Project Know More to raise awareness of the risks of substance misuse. Officers had noted that there was a perception among pupils that because the substances were thought to be legal, they were safer than illegal substances. Working in a local secondary school, and with support from the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, Drugs Action and a youth worker, the division sought to educate pupils as to the risks of taking legal highs. The division also worked with school staff to highlight the signs of substance misuse and encourage them to discuss substance misuse with pupils. The project involved the creation of a resource pack of teaching materials which teachers, police officers and other professionals can deliver in future. Following the project, there has been a decrease in the number of legal high incidents involving young people in the area, which has reduced the number of occasions on which police and ambulance services have been called out. Pupils provided feedback on the project and said they were more informed about legal highs and less likely to take them. School staff also felt more informed and said they felt more empowered to have conversations with pupils about substance misuse and more confident in reporting concerns. Project Know More was recognised with the Healthy Living Award in Aberdeen City Council's Children and Young People's Services Awards 2014.

Case study – Police Scotland Youth Volunteers

The Police Scotland Youth Volunteer Programme was established in 2013 to strengthen engagement between Police Scotland and young people. It aims to:

- promote a practical understanding of policing among young people
- encourage a spirit of adventure and good citizenship
- support local policing priorities through volunteering and give young people a chance to be heard
- inspire young people to participate positively in their communities.

Police Scotland has worked with Young Scot and YouthLink Scotland to develop the volunteer programme. At present, five programmes have been established, including one in Aberdeen, although Police Scotland hopes to roll the programme out nationally. The programme is for young people aged between 13 and 18 years old and there is a desire to ensure at least a quarter of the young people involved come from a vulnerable background. 'Vulnerability' is interpreted broadly and may include victims of crime, young people at risk of offending, or young people who may be at risk of social, financial or education exclusion. The volunteer programme provides a positive learning environment and opportunities to develop qualifications, inter-personal skills and confidence, thereby enhancing opportunities for further education, employment and training.

In Aberdeen, the programme is delivered by the school-based officer at Northfield Academy. Applications to join were sought from young people in Northfield, an area with high levels of multiple deprivation. Delivery is supported by adult volunteers, including another police officer. It has 25 members who meet weekly to take part in physical activities, learn about community safety and develop leadership skills. The
young people also volunteer in various ways, including at the Commonwealth Games, stewarding at local races which support charities and in local care homes.
The young people themselves help to identify or choose the activities in which they will take part.

We observed a meeting of around 20 young volunteers during our inspection and are grateful to the young people for taking the time to speak with us about their experiences. The young people were very positive about their participation in the programme, saying that it had improved their relationship with the police and their understanding of policing. They said the activities they had been involved in had helped them gain confidence and had been an advantage when applying for jobs. The school-based officer who delivers the programme maintains a record of achievement for each of the young volunteers and they can draw on this for evidence when applying for jobs or education or training places. While the programme is not intended to be a recruitment ground for Police Scotland, many of the young people told us that they were considering a career in the police, something all but one had never considered prior to joining the programme.

The officer leading the programme in Aberdeen has noted a positive change in the behaviour, manner, confidence and attitude of the young people involved, describing them as enthusiastic and committed to their roles. There has also been positive feedback from the young people's parents following their involvement in the programme, as well as the wider community.

Police Scotland has commissioned an independent evaluation of the programme which has identified positive outcomes for the young people involved as well as recommendations for future development of the programme. Key to the programme's future success will be sustaining what has been achieved so far: while the young people have carried out various fundraising events to help support their work, the programme has struggled to attract sufficient adult volunteers and much of the programme's success is attributable to the commitment of individual officers.

CCTV

137.   We noted in our report on local policing in Ayrshire that the future funding arrangements for CCTV are currently under review. In its national strategy for CCTV, the Scottish Government notes that funding decisions are a matter for local community planning partners. There are a variety of local arrangements in place across Scotland and, in Aberdeen, CCTV is funded by the police service and operated by members of police staff. There is agreement in principle for Aberdeen City Council to take on responsibility for CCTV although detailed arrangements have yet to be finalised.

Appendix 1 – Crime group descriptors

Crime group	Type of crime	Examples
Group 1	Crimes of violence	Homicide Attempted murder Serious assault Robbery and assault with intent to rob Possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life
Group 2	Sexual crimes	Rape and attempted rape Sexual assault Crimes associated with prostitution
Group 3	Crimes of dishonesty	Housebreaking Theft Fraud
Group 4	Fire-raising, vandalism etc	Fire-raising Vandalism Malicious mischief Culpable and reckless conduct
Group 5	Other crimes	Crimes against public justice such as perjury or resisting arrest Handling offensive weapons Drugs offences
Group 6	Miscellaneous offences	Common assault Breach of the peace Threatening or abusive behaviour Drunkenness Racially aggravated conduct
Group 7	Motor vehicle offences	Dangerous and careless driving Driving under the influence Speeding Driving while disqualified Seatbelt and mobile phone offences

Appendix 2 – Crime data tables[54]

Table A – Crimes and offences per 10,000 population 2012-13 and 2013-14

Crimes	Aberdeen City			Scotland		
	2012-13	2013-14	% change	2012-13	2013-14	% change
Group 1	14.3	14.0	-2.2	14.2	12.8	-9.9
Group 2	20.8	17.7	-14.9	14.5	16.2	11.8
Group 3	389.3	388.1	-0.3	255.8	258.4	1.0
Group 4	147.4	119.5	-18.9	111.9	102.6	-8.3
Total Groups 1 to 4	571.8	539.3	-5.7	396.4	390.0	-1.6
Group 5	123.1	138.3	12.3	117.5	119.1	1.3
Total Groups 1 to 5	695.0	677.6	-2.5	513.9	509.1	-0.9
Group 6	NDA	440.2	NDA	NDA	395.8	NDA
Group 7	NDA	469.1	NDA	NDA	553.5	NDA

Table B – Crime and offences per 10,000 population 2013-14 and 2014-15 (year-to-date)

Crimes	Aberdeen City			Scotland		
	April-December 2013-14	April-December 2014-15	% change	April-December 2013-14	April-December 2014-15	% change
Group 1	10.0	9.3	-6.6	9.5	9.0	-5.8
Group 2	13.4	14.9	11.2	12.4	13.0	4.9
Group 3	300.8	248.1	-17.5	197.4	183.6	-7.0
Group 4	91.0	87.1	-4.3	78.1	74.0	-5.3
Total Groups 1 to 4	415.2	359.4	-13.4	297.4	279.6	-6.0
Group 5	103.0	94.3	-8.4	90.0	87.2	-3.1
Total Groups 1 to 5	518.1	453.6	-12.4	387.5	366.8	-5.3
Group 6	338.4	304.8	-9.9	306.8	265.5	-13.5
Group 7	363.9	347.7	-4.4	433.6	283.7	-34.6

Table C – Detection rates 2012-13, 2013-14 and April to December 2014-15

Crimes	Aberdeen City			Scotland		
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15 YTD	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15 YTD
Group 1	72.3	75.4	89.6	78.6	81.9	85.2
Group 2	54.9	67.7	76.0	68.0	75.6	77.9
Group 3	34.3	35.4	39.0	38.1	37.4	35.2
Group 4	32.8	26.2	26.0	27.0	25.2	23.2
Group 5	96.5	96.9	96.3	97.9	98.4	96.4
Total Groups 1 to 5	46.4	48.0	50.6	51.3	51.5	50.0
Group 6	NDA	82.4	83.5	NDA	87.7	86.4
Group 7	NDA	95.9	96.2	NDA	98.9	98.4

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[54] Police Scotland, *Management Information Year End 2013/14* (2014); Police Scotland, *Management Information Police Division Report: Year End 2013/14* (2014); Police Scotland, *Management Information Force Report: Quarter 3 2014/15* (2015); and Police Scotland, *Management Information Division Area Report: Quarter 3 2014/15* (2015).

Appendix 3 – The links between local and national priorities

Multi-member ward plan priorities	Local policing plan priorities	Single Outcome Agreement	Police Scotland annual police plan priorities	SPA strategic police objectives	Scottish Government strategic policing priorities
Violence and antisocial behaviour Alcohol related disorder Vehicle-related crime Housebreaking and theft Dishonesty Road safety and road crime Drug dealing and drug misuse	Antisocial behaviour Housebreaking National security Protecting people Safer roads Serious and organised crime Violent crime	**People feel safe throughout Aberdeen's communities** ■ level of recorded violent crime per 10,000 population ■ level of domestic abuse crimes and offences ■ number of incidents of antisocial behaviour per 10,000 population ■ percentage of adult residents stating they feel 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' at home alone at night and 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' when walking along in the local neighbourhood after dark ■ wilful fires per 100,000 population ■ accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population **Safer roads** ■ number of people killed or seriously injured	Violence, disorder and antisocial behaviour Road safety and road crime Protecting vulnerable people Serious and organised crime and counter-terrorism Major events and resilience Business benefits of reform	Working partnership to improve safety for the citizens of Scotland and reduce crime Ensure that all communities, including the most vulnerable, have access to the police service and are given the support they need to feel safe	**Strategic Priority 1** Make communities safer and reduce harm by tackling and investigating crime and demonstrating pioneering approaches to prevention and collaboration at a national and local level
				Ensure Scotland's global reputation as a safe place Ensure that there is equitable access to services across all of Scotland's communities where and when needed	**Strategic Priority 2** Strengthen Scotland's reputation as a successful and safe country by demonstrating excellence in effectively planning for and responding to major events and threats
				Deliver the benefits of reform effectively and efficiently	**Strategic Priority 3** Provide an efficient, effective service focused on protecting frontline services, delivering the benefits of police reform and promoting continuous improvement
				Increase public confidence in the police service by understanding and responding to the particular needs of Scotland's diverse communities Promote a culture of excellence	**Strategic Priority 4** Make communities stronger and improve wellbeing by increasing public confidence and reducing fear of crime, making the new Police Service of Scotland an exemplar of visible, ethical and responsive policing

Appendix 4 – Aberdeen City Local Policing Plan – assessment against Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 requirements

Section 47(3) requirements	Local policing plan
(a) sets out the main priorities and objectives for the policing of the local authority's area	The Aberdeen City Local Policing Plan identifies seven priorities for 2014-17 which are supported by 19 objectives (see paragraph 37).
(b) explains the reasons for selecting each of those priorities and objectives	The plan sets out why each priority was chosen, the potential harms associated with the priorities and supporting objectives which will be pursued to address the priorities. Aberdeen's local policing plan notes that in developing the priorities, consideration was given to Police Scotland's Scottish Policing Assessment; strategic assessments by Community Planning Aberdeen and Aberdeen's Community Safety Partnership; analysis of local crime trends and information; and the outcome of consultation with community councils, key individual networks, elected officials and communities.
(c) sets out the proposed arrangements for the policing of the local authority's area (and how those arrangements are expected to achieve the main priorities and objectives)	The plan notes Police Scotland's mission to 'keep people safe' and describes arrangements for local policing, setting out how 14 local community policing teams are empowered to work with partners to resolve locally identified issues and respond to incidents. Reference is also made to the multi-agency 'Safer and Stronger Aberdeen' hub which seeks to improve the accessibility of services, enhance community safety and achieve solutions to issues identified through community consultation.
(d) where reasonably practicable, identifies outcomes by reference to which the achievement of those priorities and objectives may be measured (e) describes how those priorities, objectives and arrangements are expected to contribute to the delivery of any other relevant local outcomes which are identified by community planning	The plan describes how it is aligned with the Single Outcome Agreement for Aberdeen and contributes towards the achievement of the Strategic Policing Priorities and National Outcomes set by Scottish Ministers. The plan states that the national performance framework developed by Police Scotland will be used to demonstrate how successful the division is in meeting its local priorities and objectives.
(f) includes any other information connected with the policing of the local authority's area which the local commander considers relevant	The plan includes a section on local scrutiny and engagement which describes the scrutiny arrangements put in place by the local authority (the arrangements described in the plan for Aberdeen have changed since the plan was first published with the local scrutiny role being reallocated by Aberdeen City Council to its Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee). Reference is made to scrutiny arrangements ensuring locally set objectives deliver on the statutory purpose of improving the safety and wellbeing of communities and the provision of feedback to the local policing commander with regards to the view of the committee on any matter concerning or connected to policing in the local area and any associated recommendations for improvement. A commitment to undertake regular community engagement through community councils, other community meetings, surgeries and other events is provided. The plan also includes a section on equalities, which outlines Police Scotland's commitment to equality and diversity and the provision of a fair and consistent service despite differing expectations across the diverse range of communities within the local area. The plan also sets out various means by which the police in Aberdeen can be contacted.

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HMICS operates independently of Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and the Scottish Government. Under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, our role is to review the state, effectiveness and efficiency of Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. We support improvement in policing by carrying out inspections, making recommendations and highlighting effective practice.