HMICS HM INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY FOR SCOTLAND

An examination of how Strathclyde 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 manage 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 Strathclyde Police.

1.2 Overall, we found that Strathclyde Police is very 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 from the force executive and strong commitment shown by senior officers to delivering the force's control strategy;

- well integrated planning processes, with force priorities clearly driven by the force control strategy and supported by robust planning and management arrangements;

- a high level of staff awareness of the force control strategy; and

- the alignment of performance reporting with control strategy priorities.

1.4 We identified the following key areas for improvement:

- the use of results analysis and evaluations of operational initiatives;

- the involvement of partner organisations in tackling areas of criminality other than anti-social behaviour; and

- the force's understanding of the level of resources required to delivery the control strategy.

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 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 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 forces in implementing a) the recommendations from the 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 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 of the 2007/08 Scottish Strategic Assessment, during 2008 and 2009. 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.

2.9 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 The main aim of our visits was to get an up-to-date picture of how forces were 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.

2.11 The fieldwork component of the inspection involved HMICS staff visiting Strathclyde Police in June 2009. During this period we carried out interviews and focus groups with individual from the force and its partner organisations. Due to the large size of the force, we elected to carry out fieldwork in two territorial divisions (B and L Division) and at force headquarters. Consequently our findings are only indicative of practices across the force. Given the importance of Strathclyde Police's contribution to the VHP risk areas for Scotland as a whole, we will be considering whether further work on the VHP risk areas is necessary. This may be undertaken as part of its forthcoming Best Value audit and inspection.

2.12 We would like to thank Strathclyde 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 tasking and co-ordination group meeting, which is attended by senior staff from headquarters and territorial divisions. The force strategic assessment is considered at that meeting and the chief constable endorses this and the related control strategy.

3.2 The assistant chief constable (ACC) for territorial policing co-chairs the monthly force tactical tasking and co-ordination group meeting with the ACC for crime, due to the control strategy overlapping both portfolios. All divisional commanders attend this meeting, where they are held to account for their performance against the control strategy. The force does not produce a force tactical assessment, but progress against actions is charted and an action pack containing details of future tasks is generated based on the outcome of the meeting. In addition, the ACC for territorial policing chairs a fortnightly video conference meeting with commanders to discuss progress against the violence VHP area.

3.3 The control strategy is the primary driver for all force business, its VHPs being marketed as the force priorities. The control strategy is widely publicised through posters displayed in public and non-public areas, screen savers, verbal and electronic briefings to staff, tactical assessments and performance monitoring. These methods have proved effective, as we found high levels of awareness among the officers and staff we interviewed.

3.4 Corporate ownership of force priorities is further reinforced by assigning strategic and tactical responsibility for each VHP to different senior officers throughout the organisation. This approach not only helps to increase relevant expertise, it also raises staff awareness as each responsible lead officer seeks to drive VHP activity throughout the force.

4. The assessment of risk

4.1 The force uses a robust and systematic risk-assessment tool to inform force and divisional strategic assessments, the same model used in the Scottish Strategic Assessment. In assessing risk, the force analyses data from intelligence, the force crime system, command and control (STORM), open source reporting, public consultation and partnerships.

4.2 The force has a robust process for ensuring that local priorities are properly considered when developing the force strategic assessment, and for making sure that the force control strategy is delivered at a local level. Territorial and headquarters divisions and departments produce strategic assessments using a corporate template. The assistant chief constable (territorial policing) then reviews all divisional strategic assessments to ensure that they contain appropriate links to relevant single outcome agreements (SOAs). These are collated at force level and inform the force strategic assessment.

4.3 The force engages with the public through a number of channels, and the results are fed into the local strategic assessments and plans. The consultation exercises felt to be most useful in terms of feeding the assessments are those starting to be carried out as part of the force's community policing and reassurance strategy. This does not simply rely on survey data but includes richer information garnered from individual and group interviews conducted at multi-member ward level.

4.4 The large size of the force presents a challenge for ensuring that consultation at a strategic level is effective. Despite the range of consultation methods used at a local level, there is some evidence that community safety partners would welcome the opportunity for more involvement in assessing risks and priorities at a force level.

4.5 Once the force control strategy has been agreed, divisions and departments set their own control strategies. These must include the prevention, intelligence and enforcement actions in the force control strategy, but can also include additional priorities and actions that are relevant to local circumstances. This is a change from previous practice, when divisions and headquarters departments were able to opt out of or attach lower priority to the VHPs agreed by the force.

4.6 The force's current control strategy includes all the VHPs in the Scottish Strategic Assessment. On the evidence of its risk-assessment, the force has combined anti-social behaviour and violence into a single VHP risk area.

4.7 The force has analytical capability at divisional, force and specialist level. These resources have recently been restructured and are now managed centrally by the principal analyst. This new approach is designed to ensure that analysts are used as effectively and efficiently as possible to support force priorities. Analysts receive clear strategic direction and contribute to the range of analytical products needed to implement the NIM effectively. Some concerns remain around the relatively low ratio of analysts to police officers, and the resilience of analytical support, e.g. at times of major incidents.

5. Resources to support the control strategy

5.1 The force recognises that it is important to understand what resources are required and should be prioritised if it is to be able to deliver its control strategy, and continues to work towards this. Work is currently underway to revise its organisational assessment in

order to integrate wider organisational risks with the resource requirements of the force control strategy. It is anticipated that the next iteration of the assessment will cover a three-year period, but will be reviewed and updated every six months.

5.2   The force has a detailed training strategy and associated plan that reflects its strategic assessment and control strategy. One of the objectives for the force's training centre is to ensure that training is linked to the force and Scottish Strategic assessments, without replicating courses available at the Scottish Police College. Examples of relevant training that has been carried out include surveillance training, recorded interview training, child protection briefing, and awareness of the Proceeds of Crime Act. Strathclyde Police has a very structured process of identifying and assessing training proposals, through its Training Strategy Group. This Group seeks to align training more closely with the requirements of the control strategy, but does so in the wider context of competing demands to provide other training, for example for new officers and legislation, and officer safety.

5.3   The force has taken steps to redirect resources towards the control strategy. Some examples are given below (see also 6.11):

- (*text redacted*)
- appointing a force counter-terrorism CONTEST co-ordinator; and
- (*text redacted*).

5.4   Since April 2009, divisional commanders have had responsibility for a devolved budget (including salaries), giving them greater flexibility to meet divisional control strategy priorities. Divisions can bid for additional resources through tactical meetings, while 25 officers are available through the Violence Reduction Directorate.

5.5   Although like other forces in Scotland, Strathclyde Police has limited awareness of detailed costs associated with specific PIE activities, the force has recently instigated work in this area. Through its Budget Review Group, chaired by the deputy chief constable, the impact of various budgeting options on force activities is now being considered. The new financial coding regime currently planned for introduction across Scotland from April 2010 should also 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.

5.6   The introduction of the variable shift arrangement (VSA) last year has presented divisions with considerable challenges in terms of being able to deploy frontline officers in sufficient numbers to address the priority areas. Both staff focus groups and senior divisional management expressed concern at the negative impact this has had on available resources, staff morale and staff motivation. The force should consider conducting an evaluation to ascertain whether the VSA is achieving its objectives and /or is supporting the force to deliver its control strategy.

5.7   The force is clearly committed to working with other organisations to deliver the control strategy. The Glasgow Community Safety Services (GCSS) is just one example of partnership working, where the assistant chief constable (territorial policing) leads for the force and officers are seconded to work alongside other representatives from council services. There are a number of partnership arrangements at force level, especially with traditional law enforcement/intelligence partners such as other emergency services, utility companies and the Scottish Prison Service. In addition, the force has secured

additional funding for 200 officers through its Community Policing and Re-assurance strategy, in partnership with constituent local authorities and other agencies.

6. Activity related to the VHP risk areas

6.1 In our desktop research, we found some overlaps between the PIE recommendations in the 2007/08 Scottish Strategic Assessment and subsequent force strategic assessments or control strategies. 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 (*text redacted*)

6.4 Divisions have put considerable effort into local partnership working. There nevertheless remains the potential for partner involvement to be enhanced further, particularly around intelligence-sharing and joint tasking. There is scope, for example, to extend the involvement of partner organisations in divisional strategic and tactical tasking and co-ordination, likewise the work carried out with local authority wardens. In addition, the partner organisations we interviewed expressed their own willingness to contribute more to the VHP areas of SOCGs and terrorism.

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

6.6 **Anti-social behaviour** - as with other forces, a significant amount of partnership work is taking place, particularly at divisional level. Divisions have recently invested resources into Community Proactive Units to tackle this VHP, the effectiveness of which is being monitored. Other activities include a bottle-marking scheme, extended CCTV coverage, funded school campus officers and high visibility policing.

6.7 **Terrorism** – (*text redacted*)

6.8 **Child protection** –effective arrangements are in place under the force's public protection unit (PPU) structure, which was developed following the 07/08 Scottish Strategic Assessment. Frontline officers feel well supported in this specialist area of work and target profiles are developed as appropriate. In Strathclyde Police, intelligence primarily concerns vulnerable children living in drug-abusing environments or is captured on Child Referral forms.

6.9 **Serious organised crime groups (SOCGs)** – (*text redacted*)

6.10 **Drugs** – (*text redacted*)

6.11 **Violence** – (*text redacted*)

7. Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the control strategy

7.1 The force has a developed a systematic process for monitoring its control strategy. It comprises a set of force-wide indicators specifically linked to each priority. Following discussion with individual commanders, force headquarters assigns numerical targets to each division, derived on the basis of historical trends in performance and incidence.

Performance against these indicators is monitored fortnightly in divisions and monthly at force level, with senior officers held to account against the targets. In developing this framework, the force has endeavoured to include measures that give a picture of performance against the priorities rather than just reporting levels of activity.

7.2 A focus on performance targets may be limiting activity across the range of PIE recommendations. Concern was raised within focus groups that a focus on performance targets is diminishing the level of prevention, intelligence and enforcement activity in areas where targets have not been set.

7.3 At divisional level although the number of indicators used is extensive, the extent to which they are regularly scrutinised in order to assess performance is unclear. In addition, there is little evidence to suggest that this performance regime is primarily directed by the control strategy, as performance on violence, ASB and drugs is reviewed at a different meeting from that for SOCGs, terrorism and child protection.

7.4 Although the PIE activities in the control strategy are monitored at force tactical meetings, the force does not currently have a systematic approach for directly monitoring progress against them. Overall trends in the VHP risks are summarised and reported on at quarterly strategic meetings. However, they are not specifically linked to the impact of particular areas of activity. In common with other forces in Scotland there is minimal use of results analysis in Strathclyde Police. Without such a tool, the force will find it difficult to ascertain or compare the effectiveness of different interventions.

7.5 (*text redacted*)

7.6 Linking outcomes to PIE activities remains a challenging area for all forces. Greater use of results analyses would provide more opportunities for the force to evaluate the effectiveness of its control strategy.

8. Progress against the recommendations of 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 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 two thematic inspections, on *CONTEST: Prevent* and *The Police use of Firearms*, as these will be followed up separately.

8.4 Under the present system in Strathclyde, all thematic inspection reports are forwarded on to the force executive to decide which recommendations are applicable to the force

and what action is to be taken. Those recommendations being taken forward are assigned to an assistant chief constable, who will in turn allocate them to the relevant department. That department, through the chief constable, is then responsible for producing and implementing action plans for each recommendation. There is no central process in place by which activity is regularly monitored – the Force Improvement Board (see para 9.5) only hears about recommendations once they have been discharged – and as a result the force has no overview of what if any progress has been made. The force is in the process of introducing arrangements to monitor its continuous improvement activities through the Force Improvement Board, including those arising from HMICS thematic inspections, both internally and externally through the police authority (see paragraphs 9.5 & 9.6 below).

8.5   Overall, the force is making progress in a number of areas, as the following paragraphs demonstrate.

8.6   A number of our recommendations dealt specifically with training, some of which will require the input of the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) to provide national solutions. Examples of work that the force has carried out include:

- Strathclyde's crime registrar has prepared a training manual for new registrars and Scottish Crime Recording Standard auditors;

- the force has introduced tighter procedures in relation to domestic abuse. It has also established scrutiny measures to check that all incidents are dealt with correctly. Our focus group discussions with frontline officers indicate that the force would benefit from reviewing the impact of these changes in procedure to assess whether they are delivering the desired outcomes; and

- the force's contact centre customer service managers are receiving further training, with a view to enhancing the quality of service that service users receive when they contact the force.

8.7   Other areas where the force has introduced changes include:

- a self-nomination process for promotion, which was introduced at the superintendent level and has since been applied for chief inspector and inspector promotion boards. A similar approach is planned for the next wave of sergeant to inspector promotions. This new process has led to a large increase in work and has proved expensive in terms of staff costs. The learning captured at each stage will be fed into future exercises; and

- steps to improve feedback and liaison with service users. This includes introducing a rolling programme of telephone surveys; providing everyone who contacts the force with details of how to comment on the service they receive; piloting the use of a diary car for following up calls from the public and holding formal surgeries for people who do not want the police to visit them in their homes; and, ensuring that community policing teams in every multi-member ward have their contact details and photographs on the force website.

8.8   While Strathclyde Police has been active in the National Custody Forum, more progress could be made in the force itself on implementing the recommendations of our three inspections on custody – *Custody facilities, Care of detained children and Medical services for people in police custody*. The force only recently initiated a review of its capital programme relating to custody facilities, and there is no evidence that the

force's standard operating procedures for custody care have been revised to reflect the agreed good practice emerging from the national forum.

8.9   The force is currently consulting its performance managers in order to devise the best method of evaluating the impact of improvement activities. In the meantime, there are a number of examples where it has sought to assess the effect of its actions. For example, it is currently conducting surveys of users and officers involved in the quality of service initiatives mentioned above. It is also aware of the impact on both staff and the quality of its incident recording/investigation of its new procedures for domestic abuse.

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 was conducted through a quality improvement framework that used the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model. Police forces and services used this self-assessment model to inform their planning and performance regimes. In this way, the organisations were themselves 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 was the finding that our 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 that resulting improvement actions would be relevant 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 this exercise, the force chose to sub-divide the organisation into fifteen discrete units – eight divisions and seven departments. The outcome was fifteen respective sets of proposed action plans containing between eight and 25 improvement actions. Six additional areas for improvement for the force as a whole were drawn from recurring themes in divisional/ departmental self-assessments.

9.5   Progress on both force and divisional/departmental plans has been delayed as a result of the significant organisational change that the force has recently undergone. In February 2009 Strathclyde Police established a Force Improvement Board (FIB), chaired by the deputy chief constable and attended by a cross-section of force executive members, heads of departments and divisional commander representatives. The secretariat function is provided by the force's organisational development team. The remit of the FIB is to prioritise all proposed areas for improvement – arising through self-assessments, thematic and other inspections, or identified through other means – approve subsequent plans and oversee progress. Prioritisation is given to continuous improvement activity that can bring about clear financial benefits for the force and focuses on frontline policing.

9.6   As a consequence of re-organisation, meetings of the FIB have been put on hold until very recently. Under the new structure, the intention is to enhance further the processes by which improvement activity is undertaken. For example, while divisions will still be responsible for prioritising their plans in light of the force's priorities and business plan, the organisational development team will scrutinise their performance

from the centre. In addition, the process for monitoring progress against all action plans will be made easier by clearer, simplified and meaningful plans that are time-limited and broken down into observable tasks and sub-tasks. At present the Board meets every six weeks, but this may change to a quarterly arrangement. The organisational development team also intends to consult the scrutiny unit of the force's police authority, in order to consolidate its involvement in this area.

9.7 Given the re-structuring and the focus on frontline priorities, some force-wide actions, e.g. around disseminating budget and finance information and environmental improvements, are less well-developed. That said, a number of areas are currently being addressed:

- the force is considering a move away from blanket staff surveys to more themed exercises focusing on, e.g. specific aspects of the force, organisational change, etc;

- customer surveys have now been re-scheduled to tie in better with business planning; and

- every division has a communications officer, whose role encompasses internal and external communication.

9.8 As part of its reappraisal of processes, the organisational development team is also consulting force performance managers on how best to assess the practical impact of improvement activities. Once a system is in place, the intention is to run action plans through the process in order to identify their anticipated impact. At the time of our fieldwork, we found little evidence of awareness of changes having been made, or their impact, amongst frontline staff.

9.9 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.	Strategic-level consultation on the force strategic assessment.	4.4
2.	Understanding of resources required to deliver the force control strategy.	5.1
3.	Shift arrangements to support delivery of the force control strategy.	5.6
4.	*(text redacted)*	
5.	The involvement of partner organisations in intelligence-sharing and joint tasking.	6.4
6.	A review of the impact of performance targets on PIE activity.	7.2
7.	The consistency of approach across divisions to monitoring progress against PIE activities.	7.4
8.	The capacity of analysts and the use of results analysis to evaluate the impact of force activities and interventions.	4.7, 7.4 & 7.6

To monitor and improve the police service in Scotland

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.