Written submission from HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland

**Police and Fire Reform Act 2013**

The statutory role of HMICS under the above act states:

(1) The Scottish Ministers may direct the inspectors of constabulary to make inquiries about any matter relating to the Authority or the Police Service as they consider appropriate.

(2) The inspectors of constabulary may make such other inquiries as they think fit about

(a) the state, efficiency and effectiveness of the Authority and the Police Service

**Context**

The establishment of the Scottish Police Authority and the Police Service of Scotland has involved the most complex and significant reform process. The enormity of the changes included the two newly created organisations inheriting 10 separate legacy police organisational arrangements and the transfer of functions, financial controls and responsibilities from a number of Local Authorities.

**HMICS Model and Approach**

In response to the new policing landscape post 1 April 2013, HMICS introduced a new Inspection model. The inspection team now consists of HMIC, an Assistant HMI and 6 Lead Inspectors.

Since 1 April, Lead Inspectors have been engaged in field work designed to develop key relationships across the new policing structures and to create ‘profiles’ of local and national policing arrangements.

Whilst a number of formal inspections have taken place, including a joint review with the Fire and Rescue Inspectorate into the developing arrangements for Local Authority Scrutiny and Engagement, HMICS have not conducted any detailed/formal inspection activity specifically on the reform process.

Whilst it is very early in the reform process, HMICS work to date, (7 months into the new organisations), has identified and recognised some remarkable early transition progress. Operational policing across all areas of Scotland remains strong, with policing performance being maintained across many of the measured indicators. There are also early signs that access to specialist services, specifically in relation to the investigation of serious crime, has been improved across Scotland. However as with the establishment of any new organisation and especially one of this scale there is still much work to do.

**Police Governance**
The Public Audit Committee has previously recognised the debate which took place in the months immediately preceding the launch of the new policing arrangements for Scotland. In evidence provided to the Committee in January 2013, my predecessor, Andrew Laing stated –

“With a new service, new legislation and new leaders there were always going to be challenges around boundaries, as we are seeing at the moment”

Given the importance of policing, and the passion for public service of those involved in leading the change, it is no surprise that there were differing views and interpretations around various roles and responsibilities.

Having recognised some early concerns around a lack of clarity on governance functions, roles and responsibilities, HMICS was involved in facilitating continued discussion and debate within and between the Scottish Police Authority, the Scottish Government and the Police Service of Scotland. The specific issues revolved around the extent to which the Scottish Police Authority would be responsible for the direct ‘delivery’ of support services and the capacity of the Authority to exercise scrutiny, support and governance. Following these discussions, in June 2013, the Scottish Police Authority decided to adopt a governance model which focussed upon strategy, policy, scrutiny and engagement. Support functions, other than those the Act requires the Police Authority to deliver, were to be under the direction and control of the Chief Constable.

There is still much work to do in this area. HMICS will continue to support the Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland in the development and implementation of this agreed approach.

**Future work**

HMICS will continue to retain a key interest in

- The continued development and implementation of the Police Authorities organisational requirements
- The effectiveness of the governance arrangements and the key supporting strategies e.g. finance, performance management, ICT, estates
- The efficiency and effectiveness of the emerging policing structures, both at a local and national level

HMICS is currently developing a detailed work plan for 2014 and beyond. Extensive consultation and discussion will take place with key stakeholders, including the Scottish Police Authority, Police Scotland, Scottish Government and members of the Scottish Parliament. Early informal work has already identified that Local policing, local scrutiny and engagement, and indeed the link into the new national structures and approaches, will feature in the thematic work undertaken by HMICS in 2014.

George M Graham
HMICS