



National Audit Office

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

Continuous improvement arrangements

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Design and Production by
NAO Marketing & Communications Team
DP Ref: 009032

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LONDON: The Stationery Office
£7.95

Ordered by the
House of Commons
to be printed on 3 June 2009

This report has been prepared under Section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 for presentation to each House of Parliament in accordance with Section 30 of the Act.

Tim Burr
Comptroller and Auditor General
National Audit Office

29 May 2009

This report can be found on the National Audit Office web site at www.nao.org.uk

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SUMMARY

Background

1 The Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Policing Board) was set up on 4 November 2001 by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, which was designed to put the recommendations of the Patten Report on policing into practice. At the same time the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) came into being, replacing the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

2 Section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires the Policing 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. The Policing Board shall

prepare and publish a performance plan for each financial year detailing how the continuous improvement arrangements are to be implemented. It shall also prepare and publish a performance summary.

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

3 The Comptroller and Auditor General is required to audit the performance plan and performance summary under Section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 and 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 for Northern Ireland.

4 I have also reviewed the arrangements in place to secure continuous improvement under Section 30 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.

5 This is my sixth report. The findings from my work are set out in detail in the following parts of my report:

- Part 1: The performance plan for 2008-09 and the performance summary for 2007-08; and
- Part 2: Continuous improvement arrangements.

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

Main findings of my review

6 On the performance plan 2008-09 and the performance summary for 2007-08:

- The Policing Board have prepared and published a performance plan and a performance summary in accordance with the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. My audit opinion is given at Annex B.
- The 30 performance targets for 2008-09 outlined in the performance plan are reasonable and have clear deadlines for achievement. However, 16 of the targets do not set a clear volume or percentage for improvement.
- Four performance targets have been dropped compared with the 2007-08 performance plan, but no information is provided as to the reasons why. A narrative explanation in the plan would be useful to readers, so they can follow from one year to the next why targets are changed.
- The Policing Board's assessment of its own and the Chief Constable's performance in 2007-08 is reasonable and includes clear detail on the outturn against each target. However, 11 targets are reported as not achieved, with no narrative to explain the reasons why.

7 On the continuous improvement arrangements:

- The Policing Board and the PSNI have decided not to continue with the Best Value methodology in support of their continuous improvement arrangements. Whilst the Policing Board and the PSNI have committed to explore potential tools and approaches used by other Police Services and to develop their own approach, there is no timeline in the 2008-09 performance plan as to when the new approach will be in place. In my view the new approach should be in place for 2009-10.

- The two Best Value reviews scheduled for 2007-08 were completed as planned, and have delivered recommendations for improvement.
- The Policing Board completed Post Implementation Reviews on three of the four individual Best Value reviews from 2005-06 and 2006-07. This exercise has highlighted that whilst implemented recommendations have delivered improvements there were 94 (48 per cent) of the 194 Best Value recommendations not implemented as at March 2008.
- The PSNI have developed a database which is intended to help track the progress towards the implementation of recommendations for improvement from external oversight bodies, including the Best Value recommendations.

Recommendations

- The Policing Board could further improve the information provided with the performance indicators and targets.
- The Policing Board and PSNI should ensure that where new systems are introduced the availability of timely and complete data for monitoring progress against targets in the performance plan is assured.
- The Policing Board should provide an explanation in their Annual Report, for each target not achieved, as to why it has not been achieved.
- The working group which advises on continuous improvement should meet at least three times a year.
- Lessons drawn from the Best Value post implementation reviews should be fed into the new methodology adopted for continuous improvement.
- The Policing Board needs to adopt a new approach to continuous improvement for PSNI for 2009-10, including reviews of the way in which functions are exercised, as required by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act.
- The Policing Board needs to formally adopt a methodology to secure continuous improvement in its own functions as required by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act.
- To support continuous improvement, the overview database will need to demonstrate satisfactory and timely clearance of recommendations, and to evidence reductions in the numbers of uncleared recommendations.

PART ONE

The performance plan for 2008-09 and the performance summary for 2007-08

Introduction

1.1 In this part I report whether:

- the performance plan published in the Policing Plan for 2008-11 meets the Policing Board's statutory obligations (paragraphs 1.2 to 1.4);
- the proposed performance indicators and standards are reasonable (paragraphs 1.5 to 1.10);
- the systems in place to produce performance information in support of the performance indicators and standards are appropriate (paragraphs 1.11 to 1.16); and
- the performance summary published in the Policing Board's annual report for 2007-08 meets the Policing Board's statutory obligations (paragraphs 1.17 to 1.21).

The performance plan

1.2 The Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published a continuous improvement performance plan for 2008-09 within the 2008-11 Policing Plan.¹

1.3 The performance plan includes a planned approach to continuous improvement by the PSNI and the Policing Board (Part Five), and includes performance indicators and targets (Part Two).

1.4 The performance plan has therefore been prepared and published in accordance with the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. My audit opinion is given at Annex B.

The proposed performance indicators and standards

1.5 The Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires that the Policing Board identifies performance indicators and targets in its performance plan to measure the performance of existing functions of the Policing Board and the PSNI. Part Two of the three-year Policing Plan for 2008-11 includes a number of performance indicators and targets that have been determined by the Policing Board following consultation with the Chief Constable, District Policing Partnerships and the public.

1.6 The 2007-08 performance plan set 28 targets. The number has increased to 30 for the 2008-09 plan. This net increase reflects six new targets with four being dropped. As in previous years, the reasons for discarding targets is not mentioned in the Policing Plan. The Policing Board explained that performance targets may be dropped if there has been a significant improvement, or where the target has lost relevance or demand. For example, the Emergency Call response time target (1.3.1 from 2007-08) is not included in the 2008-09 plan, as it was considered labour intensive to measure and is planned to be replaced with an equivalent target based on National Call Handling Standards. This information could have usefully been supplied within the plan, allowing the reader to understand that the target is being changed.

1.7 I have assessed whether each target is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time related. I found that the targets had been well expressed against four of the five criteria. Detailed findings from my review of individual standards and indicators are set out at Annex D.

¹ The Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2008-11 published in March 2008.

1.8 The wording of some targets could be improved to make them more specific. For 2008-09, there are 16 targets which are not specific. Two examples are:

- Target 2.1.1 relates to increasing the percentage of people who are confident in the police's ability to provide an ordinary, day-to-day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland. The level of the expected increase has not been set in percentage or numerical terms, though last year a specific target of four percentage points was set (and achieved).
- Target 3.2.1 is to reduce the level of violent crime. No level of reduction is set, though last year a specific target of two per cent was set (and achieved).

Recommendations

1.9 The Policing Board could further improve the performance indicators and targets used for future years as follows:

- Where a performance indicator or target from the previous year is not repeated in the current performance plan, the reason for its removal should be explained.
- All targets set should be specific. Where the Policing Board considers it inappropriate to make a target specific, a brief explanation should be provided.

1.10 The recommendations above are similar to those I made in my fourth and fifth reports. I have been informed that the 2009-12 Policing Plan addresses these points, which I will review in my next annual report.

Systems to produce performance information in support of the performance indicators and standards

1.11 Performance information comes from data systems, the results of the Northern Ireland Omnibus survey and a victims' survey. The data drawn from the PSNI's crime recording systems is validated by the PSNI's Central Statistics Unit (CSU) who follow Home Office guidelines. The data drawn from other PSNI business systems is reviewed by CSU for month to month consistency. I have reviewed the system of validation checks (which includes the six new targets for 2008-09), and consider them to be appropriate.

1.12 The PSNI introduced a new crime recording system called NICHE, which replaced the integrated crime information system (ICIS) from April 2007. The reason for the introduction of NICHE was linked to compatibility with the wider Causeway infrastructure to allow the transfer of information between the various policing and justice bodies in Northern Ireland. NICHE is an off-the-shelf package, which is also used by some of the police services in England and Wales. I have reviewed the new system to assess whether it is suitable for securing relevant data to underpin the crime and road safety targets. My review found that the information flow into NICHE, from individually completed crime recording forms, is sufficient to support the measurement of the targets.

1.13 There were delays to the production of the quarterly crime targets and the whole year's road safety targets to the Policing Board following the introduction of NICHE. This delay was caused by some problems in getting timely completion of the new crime and road traffic collision reporting forms and their entry into the NICHE system which, in turn, created a backlog of month by month data entry and validation. I will review whether the situation improved during 2008-09 in my next report.

1.14 The Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey is undertaken by NISRA (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency), which is independent of the Policing Board and PSNI. NISRA follows the National Statistics Code of Practice. The survey is conducted twice a year, in April and October. The Policing Board's use of statistics provided by the Omnibus Survey informs the results against the indicator for the percentage of people who are confident in the police's ability to provide a day-to-day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland. Its use is considered appropriate for this purpose.

1.15 The victims' survey is conducted by the PSNI's central statistics unit incorporating core questions recommended by the Home Office. The survey is by postal questionnaire to a random sample of victims of violent crime, vehicle crime, domestic burglary, racist incidents and road traffic collisions. The results of the survey will inform the performance against target 2.1.2.

Recommendation

1.16 The Policing Board and PSNI should ensure that where new systems are introduced the availability of timely and complete data for monitoring progress against targets in the performance plan is assured.

The Policing Board's assessment of its own and the Chief Constable's performance in 2007-08 by reference to performance indicators

1.17 The Policing Board's assessment of its own performance and the Chief Constable's performance has been published in its 2007-08 Annual Report.²

1.18 The Policing Board has included performance information against all the targets for 2007-08 set out in part two of the 2007-10 Policing Plan. The results for the 28 performance targets are summarised in the following table:

Achieved	Not Achieved	Total
17	11	28

1.19 In 2007-08, the PSNI continued to report its performance against the quantifiable performance standards quarterly to the public session of the Policing Board. This reporting is supported by a presentation by the Chief Constable to the Policing Board each month on performance against key targets. He also answers questions raised on the performance information by the Policing Board members and on other PSNI issues of current interest. In addition, at the monthly Policing Board meetings, a written report is submitted by the PSNI setting out its current performance against each of the targets in the Performance Plan.

1.20 The picture presented by the Policing Board in the Annual Report could be enhanced. Where targets have not been achieved, there are no explanations in the Annual Report for the reasons for failure and any remedial actions planned.

Recommendation

1.21 The Policing Board should provide an explanation in their Annual Report, for each target not achieved, as to why it has not been achieved.

² NIPB Annual Report and Accounts (published July 2008) pages 35 to 40 give the results of the Policing Board's own performance and pages 69 to 71 detail the PSNI's performance against the Policing Plan targets.

PART TWO

Operation of the arrangements to secure Continuous Improvement

Introduction

2.1 In this part of my report I have reviewed:

- the Role of the Policing Board and its work with the Police Service (paragraphs 2.2 to 2.7);
- the 2007-08 Best Value reviews (paragraphs 2.8 to 2.13);
- the 2007-08 Post Implementation Reviews (paragraphs 2.14 to 2.21); and
- developments in Continuous Improvement (paragraphs 2.22 to 2.35).

The Role of the Policing Board and its work with the Police Service

2.2 The Policing Board works in partnership with the PSNI to achieve their shared objectives for economic, efficient and effective policing.

2.3 The Policing Board meets on a monthly basis with the Chief Constable and also at a quarterly public forum. This provides the opportunity for members to put questions and for topical issues to be discussed. Emphasis is also placed on reviewing progress against the Policing Plan targets at these meetings.

2.4 The Policing Board's Resources and Improvement Committee has oversight of the continuous improvement responsibility. The Committee is constituted from Policing Board Members. It receives reports on the progress of recommendations made by the various oversight bodies of the PSNI and under Best Value and challenges the progress towards implementation. It receives regular updates on the core PSNI strategies in line with the 'Plan for Delivering Policing Services and Continuous Improvement' noted in

Part 3 of the Policing Plan. It also receives updates on the in-year Best Value reviews and monitors their progress. Officials from the Policing Board and officers from the PSNI attend meetings of the Committee.

2.5 A Continuous Improvement Strategic Working Group (CISWG), organised and chaired by the Policing Board, advises both the Policing Board and the PSNI in developing and implementing a continuous improvement environment within their respective organisations. Members of the working group include officials representing the Policing Board, the PSNI, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, the National Audit Office, the Northern Ireland Office, the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland and the Association of Police Authorities. The CISWG only met twice during the year under review.

2.6 To be effective the CISWG needs to meet regularly to facilitate feedback on progress, with the various reviews and inspections in progress together with targeting and coordination of future activities.

Recommendation

2.7 The CISWG should meet at least three times a year.

The 2007-08 Best Value reviews

2.8 The two 2007-08 Best Value reviews scheduled in the 2007-10 Policing Plan were the Protecting Vulnerable People review and the Community Engagement review. Both were completed as planned.

2.9 The Policing Board's Annual Report records the completion of both the reviews and refers the reader to the reviews and the recommendations on the PSNI and Policing Board websites.

2.10 In conjunction with Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, I have carried out a review of the Protecting Vulnerable People Review conducted by the PSNI. I have also reviewed the Policing Board's own Community Engagement Review.

2.11 The Best Value methodology is based around the 'Four Cs' of challenge, consult, compare and compete. My reviews focused on how well these criteria had been followed, as well as how the reviews had been resourced and reported on.

2.12 I found that the Policing Board and the Police Service have delivered the Best Value reviews in accordance with the Best Value methodology. However, I have noted some areas in which the Protecting Vulnerable People review might have been strengthened.

2.13 I have the following specific observations and recommendations arising from the two reviews:

PSNI Review: Protecting Vulnerable People

- The Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) review aimed to make recommendations geared towards improving the efficiency and effectiveness of how the PSNI protects vulnerable people. The review included Children, Missing Persons, Victims of Sexual Offences, Victims of Domestic Abuse, and Older People within its definition of vulnerable people.
- The Best Value review resulted in 19 agreed recommendations which should deliver improvements, if implemented successfully.
- The Best Value review was conducted at the same time as an internal PSNI review covering similar ground, which resulted in some duplication of effort during the review, and diluted the Best Value review team's ability to fully engage the challenge and consult elements of the Best Value methodology.
- The challenge element could also have been strengthened by bringing an independent PVP expert to increase the skills available to the review team.
- Several recommendations related to the implementation of a dedicated Public Protection Unit (PPU) within each of the PSNI's eight District Command Units (DCU). Recognising that the PPUs are newly formed and that the DCUs have also been

recently restructured I recommend that a review of the PPUs be conducted, after a reasonable period of operation, to ensure that they are operating as intended and to the standards required.

- HMIC has reported separately on its inspection, noting a lack of a gap analysis assessing the risks facing the PVP function and lack of clear comparison with PVP in other police services. HMIC has therefore agreed to undertake an assessment of the protecting vulnerable people framework along the lines of the detailed themed approach it has used in England & Wales. This review is planned to take place after allowing time for the PPU structure and associated policies and procedures to be embedded along with implementation of recommendations from the Best Value review.

Northern Ireland Policing Board Review: Community Engagement

- The review aimed to assess how the Board's legislative obligations, functions and processes relating to Community Engagement are currently fulfilled. It included consideration of the Board's 'Discharge of its statutory Community Engagement duties, Promoting of public confidence, Community Engagement Strategy'; and identification of key stakeholders within the community, their needs and how these needs are communicated, considered and integrated within the wider Policing Agenda.
- The Best Value review resulted in 12 recommendations, which form part of a performance improvement plan. Eight of the recommendations had both an agreed implementation time frame and responsible official. The remaining four recommendations covered policy and were therefore to be considered further by the Board's Community Engagement Committee.
- My review found that the Best Value review included a useful comparison with other police services and also included public consultation. The recommendations looked at ways the Board could increase their engagement and take the lead more often, and when implemented should achieve improvements.

The 2007-08 Post Implementation Reviews

2.14 Post implementation reviews are part of the Best Value methodology and comprise a formal assessment of the progress in implementing Best Value recommendations and whether the planned impacts have been achieved.

2.15 The Policing Board has undertaken post implementation reviews in 2007-08 on the two Best Value reviews completed in 2005-06 (Police Patrol Function, and External Communication & Public Consultation), and the Partnerships review which was completed in 2006-07. In addition, the Board has undertaken a follow-up to the post implementation reviews completed in 2007 on the six 2004-05 PSNI Best Value reviews. I have reviewed the methodology behind these Post Implementation Reviews and reviewed the published reports.

2.16 The Post Implementation Reviews (PIRs) were completed by KPMG on behalf of the Policing Board. I am satisfied that each review was undertaken using a consistent methodology, approach and objectives. Adequate challenge was applied when determining whether recommendations had been implemented and evidence to support conclusions was obtained. Policing Board and PSNI officials were given the opportunity to comment on the review findings prior to publication of the reports. Each of the completed PIRs has been published on the Policing Board's website.

2.17 Overall, of the 194 recommendations contained in the three Best Value reviews, 36 per cent had been fully implemented at the time the PIR was completed in March 2008. A summary of the results of the PIRs is set out in the table below:

2.18 The published PIRs show that some recommendations from the Best Value reviews are being implemented and that stakeholders have confirmed improvements have been achieved in a number of areas in each of the reviews. Financial savings were identified in some reviews, but most improvements related to enhanced quality of service or internal processes rather than financial gain.

2.19 However, 94 of the 194 recommendations had not been fully implemented at the time of the post implementation review. Eighty-four of these recommendations were nearly two years old. The majority of these recommendations have been progressed in part. Additional information on the progress of recommendations is provided in the published PIRs available on the Policing Board's website. Progress continues to be monitored through the Resources and Improvement Committee and via annual post implementation review.

2.20 Regarding the 2004-05 PSNI Best Value reviews, of the 58 recommendations which were outstanding at the completion of the post implementation review in 2006-07, 20 (34 per cent) have been implemented and five (nine per cent) have been superseded, leaving 33 (57 per cent) not yet implemented.

Recommendation

2.21 Lessons drawn from the Best Value PIRs should be fed into the new methodology adopted for continuous improvement.

Review	Number of Recommendations			
	Total	Fully implemented	Superseded	Not fully implemented
NIPB External Communication & Public Consultation (2005-06)	29	14	8	7 (24%)
PSNI Police Patrol Function (2005-06)	141	45	19	77 (55%)
PSNI Partnerships (2006-07)	24	11	3	10 (42%)
Total	194	70	30	94
Percentage	100	36	16	48

Developments in Continuous Improvement

Methodology to replace Best Value

2.22 The Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires that the Policing Board make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in its and the PSNI's functions, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness; they are also required to include reviews of the way in which its functions are exercised. In line with the arrangements for Police Authorities in England and Wales under the Local Government Act 1999, the Policing Board and the PSNI elected to follow the Best Value methodology to underpin their approach to continuous improvement.

2.23 The Police and Justice Act 2006, from 31 March 2007, relaxed the requirements for the Police Authorities in England and Wales to produce an annual Best Value Performance Plan and to conduct Best Value reviews, though they must still make continuous improvement arrangements.

2.24 The 2008-11 Policing Plan commits the Policing Board and the PSNI to explore the potential tools and approaches used by other Police Services to deliver continuous improvement and to develop and implement their own new approach to continuous improvement in the PSNI.³ There is, however, no detail on when the new approach will be adopted or what the methodology might be.

2.25 The development of a new approach to continuous improvement at the PSNI is referred to in part five of the Policing Plan (see extract below). This part of the Plan appears to meet the requirements of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act, apart from the reviews of the way in which functions are exercised.

2.26 Similarly, the approach to continuous improvement set out in the Policing Plan for the Policing Board lacks mention of reviews of the way in which functions are exercised or a formal methodological approach going forward.

Recommendations

2.27 The Policing Board needs to adopt a new approach to continuous improvement for PSNI for 2009-10, including reviews of the way in which functions are exercised, as required by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act.

2.28 At the same time, the Policing Board also needs to formally adopt a methodology to secure continuous improvement in its own functions.

Extract from the 2008-11 Policing Plan

The new approach will involve:

- the development and implementation of a new approach to continuous improvement;
- co-ordination and monitoring of all strategic Continuous Improvement Activities for 2008-09 within Part 3 of the 2008-2011 Policing Plan;
- the independent monitoring, review and assessment of these activities by the Board via the Resources and Improvement Committee and by the Police Service via the Organisational Development Committee, utilising the centralised overview database tool; and
- continued implementation of outstanding Best Value Review recommendations, and the assessment of these through the agreed Post Implementation Review Process.

³ See page 40 of the 2008-11 Policing Plan.

Database to track recommendations of PSNI oversight bodies

2.29 During 2007-08 the PSNI developed a database called Overview⁴ to record and track the implementation of recommendations made for improvement, by the various external oversight bodies.

2.30 The overview database assigns each recommendation to an owner in the PSNI to track progress towards implementation and to ensure suitable documentary evidence supports each stage of discharge. Upon implementation, the system requires that the evidence is reviewed and, if satisfactory, the recommendation is signed off by the PSNI as implemented.

2.31 The aim is for the Overview database to form the basis for monitoring of progress on external recommendations by the PSNI.

2.32 As at April 2008 a total of 1,863 recommendations had been entered on to the Overview database, which represents recommendations made from the year 2000 onwards. Around 760 of these recommendations were still to be implemented.

2.33 I have reviewed the new database and have found that it provides for an audit trail from recommendation recording to discharge. I welcome its introduction as a means to monitor and challenge progress in implementing recommendations for improvement.

2.34 As the database did not go 'live' until 2008-09, I have not carried out any testing of the operation of the database or of the extent to which it provides the Policing Board with information on the discharge of recommendations. I plan to review its operation for my next report by making an assessment of the processes and controls underlying the operation of the database and the challenge exercised by the PSNI and the Policing Board.

Recommendation

2.35 To support continuous improvement, the overview database will need to demonstrate satisfactory and timely clearance of recommendations, and to evidence reductions in the numbers of uncleared recommendations.

⁴ Overview includes the recommendations from: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, the Criminal Justice Inspectorate of Northern Ireland, the Police Ombudsman, "Patten" recommendations, public enquiries, Policing Board, National Audit Office, Northern Ireland Audit Office and Internal Audit reports.

ANNEX A

The respective responsibilities of the Policing Board and the Comptroller and Auditor General

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 its 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 Policing Board shall prepare and publish a performance plan and a performance summary for each financial year.

3 The performance plan must:

- detail how the Policing Board has made arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions, and those of the Chief Constable, are to be implemented;
- identify factors (performance indicators) by reference to which performance in exercising functions can be measured; and
- set standards (performance targets) to be met in the exercise of particular functions in relation to performance indicators.

4 The performance summary must provide the Policing Board's assessment of:

- its own and the Chief Constable's performance in the year by reference to performance indicators, and
- the extent that any performance standard that applied at any time during the year was not met.

5 In practice, the Policing Board works in partnership with the Police Service as part of their continuous improvement framework to enable the Police Service to identify actions and review all aspects of their service.

6 Under the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 section 29, the Comptroller and Auditor General is required to audit the performance plan and the performance summary.

7 He shall issue a report:

- certifying that he has audited the performance plan and the performance summary;
- stating whether he believes the performance plan and the performance summary were prepared and published in accordance with the requirements of section 28;
- stating whether he believes the performance indicators and performance standards in the published performance plan are reasonable, and, if appropriate, recommend changes to them;
- if appropriate, recommend how the performance plan or performance summary should be amended so as to accord with the requirements of section 28; and
- to 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.

8 Under the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 section 30 the Comptroller and Auditor General may carry out an examination of the Policing Board's compliance with section 28.

9 This examination of the arrangements to secure continuous improvement may include:

- liaising with key stakeholders and in particular attending the Policing Board's continuous improvement strategic working group;
- discussing with senior management of both the Policing Board and the Police Service their plans for 2008-09;
- reviewing the Policing Board's and the PSNI's own examinations of functions in 2007-08 carried out under the Best Value methodology; and
- reviewing the systems in place to produce the required performance information.

ANNEX B

The Comptroller and Auditor General's certificate and opinion to the Houses of Parliament on the Northern Ireland Policing Board Performance Plan and Performance Summary

As reported in the Northern Ireland Policing Board and Police Service of Northern Ireland Policing Plan for 2008-11, and relevant sections on their performance as reported in their 2007-08 Annual Report 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 performance plan for the year ended 31 March 2009; and
- the performance summary for the year 2007-08.

Basis of my opinion

Audit of the Performance Plan

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

- the plan has been prepared and published in accordance with statutory requirements; and
- the performance indicators and standards for 2008-09 are reasonable.

In giving my opinion, I am not required to form a view on the achievability of the performance plan. 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.

Audit of the Performance Summary

I planned and performed my work so as to obtain all the information and explanations that I considered necessary in order to provide an opinion on whether the Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published an assessment of its own and the Police Service's performance in 2007-08 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 2007-08 performance plan. I obtained sufficient evidence to satisfy me that the summary provided includes those matters required by statute, that the performance information is reasonable, 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 performance plan for 2008-11 in all significant respects in accordance with the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000;
- the performance indicators and standards included in the performance plan for the year ended 31 March 2009 are reasonable;
- the Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published its and the PSNI's performance summary in year by reference to performance indicators in accordance with subsection 5A of Section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, and has done so within its Annual Report; and
- the performance information against performance indicators and standards contained within the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Annual Report have been compiled from the underlying systems.

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.

T J Burr

29 May 2009

Comptroller and Auditor General

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ANNEX C

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

1 I have worked closely with HMIC both during the inspection visit connected to the best value review on Protecting Vulnerable People.

2 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.

3 In Northern Ireland, HMIC does not have a similar statutory responsibility, but instead carries 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 was invited to carry out a Best Value Inspection of the PSNI in May 2008. Its full report can be found at www.hmic.org.uk.

4 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 Community Engagement. However, for the Best Value Reviews carried out by the Police Service, 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 has from its work in England and Wales and from its force inspections of the PSNI;
- reviews benefit from the operational experience of HMIC; and
- inspection activity on Best Value is co-ordinated.

ANNEX D

Analysis of 2008-09 performance indicators and standards

2008-09 Performance Indicator	Reasonable?	Performance Standards (targets)
1.1 Implementation of the Neighbourhood Policing Network.	Yes	1.1.1 To demonstrate progress in the implementation of the Neighbourhood Policing framework in line with project milestones reporting twice yearly to the Board.
2.1 Percentage of people who are confident in the police's ability to provide a professional, day-to-day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland.	Yes	2.1.1 To increase the percentage of people who are confident in the police's ability to provide an ordinary, day-to-day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland. 2.1.2 To increase the percentage of crime victims satisfied that they have been kept informed regarding their case by five per cent. 2.1.3 To increase the percentage of people who think that the police are doing a good job in the area.
3.1 Number of recorded crimes.	Yes	3.1.1 To ensure that by 2010-2011 there are fewer than 100,000 crimes recorded.
3.2 The level of more serious violent crimes.	Yes	3.2.1 To reduce the level of violent crime. 3.2.2 To reduce the level of more serious violent crime. 3.2.3 To reduce the level of violent crime against persons under the age of 18.
3.3 Number of domestic burglaries.	Yes	3.3.1 To ensure by 2010-2011 there are fewer than 6,000 domestic burglaries recorded.
3.4 Reporting of Domestic abuse.	Yes	3.4.1 To reduce the incidence of repeat victimisation of domestic abuse.
4.1 Percentage of recorded crimes cleared.	Yes	4.1.1 To increase the clearance rate by five per cent points. 4.1.2 To increase the clearance rate for sectarian crimes. 4.1.3 To increase the clearance rate for racist crimes. 4.1.4 To increase the clearance rate for homophobic crimes.
4.2 To reduce the availability of drugs and raise awareness of harm.	Yes	4.2.1 To increase the number of drug supply crime gangs frustrated, disrupted or dismantled.
4.3 The value of assets seized and recovered in accordance with the Proceeds of Crime Act.	Yes	4.3.1 To increase the number of assets seized and recovered, and report on their value, in accordance with the Proceeds of Crime Act.
5.1 Number of incidents of anti-social behaviour.	Yes	5.1.1 To reduce the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour to ensure a 15 per cent reduction by 31 March 2011.
5.2 Number of recorded crimes of criminal damage.	Yes	5.2.1 To ensure that by 2010-2011 there are fewer than 27,000 crimes of criminal damage recorded.

Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Relevant	Time related
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – performance against standard is measured against the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes – performance against standard is measured against the Northern Ireland Policing Board and PSNI victims’ survey	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – performance against standard is measured against the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data systems	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data systems	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data systems	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data system	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data system	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data system	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data system	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data system	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data system	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data system	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data system	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data system	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data system	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data system	Yes	Yes	Yes

2008-09 Performance Indicator <i>continued</i>	Reasonable? <i>continued</i>	Performance Standards (targets) <i>continued</i>
6.1 Community engagement meetings.	Yes	6.1.1 To demonstrate our contribution to the establishment of community engagement meetings in line with Partners and Community Together (PACT) model in all neighbourhoods reporting twice yearly to the Board.
7.1 Percentage of people saying they are safe in their local community.	Yes	7.1.1 To increase the percentage of people saying they are safe in their local community.
8.1 Number of people killed or seriously injured on the road.	Yes	8.1.1 To reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the road. 8.1.2 To reduce the number of children killed or seriously injured on the road.
9.1 The percentage of time spent by Police Officers on beat and patrol duties.	Yes	9.1.1 To increase this time based on the activity analysis report between 2007-08 and 2008-09.
	Yes	9.1.2 To ensure that Neighbourhood Officers work at least 80 per cent of their duty hours on neighbourhood policing duties.
9.2 Average working days lost through sickness for police officers and staff.	Yes	9.2.1 To reduce average sickness levels to 5 days for police officers and civilian staff by 31 March 2010.
9.3 Percentage of prosecution cases processed to the required standard within administrative time limits.	Yes	9.3.1 To increase the percentage of custody cases processed within administrative time limits. 9.3.2 To increase the percentage of bail cases processed within administrative time limits. 9.3.3 To process 80 per cent of indictable reported cases within administrative time limits. 9.3.4 To process 70 per cent of summary reported cases within administrative time limits.
10.1 The implementation of actions as detailed in Part 3 of the Plan.	Yes	10.1.1 To demonstrate progress towards the implementation of actions as detailed in Part 3.
* CBIS stands for Causeway Business Information Services		

Specific <i>continued</i>	Measureable <i>continued</i>	Achievable <i>continued</i>	Relevant <i>continued</i>	Time related <i>continued</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – performance against standard is measured against the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data systems	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data systems	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data systems	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data systems	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes – information comes from the PSNI data systems	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the CBIS database	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes – information comes from the CBIS database	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes – information comes from the CBIS database	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes – information comes from the CBIS database	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes – detail in Part 3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes