

# Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary and Police Authority

Best Value Audit and Inspection



Prepared for the Accounts Commission and Scottish ministers  
June 2012

# The Accounts Commission

The Accounts Commission is a statutory, independent body which, through the audit process, requests local authorities in Scotland to achieve the highest standards of financial stewardship and the economic, efficient and effective use of their resources. The Commission has four main responsibilities:

- securing the external audit, including the audit of Best Value and Community Planning
- following up issues of concern identified through the audit, to ensure satisfactory resolutions
- carrying out national performance studies to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local government
- issuing an annual direction to local authorities which sets out the range of performance information they are required to publish.

The Commission secures the audit of 32 councils and 45 joint boards and committees (including police and fire and rescue services).

# Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland

HMICS operates independently of police forces, police authorities and the Scottish Government and exists to monitor and improve the police service in Scotland. HMICS does this on behalf of the Scottish public by:

- monitoring, through self-assessment and inspection, how effectively the police service in Scotland is fulfilling its purpose and managing risk
- supporting improvement by identifying good practice, making recommendations and sharing our findings in order to achieve better outcomes for Scotland's communities
- providing advice to Scottish ministers, police authority and joint board members and police forces and services.

Even though HMICS is independent of the Scottish Government, ministers can call upon the Inspectorate to undertake particular pieces of work.

Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. It provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission. Together they ensure that the Scottish Government and public sector bodies in Scotland are held to account for the proper, efficient and effective use of public funds.

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# Commission findings

**1.** This is the sixth audit and inspection report on the performance by a police authority and force of their statutory duties on Best Value and Community Planning. It has been produced jointly by the Controller of Audit and Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland. The Accounts Commission accepts the report from the Controller of Audit on the Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority. In accordance with the Commission's statutory responsibilities, these findings relate only to the Best Value audit of the authority.

**2.** The Commission finds that Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority is effective and demonstrates most aspects of Best Value. Good performance is reflected in crime and detection rates and in positive user satisfaction.

**3.** The Commission notes the strength of the working relationships between the clerk to the authority (who is the chief executive of Dumfries & Galloway Council), the convener of the Police, Fire and Rescue Committee, and the chief constable. These working relationships are helped by clarity and understanding of respective roles and responsibilities.

**4.** The Commission is encouraged by improvements in governance arrangements: the Police, Fire and Rescue Committee fulfils its role well with good leadership shown by its convener and commitment shown by elected members. Committee members are also well informed of policing issues. There are good links with communities and other community safety partners through local area working arrangements.

**5.** While the committee fulfils its scrutiny responsibilities well in relation to force performance and its use of resources, it could have provided better oversight of longer-term police resource planning. It should strengthen its scrutiny of the force's management of its risks and the value for money of its services.

**6.** The Commission notes the limited oversight of the force's approach to equal opportunities. The Commission advises the authority to continue to pay attention to the equal opportunities aspects of how services are provided.

**7.** A challenge for the authority will be to maintain its capacity for continuous improvement in a period of transition towards the new national police authority. At the same time, it must ensure that it contributes effectively to the development of new national arrangements. As part of this, the authority should ensure sufficient support for elected members in coming months.

**8.** The Commission gratefully acknowledges the co-operation and assistance provided to the joint audit and inspection team by the elected members of Dumfries & Galloway Council, the chief constable and officers of Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, and other officials and community planning partners.

**9.** The Commission welcomes the continued joint approach with Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland on these police audit and inspection reports, and the significant contribution that this is having to stimulating more effective and streamlined scrutiny and to driving commitment to securing best value.

# HM Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland findings

**1.** As Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland, I hold a statutory responsibility to inspect both Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary and Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority, which discharges its responsibilities through a council committee, the Police, Fire and Rescue Committee (PFRC). I concur with the Accounts Commission findings on the Best Value and Community Planning performance of Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority and offer the following comment on the performance of Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary.

**2.** My overall assessment of Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary is that it is performing to a high standard and demonstrates many of the elements of best value. The force executive provide effective and visible leadership supported by a clear strategic vision encapsulated in its Community Promise which addresses the issues which most affect its communities. This vision has a strong focus on continuous improvement aiming to improve on already good performance. Overall crime rates are among the lowest in Scotland and the force delivers higher than average detection rates. The force has developed standards of service for the public contacting the force and has seen the highest increase in Scotland for users agreeing they were adequately informed about the progress of their case.

**3.** As with all organisations, there is scope for continuous improvement. In particular, I would highlight that:

- the force should continue to develop its HR and finance strategies in the context of police reform, which are responsive to the needs of the community, it should endeavour to maintain and improve levels of performance and identify opportunities to reduce cost
- the force should work with the PFRC to develop an Asset Management Plan which articulates the financial liabilities of the force estate and fixed assets to assist in managing the transfer to a single force structure.

**4.** I look forward to receiving a plan from Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary and the PFRC on behalf of the Police Authority, which addresses the improvement agenda set out in this joint audit and inspection report.

**5.** I also wish to acknowledge my gratitude for the co-operation and assistance afforded to the joint audit and inspection team by the chief constable, officers and staff of Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, the convener and elected members of the PFRC, the chief executive of Dumfries & Galloway Council and their staff and other officials and community planning partners.

**6.** The joint audit and inspection approach adopted in the preparation of this report continues to develop and is contributing towards a more effective scrutiny regime that demonstrates our commitment to achieving best value in Scottish policing.

# Introduction



This joint report is made by the Controller of Audit to the Accounts Commission under section 102(1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS) under section 33 of the Police (Scotland) Act 1967.

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 introduced statutory duties relating to Best Value and Community Planning. Its provisions apply to local authorities, including police authorities, and require specifically that:

- councils and police authorities secure best value (defined as achieving continuous improvement in the performance of functions)
- police authorities and chief constables participate in the community planning process.

The Act also amended the audit arrangements set out in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to cover Best Value and gave powers to the Accounts Commission to examine Best Value in police authorities. HMICS has a statutory duty under section 33 of the Police (Scotland) Act 1967 to inspect police forces and common police services, and to report to ministers on their state and efficiency. The 2003 Act extends this to include provision for HMICS to inquire into and report to Scottish ministers on whether a local authority is carrying out its functions both as a police authority and in relation to a number of matters including Best Value.

The 2003 Act is supported by more detailed statutory guidance on Best Value and Community Planning, and a series of advisory notes on specific topics such as elected member leadership. This guidance is designed to be descriptive rather than prescriptive, defining the goals that organisations should aim for but allowing them local discretion on the methods and routes they use.

The Scottish Government issued further guidance for police authorities and forces. This guidance includes *Justice Department Circular 11/2003 Best Value Guidance*, and *Guidance for Members of Police Authorities and Joint Authorities*, June 2007 (Appendix 1).

The scope of Best Value and Community Planning is broad and the guidance and statute indicate that a successful police authority will:

- work in tandem with the chief constable to develop a clear set of priorities that respond to the needs of the community in both the short and longer term
- be organised to support the delivery of these priorities
- meet, and clearly demonstrate that it is meeting, the community's needs
- operate in a way that drives continuous improvement in all its activities.

Similarly, a successful police force will:

- work with its partners and the police authority/police authorities to develop a clear set of priorities that respond to the needs of the community in both the short and longer term
- be organised to deliver these priorities
- meet, and clearly demonstrate that it is meeting, the community's needs
- operate in a way that drives continuous improvement in all its activities.

The key objectives of this joint audit and inspection were to:

- assess the extent to which Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary and the police authority, as discharged through the council's Police, Fire and Rescue Committee (PFRC), are meeting their duties under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and complying with Scottish Government guidance
- agree planned improvements with the local authority, force and the PFRC, to be reviewed by external auditors and HMICS on an ongoing basis.

As Best Value and Community Planning encompass a wide variety of activities, it is not realistic to audit or inspect everything in depth. For this reason we planned our detailed work in two ways:

- We considered the force structure in detail to ensure the audit and inspection took account of the different contexts and policing demands.
- We selected certain aspects of the force's and authority's performance for detailed investigation. We used a wide range of sources, including the force's and authority's own assessment of their performance, reports issued following external audit and inspections and the Scottish Policing Performance Framework (SPPF) to assess risks and scope our work to inform this selection.

Our joint report reflects this proportionate approach, with detailed commentary in some areas and more limited coverage in others. Our main audit and inspection work was conducted in January 2012. The report includes a corporate assessment of the authority and the force, while the performance assessment covers only the force.

We gratefully acknowledge the cooperation and assistance provided to the team by Councillor Ian Blake, Convener of Dumfries and Galloway Police, Fire and Rescue Authority; Patrick Shearer, Chief Constable of Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary; Gavin Stevenson, Clerk to the Police, Fire and Rescue Authority and Chief Executive of Dumfries & Galloway Council and all other elected members, police officers and staff involved. We are also grateful to the community partners who participated in the audit and inspection.

### **The tripartite arrangements and police authorities' leadership role**

The force is governed through a tripartite arrangement between the chief constable, the police authority, and Scottish ministers. As the force covers only one local authority area, the authority carries out its functions through a committee of the council. Scottish ministers have responsibility for national policy on law and order as well as the power to regulate on various policing matters including pay and conditions. The police authority is responsible for setting the police budget, holding the chief constable to account and ensuring that best value is achieved. The chief constable is responsible for the operational aspects of policing within the force area.

The effect of these arrangements is that the authority and the chief constable, although they have different roles, must work in tandem to achieve best value. In this report, we make judgements only on the authority and force, but all parties to the arrangement, including Scottish ministers, have responsibility for the overall performance of the police service.



# Summary



## Overall conclusions

### 1. Dumfries and Galloway

Constabulary (the force) performs strongly on the majority of assessment measures, in terms of both improvements over time and in comparison with other Scottish forces. It exhibits some of the lowest crime rates in Scotland and higher than average detection rates. It achieves high rates of user satisfaction on many aspects of the community's interaction with the force.

2. As Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority is a unitary police authority, it discharges its responsibility through a council committee, the PFRC. The committee is effectively engaged in setting and approving the vision for policing. Policing features strongly in the day-to-day business of the council and its partners. There is an effective and strong peer relationship between senior partners including the chief constable, the PFRC convener, and the clerk to the PFRC, who is also the council chief executive.

3. This is further strengthened by the supporting arrangements which include: the engagement of all elected members in policing through community planning, area committees, and the council's budget setting process; the convener's dual role both as PFRC convener and chair of the community safety partnership; the chief constable's role as a key community planning partner; and the force's participation on the council's Corporate Management Team (CMT).

4. The well-established relationships between the police authority and its partners are also underpinned by strong governance and supporting processes. The convener, chief constable, and the chief executive, (both in his capacity as chief executive and in his role as clerk to the PFRC) understand and fulfil their respective roles and responsibilities. In relation to governance of policing by the PFRC, there is clear evidence to show

improvement based on previous Best Value audit work.

5. The convener provides strong leadership to the PFRC and its members, who are committed to their role and who provide systematic scrutiny of the force's performance. However, there is scope for the PFRC to strengthen the challenge and direction it provides over how the force manages risk and demonstrates value for money. Public reporting could also be improved by providing more contextual and comparative performance information. The police authority has made efforts to improve the skills and capacity of elected members on the PFRC. However, it should consider how it can improve the uptake of training, particularly for those less experienced members appointed after the 2012 council elections.

6. The police authority and the force work constructively together in managing police finances. The PFRC scrutinises the force's annual budget expenditure effectively including its workforce costs, efficiency savings, and capital programme expenditure. It has not yet provided this level of strategic direction over the way resources are planned over the longer term. The authority will now need to consider how it can provide strong strategic direction in the period leading to the transition to a single national police force and in a way which supports the objectives of reform. The police (and fire and rescue) authority has agreed to recommend to the new council that the PFRC's remit is changed to include oversight of the transition to the new arrangements.

7. The PFRC provides limited oversight of the force's progress with equal opportunities and diversity, and has not met its own commitment to monitor progress in this area.

8. The force has a clear and well-informed vision for what it wants to achieve for its communities. It is

delivering a good level of policing, addressing the issues which most affect its citizens and their quality of life. The vision, as represented by their Community Promise, is influenced by the views of those communities, as well as nationally agreed priorities, which take account of available resources and organisational capacity to deliver them.

9. The chief constable and the force executive provide effective and visible leadership based on clearly articulated strategic aims for policing in Dumfries and Galloway which are well understood throughout the force. A performance management culture is embedded throughout the organisation, supported by a comprehensive performance management framework which is well integrated with the force's service planning and delivery arrangements.

10. The force places a considerable emphasis on community engagement supported by a comprehensive community policing model and engagement strategy, tailored to the needs of its communities. This is underpinned by a culture of collaborative working at all levels of the organisation to address community needs through effective partnership working.

11. The audit and inspection team have taken into account that the Scottish police service is going through a period of major change following the Scottish Government's announcement of its plan to create a single Scottish police force in April 2013. We recognise that this is a significant challenge for the force in terms of maintaining service delivery, at the same time preparing for restructuring. However, it is imperative that the force work with the PFRC to sustain its level of challenge and scrutiny to ensure that police services remain effective, make the best use of the resources allocated to them and are accountable to local communities.

# Part 1. Context



## The local context

**12.** Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary is one of only two forces in Scotland where the force serves a single council area. Dumfries and Galloway is the smallest of the Scottish forces in terms of officer and staff numbers. It covers an area of 2,649 square miles and has an estimated population of 148,030, giving a population density of around 60 people per square mile compared with the Scottish average of 168.

**13.** The area is predominantly rural with people living mainly in small communities or in the countryside. The biggest town is Dumfries, with an estimated population of 37,110, where the force and council headquarters are located. The other main towns are Stranraer with an estimated population of 10,600 and Annan with 8,240 people. The area has relatively low levels of deprivation compared to other forces; however, there are variations throughout the region.

**14.** The area has an extensive coastline and has the shortest crossing point between mainland Britain and Northern Ireland, making it a key strategic location. The recent relocation of ferry operations from Stranraer to Cairnryan and reductions in UK Border Agency staff has presented the force with a challenge in terms of resources, and altered the traffic infrastructure. Road policing is already a key area of business for the force. The area's road network includes the A75, part of the Euro route 18, which is the main transport connection between Ireland and Continental Europe. The main west arterial route between Scotland and England, the A74(M), also runs through the force area.

### Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority

**15.** As Dumfries & Galloway Council is a unitary police authority, it carries out its police authority functions

through a committee, as opposed to the joint board structure used by non-unitary police authorities. The council's PFRC has dual responsibility for both police and fire and rescue services. The council has delegated all of its police authority responsibilities to the PFRC, with the exception of the council's reserved powers for determining the force's annual revenue budget and capital programme.

**16.** The PFRC has four police subcommittees which deal with: police complaints; complaints against senior police officers; appointments and selection; and the performance, pay and development of senior officers.

**17.** The approach taken to setting the police budget differs between a unitary police authority and a joint board. A joint board has powers to set the police budget and to requisition constituent councils accordingly for their share. In Dumfries and Galloway, the chief constable presents the annual budget forecast to the PFRC, where, following consultation, an indicative budget is agreed. That budget proposal is then considered by the full council as the police authority. The council has the ability to ratify or amend the proposal made in determining the budget to be allocated. In Dumfries and Galloway, the force budget is generally set at the notional grant aided expenditure level set by the government. However, the police authority has made additional expenditure in supporting community policing, and in funding the force's voluntary redundancy scheme, for example.

**18.** The gross expenditure of the police service in 2010/11 was £45.7 million. The authority received £23.6 million in government grants. After deducting non-government grants and other income totalling £1.66 million, the net expenditure on the police service from Dumfries & Galloway Council's budget was £20.4 million. Police officer and

police staff costs account for some 87 per cent of gross spend. The force operates a general reserve; this had a closing balance of £864,000 in 2010/11, which is an increase on the previous year due to underspend in the force budget. (An indicative reserves figure for 2011/12 is £1 million.)

**19.** The council has four area committees and a network of community councils is in place to engage local communities. Area committees and community council meetings are attended by local police officers and receive regular police performance reports. This allows a good level of engagement between elected members, police officers and members of the community.

### Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary

**20.** Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary covers the south-west of Scotland and is divided into two operational policing divisions (Exhibit 1). Galloway Division covers the west of the force area and is the larger geographically, encompassing the local authority areas of Stewartry and Wigtown. Dumfries Division, which has the greater population and proportionally more staff, covers the east of the force area, encompassing the local authority areas of Annandale and Eskdale, and Nithsdale.

**21.** As at March 2012, the force has 511 police officers (full-time equivalent), meeting the target set by the Scottish Government, 226 police staff (full-time equivalent) and 121 special constables. It is the only force in Scotland to have recorded a reduction in police officer numbers since 2008/09 and has seen the largest reduction in police staff over the same period.

**22.** The force is led by the chief constable, supported by a senior management team which includes the deputy chief constable, chief superintendent, head of

crime management services (superintendent), head of corporate services (superintendent), head of operational support services (chief inspector), Dumfries commander (superintendent) and Galloway commander (superintendent) and the asset and finance manager. The force is also represented at the council's CMT.

### Exhibit 1

#### Map of Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary



Source: Audit Scotland

# Part 2. Corporate assessment



## Vision and strategic direction

### Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority

Local partners, the force and elected members work constructively together and share a clear vision for policing. There is a good process in place for developing and updating the vision. The PFRC should ensure that it receives sufficient information to challenge progress against the vision as part of its overall reporting programme.

**23.** The force vision agreed and supported by the PFRC is set out in the Community Promise (Exhibit 2), which has a clear message to 'provide a safe and secure environment for our community'. It expresses clearly the key areas on which the force will focus, such as community policing, levels of crime across the region, the way the roads network is policed and issues around the abuse of drugs and alcohol. Underpinning this promise is a commitment to deliver a professional and high standard of service to the people of Dumfries and Galloway.


**24.** The council and its partners have clearly set policing and community safety as an over-arching priority. The public, elected members and partners are effectively engaged in setting the vision. The Community Promise is the force's public-facing vision statement. The Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and the community safety strategy include related partner activity and are consistent with the Community Promise. For example, the SOA priority 'where people feel safe and respected in the community' includes the partners' response to road safety and domestic abuse. The alignment between these strategic objectives is strong, and is helped by the close working and positive relationships that exist between partners.

**25.** All elected members are informed of progress regarding the police vision through community planning

**Exhibit 2**  
Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary's Community Promise

Community Promise

Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary



**OUR PROMISE**  
We will provide a safe and secure environment for our community

**OUR AIM**

We will maintain a focus on community policing and work with our partners to deliver a service that is efficient, effective and responsive to the needs of our community

**OUR VALUES**

- To respect and protect the community
- To be open, available and approachable to all
- To listen, understand and work with the community

**Our Priorities**

**Alcohol**  
Identify and reduce alcohol related incidents

**Antisocial Behaviour**  
Tackle antisocial behaviour by working with the community and our partners

**Crime**  
Work with the community and our partners to reduce crime


**Drugs**  
Impact on the supply, misuse and availability of controlled drugs

**Public Protection**  
Protect children and the most vulnerable members of our community

**Roads Policing**  
Reduce the number of people killed or injured on our roads

**Sound Governance**  
Provide a quality service which makes best use of resources and strives for continuous improvement

**Terrorism**  
Disrupt terrorists and extremist networks



**0845 600 5701 local contact for your local police**      [www.dg.police.uk](http://www.dg.police.uk)

Source: Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary

reports, SOA progress reports and through wider committee reporting including area committees. The council leader is a member of the strategic partnership (the Community Planning Partnership), and the PFRC convener chairs the community safety partnership. These links help to ensure that police objectives are consistent with the local priorities. The leaders of the various political groups also provide strategic direction as members of the council's budget development working group in agreeing the police budget.

**26.** PFRC members are consulted and engaged throughout the process of developing and reviewing the Community Promise. The PFRC approves the Community Promise, and scrutinises police performance on an ongoing basis. However, it does not consider specific progress reports on the Community Promise. The PFRC should ensure that it provides sufficient challenge over the extent to which the Community Promise is being delivered. This could be easily achieved by, for example, the PFRC formally scrutinising the force's

quarterly performance reports and its annual report, which cover progress with the Community Promise.

### Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary

The chief constable and the force executive provide positive and effective leadership focused on the vision articulated in the Community Promise which underpins and links policing to community issues. This vision is informed by the views of, and in consultation with, local people, stakeholders, partners and senior managers within the force.

**27.** The chief constable and the force executive have provided visible and supportive leadership to the force during a period of uncertainty for staff, due to the threat of budget cuts, concerns over potential redundancies and police reform. They have driven the delivery of savings and managed change by keeping everyone informed and responding to their anxieties.

**28.** The force's vision and strategy is encapsulated in its Community Promise which outlines the aims and values of policing in the area. This vision fits into its strategic framework which provides a consistency in the message delivered both internally and externally. It is a simple and succinct statement of aims that is backed up by the force's Strategic Assessment,<sup>1</sup> Control Strategy<sup>2</sup> and the SOA. The policing vision has a strong focus on continuous improvement and aims to improve on already good performance. It also incorporates both national and local priorities, with the emphasis varying by location across the region.

**29.** There is a good process in place for developing the Community Promise. This includes an annual 'health check' to ensure that it

remains relevant and fit for purpose. The process has been supported by consultation evenings, surveys of school pupils, sessions with elected members and dialogue with other service providers. Members of the PFRC, senior police officers and other strategic partners held a strategy day to inform the development of the vision. Elected members have welcomed the improved consultation process which has been in place since 2009.

**30.** There is a good level of awareness by all staff of the content and aims of the Community Promise and how it links into their day-to-day business. The priorities are considered reflective of local issues and their role in addressing these is clear, particularly those involved in community policing. Senior managers understand the connection to national priorities and the strategic focus of the council and other service providers.

### Governance and accountability

#### Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority

The PFRC has put improvements in place which have strengthened management and governance processes. PFRC members are clear on their responsibilities and fulfil their roles effectively. The PFRC has taken efforts to improve the skills and capacity of its members; however, the uptake of training could be improved.

**31.** The 2009 Best Value audit of the council highlighted the need to improve the effectiveness of and strategic direction offered by the PFRC. The council took these improvement actions forward as part of its council-wide improvement programme. This included elected member development, and the use

of alternating agendas at the PFRC to cover the police service and the fire and rescue service separately. This audit and inspection of the police authority and the force has found that many of these improvements are now well established and that sound processes are in place to support the governance of the PFRC.

**32.** The February 2012 Best Value audit of the fire and rescue service in Dumfries and Galloway<sup>3</sup> also noted that the governance of the PFRC had improved since the 2009 Best Value audit. However, it also noted scope for the committee to provide stronger strategic direction and challenge over the fire and rescue service. With regard to the committee's role in policing, we found that the PFRC members are engaged in setting and approving the vision for policing, and that elected members provide regular scrutiny and challenge over police performance both at the PFRC and at area committees. However, we also noted scope for the committee to provide stronger strategic direction over the use of resources, and greater scrutiny over value for money and the force's management of its identified risks.

**33.** In July 2008, the PFRC reduced its membership from 19 to 11 members. This has helped it to operate more effectively as a management board with a strong service focus, and to operate in a non-party-political way. Responsibility for the community safety partnership, and aspects of environmental health were also removed from the PFRC, again helping to improve its focus on policing.

**34.** In 2010, the PFRC introduced separate police and fire meetings in place of those which considered both services together. This has made the agendas more manageable and has improved the PFRC's focus on each service.

1 The Strategic Assessment examines the strategic (longer-term) threats to the force in relation to policing and community issues. This document links in with the Force Performance Framework and recommends the policing priorities for the next 12 months through the setting of the Force Control Strategy and Intelligence Requirement.

2 The Control Strategy identifies the strategic policing priorities for the force and sets out detailed intelligence, prevention and enforcement priorities.

3 *The Audit of Best Value: Dumfries & Galloway Fire and Rescue* – Prepared for the Accounts Commission, Audit Scotland, February 2012.



**35.** The council's chief executive undertakes the role of clerk to the PFRC. The respective roles and responsibilities of the chief constable, PFRC convener, and clerk are clearly defined, and are also clearly set out in PFRC committee agendas. Each representative clearly understands and fulfils their respective role.

**36.** The PFRC is supported by the same governance controls that apply to all council committees. As such, the council's committee services team ensures that reports to the PFRC contain relevant information to support committee decisions; indicate what consultation has been undertaken; and highlight any risks.

**37.** The PFRC also has a performance reporting plan to help to ensure it meets its responsibilities. This sets out what key reports will be considered by the committee and their frequency. The PFRC has reduced the number of decisions referred to it for 'noting', and the committee is instead asked to ensure that reports address specific areas of interest. As the police authority, the council also undertakes an annual review of its schemes of delegation to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

**38.** All elected members have personal development plans setting out their individual training and development needs. The PFRC has a forward programme of events and training, including visits to port and station facilities. The uptake of training has been low on occasions. The council should consider how it can improve training uptake, particularly for those less experienced members newly elected in the 2012 council elections.

**39.** The PFRC has effective processes in place for overseeing the force's handling of complaints. The complaints subcommittee members receive special training to undertake their role and the committee does not allow substitutions of its members.

### Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary

The force has an effective working relationship with the PFRC and has encouraged a good level of challenge and scrutiny, building on lessons from other Best Value audits. Links to the council, via the CMT and strategic partnership, enables the force to engage with other service providers. Internal governance arrangements are strong with the policy group coordinating and linking force business and providing oversight to various workstreams.

**40.** The chief constable has a positive, professional relationship with the convener and with the clerk to the PFRC, which effectively balances the need for challenge and accountability without compromising the principle of operational independence. Separately, the chief constable has an effective working relationship with the chief executive of the council. The chief constable sees the benefit of the police working closely with other service providers to develop partnerships and identify areas of joint responsibility. He is represented at the council's CMT and is a member of the strategic partnership. This supports communication and awareness between partners and provides opportunities for the chief constable to work with and influence other areas of business.

**41.** The force has supported efforts to increase the level of knowledge and encourage a greater degree of challenge among members of the PFRC to better equip them in their scrutiny of policing priorities and decision-making. Detailed briefings and training events have been part of this partnership approach which added value to the entire process.

**42.** The involvement of the force in area committees and community councils provides further opportunities for accountability and engagement. The force provides detailed performance information and addresses local issues

directly. This can have the effect of reducing the likelihood of them being raised at the PFRC. However, the involvement of elected members (and PFRC members) in the committees ensures an appropriate level of challenge and scrutiny at a local level.

**43.** Internal governance is led by the force's policy group which provides oversight and challenge to force projects and workstreams, such as workforce transition, continuous improvement, diversity, performance and carbon management. All senior managers attend together with unions and staff associations. Any member of staff may attend as an observer and there is a standing invitation to members of the PFRC.

**44.** The policy group provides an open account of its decision-making and the minutes reflect all options considered and agreed outcomes. These are well communicated across the force via briefings and force intranet, providing a good level of transparency from senior management. This has ensured that staff have been kept informed of issues such as workforce modernisation, redundancy, police reform and budget reductions.

**45.** The force does not have a single overarching workforce plan. However, the principles of continuous improvement have underpinned the role of the Workforce Transition Team, which the force established to undertake a remodelling exercise considering efficiency and cost savings against the potential impact on service delivery. This has considered various strands of budget savings and cost reduction. It has examined any area where working practices could improve and better value for money be achieved. This has meant some fairly low-level issues were included; however, this has engendered awareness among staff of the need to reduce spending. Governance has been via a programme board chaired by the chief constable to provide leadership and tackle some sensitive issues, particularly around redundancy and

station closures. The role of the PFRC and council has been crucial in supporting this process, in particular relating to the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme and budget rationalisation.

**46.** The force has made good progress in developing the scrutiny, management and handling of complaints against police. Complaints are reported annually to the PFRC and quarterly to the complaints subcommittee, which considers numbers, patterns, themes and outcomes from complaint handling reviews. Internally, the force's devolved approach to dealing with and investigating complaints seems to bring benefits in terms of raising the profile and awareness of complaints issues. That said, they have little capacity to be proactive, relying instead on the premise that 'because in a small force everyone knows each other', they would have to bring in

specialist resources from other forces to deal with any significant issues and appropriate arrangements are in place.

**Community engagement**

**Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority**

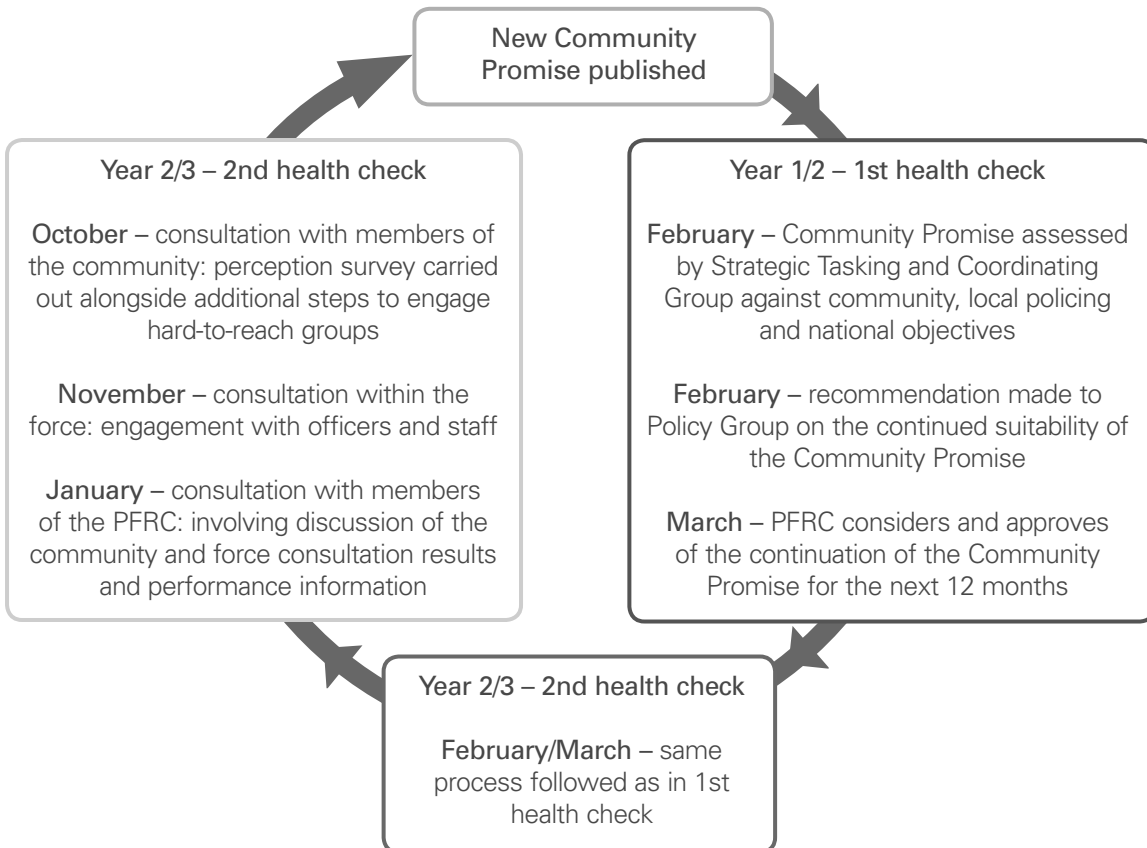
PFRC members, and elected members in general, have a good level of engagement with the public and with the police service through area committees and community councils. PFRC members have a good understanding of local policing issues and are engaged in setting the policing vision. Changes to area working arrangements in 2011 reduced the level of contact between the public and the force; measures have since been put in place to redress this.

**47.** Elected members have a good level of contact with the public and this is supported by the council's area committee and community council network. PFRC members are engaged in setting the vision for policing as set out in the Community Promise. The PFRC formally approves the Community Promise, and the public, elected members, police officers and staff are consulted about the local policing priorities as part of this process (Exhibit 3).

**48.** PFRC members have a good understanding of local policing issues. The PFRC receives regular police service response and customer satisfaction reports through police performance reporting. This reflects the strong emphasis the force places on engaging with the community and with people who have contacted the police service.

**Exhibit 3**

**Community Promise health check process**



Source: Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority/Audit Scotland

**49.** The relationships between elected members and police officers are strong, and police officers regularly attend area committee and community council meetings. Area committee members and local police representatives also hold regular briefings at police stations to help to inform elected members of local policing issues.

**50.** Before changes to the area committee reporting arrangements in 2011, the police service reported monthly to area committees, including taking questions directly from the public and elected members. This arrangement worked well and the force valued this degree of challenge and involvement over its community policing activities.

**51.** Under the revised area reporting arrangements the council introduced reporting across all service areas including education and social work, with each area reporting twice yearly. While this was seen to be a consistent approach across services, it significantly reduced the frequency of police reporting to area committees.

**52.** Consequently the force implemented further changes in September 2011 to help to reinstate the level of scrutiny and engagement from the area committees. The force now submits performance reports to area committees every two months, along with holding briefing sessions with members every three months. The police still regularly attend community council meetings to discuss local community issues, as well as wider policing issues directly with the public.

### Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary

Community engagement is an area of strength for Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary. The force approach to community policing is well regarded and supported by key stakeholders and partners. The force operates a comprehensive community policing model and engagement strategy, tailored to the particular needs of their communities.

**53.** Through the development of the Community Promise and its commitment to engaging directly with the community via community councils, area committees and elected members, the force has developed its priorities to reflect public concerns. This is reinforced through public satisfaction surveys and feedback from victims of crime.

**54.** A commitment by the force to a community policing ethos is central to the success of their approach. Community officers attend most community council meetings and deal with local issues. Any matter which requires further action or affects a wider area is reported to the area inspector, who in turn attends area committee meetings and briefs elected members on a quarterly basis, highlighting performance and responding to concerns. Any urgent or force-wide issue is reported to the daily tasking meeting and resources are allocated accordingly. Their approach would benefit from some benchmarking against another successful community policing model elsewhere, such as Lothian and Borders.

**55.** This level of engagement provides an openness and accessibility for the public to highlight concerns either directly or via their elected representatives. This is further developed through the force involvement in the community safety partnership and its contribution to delivering and shaping the SOA.

**56.** We found strong evidence throughout all levels in the force of a genuine commitment to community engagement and working with partners to achieve positive outcomes to community concerns.

**57.** The force has committed resources to meet the requirements of the Curriculum for Excellence Strategy, which provides schools and all key partners with a clear focus and purpose, to ensure the delivery of a corporate, planned and consistent message to every child and young person within the area. As part of the force's commitment to a policy of prevention and early intervention, it has undertaken to work in partnership with all primary and secondary schools and with other agencies to assist in the delivery of presentations and activities in four priority areas:

- substance abuse
- antisocial behaviour
- road safety
- personal safety.

### Partnership working and community leadership

#### Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority

The PFRC has a good understanding of the partnership working that takes place through links with the Community Planning Partnership and area committees. Elected members are engaged in setting the local priorities with partners.

**58.** Relationships between the PFRC, the council, the force and its partners including health, education and social work are good and partners work closely and constructively together. The chief constable, the PFRC convener and the council's chief executive, who is also clerk to the PFRC, have developed a close working relationship within the unitary police authority. Partnership working

further benefits from the key public sector agencies in the area sharing common boundaries. The strategic partnership was consulted over the Community Promise which helps to ensure that policing priorities are consistent with local priorities set out in the SOA.

**59.** The chief constable is a member of the strategic partnership, and he and other force representatives take an active role in Community Planning. The force is also represented on the council's CMT; this provides a useful forum for partnership working.

**60.** Elected members and the strategic partnership representatives are kept informed of partnership activity through a range of mechanisms, for example:

- elected members are aware of the strong partnership working that exists through their role in area committees, community councils, and through the various community planning groups
- the PFRC convener is also the chair of the community safety partnership and this ensures that both forums have oversight of common issues
- relevant issues from the strategic partnership are reported to the PFRC by the chief constable, chief executive or members of the community planning team.

#### Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary

The force works effectively with a range of partners with a view to enhancing community wellbeing and delivering an efficient service, responsive to the needs of the community.

**61.** The force engages at chief officer level through the strategic partnership and at strategic and tactical level through the Chief Officers Group, which meets to discuss community

planning issues affecting all areas of business. This benefits each partner by providing a structure which is not reliant on personalities and working relationship by clearly outlining the respective roles and responsibilities. This is linked to the developing SOA process both within the force and as a partner in the Community Planning Structure. This will continue to be a significant demand, but is considered by the force to represent an opportunity to drive forward service delivery and enhance community wellbeing.

**62.** The force has a culture of collaborative working with partners at all levels of the organisation. We found evidence of strong local engagement with elected members, with good information-sharing protocols in place to support work with the council and other service providers. Divisional officers and partner agencies were able to provide numerous examples of effective partnership working in the areas of community safety, youth justice, domestic abuse, drugs and alcohol, and public protection.

**63.** An example of partnership working improving force performance has been its involvement in diversion schemes for young people. Since March 2010, processes for dealing with youth offending have been developed with the introduction of Early and Effective Intervention (EEI). The partnership involves police, social services and the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service and has given the police access to a broader range of options which can be tailored to the young person's individual needs. These are:

- Restorative Justice Warning
- Formal Police Warning
- Referral to Multi-Agency Case Progression Group
- Referral to Children's Reporter.

**64.** Evaluation of the scheme by the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research in July 2011 acknowledged the positive part EEI had played in the area's Youth Justice Strategy and the impact it was having on youth offending.

#### Performance management and improvement

##### Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority

The PFRC provides systematic scrutiny of police performance. There is scope for it to provide stronger scrutiny and challenge over how the force manages risks, improvement and demonstrates value for money. There is scope for public reporting to be further developed to provide more contextual and comparative performance information.

**65.** The PFRC receives regular performance reports, including thematic reports and self-evaluations. Police performance reporting conforms to the SPPF, covering crime statistics as well as corporate management information such as sickness absence and call response times. Area committees also receive this performance information broken down by local area. Financial reporting is regular and includes budget expenditure, capital expenditure, and efficiencies.

**66.** While the PFRC receives performance and budget information, it does not receive information on the costs of policing activities to allow it to judge value for money. This situation is common across police authorities and the police service is developing its national approach to monitoring the costs of policing activities.

**67.** There is a perception both among PFRC members and representatives from the force that the level of challenge and scrutiny from the committee has improved. We confirmed this through our

observations of PFRC meetings and noted that the PFRC picks up on performance issues and seeks further assurance and clarification from the force where required.

**68.** This improved level of scrutiny has been assisted to some extent by training opportunities, seminars and events such as visits to police stations and facilities. The council should continue its efforts to improve the capacity of all members to scrutinise, particularly in view of potential changes to the committee membership following the May 2012 local government election.

**69.** The PFRC receives regular reports from the force on its improvement and efficiency activity. While the PFRC has oversight of this activity, it has not provided a strong degree of challenge in this area.

**70.** The PFRC has considered the force's strategic risk register, but has not taken an active role in challenging how the force manages risk. The risk register was first reported to the September 2010 PFRC meeting. There was then a gap of 14 months before the updated risk register was reported. It is important that the committee is aware of emerging risks on an ongoing basis and it should put in place measures to allow this.

**71.** Public performance reports for police services are readily available on the force's website and are informative and easily understood. However, there is scope for the PFRC to review public reporting to ensure that it provides more contextual and comparative information.

### Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary

The force has a strong performance culture that is embedded throughout the organisation and actively championed as a means of achieving improvement by its senior managers. Its performance management framework is comprehensive and integrated with service planning and delivery, and it regularly monitors and reports on its performance against its own and relevant partnership plans. Recent enhancements have seen the force's performance reports to the PFRC now containing more balanced and comparative information, although gaps in cost data remain.

**72.** From the force's policy group and strategic tasking and coordination group through its Resource and Business Continuity (RABC) meetings, tactical tasking and coordination process and local area inspectors to individual officers and staff, everyone working in Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary is expected to play their part in managing performance, whether that be their own personal workload or reviewing the performance of others or of the force. For example, senior officers are nominated as leads for each of the control strategy priorities which are then monitored regularly, while individual officers and supervisors are able to oversee workloads through the IMAGE<sup>4</sup> system.

**73.** Nevertheless, the focus is very much on working constructively towards the outcomes the public wants the force to achieve as opposed to relying solely on performance indicators. This ethos is supported by a commitment to understanding the views of its service users, through its quarterly user surveys, and of the wider population by way of local consultation through local area committees, force

conference days and other surveys. Performance information is widely disseminated through a range of tailored reports produced to various timescales and formats and intended to report on performance on, among other things:

- core aspects of policing
- the Scottish Policing Performance Framework
- progress against the force's Community Promise, Control Strategy and SOA priorities, and more directly
- to prompt immediate remedial action.

**74.** The performance report to the PFRC has recently undergone some content changes in response to desires expressed by both the force and the committee for further information. These changes include more contextual commentary, further comparative performance information and additional statistical analyses. However, there remains little discussion in this or other performance reports on the cost-effectiveness of the force's activities.

### Use of resources

#### Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority

The police authority and the force work constructively together in managing police finances. The PFRC regularly scrutinises the force's annual budget expenditure including its workforce costs, efficiency savings, and capital programme expenditure. It has not, however, provided strong strategic direction over the way resources are planned over the longer term.

**75.** The PFRC closely monitors the force's finances and receives regular revenue and capital budget reports.

4 IMAGE is an incident recording system developed for use throughout Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary and provides a means where incidents can be recorded at any location within the force area. IMAGE stands for Incident Management And General Enquiry.

It also receives ad hoc reports on the force's efficiency savings. It has not, however, provided this level of strategic direction over the way resources are planned over the longer term. The force does not have a financial strategy, and the PFRC has not requested financial and resource plans from the force. The PFRC has not, therefore, provided strong strategic direction over the way resources have been planned over the longer term.

**76.** The PFRC will now need to consider how it can provide strategic direction in the transition to a single national force. This will include clarifying the assets and liabilities involved, the implications of contractual agreements, and the responsibilities of the parties concerned.

**77.** The council's chief financial officer works closely and constructively with the force. For example, he assisted the force in securing council financing of the force's voluntary redundancy programme in 2010, helping to reduce the impact on the police budget. The force's financial reports to the PFRC also use the standard council format which makes them easily understandable to committee members.

**78.** In March 2010, the PFRC, the force, the fire and rescue service and the council established a member-officer working group to identify further areas for sharing services between these organisations. However, this group only met twice and at its second meeting in March 2011 it decided that, given the reform agenda, it would not be suitable to invest funds in exploring larger-scale or more complex options.

**79.** Reporting of the force's strategic use of its property, vehicle and other assets is limited. The PFRC receives ad hoc reports on issues and initiatives, but the force's asset management strategy has not been reported to the PFRC. There is,

therefore, limited challenge from the PFRC over how the force uses its assets.

**80.** The force has operated without a workforce strategy to set out its workforce needs in the medium term. Such a plan would have strengthened the force's understanding of any skills gaps and other pressure points in advance of its voluntary redundancy programme. However, the force handled the exercise well and the PFRC was satisfied that it managed the impact on policing services and engaged employees and trade unions effectively throughout the process.

#### Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary

Through the Workforce Transition Team and RABC meetings, the force manages its resources and identifies opportunities to reduce cost and maintain its effectiveness. The force has sustained police officer numbers and reduced police staff, while continuing to consider these competing challenges to achieve a balanced workforce and manage the transition towards a single force structure.

**81.** The force operates without a formal workforce plan, however the work undertaken by the Workforce Transition Team (WTT) has put in place methods of addressing the need for budget reductions and workforce remodelling. The terms of reference for 2011/12 were:

- identify how we manage budget reductions with minimum impact on service delivery recognising our commitment to the SOA and community promise
- reduce organisational expenditure, recognising 87 per cent of the force budget is used for staff
- ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the reduction in staff numbers through meaningful consultation with our

staff associations as required by legislation and in compliance with recognised best practice

- identify those activities which would have least adverse impact should that activity cease
- identify opportunities to remodel our service delivery to optimise efficiency and effectiveness within the constraints of our budgets
- to promote a shared and devolved responsibility to identify efficiencies.

**82.** The force was aware of the increasingly challenging financial environment and realised £1,909,000 as part of the efficient government savings in 2010/11. The WTT was actively involved in the voluntary redundancy scheme to support this process resulting in 29 police staff leaving the force in 2010/11, producing actual savings of £650,000 in 2011/12. A reduced scheme was revisited in December 2011 resulting in a further three members of staff leaving. The work of the WTT is helping the force to prepare for the transition towards a single force structure.

**83.** The RABC meeting assesses on a weekly basis operational demand and resourcing issues. Its remit is 'to provide a forum at which tactical managers can address resource and business continuity needs to ensure best use of finance, equipment and staff available to meet service demands'. This forum actively and effectively manages resources, considers and monitors the impact of policy decisions, financial challenges or workforce change on service delivery.

**84.** The force does not have a long-term financial strategy which would have enabled more involvement of the PFRC in outlining its priorities in planning and use of resources. The force does, however, regularly submit revenue and capital budget reports

to the committee, which allows a level of challenge and scrutiny. The entire voluntary redundancy process was done in conjunction with the committee and the council was closely involved in the financial settlement. The force has had its draft capital budget paper for 2012/13 discussed by the PFRC at its meeting on 24/01/12. The recommendations were agreed to take forward for final approval in March 2012. A medium-term financial strategy, currently being considered by the force prior to submission to the PFRC, will outline plans for the transition period to a single force.

**85.** The force engages the PFRC in the budget-setting process on an annual basis and works closely with the council's chief finance officer in the presentation and content of reports. The planning cycle starts in October with a provisional budget agreed at policy group for submission to the PFRC in January. Full council have an opportunity to consider the content and how it links to other service users. Following consideration and challenge by elected members the final version is approved in March.

**86.** The force identified that the current HR strategy needed to be reviewed. However, with financial pressures and workforce transition, this was not addressed until recently. A new HR strategy which better reflects the needs of the organisation has been drawn up and was submitted to the January 2012 policy group where it was approved for further development.

**87.** The force developed an Asset Management Strategy and Plan for the period 2009–14. While this offered a comprehensive strategy at that time, it is unclear what, if any, changes or updates have been done and the force accepts that the plan needs to be updated. Progress against this plan has not been reported to the PFRC, reducing the opportunity for challenge. However, capital priorities are agreed and monitored through

the annual capital plan and individual projects have been submitted to the PFRC and approved as they arise. There is no fixed asset register, all assets are owned by the council.

**88.** In August 2011, the force had the business case for the refurbishment of Castle Douglas Police Station approved by the PFRC. This originally formed part of the Asset Management Strategy and Capital Investment Programme for the period 2009–14 which identified the need for a new police station at Castle Douglas as a priority. A proposal was prepared to build a new facility at the former health centre site. However, following a decision of the council's Corporate Policy Committee, this was not deemed a priority and funding was not approved. The subsequent plan for refurbishing the existing facility then became the most viable option. Throughout the entire project, the involvement of the PFRC and council have helped to balance the risks to the force against the need for prioritisation of capital projects, before the latest plan has been accepted. Consideration of the future needs of the police estate in the area have been factored into the decision-making process. The force would benefit from updating its Asset Management Strategy to outline its intentions during the transition towards a single force.

## Equalities

### Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority

The PFRC provides limited oversight of the force's progress with equal opportunities and diversity, and it has not met its own commitment to monitor the force's progress in this area.

**89.** The PFRC does not systematically monitor the force's progress with equalities and diversity, and does not provide strong challenge or direction in this area. The force's single equality scheme was established in December

2009, and has been monitored and managed through the force's policy group. The PFRC's forward reporting programme includes the commitment to review the equality plans; however, progress with the force's equalities scheme has not been reported to the PFRC. The PFRC and the force have indicated that, once the new Public Sector Equality Duties come into effect in May 2012, reports on equality and diversity issues will be progressed and considered by the PFRC.

**90.** While specific reports on equalities and diversity have not been considered by the PFRC, all reports to the committee are subject to an impact assessment. This encourages reports to highlight any impact on communities or particular groups. Elected members have received briefings through the council on equality and diversity including legislative requirements.

**91.** The council as police authority, the force, and its partners have worked constructively together in managing aspects of equalities and diversity. This includes identifying disability access grant funding for the refurbishment of Castle Douglas police station, and the joint use of equalities advice and support between the force, the NHS, and the council. The Community Promise consultation events included representatives from minority and harder-to-reach groups. The force also works jointly with the council, the voluntary sector and other partners in a range of initiatives to engage minority groups.

**92.** The PFRC should ensure that it has sufficient oversight of the force's equalities and diversity activities and demonstrate its progress and impact in this area.

## Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary

The force demonstrates a good awareness of equalities and diversity issues. Despite some challenges around the availability of its diversity officer, it has taken positive steps to meet its obligations and provide a good level of service to its staff. Externally the force is a prominent partner in domestic abuse, public protection, youth justice and drugs and alcohol forums.

**93.** The force has faced some challenges around the provision of a diversity officer to support staff and ad hoc arrangements have been in place since June 2010. It is acknowledged that some of the issues were unavoidable and the force did provide some cover through community planning partners. The force has recently advertised for, and appointed, a person to this post, which has addressed the gap and shown that despite the need for fiscal prudence, it is prepared to act to address an issue which was clearly a vulnerability for them.

**94.** The force has a Force Diversity Strategy Forum which has highlighted the risks associated with a lack of diversity officer. This addressed perceptions internally and externally regarding the force's commitment to promoting diversity, dignity, respect and equality.

**95.** Diversity awareness was found to be well embedded in operational policing, with police managers citing the use of equality impact assessments. No concerns were raised by staff regarding support or availability of advice for equalities or diversity matters.

**96.** The force has an active Single Equality Scheme, covering the period 2009–12, which has been supported by yearly action plans. A diversity risk matrix is linked to the action plan, outlining risk against likelihood.

## Sustainability

### Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority

The PFRC has oversight of the force's sustainable development activities, although the PFRC has not identified sustainability as a formal part of its reporting programme.

**97.** The PFRC's forward reporting plan does not specifically include sustainability, however the force reports relevant information to the committee. The force's Carbon Management Plan was reported to the PFRC in May 2011, with a commitment to provide the PFRC with an annual progress report.

**98.** PFRC members are also made aware of the force's sustainability activity through its reporting of efficiencies and initiatives. This includes energy efficiency measures in buildings, and the conversion of the force's vehicle fleet to diesel.

### Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary

The force has actively encouraged staff to consider energy and efficiency savings as part of its approach to business planning. There has been good recent progress made in developing an approach to sustainability, particularly in relation to carbon management and sustainable procurement.

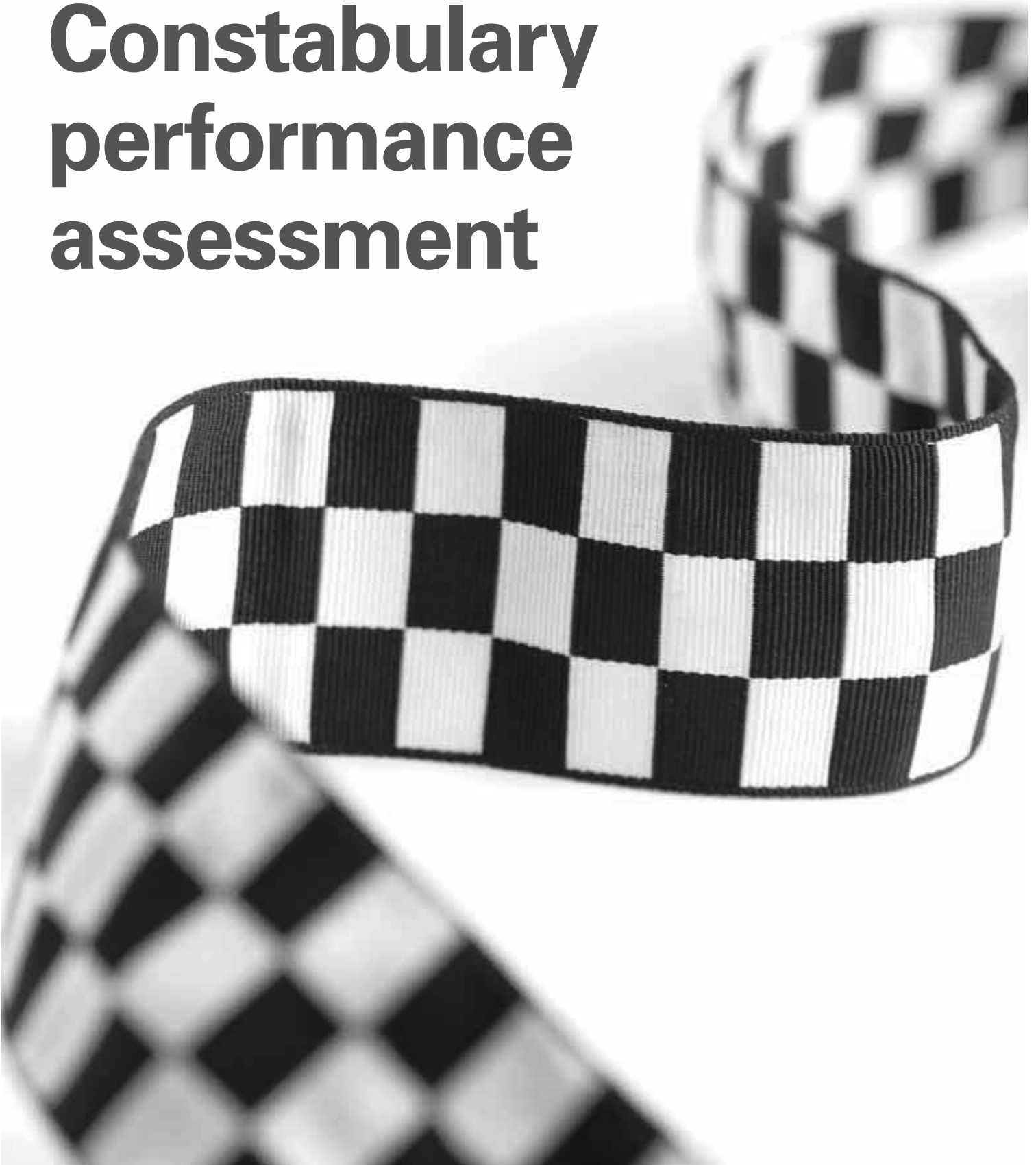
**99.** The force's Carbon Management Plan is a comprehensive account of its plans to reduce its carbon footprint through a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and an ambitious programme of improvement and change projects. The accompanying action plan sets out those areas where both carbon and cost savings could be realised. Set against a baseline assessment of 2009/10 figures, this will demonstrate year-on-year performance.

**100.** The Continuous Improvement Group supports other forums such as the Carbon Management Group, the Force ICT User Group and the Fleet User Group which all focus on delivering tangible and measurable outcomes. The Fleet User Group has overseen the introduction of a diesel fleet resulting in fuel savings and the Force ICT User Group has instigated the introduction of multi-function devices to phase out expensive desktop printing. All utility bills are examined on a quarterly basis to consider any areas of concern or obvious overuse. Staff are encouraged through the 'Make the Difference' staff suggestion scheme to contribute ideas for cost and energy savings.

**101.** The force has an extensive Business Continuity Plan framework which promotes a maintenance and review approach with the aim of keeping the individual plans current and fit for purpose. The delegation of responsibility to specified staff members helps to ensure that each station, department and role are covered.



# Part 3. Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary performance assessment



## Performance outcomes

The force continues to perform strongly on most assessment measures, in terms of both improvements over time and in comparison with other Scottish forces. Typically, it exhibits some of the lowest crime rates in Scotland and higher than average detection rates. It also regularly has high rates of user satisfaction on most aspects of the community's interaction with the force.

**102.** A more detailed description of its performance follows, set out according to the four headings of the SPPF, but with specific reference to the force's priorities under its Community Promise. To provide a longer-term perspective this considers performance data covering the last four financial years, from 2007/08 to 2010/11. Where available and relevant, more recent data from April to September 2011 has been included to provide additional context.

### Service response

**103.** The force performs well on most of the indicators under this heading. For example, it commonly has one of the highest proportions of 999 calls answered within ten seconds, 98.2 per cent at September 2011 against a Scottish average of 94.6 per cent, and of non-emergency response telephone calls answered within 40 seconds, 94.5 per cent against a Scottish average of 91.9 per cent in the period.

**104.** The force monitors user satisfaction with initial contact and overall contact with the police to assess performance against the priorities of its Community Promise (Exhibit 4). In these cases, 2010/11 saw the percentage of satisfied respondents rise year on year, to stand at 95.3 per cent, 89.2 per cent respectively. Also, since introducing its standards of service for members of the public contacting the force

## Exhibit 4

### Good practice example – force standards of service

The force emphasis on keeping victims of crime informed about their case supports the aims of their Community Promise.

When a person is a victim of a crime they receive a leaflet which sets out what the victim can expect in terms of being kept updated:

- within 12 days to advise them of how the case is progressing
- within 28 days and given a final update; and/or
- if a person is charged with the crime or offence the victim will be contacted as soon as possible.

This also explains what service the victim can expect once a person has been charged and a report goes to the criminal justice agency.

The 12 and 28-day updates are triggered through the force IMAGE system prompting enquiry officers to ensure that contact has been made with the victim. Supervisors check this is done and regular station audits from the performance manager ensure compliance.

User satisfaction surveys further strengthen this approach by including a specific question confirming knowledge of the process and assessing the level of service received.

Source: HMICS/Audit Scotland

about a crime it has also seen the highest percentage of users agreeing that they were kept adequately informed about the progress of their case (Exhibit 5).

### Complaints

**105.** In 2010/11, the total number of complaint cases received by the force declined for the second successive year to stand at 10.9 per 10,000 population. The latest figures available<sup>5</sup> suggest that this downward trend is continuing. Nevertheless, the rate remains above the Scottish average of 8.3 per 10,000 population. This is mainly down to the relatively high number of quality of service complaints (Exhibit 6), as opposed to allegations about the conduct of the force's officers, staff or special constables received from members of the public.

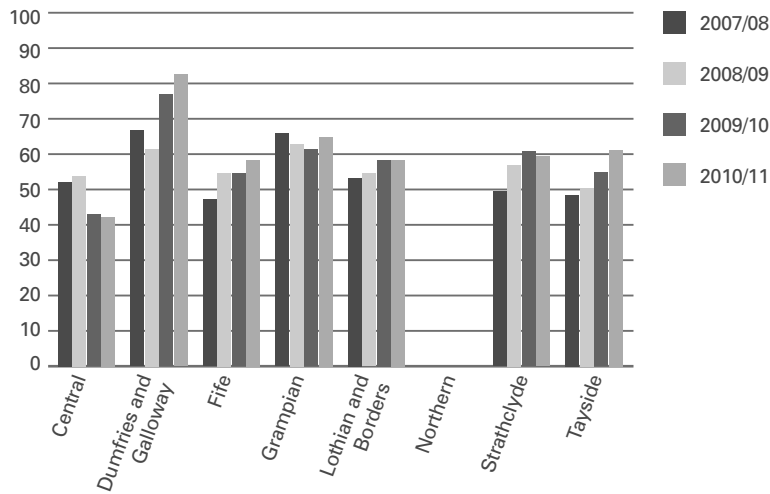
**106.** Like most other forces, the majority of service quality complaints are now to do with aspects of its service delivery, most of which in turn are resolved informally by explanation to the complainant. The force explains current trends in its complaints as reflecting their close links with the community and the robustness of their recording processes. It also receives a significant proportion of its complaints, about a fifth, from people outside the force area related primarily to road policing issues.

### Public reassurance and community safety

**107.** The overall picture is largely positive, with low rates of crime per 10,000 population and high rates of detection characteristic of the force's performance. Compared to other Scottish forces it typically has the lowest recorded crime rates for groups 1 to 4 combined and

### Exhibit 5

Force user satisfaction surveys: percentage 'kept adequately informed'



Source: Scottish Government, SPPF 2010/11

8.5 compared to 21.9 per 10,000 population and sexual offences (group 2), 6.2 compared to 12.5 per 10,000 population nationally.

**109.** Despite a slight decrease, the force's detection rate for groups 1 to 4 combined continues to compare favourably with that for other forces and Scotland as a whole (Exhibit 8, overleaf). Over the last three years it has exhibited the highest rate for both groups 3 and 4. However, the largest increase has been in group 1, where its rate has risen over 11 percentage points since 2007/08 to stand at 95.3 per cent in 2010/11. It also has higher than average detection rates for antisocial behaviour crimes and offences.

### Road safety

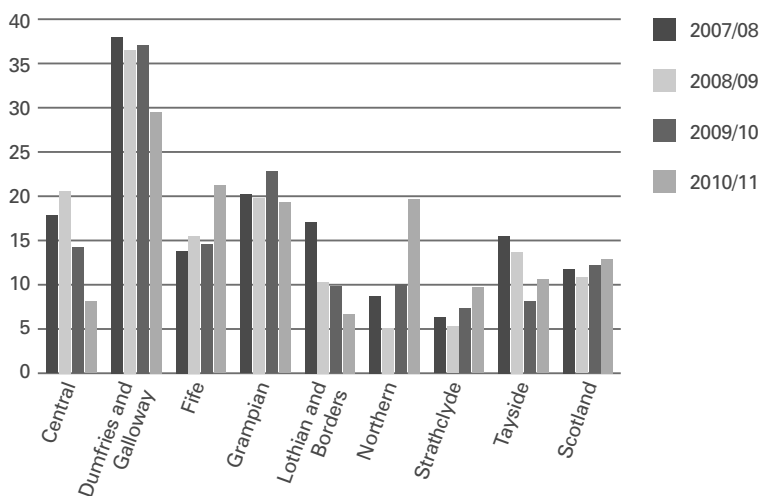
**110.** The force and its partner agencies continue to promote road safety and encourage safe driving, reflecting community concerns. Proactive enforcement measures to reduce casualties remain a priority and a number of indicators are monitored in relation to vehicle collisions as well as driving offences. Reflecting this approach, the force regularly achieves higher rates per 10,000 population of vehicle offences (group 7) than those of any other force. Indeed it does so by some margin, commonly sitting at around double the rate of the Scottish average. In addition, rates per million vehicle kilometres of persons killed or injured on the roads, including serious and slight injuries, children and adults, have all experienced long-term reductions to bring Dumfries and Galloway below the Scottish average. Although more recent figures are showing a rise in killed and serious injuries in the first half of 2011/12, it is too early to anticipate what effect this may have on the final figure for the current year (Exhibit 9, page 27).

### Antisocial behaviour

**111.** The force identified antisocial behaviour as a force priority in its community promise. Compared with other Scottish forces, Dumfries and Galloway has one of the lowest and

### Exhibit 6

Percentage of complaint allegations received concerning quality of service



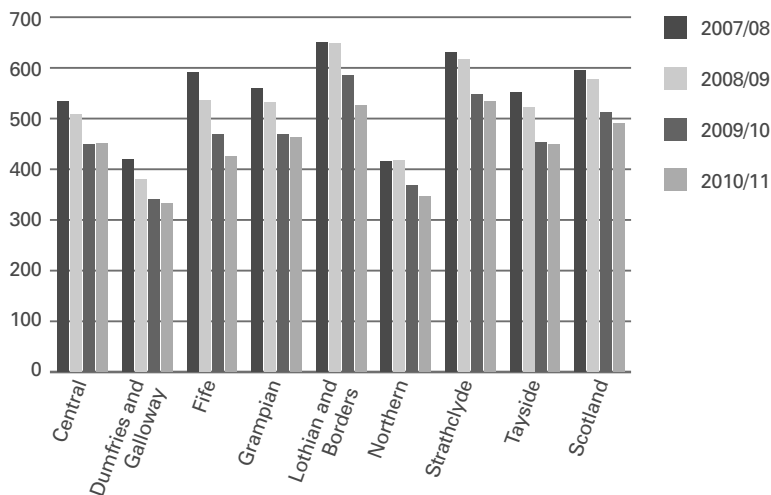
Source: PCCS

for groups 1 to 3 separately. The most up-to-date data (to September 2011) confirm this trend, despite the force recording some small year-on-year rises in the year 2010/11. The force also commonly has the highest detection rates for crimes of indecency (group 3) and crimes of fire-raising, malicious and reckless conduct (group 4) and higher than average rates for all other crime and offences groups.

**108.** The force has seen successive annual declines over the last three years in groups 1 to 4 combined (Exhibit 7, overleaf). In keeping with the trend for Scotland as a whole, reductions in group 4 crimes of fire-raising and vandalism in particular have contributed to the force's consistent downward trajectory. Compared with other forces it also has a considerably lower rate of crimes of violence (group 1),

**Exhibit 7**

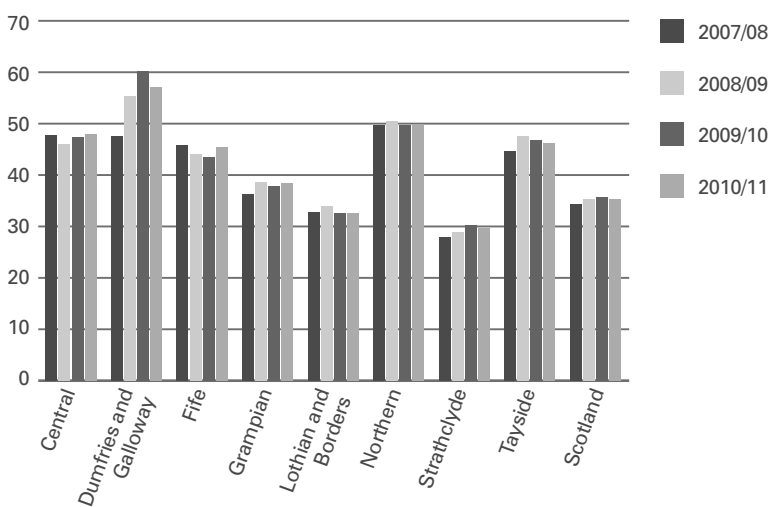
Total crime (groups 1-4) per 10,000 population



Source: Scottish Government, SPPF 2010/11

**Exhibit 8**

Group 1-4 crimes – detection rate



Source: Scottish Government, SPPF 2010/11

falling rates of recorded antisocial crimes and offences per 10,000 population. Incidents of disregard for community or personal wellbeing, environmental damage and the misuse of public space all contribute to this downward trend. While acts directed at people have seen a slight increase in 2010/11, the force continues to have one of the lowest rates of crimes and offences in this category, 7.8 compared to 18.3 per 10,000 population for Scotland.

**112.** Linked to this priority is youth crime. For the past three years the force has had one of the highest proportions in Scotland of crimes committed by youths aged between eight and 17 years. In 2010/11, they accounted for 16.5 per cent of its group 1 to 6 crimes, against a Scottish average of 10.2 per cent. However, this proportion marks a decrease since 2008/09 when it stood at 19.8 per cent. In addition, compared with 2009/10 the force

saw a 13 per cent fall in the number of group 6 crimes and a 4.9 per cent drop in group 4 crimes committed by young people, while figures up to September 2011 show further drops in the overall number of crimes committed by youths. Although relatively small numbers are involved, group 1 crimes have more than doubled since 2009/10 (from 11 to 28). It is acknowledged that a great deal of partnership working between the force and local partner agencies has been directed at young people, to good effect.

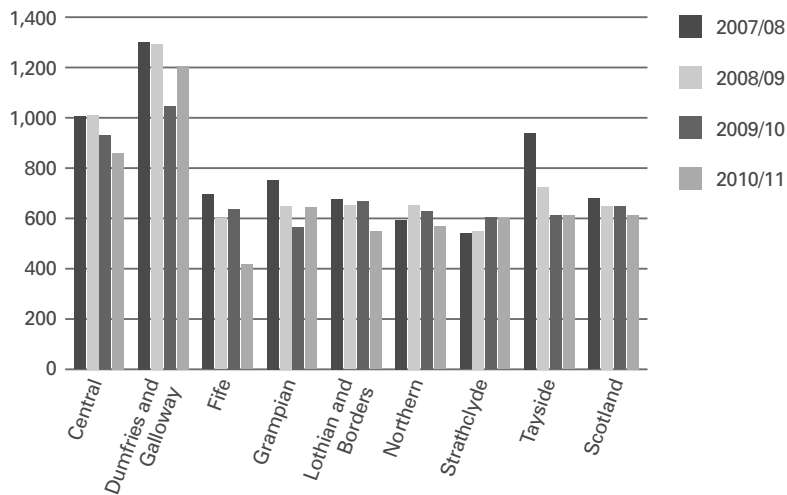
**113.** The force also shows a similar pattern for racist incidents and racially aggravated crimes; that is, low numbers recorded and among the highest detection rates in Scotland.

**Criminal justice and tackling crime**

**114.** A national target of 80 per cent has been in place for a number of years for the proportion of crime reports submitted to the procurator fiscal and the Children’s Reporter within 28 and 14 calendar days respectively. For the last four years the force has exhibited one of the highest proportions for submissions to the procurator fiscal, at 96.3 per cent in 2010/11 compared with a Scottish average of 90.1 per cent. Despite a slight year-on-year dip in 2010/11, longer-term increases in the proportion of reports to the Children’s Reporter have brought the force’s submission rate in 2010/11 at 83.9 per cent to just below the Scottish average of 85.3 per cent. It also has the lowest proportion of reports submitted that go on to be marked as ‘no proceedings’ including those so marked because of insufficient evidence (Exhibit 10).

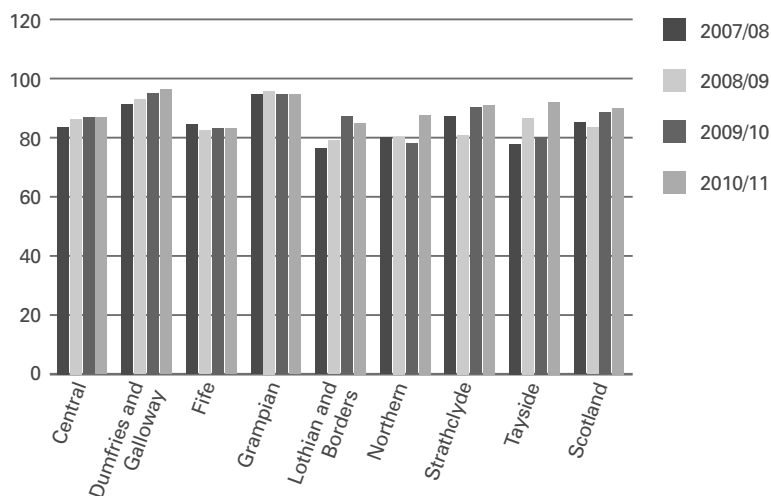
**115.** Offences can alternatively be disposed of by direct measures, such as antisocial behaviour fixed penalty tickets, formal warnings, restorative justice warnings and conferences. Both these and the formal report submissions described above are priority measures for the force and have been the focus of targeted joint working with partner agencies. Having been involved in piloting restorative

**Exhibit 9**  
Group 7 offences per 10,000 population



Source: Scottish Government, SPPF 2010/11

**Exhibit 10**  
Proportion of reports submitted to the procurator fiscal within 28 days (target = 80%)



Source: Scottish Government, SPPF 2010/11

justice measures, Dumfries and Galloway continues to account for a greater than expected share of all those that are applied across Scotland. Indeed, according to its 2011 self-evaluation plan, Dumfries and Galloway has provided more diversion from prosecution places than have other Scottish authorities combined. Such is its perceived success, the scheme is now due to be rolled out nationally.

**116.** It is often difficult to interpret statistics concerning drug offences because the type and quantities that the police seize can be greatly influenced by factors of supply and demand. This is important given that one of the force's priorities is to 'impact on' the supply, misuse and availability of drugs. The number of offences of supply and possession with intent to supply that the force has proactively detected has risen for the second successive year, giving it the highest rate per 10,000 population

in Scotland in 2010/11. Also, while the number of drug deaths in the force area has remained static over the last two years, the number of drug overdoses has fallen by 40.8 per cent.

**Sound governance and efficiency**

**117.** Across Scotland forces are striving to maintain high standards of service in the face of financial cuts and major reform. Over the past year, Dumfries and Galloway has been working to cut the number of support staff it employs – 2010/11 saw a 17.1 per cent attrition rate in this staff category – while seeking to recruit additional police officers.

**118.** At the present time it has the highest, though declining, rate per 10,000 population of police staff, at 17.5 members of civilian staff per 10,000 population compared with a Scotland-wide average of 12.9 (based on headcount rather than full-time equivalent which would give a ratio of 14.5 to 11.8). Furthermore, despite also having the lowest actual number of police officers in Scotland the force has one of the highest rates per 10,000 population. Successive increases in its special constabulary strength mean that it also continues to have the highest rate of special constables nationally.

**119.** Both police officers and support staff in Dumfries and Galloway have some of the lowest sickness absence rates across the Scottish forces. The force is not only doing well against its own past performance but is also strong in comparison with Scotland as a whole. The force credits proactive measures to address sickness issues at an early stage including the use of private care as a main contributor to this trend (Exhibit 11, overleaf).

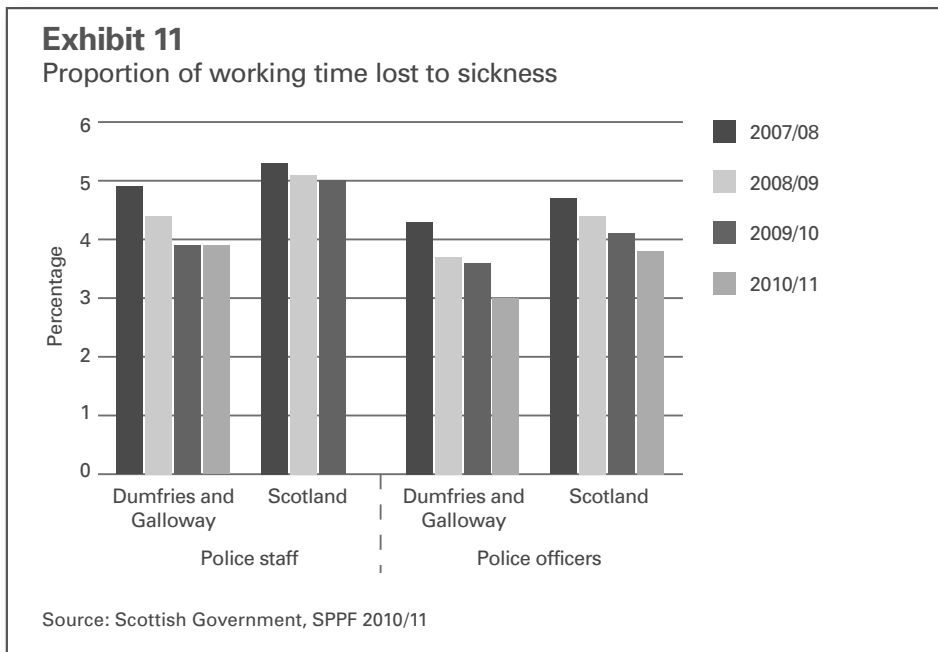
**120.** Though not a Community Promise measure, staff morale and satisfaction is an important and relevant measure under governance and efficiency. As a result of the departure of its former diversity assistant, the force has not run a formal staff survey since 2008. In this absence, proxy measures such

as sickness absence can be useful indicators of staff morale, particularly at this time of job losses and change. That said, the force has run a number of smaller staff consultation exercises on topics such as uniforms, making savings and police reform. Also, having now recruited a replacement member of staff it is in the process of running an online staff survey of a similar format to that of previous years, the results of which will be available in spring 2012. The inspection team were, however, reassured through interviews and focus groups with police officers, police staff, unions and staff associations that morale was good. All staff felt they had been well informed of issues affecting both them and the force.

**121.** Finally, all forces in Scotland have witnessed a decrease in the proportion of salary costs accounted for by overtime for both police officers and police staff. Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary is no exception, currently showing the lowest proportion for support staff across Scotland.

**Conclusion**

**122.** Taken together the figures above combine to present a very positive picture of performance by Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary. In most instances, recorded crime is low and declining particularly over the longer term, while detection rates and user satisfaction are already among the highest in Scotland and still improving. Internally, despite marked cuts in police staff numbers, both sickness absence and costs accounted for by overtime continue to fall. Even where performance has traditionally been less strong, such as with quality of service complaints, recent figures suggest that here too the trends are positive.



# Part 4. Improvement recommendations



**123.** Scottish police services are going through a period of major change with the government's announcement of its plan to create a single Scottish police force. We recognise that this is now a prominent issue for all forces and have taken this into account in setting out the improvement agenda. However, police authorities and forces have an important role to maintain in the run-up to police reform. In particular, they must continue to observe their duties under the Best Value legislation to ensure that police services remain effective, make the best use of the resources allocated to them and are accountable to local communities.

**124.** The improvement areas, set out below, focus on areas that are important to the operation of the police authority in the run-up to the transition to a single force.

## Improvement agenda

### Joint improvements

1. The authority needs to form a clear view of how it can provide direction and scrutiny in the critical period of transition to a single force. While recognising the need to sustain performance in the year ahead they must also make difficult decisions in favour of the process of reform and a single national service. At its meeting on 24 January 2012, the Police (and Fire and Rescue) Authority agreed to recommend to the new council that the PFRC's remit is changed to include oversight of the Dumfries and Galloway Pathfinder project and the transition to the new arrangements.
2. The authority and force should sustain the scrutiny of police performance, and consider how to develop this further to challenge the cost-effectiveness of police services. They should also ensure that performance reports provide more balanced and comparative information including the cost of police activity.

3. The authority and force should put in place more systematic scrutiny of risks and ensure that the authority is aware of emerging risks, and of changes to risks, on an ongoing basis.

### Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority

1. The authority should continue to develop the skills and capacity of members, and encourage the uptake of training and development events, particularly for new members following the 2012 council elections.
2. The authority should put measures in place to ensure that it has sufficient oversight of the force's activities to promote equal opportunities and diversity.
3. The authority should consider how to develop public reporting to provide more contextual and comparative information.

### Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary

1. The force should continue to develop its HR and finance strategies in the context of police reform, which are responsive to the needs of the community. It should endeavour to maintain and improve levels of performance and identify opportunities to reduce cost.
2. The force should work with the PFRC to develop an Asset Management Plan which articulates the financial liabilities of the force estate and fixed assets to assist in managing the transfer to a single force structure.



# Appendix 1.

## Expectations of police authorities

The Scottish Government has issued two main sources of guidance on the role of elected members and police authorities:

- *Circular 11/2003, Implementing Best Value in the Scottish Police Service*, issued in December 2003.
- *Guidance to Members*, issued in June 2007.

Taken together, these two documents set out six main areas of activity for police authorities and their members:

- Police authorities need to pursue Best Value in tandem with chief constables who are responsible for police operations in their force. Members of the police authorities should take joint responsibility for the overarching plan to achieve Best Value and other duties in the force, and work with the chief constable to ensure that it is carried out effectively.
- Best Value requires elected members and senior managers to develop a vision of how Best Value will contribute to the corporate goals of the authorities, inform the direction of services and be communicated to staff.
- Police authorities are expected to demonstrate responsiveness to the needs of the public and other stakeholders. Plans, priorities and actions should be informed by an understanding of those needs. Police authorities may make clear publicly how they engage and work with chief constables, delivering and reporting on Best Value. They have a particular role to play in ensuring effective public consultation on aspects of policing.
- It is a matter for each authority to determine how it fulfils these roles. However, one option might be for the police authorities to contribute to and endorse the chief constable's annual plan.
- Members of the police authorities should be able to demonstrate that they are making the best use of public resources and demonstrate an approach to review that is rigorous, robust and covers all aspects of their work.
- Police authorities need to make sure that the force collects and reports good-quality performance data to them. Police authorities should analyse the data and any accompanying commentary. They may then want to investigate further by asking questions of the chief constable as part of a continuous discussion and review of force performance.

# Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary and Police Authority

## Best Value Audit and Inspection

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