

## REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 20 FEBRUARY 2020

### CONSULTATION ON HM INSPECTORATE FOR CONSTABULARY IN SCOTLAND (HMICS) SCRUTINY PLANNING 2020/21

#### 1 Reason for Report / Summary

- 1.1 This report details Aberdeenshire Council's response to the consultation on the HMICS' Scrutiny Plan for 2020-21.

#### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 *Acknowledge Aberdeenshire Council's response submitted under delegated powers and following consultation.***

#### 3 Purpose and Decision Making Route

- 3.1 HMICS have a duty to inquire into the arrangements made by the Chief Constable and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) to meet their obligations in terms of Best Value and continuous improvement. They have a requirement to prepare a plan setting out inspection priorities for the year ahead and to consult with relevant stakeholders in preparing the plan.

#### 4 Discussion

- 4.1 The [consultation](#) gave the opportunity to put forward multiple issues that should be considered for scrutiny by HMICS, and any emerging threats that would impact on Police Scotland or the Scottish Police Authority.
- 4.2 As this consultation involved all services across the council, it was decided that officers' views would be collated by the Corporate Policy and Strategic Community Planning Team. The questions were emailed on 20th November 2019, with a deadline of 7th January 2020. Chief officers, policy committee chairs and area committee chairs had the opportunity to contribute to the Aberdeenshire Council response. Responses were collated prior to the submission closing date of 17th January 2020.
- 4.3 Responses were received from the council's Housing Service, Roads and Landscape Service, an Area Manager and the Communities Committee Chair. The collated response is shown in Appendix 1.
- 4.4 As specified by the Scheme of Governance, due to the timelines of Communities Committee meetings, the draft response was sent to the

Chair, Vice Chair, and main Opposition Spokesperson of the Communities Committee for review and approval. The response was approved via delegated powers and submitted on 20<sup>th</sup> January, following request for a slight extension.

- 4.5 In summary, Aberdeenshire Council highlighted five issues for scrutiny, as follows: road safety / roads policing; county lines/cuckooing; internet/phone fraud; community policing; and partnerships and sustainability in line with police priorities. The emerging threats highlighted for Police Scotland and SPA to consider were budget/resource issues, serious and organised crime, terrorism, and internet crimes.

## 5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 5.1 This report is relevant to all 11 Council Priorities in terms of ensuring safer communities.
- 5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation is agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		x	
Staffing		x	
Equalities		x	
Fairer Scotland Duty		x	
Town Centre First		x	
Sustainability		x	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		x	

- 5.3 An equality impact assessment is not required because this is a response to a consultation and does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.
- 5.4 The following risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:  
Changes in government policy, legislation and regulation - this is controlled through COSLA membership, SOLACE membership and membership of professional bodies at both corporate & individual level.

## 6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no

comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

6.2 The Communities Committee is able to note this report in terms of Section D1.1f of Part 2 A - List of Committee Powers in the Scheme of Governance.

Chief Officers can submit a Council response to an external consultation on any policy matter, according to Section A22 of the List of Officers Powers in Part 2B of the Scheme of Governance, where the timescale for responding does not permit an opportunity for approval by the appropriate policy committee.

Any response submitted under this delegated power shall be made following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair and main Opposition Spokesperson of the appropriate policy committee, where possible, and must be reported to the next committee meeting.

**Ritchie Johnson**  
**Director of Business Services**

Report prepared by: Erin Wood, Policy Officer, Corporate Policy and Community Planning Team, 31st January 2020

### **List of Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Aberdeenshire Council Response



## **APPENDIX 1 – ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO HMICS CONSULTATION**

**January 2020**

### **ISSUE 1: What area of Policing do you think HMICS should examine? (for example, drug deaths, sexual crime, training, domestic violence)**

Road safety / road policing is one area that HMICS should examine.

#### **Why should this area be inspected?**

Road safety has been highlighted as a major concern for most rural communities.

Inspection is required for road policing due to the lack of enforcement for speeding, driver behaviour and appropriate on-street parking. The latter includes parking on double yellow lines and driving and parking in pedestrian precincts.

#### **What aspects could be improved?**

Addressing driver behavior, especially speeding, as there is the perception of a lack of officers focusing on this aspect.

Education and enforcement could be improved.

### **ISSUE 2: What area of Policing do you think HMICS should examine? (for example, drug deaths, sexual crime, training, domestic violence)**

County Lines and Cuckooing

#### **Why should this area be inspected?**

This is a known issue in Aberdeenshire and an incredibly complex one involving multiple agencies which may benefit from inspection.

#### **What aspects could be improved?**

The inspection would determine what could be improved. It would allow any improvements to be put forward or indeed provide assurance that the area works as well as it can.

### **ISSUE 3: What area of Policing do you think HMICS should examine? (for example, drug deaths, sexual crime, training, domestic violence)**

The inspections should also be in areas which reflect the newly published Police Scotland Priorities as set out by the Scottish Government. Partnerships and Sustainability are of particular interest.

#### **Why should this area be inspected?**

Sustainability is becoming more and more of an issue in regard to the financial restraints within which Police Scotland are operating. The resource is not sufficient to support the status quo, never mind future requirements.

In regard to partnerships, there needs to be consideration of what Police Scotland's core business actually is. 22% of calls to Police Scotland relate to

criminality. 78% of calls are from people who have varying degrees of vulnerabilities and are not necessarily sign posted to the most appropriate services. In fact, the access to those services is limited and, in many cases, custody is the only recourse open to Police Scotland. That is not a positive outcome for anyone and collaborative approaches must be adopted to allow these individuals to receive the correct support. Mental Health and Learning Disabilities are examples of vulnerabilities which are not being addressed. Solutions lie in wider public sector and third sector partnerships.

**What aspects could be improved?**

As above

**ISSUE 4: What area of Policing do you think HMICS should examine? (for example, drug deaths, sexual crime, training, domestic violence)**

Community Policing

**What aspects could be improved?**

It would be of benefit to assess the effectiveness and outcomes relating to this area. This ties into Community Safety and partnership working

**ISSUE 5: What area of Policing do you think HMICS should examine? (for example, drug deaths, sexual crime, training, domestic violence)**

Internet/ phone fraud

**Why should this area be inspected?**

Instances of vulnerable households being targeted seem to be rising

**What aspects could be improved?**

Education of the public could be improved to help raise awareness.

**What emerging threats do you think is likely to impact on Police Scotland or the SPA?**

Budget and resource issues will continue to be a challenge. Internet crimes and terrorism and serious organised crime are threats.

The SPA needs autonomy to carry out monitoring and scrutiny.