



Meeting	Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee
Date	15 August 2024
Location	Virtual
Title of Paper	HMICS Inspection of SPA Corporate – SPA response
Presented By	John McNellis Head of Finance, Audit & Risk
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Yes

PURPOSE

To provide the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) with the SPA response to the published inspection of SPA Corporate and our next steps to address the inspections findings.

The paper is presented in line with the corporate governance framework of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) terms of reference and is submitted for consultation.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 HMICS has a statutory obligation to inquire into the state, efficiency and effectiveness of both the Police Service of Scotland (Police Scotland) and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA).
- 1.2 Detail of the aims and objectives of the inspection as well as the Authority's preparations was provided to the February ARAC.
- 1.3 HMICS conducted the inspection of the Authority from January to March 2024 and published their inspection report on [11 June 2024](#).

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

- 2.1 The full report has been presented at agenda item 4.2. The findings from this report have also been shared with all Board Members at an earlier board seminar.
- 2.2 A full response to the inspection is included at appendix A.
- 2.3 This paper provides the opportunity to formally report the inspection to the ARAC and outline managements response and next steps.
- 2.4 The Authority welcomes this report and in particular HMICS' overall statement which praises the Authority for the progress since the previous inspection.
- 2.5 HMICS have recognised significant improvements since 2019 with a number of positive findings. HMICS and the Authority also recognise that there remains areas where continuous improvement are required.
- 2.6 We have carefully considered each of the 17 areas for development and ensured that actions in response are included in the SPA corporate business plan. Progress will be monitored quarterly to the senior leadership team and to the ARAC.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no specific financial implications associated with this paper.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no specific personnel implications associated with this paper.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this paper.

6 REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are reputational implications associated with this paper. The outcome of the HMICS inspection is likely to have a reputational impact on the Authority.

7 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific social implications associated with this paper.

8 COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1 There are no specific community impact implications associated with this paper.

9 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific equalities implications associated with this paper.

10 ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific environmental implications associated with this paper.

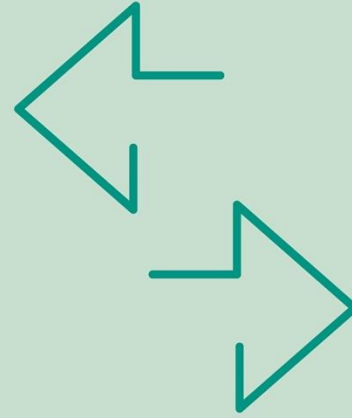
RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to discuss the Authority's response to the HMICS inspection report.

Appendix A

HMICS Inspection of the Authority

15 August 2024



SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY
ÙGH DARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

Background



HMICS role

Statutory obligation to inquire into the state, efficiency and effectiveness of both Police Scotland and the Authority.

- HMICS consider the role and work of the Authority during other reviews.
- The last specific full inspection of the Authority was in 2019.

- HMICS expect to undertake a specific inspection of the Authority every 4/5 years.



Authority's role

The Scottish Police Authority is responsible for maintaining policing. It has four specific areas of responsibility.

1. Promoting the policing principles
2. Supporting continuous improvement

3. Keeping policing under review
4. Holding the Chief Constable to account.

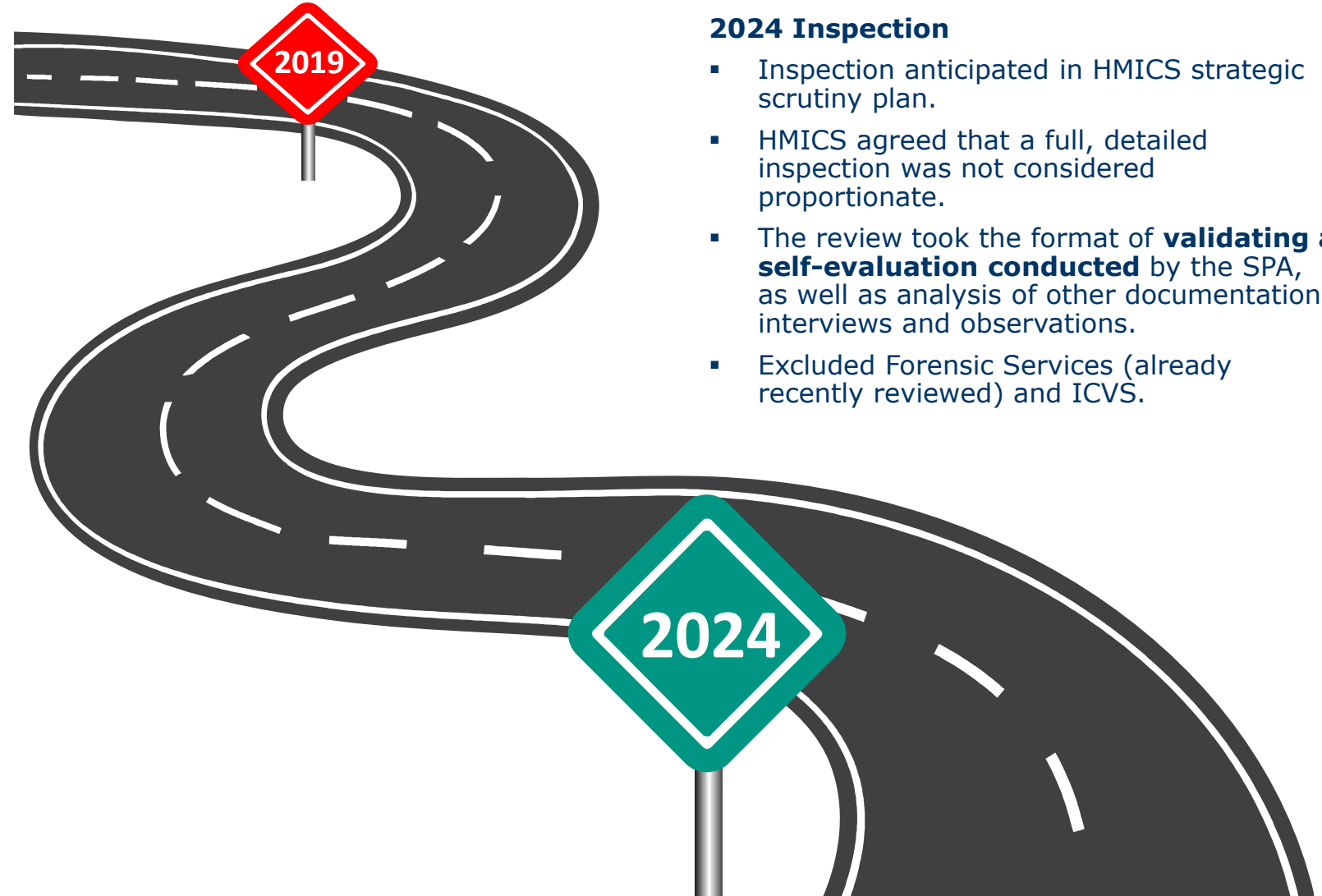
Background: journey since 2019

2019 Inspection

Previous full inspection of the Authority in 2019. The report was highly critical and made 14 recommendations.

Some of the findings include:

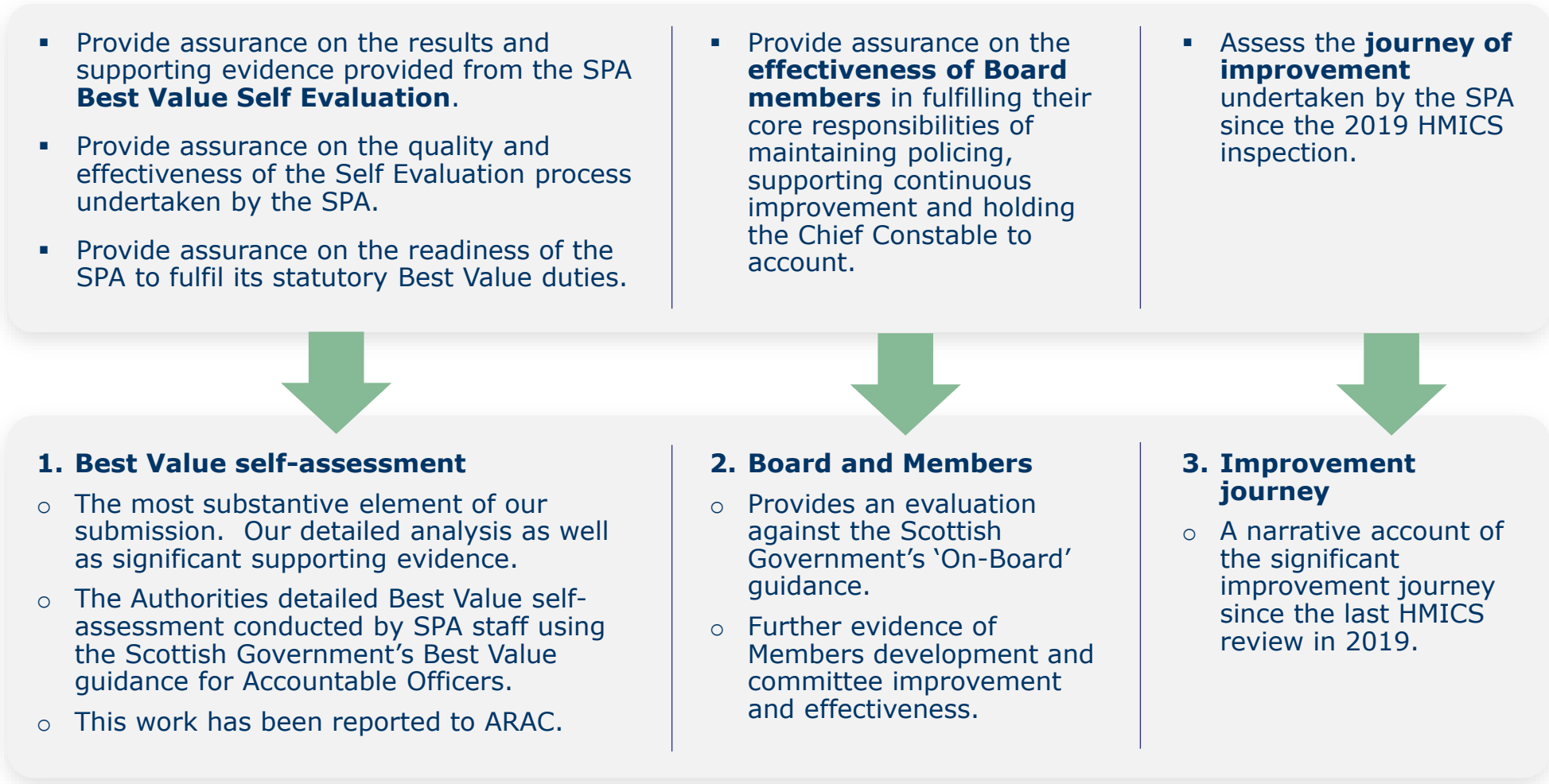
- constrained capacity and capability;
- underdeveloped governance framework;
- unclear role of the role of Chair;
- Chair and Board members acting well outwith their non-executive role;
- issues with our local authority engagement;
- issues with balancing the budget, SWP, governance of change;
- lack of a clear vision or strategy for the Authority;
- lack of rigour or effectiveness in holding the Chief Constable to account.



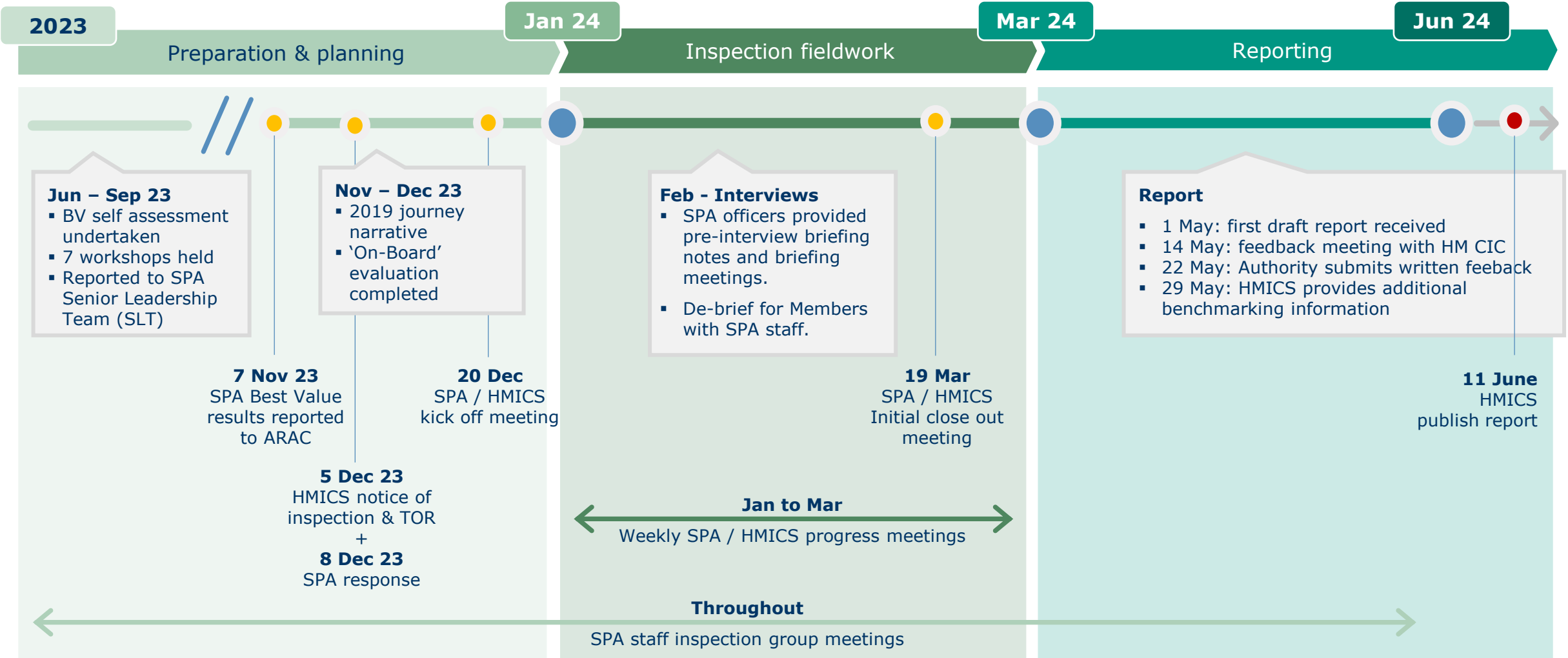
2024 Inspection

- Inspection anticipated in HMICS strategic scrutiny plan.
- HMICS agreed that a full, detailed inspection was not considered proportionate.
- The review took the format of **validating a self-evaluation conducted** by the SPA, as well as analysis of other documentation, interviews and observations.
- Excluded Forensic Services (already recently reviewed) and ICVS.

Background: our approach to the inspection



Timeline



Key Findings

Approach

- The SPA has a strong commitment to self-evaluation to support improvement.
- The Best Value self-evaluation exercise has been carried out effectively, involving staff and using appropriate statutory guidance.
- It has been transparent in reporting its approach and results and demonstrating clear ownership of the outputs.

Vision and Leadership

- Stronger leadership, vision and direction in place, provided by the SPA Board and Chief Executive.
- The SPA's strategies and plans clearly set out what it wants to achieve over the short to medium-term, but further work is required to develop a longer-term vision and sustainable policing model.

Governance & Accountability

- The SPA has appropriate governance arrangements in place. Its decision-making processes are consistent with public sector best practice in being generally open and transparent.
- Board and committee meetings provide a healthy environment for members to offer constructive challenge.
- The SPA is now in a position of compliance with On Board guidance for members of statutory boards - no evidence of board members acting outwith their non-executive role.

Other findings

- Demonstrates effective financial planning and management.
- Promotes a culture of equality and is working closely with Police Scotland to embed equality into all aspects of working.
- Making progress on sustainability issues, driven by its corporate sustainability plan.

News

[Scottish Police Authority Praised for Progress](#)

Press release

10 June 2024

"A strategic review by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) has praised the progress made by the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) in providing oversight and scrutiny of policing in Scotland.

But more needs to be done to help Police Scotland develop a longer-term vision and sustainable model for policing."

HMICS press release

Findings: recommendations



One recommendation

“The SPA should put in place measures to monitor progress against the areas for development outlined in this review, ensuring regular public reporting to allow assessment of progress.”

SPA response:

- The SPA has discussed our approach to monitoring and reporting progress with HMICS. HMICS recognise our existing robust mechanism to monitor and report milestones as part of our business plan.
- Many of the areas for development (AFD’s) are already reflected in the business plan milestones and have been enhanced, whilst new AFD’s can be added to the business plan.
- These will be tracked and reported to the senior leadership team and ARAC quarterly ensuring transparent public reporting of progress.
- The SPA will now seek the agreement of HMICS to close this recommendation.

Seventeen areas for developments (AFD’s)

Unlike recommendations, the detailed management response to AFD’s are a matter for the Authority. HMICS will not be involved in management’s response or follow up on the implementation of the AFD.

SPA response:

- For each AFD we have mapped the finding to milestones in our existing SPA corporate business plan.
- Where there are new actions / milestones these have been added to the business plan with expected delivery dates. The majority of AFD’s can be completed in the current financial year, however, we also recognise some areas have dependencies on Police Scotland and will take longer.
- Progress will be monitored quarterly and reported to the senior leadership team and ARAC.

Findings: areas for development

#	Area for development
1	The SPA is considering how to enhance its self-evaluation process, in particular moving away from compliance-based assessment. Future iterations would benefit from: inviting wider participation; reviewing the assessment criteria to take account of all relevant guidance; and by more fully encompassing all of its roles, including its role in holding Police Scotland to account.
2	The SPA should reflect upon its self-evaluation as well as on the findings from this review to consider what further development work is needed to fully meet best value expectations.
3	The SPA should plan how it can best continue to support and challenge Police Scotland in both its continuous improvement and best value commitments.
4	The SPA should invest time in reflecting upon its current leadership, with the aim of capturing successes and good practice as well as any challenges. It should then translate these into learning to ensure that robust structures and processes are in place for any subsequent changes in personnel.
5	The SPA, both as an organisation and in its scrutiny of Police Scotland, should continue to develop performance and outcome measures to improve transparency and reporting against strategic aims.
6	The SPA should continue to develop its work to enhance scrutiny of Police Scotland's development of a longer-term vision and sustainable model for policing. This should focus upon progress and should be developed with consideration of, and in alignment to, the joint strategy.
7	The SPA should consider streamlining its plans and subsequent reporting, ensuring that it effectively prioritises its work for most impact, with effective use of its resources.
8	The SPA should further develop its strategic partnership role, and its engagement strategy should clearly set out the levels and intended outcomes of engagement.

Findings: areas for development, continued

#	Area for development
9	The SPA should review the agendas of its committees in line with their core purpose and consider reporting committee effectiveness reviews in public, involving other stakeholders in the process.
10	The SPA should improve both the recording of decisions in minutes and the use of rolling action logs to ensure that acceptance of assurances, and any follow-up requests or agreed actions, are recorded and delivered.
11	The SPA should, in conjunction with Police Scotland, review the quantity and quality of reports going to board and committee meetings to ensure that they are clear and concise to support effective scrutiny, and do not over burden board members.
12	The SPA should improve its scrutiny, challenge and monitoring of Police Scotland's risk reporting, risk register and mitigating actions.
13	The SPA needs to ensure that it is exercising effective scrutiny and oversight of Police Scotland's change programme and associated benefits.
14	In conjunction with Police Scotland, the SPA should urgently refresh its medium-term financial strategy to reflect projected funding settlements from the Scottish Government.
15	The SPA should consider improving its website content to provide increased clarity and accessibility on engagement and performance reporting.
16	The SPA should consider how interdependencies and duplication across its committees could be better managed.
17	The SPA should consider how to ensure that seldom-heard voices are systematically and effectively engaged in its own and Police Scotland's work.