



SUBMISSION OF

HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY

TO THE

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC TRUST: OPENNESS
AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN LOCAL AND LONDON
GOVERNMENT

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the Committee on Standards in Public Life's enquiry into Local Leadership and Public Trust: Openness and Accountability in Local and London Government.

2. This submission sets out the role and work of HMIC, particularly in relation to Police Authorities. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary welcomes the opportunity to provide oral testimony on the particular issues the Committee wishes to address.

BACKGROUND

3. For over a century and a half Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary have been charged with examining and improving the efficiency of the Police Service in England and Wales, with the first HMIs appointed under the provisions of the County and Borough Police Act 1856. In 1962, the Royal Commission on the Police formally acknowledged their contribution to policing.

4. Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary are appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Home Secretary and report to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary. HMCIC is independent both of the Home Office and of the Police Service.

FUNCTIONS

5. The functions of the Inspectorate can at present be divided into three main areas:

- The formal inspection and assessment of the 43 police forces in England and Wales; the Police Service of Northern Ireland; the Serious Organised Crime Agency; the Civil Nuclear Constabulary; the British Transport Police; and the Ministry of Defence Police and Guarding Agency, including those at the Sovereign base in Cyprus. HMIC also inspects HM Revenue and Customs. Also inspected, by invitation, are the three island forces (Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man); and other organisations responsible for policing such as police forces overseas. Thematic inspections are also undertaken, some in conjunction with other bodies, especially the other criminal justice system inspectorates. Inspections are conducted openly and the recommendations of the HMIs are arrived at independently. HMIs' reports are normally published and placed on our website; and good practice is garnered and disseminated.
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary plays a key advisory role within the tripartite system (Home Office, Chief Officer and Police Authority/Northern Ireland Policing Board) where its independence and professional expertise are recognised by all parties. HMIs also provide a crucial link between forces and the Home Office and, as the Home Secretary's principal professional police adviser, the Chief Inspector of Constabulary links directly with the Home Office Crime Reduction and Community Safety Group.
- HMIC contributes to advice to the Home Secretary on senior appointments in the Police Service, via the Senior Appointments Panel on which HMCIC sits.

6. In addition, the Inspectorate keeps abreast of policing issues world-wide by fostering links with international agencies. HMIC also contributes to the development of inspection science through its association with other inspectorates, both within and without the criminal justice system.

ORGANISATION

7. The Inspectorate of Constabulary is independent both of the Police Service and the Home Office. HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary for England, Wales and Northern Ireland is based in London and is supported by Assistant Inspectors of Constabulary who have clearly defined functional responsibilities; a financial adviser; and a small administrative staff. HMCIC visits police forces but inspects rarely; the role generally is to direct and co-ordinate the work of HM Inspectors, particularly those who have responsibility for inspecting a number of forces in one or more of the regions. HMCIC provides advice at national level and is available to advise Ministers and Home Office officials on aspects of policing, as well as the Police Service, both on operational and management matters.

8. The regional Inspectors of Constabulary are located in regional offices in Bromsgrove, Wakefield and Woking and are supported by a small staff. Their primary function is to inspect and assess police forces and to report their findings publicly. HMIs also have an important advisory function and seek to influence the development of policing by disseminating good practice and providing advice to police forces and police authorities. Assistance to each HMI is provided by staff officers and the financial adviser, each of whom have a key role in the inspection process. The national agencies HMI is based in London, and in addition to inspecting the London police forces, the Serious Organised Crime Agency and HM Revenue and Customs, undertakes thematic inspections of high risk issues including Counter Terrorism.

9. HMIC's inspection staff is largely provided by forces and others on a secondment basis, some being on short-term loan. These arrangements provide HMIC with currency of experience of policing and law enforcement.

10. Through the inspection and assessment processes and the recommendations made in published reports, the Inspectorate seeks to influence Chief Officers, the Home Office, Police Authorities and the Northern Ireland Policing Board to ensure the provision of an efficient and effective Police Service. HMCIC is required to submit to the Home Secretary an annual report, subsequently laid before Parliament and published, which summarises the main findings from the previous year's inspections and provides an overview of topical policing issues.

11. Since April 2003, HMIs have been responsible for overseeing personal development reviews for chief officers. PDRs and the general process of performance review are a central component of the development of leadership in the top ranks of the Police Service.

12. The role of HMIC outside formal inspections is as important as the inspection process. The Inspectorate is well placed to provide professional advice - for instance with regard to the police reform programme - through the knowledge derived from the inspection process, the wide-ranging contact within the tripartite system and the expertise of its members.

THE POLICING GREEN PAPER, HMIC AND THE INSPECTION OF POLICE AUTHORITIES

13. The Government published on 17 July 2008 a policing Green Paper *From the neighbourhood to the national: policing our communities together* (CM 7448). This set out a number of proposals for a fresh approach to many aspects of policing.

14. Responses to the proposals were considered, and a 'next steps' document was published by the Home Office on 27 November 2008. This document set out the changes which were being taken forward, including the part HMIC is to play in the new regime. The Green Paper suggested that HMIC should assume a role as *the fierce advocate and more explicit guarantor of the public interest*. Included in HMIC's role is a new responsibility placed on HMIC to inspect police authorities.

15. Police authorities have a role in policing which may briefly be described as setting the strategic direction for the force; holding the chief constable to account on behalf of the local community; consulting locally on what people want from their local police; and making sure that communities get value for money from their force. Police authorities comprise those appointed from elected members of the local authority, and (in the minority) locally selected independent members. The details of police authorities' responsibilities are derived from the Police Act 1996.

16. The Green Paper 'next steps' document said that HMIC would be conducting inspections of police authorities, in these terms:

Inspection of Police Authorities, from April 2009, will look at performance on efficiency and productivity including based on their core duty 'to maintain an efficient and effective police force in their area' by setting ambitious local targets and challenging chief officers to account for their performance in achieving it.

17. HMIC, in association with the Audit Commission (which has complementary interests in this area) is devising a methodology for use in these inspections, and has been trialling it in several police authorities. The intention is that the methodology will be reviewed in the light of experience in these pilot inspections, for use when the programme commenced in full. At present, it is intended to begin the full 18-month inspection programme during 2009-10. However, an interim report on emerging issues and learning after inspecting a number of authorities will be published in the Autumn of 2009.

18. Our preliminary work has enabled HMIC to draw up the attached list of statutory police authority functions, duties and authorities.

FURTHER EVIDENCE TO THE COMMITTEE

19. Clearly, HMIC's work will continue while the Committee considers this subject. HMIC would be pleased to provide further, supplementary evidence as the inspection programme proceeds, if that is the Committee's wish.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
Ashley House
2 Monck Street
London SW1P 2BQ

www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic

February 2009