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News release

Embargoed until 00.01 hours, Thursday 5 July 2012

Central Scotland Police and Joint Police Board perform well and have scope for improvement in the year ahead

Central Scotland Police and its police authority, the Central Scotland Police Joint Board, perform well. Both demonstrate many aspects of Best Value but can make improvements in some areas in the transition to a single Scottish force.

The *Best Value Audit and Inspection: Central Scotland Police and Joint Police Board* provides an overview of how these bodies are meeting their duties to deliver Best Value in what they do. It is a joint report from the Accounts Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS).

The force performs to a good standard. Public satisfaction is improving and overall crime rates continue to fall. Detection rates remain high and the force continues to show good stewardship in the way it manages its resources.

It should, however, evaluate its partnership working to share best practice, improve analysis of its community policing model and review lead arrangements for equality issues.

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Andrew Laing, said: "There are areas identified for further improvement but this is in the context of a force and board that are performing well. For example, the improvements made to the force strategic framework would benefit from the board having access to it, in particular, the Force Improvement Plan."

The Accounts Commission found that **the police authority** fulfils its responsibilities well and demonstrates many of the key elements of Best Value. It has an effective relationship with the force based on a shared vision with a strong focus on community policing

Board members should engage more consistently in working with partners and improve its monitoring of issues like workforce planning and finance. The reports it receives should be clearer on the implications of decisions - particularly in the light of significant changes ahead of the move next year to a single force.

Chair of the Accounts Commission, John Baillie said: "We welcome the board's self-awareness. It knows how it can improve further and this can be seen in a strong transitional work plan. It has good quality information from the force but it needs to improve scrutiny in some areas and in the way reports to the public."

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Notes to Editors

1. The Accounts Commission for Scotland was set up in 1975. The Commission checks whether local authorities, fire and police boards spend public money properly and effectively.
2. HMICS operates independently of police forces, police authorities and the Scottish Government and exists to monitor and improve the police service in Scotland.
3. Central Scotland Police Joint Board includes representatives from Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils.
4. Both the Accounts Commission and HMICS have the power to examine how well Scottish police authorities are delivering best value. HMICS also has a statutory duty to inspect police forces and report on their state

and efficiency. Both organisations would have been entitled produce their own report on each police authority but this would have created duplication of work and is not in keeping with the spirit of the recommendations of the Crerar report and with the current drive to streamline scrutiny. Also, a joint report gives the public an overall view of how well the police authorities in their area are meeting their duties to provide best value. It was decided that a joint report would be the most efficient way for both bodies to exercise their best value duties.

5. Best Value is the duty placed on local authorities by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. It requires local authorities to demonstrate their on-going commitment to providing better services to local people