HMICS
HM INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY FOR SCOTLAND

An examination of how Lothian and Borders 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, we conducted a high-level review examining how the eight Scottish police forces manage the very high priority (VHP) risk areas identified by the Scottish Strategic Assessment (SSA) (see Appendix for a further explanation of these terms). This report presents our findings for Lothian and Borders Police.

1.2 Overall, we found that Lothian and Borders Police is very well placed to develop and deliver on a robust control strategy for managing those risks that pose the greatest threats to communities.

1.3 In particular, we found that the force manages the following areas well:

- providing clear and visible leadership and a strong sense of commitment from senior officers;
- ensuring strong and effective partnership working at strategic and tactical levels;
- integrating the force's planning processes; and
- promoting staff awareness of the force control strategy.

1.4 We identified the following key areas for improvement:

- (*text redacted*);
- linkages between the control strategy and the force's training strategy; and
- the use of results analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of force activities.

1.5 We will be seeking assurance from the force that the areas for improvement identified in section 10 are being addressed, and we request an update on progress by end of March 2010.

1.6 In addition to reviewing how the force is managing the VHP areas we assessed its 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 aspect that had not been covered in detail by the self-assessment tool, and we wanted assurance that those risks were being managed effectively.

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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 from 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 fieldwork and focus group 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 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 and focus group questions.

2.11 The fieldwork element of the inspection involved HMICS staff visiting Lothian and Borders Police in July 2009. During this period we carried out interviews and focus groups with individuals from the force and its 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 VHP risks. The aspects we 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 Lothian and Borders 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 provide clear and visible leadership, and ensure executive involvement in the NIM process. The chief constable chairs the force strategic process and is personally involved in setting the force's priorities. Strategic and tactical delivery of the control strategy is the responsibility of the deputy chief constable and the two assistant chief constables respectively. The assistant chief constables also jointly chair the force tactical process, ensuring that force activity links in with single outcome agreements and the Scottish Policing Performance Framework.

3.2 The force's planning processes are robust and well integrated. Operational and organisational priorities are combined in the force's strategic and policing plans and clearly provide strategic focus. Activity against the operational priorities only is further directed by a series of PIEs.

3.3 Corporate understanding of, and commitment to, force priorities is further reinforced through designated chief superintendents or superintendents having responsibility for leading on each of the priorities across the force. Similarly, individual senior manager leads are allocated to each of the three cross-cutting PIE elements. This innovative approach is intended to promote a corporate approach to managing all the elements of the control strategy, and to enhance governance and accountability. This being the first year of its introduction, the force intends to monitor its effectiveness.

3.4 The majority of staff we spoke with at all levels of the organisation demonstrated good levels of awareness of the force's priorities and their role in reducing the risks associated with them. Priorities are communicated to staff via the force intranet, posters and daily briefings, and all daily briefing processes and intelligence requirements are clearly linked to the control strategy. (*text redacted*)

4. Assessment of risk

4.1 The force applies a robust and systematic risk-assessment process to inform strategic decision-making and determine its priorities. It uses two risk models: the 3PLEM model to determine crime priorities, and the 4R impact assessment model to identify the organisational priorities of its strategic assessment. Although data from a number of partnership sources are considered in the process and partner organisations are routinely involved in developing the strategic assessment, the extent to which the views of communities are taken into account is unclear.

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4.2   The force's current control strategy contains all six VHP areas identified by the Scottish Strategic Assessment. There are no additional VHPs, although the force has included child protection within the wider priority of public protection.

4.3   Divisions prepare their own individual strategic assessments, the contents of which also inform the force's document. Their subsequent control strategies must include every force priority although the emphasis accorded each can be modified to reflect the extent to which it presents a risk to the division. Divisions can take on further priorities if their assessment suggests this. For example, because of the high number of road collisions causing serious injury or fatality, reducing road casualties is a VHP area in one division. However, we found inconsistencies in the extent to which the divisions followed this guidance.

4.4   There is potential for the force to use analysts more effectively. For example, we found limited appreciation among some police officers of the skills and abilities of analysts, and their important contribution to the NIM process. This is further reflected in the typically narrow range of analytical products that they are asked to produce. The force may benefit from reviewing this aspect of its activity.

5.   Resources to support the control strategy

5.1   While the force has developed a training strategy, it has no formal, centralised process in place for ensuring that this is aligned with its control strategy. As a result, training requests relating to the control strategy are invariably made on an ad hoc basis, after the training budget has already been allocated. The situation is further compounded by the fact that the force has a number of separate training co-ordinator posts for specialist areas of activity such as child protection. Consequently, the head of training has no overview of training requirements for the force as a whole or of the total costs involved. This fragmented situation is one that the force may wish to review.

5.2   The force has an established approach to prioritising resources in order to achieve its control strategy. Financial budgets, including police salaries, are fully devolved to divisional commanders. There is therefore the potential to match resources to VHPs at a local level, and the force may wish to monitor the extent to which this happens in practice. In addition, divisional commanders can make bids to an assistant chief constable for extra resources for proactive initiatives to address local problems, through the force tactical tasking and co-ordinating group process. There are two funding budgets available for these purposes, both of which are managed by an assistant chief constable. Occasionally divisions will make bids for resources from other divisions, but this is usually on a reactive basis.

5.3   In common with other forces in Scotland, Lothian and Borders Police has limited awareness of detailed costs associated with specific 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 currently planned for introduction across Scotland from April 2010 should help. The force should ensure that this regime provides information that can help it to understand the costs related to delivering its control strategy.

5.4   The force has recently invested in more analysts to support the control strategy. Despite this we found analytical capacity in relation to force and divisional needs can be compromised when analysts are seconded to work on major investigations.

5.5   (*text redacted*)

5.6   Ensuring there are adequate frontline resources are to tackle the VHP areas is a continuing challenge for the force. Our focus groups revealed that frontline officers felt significantly under-resourced, and community officers felt that a lack of understanding of their role was leading to too few officers applying for similar posts. In other groups, supervisors told us that they often felt they had insufficient time or capacity to brief and manage their staff effectively, or to pursue problem-solving and proactive policing. They also believed that what they saw as a high proportion of acting sergeants in the force was detracting from its ability to deliver the control strategy. While we recognise that focus groups may not be fully representative, these findings were consistent across all our groups. The force may find it useful to pursue these matters in more depth.

5.7   The force benefits from having a number of partnership funded posts. These comprise two inspectors, 17 sergeants and 172 constables, mainly involved in anti-social behaviour and violence reduction. We feel that these arrangements represent a potential area of vulnerability to the force given the current financial climate and that the force should attempt to mitigate this risk.

6.   Activities related to the VHP risk areas

6.1   In our desktop research we found clear overlaps between the PIE recommendations of the 2007-08 Scottish Strategic Assessment and subsequent force strategic assessments and control strategies. The force should continue to ensure that when it develops PIE activities it gives due consideration to their potential effectiveness. This is of particular importance when they differ from those recommended in the Scottish Strategic Assessment.

6.2   (*text redacted*)

6.3   The force and its divisions give significant prominence to working with partners in order to address the VHP areas. Partner organisations are involved in tactical tasking and co-ordinating group meetings, while procurators fiscal attend force tactical meetings. Divisional command teams are also actively involved in Community Planning Partnerships. There is a willingness to further enhance partnership working at a tactical level in all VHP areas.

6.4   The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of some of the activities undertaken by the force to manage the individual VHP risks.

6.5   **Anti-social behaviour** - reducing anti-social behaviour is the main remit of community policing and is addressed in a structured way. For example, Operation Gladiator in 'G' division, where vandalism accounts for 30% of crime, has focused entirely on anti-social behaviour. The result has been marked reductions in the incidence of these crimes, accompanied by a high detection rate. Elsewhere, the perceived success of partnership working in divisions is demonstrated by the positive impact on anti-social behaviour of community action teams. The force clearly sees tackling quality of life problems for the community as a priority, and work is proceeding on a force-wide, joint, anti-social behaviour strategy with partners.

6.6   **Terrorism** - (*text redacted*)

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6.7 **Child protection** – the force has been strongly committed to training staff in child protection, a finding that was confirmed by the high levels of awareness shown by those we spoke with. It is from patrol officers that most intelligence in this area comes. Another result of the training has been a large rise in the number of child abuse referral forms submitted across the force. Nevertheless, the systems in place are robust and frontline staff feel well supported when dealing with these kinds of incident. The force also has a co-ordinated partnership commitment to delivering an Integrated Child Services Plan. Finally, community officers demonstrated a good knowledge of the sex offenders in the community, and their role in monitoring and reducing the risks they pose. There is scope to enhance this by extending such briefings to all frontline staff.

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

6.9 **Drugs** - the force and its staff recognise that drugs pose a significant problem. Both the force and its partner organisations demonstrated a good awareness of current local trends. As well as the force conducting its own effective enforcement activities we also found several good examples of joint work with partner organisations, such as staging combined seminars on reducing the threat of cannabis cultivation.

6.10 **Violence** – frontline staff were well-informed about matters relating to domestic abuse, and are encouraged to take a robust approach to dealing with such incidents. Each division has investigative resources dedicated to supporting domestic abuse policies. Furthermore, effective marketing of divisional intelligence requirements has brought about an increase in the volume of intelligence submitted in relation to violent offenders. We also found good examples of joint working to reduce violence in general, through initiatives such as Cool-down crew, Y2K and MisPass.

7.   Monitoring and review

7.1 The force has a robust system in place for monitoring and reviewing the performance of divisional command teams, known as the Performance and Activity Management (PAM) process. Whilst these meetings consider and challenge divisional command teams over a broad spectrum of performance information they are not directly linked to review of the control strategy.

7.2 The monthly performance reports produced to inform these meetings are not structured around the control strategy priorities but are aligned with the Scottish Policing Performance Framework indicators (SPPF). The force is currently working to develop a set of performance measures that reflect VHPs and to find ways of measuring outcomes.

7.3 The force monitors its PIEs through the level two tasking process but has yet to introduce a systematic method of assessing the extent to which individual PIE actions are contributing to reducing the risks associated with the VHP areas.

7.4 (*text redacted*)

7.5 Despite recent additional investment in its analytical capacity, the force's use of results analysis remains limited. This kind of evaluation is crucial to understanding what force activities and interventions are contributing most to observed outcomes.

7.6 Linking outcomes to PIE activities remains a challenge for all forces. Greater use of results analyses would give the force more opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of its control strategy.

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 two thematic inspections *CONTEST: Prevent* and *The Police Use of Firearms*, as these will be followed up separately.

8.4 In Lothian and Borders Police, activities associated with responding to the recommendations of our inspection reports are not prioritised within its wider business planning process. Instead, individual owners are allocated to each report and are responsible for preparing a document setting out the force's current position and its action plan. From then until a recommendation is discharged, the force's Force Inspectorate compiles quarterly updates on progress. These are also shared with the force's 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:

- awareness-raising through revised general orders and memos in relation to aspects of the applying the Scottish Crime Recording Standard, dealing with domestic abuse and detaining children in custody - although the extent to which these have been assimilated by staff was unclear;

- adopting the Tayside psychiatric assessment protocol in order to enhance medical provision for people in custody, and pursuing research into other alternatives to custody.

8.6 The force has decided not to implement in full the recommendation from our report on the care of detained children, which said that the decision to detain a child in custody should be authorised by a superintendent or higher ranking officer. Instead the force has decided to raise the required rank from Inspector to Chief Inspector. Chief Inspector's form part of the on-call Divisional Senior Management rota and it is the force's view that this is a more pragmatic approach.

8.7 Progress in several other areas has been slow. For example, the implementation of a joint risk assessment process for detaining children in police custody is still delayed, with meetings with partner agencies being scheduled and then not going ahead. And in

the case of serious fraud, the force has yet to identify a single point of contact or SPOC for financial institutions trying to report incidents of fraud.

8.8 While the force has made progress in implementing many of the recommendations of our 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 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 is 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 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 primary basis of our comments here.

9.4 For the purpose of the exercise, Lothian and Borders Police divided itself into nine discrete 'divisions', comprising its four territorial divisions and five amalgamated (from ten) departments. The initial outcome was fourteen different action plans. There was no force-wide action plan as such. Instead, the force selected a number of individual improvement actions from these initial divisional plans, which all divisions had then to adopt. Thus, with few exceptions there was relatively little difference between the final lists of actions of each of the 14 units. The guidance we issued does encourage forces to look for common themes. It does not, though, advocate that division- or department-specific recommendations are ignored in doing so.

9.5 The force's Force Inspectorate team manages the process for dealing with these improvement actions. All actions are assigned an owner which means, in the absence of a force action plan, that the same improvement action can in theory have 14 different owners. No priority grading has been allocated to any of the actions. Instead, a blanket completion date has been set for December 2009, in effect giving owners a year to realise their plans irrespective of what these entail. The fourteen divisions/departments send quarterly updates to the Force Inspectorate, which records progress on an electronic database.

9.6 Individual actions are not discharged until formally recognised as such by the police board, at the end of the year. For now it is unclear how the force establishes whether outstanding actions are on target. However, it would appear that good progress is being made in the following force-wide areas:

- increasing the visibility of leaders and encouraging contact with staff through road shows, visits, and so on;
- establishing performance and management meetings with inspectors; and

- developing internal mechanisms for reporting on and displaying examples of 'Good Work'.

9.7   Few improvement actions included plans for evaluating their impact in terms of, e.g. business outputs and outcomes, stakeholder or customer perceptions. The force did intend though, to look to the findings of its next self-assessment to pick up any changes in staff 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.	(*text redacted*)	
2.	Consistency in the way in which divisional strategic assessments and control strategies are produced.	4.3
3.	The link between the force training strategy and its control strategy.	5.1
4.	The deployment of analysts and the use of results analysis.	5.4, 7.5
5.	The capacity of frontline staff to deliver the control strategy.	5.6
6.	(*text redacted*)	
7.	The range of measures used to assess performance and outcomes against the control strategy, and approach to monitoring PIE activities.	7.2, 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.