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## Press release

Embargoed until Thursday 24 February, 00.01 hours.

# Grampian police and joint police board perform well while more progress could be made

**Grampian Police and the Grampian Joint Police Board have an effective working relationship and a shared vision for policing in the area, but some areas still need development.**

The *Best Value Audit and Inspection: Grampian Police and Grampian Joint Police Board* provides an overview of how both these bodies are meeting their best value duties and is a joint report from the Accounts Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS).

The performance assessment of **the force** found that there has been an overall reduction in recorded crimes since 2006/07 and crimes of violence, indecency, dishonesty and reckless behaviour are at their lowest level for seven years.

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Andrew Laing, said: "Grampian Police force is performing well and demonstrates many of the elements of best value. Levels of public satisfaction are high and improving and, overall, crime rates in the area are falling. However, it is unclear why recorded instances of racially motivated crime and complaints against the police have increased and the force should make further efforts to understand and explain this".

The report also says the force should make efforts to calculate how much individual policing activities cost to help it work with the board to make difficult decisions on future priorities and where money should be spent in the future.

The Accounts Commission found that **the board** has a good understanding of its role and that members actively question and challenge the force about its performance in a constructive way.

Chair of the Accounts Commission, John Baillie, said: "The board works well to meet the needs of local communities. It has a positive partnership with the force and together they have developed a shared vision for policing in the area and a clear set of priorities. However, with public finances tight the board should develop its longer-term financial planning and scrutiny roles to ensure the best use of resources. It could also do more to help identify savings through partnership and shared services initiatives."

The board should also make sure that arrangements for an effective independent custody visiting scheme are implemented quickly. At present, the board is the only police authority in the United Kingdom not to have an operational scheme in place.

The force and the board will now produce an improvement plan to show how they intend to address the findings.

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### Notes to Editors

1. The Accounts Commission for Scotland was set up in 1975. The Commission checks whether local authorities, fire and police boards spend public money properly and effectively.
2. HMICS operates independently of police forces, police authorities and the Scottish Government and exists to monitor and improve the police service in Scotland.

3. A joint police board is made up of councilors from the local authority areas the force covers. In the case of Grampian there are six members from Aberdeen City Council, six from Aberdeenshire Council and three from Moray Council. A joint police board is responsible for setting the budget for the force; ensuring that best value is attained and holding the chief constable to account. A police force provides police services in the force area.
4. Both the Accounts Commission and HMICS have the power to examine how well Scottish police authorities are delivering best value. HMICS also has a statutory duty to inspect police forces and report on their state and efficiency. Both organisations would have been entitled produce their own report on each police authority but this would have created duplication of work and is not in keeping with the spirit of the recommendations of the Crerar report and with the current drive to streamline scrutiny. Also a joint report gives the public an overall view of how well the police authorities in their area are meeting their duties to provide best value. It was decided that a joint report would be the most efficient way for both bodies to exercise their best value duties.
5. John Baillie and Andrew Laing will be available for interview on Wednesday 23 February. In his role as chair of the Accounts Commission John Baillie will be able to talk about the best value performance of Grampian Joint Police Board. Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Andrew Laing will be able to talk about both the police force and Grampian Joint Police Board.