



National Audit Office

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD Best Value Performance Plan for 2005-06

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National Audit Office

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

Best Value Performance Plan for 2005-06

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Comptroller and Auditor General
National Audit Office
6 January 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Background

1 Section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires the Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Board) to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which their functions and those of the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) are exercised, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

2 This obligation replicates similar requirements (referred to as Best Value) contained in the Local Government Act 1999, for Police Authorities in England and Wales¹, to provide an opportunity for the Board and Police Service to demonstrate that they have operated in the most efficient, effective and economical way.

3 This is my third annual report on these arrangements.

Basis and scope of the audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General

4 The Comptroller and Auditor General is required to send a report to the Northern Ireland Policing Board, the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Secretary of State on the Performance Plan and reported performance under Section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.

5 The purpose of my annual report is to inform Parliament, Members of the Policing Board and the Chief Constable of the key issues arising from my audit of the Best Value Performance Plan, my recommendations and any actions that are now required.

6 I have also reviewed the performance against the previous year's targets as set out in the Annual Review of the Northern Ireland Policing Board² and on the Policing Board's web-site.³

7 The Policing Board have highlighted in their 2005-06 Plan that in addition to explicit 'Best value reviews', the Police Service have had in place a series of strategic initiatives which are also designed to deliver effectiveness, efficiency and economy within the organisation. Given this emphasis, I have reviewed one of these strategic initiatives (Information Systems) and included my findings on it in this report.

8 The findings from my work are set out in detail in the following parts of my report:

- Part 1: The Best Value Performance Plan and performance in 2004-05;
- Part 2: The operation of arrangements for securing Continuous Improvement; and
- Part 3: Information and Computer Services Strategy implementation.

Annex A gives details of the basis and scope of my report.

Main findings of my review

9 On Best Value:

- The Policing Board have prepared and published their Best Value Performance Plan in all significant respects in accordance with the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. My audit opinion is given at Annex B.
- Both the Policing Board and PSNI have made real efforts to implement the recommendations of past reviews by the National Audit Office and Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary. While not every recommendation has been implemented, these do not pose a major threat to further progress in measuring and achieving Continuous Improvement.
- The data systems to generate performance information and the performance monitoring activities are generally strong and both bodies are always looking to make further improvements where they can (paragraph 1.15).
- Both organisations can improve how they present to the public what they do and achieve particularly in their published summary of performance against the Best Value Performance Plan. This could be enhanced to better inform readers much more about how they have improved the quality of policing (paragraph 1.6).
- The Board and PSNI have significantly improved the quality of their performance indicators and standards for 2005-06 from 2004-05, although improvements can still be made for example with some non-specific targets covering, for example, the total number of crimes (see Figure 2 on pages 6 and 7).

¹ Best Value is described as securing continuous improvement in the exercise of all functions undertaken by the authority, whether statutory or not, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Notes to the Local Government Act 1999). Best Value and Continuous Improvement are used by practitioners interchangeably and therefore for the purposes of my report the terms Best Value and Continuous Improvement are synonymous.

² Northern Ireland Policing Board Annual Review 2004-05 published June 2005.

³ This information is published on the Policing Board's web-site at http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/word_docs/publicationschemedocs/Achieve_0405.DOC.

- Both the Board and the PSNI recognise that more needs to be done to ensure Best Value is fully embedded within their organisations. The Policing Board have recognised they can continue to improve the way they challenge the Police Service. They appear to get more information than they can readily absorb so it is important to identify the key issues on which to challenge effectively. Responsibility for monitoring progress against the Best Value Review Programme is to pass from the Board's Audit and Best Value Committee to the Finance and General Purposes Committee in 2005-06. The latter Committee meets more frequently and this should help facilitate the Board's oversight (paragraph 2.5).
- The plan for 2005-06 is ambitious and reflects a real determination to make Best Value work and we applaud this. The Policing Board are monitoring progress carefully (paragraph 2.6).
- In performing their internal reviews the PSNI seem to be weakest on the "Competition" criteria (one of the four key criteria against which functions and services should be examined). The quality of the PSNI's own reviews are improving although one of the three we looked at was poorly resourced and the quality of the review suffered. External service provision is generally dismissed fairly peremptorily at a very early stage of the review (paragraphs 2.8 to 2.9).
- Internal Review Teams can do more to engage all the interested parties in consultation. We consider that the Review Teams are still too isolated from the rest of the police force (paragraph 2.9).

10 On the implementation of their Information Systems (IS) strategy:

- the successful implementation of their IS strategy should assist PSNI in achieving their effectiveness, efficiency and economy objectives (paragraph 3.19);
- there is a strong senior management support, sponsorship and commitment to the team implementing the IS strategy and to the strategy itself (paragraph 3.6);

- the implementation timescale of the strategy, covering 2004-08 is extremely challenging and together with the complexity of the overall Programme, there is still an inherent risk that projects may not to be delivered on time and to an adequate standard for the ultimate users. I note that some parts of the project (covering mobile systems) are not due for implementation until 2009; and
- PSNI have not invited the Office for Government Commerce to perform formal "Gateway" reviews yet and funding for the implementation of the strategy from the Northern Ireland Office of a total of some £65 million has been made dependent on the PSNI undertaking these. PSNI are clarifying whether the OGC process should relate to the overall programme or individual projects (paragraph 3.11).

11 In implementing their IS Strategy, the PSNI should:

- ensure that business process analysis follows a more consistent methodology;
- update programme plans more frequently to properly reflect progress;
- address business changes more explicitly through business process analysis;
- identify business benefits that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-limited and against which progress can be monitored after projects have gone live;
- clarify how and when OGC should be involved;
- clarify the extent of approval for funding already provided and whether further approval is required for both the envelope of projects and individual elements of the strategy; and
- define, implement and monitor an Information Management training strategy together with a training needs analysis.

12 The Policing Board and Police Service have plans in progress to implement the above recommendations and I look forward to the application of Continuous Improvement to the strategically important area of patrolling in 2005-06.

PART ONE

The 2005-06 Best Value Performance Plan and performance against the previous year's plan

Introduction

1.1 In this part I report whether:

- the content and supporting documentation for the 2005-06 Best Value Performance Plan published in the Policing Plan for 2005-08 meets the Board's statutory obligations (paragraphs 1.2 to 1.7);
- proposed performance indicators and standards are reasonable (paragraphs 1.8 to 1.15);
- the systems in place to produce performance information in support of their Best Value indicators and standards, are appropriate (paragraphs 1.16 to 1.21); and
- the Board's assessment of its own and the Chief Constable's performance in 2004-05 by reference to performance indicators is reasonable (paragraphs 1.22 to 1.28).

The content and supporting documentation for the 2005-06 Best Value Performance Plan meets the Board's statutory obligations

1.2 The Northern Ireland Policing Board have prepared and published their Best Value Performance Plan in all significant respects in accordance with the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 (further details are provided at Annex A). My audit opinion is given at Annex B.

1.3 The Performance Plan should:

- detail how the Policing Board have made arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which their functions, and those of the Chief Constable, are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- identify factors (performance indicators) by reference to which performance in exercising functions can be measured;
- set standards (performance targets) to be met in the exercise of particular functions in relation to performance indicators;
- contain the Board's assessment of their own and the Chief Constable's performance in the year by reference to performance indicators; and
- contain explanations of the extent that any performance standard that applied at any time during the year, was not met.

1.4 The 2005-06 Best Value Performance Plan was contained within the three year 2005-08 Policing Plan. This document was distributed widely for example to local councillors, libraries and the media as well as on the website of the Policing Board.

1.5 The legislation requires the Policing Board's Performance Plan to include details of the arrangements made to secure continuous improvement. The Performance Plan contains basic information only and the public's understanding of it would be enhanced by the inclusion of additional information on the following matters:

- how the choice of reviews and conclusions of completed reviews will be challenged by the Board to ensure they are valid and will support the objectives of continuous improvement; and
- how the PSNI and Policing Board will consult with the public about their plans and actions to be taken arising from the reviews.

1.6 A summary of progress against the 2004-05 Best Value Performance Plan has been included in the Board's 2004-05 Annual Review and on its web-site. The aim of this is to give the public an understanding of how the Best Value Review process has enhanced the efficiency, economy and effectiveness of the PSNI. However little narrative description is given of how services have been improved or of other developments, such as details of efficiencies achieved.

Recommendations

1.7 The Board and Service should:

- develop their Best Value Performance Summary Plan for 2006-07 to provide more narrative explanation to give the public a clearer understanding of the Best Value regime, how they can expect to be consulted and how the accountability framework will operate; and
- enhance their Performance Plan by ensuring that the outcomes of Best Value Reviews are quantified where possible and reported.

The proposed performance indicators and standards outlined in the Best Value Performance Plan are reasonable but can be improved

1.8 The Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires that the Policing Board identify performance indicators and performance standards in its Plan to measure the performance of existing functions of the Policing Board and the PSNI. Part two of the three year Policing Plan for 2005-08 includes a number of performance indicators and standards which have been determined by the Policing Board. Police service performance is also measured by a number of indicators showing their progress in implementing the recommendations of the Patten Report which are contained in quarterly reports of the Office of the Oversight Commissioner (OOC).

1.9 The Policing Board has set the 2005-06 performance indicators and performance standards following consultation with the Chief Constable, District Policing Partnerships and the public. The Board has made a number of improvements from the performance indicators and standards set in previous years, although there remain a number of areas, which are set out below, where the performance indicators and standards can be further enhanced. The improvements made for 2005-06 include:

- the presentation of the performance indicators and standards in the Policing Plan has been improved. All of the performance indicators and standards for 2005-06 are now included in a single part of the Policing Plan, and they have been set out under six policing domains (**Figure 1**), five of which are common to those used by police services in England and Wales;
- the performance indicators and standards cover a number of areas that were not included in 2004-05, but which are important elements of policing. These are shown in **Figure 2 on pages 6 and 7**; and
- in a number of areas, the Board have developed standards from previous years to make them more specific about how the quality of policing services is to be improved. These are shown in the Figure 2.

1.10 The Policing Board is not subject to the statutory best value indicators determined annually by the Home Office for forces in England and Wales. However, the Policing Board use indicators broadly similar to those used in England and Wales and in some cases more detailed ones. For example, there are two standards relating specifically to the number of recorded homophobic incidents and crimes. Although the number of Home Office indicators

1 "Domains" in the Policing Plan	
	Common to other forces?
Citizen Focus	Y
Reducing Crime	Y
Investigating Crime	Y
Promoting Public Safety	Y
Resource Usage	Y
Programme of Change	N

In England and Wales their sixth domain is "providing assistance". Domain categories are used to categorise indicators as they are intended to capture the flavour of the services provided.

not included by the Board in 2005-06 is lower than in previous years, there are still some Home Office indicators that the Board has chosen not to adopt. For example, the Board has not included indicators on the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions, the risk of personal or household crime, or the ethnicity and gender of recruits. In some areas such as domestic burglary and vehicle crime, the Home Office indicators measure crime rates per household or head of population while the Board's indicators measure the number of types of crime in absolute terms. This can make it difficult for the public to benchmark the PSNI's performance with that of other police forces.

1.11 Standards (targets) are set for each performance indicator. One of these standards (on achieving "Gershon" efficiency savings) is deliverable over several years, but from the Plan it is not clear whether the intention is that performance will be gradually improved or achieved as a result of a single set of initiatives. Many police authorities utilise milestones to monitor the progress towards the achievement of standards, enabling earlier corrective action if necessary.

1.12 A number of the Best Value standards are not specific about what the PSNI should achieve. For example:

- some standards focus on the requirements for the PSNI to report to the Policing Board on various strategies rather than achieving the planned outcomes from those strategies;
- other standards require the PSNI to monitor the number of certain types of incident, but do not set a standard to reduce the number of incidents or improve the detection rate; and
- other standards do relate to an increase in the number of detections for a type of offence or a decrease in the number of a type of crime, but do not state what level of increase or decrease is to be achieved.

Examples of the above are given in Figure 2.

1.13 There are a number of reasons why the Policing Board has selected non-specific standards. For example:

- standards requiring the PSNI to report to the Policing Board on a particular strategy are often supported by a large number of unpublished standards, performance against which is included in internal reports to the Policing Board;

- for some types of incidents, such as incidents of a racist or homophobic nature, the Board believe it is more appropriate initially to have standards to monitor the number of incidents, as there may be problems of under-reporting that need to be addressed before standards to reduce the number of incidents are useful. The Board is continuing to work towards developing the standards in such areas over time; and
- some standards, such as measuring police response times to emergency calls, relate to areas that have not previously been covered by the indicators. Data is being reviewed to establish a reliable baseline before more specific standards on improving the level of performance can be set.

1.14 The present indicators are not currently within the Best Value part of the Policing Plan. The Policing Board believe the Best Value programme is only one aspect of the change programme occurring in the police service at present and thus the indicators are wider-reaching than simply reflecting the impact of the Best Value programme.

Recommendations

1.15 The Board could improve the indicators used for future years as follows:

- continuing to consider the inclusion of other Home Office indicators currently absent from the Performance Plan where these are appropriate to the Northern Ireland context, such as the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions;
- developing and publishing milestones to enable progress towards achieving standards to be monitored more easily and corrective action taken if necessary;
- where the Board have chosen to set a standard that is not specific, it should consider setting out the reasons for this in the Policing Plan to demonstrate how the selected standard will result in improvements to the quality of service; and
- making specific reference to the Policing Board and PSNI performance indicators and standards in the Best Value Performance Plan for 2006-07. Where appropriate, links should be made between individual Best Value Reviews (both planned and completed) noted in the Best Value Performance Plan and the indicators and standards by which they are to be measured.

2 Analysis of 2005-06 performance indicators and standards

2005-06 Indicator	Reasonable?	Enhancements from 2004-05	
		Not covered by prior year indicators	Standard made more specific
Domain: Citizen focus			
1.1 The percentage of victims satisfied with the police service received.	■	■	
1.2 The percentage of people who think the police do a good job.	■		
1.3 The percentage of people who think the police treat everyone equally.	■		
1.4 Response time to emergency calls.	■	■	
Domain: Reducing Crime			
2.1 The total number of crimes.	■	■	
2.2 The number of domestic burglaries.	■		
2.3 The number of vehicle crimes.	■		
2.4 The number of violent crimes.	■	■	
3.1 Fear of crime.	■	■	
3.2 The percentage of people satisfied with the level of police patrolling in their local area.	■		
Domain: Investigating Crime			
4.1 The percentage of all crimes cleared.	■	■	
4.2 The percentage of violent crimes cleared.	■		
4.3 The quantity of drugs seized.	■		
4.4 The percentage of murder/manslaughter crimes cleared.	■		
4.5 The number and value of cash forfeitures and confiscations under the Proceeds of Crime Act.	■	■	
4.6 The number of persons charged with terrorist offences.	■		
4.7 The percentage of domestic violence offences cleared.	■		■
4.8 The number of hate crimes/incidents.	■	■	
4.9 The percentage of hate crimes cleared.	■	■	■
Domain: Promoting Public Safety			
5.1 The percentage of people who know the officer in charge of policing in their local area and how to make contact.	■	■	
5.2 To establish an effective system for the recording and monitoring of incidents of anti-social behaviour.	■	■	
5.3 Anti-social behaviour hotspots identified through the use of NIM.	■	■	
5.4 Contribution towards the Northern Ireland Community Safety Strategy.	■		
6.1 Contribution towards delivery of the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy.	■		
6.2 The number of detections for excess speed offences in areas with high incidence of injury collisions and also areas subject to local complaint.	■		
6.3 The number of detections for driving whilst impaired through drink and/or drugs.	■		
6.4 The number of detections for non-wearing of seatbelt offences.	■		
6.5 The number of detections for careless and dangerous driving.	■		
Domain: Resource Usage			
7.1 Average amount of overtime worked.	■		
7.2 Deliver Gershon efficiency savings.	■	■	
7.3 Average working days lost through sickness.	■	■	
7.4 Improving organisational performance through efficient and effective deployment practices.	■		■
7.5 The percentage of custody and bail cases processed within administrative time limits.	■		
Domain: Programme of Change			
8.1 Progress against agreed changes and agreed timetables for change relating to policing and the criminal justice system.	■		

Areas for improvement

Standard focuses on reporting performance rather than achieving outcomes

Target about monitoring number of incidents

Long-term standard with no milestones

Standard not specific about level of increase or decrease



The systems in place to produce performance information in support of their Best Value indicators and standards are appropriate

1.16 For a number of the performance indicators and standards, the Policing Board relies on the PSNI to collate the information that it uses to monitor performance. I have reviewed the systems that the PSNI has put in place to collect this information, and I consider that those systems are appropriate.

Performance monitoring by the Policing Board

1.17 In 2004-05, the PSNI has reported its performance against the quantifiable performance standards quarterly to the public session of the Policing Board, rather than the Board's Corporate Policy Committee, as had occurred in 2003-04. At the Board meetings, a written paper is submitted by the PSNI setting out its current performance against the performance standards in the Performance Plan. This is supported by a presentation by the Chief Constable, who also answers questions raised on the performance information by the Board members. This change in reporting procedure has resulted in greater public accountability, because the Board sessions are held in public.

1.18 Only one performance target (3.5.2: "To monitor the number of domestic violence offences that result in persons reported or charged", a new target for 2004-05) was omitted from the quarterly performance reports provided to the Board by the PSNI. However performance information for this standard has been included in the annual performance information published in the Board's Annual Report.

Use of snapshot surveys

1.19 The Best Value performance indicators include a number of measures relating to public satisfaction with and confidence in the PSNI. Performance against four of the 2004-05 standards has been measured using the Omnibus Survey.⁴ This survey gives results from a snapshot of views of the public and performance is measured twice a year, with the most recent results published in the Policing Board's Annual Report. While this survey is cheaper than a continuous survey and the results are available faster and more frequently, there is a

risk that the results of a snapshot survey could be distorted by one-off events that have a short-term effect on public confidence. For 2005-06, although the Board are planning to use a continuous survey, the Northern Ireland Crime Survey, to measure performance against one performance standard, they still intend to use the snapshot Omnibus survey to monitor performance against the remaining three relevant standards.

1.20 The performance information in the Annual Report has been taken from the October 2004 Omnibus Survey, although the results of the April 2005 Omnibus Survey were available before the Annual Report was prepared. The fieldwork for the April 2005 Omnibus Survey was carried out between 11 April and 13 May 2005, so it would have given information on levels of satisfaction at or just after the end of the period reported on, rather than half-way through the year. This would have allowed stakeholders to assess public satisfaction levels after the changes set out in the Best Value Performance Plan for 2004-05 had been implemented.

Recommendations

1.21 The Board should:

- ensure that the in-year performance information that it receives from the PSNI covers all performance standards in place for the year especially where new standards have been set; and
- consider whether it would be beneficial to have a continuous survey to measure public confidence levels instead of a snapshot survey which might reflect only the impact of events in the short term rather than the longer-term effectiveness of the Board and Service's actions and policies;
- consider the timing of any snapshot survey. If this is considered the best option. This year six month-old data was used while more recent data collected in April 2005 was available.

⁴ An omnibus survey is a sample survey which contains questions about a wide range of issues. The Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey is carried out on a regular basis and is designed to provide a snapshot of views of the people of Northern Ireland.

The Board's assessment of its own and the Chief Constable's performance in 2004-05 by reference to performance indicators is reasonable

Inclusion of performance information in the Policing Board's Annual Report

1.22 The Board's assessment of their own and the Chief Constable's performance against the Best Value performance indicators during the year 2004-05 has been published in their 2004-05 Annual Review and on their website.

1.23 However, the Policing Board has not included performance in the year by reference to performance indicator 6.1 ("The number of officers available for duty within district commands"). Performance information for the standard ("To fully implement the agreed Human Resource Planning Strategy within agreed timescales reporting every four months to the Board") linked to this indicator has been included, but this does not specifically address the information set out in the indicator. In addition, the performance information for target 4.1.1 does not cover all aspects set out in the standard. The standard is "to increase the number and quantity of seizures of illicit drugs in Northern Ireland". The performance reported only covers the number of seizures, not the quantity seized. I understand that this is because quantities of drugs seized can only be shown at a disaggregated level, as different drug types are measured in different ways.

1.24 No explanations are provided of why in some cases actual performance has varied from the standard set. These would provide useful additional information to the public. For example, as reported for target 2.1.4, the number of detections for dangerous and careless driving has substantially increased from 2003-04. However, this is partly due to an increase in the type of detections being classified as careless driving, which means that the figures for the two years are not directly comparable. This is stated in the annual performance summary provided to the Board by the PSNI, but not in the performance information published by the Board. Including narrative explanations of performance would also allow performance against a standard to be put in context and details could also be given of any initiatives that have been put in place relating to the standard.

1.25 A number of the performance standards are based on improving performance from 2003-04 levels, and performance information for 2003-04 has been disclosed to indicate whether the standard has been achieved. In the case of target 2.1.1 ("To increase the number of detections for excess speed"), the figure stated for 2003-04 does not agree to that published in the Board's 2003-04 Annual Report. The reason for this is that the figure has been revised to take into account detections under the fixed safety camera scheme, which was introduced on 1 July 2003. However, this has not been explained in the 2004-05 Annual Report, which could be confusing for the public.

Performance information on standards relating to long-term strategies

1.26 The Best Value Performance Plan for 2004-05 included a number of standards that related to the PSNI's implementation of long-term strategies, such as the Human Resources Planning Strategy; the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy; the Northern Ireland Community Safety Strategy; the Northern Ireland Drugs Strategy; the Overtime Reduction Strategy; and the Training, Education and Development Strategy.

1.27 The Policing Board has included performance information for these standards, but this focuses on whether or not the PSNI has met the requirements on reporting progress to the Policing Board rather than how successfully the strategies have been or are being implemented.

Recommendations

1.28 The Policing Board and Police Service should:

- comply with the requirements of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, by ensuring their performance information covers all of the indicators that applied during the year, as well as every aspect of each standard. If it is difficult to report performance for a particular standard (as reported in paragraph 1.23), the Board should consider revising the standard for future years to ensure that it reports performance in a meaningful way;
- where performance information in the Annual Report differs from that published elsewhere, the reason for the difference should be explained; and
- consider including narrative explanations of why performance is above or below the standard set to add context to the performance information provided.

PART TWO

Operation of the arrangements to secure Continuous Improvement

2.1 In this part of my report I have reviewed:

- the Role of the Policing Board and working with the Police Service (paragraphs 2.2 to 2.5);
- the selection of the Best Value review programme The Best Value Review Methodology (paragraphs 2.6 to 2.7); and
- progress against the 2004-05 Best Value Performance Plan (paragraphs 2.8 to 2.9).

The Role of the Policing Board and working with the Police Service

2.2 The Policing Board needs to work in close partnership with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) to achieve their shared objectives for economic, efficient and effective policing.

2.3 The Board has played a greater role in promoting and monitoring Best Value in 2004-05 at both the strategic and working levels than it did in 2003-04. For example, a Continuous Improvement Strategic Working Group has met throughout the year to advise both the Board and the PSNI in developing and implementing a continuous improvement environment within their respective organisations. Members of the group include representatives of the Board, the PSNI, HMIC, the NAO, the NIO, the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland and the Association of Police Authorities. The Board has appointed a Board Liaison Officer for each Best Value Review carried out by the PSNI. Within the PSNI, Best Value has been included within the performance-related pay criteria for the Chief Constable demonstrating senior management commitment to Best Value.

2.4 The Board is looking to enhance their challenge of BV performance still further. In the past, while the PSNI provided details of individual Best Value Reviews to the meetings of the Audit and Best Value Committee, these papers have been generally submitted after the Review has been completed. The Chairman of the Audit and Best Value Committee has commented that it would be easier for the Board to exercise its challenge function if it received more frequent updates throughout the whole period of a Best Value Review.

2.5 The NIPB and PSNI have now recognised that more needs to be done to ensure Best Value is effectively embedded within both organisations. For example, responsibility for monitoring progress against the Best Value Review Programme is to be passed in 2005-06 from the Board's Audit and Best Value Committee to its Finance and General Purposes Committee. The latter Committee will meet monthly which will facilitate the Board's oversight. I recommend the Board monitor the information it receives to ensure that it is able to monitor the Best Value process and its outcomes, and to exercise its challenge function effectively.

The selection of the Best Value review programme and the Best Value Review Methodology

2.6 As noted in paragraph 7, the PSNI have carried out key strategic change projects⁵ in addition to the Best Value programme. While this has resulted in Best Value often being directed to more internally-facing areas to date, this is set to change. The Best Value Review programme for 2005-06 is more strategic in nature and will look at a number of different aspects of patrolling.

⁵ These five projects cover: Human Resource Planning Strategy, Training and Education, Finance and Resource Management, Call Handling and Information and Computer Services.

2.7 PSNI has carried out a thorough review of its Best Value methodology in 2004-05. The revised methodology incorporates updated Home Office guidance and has been developed in consultation with the Continuous Improvement Strategic Working Group. It will ensure greater use of the “Four Cs” (Challenge, Consult, Compare and Compete) in a focused manner. The Policing Board has also adopted the revised methodology for use in its own Best Value Reviews.

Progress against the 2004-05 Best Value Performance Plan

2.8 In 2004-05, the PSNI completed the programme of six Best Value Reviews set out in its Best Value Performance Plan for that year. In addition, in response to my report on their 2004-05 Best Value Performance Plan, the Policing Board carried out their first Best Value Review of one of their own functions, the Police Administration Branch, which had not been included in the original plan. In conjunction with Her Majesty Inspector of Constabulary, I have carried out a detailed review of two of the PSNI’s Best Value Reviews from 2004-05. I have also reviewed the Policing Board’s own Best Value Review.

2.9 The Best Value methodology is based around the “Four Cs” of challenge, consult, compare and compete. My review focused on how well these criteria had been implemented, as well as how the reviews had been resourced and reported on. I found that while the Board and the PSNI had made significant progress since 2003-04 when the review programme was not completed there remain areas where further improvements can be made. My key findings were:

- in performing their internal reviews the PSNI seem to be weakest on the “Competition” criteria (one of the four key criteria against which functions and services should be examined). External service provision is generally dismissed fairly peremptorily at a very early stage of the review (Annex C); and
- review Teams can do more to engage all the interested parties in consultation. We were left with the impression that the Review Teams are still too isolated from the rest of the police force.

My findings and recommendations from this work are detailed at Annex C.

PART THREE

The PSNI IS strategy

Introduction

3.1 In addition to explicit 'Best value reviews', the Police Service have five strategic projects designed to deliver effectiveness, efficiency and economy within the organization. One of these deals with Information Systems (IS).

3.2 The development of first class information systems has been central to PSNI's response to Patten Commission Recommendation 93 which stated that:

"There should be an urgent, independent, and in-depth strategic review of the use of information technology (IT) in policing. It should benchmark the Northern Ireland police against police services in the rest of the world and devise a properly resourced strategy that places them at the forefront of law enforcement technology within 3 to 5 years".

3.3 PSNI's IS strategy for 2004-08 includes an array of individual projects categorised under five key functions (operational policing, policing support, organisation support, systems integration and infrastructure development) and details are provided at Annex D. In developing and implementing their strategy, PSNI have been subject to review by the Office of the Oversight Commissioner and have gained independent assurance from external reviews including by HMIC and, most recently, the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO).

3.4 Both the Board and PSNI indicated in their Policing Plan that these strategic initiatives were key to achieving efficiency, economy and effectiveness in their work. I reviewed aspects of the IS strategy to ensure that I had fully considered and appreciated the PSNI's other work to improve their service. In undertaking this review we worked with PITO while recognising our different perspectives. I therefore focussed my review on how the IT strategy implementation was being controlled and governed and have reviewed the work carried out by the other oversight review bodies. With a number of individual projects still at an early stage, a number of governance areas and controls could not be considered and I have therefore identified some areas which might be worth review in the future as projects progress. My key findings, conclusions and recommendations are given below.

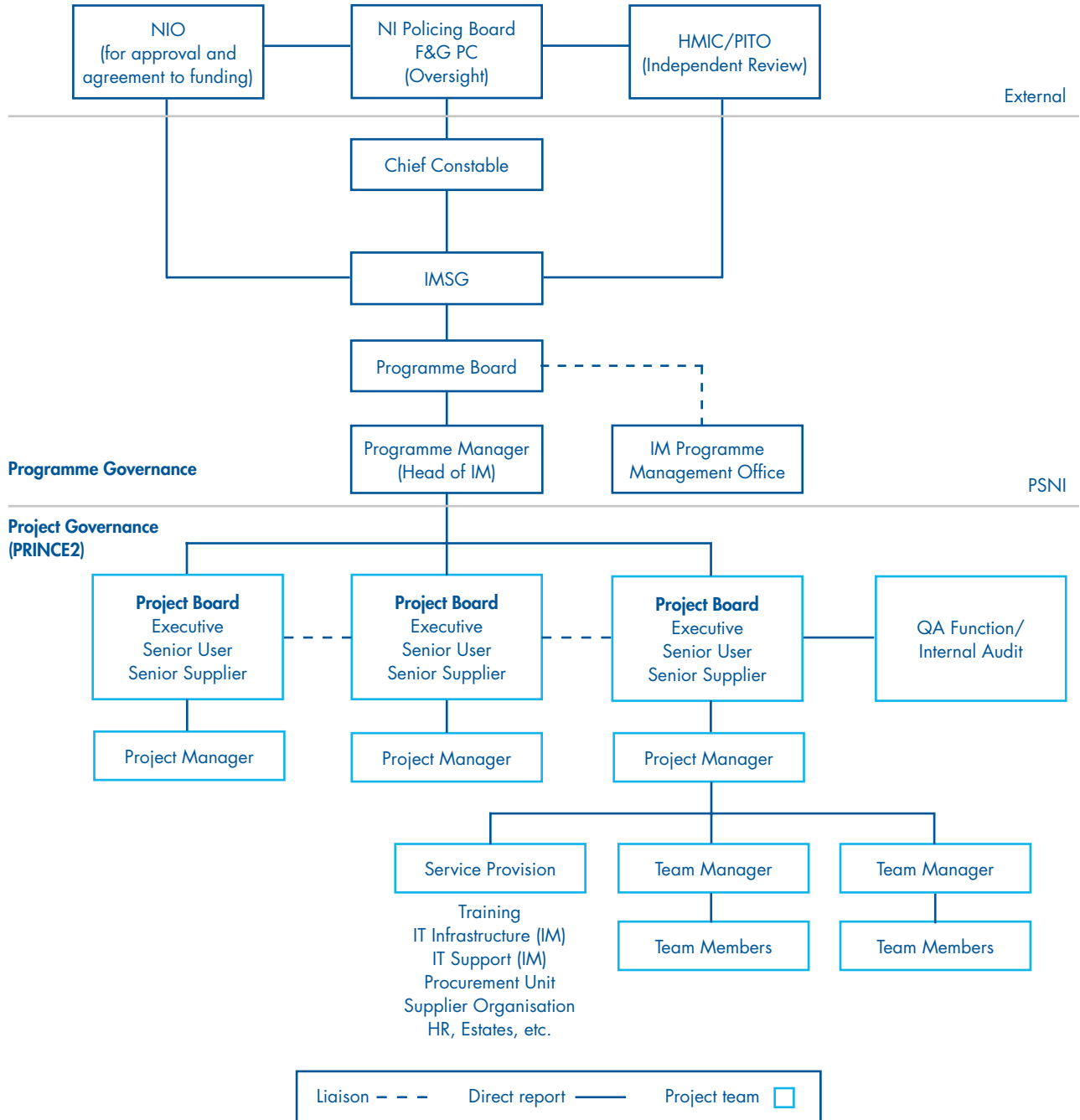
Key findings

Governance and sponsorship

3.5 The overall governance and reporting arrangements for the IS strategy and projects within it are shown in **Figure 3**.

3

Programme and project governance



Source: PSNI IS strategy

3.6 Leadership of the IS strategy implementation is provided by the Information Management (IM) Director with support from the IS strategy sponsor who is the Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) responsible for Operational Support. This leadership and commitment ensures that the IS strategy is given the right importance and profile and that sufficient support is provided to the Project managers.

3.7 An integral part of programme and project governance is ownership and accountability and two oversight groups exists to provide this for the IS strategy implementation. An overall Information Management Steering Group (IMSG) chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable meets twice a year where all the key business stakeholders are represented. The IMSG provides ongoing commitment and sponsorship and is the key decision making body engaging with the key business stakeholders. The regular monitoring of the IS strategy implementation is delegated to the Programme Board (PB) which meets every two months and is chaired by ACC (Operational Support) with senior project managers for the project streams. They also ensure that recommendations from previous IS strategy reviews are publicised within teams and that these are addressed through detailed action plans.

3.8 The regular reporting to the IMSG and PB consists of large amount of information about each project and its status against original timescales and budget. While this information is useful and provides detailed information on each individual project, PSNI acknowledge that the pack of meeting papers prepared and reported at these two governance groups is onerous and not fully effective. Exception reporting may prove to be more digestible and effective to members.

3.9 The effective identification, assessment and management of programme and project risks are essential components in the successful delivery of IT programmes and projects. PSNI has a well-defined process in place to administer these risks both at a strategic Programme level and at a project operational level.

Funding, approval and OGC input

3.10 The total cost of implementing the IS strategy is budgeted at £65m. PSNI have established procedures with the NIO for an approval process to ensure funding for key projects. PSNI forward business cases for each project to NIO for their review and approval but there has been some delay in approval of projects while further clarification has been sought. NIO have stipulated in approving projects that this is subject to a Gateway review being carried out.

3.11 Previous PITO reviews have followed OGC gateway methodology (PITO reviews however are equivalent to “Gate Zero”⁶ reviews) but these have not been formal OGC reviews or performed under their auspices. PSNI have not yet involved OGC to perform formal Gateway reviews but are considering whether and how formal Gateway reviews need to be carried out.

Business Benefits identification and realisation

3.12 As with any major IT programme business benefits need to be identified early and monitored after the constituent IT projects have gone live to assess whether the expected benefits have been realised. Some benefits have been identified by staff across the individual PSNI projects we reviewed. However PSNI have recognised that more can be done in this area and have initiatives to implement a more robust and formal “Benefits realisation” management process that will enable them to assess better how implementation of their IS strategy has delivered against their expectations.

Project Management skills, project control and documentation

3.13 Project Managers delivering the individual projects within the IS strategy need to be skilled adequately to ensure that the correct project methodology is applied and managed. There continues to be strong emphasis on project methodology training and external consultants are used extensively to fill skills gaps. An external training co-ordinator has recently been appointed to identify and deliver training to address any skill shortages to deliver the IT strategy.

⁶ “Gate Zero” is one of a series of Gateway reviews which review progress of IT projects from initial strategy to post-implementation. In their periodic reviews of PSNI strategy progress, PITO reviews are limited to Gate Zero which is designed to be re-performed at appropriate intervals.

3.14 Within the PSNI IS strategy Programme, all projects are run using a recognised project methodology which defines the stages when project documentation needs to be produced and the quality of these documents. These documents are used to control and manage the effective implementation of the various elements of the IS strategy. We saw some good examples of individual project documents such as project business cases. As individual projects progress towards the delivery phase, it will become vital to ensure the consistency, quality and adequacy of project documentation and this should be monitored effectively. PSNI have recognised that there is still some way to go to embed the quality aspect of project controls for documentation and is seeking to address this through further training of staff.

Programme and Project planning and monitoring

3.15 A detailed up-to-date programme plan incorporating individual project plans with costs, timescales, duration, milestones, baseline timings and dependencies exists for this significant and complex IS strategy implementation programme. In addition the individual projects are monitored against the financial budgets set at the outset by the finance team both within the Project Management Office and the finance department and by the relevant project managers. Individual projects are listed at Annex D.

3.16 Due to some delay in approval of some project funding and the associated risk that funds may not be available, detailed project plans had not been fully updated at the time of our review although this has now been done. Regular monitoring and revision should help to identify significant implementation issues.

Business Process Change Management

3.17 Large IT projects implementing new software normally mean that there will be an impact on the existing business processes. Business change management focuses on the challenges of changing people's behaviour, skills and methods of working to ensure that programme's goals and objectives are realised. These business changes need to be identified, planned for and implemented with the user community acquiring the new systems being delivered by PSNI.

3.18 The business process changes and analyses which are needed within PSNI do not yet follow a consistent and common methodology possible due to the varying skills available within PSNI to perform a full end to end business process change management. PSNI should address this by developing a corporate and comprehensive process change management strategy which should include end to end process documentation covering risks and controls within the process which will aid in user understanding and training.

Conclusions

3.19 The successful implementation of the IS strategy should assist PSNI in achieving their effectiveness, efficiency and economy objectives. I found that there was strong senior management support and sponsorship for the IS strategy. Recommendations made by previous reviewing bodies have been or are in the process of being implemented.

3.20 The implementation timescale of the strategy covering 2004-08 is extremely challenging and, together with the complexity of the programme, gives rise to a risk that projects might not be delivered on time or to an adequate standard to the ultimate users. Annex D shows the stage of completion of individual projects as at July 2005. It is essential that the ongoing momentum and commitment within the PSNI should be maintained and monitored to ensure that various projects are delivered to a quality standard and that any delays in project delivery are addressed and escalated appropriately. I have made a number of recommendations to facilitate this.

Recommendations

3.21 The Policing Board and Police Service should:

On governance

- the IS strategy timescales are extremely challenging and aggressive and PSNI should consider whether the IMMSG should meet more often than twice a year or consider engaging the members of the IMMSG more than twice a year;
- continue to rationalise the project reporting requirements for both IMMSG and PB to ensure that feedback provided to the IMMSG and the PB on project reporting is on an exception basis in order to make best use of people's times and priorities; and
- continue to identify, evaluate and monitor risks through out Project life cycles within the overall Programme and ensure that the risk management process is firmly embedded within PSNI as the IT strategy starts to deliver the new systems and processes.

On funding, approval and input from the Office of Government Commerce

- ensure that PSNI performs a risk and complexity assessment of all their projects and the overall Programme and commission formal OGC gateway reviews at the stages required by the OGC guidance. Such reviews should be carried out by OGC or other peer bodies;
- clarify with NIO the terms of the funding approval and confirm with NIO how to progress with the Gateway review requirement; and
- liaise with NIO and agree a timetable for when the funds for each of the projects will be approved and released to ensure that there are no delays in resourcing and implementing the projects within the overall IS strategy implementation Programme.

On business Benefits identification and realisation

- PSNI should adopt a consistent and common strategy to identify and monitor business benefits being delivered through the IS strategy implementation; and
- PSNI should plan how their projects will be assessed using "Gateway 5"⁷ which assesses whether the benefits of the project have been fully realised, lessons learned and value for money secured.

On project management skills

- a PSNI training strategy incorporating training needs and gaps needs to be clearly defined, implemented and monitored to ensure that a full set of skills within PSNI are available at the right time for the effective and timely implementation of the IS strategy; and
- where external consultants are used in the short term, skills transfer should be embedded within the external consultant specification including specific timescales when PSNI resources will take over the external consultants role and this should be monitored regularly.

On business process change management:

- PSNI should adopt a common and consistent standard for business process change. Business process change should also include documentation on the new business process, risks within the business processes and associated impact. PSNI should also consider how associated controls will be embedded within new business processes to mitigate these risks.

And more widely

- PSNI should consider the role of an independent assurance function integrated within the individual programme and projects as part of its governance arrangement. This assurance function would provide regular progress reports to the PB and IMMSG that the project governance framework is designed and operating as required and perform assurance related work as required to cover any risks to the IS strategy implementation;
- although it is early in the programme timeline, PSNI should consider planning and eventually executing post implementation reviews of the completed projects to ensure lessons are learnt early on and best practice is shared with the remaining projects;
- once the systems are delivered and operational, PSNI should measure system performance against established performance indicators or commission external benchmarking against similar systems; and
- PSNI should consider knowledge management and how this is currently managed to provide effective storage and retrieval of information.

⁷ OGC Gateway Review 5 focuses on ensuring that the project delivers the benefits and value for money identified in the business case and benefits plans.

ANNEX A

The statutory requirement for Continuous Improvement (Best Value) Performance Plans

1 Under the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 section 28 the Northern Ireland Policing Board (Policing Board) is required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which their functions and those of the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) are exercised, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

2 The Performance Plan prepared under section 28 for the financial year beginning 1 April 2005 should:

- detail how the Policing Board have made arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which their functions, and those of the Chief Constable, are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- identify factors (performance indicators) by reference to which performance in exercising functions can be measured;
- set standards (performance targets) to be met in the exercise of particular functions in relation to performance indicators;
- contain the Board's assessment of their own and the Chief Constable's performance in the year by reference to performance indicators; and
- contain explanations of the extent to which any performance standard that applied at any time during the year, was not met.

3 The Board's Best Value Performance Plan was published as part of their three year Policing Plan for 2005-08 on 1 March 2005. The Board's assessment of their own and the Chief Constable's performance in 2004-05 by reference to performance indicators was included in the Board's Annual Review and on their website.

Respective responsibilities of the Policing Board and the Comptroller and Auditor General

4 The Policing Board is responsible for preparing their Performance Plan and Annual Report, for the information and the assessments that are set out within them and the assumptions and estimates on which they are based. It is also responsible for ensuring that the PSNI have in place appropriate performance management and internal control systems, from which the information and assessments in the Best Value Performance Plan are derived. In practice the Policing Board works in partnership with the PSNI as part of their continuous improvement framework to enable the Police Service to identify action and review all aspects of their service.

5 The Comptroller and Auditor General's responsibilities are to:

- certify and report on whether the Policing Board has complied with statutory requirements in respect of the preparation and publication of its Performance Plan. In particular whether the Plan states how continuous improvement is going to be achieved, whether it contains performance indicators and standards and whether there is a summary of the Policing Board's assessment of their performance and that of the Chief Constable for the previous year;
- state whether the performance indicators and performance standards are reasonable, and, if appropriate, recommend changes to them;
- review and report on the working of the arrangements to secure continuous arrangements; and
- recommend to the Secretary of State whether to give a direction under Section 31 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requiring the Policing Board to take corrective action to ensure compliance with the Act.

Basis and scope of the Comptroller and Auditor General's audit

6 The Comptroller and Auditor General is required to issue a report to the Policing Board, the Chief Constable of the PSNI and the Secretary of State on the annual Performance Plan under Section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. The purpose of this report is to inform Parliament, Members of the Policing Board and the Chief Constable of the key issues arising from the audit of the Best Value Performance Plan and related performance information in the Annual Report, and to make recommendations as required.

7 To fulfil my statutory responsibilities outlined above I have:

- reviewed the Best Value Performance Plan to confirm compliance with legislative and statutory guidance;
- assessed whether the stated performance indicators and standards are reasonable;
- discussed with senior management of both the Policing Board and the PSNI their plans for 2005-06;
- liaised with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Police Information Technology Organisation; and
- reviewed the systems in place to produce the required performance information.

Consultation with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)

8 In England and Wales the role of HMIC in inspecting police forces and reporting on the achievement of Best Value is laid down in statute and the responsibility for reviewing and auditing Best Value is shared with the Audit Commission. Under section 25 of the Local Government Act 1999, there is a statutory requirement for auditors to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State for the purposes of securing the coordination of different kinds of inspection, inquiry and investigation. Inspectorate reports are public documents and in every case a copy will be forwarded to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Police Authority and the Chief Constable or Commissioner of the Force concerned.

9 In Northern Ireland HMIC do not have a similar statutory responsibility but instead carry out an annual inspection of the Police Service for Northern Ireland by invitation. This inspection is an examination of those areas of policing organisation and practice judged to be central to the efficient and effective discharge of the policing function. The Police (Northern Ireland) Act also allows HMIC to perform reviews of Best Value projects by direction of the Secretary of State. HMIC were invited to carry out a Best Value Inspection of the PSNI in May 2005. I have worked closely with HMIC both during the inspection visit and throughout the audit of the Best Value Performance Plan. In common with practice in England and Wales, I have incorporated the findings of the inspection into my report. Their full report can be found at www.hmic.org.uk. In addition, the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 gives me the authority to perform my own reviews of Best Value projects, and I have carried out my own review of the Policing Board's Best Value Review of the Police Administration Branch. However, for the Best Value Reviews carried out by the PSNI, I have proceeded thus far on the basis of collaboration with HMIC. This has the following advantages:

- those involved in developing and promoting Best Value work can take advantage of the knowledge base that HMIC have from their work in England and Wales and from their force inspections of the PSNI;
- reviews benefit from the operational experience of HMIC; and
- HMIC can assist with my assessment of the reasonableness of the performance indicators and standards adopted by the Policing Board.

ANNEX B

Auditor's certificate and opinion to the Houses of Parliament on the Northern Ireland Policing Board Best Value Performance

As reported in the Northern Ireland Policing Board and Police Service of Northern Ireland Policing Plan for 2005-08⁸ and relevant sections on their performance on Best Value reported in their 2004-05 Annual Review and on their website.

Certificate

In accordance with Section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 as amended, I certify that I have audited:

- the Policing Board and Police Service of Northern Ireland's Best Value Performance Plan for the year ended 31 March 2006;
- the performance of the Police Service of Northern Ireland for the year 2004-05 against the performance indicators and standards in the Best Value Performance Plan.

Opinion

Basis of this opinion

Audit of the Best Value Performance Plan

I planned and performed my work so as to obtain all the information and explanations which I considered necessary in order to provide an opinion on whether:

- the plan has been prepared and published in accordance with statutory requirements;
- arrangements have been made to secure continuous improvement in the way that the Police Board's functions, and those of the Chief Constable, are exercised; and
- the performance indicators and standards are reasonable.

In giving my opinion I am not required to form a view on the achievability of the forward looking Best Value Performance Plan published by the Northern Ireland Policing Board. My work comprised a review and assessment of the plan and where appropriate, examination, on a test basis, of relevant evidence sufficient to satisfy me that arrangements to secure continuous improvements are in place, that the plan includes those matters prescribed in legislation and that the arrangements for publishing the plan complied with those requirements.

I am required, under Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 section 29, to give an opinion on whether the performance indicators and performance standards are reasonable. The Northern Ireland Policing Board and Police Service of Northern Ireland are not required to follow the statutory indicators set for Police Authorities in England and Wales on an annual basis by the Home Office. However, in arriving at my assessment I have kept the requirements placed on other police forces in mind and discussed their relevance with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of the Constabulary.

Where I have qualified my audit opinion on the plan I am required to recommend how the plan should be amended so as to comply in all significant respects with the legislation.

⁸ The Northern Ireland Policing Board and Police Service of Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2005-08.

Audit of the performance indicator information for the year 2004-05

I planned and performed my work so as to obtain all the information and explanations which I considered necessary in order to provide an opinion on whether the Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published an assessment of their own and the Police Service's performance in the year measured by reference to performance indicators and standards.

My work comprised a review and assessment, and where appropriate, examination on a test basis of the evidence supporting performance against the indicators as prescribed in the prior year's Best Value Performance Plan. I obtained sufficient evidence to satisfy me that the plan provided includes those matters required by statute, that the performance information is accurate and the systems that generated the information are sufficiently well controlled so as to mitigate significant risks to data reliability.

Opinion

In my opinion,

- the Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published its Best Value Performance Plan in all significant respects in accordance with the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.
- the performance indicators and standards included in the Best Value Performance Plan for the year ended 31 March 2006 are reasonable.
- the Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published its and the PSNI's performance in year by reference to performance indicators in accordance with Section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 as amended by Section 9 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2003. The Northern Ireland Policing Board publishes this information within its Annual Report.
- the performance information against performance indicators and standards, contained within the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Annual Report is an accurate assessment of the Northern Ireland Policing Board's and PSNI's performance.

Recommendations to the Secretary of State

Under section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 I am required to recommend whether the Secretary of State issue a direction under section 31.

On the basis of my work:

- I do not recommend that the Secretary of State issues a direction under section 31 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.

John Bourn
6 January 2006

National Audit Office
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ANNEX C

Findings from review of Best Value Reviews

- Application of the National Intelligence Model within Road Policing; and
- Transport Services.

Key Findings

One of the Best Value Reviews, the Roads Policing Review, was not sufficiently well-resourced or given enough time in order to produce a well-balanced, considered report. This resulted in its recommendations not being well-supported and not having the support of the staff in the relevant operational areas. This will make it difficult to implement the recommendations.

The PSNI have taken steps to strengthen the challenge functions for individual Best Value Reviews in 2004-05. For example, a Policing Board Liaison Officer is appointed for each PSNI Review. However, the degree of involvement of the Liaison Officer has not been consistent across all reviews, and it would be useful to clarify this by means of written Terms of Reference.

There are other aspects of the challenge function that could also be strengthened. For instance, the PSNI have not yet made use of “critical friends” from other police services or police authorities, who could provide a useful external challenge.
(Challenge)

I found that the PSNI had attempted to consult both internally and externally as part of their Best Value reviews. For example, questionnaires were sent to external organisations that were believed to have an interest in the subject under review. Internally, staff associations were sent copies of Terms of Reference and questionnaires were sent to colleagues.

However, there remain some ways in which consultation could be improved. Internally, questionnaires were not always sent to all of those who wished to contribute. For example, a number of police officers and information officers within the central Roads Policing Branch were not consulted on the Best Value Review on Roads Policing.

Recommendations

All Best Value reviews should be adequately resourced and should be given sufficient time to ensure that a thorough review can be carried out.

The challenge function for individual Best Value Reviews could be strengthened by agreeing written Terms of Reference for Liaison Officers.

Consideration should be given to engaging a “critical friend” from another police service or police authority to provide an appropriate external challenge function.

Questionnaires that are sent out internally should be accompanied by a covering letter from the Chief Constable to demonstrate the importance that senior management gives to Best Value. This may encourage a higher response rate. The review team should ensure that all staff who may wish to contribute are given the opportunity to do so.

For external consultation, it may be useful to have contingency plans in place to address poor response rates for questionnaires.

Key Findings continued

The response rate for both internal and external questionnaires was low for some reviews, and there was no evidence of contingency plans, such as the use of focus groups, to address this and ensure that effective consultation had taken place. I understand that focus groups have already been arranged for the Patrolling Review in 2005-06 to resolve this.

(Consultation)

A key element of the Best Value methodology is comparison with other service providers, both other police services and non-police organisations. I found that the comparison function was not being exercised consistently across all Best Value Reviews. For example, in some cases, comparison was poorly focused and questionnaires were sent to all other UK police services. A more effective and productive approach might be to concentrate on a smaller number of services who have been identified as being high performers.

(Comparison)

Service delivery by non-police providers was dismissed at an early stage of the review. It is important that external service provision is thoroughly considered as an option.

(Competition)

Each report contains an implementation plan setting out how its recommendations are to be implemented. However, the plans submitted to the Board were inconsistent in their content and presentation. For example, some did not include details of the person responsible for implementing each recommendation, or the date by which recommendation was to be implemented. Whilst I have been informed by the ACC for Operational Support and Change Management that he is ultimately responsible for the delivery of all Best Value implementation plans, the lack of consistent information makes it more difficult for him and the Board to monitor performance against the plan and to hold people to account for non-implementation.

Best Value reports do not always set out how their implementation is expected to improve performance against Best Value targets or how targets are to be increased following the review.

Recommendations continued

Comparison could be focused on a smaller number of the most relevant examples, rather than attempting to compare across all police services in the UK. The external "critical friends" and HMIC may be of use in this regard.

Service delivery by non-police providers should be thoroughly considered as an option as part of each Best Value Review. Where it is rejected as a viable option, the reasons for this should be clearly documented within the Best Value Review.

Each report should include a standard implementation plan before it is presented to the Board. This should include details of accountable officers and implementation dates.

Each report should include details of how performance against targets is planned to improve as a result of its implementation. Consideration should be given to raising targets in relevant areas following a Best Value Review.

- Based on review of Best Value Review of Police Administration Branch.

Key Findings *continued*

Senior management's ability to exercise its challenge function at an early stage was undermined by only being involved in the later parts of the project.
(Challenge)

Samples were used as the basis of external consultation. However there was a lack of evidence that adequate consideration had been given as to whether the sample used was sufficiently representative of the population.
(Consultation)

Service delivery by non-police providers was dismissed at an early stage of the review. It is important that external service provision is thoroughly considered as an option.
(Competition)

The Review made no comparison to another police service or authority or otherwise document why this was not relevant.
(Comparison)

Although the Review included statistics and information relating to two non-police organisations, no direct comparisons were made with the service delivered by the Board.
(Comparison)

Recommendations *continued*

Senior management within the Board should ensure that they are sufficiently engaged with individual Best Value reviews at all stages to provide a robust challenge function.

It may be useful to consult colleagues in the Statistical Branch to ensure that any samples used are sufficiently representative.

Service delivery by non-police providers should be thoroughly considered as an option as part of each Best Value Review. Where it is rejected as a viable option, the reasons for this should be clearly documented within the Best Value Review.

All Best Value Reviews should include a comparison with at least one other police service or police authority or explicitly state why this is not applicable.

All Best Value Reviews should make it clear which elements of the process are being compared.

ANNEX D

Projects identified within the PSNI IS strategy

The projects have been classified into five broad categories which will be managed as 'portfolios of projects' at IMSC level. The five categories (or portfolios) are as follows:

- Operational Policing;
- Policing Support;
- Organisational Support;
- System Integration; and
- Infrastructure Development.

A summary of each of the projects within these categories is contained in Table below, and a fuller description of each individual project exists within IS strategy documentation.

Project Portfolio

Category	Key characteristics	Projects	Initial go live date as per IS strategy dated 31 December 2004	Target implementation date as per project plan as at July 2005	% stage reached as per project plan July 05
Operational Policing	Have a direct impact on core policing activities. Change in some manner the way in which operational police officers work in the field. Focused on delivering applications that will be useful to operational officers in terms of efficiency, and/or effectiveness.	Mobile data	16.01.09	26.11.08	9
		IIB Case Management (project on hold)	07.07.05	11.04.05	48
		Enterprise Solution covering:	27.06.08	30.04.08	31
		Case Preparation and Custody, Warrants and Searches, Property Management, Crime, Intelligence, Occurrence, Management, Tasking/ Workflow, MIS			
Policing Support	Have an indirect impact on core policing activities. Support the way in which officers operate in the field without having a direct impact on core policing activities.	Call Handling Pilot	09.04.07	20.02.08	28
		VIPER	14.06.05	30.11.06	66
		Visor	30.06.06	03.08.05	58
		Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)	10.11.05	04.01.06	69
		Fixed Penalty Processing Centre	30.03.05	29.06.05	100
		Livescan (Fingerprints)	08.11.05	30.06.06	57
		Schengen (National Delay Factor)	24.01.05	19.01.06	17
		Facial Recognition	30.01.07	29.01.07	0

Category	Key characteristics	Projects	Initial go live date as per IS strategy dated 31 December 2004	Target implementation date as per project plan as at July 2005	% stage reached as per project plan July 05
		Firearms Licensing	07.10.04	30.06.05	99
		Electronic Problem Solving Folders	19.04.04	19.04.04	100
		Duty Brief	17.06.04	17.06.04	100
		PAC Brief	09.07.04	09.07.04	100
		Small Scale Projects	24.02.06	29.04.05	100
Organisation Support	Support administrative or 'back office' functions. Focused on achieving organisational efficiency.	Financial Systems	26.03.07	07.02.06	66
		Payroll	23.03.06	31.10.06	42
		Activity Based Costing	30.09.04	30.09.04	100
		HR System upgrade and enhancements	02.12.04 30.03.07	05.12.05	74
		EDRNS/Workflow	24.03.06	04.12.06	26
		E-learning/CBT (project on hold)	23.11.05	25.05.05	0
		Technology Support for New Police College	28.04.08	25.04.08	39
		DPP Question & Answer System	12.03.04	12.03.04	100
Systems Integration	Meet the requirements for information technology under Patten. Will help the PSNI move towards better integrated systems. Reduce the costs associated with existing systems provision.	EAI Platform	02.12.04	13.06.05	100
		System Integration Development	09.12.08	31.03.08	29
		Gazetteer/GIS	16.12.04	14.03.05	35
		Corporate Data Model	08.02.05	13.12.05	66
		Data Warehouse	15.03.07	29.08.07	0
Infrastructure Development	Provide a more technically robust advanced systems architecture. Not directly related to any particular process or application.	Common Terminal Roll-out	30.09.04	30.09.04	100
		Business Continuity	02.11.06	11.06.07	0
		Service Desk Restructuring	06.12.05	16.10.06	13
		Managed Services Restructuring	10.09.08	19.02.10	0
		Network Restructuring	31.05.07	29.05.07	0
		Access Control	15.05.08	14.05.08	0

