

# JUSTICE COMMITTEE – 19<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2014

## EVIDENCE SESSION BRIEFING FROM HMICS/HMFSI

### Background

The Justice Committee has requested a one-off evidence session with HMICS and HMFSI on Tuesday 19 August 2014. The purpose of the session is to discuss inspection and thematic work in relation to the first year of the single services and to explore common themes arising from the work of both inspectorates.

Both inspectorates have undertaken a number of thematic inspections<sup>1</sup> and pursued regular engagement with police and fire services and their respective Authorities. Each inspectorate maintains a scrutiny risk assessment which when combined with stakeholder consultation informs our future work programmes. Both inspectorates maintain and publish annual scrutiny plans, which are kept under regular review.

There are a number of **shared key messages** and inspection findings which can be highlighted from our work over the past year:

### 1. Reform

On the whole, our judgement is that the reform process has been effective to date. This is reflected in the continuity of front line services from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, with minimal direct impact on the services provided to communities. Our assessment is that both services are operationally effective and better placed to deal with major events than the legacy services. However, the creation of the new services was only the beginning of a major change programme and challenges remain in terms of the medium to long term sustainability. Both services and their respective authorities are aware of this and plans are being developed to address them. The financial challenge still remains and although the targeted savings have been achieved to date, with no discernible impact on service delivery, there is a need for both services to be clear about future structures and have transition plans that deliver sustainable savings.

In terms of the benefits of reform : *(i) to protect and improve local services; (ii) to create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity; and (iii) to strengthen the connection between services and communities,*<sup>2</sup> we have taken the opportunity during our inspections to reflect on the extent to which the reform objectives are being achieved. We have found early evidence that there is more equal access to specialist resources across the country – which is exhibited in our work around Roads Policing and the now routine mobilising of specialist FRS assets across what were previously geographical limits. There is also early evidence in the production of local plans, that the connection with local communities is being developed, although we feel there is further work to be done in this area. We consider that the legislative framework supports both national and local delivery, although effective localism and genuine engagement with communities will be a critical success factor for both services moving forward. This is particularly evident in terms of national decisions which impact on local communities.

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<sup>1</sup> HMFSI – Equal Access to National Capacity – May 2014, Overview of the SFRS – November 2013  
HMFSI & HMICS – Development of local plans and arrangements for local scrutiny & engagement – May 2013.  
HMICS – Custody – August 2014, Roads Policing – July 2014, Legacy Recommendations - CONTEST Prepare – June 2014, Incident & Crime Reporting – December 2013,

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Parliament, [Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Bill: Policy Memorandum](#) (2012).

We plan to undertake further inspection work which focuses specifically on the local delivery of services in order to more fully assess how these have been protected and improved. HMICS has recently introduced a new rolling programme of local policing inspection, and will shortly report on the pilot inspection of Fife.

## **2. Change Management**

Whilst front line services have been maintained, the technical challenges of amalgamating a number of organisations together continues to absorb a great deal of management capacity and consequently allows less time for strategic planning, innovation and improvement. There continue to be issues in developing workforce planning, ICT integration, availability of effective management and performance information, consistent application of policy and the development of effective scrutiny. It is our opinion that both Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are still at an early stage of a significant programme of transformational change. Some of that change will take time to achieve, and only once implemented will it be possible to fully assess whether the intended benefits of reform have been fully realised. HMICS has committed to scrutiny of Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority around their implementation and governance of the corporate strategy and supporting plans.

## **3. Leadership and Governance**

In November 2013, HMIFRS made comment about the importance of effective working between the Fire Board and the Strategic Leadership Team. This has not been explicitly followed up to date but relationships continue to be a matter of interest in the Inspectorate's risk assessment.

Early in 2013, HMICS was proactive in engaging with the SPA and Police Scotland in addressing governance issues which were affecting relationships. These issues were also highlighted by Audit Scotland<sup>3</sup> and have since significantly improved. HMICS is about to undertake a Continuous Improvement Review of the SPA in respect of leadership and governance.

We think that it is inevitable that strong relationships will take time to develop and those bodies with roles which include supporting, promoting and challenging services, will always require to seek an effective balance. That said, there is now a need to strengthen national and local scrutiny arrangements for both services, encourage constructive dialogue and develop a shared understanding across Scotland in terms of individual roles, responsibilities and boundaries for the services, their authorities and scrutiny bodies.

## **4. Service Delivery**

In the HMFSI May report '*Equal Access to National Capacity*<sup>4</sup>, the fragility of the volunteer and RDS service across Scotland was particularly emphasised. 85% of Scotland's fire stations are wholly or partly dependant on RDS or volunteer crews and their long-term sustainability is therefore crucial to the success of the Service. The Inspectorate intends to follow up on this issue and hopes to work with the SFRS on its review project.

HMICS has taken the opportunity in a series of thematic reports to comment positively on the services being provided by Police Scotland, as well as make recommendations for

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<sup>3</sup> Audit Scotland 'Police Reform – Update 2013' – November 2013

[http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2013/nr\\_131114\\_police\\_reform.pdf](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2013/nr_131114_police_reform.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0045/00451034.pdf>

improvement. In *Roads Policing*<sup>5</sup> we have asked Police Scotland to examine the extent to which target setting and performance management processes drive operational behaviours and assess their impact in terms of delivering outcomes and maintaining public satisfaction and confidence. In *Custody*<sup>6</sup>, we made 15 recommendations and identified 39 areas for improvement, highlighting in particular the need for Police Scotland to finalise the Custody Estate Strategy and work in partnership with the Scottish Police Authority and Scottish Government to prioritise investment in the custody estate.

HMICS has also included some capacity for Audit and Assurance reviews within our annual scrutiny plan and has committed to specific scrutiny activity around Stop and Search, Crime Recording and Armed Policing. HMICS also has a programme of collaborative inspections in areas where Police Scotland deliver services in partnership with other agencies, such as Childrens' Services and MAPPA arrangements.

In terms of Call Handling, both inspectorates recognise the need to rationalise legacy structures. Whilst these structures worked well for legacy forces and have been supported by dedicated and professional staff, the proposals to develop new structures for the new services are necessary in terms of both efficiency and operational effectiveness. It is a matter for the respective authorities to determine the optimum structures and have these supported by appropriate business cases and implementation plans. While both inspectorates will have an interest in this process, our primary focus is on service delivery and ensuring that communities and front-line staff receive an equivalent or improved service from the new call handling structures. In our *Legacy Recommendations Review*<sup>7</sup> HMICS took the opportunity to recommend that Police Scotland create and publish details of the service that members of the public can expect to receive when they call the police and publish performance information.

## **5. Major Event Planning**

Both inspectorates reported on the preparations for CG2014 and stated that we are content with the way the planning process was managed. In our review of CONTEST Prepare<sup>8</sup>, HMICS concluded that Police Scotland, working with others, is prepared to respond to and recover from a terrorist incident. There are a number of other significant events which have been handled professionally by both services, including the Clutha Helicopter crash, Glasgow School of Art fire and T-in-the-Park. We are aware that forthcoming events such as the Ryder Cup have also been subject to rigorous planning. We consider that the single services have strengthened capability and capacity around major events in Scotland

## **6. Engagement**

We have found that partners in the wider justice, community safety, public and voluntary sectors are positive about their relationships with the new national services. They have welcomed the single point of contact that a national service has provided and thought this led to more effective and efficient decision making.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.hmics.org/sites/default/files/publications/HMICS%20-%20%20Thematic%20Inspection%20of%20Road%20Policing.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.hmics.org/sites/default/files/publications/Thematic%20Inspection%20of%20Police%20Custody%20Arrangements%20in%20Scotland.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.hmics.org/sites/default/files/publications/HMICS%20Review%20of%20Legacy%20Inspection%20Recommendation%20July%202014.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.hmics.org/sites/default/files/publications/HMICS%20Thematic%20Review%20of%20CONTEST%20Prepare%202013\\_1.pdf](http://www.hmics.org/sites/default/files/publications/HMICS%20Thematic%20Review%20of%20CONTEST%20Prepare%202013_1.pdf)

## 7. Conclusion

Both inspectorates conclude that the creation of the single Police and Fire Services has been effective to date and that both services are operationally stronger than their legacy services. However, the reform process has only started and there needs to be an ongoing focus on *sustainability*, *localism* and *scrutiny* to ensure the medium to long term success and to fully realise the anticipated benefits of reform.

We hope the Committee find this briefing useful and we look forward to providing further information at our evidence session.

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**HMICS**

**Steven Torrie**  
**HMIFRS**

### **For further information**

Our scrutiny plans for 2014/15 can be found at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0044/00449731.pdf>

<http://www.hmics.org/sites/default/files/publications/SCRUTINY%20PLAN%202014-15%201.0%20FINAL.pdf>

HMICS Corporate Strategy 2014/17 can be found at:

<http://www.hmics.org/sites/default/files/publications/CORPORATE%20STRATEGY%202014-17%20v1.0%20FINAL.pdf>