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**To: Police and Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Sub Committee**

**On: 18 January 2022**

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**Report by: Director of Communities and Housing Services**

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**Heading: Consultation on HM Inspectorate of Constabulary In Scotland (HMICS) Scrutiny Plan 2022-25**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Scotland (HMICS) is in the process of developing their Scrutiny Plan to deliver a planned inspection programme for 2022–2025.
  - 1.2 HMICS will continue to utilise an online survey so that anyone with an interest in policing in Scotland can make a contribution. As part of this process, HMICS sought the views of key stakeholders on any topical, high risk or emerging areas in Policing that could be included within the 2022-25 plan.
  - 1.3 The on-line survey can be accessed at:  
<https://response.questback.com/scottishgovernment/HMICSscrutinyconsultation2021>
  - 1.4 The aim of the online survey is to provide HMICS with a thorough insight into the key issues that members of the public, key stakeholders and staff members of Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority feel strongly about.
  - 1.5 HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Gillian Imery wrote to partners including the Renfrewshire Council Chief Executive on 7 December 2021 requesting input into the HMICS Scrutiny Plan 2022-25.
  - 1.6 The final date for submissions to the letter is 21 January 2022. A draft response from the Council is attached as Appendix 1 to this report for the approval of members and will be submitted in line with the timescales provided.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Police and Fire & Rescue Scrutiny Sub Committee:
- (i) notes the consultation on the HMICS scrutiny plan.
  - (ii) approves the Council's consultation response as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.
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## **3. Background**

- 3.1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland, (HMICS) has a statutory role to report on the state, effectiveness and efficiency of both Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. HMICS first issued a consultation on their forward workplan 2014 – 2017 in November 2013. Since then, each HMICS Annual Scrutiny Plan has included an appropriate focus on the issues that are relevant and have been highlighted by the Council. This 3-year plan will supersede the previous one and annual reviews will follow.
- 3.2 In accordance with their statutory obligation to keep this plan under review, HMICS are currently refreshing it to take account of necessary changes to scrutiny activities. The last updated HMICS Scrutiny Plan 2021-22, was issued in June 2021.
- 3.3 Previously, HMICS highlighted some of the areas they wished to focus on, however this year, as was the case in recent years, they did not provide a draft report or anything that they would focus on during the 2022–2025 year.
- 3.4 From a Renfrewshire perspective, local relationships with Police Scotland and with the Scottish Police Authority are excellent and the areas highlighted in the Renfrewshire response will strengthen this relationship.
- 3.5 The response attached for approval, welcomes the development of the HMICS Scrutiny Plan for 2022-2025 and highlights some areas that Renfrewshire Council feel would benefit from scrutiny by HMICS.
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## **Implications of the Report**

- 1. **Financial** - None
- 2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None.
- 3. **Community/Council Planning** –
  - *Our Renfrewshire is safe* - By focusing on key areas of policing, Renfrewshire should be a safer place to live, work and visit
- 4. **Legal** - None

5. **Property/Assets** - None
  6. **Information Technology** - None
  7. **Equality & Human Rights**
    - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
  8. **Health & Safety** – None.
  9. **Procurement** - None
  10. **Risk** - None
  11. **Privacy Impact** - None.
  12. **COSLA Policy Position** – Not Applicable
  13. **Climate Risk** – Not Applicable
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#### **List of Background Papers**

**None**

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## **Renfrewshire Council's response to the consultation on HMICS Scrutiny Plan 2022-2025**

Renfrewshire Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this process.

### **What do you think are the key issues that will face policing in Scotland over the next 3 years and why?**

There will continue to be many issues facing Police Scotland over the next 3 years – including continuing to work with and for communities, Serious Organised Crime, CONTEST (Prevent) including Prevent Multi Agency Panel (PMAP) meetings and general crime coming out of the pandemic.

One of the bigger challenges will be how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected Police Scotland and in particular, what lessons have been learned and implemented to make Police Scotland better. This may include the use of the 4 E's (Engage, Explain, Encourage, Enforce) as a regular tool for dealing with businesses.

Local demands will change, including a local election in May 2022 which will potentially lead to different demands, priorities and scrutiny by local authorities over the subsequent years.

Finally, a key issue moving forward will be funding come out of the Covid-19 pandemic. Like other public bodies, massive resources have been used to ensure that the transmission of Covid-19 was reduced, however, this funding and resource will stop and potentially leave a funding gap for Police Scotland. This will be a challenge moving forward.

### **Are there any departments or Divisions that you think require scrutiny from HMICS and why?**

There are no specific departments or Divisions that require to be looked at. Renfrewshire and Inverclyde (K Division) has a good relationship with the Local Authority through the Renfrewshire Community Safety Partnership.

However, there is best practice in some Divisions and HMICS could potentially assist in understanding why this best practice is not followed in others? As specific examples, Renfrewshire Council and Police Scotland are working together to follow the South Ayrshire model (U Division) of the use of Quad Bikes. This has been challenging to overcome some of the bureaucracy and best practice (and best value) should be discussed across all divisions.

The same can be said about CCTV and the use of Public Space cameras to assist Police Scotland with regards to crimes. Again, this is an exemplar in Renfrewshire/K Division to allow a swift response, however, this comes at a cost, including resource and Police Scotland require increased central funding to assist local divisions in ensuring the increased demand on local authorities is met.

**Is there any new legislation, processes or technology that require assurance from HMICS?**

Following COP26, there is an opportunity to look at a wide range of new technologies and plans to introduce new technologies i.e. Body Worn Cameras, use of drones etc. This would give assurance to the Public (and Police Scotland) that all checks have been made.

**Are there any processes that Police Scotland and partner agencies are involved in where you feel that joint inspection would be of benefit? Why is this important?**

Not that we can think of at the current time.

**Where could scrutiny from HMICS add the most value and why?**

Police Scotland are scrutinised regularly via public and Scrutiny Committees, including Elected Members. One of the key areas would be to continue to review are larger challenges (Renfrewshire Council is aware of the assurance review on COP26). Where the public feel that Police Scotland are not responding appropriately, could be a focus including an assurance review on the carrying of knives and an on-going review of hate crime (again, Renfrewshire Council is aware of the Thematic Inspection report published in June 2021).

**Do you currently read HMICS reports and publications?**

N/A – Organisation response

**(If you answered 'Yes' to question 7) Have HMICS reports had a positive impact on your work &/or understanding of policing in Scotland? In what ways could we make our reports more relevant for you?**

N/A – Organisation response

**(If you answered 'No' to question 7) What would make you more likely to read our reports? In what ways could we make our reports more relevant for you?**

N/A – Organisation response

**Are there any ways that we could make our reports and publications more accessible?**

N/A – Organisation response

**In the last 12 months have you visited the HMICS website?**

N/A – Organisation response

**If 'Yes', how easy was it to find what you were looking for on HMICS' website?**

N/A – Organisation response

**If you have any suggestions for ways in which we could improve our website, including anything you would like to see that isn't currently there, please use the box below:**

N/A – Organisation response