

## JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE

7 DECEMBER 2015

**Summary of Recent External Inspection Reports****Paul Godden, Corporate Development Department****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide members with a summary of recent external inspection reports and an overview of the process in place to manage the Force's response to inspection recommendations and findings.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. The following national inspection reports have been published by HMIC since the last Joint Independent Audit Committee:
- Targeting the risk: An inspection of the efficiency and effectiveness of firearms licensing.
  - Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL): Police Efficiency 2015.
  - Joint inspection report – A follow-up inspection of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.
  - Working in step? A joint inspection of Local Criminal Justice Partnerships (LCJP).
  - Joint inspection report – Witness for the prosecution: Identifying victim and witness vulnerability in criminal case files.
- 2.2 The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) also published its findings from ICO audits and follow-up reviews of police forces.
- 2.3 Corporate Development Department acts as the central liaison point for all HMIC related matters.
- 2.4 All HMIC inspection reports and other external inspection reports are considered by Chief Officers. A project lead is appointed to consider inspection findings and prepare an action plan in response to any recommendations and areas for improvement identified. These action plans are agreed by the Executive Board and by the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 2.5 Project teams are appointed to support implementation of the action plan, as appropriate. Progress against agreed action plans is reported to the Strategic Management Board.

**3. SUMMARY****Targeting the risk: An inspection of the efficiency and effectiveness of firearms licensing**

- 3.1 The Home Secretary commissioned an inspection by HMIC on the efficiency and effectiveness of the arrangements in place to manage firearms licensing, including:

the governance structure for firearms licensing; force understanding and management of risk to firearms licensing; force learning to improve firearms licensing from national reports into fatal shootings; and engagement with other stakeholders.

- 3.2 Fieldwork was undertaken in 11 police forces and data requested from all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Northumbria Police was not visited, but did provide evidence by way of a data return.
- 3.3 Overall, HMIC found that the lawful possession of firearms in England and Wales is tightly controlled. At a national level, senior police leaders for firearms licensing had a very good grasp of the risks and challenges faced by the police, but there are gaps in the governance within individual forces.
- 3.4 The interpretation of Home Office guidance differed greatly amongst forces and allowed far too much discretion to fulfil their intended purpose.
- 3.5 HMIC made eighteen recommendations. Ten are directed at Chief Constables and focus on four broad themes:
- The governance of firearms licensing and effective monitoring.
  - The demands placed on firearms licensing departments and their capacity to meet this demand.
  - A review of systems and processes.
  - The arrangements for public engagement and customer service.

#### **PEEL – Police Efficiency 2015**

- 3.6 This inspection assessed how forces maximise the outcomes from available resources and considered the financial and workforce planning of police forces whilst examining wider questions of cost, capability and productivity. The inspection focused on the overall question, *'How efficient is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?'*
- 3.7 The national thematic report and Force reports were published on 20 October 2015, and the overall judgement for Northumbria Police was **GOOD**.
- 3.8 Northumbria was also judged as **GOOD** in each of the three areas tested:
- How well does the force use its resources to meet demand?
  - How sustainable and affordable is the workforce model?
  - How sustainable is the force's financial position for the short and long term?
- 3.9 Overall, HMIC found that the Force has a strong understanding of its likely financial position up to 2018 and understands the financial challenges it faces. It is using new ways of working to reduce its spending while maintaining a high quality of service to its communities.
- 3.10 The report acknowledged that the Force's current workforce model cannot be sustained beyond 2017/18. Longer-term saving plans are less certain and depend on collaborative working with local organisations and neighbouring forces.

- 3.11 Understanding of demand and the costs involved in providing all of its various services is not yet sufficiently detailed and this is needed to inform the new operating model to meet its budget beyond 2017/18.

**Joint inspection report – A follow-up inspection of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements**

- 3.12 This joint inspection sought to establish whether the recommendations in the 2011 report *'Putting the pieces together – an inspection of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements'* had been implemented, and whether improvements to practice had resulted. The Northumbria Police area was not visited.
- 3.13 Overall, it found there had been measurable improvement in the quality of work undertaken with MAPPA offenders managed at level 2 and 3, compared with 2011. The inspection found that risk management plans were still not good enough, the quality of minutes had improved, but remained inconsistent and responsible authorities and duty to co-operate agencies were not always appropriately represented at level 2 and 3 meetings.
- 3.14 The report included a number of recommendations, with specific recommendations for police forces to ensure:
- that all violent offenders managed at MAPPA level 2 and 3 are allocated a named police offender manager.
  - neighbourhood policing teams are made fully aware of Registered Sex Offenders living within their policing areas.

**Working in step? A joint inspection of local criminal justice partnerships (LCJPs)**

- 3.15 This joint inspection was completed in 2014/15 and examined how well local criminal justice agencies work together to provide justice that is efficient and effective. The report was published 22 October 2015. Northumbria was not visited.
- 3.16 Overall, whilst acknowledging the scale of the challenge, the inspection found little evidence that LCJPs were visible, accountable and influential bodies leading work to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CJS at a local level and achieving tangible results.
- 3.17 The report recommends that steps are taken by the leaders of the criminal justice agencies to provide greater clarity and direction, pace and purpose to inter-agency working at local, regional and national level.

**Joint inspection report – Witness for the prosecution: Identifying victim and witness vulnerability in criminal case files**

- 3.18 A joint inspection report, together with 43 force reports was published on 12 November 2015.
- 3.19 The Force report was positive. However, overall the joint inspectorate concluded that vulnerable victims and witnesses are being let down by an inconsistent approach to the management of criminal case files.

- 3.20 The inspection found that:
- The quality of police reports had improved since the previous reviews in 2011 and 2013; however, the quality of service was no different whether a vulnerable victim or witness was involved in the case or not.
  - The police and CPS must improve their understanding of vulnerability of a victim or witness and how their vulnerability can change as the case progresses through court.
  - The police and CPS must strive to understand better their respective contributions to the criminal justice process and eliminate the 'tick-box' culture, to improve both the efficiency of the criminal justice system and the service provided to vulnerable victims and witnesses.
- 3.21 The national report contains ten recommendations to ensure that an effective system is put in place to make sure that case file information on vulnerable and intimidated witnesses is improved.
- 3.22 The majority of recommendations are for the College of Policing solely, or working with the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for file quality.
- 3.23 Chief constables should undertake an evaluation of their local training arrangements for student officers and review the templates in use in their force to ensure officers and staff are using the authorised versions which have not been amended or adapted.

**Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) – Findings from ICO audits and follow-up reviews of police forces**

- 3.24 The ICO published a report with a number of recommendations for police forces following their experience of personal data handling from 40 ICO audits and 30 follow-up audits of police forces.
- 3.25 The follow-up activity highlighted some key compliance areas where forces have not yet been able to mitigate risks identified during original audit activity.
- 3.26 Common themes included lack of progress towards creating and maintaining an information asset register, training and awareness for both general staff and those with specialised roles within information governance, security of personal data, particularly around retention and disposal of records and information security checks of both internal force premises and third party suppliers.
- 3.27 The recommendations covered a number of areas including: records management; training and awareness; audit and compliance checks; policy and procedure; network access controls; record storage, retention and disposal; governance structures; and data sharing.
- 3.28 An audit of the processing of personal data by Northumbria Police was carried out by the ICO in March 2013. Overall, the ICO concluded that there was a reasonable level of assurance that processes and procedures were in place and delivering data protection compliance.
- 3.29 An assessment of the Force position against each of the recommendations will be undertaken.

**4. Financial Considerations**

- 4.1 There are no additional financial considerations arising from this report.

**5. Legal Considerations**

- 5.1 There are no legal considerations arising from the content of this report.

**6. Equality Considerations**

- 6.1 There are no equality implications arising from the content of this report.

**7. Risk Management Considerations**

- 7.1 HMIC expects that progress is made in response to the recommendations and uses progress against previous recommendations to assess risk when considering future inspection activity.
- 7.2 The Force prepares action plans in response to HMIC findings, as appropriate, and delivery is monitored at the Force's Strategic Management Board.

**8. Recommendation**

- 8.1 The Committee is asked to note the recent inspection reports.