

Best Value in police authorities and police forces in Scotland

Overview report



Prepared for the Accounts Commission and Scottish ministers
November 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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Introduction



1. This joint report is made by the Accounts Commission under Section 97A 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.

2. 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.

3. The 2003 Act is supported by more detailed statutory guidance on Best Value and Community Planning. Along with the act, this guidance indicates 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.

4. 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.

5. In 2009, the Accounts Commission and HMICS began a programme of joint audits and inspections to examine how well the eight Scottish forces and police authorities were delivering best value. The joint audits/inspections included a corporate assessment of police authorities and forces that examined a number of key issues including: vision and strategic direction; governance and accountability; partnership working and community engagement; performance management and improvement; use of resources; equalities; and sustainability. They also included a performance assessment for each force.

6. The programme of audits/inspections was completed in 2012, as shown in [Exhibit 1](#).

7. Over and above the Best Value audit and inspection programme, in October 2010, Audit Scotland published a report on the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA). While the role of the SPSA has been outwith the remit of the joint audits/inspections, this report provides useful contextual information when considering the future of police services under the Police Service of Scotland from April 2013.

8. This national overview summarises our findings from local reports and supplements them with commentary on other policing issues at a national level. In 2011, the Scottish Government decided on a national approach to policing. From April 2013 two new bodies will be established: the Scottish Police Authority and the Police Service of Scotland. These replace the eight current police forces and authorities and, as described

Exhibit 1

Publication of joint Best Value audit and inspection reports

Police authority/force	Date of publication
Tayside Police and Tayside Joint Police Board	December 2009
Northern Constabulary and Northern Joint Police Board	April 2010
Grampian Police and Grampian Joint Police Board	February 2011
Strathclyde Police and Strathclyde Police Authority	July 2011
Lothian and Borders Police and Police Board	December 2011
Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary and Police Authority	June 2012
Central Scotland Police and Central Scotland Joint Police Board	July 2012
Fife Constabulary and Fife Police Authority	September 2012
Strathclyde Police Authority (follow-up report)	September 2012

Source: Audit Scotland and HMICS

later in this report, this will mean a different role for local authorities in the delivery of local policing.

The strengths, weaknesses and examples of good practice identified in this overview report can help inform subsequent developments in governance and management arrangements both locally and nationally.

9. The introduction of the new national arrangements for policing in Scotland from April 2013 will bring different audit and inspection arrangements. The inspection of policing services will remain with HMICS, but the responsibility for audit will be transferred from the Accounts Commission to the Auditor General for Scotland.

Summary



Overall conclusions

10. Police forces and authorities play a crucial role in helping to ensure the safety of their local communities and have made an important contribution to reducing crime.

11. The crime rate in Scotland is lower than in England and Wales for most types of crime. However, violent crime per head of population is greater in Scotland than in England and Wales and elsewhere in Europe.

12. Though the overall level of reported crime has been declining, reported levels of domestic abuse and racially aggravated crimes have been increasing. This trend may be influenced by changing social attitudes and a greater public confidence in reporting these types of crime, although there may be other reasons for the increases.

13. The fear of crime is falling and public satisfaction, confidence and attitudes to the police in local communities remain high. Complaints about the police have been decreasing over time, but did increase in 2011/12.

14. As part of a tripartite arrangement along with the chief constable and Scottish ministers, police authorities have had an important role in the governance of policing in Scotland. Police authorities currently oversee spending of almost £942 million across Scotland's eight police forces. To ensure they get best value from these resources, police authorities and forces have to make hard choices between competing priorities. These decisions come with risks that touch people's lives very directly. We found that the priorities of individual Scottish police forces are informed by a good understanding of the policing needs of local communities and that community engagement has been strengthened through the development of community policing.

15. Police forces play an effective role within local community planning arrangements and work well with partners to deliver local outcomes. Police authorities, however, have not been as effective in their role of influencing local policing and partnership priorities and then monitoring development and delivery.

16. There are notable differences in the cost of policing across Scotland's eight forces, but average costs are below comparable policing costs in the rest of the UK. Police forces have sound systems of budget control, but lack an effective means of analysing the cost of their activities more clearly to inform resource prioritisation. In dealing with real term decreases in their budgets, police forces have reported significant savings through efficiency programmes. They are targeting improvement activity towards priorities, although aspects of organisational change would benefit from better strategic leadership. Police authorities have done relatively little to influence or monitor force improvement activity.

17. Police officers and staff are police forces' major resource, accounting for around 85 per cent of budgets, and forces have employed effective strategies to manage their HR. They have been working within the context of maintaining a nationally agreed minimum number of police officers against a backdrop of real term budget reductions. As a result, on average forces have reduced the number of police staff by 12 per cent over the past three years to balance their budgets.

18. The management of police assets has been relatively underdeveloped with forces only recently developing asset management strategies. We found it was not always clear how these strategies have helped to improve the way assets are managed. Some forces share buildings with partners to generate efficiencies but there has been limited progress in sharing services and other resources across forces.

19. Police forces have been improving the way they manage performance but need to identify more clearly costs and value for money. The performance information they provide to police authorities typically lacks the necessary information to fully support effective scrutiny, such as context and commentary, internal comparisons across divisions, trends over time and benchmarking against national performance. Police authority members, for their part, have been improving their scrutiny of police performance but still do not provide an appropriate level of challenge to performance, particularly relating to value for money and risk.

20. Scottish police forces have demonstrated clear leadership of their equality agendas and taken actions, such as equality impact assessments, to address equality issues. This is reflected in their workforces becoming more diverse. They have also been striving to improve the environmental impact of their work, although this requires further improvement in contributing to the government's national targets. Police authority members have not played an effective role in influencing or scrutinising either equality and diversity or environmental issues.

21. Our audits/inspections found that members of police authorities need to have a better understanding of their roles. As a result, they have generally not provided appropriate leadership or carried out their role to best effect. Local elected members have not played an active enough role in setting local priorities and objectives, scrutinising local policing plans and public performance reporting. It is important that authorities ensure, in the transition to the new national policing arrangements, that their members are properly equipped to perform their new role effectively. In [Appendix 1](#) of this report, we have provided a checklist of issues for current police authority members to consider prior to April 2013.

22. The new policing arrangements in Scotland come into effect in April 2013. It is critical that the respective roles of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA), the Police Service of Scotland, local authorities and their partners are clearly understood and that policing services are managed in accordance with well-established principles of good governance and accountability. In particular, to address the identified weaknesses in governance of policing, it is important that under the new arrangements the SPA promotes and supports continuous improvement of policing in Scotland and effectively holds the chief constable to account.

23. To address the areas for improvement identified throughout this report, we have identified a range of key issues to be considered under the new policing arrangements. These are outlined in [Appendix 2](#) of this report.

Part 1. Context



Police authorities and joint police boards

24. Each Scottish council has a statutory duty to perform as a police authority. Since the reorganisation of local government into 32 unitary local authorities in 1996, two of the eight Scottish police forces (Dumfries and Galloway and Fife) cover a single council area and are overseen by a single police authority. These two police authorities comprise elected members from the council and carry out their functions through a committee of the council. For the other six Scottish police forces, which each cover between three and 12 council areas, police authorities discharge their duties through joint police boards, each of which comprises elected representatives from the councils within the relevant force area.

25. The term ‘police authority’ is used in the rest of this report and refers to the operation of both the unitary police authorities and joint police boards.

Police forces

26. Forces vary greatly in terms of size (*Exhibit 2, overleaf*). They range from Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, which employs 493 police officers and serves a population of approximately 148,190 people, to Strathclyde Police, which employs 8,097 police officers and serves a population of approximately 2.2 million people. The geographic areas covered by forces are also extremely diverse, from Northern Constabulary covering almost 40 per cent of Scotland at 12,000 square miles, including the Outer Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland, to Fife Constabulary covering less than two per cent, at only 513 square miles.

27. The organisational structure of forces also varies. However, forces are generally managed on the basis of both:

- geographical areas – where forces are structured into territorial divisions or command areas, which may be further divided into subdivisions. In total, there are 27 police divisions across the eight Scottish police forces, ranging in size from around 120 to 1,380 police officers
- functions – where forces are structured based on a distinction between general operations (eg, preventing crime, protecting people and property and maintaining public order); and specialist operations (eg, criminal investigation, underwater search, air support and firearms response). In addition, there is a clear delineation between what are considered to be ‘operational’ functions (which comprise all of the above activities) and administrative/support functions that are primarily undertaken by police staff.¹

Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA)

28. Scottish police forces are supported by the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA).² The SPSA is a non-departmental public body (NDPB), established in April 2007, that provides a number of common police services including national police training through the Scottish Police College, police information and intelligence systems and day-to-day ICT support. In addition, it maintains specialist frontline officers³ and intelligence staff of the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency (SCDEA).

29. The SPSA also provides the police service with a national forensic service. The SPSA is directly funded by the Scottish Government and has around 1,600 staff (FTE) and a total budget of around £92 million.

Other police bodies

30. Our audits/inspections covered the eight Scottish police authorities and forces. However, it is also worth noting that a number of other UK police bodies operate in Scotland, including:

- British Transport Police – a police force for the railways providing a service for rail operators, their staff and passengers across Britain.
- Ministry of Defence Police – provides security within Ministry of Defence properties across Britain (eg, the nuclear submarine base at Faslane) and at sites deemed essential to the UK’s critical national infrastructure.
- Civil Nuclear Constabulary – provides protection for nuclear materials on designated UK nuclear licensed sites and in transit.
- Serious and Organised Crime Agency – SOCA tackles serious organised crime across the UK including Class A drugs, people smuggling and human trafficking, fraud, computer crime and money laundering. SOCA and its functions are to be absorbed into the new National Crime Agency (Home Office, 2011).
- United Kingdom Border Agency and United Kingdom Border Force – agencies of the Home Office tasked to protect the UK’s border.

¹ Police staff are civilian members of police forces who perform a number of specialist and support functions. They do not have police powers.

² As a non-departmental public body (NDPB), the SPSA is not subject to the same Best Value audit and inspection process as the eight police authorities and forces. In October 2010, Audit Scotland published a report on the SPSA on behalf of the Auditor General for Scotland, which is available at http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2010/nr_101028_spsa.pdf

³ Police officers seconded to SPSA in any capacity remain members of their parent police forces. SPSA is, however, an employer in its own right and employs police staff to deliver several specialist functions.

Exhibit 2

Police force size and coverage



Police force	No of police officers ¹ (and police staff) ²	Resident population	Percentage of Scottish population covered (%)	Force area (square miles)	Force area as percentage of Scotland (%)
Strathclyde	8,097 (2,260)	2,221,830	42.5	5,370	18
Lothian and Borders	2,855 (1,061)	949,710	18.2	2,471	8
Grampian	1,462 (618)	550,620	10.5	3,253	11
Tayside	1,224 (485)	402,640	7.7	2,896	9
Fife	1,064 (423)	365,020	7.0	513	2
Central Scotland	833 (302)	293,760	5.6	1,016	3
Northern	755 (316)	290,330	5.6	12,000	40
Dumfries and Galloway	493 (253)	148,190	2.8	2,649	9
Scotland	16,783³ (5,718)	5,222,100	100⁴	30,168	100

Notes:

1. Full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers as at 30 June 2012, rounded to the nearest whole number.
2. Full-time equivalent (FTE) police staff as at 31 March 2012.
3. This does not include police officers employed in the SPSA/SCDEA and officers seconded to HMICS, Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS), Scottish Government or elsewhere. The total number of police officers in Scotland at 30 June 2012 was 17,373. Scotland and force totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding.
4. Scotland total and individual force percentages may not equal due to rounding.

Source: *Police quarterly strength statistics Scotland*, Scottish Government, 30 June 2012 and HMICS

31. Unlike the eight Scottish police forces, the forces listed in para 30 fall under UK rather than Scottish jurisdiction.

The tripartite arrangements and police authorities' leadership role

32. Police forces in Scotland are governed through a tripartite arrangement between the chief constable, the local police authority, and Scottish ministers. The chief constable is responsible for the operational aspects of policing within the force area. The authority is responsible for setting the police budget, holding the chief constable to account and ensuring that best value is achieved. In addition, authorities have a specific responsibility for exercising scrutiny over the handling of complaints about the police. 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.

33. Although these arrangements mean that, locally, the police authority and the chief constable have distinct roles, they must work in partnership to deliver local policing services for their communities and to achieve best value. In this report, we only make judgements on the authorities and forces, but all parties to the tripartite arrangement, including Scottish ministers, have responsibility for the overall performance of the police service.

Police reform

34. The Scottish Government is implementing a programme of police reform to sustain future policing outcomes and local policing for communities. The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 ('the Act') received royal assent on 7 August 2012. The Act replaces the current eight Scottish police forces (and SPFA) and police authorities with a single Police Service of Scotland.

In establishing the Police Service of Scotland, the Scottish Government's aims⁴ are:

- protecting and improving frontline services for local communities by reducing duplication in supporting areas such as payroll and HR, and delivering services such as roads policing in different ways
- keeping communities safer by providing more equitable access across Scotland to specialist support, expertise and national capacity when it is needed
- strengthening the links between the police and the communities they serve through locally elected members, creating a new direct relationship with each of Scotland's 32 local authorities rather than the regional joint boards, and improving partnership working with other agencies
- providing clearer national governance.

35. In September 2012, Mr Stephen House was appointed as chief constable of the Police Service of Scotland.

36. The Act also replaces local police authorities with a single, independent Scottish Police Authority (SPA) that is accountable to Scottish ministers for promoting and supporting continuous improvement in the policing of Scotland; keeping the policing of Scotland under review; holding the chief constable to account for the policing of Scotland; and providing forensic services to the Police Service, the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner and the Lord Advocate and procurators fiscal. The Act specifies that the SPA will consist of a chair and ten to 14 other members, all appointed by Scottish ministers. In August 2012, Mr Vic Emery was appointed chair of the new Scottish Police Authority.

Twelve further members of the SPA were appointed in October 2012.

37. The Act also requires that the SPA, in collaboration with the chief constable, prepare and publish a strategic policing plan for approval by Scottish ministers. The SPA must prepare a strategic policing plan at least once every three years and, in doing so, must take account of the views of local authorities, HMICS and other relevant stakeholders. The chief constable must prepare an annual policing plan that reflects the strategic plan.

38. The Act also introduces an obligation on local police commanders in each local authority area in Scotland to produce a policing plan for the area, setting out priorities, objectives and arrangements for local service delivery, for approval by the local authority. The Act makes it clear that the local authority will be involved in determining priorities and objectives for policing in the area. The Act is not prescriptive in terms of local structures and the role of local elected members, beyond each local authority being required to approve the local policing plan. There is therefore scope for local authorities to examine how local dialogue with police commanders and monitoring of local policing services may function. At present, 'pathfinder' projects are operating in several local authorities as a way of exploring how local elected representatives might exercise this role, and how policing can best be aligned with community planning arrangements.

39. Reviews of complaints about the police and the investigation of serious incidents and offences involving people serving with the police will be handled by one independent body, the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC).

40. The Act places a duty on the chief constable to make arrangements which secure best value for the

Police Service of Scotland. It also provides for the Auditor General for Scotland and HMICS to examine whether both the SPA and the Police Service of Scotland are meeting their duties to secure best value. HMICS, the Auditor General and the PIRC must cooperate and coordinate their activity to prevent any unnecessary duplication of any inspections, investigations, inquiries or examinations of the SPA or the Police Service of Scotland.

41. The Scottish Government is working with the police service and other key stakeholders to implement these new structures by 1 April 2013. Based on the finding from our audit/inspection reports, we have provided a checklist for existing members of police authorities to help them manage the transition to the new arrangements in April 2013 ([Appendix 1](#)).

Part 2. Governance and management



Vision and strategic direction

We found that the priorities of individual Scottish police forces are informed by a good understanding of the policing needs of local communities. Across police authorities, members have not been effective in influencing the vision and strategic priorities for local policing and subsequently monitoring progress in delivering those objectives.

42. Scottish police forces' strategic plans are informed by a mix of national and local policing priorities. The priorities in their plans are informed by the national strategic assessment for policing,⁵ the Scottish Government's national community safety objectives and the community plans of constituent councils. Local priorities are developed based on a sound understanding of local needs and informed by good engagement with partners and local communities.

43. In setting their vision, forces strike a balance between crime prevention and enforcement activity. The relative emphasis for individual forces has depended on local context and the approach of individual chief constables. The introduction of the Police Service of Scotland, Scottish Police Authority and local policing plans in April 2013 will determine the future balance between prevention and enforcement in local areas.

44. In forces where strategic plans support the delivery of policing activity well, we found that strategic priorities clearly link to operational delivery plans and are widely communicated and understood by staff, partners and the wider community. For example, Fife Constabulary has made its policing plan deliberately short and simple so it is easier to understand

and remember. It has also reproduced the plan in a business card format for use by staff and the public, which strengthens the understanding of strategic priorities at a local level and helps to ensure that operational activity and resources are directed towards priority areas. However, we found these links were not clear in all forces, meaning that plans and priorities may not be universally understood by police officers, staff and partners. Similarly, this can make it more difficult for forces and police authorities to monitor and review the impact of force/divisional activities.

45. Our Best Value audits/inspections found that in some authorities, for example in Strathclyde, Tayside and Lothian and Borders, members have not played an effective role in helping to shape strategic policing plans and local priorities. In these authorities, members simply endorsed the force's vision and strategic direction for policing. While these are only three of Scotland's eight current police authorities, it means that members responsible for almost two-thirds of Scotland's policing are playing a passive role in setting a vision for local policing. Our recent follow-up audit/inspection of Strathclyde Police Authority reported that members are only recently beginning to address this by playing a more active role in shaping future policing priorities.

Key issues to consider

The new Scottish Police Authority should ensure that it has strong arrangements in place to develop, in collaboration with the chief constable, the strategic policing plan for Scotland. In doing so, it should take account of the views of local authorities, HMICS and other stakeholders. It should also establish good arrangements for

monitoring progress in achieving this plan.

At the local level, it is important that the local policing plan clearly sets out the priorities and objectives for police services in that area, and that it is appropriately aligned with community planning arrangements. Local arrangements should also ensure that effective monitoring processes are in place.

Police authority governance arrangements

Police authority members have not carried out their roles and responsibilities to full effect. They would have benefited from better support and development to improve their confidence and capacity to lead and scrutinise police activity.

46. Police authorities operate with different governance structures. For example, joint police boards are supported by a range of subcommittees,⁶ typically covering issues such as audit and scrutiny, policy and best value, resources and complaints.

47. We found that governance structures provide a sound basis for members to carry out their roles, albeit we highlighted that aspects of some were not consistent with recognised good practice. For example, in Grampian Police, subcommittees were chaired by the convener of the board and in Fife Constabulary the former police fire and safety committee's (PFSC) scrutiny group was chaired by the PFSC convener and met in private.⁷ To comply with published principles of good governance ([Exhibit 3](#)),

⁵ This is one of a number of policing-related products which is generated by the National Intelligence Model. This is an analytical approach that drives effective strategy for all law enforcement needs, ranging from organised crime to road safety. It is capable of use in relation to new or emerging problems and provides a strategic and operational focus for policing activity.

⁶ This does not include subcommittees that are only convened as and when required, or issues such as those covering appointments, urgent business and emergencies, etc.

⁷ Since the May 2012 elections, Fife Constabulary's police fire and safety committee (PFSC) has been replaced with a police transition committee in preparation for April 2013.

Exhibit 3

Principles of good governance

- 1 Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community, and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
- 2 Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose and clearly defined functions and roles.
- 3 Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
- 4 Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.
- 5 Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.
- 6 Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

Source: *Delivering good governance in local government framework*, SOLACE/CIPFA, 2007

subcommittees and/or working groups should be chaired by a member of a different political party to that of the convener. In addition, authority activity in scrutinising police performance should be conducted in public.

48. Although governance structures are appropriate in the main, we found the effectiveness of elected member leadership and scrutiny to be poor. In many cases members have tended to take a largely passive role, for example by approving budgets rather than being involved in their early development and by responding to force reports rather than actively identifying what they want reports on.

49. Where we found effective working relationships between police forces and authorities, police authority members are supplied with good information to scrutinise force performance and use this to provide a reasonable level of challenge to officers. Less effective working relationships tend to be characterised by forces providing insufficient information within reports to support

effective scrutiny, which in turn limits opportunities for members to consider options and make decisions.

50. The support available to elected members is vital in helping them carry out their police authority functions effectively. We found the support provided to most joint boards to be insufficient. The level of support provided across Scotland is variable. Six police authorities are supported by a part-time clerk and treasurer function (provided by one of the constituent councils). Lothian and Borders Police Authority have additional policy and analytical support equivalent to one full-time member of staff, while Strathclyde Police Authority has dedicated support provided through a substantial police authority office, comprising 11 members of staff and with an annual cost of around £1.3 million.

51. Where support for police authorities had been increased, for example in Lothian and Borders Police Authority, this has had a positive impact for members.

However, we also found that the quality of support available was more important than the amount of resources available. This was highlighted by the lack of evidence to demonstrate that the significant resources available to Strathclyde Police Authority are improving the effectiveness of the police authority.

52. Across all audits/inspections we found training and development for police authority members to be an area for improvement in helping build their confidence and capacity to carry out their leadership and scrutiny roles. We identified the need to make training systematic and structured and to encourage members' uptake of training, which in half of all police authorities we reported as being poor.

53. Developing the capabilities of those who will be overseeing the delivery of police services from April 2013 will be critical to making the new arrangements operate effectively. Members of the SPA will need appropriate support to enable them to fulfil their strategic oversight role effectively. At a local level, councils will need to consider what training, development and support is required for elected members who will play an important role in agreeing local policing plans from April 2013 onwards.

Key issues to consider

It is important that the new policing arrangements operate in a way that is consistent with recognised principles of good governance.

It is vital that the arrangements for ensuring clear accountability are clearly articulated and that roles and responsibilities are understood and agreed.

Members of the SPA and local authorities should receive appropriate training on their respective roles and responsibilities and be provided with appropriate support to carry out these roles effectively.

Community engagement

Police forces and police authority members engage well with their communities and as a result have a good understanding of their policing needs. Community engagement has been strengthened through the development of community policing and there is a range of good practice across the country.

54. Strong links with local communities are a fundamental component of consensual policing in Scotland. While the eight Scottish police forces deliver on a number of national priority areas, there are also a range of policing-related issues within individual communities that clearly impact upon local people's quality of life and feelings of security and safety. It is therefore important that police forces have mechanisms in place which enable local officers to connect with local communities, to understand local issues, communities' expectations and assist in devising appropriate responses and solutions.

55. Throughout our audit and inspection programme, we found community engagement to be an area of strength across all force areas. Police officers and police authority members regularly attend a wide range of community engagement meetings, which helps them develop a good understanding of their local communities' needs and policing priorities.

56. Some forces are also actively seeking additional ways to broaden their contact with local residents. For example, we highlighted that Fife Constabulary demonstrates good practice in engaging with people in places like supermarkets, DIY stores, schools and credit union offices, and in making direct contact with over 450 different minority communities. Like some other forces, it is also using social media such as Facebook and Twitter to successfully reach a wider audience.

57. We found community engagement had also been strengthened through the development of community policing models across several forces, notably in Lothian and Borders Police, Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, Central Scotland Police and Fife Constabulary. Community policing is underpinned by proactive and well-structured approaches to community engagement, examples of which are given below.

Police in the Community Programme – Fife Constabulary

Fife Constabulary's commitment to taking policing closer to the community is evident in its *Police in the Community Programme*. This is a community-based initiative aimed at increasing public awareness and increasing confidence in its ability to deliver policing services. The programme takes the format of a training course for members of the community with a series of lectures and events run over a six-week period. Since the programme began in 2009 six courses have been held, comprising over 150 participants aged between 16 and 84 from all sections of Fife's communities. The course delivers an overview of the force's policing plan priorities and issues facing policing. It also includes case studies and gets students to work together to look at solutions to problems in the community. Feedback from participants indicates that the programme was worthwhile and of great benefit to them. A number of participants go on to become special constables or full-time officers.

People and Communities Together (PACT) – Central Scotland Police

Through the PACT process community officers are taking steps to understand the needs of communities and set local priorities through effective consultation, planning and reporting back to

communities. The introduction of PACT has led to the development of Community Policing Forums that are involved in how priorities are presented and how communities feed into this through a process of 'You said, we did' reporting.

Central Scotland Police is also using PACT to inform response teams and demand management. In Bannockburn, the force is testing an approach which links demand management with PACT priorities so that response teams are aware of the priorities in areas where they are being deployed. Community policing shifts have recently been reviewed following consultation and agreement with the police federation, and planned changes to shift patterns aim to improve its overall 24/7 capacity spread with community officers working more days and a less compressed shift pattern.

Central Scotland Police's improved engagement with its communities is reflected in an impressive turnaround in customer satisfaction rates during 2011/12, with improvement in eight of its nine user satisfaction and quality of service indicators.

58. Police authority members actively engage with their communities as elected councillors. A number of authorities have built on this with clearly stated commitments on engagement through 'community promises' and 'community charters'. These are positive developments, but they would benefit from having measurable objectives to help communities assess whether the commitments are being met. Central Scotland Police Authority has also made a clear statement about the role of its members in engaging with communities through agreed role descriptions that include representing and acting as an advocate for the interests of the board and liaising and working with local organisations and representative groups to further the interest of the board.

59. While there are examples of good work in this area, we found police authorities could make better use of community engagement. Not all police forces and authorities coordinate their community engagement well or use community feedback sufficiently to influence local priorities in their strategic planning processes.

Key issues to consider

When planning and carrying out community engagement activity, local commanders should consider how best to coordinate this with other local engagement activity being carried out by partners.

Local commanders should ensure that local policing plans and priorities are clearly informed by feedback from local communities.

Partnership working

Forces work well with their partners to deliver better community safety and public protection outcomes. Across the country, police authority members have not provided sufficient strategic oversight or monitoring of partnership activity.

60. Police forces are committed to integrating community planning into their ways of working. They work well with their partners at both strategic and tactical levels to enhance community wellbeing and deliver better community safety and public protection outcomes.

61. Senior police officers play a key role in community planning partnerships, often chairing local community safety partnerships (CSPs). Joint strategic assessments produced through CSPs provide an effective means for defining how partners will collaborate to achieve local outcomes. At an operational level we found partnership working to be a strength and a range of effective local practices in place.

62. A range of strategic and operational partnership groups exist within local areas across the country. In almost half of our audits/inspections we found that when entering into partnerships, forces could better define their roles and responsibilities, better assess how their participation in partnership activity could influence local outcomes and learn from good practice happening in other areas.

Multi-Agency Screening Hub (MASH) – Central Scotland Police

Central Scotland Police has introduced a multi-agency screening hub (MASH) in Larbert to improve public protection through shared services, co-location, joint working and effective information sharing and decision-making. Although in the early stages of implementation, the MASH brings together recognised good practice from across Scotland. Building on the concept that public protection, community safety, repeat victims, vulnerable adults and child issues can be best dealt with through a single joint approach, the MASH acts as a conduit for all public protection reports (some 13,000 each year). Having relevant partners co-located allows for more immediate multi-agency screening, decision-making, information sharing, case-conferencing and action.

Midlothian Community Safety Team – Lothian and Borders Police

In Lothian and Borders, the Midlothian Community Safety Team has had a significant impact on reducing incidents of antisocial behaviour in the area. The team, which is focused on improving community safety and reducing antisocial behaviour across Midlothian, is supported by Midlothian Council and includes seconded police officers, local authority liaison officers and funded Community Action Team officers. Since 2008, vandalism

in the area has been reduced by approximately 40 per cent, accompanied by a decrease in calls to the council's antisocial behaviour helpline. In addition, the Midlothian Community Planning Strategic Assessment, the first of its kind in Scotland, links the five Scottish Government strategic objectives to the local community planning partnership and identifies opportunities and areas for action between partners. The Midlothian Community Safety Team has been highly commended in Scottish Policing Awards.

63. We found that partnership working in the unitary authorities is well embedded into organisations' working practices and has led to better information sharing and alignment of resources. It was also clear that some of the more positive developments in partnership working were facilitated by smaller more manageable numbers of partners sharing common boundaries.

64. In five of our eight audits/inspections we found that police authorities were not providing sufficient strategic oversight of partnership activity and/or monitoring the effectiveness of their force's partnership work in the local area. We found police authorities to be more effective in Northern Constabulary, where authority members are actively involved in local CSPs, and in Grampian and Dumfries and Galloway where the conveners also chair a local CSP. Where police authority members are actively involved in CSPs, this ensures that there is clear oversight on common issues and helps strengthen community leadership on policing issues.

65. There was a need to build clearer links between police authorities and community planning partnerships. Our early audits/inspections found police authorities had little or no involvement in developing single outcome agreements (SOAs), had limited links to community safety partnerships and did not scrutinise or challenge their

force's partnership work effectively. In our later audits/inspections we found this had improved. In the new policing structures it will be important to ensure there is an effective level of integration between local SOAs, partnership plans and local and national policing plans. Policing pathfinder projects are currently investigating how these relationships may work to best effect from April 2013.

Key issues to consider

There needs to be clarity about the respective roles of local police commanders and elected members in relevant partnerships and how this will support positive policing outcomes.

Establishing an effective level of integration between partnership plans, local and national policing plans and SOAs will be critical to the success of new policing structures.

Performance management and continuous improvement

We found that police authority members have been improving their scrutiny of police performance. However, they have not been proactively challenging performance or been clear about what performance information they need to fulfil their role effectively. They have also had insufficient involvement in public performance reporting. Police authorities do not effectively influence or monitor forces' improvement activity in striving to achieve best value.

Police forces have been improving the way they manage performance. However, more work is needed to clearly identify the cost of policing activities and assess value for money.

66. Forces have been improving the way they manage their performance. In early audits/inspections we found that performance management was not always focused on key force priorities and objectives, and that performance reports to police authorities lacked detail and coverage. More recently, we have found stronger performance management cultures evolving within forces, commonly supported by more complete performance management frameworks that are increasingly well integrated within forces' service planning and delivery arrangements.

67. Since 2007/08, forces have reported a single suite of comparable performance information through the Scottish Policing Performance Framework (SPPF). Indicators in the SPPF allow performance comparisons in relation to service response; public reassurance and community safety; criminal justice and tackling crime; and sound governance and efficiency. Some of these comparisons are outlined in Part 4 of this report.

68. Police forces have been working to develop better cost information for some time through police objective analysis (POA),⁸ however it remains underdeveloped. In contrast, police forces in England and Wales introduced POA several years ago and have comparatively good information on what activities their people carry out and what this costs. This helps them in demonstrating value for money. In contrast, across Scotland it is difficult to understand performance variations, cost effectiveness and value for money. Improving cost information is an area for future improvement.

69. There are appropriate governance structures in place, through scrutiny-focused subcommittees and groups to allow police authorities to review police performance. Over the course of our audit/inspection programme, we found that forces' performance

reports to their police authorities have improved. We have also seen improvements in performance reporting from those forces that were audited/inspected early in our programme. Police forces are now more regularly providing members with a wide range of information on policing activities, performance levels, and progress in implementing recommendations from external audit and inspection. Reports have become more balanced, for example highlighting where goals have not been achieved as well as successes, and include more comparative performance and information on partnership plans to support better scrutiny. Despite this we found that performance reports would still benefit from more commentary, internal comparisons across divisions, trends over time and benchmarking against national performance.

70. We found that members are becoming more active in scrutinising performance information but still have scope to more effectively challenge senior officers. For example, we found in only a minority of police authorities, including Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary and Central Scotland Police, members had influenced the type and quality of performance information they received to allow them to determine whether forces are delivering their strategic objectives.

71. We found that police authorities have insufficient involvement in public performance reporting. The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 places a statutory duty upon police authorities to make arrangements which secure best value and to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of their functions. Many police authorities do not play an active role in this regard and their activities often do not feature in the local policing performance report.

⁸ Police Objective Analysis (POA) is a nationally adopted model for analysing individual police authority expenditure by activity.

As a result, their contribution to the governance and accountability of their force is not visible to the public and they are not fully delivering their public performance reporting responsibilities.

72. Our audit/inspection programme was carried out during a period of significant change brought about initially by reductions in public spending and subsequently by the transition to a single Police Service of Scotland. While recognising the impact of reform in 2013, police forces remain committed to improving the performance of their services through major programmes of change.

73. Force improvement programmes are managed through appropriate formal governance structures and transparent decision-making processes in all forces. During our early audits/inspections we found that forces needed to better coordinate and manage their change programmes in order to improve their potential impact and reduce associated corporate risks. More recently, we found improvement activity was better coordinated and targeted to force priorities.

74. In contrast, police authorities have done little to influence, prioritise or monitor force improvement activity and have tended to rely on forces to identify areas in need of review and improvement.

75. Nationally, the police service had planned to introduce a national performance management system aimed at enabling a broader view on demand levels, resource management and cross-force activities. The national 'performance platform project' began in 2006 but was terminated in August 2012 without delivery of any of the anticipated capabilities. Partly because of the absence of a national system, forces manage their performance in different ways. For example, some forces examine performance quarterly or twice-yearly, while others examine

force performance on a weekly basis. This is likely to present a challenge in implementing a consistent performance management system in the Police Service of Scotland.

Key issues to consider

Public performance reporting needs to be informative and balanced. In addition to highlighting successes, it should clearly identify where goals have not been achieved and include better information on costs of activities and comparative performance to allow a clearer assessment of value for money.

Members of the SPA need to be clear about what performance information they expect to receive, and be able to scrutinise performance effectively.

Monitoring at local level also needs to be supported by good-quality performance information, to allow local authorities and the local commander to improve service delivery and outcomes for local communities.

Equality and diversity

Scottish police forces have been taking appropriate actions, such as equality impact assessments, to improve equality and diversity through operational policing and within their workforces. Work on equality and diversity has been supported by clear leadership throughout forces. As a result, they are achieving a better gender balance in their workforces. Police authority members have not demonstrated a clear understanding of their role in promoting equality and diversity and have not led or scrutinised equality and diversity issues effectively.

76. Police forces have been working hard to deliver their equality duties and commitments in their

equality schemes. Senior managers demonstrate clear leadership on equality and diversity and forces have established corporate steering groups to take forward their equality and diversity strategies.

77. We found a culture of equality and diversity to be embedded within operational policing. Forces carry out equality impact assessments of their operational policies and are engaging well with representatives of relevant groups within their communities to help shape priorities within their equality and diversity strategies. Forces also demonstrated a broad range of diversity initiatives to deliver their priorities, particularly in relation to hate and race crime.

78. Forces are equally focused on improving equality and diversity within their workforces. As a result the workforce profile of Scottish police forces has changed significantly in recent years, particularly around gender equality. Since 2003, the proportion of female police officers has risen from 18.8 to 27.8 per cent. The shift in the gender balance of the workforce is positive, although the proportion of female officers remains below the general proportion of females in the workforce. The 2001 census data for Scotland showed that 52 per cent of all economically active people were female. In contrast, two-thirds (65.7 per cent) of police staff are female, a statistic that has remained relatively constant over time.

79. The proportion of police officers declaring themselves as being from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background has remained constant over time at around 1.2 per cent of the workforce. This is below the average ethnic proportion of the population in Scotland (reported as being around two per cent in the 2001 census). It is, however, greater than the ethnic diversity in other uniformed services in Scotland – for example, 0.6 per cent of firefighters have declared themselves as being from a BME background.

80. Population estimates project significantly greater diversity of Scotland's population in future years with growth in the proportion of the population from BME backgrounds. In light of this, the Police Service of Scotland will need to make sure both its workforce and operational policies reflect the projected change to comply with the specific equalities duties under the Equality Act (Scotland) 2010.

81. The proportion of police officers declaring a disability has risen significantly in recent years, increasing from 0.5 per cent in 2007/08 to 3.2 per cent in 2011/12. This may be a result of positive action in terms of recruitment and selection, but may equally reflect the fact that officers are becoming more willing to identify themselves as having a disability without fear that this will affect their careers. In accommodating people's differing needs it is important that police forces maintain a culture where employees feel able to disclose whether any of the equality characteristics in equality legislation apply to them.

82. Across all of our audits/inspections we consistently found that police authorities do not provide strategic leadership of equality and diversity issues. Elected members have access to a good range of equalities-related training opportunities to help them fulfil their role more effectively, but they do not always take up these opportunities. As a result we found that the provision of training in itself has had little practical impact in improving their awareness of their equalities duties⁹ or in encouraging engagement with local equality and diversity agendas.

83. We did, however, find some examples where police authority members are playing a more active

leadership role in equalities. For example, in Northern Constabulary three members, including the convener and vice-convener, represent the authority on the force's diversity progress group.

84. With the exception of Grampian, Northern and Tayside, we found that police authorities receive insufficient relevant information from forces to support effective scrutiny. Most receive only periodic updates on force progress against activities in statutory equality schemes. This is important information, but the range of potential equality and diversity activities that can be undertaken by forces is significantly broader than this. There are some examples of forces having developed reporting further. For example, Lothian and Borders Police provides authority members with annual updates from its Lay Diversity Adviser Scheme, highlighting engagement with diverse communities and how the force manages hate crime and critical incidents. It is important that the Police Service of Scotland builds upon best practices developed by individual forces to ensure it has an effective approach to managing and reporting on equalities issues.

Key issues to consider

It is important that the Police Service of Scotland builds upon good practice developed by individual forces to ensure it has the most effective approach to managing and reporting on equalities issues.

Policing performance information should include appropriate outcome-focused equalities measures to inform effective monitoring and scrutiny of the impact of equalities work.

Training programmes for members of the SPA and those involved in agreeing local policing plans should include an appropriate level of training on equalities duties.

Sustainability

Police forces have been giving greater consideration to the environmental impact of their work, although this requires further improvement to contribute to the government's national sustainability targets. Police authorities provide little challenge to how well forces are performing against environmental commitments.

85. Scottish police forces recognise their role in supporting and maintaining social and economic sustainability and improving their environmental sustainability. They are currently striving to achieve financial savings by reducing energy use through carbon management and sustainable procurement.

86. In April 2010, Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) approved a climate change action plan 2010–20 and set a national target for reducing CO₂ emissions by 15 per cent by 2015.¹⁰ All forces have responded to this challenge by developing carbon management plans. Across forces a number of positive steps have been taken to help achieve carbon reduction targets. These include:

- establishing environmental action or carbon management groups to drive initiatives
- taking direct action through the introduction of more environmentally friendly vehicles, including bio-diesel fuel cars, electric vehicles, reducing unnecessary travel, purchasing

9 New specific equality duties for public authorities in Scotland came into force on Sunday 27 May 2012. They include a duty to assess impact on equality, improving the outcomes of policies and practices for all equality groups and the recording of employment, gender pay gap and occupational segregation information.

10 Targeted emissions reductions are compared with 2009/10 levels.

renewable energy, installing more environmentally friendly boilers, improving energy awareness, increasing waste segregation and recycling facilities in buildings, and making better use of video-conferencing

- reducing carbon emissions through new, more energy-efficient buildings¹¹ and through sharing buildings with partners
- encouraging staff to make suggestions for energy and cost savings that can inform business planning processes.

87. Carbon management plans have been established at different times in different forces and we were not able to determine how clearly and consistently forces have been reporting against their plans – and what impact they have had. The most recent audits/inspections, however, suggest that forces are achieving some success. For example, Central Scotland Police has reduced its CO₂ emissions by 23 per cent since 2008. Forces need to continue to focus on reducing their environmental impact in making a proportionate contribution to the Scottish Government's national commitment to reduce CO₂ emissions by 42 per cent by 2020.

88. Our audits/inspections found that police authorities do not have a clearly articulated approach to improving sustainability and recognise that further work is needed to ensure this is embedded across police activity. A common finding across our reports was the need for forces to provide members with better sustainability-related information to allow them to better consider sustainability issues in decision-making and more effectively scrutinise relevant performance. This is an important area for improvement given the critical nature of environmental sustainability.

Key issues to consider

Members of the SPA need to be clear about their role in improving environmental performance and should be provided with good information to facilitate effective scrutiny in this area.

The Police Service of Scotland should establish a consistent approach to sustainability that not only continues and builds upon the good work done locally by Scottish forces but embraces the best practice examples from elsewhere.

¹¹ Reductions in public sector spending have limited scope for large-scale capital investment, but police reform may present new opportunities through estate rationalisation.

Part 3. Use of resources



Costs and efficiencies

There is no consistent picture across Scotland regarding policing costs. However, the average per capita cost of Scottish police forces is less than that for England and Wales. Forces have reported significant savings through their efficiency programmes with reduced overtime costs making a large contribution to greater efficiency in a number of forces.

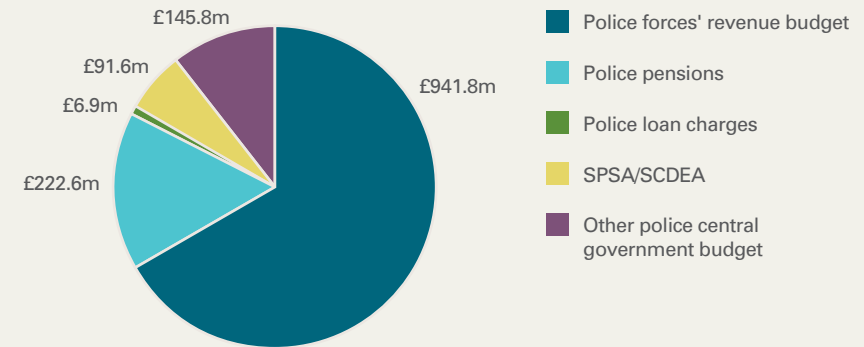
89. For 2012/13, the total Scottish policing revenue budget is £1.4 billion.¹² Around 70 per cent of this (£941.8 million) is funding for Scotland's eight police forces, with the remainder being funding for the SPSA/SCDEA, together with other funding streams that do not go directly to the forces but provide support functions for the police services in Scotland (Exhibit 4).

90. Budgets for the eight individual police forces are made up of 51 per cent funding from central government and 49 per cent from funding from local authorities. In recent years, police forces have been working with reduced revenue budgets that have been decreasing further in real terms as a result of the rate of inflation.

91. Police force expenditure per head of population ranges from £137 per resident in Central to £199 in Strathclyde, with the national average expenditure being £182 as shown in Exhibit 5 (overleaf). In Fife and Northern expenditure per head of population increased in 2011/12 despite a reduction in the national budget. In contrast, expenditure per head of population fell in Central Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway,

Exhibit 4

Scottish policing budget 2012/13 (£ millions)



Source: Scottish Government

Grampian, Lothian and Borders, Strathclyde and Tayside.

92. The cost per head of policing in Scotland compares favourably with costs in England and Wales (Exhibit 5, overleaf). Data reported by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) shows an average net cost per head of £191.44 across England and Wales during 2011/12.¹³ Separately, the average reported net policing cost per head in Wales of £235.00 and in England of £187.98 are both above the Scottish average. The average policing cost in England is heavily influenced by the estimated cost of the Metropolitan Police force. Excluding the Metropolitan Police, the English average of £182.81 in 2011/12 is still above the Scottish average.

93. Expenditure in Scotland's two largest forces (Strathclyde and Lothian and Borders Police) is above the national average level, whereas

expenditure levels in smaller forces are below the average. Staffing costs account for around 85 per cent of policing budgets and therefore staffing levels have the most significant influence on the cost of policing. Variations in expenditure levels suggest that factors other than organisational size also influence staffing levels.

94. During 2011/12, Scottish forces have reported efficiency savings totalling £33.3 million.¹⁴ These efficiencies have been achieved despite a number of challenges during the year, including providing mutual aid to address serious public disorder to affected communities during the riots in England; severe weather that affected transport networks across the country; and the significant demands of engaging in, and planning for, the delivery of police reform.

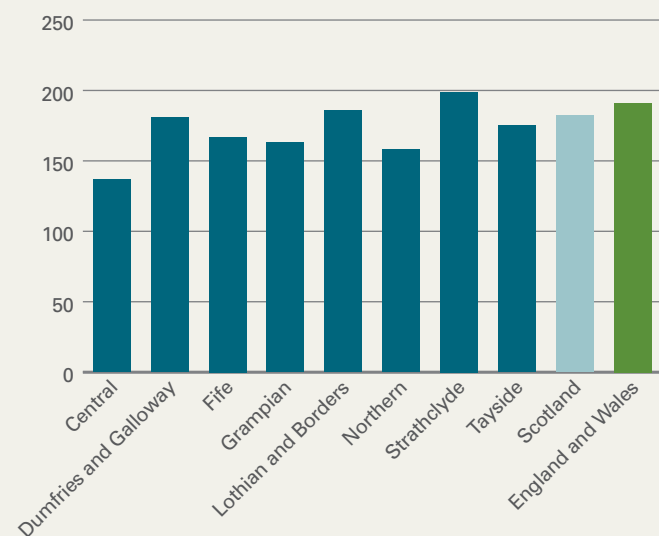
¹² Includes expenditure on pensions.

¹³ Comparisons are made on the basis of Scottish Police Performance Framework (SPPF) data for Scotland and CIPFA actuals for forces in England and Wales in 2011/12. This is due to comparable CIPFA data for Scotland being incomplete. As such a degree of care should be taken in comparing the actual numbers reported. Both figures for Scotland and for England and Wales relate to the funding of police forces only and do not take into account the additional costs of providing national support services, such as the SPSA/SCDEA in Scotland and the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA)/SOCA in England and Wales.

¹⁴ Unaudited figure based on the ACPOS efficiency statement for 2011/12. Efficiency savings are a total of cash and time releasing efficiencies.

Exhibit 5

Expenditure of Scottish police forces per head of population 2011/12



Source: SPPF Annual Report 2011/12 and Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA)

how financial resources are used but have played a more limited role in budget setting, long-term financial planning and monitoring efficiencies.

97. Scottish police forces have sound budget controls with robust processes in place for setting and monitoring budgets. Against a backdrop of resource pressures they have reported efficiency savings in excess of their targets in recent years.

98. Although forces have reported significant efficiencies in relation to their overall budgets, they do not currently have detailed information about the specific costs of their activities. All Scottish forces have looked to use Police Objective Analysis (POA) as a methodology to facilitate a better method of costing their activity. Although ACPOS has devoted resources to developing and introducing POA over recent years, it remains much less developed in Scotland than in England and Wales, with no Scottish force so far having effectively implemented POA. Without the development of POA (or an alternative model), forces are unable to compare the relative costs of delivering their services and police authority members are unable to properly exercise scrutiny and challenge in this area.

99. Police authority members do, however, play an active role in the regular monitoring of how financial resources are being used. They are supported in this by the force's heads of finance and the police authority's treasurer who has responsibility for establishing a financial framework and regulations which provide for effective managerial control and review, and satisfactory financial monitoring and reporting procedures. Members scrutinise expenditure but are much less involved in developing their force's long-term financial strategy or annual budgets, beyond approving them each year.

95. Reductions in police overtime have made a significant contribution to forces' efficiency savings. Since 2007/08, the proportion of police officer payroll spent on overtime payments across Scotland has fallen year-on-year from 7.5 to 4.6 per cent in 2011/12. Most notably over this period, Strathclyde Police has halved this element of expenditure from 9.0 to 4.5 per cent. The picture across Scotland is not consistent, however, with Central Scotland Police, Grampian Police and Northern Constabulary experiencing increased overtime expenditure in 2011/12.

96. While forces have demonstrated capability in making savings, they have not complemented this with long-term financial strategies that set out how ongoing financial pressures will be managed. We would expect clear, transparent and robust longer-term financial plans that go beyond the life of current police forces. Although the Police Service of Scotland will be funded centrally, at a local authority level elected members

will still have a role in informing decisions about local policing priorities that may have longer-term resourcing implications.

Key issues to consider

Decisions about policing priorities in both local and national policing plans will need to fully consider long-term resource implications.

In striving to make the targeted long-term efficiencies within policing, the Police Service of Scotland should have clear plans in place to deliver ongoing operating efficiencies as well as one-off cost savings or income streams.

Managing finances

Police forces have sound financial controls in place. However, a better understanding of the cost of specific activities is needed to inform resource decisions. Police authority members are actively involved in monitoring

100. While members' monitoring of police force expenditure is generally effective across the country, their involvement in monitoring whether savings and efficiencies have been achieved is limited. There are some cases where members have been active, for example in Fife Constabulary the convener is a member of the Force Efficiencies Programme Oversight Group. However, in the majority of forces, we found this to be an area that could work better. Under both the current and future structures for policing governance, elected members need to improve their understanding of how budgets and efficiencies are developed to enable them to scrutinise more effectively.

Key issues to consider

The SPA should establish a long-term strategic financial plan, monitor how financial resources are being used, and whether efficiencies are being achieved.

The Police Service of Scotland needs to have a clear understanding of the costs of police activity.

Managing the workforce

Police forces manage their people resources well. They have been working in a context of maintaining police officer numbers which has resulted in their significantly reducing the number of police staff to help balance their budgets. It is important that forces continue to review their workforce balance and levels of sickness absence in delivering services most efficiently.

101. Forces recognise people as their most valuable asset and they have developed good arrangements for managing their staff resources. They have comprehensive HR strategies and plans that link to their force policing plans to ensure that staff resources are allocated based on demand and priorities.

102. Police authorities' oversight of people resources and workforce planning is limited. Given that staff account for around 85 per cent of forces' expenditure, it is important that police authorities maintain proper oversight of the strategic issues around the management of HR. We found police authorities' oversight and scrutiny of the workforce to be weaker than their scrutiny of financial resources. Where oversight is effective, it is supported by good governance arrangements, such as personnel subcommittees or members' involvement in HR working groups through which members can provide effective challenge on key strategic decisions. More commonly though, we found scrutiny of HR to be underdeveloped, particularly around more complex areas such as workforce planning.

103. The number of police officers per 10,000 population ranges from 27.2 in Northern Constabulary to 38.3 in Strathclyde Police. Across Scotland there are 33.7 police officers per 10,000 head of population, up from 31.9 in 2007/08. Historically, the number of police officers in individual forces has been determined by individual chief constables and there is no national formula which dictates overall establishments.

104. In the 2007 Scottish Parliament elections, the Scottish Government pledged to put 1,000 more police officers on the streets of Scotland. Since then, police numbers in Scotland have increased from 16,234 at 31 March 2007 to 17,373 in June 2012. This is an increase of 1,139 police officers (or seven per cent) over this period ([Exhibit 6, overleaf](#)). The government remains committed to ensuring police officer numbers do not fall below 17,234 and this is influencing local policy and resourcing decisions.

105. The Scottish Government's policy of maintaining a higher minimum number of police officers over the past five years has helped forces to introduce new models of

community policing that build a closer relationship between the police and the public. Over this period, forces have experienced greater levels of public satisfaction, as highlighted in our Best Value audits/inspections. Similarly, Scottish Crime and Justice Surveys (SCJS) show a positive increase in public confidence with the police between 2008/09 and 2010/11, as shown in [Exhibit 7 \(overleaf\)](#).

106. In addition to improved public confidence in policing, the overall level of recorded crime is lower across all eight forces than in 2007/08, although crime levels have been generally decreasing for many years. However, there is less evidence that the higher number of police officers has had such a positive impact in detecting crime or reducing the fear of crime. Average detection rates across Scotland have remained relatively constant over the past five years for most crimes. Similarly, while the fear of crime has been declining since 2008, it has not fallen significantly.

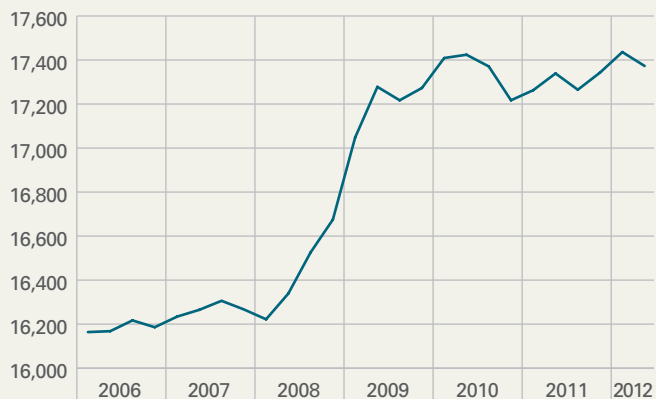
107. Between 2007/08 and 2010/11, police officer sickness absence in forces fell year-on-year from an average of 4.7 per cent to 3.8 per cent of working time. However, in 2011/12 sickness absence increased to 4.2 per cent with only Tayside Police continuing to reduce sickness absence among its police officers during the year. It is important that forces remain focused on managing absence as effectively as possible to generate greatest efficiency, maximise the health and well-being of their workforce and sustain services to communities.

Police staff

108. Police forces have always employed a large number of police staff in addition to their police officers. The number of police staff in Scotland reached a peak in 2006/07 at 8,171. Underpinning this growth was a desire to make more efficient and effective use of resources across the police workforce. While greater operating efficiency had been a

Exhibit 6

Number of police officers (FTE) in Scotland 2006 to 2012



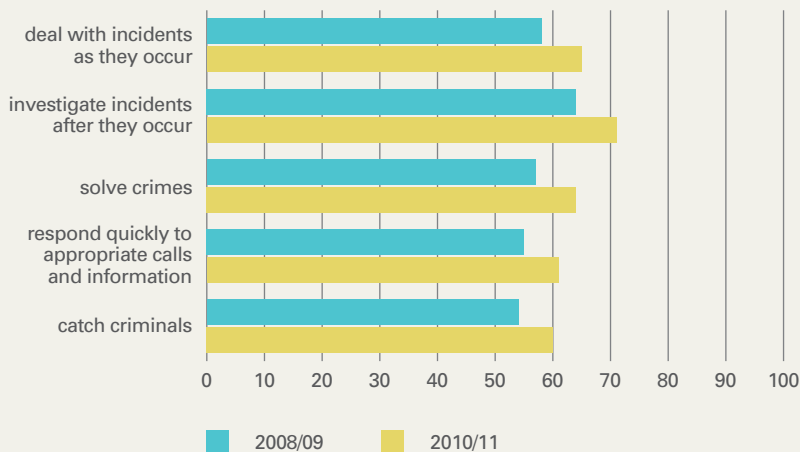
Source: *Police Officer Quarterly Strength Statistics*, Scottish Government, June 2012¹

¹ Totals include officers deployed in the eight Scottish police forces (including additional regular police), and those on secondment or central service.

Exhibit 7

Public perceptions of confidence in the local police

The proportion of adults that were confident in their local police force's ability to:



Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Surveys 2008/09 and 2010/11

significant strategic driver for this, it is also the case that many police functions can be more effectively delivered by qualified police staff than by police officers. These include core organisational and management functions such as administration, HR, procurement, communications and marketing, information technology and forensics. Roles traditionally performed by uniformed police officers but which do not require a police officer's power of arrest have also been increasingly 'civilianised' over the last decade. This includes custody and detention, forensic sciences, call handling and some crime investigation.

109. Since 2008/09, police staff numbers have decreased across all forces. In 2011/12, a total of 5,718 (FTE) police staff were employed by the eight Scottish police forces, a 6.8 per cent decrease in the last year. Over the last three years the number of FTE police staff has decreased by 12 per cent. Reductions in police staff can be directly attributed to forces' need to reduce operating costs and the range of early retirement/voluntary redundancy options that have been available to avoid compulsory redundancies.

110. The reduction in police staff numbers in 2011/12 has been accompanied by an increase in police staff overtime expenditure across Scotland. Between 2007/08 and 2010/11, the proportion of police staff overtime expenditure, as a proportion of the overall police staff salary budget, fell year-on-year from 3.0 to 1.4 per cent. However, during the last financial year overtime rose slightly to 1.7 per cent of the police staff payroll, with all but Fife Constabulary and Lothian and Borders Police experiencing growing overtime expenditure during 2011/12. Decisions to cut police staff numbers to reduce costs must take into account any indirect additional costs when calculating the likely savings which can be realised.

111. Sickness absence among police staff has continued to decrease each year. Since 2007/08, this category of sickness absence has fallen year-on-year from an average of 5.3 per cent to 4.8 per cent of working time. While the continual decrease in police staff absence is very encouraging, it remains above that of police officers.

112. Police staff numbers will continue to be put under pressure as forces face real-term budget cuts while trying to maintain police officer numbers at or above the Scottish Government's minimum of 17,234. It is important that the Police Service of Scotland undertakes strategic workforce planning to ensure that it makes best use of its people resources in a sustainable way, with functions carried out by people with the right skills, knowledge and experience. There are some indications that police staff posts are being covered by police officers in the short term, but at a time of continued financial pressures there is a risk that this is not an efficient and sustainable use of resources if adopted longer term.

Special constables

113. Scottish police forces also make use of part-time, volunteer special constables. While on duty, special constables have the same powers as regular police officers. As at March 2012, there were 1,443 special constables across the eight Scottish forces, equivalent to around 2.7 per 10,000 head of population. Since 2007/08, the number of special constables in Scotland has fluctuated between around 3.2 per 10,000 head of population and current levels. Over the same period, the average number of hours worked per special constable has grown from around 127 hours per year in 2007/08 to 158 hours in 2011/12. As a result, special constables now provide a greater overall resource across the country than in 2007/08.

114. There are some marked differences in the availability of special constables across the country.

For example, special constables in Grampian Police and Tayside Police provide an average of 197 hours per year, but only around half of this (104 hours on average) in Fife Constabulary. In Northern Constabulary, the number of special constables per 10,000 population has more than halved from 8.3 to 4.0 since 2007/08, but the average number of hours provided by each officer has almost doubled from 99 to 191 hours, meaning that the overall level of resource has remained relatively static. During 2011/12, Strathclyde Police saw a marginal decrease in its number of special constables (from 2.8 to 2.5 per 10,000 population) but a 70 per cent increase in the average hours provided by each officer from 84 to 142 hours.

115. It is clear that special constables provide an important additional low-cost resource for many police forces, especially in the current financial environment. While this is to be welcomed, the significant increases in the number of hours worked may present unanticipated challenges around the European Working Time Directive, especially where special constables perform their duties on days when they have also carried out their primary paid employment. This is an area of potential risk for chief constables.

Key issues to consider

Within the context of maintaining a minimum number of police officers, the Police Service of Scotland and SPA should undertake strategic workforce planning to ensure that it makes best use of its people resources, with functions carried out by people with the right skills, knowledge and experience.

Managing assets and other resources

Police forces have only recently developed strategies for managing their assets. Where strategies are in place it is not always clear how they have helped improve

the way assets are managed. There are some good examples of structures that allow police authorities to scrutinise forces' management of assets but this has not been consistent across the country. Some forces share buildings with partners to generate efficiency but prior to the current work to develop the Police Service of Scotland there had been little progress in sharing services.

116. We found a mixed picture of how forces manage their assets. In the earlier audits/inspections in Tayside Police, Northern Constabulary and Grampian Police we found that there was no long-term strategy for managing assets which was linked to strategic priorities and objectives. During our most recent audits/inspections, we found that forces had asset management strategies in place.

117. We also found that, where forces have developed asset management strategies and plans, they did not necessarily improve the way assets are being managed. For example, Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary has a comprehensive asset management strategy and plan for 2009–14, but the plan had not been updated since 2009 and progress against it has not been reported to the police authority. In contrast, members of the Central Scotland police authority scrutinise the force's management of its assets through regular reports to the physical resources subcommittee. Strathclyde Police has created a Force Asset Management Board which enables the force to work with the police authority to ensure that strategic business and operational needs can be translated into future property requirements which support effective frontline policing.

118. Some forces, such as Fife, Grampian, Lothian and Borders and Strathclyde, have made progress in sharing buildings with other public sector agencies to generate greater efficiency. But beyond sharing

accommodation forces have made little progress in sharing services, particularly 'back office' functions such as payroll, HR, procurement and fleet management. A 'quad force' project involving Central Scotland Police, Fife Constabulary, Tayside Police and Lothian and Borders Police explored ways of collaborating and sharing operational services, such as firearms and road policing, and support services, although progress was slow. This work was complementary to moving towards the new structure for policing in Scotland and the lessons learned from it have been incorporated into the current national reform programme.

Key issues to consider

The eight current police forces and authorities need to manage very carefully the transition process in relation to the identification and transfer of assets and liabilities.

The SPA and the Police Service of Scotland need to manage the significant police assets across the country well to ensure they are used most efficiently.

Part 4. Service performance



Crime levels

Recorded crime has fallen year-on-year since 2006/07. Police forces have been tackling priority areas effectively and there has been significant falls in antisocial behaviour. While recorded crime levels have been falling, recorded incidents of domestic abuse and racially aggravated crime continue to grow. After a period of long-term declines in drugs and road traffic offences an increase was seen last year. For most types of crime, incidents in Scotland tend to be comparably lower in Scotland than in England and Wales; however, violent crimes per head of population continue to be higher in Scotland than elsewhere in Europe.

119. In 2011/12, there were 314,186 recorded crimes and 544,033 other offences. Since 2006/07, the volume of recorded crime has fallen year-on-year. The number of recorded crimes during 2011/12 was 9,061 fewer than in the previous year, a fall of 2.8 per cent.

120. The number of 999 and non-emergency calls received by Scottish police forces has also been declining, between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the number of 999 calls per 10,000 population fell from 1,339 to 1,196, a fall of over ten per cent. Over the same period, there was a sharper rate of decline in non-emergency calls. As a result, although the total call demand on forces has decreased significantly, 999 calls now represent a higher proportion of overall calls received.

121. Recorded crimes of violence, indecency, dishonesty and vandalism, fire-raising and malicious conduct etc. – referred to as group 1 to 4 crimes in the SPPF – have seen successive annual decreases over the last five years. In 2007/08, there were 594.3 group 1 to 4 crimes per 10,000 population across Scotland and this has fallen to 471.7 in 2011/12 ([Exhibit 8](#)). Falls in the numbers of crimes of violence and vandalism, fire-raising and malicious conduct etc, in particular, have contributed to this decline, while an earlier, long-term

decline in dishonesty has levelled out over the last three years.

122. The number of drug-related offences recorded by the police in Scotland has been on a long-term decline. Comparing 2011/12 with 2007/08, shows a decrease in the number of recorded drug-related offences of 29 crimes per 10,000 head of population. However, in 2011/12 the number of offences increased. There were almost 130 recorded drug-related offences per 10,000 head of population across Scotland during the year, one more on average than in 2010/11. While most areas continued to see a decline, there were notable increases recorded by Fife and Northern Constabularies and by Strathclyde Police.

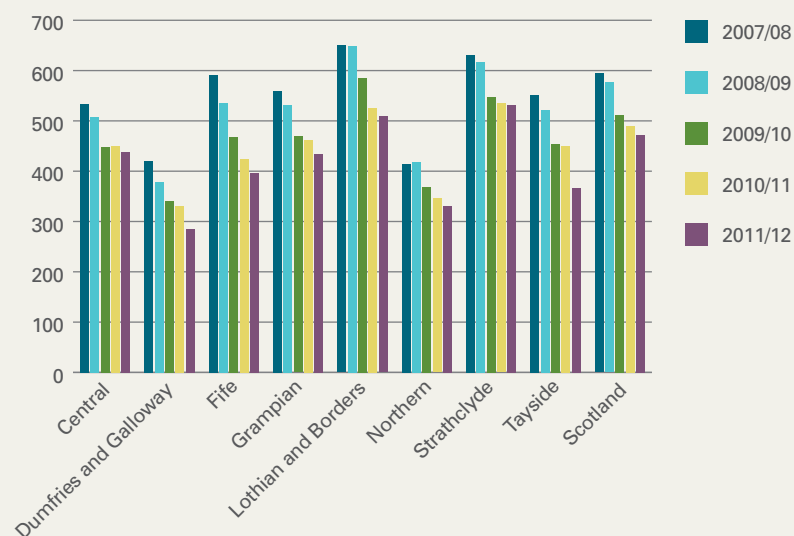
123. Road traffic offences have also been in long-term decline but increased in 2011/12. There were almost 640 road traffic offences during the year per 10,000 head of population, a figure noticeably lower than the 679 offences recorded in 2007/08. During 2010/11, this figure was particularly low, with only around 613 road traffic offences per 10,000 head of population. Only Fife Constabulary and Lothian and Borders Police recorded a further reduction in these offences during 2011/12.

124. While road traffic offences have increased in the last year, the number of people killed or injured in road collisions continues to fall. During 2011/12, 173 people were injured or killed in road traffic incidents across Scotland, a fall of 37 (or 17.6 per cent) from the previous year and a 22.4 per cent decline against the previous three-year average.

125. Enforcement action taken by the police in response to antisocial behaviour-related crimes and offences has decreased in recent years.¹⁵ Between 2008/09 and 2011/12, enforcement action in relation to antisocial behaviour across Scotland

Exhibit 8

Total group 1 to 4 crimes per 10,000 population by police force between 2007/08 and 2011/12



Source: HMICS

¹⁵ These figures relate specifically to enforcement action taken by the police. They do not necessarily reflect the number of public calls received regarding anti social behaviour, which are currently not collected and analysed.

fell consistently year-on-year from 482.8 to 301.8 per 10,000 head of population, a decrease of over 37 per cent (Exhibit 9). All police forces have seen noticeable decreases, with Dumfries and Galloway and Fife Constabularies and Grampian Police seeing levels of antisocial behaviour enforcement roughly halve in the last three years.

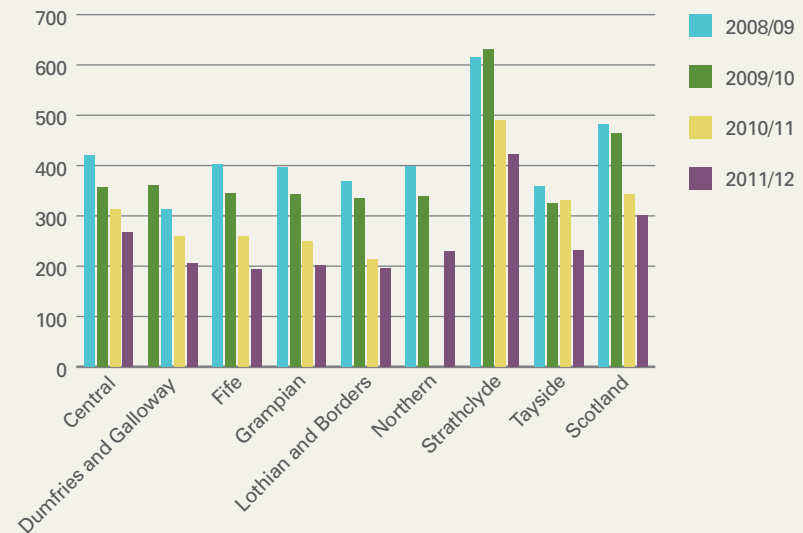
126. In contrast to the overall reduction in crime levels over time, levels of domestic abuse have been increasing in recent years (Exhibit 10). Most notably, the number of incidents recorded by Northern Constabulary doubled during 2011/12. There are a number of possible explanations for this. While it is possible that domestic abuse is becoming more prevalent, it may indicate that changing attitudes, along with high-profile targeted campaigns, are encouraging more people to report domestic abuse incidents.

127. The numbers of racially aggravated crimes have been gradually increasing in recent years (Exhibit 11, overleaf). Again, the data may reflect that changing attitudes towards this type of crime are encouraging more people to report racially aggravated crimes. It may also reflect the way these crimes are being recorded as well as the changing profile of the Scottish population over time.

128. Comparing crime rates in Scotland with those in England and Wales shows a variable picture (Exhibit 12, overleaf). The latest available data (for 2010/11) indicates that robbery, thefts and housebreaking were lower in Scotland than in England and Wales.¹⁶ However, vandalism and assaults were higher in Scotland than in England and Wales. Data from both the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey and the British Crime Survey shows that 25 per cent of crime in Scotland in 2010/11 was violent crime compared with 23 per

Exhibit 9

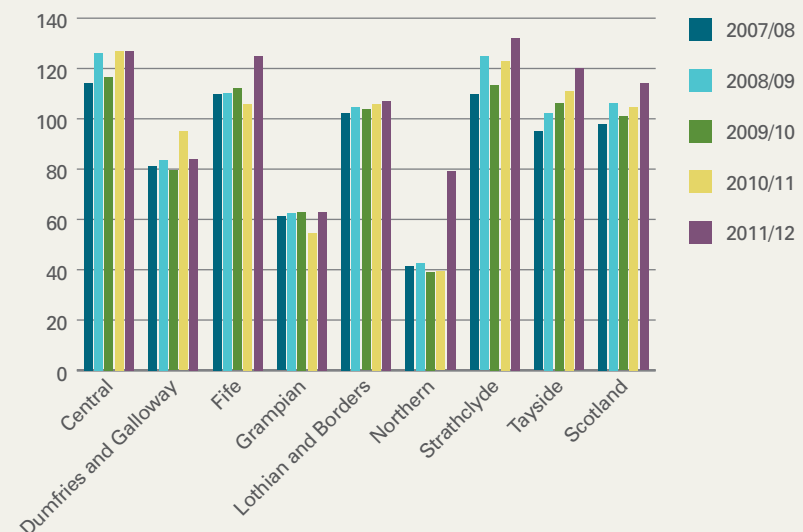
Antisocial behaviour incidents per 10,000 population by police force between 2008/09 and 2011/12



Source: HMICS

Exhibit 10

Domestic abuse incidents per 10,000 head of population by police force between 2007/08 to 2011/12

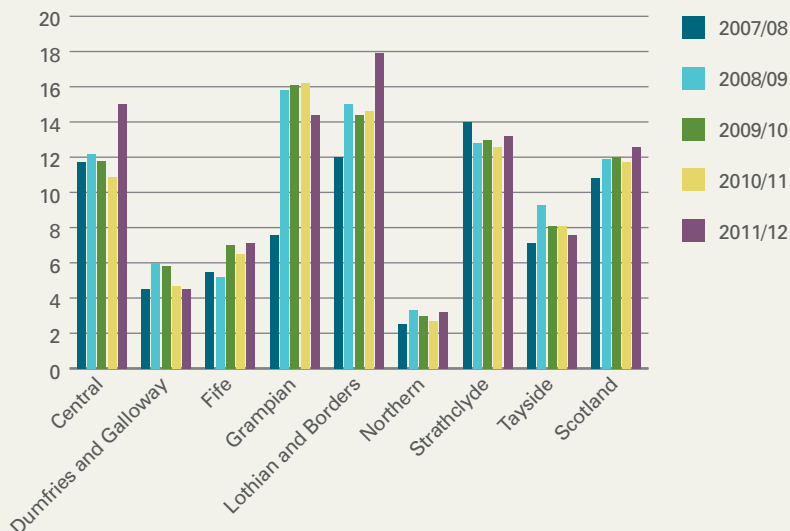


Source: HMICS

¹⁶ The comparator used is, as elsewhere in this report, the number of crimes per 10,000 adults or households, as measured by the British Crime Survey and the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey.

Exhibit 11

Racially aggravated crimes per 10,000 population by police force between 2007/08 and 2011/12



Source: HMICS

cent of crime in England and Wales. Indeed the Scottish Government's Strategy for Justice in Scotland¹⁷ identifies that levels of violent crime per head of population are higher than elsewhere in the UK and Europe. Tackling violence and violent crime continues to be a very high policing priority in Scotland's national strategic assessment.

Detecting crime

Detection rates across the country have remained fairly constant for most types of crimes in recent years. Detection levels of violent and racially aggravated crimes have improved most significantly.

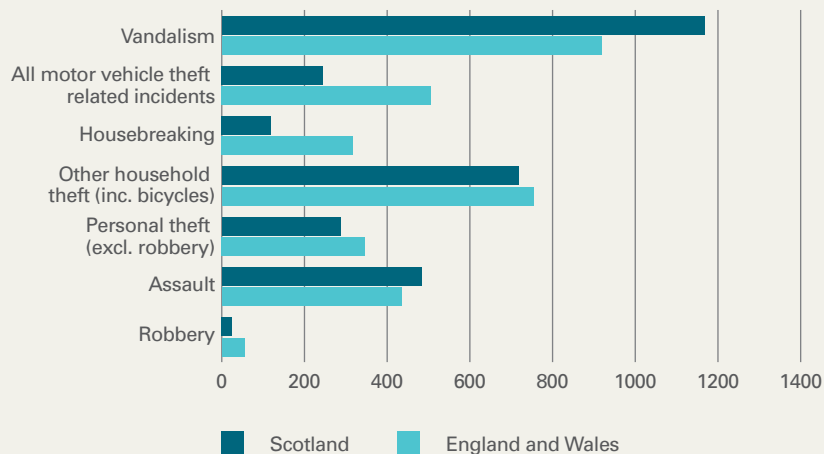
129. While policing activity can positively influence levels of crime, detection rates can provide a more direct indicator of police performance. Despite the decreasing level of crime over time and the increased number of police officers in recent years, detection rates across Scotland have remained relatively constant for most types of crimes (Exhibit 13). The most notable increase in detection rates across Scotland has been in detecting violent crimes. Given the scale of the issue highlighted earlier, this is a positive development.

130. Across the other crime groups, there are no obvious or consistent trends in detection rates between forces over time. The wide variation in detection rates across Scotland is influenced by various factors, such as recorded crime levels, adherence to the Scottish Crime Recording Standard, geography, demography and population stability, with detection rates in rural areas typically being higher than in urban areas.

131. There is also no clear correlation between changes in the number of different types of crimes and detection rates over the past four years. For example, detections of violent crimes have increased at a

Exhibit 12

Comparison of crime incidence rates per 10,000 households between Scotland, and England and Wales in 2010/11



Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) and British Crime Survey (BCS)

slower rate than the decrease in the rate of reported violent crimes. In addition, crimes of vandalism, fire raising and malicious conduct have decreased significantly since 2007/08, yet detection rates have remained unchanged. With the exception of Central Scotland Police, (whose detection rates have fallen across all crime groups since 2007/08),¹⁸ Scottish forces have improved their detection rates in several of the seven crime groups over this period.

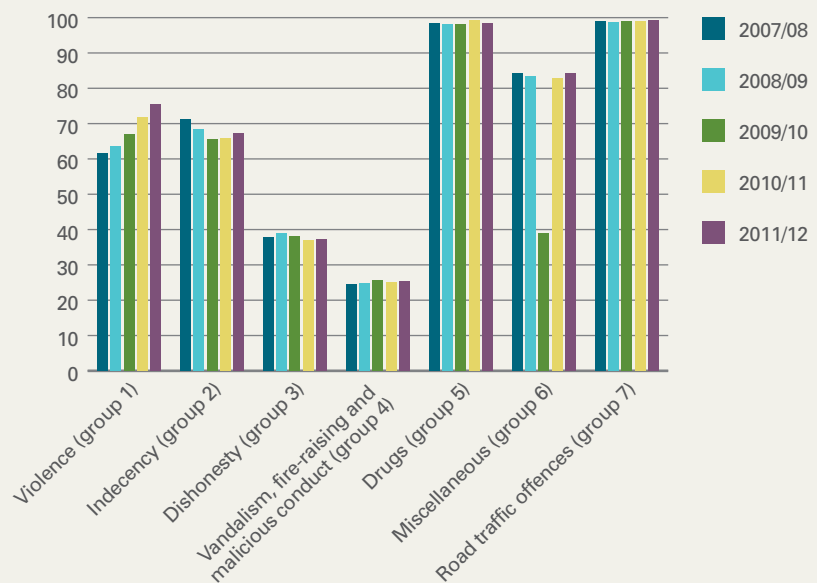
132. The detection rates for vandalism, fire-raising and malicious conduct are lower than for other crimes, as the perpetrators are more generally difficult to identify. In contrast, police forces are detecting almost all road traffic and drugs offences – where the perpetrators are almost always present.

133. Within the main crime categories, detection rates for racially aggravated crimes have been increasing across Scotland in recent years. Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, detections of racially aggravated crimes increased from 58.8 to 66.0 per cent. Within the Scottish average, detections of racially aggravated crimes have increased in three forces compared with four years ago (Central Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway and Strathclyde), three are at broadly the same level (Grampian, Lothian and Borders and Northern) and have declined in two forces (Fife and Tayside). Encouragingly, though, the average detection rate for racially aggravated crimes in Scotland has increased at a greater rate than the slight growth in the relevant number of reported crimes over this period.

134. Without information on the cost of police activity it is difficult to determine how much effort has been directed towards detecting different types of crime and whether current performance levels represent value for money.

Exhibit 13

Average detection rates across Scotland for each category of crime



Source: HMICS

Fear of crime

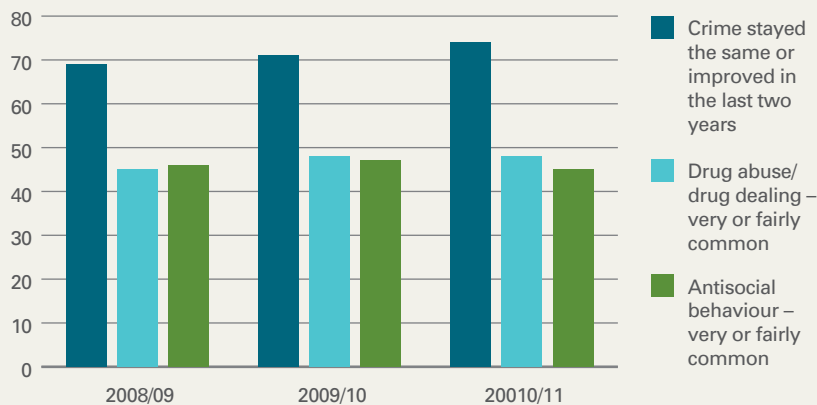
Fear of crime is gradually declining but there continues to be a gap between the perception and actual risk of crime.

135. Reducing people's fear and perception of crime is one of the Scottish Government's key outcomes in its national performance framework and its Strategy for Justice in Scotland. The strategy recognises that perceptions and fears about safety impact both on society as whole and on the justice system itself. A perceived lack of local safety and security can inhibit community engagement and lead certain groups to be socially excluded and less able to enjoy fulfilled lives. An important element of the achievement of the justice vision will be to reduce fear of crime and increase public confidence in the justice system itself by focusing on public reassurance.

136. In 2010/11, the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) showed that 74 per cent of adults felt the crime rate in their area stayed the same or decreased in the past two years. This is an improvement of three percentage points since 2009/10 and nine percentage points since 2006, the baseline year. The proportion of adults who think that antisocial behaviour is very or fairly common was marginally lower in 2010/11 than in 2008/09 (Exhibit 14, overleaf), but over the same period the proportion who thought that drug dealing and/or drug abuse was very or fairly common had increased. Although there is a slowly improving trend in perceptions and feelings of safety, there is a persistent and demonstrable gap between perceived risk and actual risk of crime, with people over-estimating their risk of becoming a victim of crime.

¹⁸ Despite decreases, in 2011/12 Central Scotland Police's detection rates were higher than the Scottish figure in all crime categories.

Exhibit 14 Perception of crime



Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) 2010/11

137. Public anxiety about crime has remained fairly constant over time, with about half of all adults in each survey carried out thinking that it was unlikely that they would experience crimes during the following year. The survey results showed that people were most worried about someone using their credit card or bank details to obtain money, goods or services. The proportion of respondents worrying about this has increased by one per cent in each of the last three years and in 2010/11 was 58 per cent. The issue has featured increasingly prominently in media articles, and has also been the subject of awareness initiatives by some banks.

138. Typically, the extent to which people feel safe walking alone in their local area after dark is used to gauge public anxiety about crime. This statistic has remained largely unchanged across Scotland, although during 2010/11 68 per cent of adults said they felt safe, a one per cent increase on previous years. The proportion of people who feel very unsafe fell from 12 per cent to ten per cent in 2010/11.

Satisfaction with policing

Public satisfaction, confidence and attitudes to police in local communities remain high and comparable with levels in England and Wales. Complaints about the police have been decreasing over time but increased in 2011/12.

139. Public satisfaction, confidence and attitudes to the police in local communities is high, at around 82 per cent on average across Scotland in 2011/12. This strongly suggests that forces pay attention to communities' perceptions and take an ongoing interest in ensuring that officers and staff provide a high quality of service.

140. Data gathered by HMICS from local user satisfaction surveys shows that the numbers of people surveyed who were either fairly, very or completely satisfied with the level of service obtained from the local police service is fairly consistent across the country, with statistics ranging between 83.9 and 84.3 per cent.¹⁹ This compares well with similar data regarding forces in England and

Wales, where the average level of satisfaction is around 84 per cent.²⁰

141. During the year, levels of user satisfaction did, however, decline in three of the seven forces that collect annual satisfaction data.²¹

142. Grampian Police has the highest percentage of users expressing satisfaction about their query being resolved and the overall way in which their matter was dealt with. Strathclyde Police has the highest percentage of users expressing satisfaction with their initial contact and the initial treatment of their matter, but the lowest percentage of users expressing their satisfaction with how their matter was dealt with overall. Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary has the highest percentage of users expressing satisfaction with the overall treatment of their matter.

143. As can be seen from Exhibit 15, Grampian and Strathclyde Police have by far the highest response rate to their user satisfaction surveys as they use telephone rather than postal surveys. Fife Constabulary has the lowest response rate to its user satisfaction survey and the lowest percentages of users expressing satisfaction with being informed, their initial treatment and how their query was resolved.

144. During 2011/12, the eight Scottish forces received 4,379 complaints, a rise of 4.1 per cent on the previous year. Six of the eight forces contributed to this upturn, with Central Scotland Police recording the greatest increase (35.1 per cent) and Strathclyde Police the smallest (0.2 per cent). Grampian Police showed the largest decline, with a 7.5 per cent fall in complaints. From a longer-term perspective, however, the total number of complaint cases received this year is 3.7 per cent lower than the average over the previous three years (2008/09 to 2010/11).

¹⁹ *Quality of service, crime and policing comparator*, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), July 2012.

²⁰ HMIC, March 2012.

²¹ Northern Constabulary collects biennial community satisfaction data in conjunction with its strategic partners.

Exhibit 15

Police force satisfaction surveys – percentage of respondents satisfied with service

	Central	Dumfries and Galloway	Fife	Grampian	Lothian and Borders	Northern ²	Strathclyde	Tayside
Survey response rate	28.6	37.0	21.3	98.6	39.9	N/A	83.4	35
Initial contact ¹	87.0	92.4	87.6	95.9	85.9	N/A	97.3	93.6
Resolved query ¹	75.3	84.4	67.9	91.1	69.1	N/A	83.5	75.1
Kept informed	60.5	76.0	54.6	66.4	65.0	N/A	59.0	61
Initial treatment ¹	86.7	94.5	88.9	95.5	87.3	N/A	95.6	93.3
Overall treatment ¹	88.4	95.5	92.7	94.2	92.4	N/A	93.7	93.7
Overall dealt with ¹	77.3	85.7	72.7	90.2	76.9	N/A	71.6	82.5

Notes:

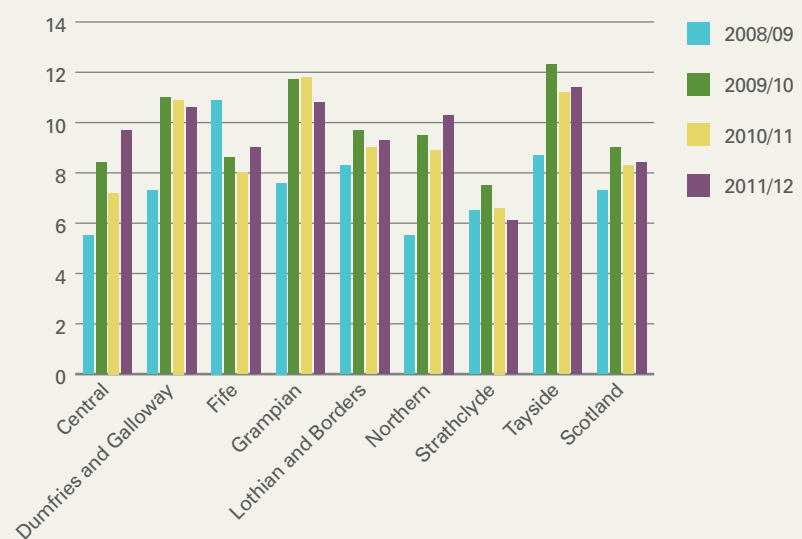
1. The data in this table shows the percentage of survey respondents satisfied with these various aspects of the service. The exception to this is the percentage of 'yes' responses to being kept informed.
2. Northern Constabulary collects biennial community satisfaction data in conjunction with its strategic partners.

Source: HMICS

145. There is no clear underlying trend in complaints received by individual forces in recent years (Exhibit 16). Some forces have experienced an increasing trend over time, such as Central Scotland Police, Grampian Police, Northern Constabulary and Tayside Police. These forces all receive a higher percentage share of complaints than might be expected from their share of the Scottish population. A consistent trend among others is harder to discern. The obvious exception is Strathclyde Police, which is the only force to record a fairly persistent annual decline in the number of complaints received. Its level of complaints per 10,000 population is now well below that of the other Scottish forces, and its overall share of total complaints (31.2 per cent) is considerably lower than might be expected on the basis of its 42.4 per cent share of Scotland's population. It is not clear why this should be the case.

Exhibit 16

Complaint cases received per 10,000 population by police force between 2008/09 and 2011/12



Source: HMICS

Part 5. Future considerations



146. The Scottish Police Authority and Police Service of Scotland will become operational from 1 April 2013. The Scottish Government expects the merger of the existing eight forces will generate efficiency savings of around £1.7 billion over 15 years through measures such as the rationalisation of support services and management costs and better procurement. The Government anticipates that these savings are expected to help protect frontline services at a time of reduced public sector spending.

147. There are potential benefits from the harmonisation of good practice and a more consistent approach to matching resources to priority risk areas. This will help to deliver better outcomes for local communities and make best use of resources.

148. Many of the priorities and objectives for the new national service are set out in the Transitional Policing Framework for Scotland 2012. There are, however, difficult decisions which will need to be taken if these are to be achieved. Strong leadership will be required from the current Scottish Policing Board²² members and senior officers in driving through strategic changes.

149. The move from eight police forces to a single national service presents both opportunities and challenges. In the short term, it is essential that the current joint boards and police authorities maintain a proper oversight of the service during this period of transition and change.

150. As the new service takes shape there will be a medium and longer-term agenda for change that will require strong leadership both nationally and locally, if a world-class Police Service of Scotland is to be delivered.

151. Based on our findings we have identified the following issues that should be considered at both a national and local level by the Scottish Government, local authorities, the Police Service of Scotland and Scottish Police Authority from April 2013. These are outlined in [Appendix 2](#).

²² The Scottish Policing Board first met in November 2009. It brings together all the tripartite partners and COSLA and provides a forum for collective discussion and agreement of action on key strategic issues for policing in Scotland.

Appendix 1.

Checklist for members of existing police authorities

Issues for current police authority members to consider

General

The police authority has assured itself that there is sufficient capacity within the police force to continue delivering core services and that business as usual is being maintained during the transition to the Police Service of Scotland.

- What measures is it taking to mitigate any associated risks to core services?
- For example, is it asking for more frequent performance reports in key areas to check performance is not dipping and asking for more frequent establishment updates to ensure there are sufficient officers and staff for key activities?

The police authority is clear that improvement plans, including those arising from external scrutiny, are being implemented.

- Do progress reports presented to members contain sufficient information to enable proper scrutiny?
- What action is being taken if particular areas for improvement are not being addressed?

The police authority has taken steps to ensure it remains fully quorate at all its meetings.

- Standing orders have proper provision for substitutes to be appointed?

The police authority has assured itself there are adequate arrangements for internal audit.

- What steps is the board/committee taking to ensure it has access to the internal audit services to which it is entitled?
- Has the internal audit programme been reviewed and updated to reflect the current risks around police and fire reform?

Resources

In considering and approving spending during the financial year 2012/13, the police authority is ensuring proper consideration is taken of both the immediate needs of the force and the future needs of the services.

- Are significant proposals for capital spending part of a long-term capital strategy? Is the strategy still relevant in the new circumstances?
- Are spending decisions taking appropriate account of value for money? Is the police authority ensuring itself that it is not agreeing to projects that promote short-term local interests over and above the long-term interests of the service?
- Is the board fully considering the sustainability of all major spending decisions and/or implications?

The police authority has ensured there is complete information on all assets and liabilities and appropriate arrangements for these to be transferred either to the new bodies or returned to the local authority.

- Is there an up-to-date asset register?
- Are all property, rights, liabilities and obligations identified and documented?
- Will any uncertainties around ownership of property, rights, liabilities and obligations be resolved before transfer at 31 March 2013?

Issues for current police authority members to consider

The police authority is carrying out proper oversight and scrutiny of exit packages for staff that these are supported by appropriate business cases and there are adequate funds available.

- Are members being made aware of staff movements (eg, leaving the service altogether or moving to the new body), in particular senior staff, and the implications of these on service delivery?
- Are members considering proposals for exit packages (supported by detailed business cases that identify both the risks and the costs involved) before they are agreed rather than after any agreement?

Winding up the authority

The police authority has ensured there are people with appropriate skills to complete the final accounts and there are formal and legal arrangements for signing these off.

- What steps is the board taking to ensure it fulfils its legal obligations to sign off the final accounts?
- Are there sufficient qualified staff, whether directly employed or seconded by the lead council, to complete the final accounts?

Specific issues for the unitary authorities (Dumfries and Galloway and Fife)

- Is the council being proactive in disaggregating property, rights, liabilities and obligations?

Appendix 2.

Key issues for the Police Service of Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and local authorities to consider under new policing arrangements

Key issues

Strategic direction

The new Scottish Police Authority should ensure that it has strong arrangements in place to develop, in collaboration with the chief constable, the strategic policing plan for Scotland. In doing so, it should take account of the views of local authorities, HMICS and other stakeholders. It should also establish good arrangements for monitoring progress in achieving this plan.

Establishing an effective level of integration between partnership plans, local and national policing plans and SOAs will be critical to the success of new policing structures.

At the local level, it is important that the local policing plan clearly sets out the priorities and objectives for police services in that area, and that it is appropriately aligned with community planning arrangements. Local arrangements should also ensure that effective monitoring processes are in place.

Local commanders should ensure that local policing plans and priorities are clearly informed by feedback from local communities.

When planning and carrying out community engagement activity, local commanders should consider how best to coordinate this with other local engagement activity being carried out by partners.

Governance and accountability

It is important that the new policing arrangements operate in a way that is consistent with recognised principles of good governance.

It is vital that the accountability arrangements are clearly articulated and that roles and responsibilities are understood and agreed.

Members of the SPA and local authorities should receive appropriate training on their respective roles and responsibilities and be provided with appropriate support to carry out these roles effectively.

There needs to be clarity about the respective roles of local police commanders and elected members in relevant partnerships and how this will support positive policing outcomes.

Managing performance

Members of the SPA need to be clear about what performance information they expect to receive, and be able to scrutinise performance effectively.

Monitoring at a local level also needs to be supported by good-quality performance information, to allow local authorities and the local commander to improve service delivery and outcomes for local communities.

Public performance reporting needs to be informative and balanced. In addition to highlighting successes, it should clearly identify where goals have not been achieved and include better information on costs of activities and comparative performance to allow a clearer assessment of value for money.

Managing resources

Decisions about policing priorities in both local and national policing plans will need to fully consider long-term resource implications.

Key issues

In striving to make the targeted long-term efficiencies within policing, the Police Service of Scotland should have clear plans in place to deliver ongoing operating efficiencies as well as one-off cost savings or income streams.

The SPA should establish a long-term strategic financial plan, monitor how financial resources are being used, and whether efficiencies are being achieved.

The Police Service of Scotland needs to have a clear understanding of the costs of police activity.

Within the context of maintaining a minimum number of police officers, the Police Service of Scotland and SPA should undertake strategic workforce planning to ensure that it makes best use of its people resources, with functions carried out by people with the right skills, knowledge and experience.

The eight current police forces and authorities need to manage very carefully the transition process in relation to the identification and transfer of assets and liabilities.

The SPA and the Police Service of Scotland need to manage the significant police assets across the country well to ensure they are used most efficiently.

Equalities and sustainability

It is important that the Police Service of Scotland builds upon good practice developed by individual forces to ensure it has the most effective approach to managing and reporting on equalities issues.

Training programmes for members of the SPA and those involved in agreeing local policing plans should include an appropriate level of training on equalities duties.

Policing performance information should include appropriate outcome-focused equalities measures to inform effective monitoring and scrutiny of the impact of equalities work.

Members of the SPA need to be clear about their role in improving environmental performance and should be provided with good information to facilitate effective scrutiny in this area.

The Police Service of Scotland should establish a consistent approach to sustainability that not only continues and builds upon the good work done locally by Scottish forces but embraces the best practice examples from elsewhere.

Best Value in police authorities and police forces in Scotland

Overview report

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