Dear Convener

Joint Inspection of British Transport Police

I refer to your recent call for written evidence on the Railway Scotland Bill and wish to advise you that I have agreed to conduct a joint inspection of British Transport Police, (BTP) with Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary in England and Wales, (HMIC).

This agreement will allow for HMICS to work with HMIC on its planned inspection of efficiency, legitimacy and leadership and will now include as assessment of BTP in Scotland. It is also my intention to use our inspection to identify any strategic issues arising from the transfer of BTP Scottish operations to Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority under the Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill. This could potentially be used to inform future discussions about the implementation of this transfer.

The inspection will be conducted under Section 63 of Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 and has already been commissioned by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Transport. It is our intention to produce a single joint report with HMIC that will be submitted to the Department of Transport in accordance with the legislation. Although this requires our report to be is published by the Secretary of State, it would be my intention for copies to be provided to Scottish Ministers, the Justice Committee and made public through our HMICS website.

Our inspection fieldwork will commence in February 2017, although I do not yet have a date for completion. It will be absorbed within our current 2016/17 Scrutiny Plan and led in Scotland by Billy Gordon, Assistant Inspector of Constabulary.

Separate letters have been sent to the Department of Transport, British Transport Police Authority and the Chief Constable of BTP advising them of the joint inspection. I have also written to the Scottish Government, Chair of the Scottish Police Authority and the Chief Constable for their awareness.
I will today be issuing an embargoed press release for publication on Monday 9 January 2017 of intended inspection activity in this area.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely


Derek Penman
HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary