



HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland

**REVIEW OF SCOTTISH CRIMINAL RECORD
OFFICE
PRIMARY INSPECTION OF 2004**

December 2006

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 HMIC operates a five yearly inspection cycle. The primary inspection, which initiates the process, comprises a comprehensive examination of all aspects of an organisation's activity at a strategic level. The fieldwork focuses on areas of business which attract particular attention due to performance levels, variations from common practice or concerns identified about the approaches followed. The process also seeks to identify good practice from which other forces or common police services could learn. The primary inspection is followed currently by two review inspections at 18-month intervals. These focus on:

- Progress against the recommendations made in the preceding primary inspection;
- Progress in the 'areas to be reviewed' identified in the preceding primary inspection;
- Progress against the recommendations made in recent thematic inspections;
- Items nominated by the force or common police service concerned regarding its current position and/or seen as representing significant challenges in the future
- National developments in policing;
- Events or developments relevant to the particular force or common police service as identified through HMIC Knowledge Management Unit's environmental scanning process;
- Outcomes of the force's or common police service's self-assessment and internal inspection work;
- Outcomes of other external scrutiny, for example HSE Inspections, Audit Scotland studies and audits, and CRE reports; and
- Review of performance information – leading to a risk assessment-led focus on any area seen as under-performing.

1.2 HMIC methodology for review inspections involves preparing an appropriate set of questions to address the issues selected from the list shown above. This provides a structured and relevant examination of the organisation and ensures that the inspection is evidence-based.

1.3 In considering all of the above on this occasion, HMIC has obviously taken into account the public, media and parliamentary attention given to the McKie case and the subsequent focus on the Scottish Criminal Record Office (SCRO). In this respect, the Inspectorate recognises the following: that parliamentary scrutiny was still active at the time of the inspection; that that scrutiny involved an in-depth examination of specific parts of SCRO work, in particular fingerprint identification; and that any examination of that work within this review inspection could not be as detailed or probing as the parliamentary inquiry. It followed that there was no sense or value in HMIC including in this inspection any aspects of SCRO covered by the parliamentary examination, other than those referred to in the primary inspection.

1.4 This review inspection has been conducted at a time of significant change for SCRO. April 2007 will see the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) established to oversee the functions mostly carried out by the existing common police services, namely the Scottish Police College, SCRO, the Scottish Police Information Strategy (SPIS) and the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency. This newly formed agency will be directly responsible for providing Scottish police forces with a range of support services, including the development of a new national forensic science service, on a national basis. It is highly likely, for reasons detailed later, that SCRO will not exist in its current format after April 2007. However, the services provided currently by SCRO will still be provided in the future; all that

is to change are the organisational structures supporting those responsible for delivering the service. Therefore the findings of this review will be relevant to the emergent structures.

1.5 As constituted currently SCRO is a relatively small organisation in policing terms. That said, it provides critically important support services and probably does so today better than at any time in its history. Whatever size it is as it becomes absorbed into SPSA, it is unlikely to be bigger than at present and will take its place alongside the relatively larger Scottish Police College, the Scottish Forensic Science Service, the Information and Communications Technology function and the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency. All of these services, particularly the smaller ones, should benefit considerably from being part of a larger body, which will yet not be so large as to make its constituent parts insignificant or unimportant.

1.6 SCRO is not able currently to do some things or access readily some corporate services because of its size. Neither has it the breadth of staff to get the most out of identifying innovation and good practice. The challenge for those staff and management who will become part of SPSA will be to identify and seize proactively the opportunities for improvement to mutual benefit. The trick for SPSA itself will be to seek, support, encourage and facilitate all those important proposals, emanating from its very able staff, which will enhance its service to policing and hence to the public. Both staff and management, and interested observers, need to understand that change will not bring immediate gains, but that ultimately the benefits are certainly worth striving for.

1.7 This Review Inspection will include SCRO's and the Association of Chief Police Officers' Scotland (ACPOS) responses to recommendations and areas for review identified in the Primary Inspection Report of 2004. HMIC recognises that recommendations need to be considered carefully by the organisation, will often have resource implications and may need to be approached in a phased and prioritised way.

1.8 An organisation may choose not to follow or adopt an HMIC recommendation or suggestion and will set out an argued case for not doing so. In turn, HMIC may comment on this, but the debate is a public one on which the Police Authority (in this case the Common Police Services Programme Board and, after 1 April 2007, the Scottish Police Services Authority), Ministers and wider public may wish to take a view.

1.9 This Review, which is made public through the SCRO and HMIC websites, is part of the transparency and accountability process to which police forces and common police services are subjected.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2.1 The Primary Inspection of SCRO in 2004 made a total of 13 recommendations. Of these, eight were directed at SCRO, the remaining five at ACPOS. In addition 17 areas of work in progress were identified for consideration during this review. Following publication of the resulting report, SCRO initiated an action planning process, identifying areas to be addressed and allocating responsibility to identified post-holders. The business support manager has managed this process centrally, with the intention of providing a framework to co-ordinate and monitor progress. Of the 13 recommendations, six directed at SCRO and two at ACPOS can now be fully discharged. Advances in the 17 areas of work in progress have been considered. Progress has been noted in all areas, but six are still in the process of being implemented. HMIC will revisit these areas to assess their impact at the next inspection.

2.2 HMIC found that SCRO has made steady progress in addressing the issues raised during the Primary Inspection. In particular are the following: a robust consultation process has been developed to inform and shape the corporate planning process; a revised race equality scheme with an action plan has been introduced; and an effective performance management regime has been implemented. Progress has also been noted in all the recommendations made for ACPOS, particularly in relation to audit and compliance processes for the Scottish Intelligence Database (SID) and the issues over warning markers on the Criminal History System (CHS). HMIC found that many of the areas of work in progress identified at the Primary Inspection were now standard practice, including human resources and business administration support, the communications strategy and the provision of interpreter services for callers to Crimestoppers.

2.3 While some progress had been made in respect of the remaining recommendations, HMIC considers this to be insufficient to justify discharging them. Those areas that will be revisited at the next inspection include the following: the introduction of a revised Disclosure Scotland application form; a national stolen property index; and, arrangements for hosting national computer applications. In relation to issues over ownership of data input onto CHS, HMIC has considered it necessary to make further recommendations to ACPOS in order to address issues highlighted to the inspection team.

2.4 Summary of recommendations for SCRO from the 2004 Primary Inspection

Rec No.	Issue	Status
Rec 1	External consultation	Discharged
Rec 2	Race Equality Scheme	Discharged
Rec 3	Financial management	Discharged
Rec 4	Integration of SFS	Revisit at next inspection
Rec 5	Disclosure Scotland application form	Discharged partially
Rec 6	Disclosure Scotland SLA	Discharged
Rec 7	Disclosure Scotland customers' billing	Discharged
Rec 8	Performance Management	Discharged

2.5 Summary of recommendations for ACPOS from the 2004 Primary Inspection

Rec No.	Issue	Status
Rec 9	National stolen property index	Revisit at next inspection
Rec 10	Computer applications	Revisit at next inspection
Rec 11	Scottish Intelligence Database	Discharged
Rec 12	Intelligence markers on CHS	Discharged
Rec 13	ISCJIS safeguards	Revisit at next inspection

2.6 Summary of areas to be reviewed from the 2004 Primary Inspection

Review No.	Issue	Status
Review 1	Corporate Plan	Satisfactory progress made
Review 2	HR management	Satisfactory progress made
Review 3	Training database	Satisfactory progress made
Review 4	Links with force internet sites	Satisfactory progress made
Review 5	Alliance Management strategy	Revisit at next inspection
Review 6	Devolved overtime	Satisfactory progress made
Review 7	BVR process	Revisit at next inspection
Review 8	Business support	Satisfactory progress made
Review 9	SLA for fingerprints	Satisfactory progress made
Review 10	Impact of IDENT1	Revisit at next inspection
Review 11	Fingerprint identification at satellite bureaux	Revisit at next inspection
Review 12	Non-numeric fingerprint standard	Satisfactory progress made
Review 13	Increased automation in Disclosure Scotland	Satisfactory progress made
Review 14	Replacement of CHS	Revisit at next inspection
Review 15	CHS quality assurance	Revisit at next inspection
Review 16	Translation facilities for Crimestoppers	Satisfactory progress made
Review 17	BVR IT bureau	Satisfactory progress made

2.7 This inspection took the opportunity to consider SCRO's approach to a number of national issues and areas of development relevant to SCRO, as well as progress against recommendations from recent thematic inspections. The national issues include the development of Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and management of the organisation's estate. The relevant thematic inspections were 'Managing Improvement'; 'Safety First' and 'Quality of Service'. These matters are considered in greater detail at sections 5 and 6 of this report, but good progress was noted in all the areas identified.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2004 PRIMARY INSPECTION

Scottish Criminal Record Office

3.1 Recommendation 1 – *that SCRO undertake comprehensive external consultation to inform the future development of its Corporate Plan (paragraph 2.7).*

3.1.1 HMIC found good evidence of a robust consultation process in place to inform and shape the corporate planning process. An audit of external partners, listing who they are and how communications are maintained, has been conducted and was used to assist in preparing the Corporate Plan 2006-09. Key stakeholders were consulted during the development stages of the plan and their views incorporated into the final document.

3.1.2 A series of customer surveys is underway for the component SCRO bureaux. These include both the public-facing services of Disclosure Scotland and Crimestoppers Scotland, and the Criminal Justice Information Bureau (CJIB) and Intelligence Support Bureau (ISB). Because of the size of their customer base, the surveys for Disclosure Scotland and Crimestoppers were conducted by external market research agencies. Analysis of the CJIB in-house survey is still to be carried out, while a date for the ISB survey has yet to be set. The results will be fed back to the respective bureaux for appropriate action and to inform the future planning process.

3.1.3 HMIC is satisfied with the progress that has been made and considers that this recommendation is now discharged.

3.2 Recommendation 2 - *that SCRO review its Race Equality Scheme, taking account of the issues raised in this Report, and produce a revised Scheme and complementary Action Plan by the scheduled revision date of August 2005 (paragraph 3.34).*

3.2.1 In February 2006 SCRO published its Race Equality Scheme (RES) 2005-2008, based on the ACPOS-approved standard template for such schemes. The Scheme is published on SCRO's internet and intranet sites, while its executive summary is also available in seven community languages. Recognising the difficulties in consulting across the wider community, SCRO made full use of consultation programmes carried out with independent advisory groups at the Scottish Police College and Tayside Police. The consultation process involved key stakeholders, partners, staff associations and individual members of staff from all grades and business areas.

3.2.2 The Scheme is designed to determine how SCRO continues to fulfil its obligations under specific duties, including:

- Updated actions from the 2002 Commitment Plan;
- Realistic targets for completion of actions from 2005 – 2008; and
- A revised process for impact assessment and consultation on actions identified.

Overall the scheme is an indicator of the service which stakeholders, customers and staff should continue to expect in terms of race equality.

3.2.3 SCRO has an effective process of monitoring the diversity of its work force and the impact of its policies and procedures on employees and service users. The Diversity Steering

Group, chaired by the deputy director, is responsible for ensuring that diversity is considered as a mainstream issue at all levels of activity within the organisation. A quarterly diversity monitoring report is produced and discussed at each diversity steering group, an abridged version of which is published via SCRO's internet site. Emerging trends are identified and appropriate responses actioned. Progress against actions identified in the RES action plan is also monitored at this meeting. HMIC is encouraged by the quality of the information produced in the quarterly diversity monitoring report and, as will be seen below, saw evidence of the positive impact this has had. **HMIC commends as good practice the way in which SCRO collates and presents monitoring data on the diversity of its workforce.**

3.2.4 SCRO has made good progress in improving the ethnic diversity of its workforce. The monitoring processes described above had revealed the failure of targeted recruitment advertising to encourage applicants from minority ethnic communities. On the advice of a recruitment consultant, SCRO ran an advertising campaign to raise its profile as an employer of choice, on an ethnic community radio station. At the time of the inspection the proportion of staff from all minority ethnic groups was 2.18%. This is slightly higher than the proportion of the minority ethnic population in Scotland recorded in the 2001 census, and almost twice the Scottish police service average of 1.2%. While it is too early to assess the impact of the awareness-raising campaign, early indications are positive. HMIC is encouraged by this approach and the progress being made in this area, and considers this recommendation to be discharged.

3.3 **Recommendation 3-** *that SCRO consider the observations made by the Scottish Executive, Audit and Accountancy Services and implement the changes as required (paragraph 4.16).*

3.3.1 There is no set budget for Disclosure Scotland and instead it operates with a 'virtual' budget from Ministerial monies. The monthly management accounts that SCRO prepares for Disclosure Scotland have been amended to include a schedule showing operating costs incurred by SCRO/Disclosure Scotland. They also contain an income and expenditure statement that shows income generated from disclosure processing, how this is allocated between partners and the subsequent deduction of SCRO operating costs. Projected financial outturn is now prepared and submitted alongside the budget from the July report onwards.

3.3.2 SCRO receives information regarding debt levels on a monthly basis from BT. This includes details on the top five debts and actions taken. This information is included with the monthly budget report. BT also creates a Monthly Management Information Pack (MMIP) which is based on the requirements of the contract, better informs both partners and facilitates routine performance reviews (paragraph 3.8).

3.3.3 HMIC has consulted with the Scottish Executive Internal Audit on this response. Internal Audit has not undertaken any recent review and was unable to comment on the extent of the implementation or effectiveness of the recommendation. However, on the basis of the information provided to them they are satisfied that the principles of the recommendation have been addressed. This recommendation is therefore now discharged.

3.4 **Recommendation 4-** *that SCRO actively pursue further integration of the SFS, taking account of the specific issues raised in this Report (paragraph 5.15).*

3.4.1 SCRO had implemented a number of actions to promote the corporate identity of the Scottish Fingerprint Service, including:

- Developing the SFS logo, which is now used on all correspondence, brochures, reference materials and manuals;
- SFS conferences attended by staff from all disciplines within each bureau and the wider criminal justice community;
- Cross-bureaux meetings and training events, with the venue for each rotated around all bureaux;
- A common recruitment policy for trainee fingerprint officers;
- Advertising vacancies, including temporary responsibility posts, across all bureaux;
- Single service ISO 9001:2000 accreditation – all areas operating to standardised procedures;
- Developing “Managing our SFS Performance”, a monthly document which reports on service information; and
- Developing the SFS web site, which went live in September 2006 (www.sfs.police.uk).

3.4.2 However, events have moved on since the 2004 inspection. In February 2006 the Minister for Justice, Cathy Jamieson MSP, instructed the interim Chief Executive of the Scottish Police Services Authority to bring forward an action plan to develop the Scottish Fingerprint Service as an integrated part of the new Scottish Forensic Science Service from April 2007. Published on 21 April 2006, the Action Plan for Excellence is intended to take stock of the Scottish Fingerprint Service as it is today and to identify action points to develop the organisation for the future as part of the Scottish Forensic Service. The 25 point plan covers extensively the issues of corporate identity raised by HMIC in 2004.

3.4.3 The review inspection has found that, whilst effort has been made to establish the corporate identity of SFS, variations in working patterns (e.g. shift and on call arrangements) and conditions of service (e.g. appraisal systems and sickness management policies) between the four fingerprint bureaux still exist. HMIC recognises that these local arrangements are due largely to the current employment relationship between host forces and the satellite bureaux. A corporate approach to customer needs is clearly helpful, but HMIC believes that a similarly corporate approach to employee management is also needed to meet the requirements of this recommendation. Development of SPSA and the Scottish Forensic Service, implementation of the Action Plan for Excellence and the outcomes of the enquiry of the of the Scottish Parliament’s Justice 1 Committee into the efficient running of the SCRO and the Scottish Fingerprint Service, combined should ensure that this is achieved. HMIC acknowledges the progress that has been made toward implementing the Action Plan for Excellence in general, and in fulfilling this recommendation in terms of the corporate branding of the service in particular. However, considerable work is still to be done, in terms of conditions of service and working patterns, before a truly integrated Scottish Fingerprint Service can be considered a reality. HMIC will revisit this area at the next inspection.

3.5 **Recommendation 5** – *that the Disclosure Scotland application form be revised in consultation with representative service users and introduced as soon as possible after the requirements of the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 have been ascertained (paragraph 5.49).*

3.5.1 Though located within SCRO, Disclosure Scotland is in reality a completely separate organisation. The current tenancy arrangements were established as a matter of convenience and have served in recent years to facilitate the improvements in service delivery that have been made. The Common Police Services Programme Board has an interest in the organisation but no direct responsibility. As a consequence, Disclosure Scotland will not feature as part of the SPSA in April 2007. As will be seen (paragraph 3.5.5), this has implications for future monitoring of Disclosure Scotland's progress in these areas.

3.5.2 Following the work of an internal review team, which included consultation with five major registered bodies, a draft form was designed. The Scottish Executive Legal Department approved it and a further consultation process has been completed. The form now needs Ministerial approval and was laid before the Scottish Parliament in early November 2006.

3.5.3 Guidance notes have been amended to reflect the revised form. In addition, software suppliers have already been given the go-ahead to make the changes to the Disclosure workflow system required to accommodate the revised form. This is on schedule and is due to be introduced by 15th December 2006. The old and new application forms are to run concurrently for six months on the Disclosure workflow system.

3.5.4 An implementation plan has been devised to smooth the transition from the old form to the new one. Stocks of both the new form and the new guidance notes will be ordered in preparation for the change-over. While a final implementation date has yet to be agreed, a communication strategy is being developed to apprise all users of the changes and the proposed implementation. A series of seminars to raise awareness of these changes is planned for early 2007.

3.5.5 HMIC recognises that genuine progress has been made in this area. It considers this recommendation partially discharged, to the extent that the application form has been revised but not yet implemented. This area should be carried forward to the next review, by HMIC or by whatever scrutiny/regulatory body assumes responsibility for Disclosure Scotland from April 2007.

3.6 Recommendation 6 – that Disclosure Scotland engage with registered bodies with a view to establishing a SLA in relation to performance standards and the responsibilities of both the service provider and the client in achieving them (paragraph 5.69).

3.6.1 Consulting on this issue, Disclosure Scotland found registered bodies to be unsupportive of an SLA that would impose timescales on what they see as their internal processes. The consultation process was useful, however, in generating greater understanding between Disclosure Scotland and its customers. For example, employment and recruitment policies requiring that disclosure applications are only progressed after short-listing, often led to misunderstandings between Disclosure Scotland and individual applicants. The consultation clarified these issues and in so doing has led to an improvement in turnaround times. Some registered bodies would have preferred Disclosure Scotland to have a written SLA tailored for them individually, rather than the service level target of 14 days that exists currently. However, tailoring SLAs to the needs of the 3,000 registered bodies and numerous other individual organisations with whom Disclosure Scotland deals would have resulted in a large bureaucratic process that would have had little or no impact on the service being provided.

3.6.2 Alternative solutions, such as changes to the Codes of Practice or further dialogue to improve registered bodies' understanding of the process, have been proposed. Discussions with the Scottish Executive are at an early stage. However indications are that the former proposal will require legislative change and could lead to a more bureaucratic process, whilst the latter is something that could be achieved in conjunction with scheduled seminars to promote the changes to the application form (paragraph 3.5.3).

3.6.3 HMIC notes that average turnaround times for Scottish forces responding to disclosure requests from Disclosure Scotland exceed the current 14 day service level agreement. **HMIC suggests that ACPOS consider this issue and attempt to identify ways to improve performance in this area.**

3.6.4 HMIC recognises that SCRO cannot force registered bodies to change their internal procedures, and is satisfied that sufficient progress has been made in this area. This recommendation is therefore discharged.

3.7 Recommendation 7 – that Disclosure Scotland enter into consultation with registered bodies with a view to ascertaining customers' billing needs and introducing revised invoicing arrangements to address them (paragraph 5.74).

3.7.1 Disclosure Scotland conducted its own survey and commissioned an independent consultation exercise on this issue, and found the majority of its customers to be satisfied with existing arrangements. Nevertheless, a number of minor ways to improve the billing process were identified. For example bar code numbers on invoices, to identify individual applications in the event of an inquiry, have been implemented through the 'request for change' process (paragraph 4.13.1). Other areas where changes have been requested include providing the applicant's signature, the counter-signatory's name and a counter signatory code. Disclosure Scotland is now considering ways to implement these requests, giving due regard to the cost, practicality and potential benefit to itself whilst ensuring that this does not create problems for clientele who are satisfied with existing arrangements.

3.7.2 HMIC is satisfied that sufficient progress that has been made in this area to discharge this recommendation.

3.8 Recommendation 8 – that SCRO actively pursue development and submission of an agreed 'Monthly Management Information Pack' which is fit for purpose, in order to drive continuous improvement (paragraph 5.78).

3.8.1 Disclosure Scotland, in response to the above recommendation, introduced a Monthly Management Information Pack in July 2005. This provides a wide range of information including:

- Details of progress of any current changes to processes and systems;
- System performance;
- Disputes handled by the Exceptions Handling Unit;
- Details of payment methods;
- Trend analysis;
- Service performance;
- Average processing times; and

- Details of the financial position.

3.8.2 Some of the information which is put into the pack forms the basis of discussion at monthly performance meetings (paragraph 6.1), the format of which has been adopted throughout SCRO. The monthly reports are a useful tool to help focus on service delivery, which has seen significant improvement in recent years. Since August 2004, prior to the introduction of the pack, average turnaround times have been within the informal service level agreement time of 14 days (paragraph 3.6). There is no doubt that monitoring performance data has helped management to maintain a reduction in timescales. HMIC was encouraged to learn that at the time of this review this had been reduced to two days. The performance management process has been refined further to monitor individual performance, in order to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to carry out their job and that there are sufficient numbers in place to meet the demands being placed upon them.

3.8.3 HMIC is satisfied with the progress that has been made in this area and considers this recommendation to be discharged.

Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland

3.9 **Recommendation 9** - *HMIC is aware that ACPOS has requested SPIS to initiate the development of a crime recording system and recommends that ACPOS consider the functionality of the national stolen property index within the specification and business benefits of any new system.*

3.9.1 The national stolen property index is currently linked to the CHS by virtue of the fact that it sits on the same computer mainframe. Other than Strathclyde Police, all Scottish forces have crime recording systems that incorporate a stolen property search facility. Data illustrating forces' use of the stolen property index reveals that it is used rarely, and when it is, it is predominantly by Strathclyde officers. Based on these findings, and on the cost and time implications of incorporating the index into the successor of CHS (CHS II), the ACPOS Crime Business Area decided that this facility would not feature in CHS II. A national scoping study on the Information Management Project, supported by the ACPOS Business Change Directorate, is due to report at the end of the year. Its findings will allow the Crime Business Area and the Business Change Programme Board to consider the potential for an enhanced national information sharing capability for stolen property.

3.9.2 HMIC notes these developments, but is concerned at the loss, albeit temporarily, of a valuable tool for assisting crime detection across force borders. For this reason HMIC encourages ACPOS to address this issue expeditiously. HMIC does not consider that sufficient progress has been made in this area to discharge this recommendation and will therefore seek an action plan from ACPOS. This should address the police service's short and longer term needs for a national stolen property database or data warehouse that is updated automatically by every crime report and is searchable from every police station.

3.10 **Recommendation 10** - *HMIC recommends that ACPOS progress arrangements for the hosting of national computer applications and associated issues, where appropriate, through the CPS Programme Board.*

3.10.1 The issue of hosting national computer applications will be considered as part of the new arrangements for ICT support for the Scottish police service. It follows the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between ACPOS and the Scottish Executive on ICT support for the Scottish police service. This joint venture has allowed a single ICT support organisation for the Service to be created in advance of the SPSA assuming statutory responsibility once it becomes established. And so, at the beginning of August 2006 the ACPOS ICT Directorate was created. Previously, developmental work on new and existing force systems was being undertaken by staff in forces or the Scottish Police Information Strategy (SPIS). It is intended that the Directorate will now absorb all work and relevant staff, until the transfer to SPSA in April 2008.

3.10.2 The hosting of national computer applications will be an early consideration for SPSA, as part of the new arrangements for ICT support for the Scottish police service.

3.10.3 HMIC notes the progress that has been made in this area and looks forward to seeing tangible results as a result of the reorganisation that has taken place. The Inspectorate also notes the decision that the Interim Director of ACPOS ICT Directorate should also take over as Director of SPIS until that organisation becomes absorbed into SPSA. HMIC understands some of the argument for making the most of synergy. Nevertheless it supports the eventual separation of the customer and provider, the relationship envisaged come April 2008, so as to avoid the pitfalls and mistakes of the past. This recommendation remains outstanding and will be revisited at the next inspection.

3.11 Recommendation 11 - *HMIC recommends that ACPOS review the internal Scottish Intelligence Database (SID) compliance arrangements within forces and agencies.*

3.11.1 SCRO has developed a robust system of audit and compliance to ensure that the Scottish Intelligence Database (SID) is used according to its published Rules and Conventions and Data Input Standards. This is underpinned by SCRO's Intelligence Support Bureau Audit and Compliance Strategy, which sets out the methodology for the audit and compliance process. Monthly performance reports inform forces of their level of compliance. This a fluid process, the performance reports and Audit and Compliance Strategy allowing trends and areas for improvement to be identified. The SID users group, a forum for representatives of SID users, provides an ideal platform from which performance and quality issues can be discussed and solutions identified and actioned. HMIC received positive feedback from service users on the value of these reports in improving the quality of information and intelligence input into the database. The Inspectorate also acknowledges user concerns about the failure of SID to identify input standards sufficiently clearly, such that the non-compliance rate in the current version may not improve much beyond the existing level. This gives rise to a proportionate level of risk that the system will fail to respond as intended to speculative inquiries. The inspection team was given to understand that the next version of SID, due to arrive within months, will provide a better user interface in this respect. In the meantime forces and users are therefore urged to maintain compliance standards, however cumbersome.

3.11.2 HMIC is satisfied with the progress made in this area and considers this recommendation to be discharged.

3.12 Recommendation 12 - *HMIC recommends that ACPOS progress the issues surrounding intelligence markers on CHS and, as a matter of urgency, consider any requirement for an interim solution to ensure the existence of force intelligence on SID is identified in disclosure requests.*

3.12.1 In March 2006 SCRO began implementing a process for identifying records requiring amendment. The process is carried out on a quarterly basis and involves the production of 'measure' files and further 'snapshot' files. The files are sent to forces who then correct unmarked SID nominals. Such routine reporting of non-compliant records should also show up any consistent performance failings. The whole process will incrementally reduce the number of records that are affected and, with the proposed interface between CHS II and SID, could lead ultimately to a position where a computer generated solution will replace the need for manual checking. The proposed interface between the CHS II and SID has been included in a list of possible changes to come after the system has been delivered in December 2006. However, a number of issues have still to be resolved before a definitive plan can be drawn up for work after the first CHS service release.

3.12.2 HMIC is satisfied with the progress that has been made in this area and considers this recommendation to be discharged.

3.13 Recommendation 13 - *HMIC recommends that ACPOS consult with the Scottish Executive to determine a formal framework which protects the interests of all stakeholders in maintaining an accurate CHS, but which facilitates the increased efficiency in working practices that ISCJIS offers.*

3.13.1 Following consultation with the Scottish Executive, a review process began that was still underway at the time of this review inspection. Its remit is to "undertake a strategic review of the work of the ISCJIS programme to date, and to make recommendations to the National Criminal Justice Board on the future structure and strategy for the integration of criminal justice information systems in Scotland."

3.13.2 The review is due to report in November. Though wide-ranging in scope, issues concerning the efficacy of individual agencies' information systems are out with its remit, except insofar as they are relied upon by other agencies or impact upon other organisations' effectiveness.

3.13.3 HMIC is aware that there is much work underway between all of the partners in the criminal justice system to improve data sharing. However, there are two issues that police staff across Scotland brought to HMIC's attention during the inspection, which suggest a kind of 'silo thinking' that may affect other parts of criminal justice information systems. Central to the first problem is the fact that police staff are the only people authorised to update the CHS manually (with the exception of the staff of Vehicle Operator and Services Agency (VOSA)). Each agency directly inputs information onto the CHS as cases progress through the criminal justice process. And yet it is down to the police records offices alone to ensure data integrity, by continuing to conduct retrospective checks, identify and then correct any data input errors made by other criminal justice partners.

3.13.4 In relation to the second issue, HMIC was surprised to learn that other criminal justice system partners do not yet have sufficient automatic electronic links to national police systems to allow them to receive the specific and predictable information they need, without

requiring someone at SCRO to be consciously involved in the information transfer. This is particularly surprising in respect of the Criminal History System, since much of its data will have originated from those other partners rather than the police. Moreover, the information needs of partners, such as procurators fiscal, are increasing e.g. in respect of witnesses and eventually from other police systems in respect of accused being considered for bail. The Inspectorate is concerned that if automatic electronic data transfer is not developed quickly for these purposes, this will build in more inefficiencies for the police service in the future.

3.13.5 HMIC is very disappointed to find that these two examples of grossly inefficient use of police staff time have been allowed to develop unchecked.

3.13.6 Whatever the reason for this, there are indications from other criminal justice partners that the silo mentality may also be affecting cross-partner links to other information systems. HMIC is clear that this should not continue. Police staff are dealing with increased demands with no corresponding increase in resources, so it is possible that other parts of their work suffer or that overtime is paid unnecessarily. Criminal justice partners such as the Scottish Courts Service and COPFS must be given the following:

- Whatever vetting or training is necessary to allow them to input data manually onto police systems (particularly the CHS);
- Whatever automatic links to police national systems are necessary for them to fulfil their responsibilities.

3.13.7 Another issue brought to HMIC's attention during this review is that of governance of the CHS. The current data controllers for the information held on the CHS are the eight Scottish chief constables. This is despite the fact that much of the data belongs to, and is input by, many of the other criminal justice partners. By correcting all the data the police are effectively taking on responsibility for other criminal justice organisations' data. Whilst the shape of SCRO will change with the onset of SPSA, it will still host CHS. The question of ownership of the CHS will need to be answered. If SPSA becomes the owner, it could be argued that the chief executive becomes the data controller for the whole of Scotland. Though such a move could have significant resource implications with respect to subject access requests (paragraph 5.4.3), this should not be seen as an obstacle. For this is yet another service that is not necessarily a police responsibility, and could be better undertaken by a single non-police agency that could apply consistent practice and procedure.

3.13.8 HMIC recognises that an engagement process is underway that meets the requirements of this recommendation, and awaits with interest the outcome of the ISCJIS review. However the issues identified as a result of HMIC's review are significant and need to be addressed. HMIC is therefore unable to discharge this recommendation and indeed considers it necessary to make two further recommendations for ACPOS.

Recommendation 1 – HMIC recommends that ACPOS do the following: conduct an urgent review to establish the reality of the demands being placed on police resources through work to provide information to, or check the quality of, incoming information from criminal justice partners; and, identify and implement appropriate solutions, which should include providing other CHS users with automatic electronic links which require no SCRO (or police) staff involvement and encouraging others to take responsibility for the quality of their own data.

Recommendation 2 - HMIC recommends that ACPOS engage with the Common Police Services Project Board to address the issue of ownership of CHS data; the question of the identity of data controller(s) for Scottish criminal information; and the need to transfer responsibility for dealing with subject-access requests.

4. AREAS FOR REVIEW

4.1 Implementation of the Corporate Plan 2004-07 (paragraph 2.9)

4.1.1 Since the Primary Inspection, the Corporate Plan 2004/2007 has been replaced by a newer version relating to the period 2006–2009. It was the perception of the then Director that the previous plan was too complex and cumbersome. A new planning cycle and Corporate Plan beginning April 2006 was devised, following widespread internal and external consultation. This plan sets out the overall direction, aims and objectives of SCRO. From the first year objectives an Annual Plan for 2006–2007 was produced which, among other things, provides a structure for performance meetings and reporting for all bureaux. A mapping process is being introduced to establish clear links between bureau functions, individual roles and organisational objectives (paragraph 6.1). It is envisaged that this will promote full implementation and delivery of the plan.

4.1.2 The inspection found evidence that the corporate plan had been circulated widely amongst staff, is understood and is being used to drive performance. HMIC is satisfied with the progress that has been made in this area.

4.2 Development of independent human resource management (paragraph 3.7)

4.2.1 SCRO has made good progress in this area. It now manages all processes which current Strathclyde Police employment arrangements allow, including recruitment up to point of offer, training (paragraph 4.3), equality and diversity (paragraphs 3.2 and 5.2) and absence management. This has allowed SCRO to deal with most personnel issues and queries on-site, rather than referring them to Strathclyde Police, thus providing a clearer and more efficient service to staff.

4.2.2 SCRO has introduced a number of changes to sickness absence management in recent years in order to address long term absences, some of which are associated with the scrutiny arising from the McKie case. An annual target, not to exceed an absence rate of 6%, has been set for the whole organisation and is monitored regularly through the monthly 'Managing our Resources' report. At the time of the inspection the actual rate for the year to date was 7.49%. If long term absence linked to the McKie case is excluded though, the rate falls significantly, to 4.5%. SCRO has an absence management policy and recording procedures that trigger a variety of responses in the event of an absence being reported. These can include routine return to work interviews, referral to occupational health and stress counselling. In addition SCRO is arranging stress management workshops to teach managers how to identify stress in teams, as well as individual stress management and personal pressure training.

4.2.3 A new Employee Relations Strategy to improve employee involvement and develop a formal consultation mechanism for local issues, is currently under development. A Staff Joint Consultative Forum has been established, giving employees a platform from which to raise issues and contribute to developments within SCRO. Its first meeting took place in September. This is to be followed up by training to raise forum members' awareness of how to contribute to and get the most out of the forum for themselves and the colleagues they represent.

4.2.4 MIC was impressed by some of the efforts and innovation in this area and considers that satisfactory progress has been made.

4.3 Development of the training database (paragraph 3.12)

4.3.1 A training database has been developed to support the realignment of the Personal Development Review (PDR) process, which aims to ensure that employees' training needs are identified and as far as possible met. The database records the cost of training by bureaux in order that a regular cost/benefit analysis exercise can be undertaken. The system has helped to identify deficiencies in training traditionally delivered by Strathclyde Police training department, where this was failing to meet the specialised needs of staff within SCRO. The decision to contract-out training has allowed the organisation to tailor training content to the needs of the individual and the organisation, and to have this delivered locally. Costs have been reduced and the quality of the training provided has improved. HMIC welcomes this approach and is satisfied with the progress that has been made.

4.4 Links with force intranet sites (paragraph 3.18)

4.4.1 SCRO currently has officers on secondment from Central, Strathclyde, Lothian and Borders and Fife. Some SCRO staff have access to the Strathclyde extranet. Central and Lothian and Borders have also provided links, but incompatibility between systems has prevented access to Fife Constabulary's site. HMIC is satisfied that wherever possible the necessary links have been made, and that where no such link has been established it has been due to reasons out with SCRO's control.

4.5 Implementation of the Alliance Management Strategy and the role of the Alliance Manager (paragraph 4.4)

4.5.1 The Alliance Strategy was an American concept that involved mapping stakeholders and developing a generic communication plan. In August 2005 the Alliance Manager post was changed to Corporate Communications Manager, and the alliance strategy replaced with a more focused approach to customer communications. A project-based approach has been adopted. For any new project requiring external consultation or communication, the appropriate stakeholders are identified and contacted instead of a general circulation being undertaken. This has led to a more focused and informed response e.g. for the non numeric standard for fingerprints.

4.5.2 The Corporate Communications Manager has developed an internal communications structure for SCRO, using the intranet as the main method of keeping staff informed. A number of other methods are being trialled which, if unsuccessful, are discontinued and new approaches introduced. One example is the 'one lunch' concept, whereby selected members of staff were invited to a buffet lunch and encouraged to raise issues with managers. The scheme ran for over a year but was found to be ineffective. As a result new methods, such as the staff joint consultative forum, are in the early stages of development.

4.5.3 HMIC is satisfied with progress to date, but notes that the structure will change when the Corporate Communications Manager transfers to the SPSA in January 2007. HMIC believes that effective internal and external communication is essential for effective organisational performance, and will return to this area at the next review to gauge any effects of the transition to the SPSA. As with all aspects of management and good working practice (paragraphs 1.4-1.5), it is hoped that the relatively small organisation that is SCRO will benefit from an even more developed communication capability within the SPSA.

4.6 Development and outcomes of devolved overtime budgets (paragraph 4.13)

4.6.1 Overtime continues to be devolved to the individual bureaux within SCRO. Bureaux budgets are set and adjusted on the basis of information gathered from previous years and any events/projects during the financial year identified as being likely specifically to generate/reduce overtime. For example, the budget for the Scottish Fingerprint Service was increased to allow for predicted expenditure on the IDENT1 programme, whilst overtime for Disclosure Scotland was reduced following an increase in permanent staff levels. Month by month budget totals are monitored and compared with actual spend figures for the previous two financial years, at both individual bureau performance meetings and by the Director/Deputy Director in consultation with the Business Support Manager. The “Managing Our Resources” monthly report is produced to assist the monitoring process and shows budgets being managed effectively and overtime spending within budget. HMIC recognises the benefits that have been realised by this approach and is satisfied with the progress that has been made in this area.

4.7 Best Value review process (paragraph 4.28)

4.7.1 SCRO has recognised that previous reviews were narrow in focus and did not always follow true best value principles, structure or process. It has committed itself to carrying out two best value reviews per fiscal year, targeted at a more strategic level and incorporating key areas of business.

4.7.2 The first best value review of this current fiscal year will be of internal and external audit and compliance processes and structures across the whole organisation. A dedicated team, comprising two members of staff, has approximately three months to complete this task. To encourage maximum buy-in to the process, the review team, project lead and senior management have all received training from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). This consisted of a one-day course delivered at SCRO, under the heading of Managing Service Reviews for Improvement.

4.7.3 This review began in October 2006 and is following recognised best value principles. Another continuous improvement initiative, aimed at process mapping all high level procedures and processes, is also currently ongoing within the organisation. The first stage of this latter initiative focuses on the high level processes within the Business Support Bureau, and it is anticipated that one of the outputs will be a mapped structure of compliance procedures. Sharing information between the two initiatives will clearly be of benefit to both.

4.7.4 HMIC notes the progress made to date, and will return to examine the outcomes of best value reviews conducted in this new schedule at the next inspection.

4.8 Business support arrangements (paragraph 5.1)

4.8.1 The Business Support Bureau has developed continually since 2004, with the appointment of a number of key posts. These include a Business Analyst, Personnel Manager and an Administration Manager, all of whom have made major contributions to the organisation. The Business Analyst now produces regular performance reports for each bureau; these form the basis of discussion for the monthly performance meetings (paragraph

6.1), and indeed inform and support the corporate objectives. The Personnel Manager has been instrumental in developing an independent human resources management structure (paragraph 4.2). Through this SCRO has been able to work towards accreditation in the Investors in People Award, which it anticipates will be achieved in March 2007. This is in addition to having been awarded Scotland's Health at Work Bronze Award in October 2004, and working towards the Silver Award. The Administration Manager is mainly responsible for records management and quality processes, and has been responsible for SCRO achieving ISO 9000/2002 single status accreditation. In addition, her appointment has meant that SCRO has been able to deal with the demands of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (paragraph 5.3).

4.8.2 A review of the general office in 2005 resulted in additional recruitment and assignment of duties previously carried out elsewhere within SCRO. In January 2006 the previous post of Staff Officer was civilianised and a Personal Assistant appointed, producing a cost saving benefit to SCRO. In addition to secretarial support to the Director and Deputy Director, the post holder is involved in corporate planning, organising events and other specific projects relevant to her role.

4.8.3 The additional posts and restructuring have brought benefits to SCRO, allowing the organisation to set its own agenda in these areas and work independently to achieve its own objectives. HMIC is satisfied with the progress that has been made in this area.

4.9 SLAs in respect of fingerprints (paragraph 5.16)

4.9.1 Service level agreements are now in place between the four bureaux of the Scottish Fingerprint Service and the eight police forces in Scotland. All agreements are presented in a common template and provide details of the service standards expected, including:

- Quality standards expected from forces;
- Turnaround times;
- Weeding and retention rules;
- Prioritisation rules; and
- Agreed points of contact.

4.9.2 These SLAs are reviewed by the bureaux and respective forces on a three year rolling basis. Key performance indicators are monitored through the monthly SFS performance report. Turnaround times are improving and are well within the 15 day target; it is anticipated that the next reviews will consider a new, even more stretching, turnaround time target. HMIC is encouraged by this proposal and is satisfied with the progress that has been made on this issue.

4.10 Impact of IDENT1 on detection rates and working practices (paragraph 5.21)

4.10.1 IDENT1 is a fully managed service that will provide a national automated finger and palm print capture, searching and comparison facility. Its introduction is intended to increase crime detection by providing a unified collection of finger and palm print images; enhanced accuracy, throughput, responsiveness and efficiency; and greater levels of capability, service and business benefits than those achieved by current systems. Indeed in England and Wales, where the transition to IDENT1 has already taken place, an

unprecedented increase in identifications during the first six months of the transition period was experienced; at the time of the inspection some 2,200 electronic palm identifications had been made, of which 70 related to serious crimes and offences.

4.10.2 In preparation for its introduction north of the border 40, new Livescan terminals with palm capability were successfully installed in April 2005. Work is continuing towards full operational capability by Autumn 2006, although a number of problems have beset the programme. For example, there have been some issues around incompatibility between Scottish recording systems and the proposed new system, project delays and system instability experiences in England and Wales. In January 2006, the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO), in conjunction with suppliers, set up a Strategic Review Team. A revised target date for implementation in Scotland has been set for December 2006, with full operational capability now anticipated by the end of July 2007.

4.10.3 At the time of this review, work was well underway to ensure that IDENT1 in Scotland can be delivered within the current timetable. A series of activities were planned that included:

- Breaux hardware rollout at the end of September 2006;
- Migration of Scotland's image and associated demographic data;
- Harmonisation of the Scottish Criminal History System and Police National Computer databases;
- Test teams identified for Acceptance and User Testing which began in October 2006;
- Refresher training for Scottish Fingerprint Service staff which began in October; and
- Development of a communications strategy to inform the police service in Scotland on how to get the best from the IDENT1 process.

4.10.4 The methodology and workflow process in relation to the back record conversion of Scotland's paper palm collection, to start mid-January 2007, has been agreed. Preparatory work at the Glasgow Bureau continues in relation to 90,000 palm records deemed suitable for back record conversion.

4.10.5 HMIC notes the progress that has been made in this area, but will return at the next inspection to assess the benefits that full implementation of the system should bring.

4.11 Independence of fingerprint verification at Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh (paragraph 5.24)

4.11.1 The Glasgow bureau has introduced a revised Operating Procedure. The smaller numbers of staff in the other bureaux led to initial difficulties in fully implementing the same process there. Following the trial of an independent comparison process at the Edinburgh and Dundee bureaux, the Aberdeen bureau has now adopted a similar process. The identification/verification processes are identified in the Action Plan for Excellence as central to delivering a world class service, and are to be the subject of further, more detailed review in pursuance of the action plan.

4.11.2 HMIC notes progress made to date and will revisit this area at the next inspection.

4.12 Impact of the non-numeric fingerprint standard (paragraph 5.27)

4.12.1 On 4 September 2006 the SFS launched the Non-Numeric Standard for Scotland. Since then, all joint reports requested for court from SFS have been prepared on a non-numeric basis. An explanatory leaflet and DVD were made available to all stakeholders. The introduction of this standard has attracted no adverse comments from those involved; the same is true in England and Wales where the standard has been in place since 2001. The Inspectorate received confirmation from the Crown Agent that he too is encouraged by the development and implementation of the standard. HMIC is satisfied with the progress that has been made in this area.

4.13 Opportunities for increased automation within Disclosure Scotland (paragraph 5.71)

4.13.1 Disclosure Scotland continues to progress in IT improvement. This has been achieved by way of its 'requests for change' process, whereby any identified opportunity to improve a process or system results in a case for change being prepared by its Operational Management Group. The case is then presented to a director level forum, comprising representatives from Disclosure Scotland and BT, for a decision. This forum aims to prioritise each request for change according to the requirement of the change to be introduced. A running list of requests is maintained and monitored at the monthly performance meeting (paragraph 6.1). Requests vary from minor amendments in invoice processes (paragraph 3.7.1) to major change such as the revised application form (paragraph 3.5.1) and an on-line application form, the feasibility of which is being explored. In the past year over 100 requests have been implemented.

4.13.2 HMIC is satisfied with the progress that has been made in this area.

4.14 Implementation of the replacement CHS system (paragraph 5.82)

4.14.1 Due to ongoing delays, a plan to reassess and deliver the replacement CHS was prepared during 2005. The plan has identified the work and timescales necessary to implement fully the replacement CHS. The software for the project was to be delivered by SPIS in four iterations. At the time of the inspection Iteration 1 of the software had been delivered and tested, with the remaining three on course for delivery by 22 December 2006. To ensure continuity of service, existing equipment has been retained and both systems will run in tandem for a period of time until CHS II has been tested fully.

4.14.2 HMIC notes the progress that has eventually been made and is encouraged that the project is to be delivered soon. The Inspectorate will revisit this area at the next inspection, and hopes that efforts in the meantime will focus on ensuring that the system delivered meets the standards required.

4.15 The Quality Assurance Strategy for CHS (paragraph 5.85)

4.15.1 The CHS – Data Dictionary, Rules and Conventions Manual sets out the procedures CHS users should follow. The Criminal Justice Information Bureau (CJIB) within SCRO is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the data held on CHS. In order to provide an

effective quality assurance regime, CJIB has in place a series of measures to monitor the quality of data input into CHS. These include a daily analysis of CHS records created, amended or deleted, and the compilation of monthly performance reports. The reports have been refined in recent months and the process now involves dialogue with forces each month to identify trends and solutions and promulgate good practice. On a quarterly basis, force SCRO liaison officers meet with SCRO staff to discuss performance issues. The style and content of these reports continues to be developed so that forces have a greater understanding of the areas where they can have an impact on performance.

4.15.2 There is some evidence to suggest that the quality assurance regime has produced some improved compliance with the manual. This is against a baseline of what were relatively low error rates and the fact that those that were being made were of a minor nature – usually spelling or nomenclature errors rather than inaccurate data. CJIB has attempted wherever possible to identify IT solutions for detecting and rectifying errors, in order to minimise the need for manual correction. However the limitations of CHSI have tended to impede automated solutions. It is hoped that CHSII will allow quality assurance to become more automated and thus serve to improve performance further.

4.15.3 At the time of this review a best value review of audit and compliance procedures (paragraph 4.7) had begun, to examine ways of developing a more cohesive approach to quality assurance across all systems maintained by SCRO. HMIC notes the progress that has been made in this area and will return to review developments following completion of the best value review and the introduction of CHS II.

4.16 Translation facilities for Crimestoppers (paragraph 5.101)

4.16.1 In June 2005, Crimestoppers Scotland entered into a contract with the company Language Line to provide an interpreter service for those whose first language is not English. The system is very straightforward in that when a call centre operator identifies that a caller requires the services of a translator, a three way conference call is initiated between the caller, the operator and Language Line. If the language being used by the caller is not readily identifiable, then the Language Line staff will help in identifying the language and obtaining the correct interpreter. The information provided by the caller is noted by the Crimestoppers member of staff during the three way conversation and the intelligence thereafter is processed in the usual manner. Crimestoppers Scotland has produced a step-by-step guide for staff detailing how to instigate the conference call. This service was used successfully for the first time in September 2006. HMIC understands that plans are underway to develop a Crimestoppers awareness-raising campaign within minority communities. Being able to provide an interpreter service will put SCRO in a strong position to deal with any increase in demand that this brings about. HMIC is satisfied with the progress made in this area.

4.17 Best Value review of the IT Bureau (paragraph 5.118)

4.17.1 SCRO has completed a best value review of its IT Bureau, within the following terms of reference: “to review the services supplied by the SCRO IT Bureau in conjunction with resources employed and the outcomes achieved with a view to improving its current level of performance and effectiveness in meeting its customer needs”. SCRO has since recognised that these terms of reference, the methodology and end product do not reflect true best value principles or structure.

4.17.2 The review report provided a detailed analysis of computer systems, workload and resource levels within the bureau, and made eight recommendations. With the exception of one relating to integrating SPIS with the SCRO IT organisation – an issue which now forms part of the current ICT Directorate work and is not therefore currently within SCRO's remit – all recommendations have been implemented. These included purchasing a help-desk software package to improve the services provided by the Service Desk; improving monitoring methods to identify and deliver training needs; consolidating three temporary posts to full time posts; increases to establishment; and changes to shift patterns and call out arrangements.

4.17.3 HMIC notes the outcomes from this best value review and is satisfied with the progress made. However, it anticipates that the SPSA will wish to establish a means of identifying priorities for best value reviews, adopting the now well-established principles and practices of the best value regime, across the Authority's activities and services.

5. NATIONAL AND SCRO ISSUES

5.1 In this section, the emboldened text replicates the questions asked of SCRO in the HMIC protocols for this review.

5.2 In addition and with reference to: recommendations 6 and 8 of the Primary Inspection Report; item 9 in the list of areas for review in the same report; and recommendations 7,8 & 9 of the thematic inspection report ‘Managing Improvement’ (see 6.1 of this protocol) - please indicate progress in relation to the development of performance indicators which show trends in SCRO achievement of accuracy, integrity and speed and any other qualitative measures related to stated objectives.

See Section 6.1.

5.3 How is SCRO preparing for the requirement for additional Equality Schemes in relation to Disability (The Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2005) and Gender (current Equality Bill)?

SCRO has entered into a collaborative arrangement with the other CPS organisations to develop a Disability Equality Scheme that is easily transferable across the SPSA. This collaboration has recognised the need to ‘involve’ representative bodies and organisations prior to drafting the policy document and has been progressed in conjunction with Strathclyde Police at an event held in August 2006. An initial draft has been prepared and it is anticipated that the Disability Equality Scheme, along with an action plan relevant to each SPSA organisation, will be published on time.

Work on the Gender Equality Scheme will follow a similar approach in terms of collaborative working with CPS partners. As with the Disability Equality Scheme, associated bespoke action plans will be produced for each of the organisations.

HMIC is satisfied with the progress made to date and will return to this area at the next inspection.

5.4 What is the organisation’s approach to the management of information?

SCRO’s publication scheme follows ACPOS National Policy, agreed with the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner prior to implementation of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act in January 2005. SCRO has policy and procedures in place to deal with freedom of information (FOI) requests. An Administration Manager with responsibility for FOI for SCRO has been in post since 2004. Recently two other members of staff have been trained as a back-up to this position.

Since FOI legislation was introduced in Scotland, SCRO has maintained a weekly FOI Monitoring Report. This logs the date a request is received, a unique reference number, the name of the requester, the details of the request, the person to whom responsibility has been assigned, the date the request is acknowledged and the date the response is sent. This allows SCRO to track requests and ensure that they are responded to within the time limit. It also allows requests to be analysed in order to plan resources and identify any updates to the publication scheme that may be necessary. In addition SCRO produces monthly national returns for ACPOS and a quarterly report for ACPO/ACPOS. HMIC anticipates that sharing

these statistics may continue after April 2007, but that SPSA will be the body accountable for this function.

As well as FOI requests, SCRO also receives a number of ‘subject access’ requests from individuals requesting details of their criminal convictions. The information in question is personal data owned, under current legislative arrangements, by the respective force, the relevant chief constable being the data controller. Hence SCRO does not deal with these requests, but redirects them to the relevant force. The development of SPSA may result in this situation changing, with such requests becoming the Authority’s responsibility. This has obvious resource implications for SCRO and SPSA. HMIC wishes to draw this to the attention of the Common Police Services Programme Board, with a view to it being considered as part of the recommendations made at paragraph 3.13 above.

HMIC is satisfied with the measures put in place by SCRO.

5.5 What is the SCRO strategy and plans for managing its property?

The current SCRO building at Pacific Quay, Glasgow was built in 1998, and is held on a 25 year full repairing and insuring lease that expires on 1st May 2025. The Business Support Manager is responsible for facilities management. Since the last HMIC inspection there have been a number of projects to enhance the facilities at SCRO. These include:

- Building work to provide more efficient use of space for e.g. training and locker rooms, with additional work planned to increase accommodation for business support staff;
- The construction of a bike shed for use by staff wishing to cycle to work; and
- The installation of a new, uninterruptible power supply unit to protect further the systems in use within SCRO, with additional work to provide an independent supply for main computer systems planned.

A working party has been established to ensure a smooth transition in property management with the onset of SPSA.

HMIC is satisfied that SCRO has in place policies and processes to ensure that its property is managed properly and provides a good working environment for all staff.

5.6 Describe SCRO’s approach to the transition to SPSA in April 2007.

SCRO has recognised the size of its task presented by the formation of the Scottish Police Services Authority. To meet the demands in managing this transition, SCRO commissioned an external group of consultants (ICAS) to provide change management training to staff. This training was delivered in preparation for the start of the main transition period. The Crown Agent has advised HMIC that the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service’s recent experiences in the development and implementation of the non-numeric standard for fingerprints, setting standards for data quality on the Criminal History System and planning future training for the Scottish Forensic Service “give us strong confidence for our future work with the new organisations”.

At a senior management level, SCRO has been well represented on the various groups involved with the move towards SPSA. The Director of SCRO has always been represented on the Common Police Services Programme Board and has therefore been involved in progressing the programme from the beginning. Since the start of the SPSA programme the Director has attended the CPS Directors Forum, which meets every two months. Additionally the Business Support Manager has attended the monthly meetings of the Corporate Services Working Group (during the inspection this representative changed to the SCRO Deputy Director, as a result of a request from the SPSA Project Team). The Personnel Manager attends the HR sub-group meetings and the Senior Finance Officer attends the Finance sub-group meetings.

Internally, updates from these meetings are provided to managers and staff at SCRO internal meetings and to all staff via a specific site on the Intranet. The SPSA team has recently re-introduced the e-bulletin as a means of updating the agencies; this has been posted on the Intranet, as will any future editions as soon as they are available. The Business Support section has set up an Internal Working Group for transferring records from the existing Win personnel system to the proposed new SPSA system.

Two 'road-show' events have been held, at which SCRO employees had the opportunity to question members of the SPSA project team. HMIC had the opportunity of meeting with some of those who had attended these road-shows and it was evident that they had been well received. Even so, many staff felt that a great number of questions over the fine details of the changes remained unanswered. This was a common view that was raised repeatedly during the inspection. There was also a less widely-held view that some public comments emanating from the SPSA project appeared to disparage previous management and were potentially damaging to the motivation of those required to implement change. HMIC encourages all staff to recognise that:

- The creation of SPSA is in no way a criticism of the staff of its constituent parts, rather an effort to build upon their successes;
- In a dynamic environment not all communication will be word perfect;
- Change inevitably brings different degrees of uncertainty; and
- Many developments or strands of the programme are inter-dependent:
 - so that absolute certainty is unlikely to be achieved in some areas until some time after the SPSA is established.

The Inspectorate nevertheless acknowledges that managing change of this magnitude does raise concerns for staff. Experience of large scale change elsewhere in the police service demonstrates the ease with which 'softer' issues of staff 'buy-in' can be ignored when activity around implementation intensifies. The SPSA project team already has in place a number of communication methods by which it hopes to allay concerns. It will clearly also be of benefit to employees as well as to the aims of the overall project to ensure that regular dialogue is maintained, consultation is genuinely a two-way process, and information is circulated as soon as it is available. HMIC is aware that there are and will continue to be growing pains throughout the preparation phase of SPSA implementation. The Inspectorate therefore urges all concerned to make internal relations one of their highest priorities, in what is a unique change management project with the potential to bring about great improvement to the police service in Scotland.

6. THEMATIC UPDATE

6.1 ‘Managing Improvement’ - positional statement / action plan on implementing relevant recommendations – 7, 8 & 9.

Recommendation 7 - HMIC recommends that forces and common police services continue to ensure that organisational priorities are effectively translated in a meaningful way to all members of staff whatever their role.

SCRO prepared an internal communication strategy for communicating its corporate plan to all staff. To ensure that all staff were briefed and aware of the organisation’s objectives a number of activities took place, including:

- Information on the intranet;
- Posters displayed around the building ;
- All members of staff provided with a visual aid/reference material listing their bureau objectives; and
- A corporate presentation shown at internal briefings, tailored to suit each bureau.

A copy of the plan was also published on the SCRO website.

Recommendation 8 - HMIC recommends that forces and common police services ensure that they have structured processes which ensure that performance of the whole organisation, including support departments, is reviewed and that actions arising there from are appropriately pursued.

The thematic report highlighted as an example of good practice SCRO’s monthly bureaux performance management meeting process. HMIC is encouraged by the fact that this system continues and has evolved. The monthly meetings provide a forum where service area performance reports, capturing a range of performance information relevant to each bureau, can be discussed. Each of the individual Bureau Heads attends the meetings where, if appropriate, they can be held to account for bureau performance and actions raised. The quality of reporting has been commented upon earlier in this report, in relation to monitoring diversity (paragraph 3.2).

HMIC was interested to learn that SCRO had completed a pilot process mapping exercise. Roles and functions of bureaux and individuals have been mapped out using a web-based software tool to illustrate how processes and tasks are linked to the organisation’s objectives. It is envisaged that this tool could assist in identifying reasons for gaps in performance. Two improvement teams, one for people and the other for processes, will be responsible for identifying solutions where gaps are identified. **HMIC encourages this all encompassing approach to performance management and will return to this area at the next inspection to review progress.**

Recommendation 9 - HMIC recommends that forces and common police services establish systems whereby robust performance data can be captured easily and on a timely basis. Such data should be readily accessible, involving a minimum of bureaucracy in the process.

The business analyst is responsible for compiling performance data and to this end produces monthly performance reports for each bureau within SCRO. The reports incorporate relevant performance indicators, trends and analytical commentary where appropriate. A computer-based process has been established to provide core performance information for specific functions from the relevant live systems with relative ease.

HMIC is satisfied with SCRO's response to the recommendations from this thematic inspection.

6.2 'Safety First' - positional statement / action plan on implementing relevant recommendations – 13, 4, 6 & 7.

Recommendation 4 - HMIC recommends that forces introduce a documented process to ensure that all items of officer safety equipment are properly maintained and inspected on a regular basis.

Secondments to SCRO are in non-operational posts. As consequence the organisation does not provide officer safety equipment and therefore has no need to ensure that officer safety equipment is maintained or inspected.

Recommendation 6 - HMIC recommends that all officers who are required to undertake operational duties, irrespective of rank, should be appropriately equipped and trained.

The non-operational nature of seconded posts to SCRO negates the need for officer safety equipment and associated training. SCRO has no officer safety trainers or people qualified to inspect safety equipment and no facilities for such training. Seconded officers are expected to attend relevant training prior to their return to force from secondment.

Recommendation 7 - HMIC recommends that forces continue to maintain a clear focus upon operational officer safety and that one day refresher training is provided to all officers on an annual basis. Within such refresher training programmes, forces should also consider how best to address individual officer needs.

Officers seconded to SCRO are non-operational and do not need annual re-qualification. However, facilities are available to all secondees to receive annual training in their home force if required. Before secondees return to operational duties within force, SCRO will also accommodate any requirements to have them re-trained.

HMIC is satisfied with the arrangements SCRO has put in place in response to the recommendations made in this inspection.

6.3 'Quality of Service' - positional statement / action plan on implementing relevant recommendations – 13.

Recommendation 13 - HMIC recommends that all forces be supported by a dedicated professional standards unit, capable of conducting robust proactive investigation.

In making this recommendation HMIC took the position that all forces should develop internal systems that inform on the health of integrity within the organisation. *'Robust proactive investigation into suspected corruption and the proactive maintaining of integrity by auditing, random or non targeted integrity testing, as well as quality of service checking'* was identified as good practice in helping to identify breaches of security and potential corruption. Whilst the recommendation is aimed at police forces, given SCRO's role as custodian of a number of key Scottish criminal justice databases HMIC is of the view that such a process is essential to maintaining public confidence.

At the time of the inspection respective police force boards employed all support staff within SCRO. For example, staff at Glasgow were employed by Strathclyde Police, those at Edinburgh by Lothian & Borders Police and so on. Police officers working within SCRO are seconded from police forces in Scotland, including the Ministry of Defence and British Transport Police. An audit and compliance process is in place and is managed by the Information Security Officer. However this is a general policy and is not used proactively. Nevertheless HMIC understands that the next version of SID will be able to audit an individual's access to the system and that SCRO is to assess its functionality as a proactive tool for monitoring integrity. Any question of discipline/professional standards would be referred to the relevant force where appropriate.

Whilst current practices may be suitable for the existing structures within SCRO, these will change in April 2007. The onset of SPSA will result in all staff being employed by a single employer. As a result the organisation will no longer be able to rely upon the services of force professional standards units. HMIC understands that this matter has been the subject of discussion as part of the overall implementation project, but as yet no decision has been made. HMIC takes the view that professional standards is about the proactive approach to identifying or preventing breaches of ethics or integrity and does not just deal with identified breaches of discipline. SPSA will need to ensure that adequate provision is made to fulfil the requirements of this recommendation. This is particularly relevant as SCRO is the custodian of the main criminal justice and police databases, and thus needs to take responsibility for ensuring the ethical handling of the data it holds. It therefore needs in place systems and processes to prevent or identify security breaches and to test integrity.

Recommendation 3 – HMIC recommends that consideration be given by the Common Police Services Programme Board and thereafter the SPSA to the establishment of a misconduct and professional standards capability to address issues of internal discipline and integrity as identified in recommendation 13 of the thematic inspection 'Quality of Service'.

Overall HMIC welcomes the commitment shown by the force to address recommendations contained in its thematic inspection reports.