



HM INSPECTORATE OF  
CONSTABULARY FOR SCOTLAND

An examination of how Central Scotland  
Police manages the very high priorities of  
the Scottish Strategic Assessment

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For operational security reasons, small sections of this report have  
been redacted. These are clearly indicated (*text redacted*)

December 2009

To monitor and improve the police service in Scotland



## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 During the summer of 2009, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS) conducted a high-level review examining how the eight Scottish police forces are managing the very high priority (VHP) risk areas identified by the 2007/08 Scottish Strategic Assessment (see Appendix for a further explanation of these terms). This report presents our findings for Central Scotland Police.
- 1.2 Overall, we found that Central Scotland Police is well placed to develop and deliver a robust control strategy to manage those risks that pose the greatest threats to communities.
- 1.3 In particular, we found that there is clear and visible leadership from the chief constable and strong collective commitment on the part of senior managers to delivering the force control strategy.
- 1.4 We identified the following key areas for improvement:
  - involving partners in developing the strategic assessment and working together to achieve the control strategy priorities;
  - identifying the training requirements to implement the control strategy;
  - the capacity of the force's IT systems to support analytical work; and
  - the use of results analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of force activities.
- 1.5 We will be seeking assurance from the force that all the areas for improvement identified in section 10 of this report are being addressed, and we request an update on progress by the end of March 2010.
- 1.6 In addition to reviewing how the force is managing the VHP areas, we also assessed its progress against recommendations from recent HMICS thematic inspections and the output from the self-assessment process undertaken in 2008. The findings of this work are summarised in sections 8 and 9 of this report.

## 2. Introduction

### *Background*

- 2.1 During 2008 all Scottish forces completed an internal self-assessment exercise using the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model. The intention was that forces would be the primary users of the self-assessment outputs, and that we would use the results to identify where further, more detailed, inspection work might be required.
- 2.2 Having reviewed the improvement action plans arising from each force's self-assessment, and how some of the evidence and related judgments were used in the process itself, we identified some specific areas for further examination, particularly around how forces manage the most serious risks identified through the Scottish Strategic Assessment. This was an aspect that had not been covered in detail by the self-assessment tool, and we wanted assurance that the risks were being managed effectively.



- 2.3 The 2009/10 Scottish Strategic Assessment was published in April 2009. We therefore took the 2007/08 Scottish Strategic Assessment as the starting point for this high-level follow-up. Our aim was to focus on what the Assessment had identified as the six VHP risk areas for Scottish policing – anti-social behaviour, terrorism, child protection, serious organised crime groups, drugs and violence – and within this to examine:
- how forces assess and prioritise risks;
  - how forces prioritise and co-ordinate activity related to these very high risk areas, and how these activities are integrated into other force priorities; and
  - the impact of forces’ activities in these areas over the last two years, i.e. what difference they have made.

2.4 The VHP risk areas remained broadly unchanged in the 2009/10 Strategic Assessment, apart from child protection now being included in the wider area of public protection. However, many of the recommended prevention, intelligence and enforcement (PIE) activities had been updated.

2.5 In addition to reviewing these six risk areas, we conducted a high-level assessment of forces’ progress in implementing a) the recommendations of recent HMICS thematic inspection reports and b) the force-wide actions arising from their EFQM self-assessments.

### *Methodology*

2.6 Data to inform our assessment was gathered through a combination of desktop research, and interviews and focus groups in forces. Forces were not required to prepare any additional information for this exercise.

2.7 The initial desktop research was undertaken by specialist advisers seconded from the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) National Intelligence Model (NIM) team. The documents reviewed included forces’ strategic assessments and control strategies, minutes from tasking and co-ordinating group meetings, intelligence requirements, policing plans and/or business plans and relevant performance information.

2.8 The purpose of this research phase was to examine how forces had addressed the priorities and recommendations in the 2007/08 Scottish Strategic Assessment, during 2008 and 2009.

2.9 In order to examine the impact of forces’ activities on the VHP risk areas, we had intended to look at the indicators of the Scottish Policing Performance Framework (SPPF). We found few direct links, though, between the SPPF indicators and the six VHP risks, and we were therefore unable to make our assessments. The integration of the Scottish Strategic Assessment into the Framework is one of the national areas for improvement that we have identified.

2.10 We also reviewed both the outputs of forces’ self-assessment exercises and their progress in implementing the recommendations of recent HMICS thematic inspections. The findings of each of these three research elements informed our subsequent interview and focus group questions.

2.11 The main aim of our visits was to obtain an up-to-date picture of how forces were currently managing the VHP risks. The limited scope of our fieldwork means that our



findings are necessarily high-level. The aspects that we covered in each force varied according to the findings of our desktop research. This approach has also meant that we have sometimes identified areas for improvement in one force that may not have been covered in other forces and therefore may not be unique to that force.

- 2.12 The fieldwork component of the inspection involved HMICS staff visiting Central Scotland Police in May 2009. During this period we carried out interviews with individuals from the force and its partner organisations.
- 2.13 We would like to thank Central Scotland Police for the help and support we received in undertaking this work, and members of the ACPOS NIM team for their contribution to the desktop research.

### 3. Leadership of the strategic assessment and control strategy

- 3.1 The chief constable provides clear and visible leadership in this area of activity and ensures the involvement of his executive team in the NIM process. It is the chief constable who chairs the force strategic process and is personally involved in setting the force's priorities. The assistant chief constable chairs the force tactical process and is responsible for delivering on the control strategy priorities.
- 3.2 The force's strategic assessment and control strategy are the primary drivers for prioritising force activities. In 2008 the force agreed a three-year strategic plan, but it has not produced an annual policing plan since 2007/08. Consequently, these have become, in effect, the annual policing plan. The force has developed a strategic assessment action plan, with owners assigned to each prevention, intelligence or enforcement activity. It has not yet, however, assigned strategic owners to each of the VHP areas - a practice that appears to work well in other forces. The force may wish to consider ways in which it might extend ownership of the control strategy amongst its command team.
- 3.3 The majority of staff at all levels showed good understanding of the force priorities, with the exception of organised crime groups, and their role in reducing the risks associated with them. Force priorities are communicated to staff via the force intranet and desktop screen savers, and all daily briefings and intelligence requirements are clearly linked to the control strategy.
- 3.4 Governance and accountability is clearly integrated into force business processes. The individual PIE action owners identified in the strategic assessment action plan are held to account on their progress at quarterly meetings. And due to the size of the force, senior managers are able to keep up-to-date with crime and intelligence requirements and manage these effectively.

### 4. The assessment of risk

- 4.1 The force has a robust and systematic approach to assessing risk, having recently adopted the model used in the Scottish Strategic Assessment. This change has brought about clear improvements.
- 4.2 Nevertheless, there is potential for the force to make greater use of data from partner organisations. The force's strategic assessment is informed by information and intelligence from the force's own crime systems, as well as data and research information from open/external sources. There is very little partnership data or



partnership involvement in the process. Our findings also suggest that little use is made of community consultation. The force should consider how it can make better use of partnership data and community consultation to inform its strategic assessment.

- 4.3 The force control strategy contains all six of the Scottish Strategic Assessment's VHP areas. Although violence and anti-social behaviour have been combined into one single VHP, this decision appears to be supported by relevant data. The force has also identified road casualty reduction as an additional VHP area.
- 4.4 Although divisions do not prepare separate strategic assessments, divisional commanders actively contribute to the force assessment. Nor, therefore, do they set their own control strategies but instead take their strategic direction from the force document. Given the size of the force, and the similar geographic, demographic and crime profiles of its three divisions, the value of developing separate divisional strategic assessments is questionable. The force should ensure that where local priorities are agreed at divisional level, they are supported by a robust assessment of the available evidence and risk.
- 4.5 Although analysts working in the force generally feel well-supported and well-trained, analytical capacity is stretched and lacks resilience due to a lack of analyst researchers. The force has introduced a system whereby divisional analysts are responsible for individual VHP areas, while area command analysts are responsible for the disorder, ASB and public protection areas. This has the benefit of building analytical expertise in each area but, given the small size of the team, could create tensions between divisional and force needs. Another concern is the incompatibility and inflexibility of the force's IT systems, which can significantly hamper the work of analysts.

## 5. Resources to support the control strategy

- 5.1 The force does not systematically identify the resources needed to implement the control strategy, nor does it have a structured approach to assigning resources according to VHP priorities. The force adopts an informal and mutually supportive approach to agreeing resources. Should additional resources for local initiatives be required, divisional commanders can make bids to the assistant chief constable. The collegiate approach of divisional commanders means that this route is rarely pursued. Without an understanding of the resources needed to deliver the control strategy, the force cannot be sure of matching resources to priorities effectively.
- 5.2 There is limited alignment of training with the force priorities. The force has not undertaken a training needs analysis in relation to the control strategy and there is no training strategy. Although training requirements are regularly reviewed at a senior level, they are not matched to those of the control strategy in a co-ordinated way. Consequently, the training department tends to receive ad hoc requests. Nevertheless, in common with other forces some training on aspects of the VHP areas has taken place. For example, frontline staff have received child protection awareness and joint interview training, and as a result feel well informed and well supported in this area of activity. The force is also committed to providing its analysts with appropriate training and a career structure. The force would benefit from establishing a structured approach to assessing training needs against the control strategy.
- 5.3 Further evidence that the force has been proactive in directing resources towards the VHP areas can be seen from the recent formation of the serious organised crime and surveillance unit and the restructuring of the force drugs unit. *(text redacted)*. The unit is well managed and staff have received a high level of training.



- 5.4 In common with other forces in Scotland, the force has limited understanding of the detailed costs associated with particular PIE activities. Without this understanding, the force cannot draw conclusions about the relative cost-effectiveness of the different activities it undertakes. The new financial coding regime which forces are planning to introduce across Scotland from April 2010 should assist in this area. The force should ensure that this regime provides information that can help it to understand the costs related to delivering its control strategy.
- 5.5 There is potential for more effective partnership working across the force. While the chief constable has taken steps to develop partnership working at a strategic level, working closely with the chief executives of other public sector organisations in the force area (the C5 group), partnership activities include anti-social behaviour, child protection, substance abuse, domestic abuse, road accident prevention, serious and organised crime and counter-terrorism. The force acknowledges that there is further scope to develop collaborative working across VHP areas in order to establish a more holistic approach to problem-solving and managing risks.

## 6. Activities related to the VHP risks

- 6.1 Our desktop research revealed a clear link between the force's control strategy in 2008 and the PIE recommendations of the 2007/8 Scottish Strategic Assessment. In April 2009, the force modified its strategic assessment action plan to include the PIEs in the 2009/10 Scottish Strategic Assessment.
- 6.2 *(text redacted)*
- 6.3 Partners are not involved in divisional NIM tasking meetings, leading inevitably to missed opportunities for joint action and shared intelligence. Nor are the force's strategic assessment and control strategy shared with partner organisations, due to the former document's restricted designation. There is potential for the force to develop information-sharing protocols to overcome this barrier.
- 6.4 The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of some of the activities undertaken by the force in managing the VHP risks.
- 6.5 **Anti-social behaviour** - anti-social behaviour is the main remit of community policing in Central Scotland Police, and is approached in a structured way. As a result, good progress has been made in reducing the incidence of vandalism and improving detection rates. A significant amount of activity to combat anti-social behaviour goes on at divisional level, often in association with partner agencies, such as joint patrols and weekend policing plans. Stirling council has an anti-social behaviour mapping tool, Oasis, which has proved useful in directing policing resources.
- 6.6 **Terrorism** - *(text redacted)*
- 6.7 **Child protection** - although child protection is co-ordinated centrally, divisions are actively involved in managing this risk area. For example, divisional commanders manage MAPPAs (multi-agency public protection arrangements) meetings while their officers share a role in monitoring sex offenders, including conducting visits, with the HQ-based Public Protection Unit. Furthermore, as a result of the significant amount of child protection awareness training given to frontline staff, the number of child abuse referral forms being submitted across the force had risen significantly. *(text redacted)*



## 6.8 Serious organised crime groups - *(text redacted)*

6.9 Drugs - the force recognises drugs to be a significant problem. *(text redacted)*  
Elsewhere, examples of partnership working include the Alloa south-east initiative to combat alcohol and valium misuse.

6.10 Violence - frontline staff in our focus groups demonstrated a good awareness of domestic abuse matters, referring to the force's investigative aide-memoire to assist them when dealing with such incidents. In addition, each division has dedicated investigative resources to support associated enforcement policies. Examples of activities being undertaken include a knife crime working group to address an emerging upward trend in knife crime, greater use of targeted intelligence, weekend policing plans and stop and search activity directed at reducing violence.

## 7. Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the control strategy

7.1 The force has recently introduced a more structured approach to monitoring progress against the PIEs of its control strategy, whereby progress is documented in tactical reports using a RAG (red-amber-green) system. The performance of divisional command teams is also monitored, through a separate monthly review meeting chaired by the ACC. The content of these meetings is informed by performance reports that are structured around the control strategy priorities. Where there is exceptional performance, either good or bad, command teams are required to explain the reasons behind this and, if appropriate, produce a remedial action plan.

7.2 At the time of our fieldwork, the force was in the process of redesigning its performance report template. Until recently this had consisted of a range of performance information including crime and detection rates, and calls about anti-social behaviour. The new reports are intended to link in more closely both with the force control strategy and the Scottish Policing Performance Framework (SPPF). The intention is also to improve the usefulness of the product by the inclusion of, for example, long-term trends and predictive analyses. Work is also continuing on developing performance measures, both generally and in relation to areas of policing activity that are typically under-represented, e.g. serious organised crime.

7.3 In common with many other Scottish forces, the force's use of results analysis remains limited. As a consequence, it is missing out on opportunities to understand how its activities and interventions can best lead to effective outcomes.

7.4 *(text redacted)*

7.5 The force strategic assessment covers emerging trends in the VHP risk areas, but these are rarely linked to specific force activities. There is potential for the force's new performance framework to assist in this.



## 8. Progress against recommendations in recent HMICS thematics

- 8.1 HMICS thematic inspections focus on particular themes affecting policing. Topics are identified following consultation between HMICS and ACPOS, the Scottish Government, police authorities and other stakeholders. They can also arise from forces' self-assessments, or reflect particular public or national concerns. Over the past two years we have carried out eleven thematic inspections, the recommendations of which are intended to support continuous improvement in the police service in Scotland.
- 8.2 As part of this inspection we took the opportunity to review the force's progress against outstanding recommendations. This was not a significant element of our fieldwork and we have therefore not undertaken a comprehensive review of all recommendations.
- 8.3 In addition a number of recommendations are being taken forward nationally through various ACPOS working groups, such as the National Custody Forum. We are currently in discussion with ACPOS about arrangements to monitor progress in such instances and for this reason have excluded those recommendations from this review. Nor did we examine what progress the force has made on the recommendations of our thematic inspections on *CONTEST: Prevent* and *The Police Use of Firearms*, as these will be followed up separately.
- 8.4 The force's process for dealing with thematic inspection recommendations is to integrate them into its service plans. Progress against these is then monitored and discussed internally at the quarterly meetings of the force performance improvement board. Externally, performance reports are presented to the Best Value audit subgroup of the Central Scotland Joint Police Board.
- 8.5 Overall, the force is making progress on most recommendations. Those still outstanding and not reliant on national activity all have action plans, descriptions of activity to date and revised timescales. Some examples of the force's activities are given below:
- an in-house leadership, management and supervision course for sergeants has been developed, and work on a similar one for inspectors is underway;
  - quality of service and standards of service inputs have been added to in-force training for probationers and sergeants;
  - a nominated constable liaison officer, whose duties include working jointly to respond to HMICS recommendations around medical custodies, is now based in NHS Forth Valley. Anecdotal feedback so far has been very positive. The force has also recently put in place arrangements with NHS Lothian for custody nurses to provide weekend cover, and with Signpost to provide an arrest referral scheme for those with drug and alcohol problems; and
  - significant developmental work has been carried out as the pilot force for the domestic abuse pathfinder project, under the auspices of the GIRFEC (*Getting it right for every child*) agenda.
- 8.6 Where progress has been slower, the force nevertheless has contingency actions in place. For example, limitations of the current Cellfile system used to record custody information mean that the force is restricted in what performance information it can generate. The delayed roll-out of the new national custody system is hampering the force's efforts to deal with this and related recommendations. Nevertheless, as an interim solution the force is looking at alternative ways of drawing out performance data.





8.7 The force has no formal, recognised approach to assessing the impact of recommendations once these have been implemented. That said, in a number of cases it has signalled an intention to conduct some element of evaluation. These include assessing the costs and benefits of its NHS constable liaison officer, and evaluating its work on the domestic abuse pathfinder project.

## 9. Progress against EFQM self-assessment action plans

9.1 In 2008 we changed our inspection methodology to a system of annual self-assessment. This is conducted through a quality improvement framework that uses the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model. Police forces and services are now using this self-assessment process to inform their planning and performance regimes. In this way, these organisations are able to decide themselves what their priorities for improvement and action should be.

9.2 This was a new approach for both HMICS and forces. One early learning point to emerge was the finding that the current question set required participants to focus on force processes and internal communication rather than operational activities or outcomes.

9.3 The self-assessment exercise was to be carried out by individual divisions and departments, in order to identify improvement actions separately at these levels. Forces were also encouraged to draw up a force-wide action plan to capture any common areas for improvement. It is progress against the force plan that forms the basis of our comments here.

9.4 For the purpose of the exercise, Central Scotland Police divided itself into three separate 'divisions', namely communities policing, crime and specialist operations, and corporate and operational support. The result was three divisional improvement action plans and one force-wide plan. The method used to select force actions ensured that the lowest performing areas in all three divisions were identified for improvement.

9.5 At the time of our inspection, activity had been suspended as the force was undergoing internal re-structuring. Under the new structure, its intention is to embed all improvement actions within its service plans and to devolve responsibility for these to individuals working in the relevant divisions and departments. Progress will then be monitored centrally, but in a format that is accessible to all managers wherever they are based. We are pleased to note that the intention remains to monitor both force and divisional improvement actions from the centre, thus giving both equal emphasis.

9.6 Given the above, we can make little further comment concerning progress against Central Scotland Police's improvement plans. That said, the force has already initiated some work, as outlined below:

- a review of the way in which it consults staff; and
- considering what actions it might take to improve staff awareness of its performance results.

9.7 Currently, the force's improvement action plans give no details on how it intends to assess the impact of its improvement activities, whether in terms of business outputs or outcomes, staff perceptions or customer/stakeholder perceptions.

9.8 We had already had some discussions with forces about the 2008 self-assessment process prior to this inspection. These discussions, along with the findings of this review, have



informed the development of the 2009 process which we asked forces to complete in October/November of this year.



## 10 Areas for improvement

No	Area for Improvement	Report Reference
1.	The use of partnership data, partnership involvement and community consultation in the force strategic assessment.	4.2
2.	The use of a standard risk-assessment approach to identifying local priorities at divisional level.	4.4
3.	Analytical capacity within the force and the use of results analysis.	4.5 / 7.3
4.	The force's approach to identifying the resources required to deliver the control strategy.	5.1
5.	Identification of the training needed to implement the control strategy.	5.2
6.	The contribution of partnership working to delivering the control strategy.	5.5 / 6.3 / 6.6
7.	<i>(text redacted)</i>	
8.	<i>(text redacted)</i>	
9.	<i>(text redacted)</i>	



## Appendix

### The National Intelligence Model

The National Intelligence Model (NIM) is an intelligence-led business model used by the police to manage risk, identify operational priorities and allocate resources.

The **strategic assessment** is a key component of NIM and provides an overview of long-term issues that involve criminality or have community safety implications. Strategic assessments are produced at national, force and divisional levels.

The **control strategy** is derived from the strategic assessment and sets out the long-term priorities to be tackled.

Those priorities that are deemed to be of greatest risk are known as 'very high priority' risk areas (VHPs). The national VHPs are currently anti-social behaviour, terrorism, public protection, serious organised crime groups, drugs and violence.

The control strategy also identifies **prevention, intelligence and enforcement** recommendations (PIEs) that outline activity to tackle the VHPs.