

To: Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board

On: 31 August 2016

Report by:

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Police Scotland – Counter Corruption Unit Assurance (HMICS)

1. Summary

- 1.1 On 27 June 2016 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) published an Assurance Review of Police Scotland's Counter Corruption Unit carried out following a request from the Scottish Police Authority (SPA).
- 1.2 The review focused on the way in which applications for communications data were being handled by Police Scotland, to determine the facts in relation to the alleged disclosure of sensitive information to a journalist and to test the operational practice of the Counter Corruption Unit and compliance with relevant legislation, codes of practice, policies, procedures and recognised best practice.
- 1.3 By its nature the review is very focused on the work of the Counter Corruption Unit and the 39 actions that have been identified to be taken forward by Police Scotland relate primarily to the organisational structures, governance and operating procedures that are and should be in place within Police Scotland.
- 1.4 In the main the report and the recommendations it contains are of value to the Safer & Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board as a procedure for highlighting best practice. The report has been circulated to the Community Safety and Public Protection Steering Group for use in this way. There are three recommendations that are worth noting in particular as they do impact on the partnership work that is ongoing between Police Scotland and Renfrewshire Council and these are highlighted in section 3 of this report.
- 1.5 A copy of the full HMICS Assurance Review report is available on the SPA.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Safer & Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board:

- a) Notes the HMICS Assurance Review of the Police Scotland Counter Corruption Unit published on 27 June 2016
- b) Notes the 3 recommendations that have a particular relevance to the ongoing work of the Community Safety Partnership as detailed in section 3 of this report.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Assurance Review was conducted to assess the state, effectiveness and efficiency of Police Scotland's Counter Corruptions Unit (CCU).
- 3.2 The Police Scotland's Counter Corruption Unit was established in April 2013 as a gatekeeper acting:
- as a single point of contact for "whistleblowing",
 - to carry out internal investigations into allegations of corruption, and
 - to investigate those from outwith the organisation looking to corrupt police officers.
- 3.3 The Assurance Review is split into two parts:
- Part 1 – Case Study relating to the disclosure of sensitive information to a journalist.
 - Part 2 – Assurance Review of the Counter Corruption Unit.
- 3.4 By its nature the review is very focused on the work of the Counter Corruption Unit and the 39 actions that have been identified to be taken forward by Police Scotland relate primarily to the organisational structures, governance and operating procedures that are and should be in place within Police Scotland.
- 3.5 There are three recommendations that are worth noting:

Recommendation 33:

Police Scotland should ensure that the CCU prioritises its workload around the threat posed by serious organised crime groups.

- 3.6 At any one time there are over 200 serious organised crime groups operating across Scotland. These groups pose a threat to the whole of the public sector as well as our communities and other businesses. Over the past year the Police Scotland Counter Corruption Unit has provided a significant level of support to the Council and its Integrity Group, including Internal Audit to raise awareness at a senior management level of the opportunities that serious organised crime groups seek to take advantage of and looking at policies and procedures that can be used to strengthen the organisation against the threat posed by serious organised crime. Any move to prioritise the work of the CCU on this type of activity is to be welcomed.

Recommendation 35

Police Scotland should consult with its public sector partners and refresh the remit of the CCU Public Sector Section

- 3.7 In As noted above this is an important area of work and the work that has been undertaken in Renfrewshire with the support of the CCU Public Sector Section has been of great assistance in developing the Council's Integrity Model and in strengthening the Council against risks posed by corruption and insider threat. Should Police Scotland come forward with a consultation on the aims, objectives, outputs and outcomes of the CCU Public Sector

Section then it is recommended that partners should seek to engage with and contribute positively to the consultation.

Recommendation 36

Police Scotland should monitor the progress of the vetting section to reduce and, if possible, eliminate the backlog of vetting applications and provide regular updates to the SPA.

- 3.8 The vetting process outlined in this report relates most significantly to vetting of those people that have access to Police systems and facilities. However, this process has in the past also impacted on the development and work of the Community Safety Partnership Hub due to its physical location adjacent to the Police Offices in Mill Street and also the nature of the work carried out in the Hub. Any focus on reducing the backlog in vetting will have a significant impact for the Police locally, but will also assist with speeding up some elements of partnership working.

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