HMICS HM INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY FOR SCOTLAND

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

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 were 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 Grampian Police.

1.2 Overall, we found that Grampian 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 the force manages the following areas well:

- clear, visible leadership and strong commitment, shown by senior officers to delivering the force's control strategy;

- integration of the control strategy with the force's policing plan, and robust planning and management arrangements; and

- strategic and tactical partnership working - there are good examples of this, especially in relation to anti-social behaviour.

1.4 We identified the following key areas for improvement:

- (*text redacted*); and

- how the force involves partners in tackling areas of criminality other than anti-social behaviour.

1.5 We will be seeking assurance from the force that 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 forces are managing the VHPs, we also assessed the force's progress against recommendations from recent HMICS thematic inspections and the output from the self-assessment process undertaken in 2008. Our findings from 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 were able to identify some specific areas for further examination, particularly around how forces manage the most serious risks identified through the Scottish Strategic Assessment. This was an area that had not been covered in detail by the self-assessment tool, and we wanted assurance that those 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 have they 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 from the recent HMICS thematic inspection reports and b) the force-wide actions arising from their EFQM self-assessment.

Methodology

2.6   Data to inform our assessment was gathered through a combination of desktop research and interviews in the force. 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 for the desktop research 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 the force's self-assessment exercise and its progress on implementing the recommendations of recent HMICS thematic inspections. The findings from each of these three research elements informed our subsequent interview questions.

2.11 The fieldwork component of the inspection involved HMICS staff visiting Grampian Police in June 2009. During this period we carried out interviews and focus groups with key individuals and staff from the force and partner organisations.

2.12 The main aim of our visits was to get an up-to-date picture of how forces were currently managing the very high priority risks. The areas covered in each force varied according to the findings of our desktop research. The limited scope of our fieldwork means that our findings are necessarily high level. 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.

2.13 We would like to thank Grampian Police for the help and support we received when 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 and his team were found to be providing clear and visible leadership to the force and there was significant executive involvement in the NIM process. The chief constable chairs the force strategic process and is personally involved in the subsequent setting of priorities, while the assistant chief constable (operations) chairs the force tactical process.

3.2 Corporate understanding of, and commitment to, force priorities was further reinforced through strategic and tactical responsibility for each force priority area being assigned to individual senior officers from the various divisions and departments within the organisation. This approach also raises staff awareness of the priority areas, as each lead officer seeks improvement in his or her particular area of responsibility across the whole force.

3.3 The force's planning processes are robust and well integrated. Its policing plan, *Platform for Success*, drives both activity and performance reporting. This includes all the force control strategy priorities, as well as priorities arising from the force's organisational assessment.

3.4 Staff demonstrated an understanding of control strategy priorities. Force priorities are marketed internally using posters, the force intranet, desktop screen savers and daily briefings.

4. Assessment of risk

4.1 The force's strategic assessment is based on a robust and systematic assessment of risk using a recognised risk assessment model.

4.2 While the force uses a large number of external data sources to inform its strategic assessments, there was no clear system to allow community views to inform the control strategy. Some community safety partners felt that it would be of benefit for them to be more involved in informing the force strategic assessment.

4.3 The force control strategy is developed from the strategic assessment and contains five of the six very high priority areas identified within the Scottish Strategic Assessment, i.e. anti-social behaviour, violence, child protection, drugs and terrorism. Serious organised crime groups have not been included. Through assessing the severity of

consequence and likelihood of occurrence, road casualty reduction has also been assessed as a substantial risk and is included.

4.4   Divisions do not conduct strategic assessments or develop their own control strategies, instead using the force control strategy to direct activities. Senior divisional staff felt that this had no negative impact on the ability of the divisions to address local priorities. Whilst the force defines local priorities as 'local challenges' and articulates these in the business plans of each individual business area, we found staff awareness and understanding of this process to be poor with divisions tending instead to adopt a more 'intuitive' approach to determining risk. Without a systematic approach to assessing risks at a local level, the force cannot be sure that resources are being directed towards those areas of greatest threat. Given the significant differences in geography and demography of the divisions, the force should ensure that local priorities are determined through effective risk analysis.

4.5   We found force analytical capability to be adequate. Analysts are available to support both divisional and headquarters staff. Some divisional analysts had little or no knowledge of risk-assessment tools. Unlike many other forces, Grampian Police does not employ a senior analyst. The force may wish to consider whether employing a senior analyst would enhance its use of analytical resources and improve tasking, as well as offer professional support and guidance to existing analytical staff.

4.6   The force is participating in the development of strategic assessments for local community safety partnerships, and these are a vehicle for prioritising and assessing local risks. There is considerable variability in how these are undertaken, depending partly on the maturity of the individual partnerships and the availability of partnership analysts.

5.   Resources to support the control strategy

5.1   There is limited alignment between the control strategy and the force's training plans. The force was in the process of conducting a comprehensive training review at the time of our visit. This has now been completed but has not yet been published. We are therefore unable to ascertain the extent to which it includes identifying the training needed to deliver the control strategy. In common with other forces, there has been training in some of the VHP areas, notably in child protection and counter-terrorism.

5.2   Some analysts have experienced difficulties in accessing essential training courses, and therefore occasionally they can be deployed without being fully trained. This shortcoming is a common one across the Scottish forces.

5.3   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 across Scotland are planning to introduce from April 2010 could assist in this area. The force should ensure that this regime provides information which will assist its understanding of costs related to delivering its control strategy.

5.4   (*text redacted*)

5.5   The force has a small performance improvement section that operates as part of the Development and Governance Department. Improvement processes such as LEAN systems

thinking and Six Sigma, as well as traditional inspection methods, are used to examine different areas of business within the force. The section publishes a document known as the *continuous improvement practical guide*, which clearly states how work requests are prioritised. We found little evidence of this having happened, and minimal linkage between planned work and the VHP areas identified in the force's control strategy. A more strategic approach to the work of this section could identify potential improvements in the use of resources to support the control strategy.

5.6 The force works closely and effectively with partners across all divisions and within headquarters. It is finding it more challenging to engage with relevant organisations at a strategic level in order bring about significant change in some of the high priority risk areas, for example against the threat of controlled drugs where enforcement activity alone is insufficient to improve matters.

6. Activity related to the VHP risks

6.1 In our desktop research, we found limited overlap between the PIE recommendations in the 2007/08 Scottish Strategic Assessment and subsequent force strategic assessments or control strategies. Only in the very high priority area of terrorism did the force adopt the majority of the recommendations of the Scottish Strategic Assessment. The force should ensure that when it develops PIE activities, it gives due consideration to their potential effectiveness. This is of particular importance when it is diverging from the recommendations in the Scottish Strategic Assessment.

6.2 *(text redacted)*

6.3 Collaborative working and target setting was found to be particularly effective in partnership efforts to address anti-social behaviour and associated offending, though little evidence was found of similar progress in the other VHP areas.

6.4 There is some inconsistency in divisions around the involvement of partners in local NIM tasking meetings. For example, some tactical meetings are split into open and closed sessions with partners being requested to leave before the closed element of the meeting proceeds. The publication of corporate guidance on partnership attendance at NIM meetings would provide clarity to divisions and allow a consistency of approach in this area.

6.5 The intelligence requirement is well disseminated and routinely incorporated into the daily and fortnightly tasking process. The staff we interviewed agreed that the electronic briefing process works well. It enables self-briefing in the absence of a supervisor and is also specific to areas within divisions, making the briefings more targeted and relevant.

6.6 The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of some of the activities undertaken by the force in managing the individual VHP risks.

6.7 **Anti-social behaviour** – the force clearly identifies tackling quality of life issues for members of the public as a priority. Good progress has been made in reducing vandalism and improving detection rates. A significant amount of work is occurring at divisional level, often in association with partner agencies.

6.8 **Terrorism** – *(text redacted)*

6.9 **Child protection** - child protection units are well established in divisions and share offices with staff from social services departments. The awareness of response staff of child protection matters was good. Child protection awareness training has been delivered to frontline staff, resulting in a huge rise in the number of child abuse referral forms being submitted across the force (an increase from 100 forms per month to 770).

6.10 **Serious organised crime groups** – (*text redacted*)

6.11 **Drugs** – the force has clearly identified drugs as a significant problem and its consequent focus on this VHP area is widely understood by staff. (*text redacted*). High profile operations such as Lochnagar have seen the arrest and subsequent conviction of large numbers of persons involved in the supply of controlled drugs.

6.12 **Violence** - frontline staff have a good awareness of issues associated with domestic abuse. Each division has investigative resources dedicated to supporting enforcement policies. Various knife crime initiatives have been undertaken, such as extra patrols in Aberdeen city centre to reduce alcohol-related violence linked to the weekend night-time economy.

7. Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the control strategy

7.1 Until recently the force had no systematic process for monitoring the progress and effectiveness of its PIEs. It has now revised its tactical assessment to include a section under each priority that reports progress against the specific PIEs, but this is in an early stage of development. The force reviews the control strategy every six months, and this review is informed by an interim update of the strategic assessment that provides an overview of progress against the control strategy priorities. Any changes in the recommendations must be approved by this group.

7.2 The force has yet to develop a comprehensive set of measures for all its VHP areas. While it has a mature performance management system, this is primarily focused on the indicators agreed through the Scottish Policing Performance Framework (SPPF). Crime reduction and detection rates are monitored using a red, amber, green (RAG) system, with performance discussed at a monthly commanders' meeting. The force has recently moved responsibility for the production of the force's strategic assessment to the Development and Governance department, in order to align it more closely with performance management and reporting. Developing a more comprehensive monitoring regime that links activity and outcomes to the VHPs would enable the force to assess the impact of the control strategy more effectively.

7.3 While the force has undertaken some results analysis, this is not undertaken routinely. Without such information, the force cannot make robust judgments on the effectiveness of particular initiatives. For those that are undertaken, it is important to ensure that the lessons learned are used to inform future activity.

7.4 (*text redacted*)

7.5 Linking outcomes to PIE activities remains a challenge for all forces. While both the force strategic assessment and the interim update cover emerging trends in the VHP risk areas, these are rarely linked to specific force activities. Greater use of results analyses would provide more opportunities for the force to evaluate the effectiveness of its control strategy.

8. Progress against recommendations in recent HMICS thematic inspections

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 Reviewing the force's progress against thematic recommendations was not a significant element of our fieldwork, and we did not undertake a comprehensive review of all recommendations.

8.3 Some recommendations from thematic inspections are being taken forward nationally through various ACPOS working groups, and these were not included in our review. We are currently in discussion with ACPOS about arrangements to monitor the progress in these areas. In particular, we did not review the progress the force is making against any of the recommendations in the thematic inspection related to counter-terrorism or the use of firearms, as these will be looked at separately.

8.4 The force has adopted a systematic process for reviewing and implementing relevant recommendations from our thematic inspection reports. Each report is assigned to a strategic owner who reviews the recommendations from a Grampian perspective and compiles an action plan. This is discussed and ratified by the Force Executive, and progress is then reported on a quarterly basis.

8.5 'Stewardship' meetings of the Joint Police Board are provided with an initial report and action plan. Progress is then followed up through quarterly updates. Where relevant, actions are incorporated into relevant force business plans or considered as part of internal reviews.

8.6 During the period under review, we published three thematic reports on custody – '*Custody facilities*', '*Care of detained and arrested children*' and '*Medical services for people in police custody*'. We found that the force has made good progress in this area, for example:

- new Standard Operating Procedures have been agreed, incorporating many of the points raised in the relevant reports and good practice identified in the recently developed National Custody Manual;

- new prefabricated custody facilities, which meet all Home Office guidelines, were recently erected at Fraserburgh and are designed to provide a flexible and cost-effective approach to providing adequate facilities;

- custody sergeants have been introduced into each territorial division; and

- custody staff have received new training in relation to 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC).

8.7 While the force has made good progress in implementing a number of recommendations from thematic inspections, it has still to put in place arrangements for assessing whether the changes introduced are achieving the desired outcomes.

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 now conducted mainly through a quality improvement framework that uses the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model. Police forces and police services applied this self-assessment model within their established planning and performance regimes. In this way, the organisations themselves have been able to decide on the priorities for improvement and action.

9.2 This was a new approach for both HMICS and forces. One early learning point to emerge has been the finding that the current question set requires 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 that resulting improvement actions would be relevant at this level. In Grampian, the self-assessment was undertaken by the three territorial divisions and seven other organisational areas, including both HQ-based operational divisions and support services such as human resources (HR) and finance. The process generated five force-wide actions and a total of 57 divisional actions.

9.4 All the actions had recognised owners, but none had associated timescales for completion. Approximately half the areas included some form of indicator that would reflect how performance against the action plan would be measured. In most cases these were not qualitative, but merely recorded that an action had been undertaken. All action plans are included in the Business Area business plan and are risk assessed appropriately.

9.5 The force has made good progress against its force-wide actions. For example:
- a comprehensive training review has been completed and is currently with the HR Business Area for consideration;
- an audit of business continuity was commissioned from an independent consultant, and a table-top exercise has been planned and is scheduled for later in 2009; and
- the action plans for each business area have been incorporated into relevant business plans, with quarterly reporting on progress to the Force Executive Board.

9.6 At this time, the force's improvement action plans give no details of how it intends to assess the impact of any remedial activity, either in terms of business outputs or outcomes, staff perceptions or customer/other stakeholder perceptions.

9.7 We had already had some discussions with forces about the 2008 self-assessment process prior to this work. These discussions, along with the findings from this review, have informed the development of the 2009 process, which we asked forces to complete during October and November.

10. Areas for improvement

No	Area for improvement	Report Reference
1.	The inclusion of community views to inform the force control strategy.	4.2
2.	The use of approved risk management tools at a divisional level to determine local priorities.	4.4
3.	The current gap in analytical support caused by the absence of a senior analyst.	4.5
4.	The alignment of HR policy and training delivery with force priorities.	5.1
5.	*(text redacted)*	
6.	The selection of force areas for improvement linked to the control strategy.	5.5
7.	*(text redacted)*	
8.	Corporate guidance on partnership attendance at tactical meetings.	6.4
9.	*(text redacted)*	
10.	Measurement of progress against the control strategy.	7.2
11.	Use of results analysis against PIE activities.	7.3

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.

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