

Address: 110 George Street
Edinburgh
EH2 4LH

Telephone: 0845 146 1010

Website: www.audit-scotland.gov.uk



Address: 1st Floor West
St Andrew's House,
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Telephone: 0131 244 5614

Website: www.scotland.gov.uk/hmics



News release

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Fife Constabulary and Police Authority perform well and need to continue to work closely in the transition to the new Police Service of Scotland.

Fife Constabulary and Fife Police Authority both demonstrate most aspects of Best Value. They share a strong vision of taking policing closer to the community and need to maintain the progress they have achieved in the run-up to a single force.

The *Best Value Audit and Inspection: Fife Constabulary and Fife Police Authority* sets out how these bodies are meeting their duties to deliver Best Value in what they do. It is a joint report from the Accounts Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS).

The force performs well. Overall crime rates continue to fall and detection rates are rising. The force has maintained police officer numbers while embarking on a significant change programme to manage a reduction in the police budget.

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Andrew Laing, said: "Fife Constabulary does a good job for the people it serves. The force is delivering on its long term strategy of taking policing closer to the community."

His findings highlight opportunities where it can do better, including internal communication of local priorities, more informative performance reports, and further steps to reduce domestic abuse and hate crime.

The Accounts Commission found that the **police authority**, through its Police, Fire and Safety Committee, is effective and demonstrates most of the characteristics of best value with particular strength in the vision for community policing it shares with the force.

The authority needs to be clearer about the performance information and support it needs to fulfil its best value responsibilities. The Commission also highlights the need for the authority and force to maintain good working relations in the transition to the new Police Service of Scotland.

Chair of the Accounts Commission, John Baillie, said: "Fife Police Authority performs well. There is room for improvement in its scrutiny of the force but the new Police Transition Committee set up to oversee the move to the single force has positive momentum and this needs to be maintained in the months ahead."

For further information contact Chris Holme, Audit Scotland, tel 0131 625 1653

Notes to Editors

1. This is the last of eight Best Value Audit and Inspection reports of Scottish police forces and respective police authorities. An overview report on police services is due to be published later this year – ahead of the establishment of the single Scottish police force in April 2013.
2. The Accounts Commission checks whether local authorities, fire and police boards spend public money properly and effectively.

3. HMICS operates independently of police forces, police authorities and the Scottish Government and exists to monitor and improve the police service in Scotland.
4. Audit Scotland provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission
5. Fife has established a Police Transition Committee (replacing the Police, Fire and Safety Committee) to oversee the force through to the national service next year.
6. Both the Accounts Commission and HMICS have the power to examine how well Scottish police authorities are delivering best value. HMICS also has a statutory duty to inspect police forces and report on their state and efficiency. Both organisations would have been entitled produce their own report on each police authority but this would have created duplication of work and is not in keeping with the spirit of the recommendations of the Crerar report and with the current drive to streamline scrutiny. Also, a joint report gives the public an overall view of how well the police authorities in their area are meeting their duties to provide best value. It was decided that a joint report would be the most efficient way for both bodies to exercise their best value duties.
7. Best Value is the duty placed on local authorities by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. It requires local authorities to demonstrate their on-going commitment to providing better services to local people