



Northern Ireland Audit Office

# Continuous improvement arrangements in policing





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

K J Donnelly CB  
Comptroller and Auditor General

Northern Ireland Audit Office  
12 October 2021

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# Executive Summary

## Background

1. The Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Board) was established on 4 November 2001 by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, which put the recommendations of the Patten Report on policing into practice. At the same time, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (the PSNI) came into being, replacing the Royal Ulster Constabulary.
2. Section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires the Board to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions, and those of the Chief Constable, are exercised, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Board is required to prepare and publish a Performance Plan (known as the Policing Plan) for each financial year. This includes a section setting out how the continuous improvement arrangements are to be implemented. The Board also has to prepare and publish a performance summary in respect of the previous year.

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

3. As the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for Northern Ireland, I am required under section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 to audit the Policing Plan and performance summary and to send a report to the Board, the Chief Constable and the Department

of Justice for Northern Ireland (the Department).

## The C&AG's certificate and audit opinion to the Assembly on the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Performance Summary and Performance Plan

4. In accordance with section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 as amended<sup>1</sup>, I certify that I have audited the Board's and the PSNI's:
  - Performance summary for the year ended 31 March 2020; and
  - Annual Performance Plan for the year ended 31 March 2021.

## Basis of my opinion:

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

- (i) **for the 2019-20 Performance Summary** – the Board has prepared and published a summary assessment of its own and the Chief Constable's performance in 2019-20, measured by performance targets and performance measures against the Board's Business Plan and Policing Plan respectively for

<sup>1</sup> Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2003; The Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.

2020-21. My work included examination, on a test basis, of the evidence supporting the performance indicators and measures set out in the above; and

**(ii) for the 2020-21 Annual Performance Plan** – arrangements are in place to secure continuous improvements; the Performance Plan includes those matters prescribed in legislation; the arrangements for publishing the Performance Plan complied with those requirements; and the performance indicators and standards are reasonable.

9. The Board has reported its own performance and the PSNI's performance in its Annual Report for 2019-20. Overall the Board reported that in 2019-20, 34 of its measures (73 percent) (2018-19: 65 percent) had been achieved, ten (22 percent) were partially achieved and the remaining three (5 percent) were not achieved.

10. The PSNI has reported its performance against the Policing Plan in its 2019-20 Annual Report. The report adequately reflects the measures and outcomes included in the 2019-20 Policing Plan and brings to an end the four year reporting period under the Strategic Outcomes for Policing 2016-2020. However it is difficult to summarise the PSNI's overall progress against the 2019-20 Policing Plan as its assessment does not designate a status to each measure as achieved, partially achieved or not achieved.

## Main findings of my review

6. I have given an unqualified audit opinion on the 2019-20 Performance Summary and the 2020-21 Performance Plan (**Appendix 1**). I have raised some issues and three recommendations for the attention of the Board and the PSNI, details of which are outlined in the following paragraphs.

### On 2019-20 performance – The Policing Board and the PSNI

7. Performance measures are published for both the Board and the PSNI in the Board's Business Plan and the Policing Plan respectively.
8. The Board's Business Plan for 2019-20 included 47 measures structured around 3 Outcomes. The Policing Plan for 2019-20 set out a total of 17 measures across 9 strategic outcomes.

### On the 2020-21 Annual Performance Plan

11. The Annual Performance Plan for 2020-21 supports the first year of *The Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-25* and comprises nine indicators and 11 measures (2019-20: nine outcomes and 17 measures) across 3 outcomes. The reduction in the number of performance indicators and measures following my previous recommendation is a welcome development and helps focus on those aspects which require improvement.

## Executive Summary

12. However whilst described as measures, there is limited data included against which the measure can be quantified. This makes it difficult to demonstrate achievement of individual measures and to evaluate the overall annual performance against the Performance Plan. Given that year one of the NI Policing Plan 2020-25 is now complete; the inclusion of baseline data, as it becomes available, would further enhance progress monitoring and support annual trend analysis. I have made similar recommendation in previous reports.

### On the continuous improvement arrangements

13. This is the final year of the reporting against the PSNI's current Continuous Improvement Programme covering the period 2016-20; there have been no new projects to report on this year. My previous recommendation in this area was regarding timely completion of Post Project Evaluations; and following up on this all those relating to the 2016-20 programme have now been produced.
14. Going forward continuous improvement arrangements are no longer annexed within the Annual Performance Plan 2020-21 as previously would have been the case. The implications of this will be considered in my future reports.

### Update on the legislation supporting the continuous improvement arrangements

15. As I have stated in a number of previous reports since 2017, in my opinion it is important that the Department of Justice considers changes to the legislation underpinning the audit of continuous improvement, which has been in place since 2000. The role of the C&AG defined in the 2000 Act in respect of continuous improvement here now appears to be unique in the UK with the Department finding that many of the corresponding provisions to the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 in the UK have been repealed and, for the most part, 'best value' arrangements in England and Wales no longer apply to the police. Any such proposal would be subject to Ministerial approval.

#### Summary of Recommendations

The PSNI's performance summary should include an assessment of each measure at the end of the reporting period. A summary of progress against the Annual Plan would be beneficial.

The Performance Plan would benefit from the inclusion of baseline data as this becomes available. This would allow the progress of individual measures to be monitored; and the establishment of data trends would support the evaluation of success against outcomes and the resulting positive impact for citizens.

The Department of Justice should consider changes to the legislation underpinning the audit of continuous improvement to bring the arrangements in Northern Ireland back into line with the rest of the UK.

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# Part One:

## Introduction and Background

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## Part One: Introduction and Background

### Responsibilities of the Northern Ireland Policing Board

1.1 Under section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, the Northern Ireland Policing Board (the 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 (the PSNI), are exercised, with regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

1.2 The Board must prepare and publish a performance plan (known from 2020-21 as the Annual Performance Plan) each financial year, containing details of how these continuous improvement arrangements are to be implemented. In particular, the Performance Plan must:

- identify performance indicators, by reference to which performance in exercising functions can be measured;
- set performance outcomes to be met in relation to those performance indicators; and
- include a summary of the Board's assessment of:
  - its, and the Chief Constable's, performance in the previous financial year, measured by reference to performance indicators and measures; and

- the extent to which any performance standard, which applied at any time during that year was met.

1.3 In practice, the Board works in partnership with the PSNI to develop the Performance Plan and monitor and review progress in its implementation, within an overall context of continuous improvement.

### Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

1.4 Under section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, I am required to audit the Performance Plan (including the assessment of the previous financial year's performance) to establish whether it was prepared and published in accordance with the requirements of section 28 of the Act. Accordingly, I must issue a report (**Appendix 1 and 2**):

- certifying that I have audited the Performance Plan;
- stating whether I believe the Performance Plan was prepared and published in accordance with the requirements of section 28;
- stating whether I believe the performance indicators and measures are reasonable and, if appropriate, recommending changes to them;

- if appropriate, recommending how the Performance Plan should be amended so as to accord with the requirements of section 28; and
- recommending whether the Department of Justice should give a 'direction' to the Board, under section 31 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. Such a direction would require the Board to take appropriate corrective action to ensure compliance with the Act.

1.5 Under section 30 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, I may carry out an examination of the Board's compliance with the requirements of section 28 of the Act.

1.6 In March 2020, I published a similar report summarising my audit of the previous (2018-19 and 2019-20) Policing Plans. My report at that time contained a number of recommendations that are presented at **Appendix 2**, along with an update from the Board on progress of such.

2019-20 and the extent to which performance standards were met;

- **Part Three: Review of the Performance Plan:** considering whether the Performance Plan meets the Board's statutory obligations and whether proposed performance indicators and measures are reasonable; and
- **Part Four: Operation of the Continuous Improvement Programme:** examining specific continuous improvements operating within the Board and the PSNI.

## Scope of the review

1.7 During the course of the review, my staff liaised closely with the Policing Board and the PSNI. My findings are set out as follows:

- **Part Two: Review of Performance:** summarising the Boards and the Chief Constable's performance in





## Part Two: Review of Performance

### Introduction

- 2.1 The Board is required to report, each year, a summary of its assessment of:
- its, and the Chief Constable's, performance in the previous financial year, measured by reference to performance indicators; and
  - the extent to which any performance standard which applied at any time during that year was met.
- 2.2 In this part of the report, I consider whether the performance summary published in the annual report for 2019-20 meets the statutory obligations of the Board and PSNI.

### Policing Board performance

- 2.3 The Board's Corporate Plan for the period 2017-2020<sup>2</sup> sets out the Board's Purpose, Vision and Values and outlines the key challenges envisaged during the period. Within this, seven key priority areas are identified, grouped into three themes/outcomes and each

have measures against which to gauge performance. See **Figure 1** below.

- 2.4 Within the Annual Business Plan for 2019-20<sup>3</sup>, for each of the three Outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan there are two or three Indicators (described as *measures* in the Corporate Plan). Each Indicator then has between two and fourteen measures (47 in total) which allow the Board's progress to be assessed.
- 2.5 In accordance with the legislation, the Board's performance was summarised in its 2019-20 Annual Report<sup>4</sup>. **Figure 2** presents a summary of the Board's performance against the 2019-20 business plan measures. Of the 47 measures, 34 are reported as fully achieved (73 per cent), 10 were reported as partially achieved (22 per cent) and 3 were reported as not achieved (5 per cent).
- 2.6 The performance information in the Board's Annual Report reproduces information from the Board's Business Plan and is consistent with it, rather than

**Figure 1: Summary of Themes, Outcomes and Measures**

Theme/Outcome	Theme/Outcome Narrative	Priority
1	We have an effective, efficient and continually improving police service, Policing Board and Police and Community Safety Partnerships	1,6
2	We have trust and confidence in policing.	2,4,5
3	We have a safe community, where we respect the law and each other.	3,7

**Source:** NIAO summary based on NIPB Corporate Plan 2017-2020

2 NI Policing Board Corporate Plan 2017-2020 <https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/sites/nipb/files/publications/corporate-plan-2017-2020.PDF>

3 NI Policing Board Business Plan 2019-20 <https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/sites/nipb/files/publications/business-plan-2019-2020.PDF>

4 NI Policing Board Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20 <https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/sites/nipb/files/publications/annual-report-and-accounts-2019-2020.PDF>

**Figure 2: Policing Board performance against the Corporate Business Plan Outcomes 2019-20**

Outcome	Measures	Fully Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
We have an effective, efficient and continually improving police service, Policing Board and Police and Community Safety Partnerships.	29	22	5	2
We have trust and confidence in policing.	13	8	4	1
We have a safe community, where we respect the law and each other.	5	4	1	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>

Source: NI Policing Board Annual Report 2019-20

the Corporate Plan. The Annual Report also contains additional background narrative. The reason for measures either being partially or not achieved was in part due to disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic towards the latter half of March 2020.

the five key themes as set out in the Strategic Outcomes document with 9 Outcomes and 17 measures. These are set out at **Figure 4**. The Policing Plan also contained an appendix showing the reporting contents and performance indicators supporting each measure and strategic outcome.

## PSNI performance 2019-20

2.7 The Policing Plan for 2019-20<sup>5</sup> set out how PSNI would deliver the fourth and final year of the “*Strategic Outcomes for Policing 2016-20*”<sup>6</sup>. The 2019-20 Plan retained

5 NI Policing Board Annual Policing Plan 2019-20 <https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/sites/nipb/files/publications/annual-policing-plan%202019-20.pdf>

6 NI Policing Board Strategic Outcomes for Policing in Northern Ireland 2016-2020 <https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/sites/nipb/files/media-files/Strategic-outcomes-for-policing-2016-2020.pdf>

## Part Two: Review of Performance

**Figure 4: Strategic Outcomes for Policing 2016-2020**

Theme	Strategic Outcome	Measure
<b>1.Communication and Engagement</b>	1.1 Trust and confidence in policing across NI	1.1.1 Increase the level of public confidence in the police's ability to provide an ordinary day to day service and in local police.
		1.1.2 To improve victim satisfaction in certain aspects of contact with the PSNI.
		1.1.3 Increase confidence in policing in areas where it was identified as being lower through initiatives in collaboration with local communities, partner agencies and PCSPs.
		1.1.4 Increase young people's confidence in policing in areas where it was identified as being lower through initiatives carried out in collaboration with local communities, partner agencies and PCSPs.
		1.1.5 Improve under-representation in respect of gender and community background across departments and branches of the PSNI.
	1.2 PSNI engages with communities to improve understanding of the impact of policing decisions and involve communities wherever possible in those decisions.	1.2.1 Embed and demonstrate Policing with the Community ethos and behaviours throughout the service specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate locality based police-community decision making through co-design that evidences the benefit of community input to the delivery of policing.</li> <li>• Evidence the ongoing impact and benefits realised as a result of the delivery of this project, both internally and externally</li> </ul>

Theme	Strategic Outcome	Measure
<b>2. Protection of people and communities</b>	2.1 Harm caused by crime and anti-social behaviour is reduced with a focus on protecting the most vulnerable, including repeat victims.	2.1.1 Improve service to the most vulnerable across PSNI policing districts through the implementation of Support Hubs in collaboration with PCSPs and other partners.  2.1.2 Improve the service to vulnerable groups and improve outcomes in collaboration with partners in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic abuse</li> <li>• Hate crime</li> <li>• Crimes against older people</li> <li>• Sexual offences</li> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE)</li> <li>• Children who go missing</li> </ul> 2.1.3 Demonstrate an effective contribution in addressing anti-social behaviour particularly in areas of high deprivation and hot spot areas in collaboration with PCSPs and relevant others within the community.
	2.2 People are safe on the roads.	2.2.1 Demonstrate a contribution to reduce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of people killed in road collisions;</li> <li>• The number of people seriously injured in road collisions;</li> <li>• The number of children (aged 0-15) killed or seriously injured in road collisions; and</li> <li>• The number of young people (aged 16-24) killed or seriously injured in road collisions.</li> </ul> as set out in the 2020 Road Safety Strategy

## Part Two: Review of Performance

Theme	Strategic Outcome	Measure
<b>3. Reduction in offending</b>	3.1 Identify and intervene with priority offenders.	3.1.1 Demonstrate an effective contribution to the integrated management of priority offenders in collaboration with partner agencies, in order to reduce reoffending.
	3.2 Tackle serious and organised crime.	3.2.1 Demonstrate an effective contribution to the implementation of initiatives and interventions in collaboration with partners to reduce the harm caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organised Crime Groups</li> <li>• Drugs</li> <li>• Cyber dependent, enabled and facilitated crime</li> <li>• Human exploitation and trafficking.</li> </ul>
	3.3 Tackle paramilitarism.	3.3.1 Demonstrate an effective contribution to the implementation of the Executive Action Plan and to the Joint Agency Task Force.  3.3.2 Demonstrate an effective contribution to the elimination of paramilitarism in Northern Ireland in collaboration with partner agencies, local communities and PSCPs through co-design of programmes and interventions.
<b>4. More efficient and effective delivery of justice</b>	4.1 Achieve an effective partnership with the Public Prosecution Service and wider criminal justice agencies to deliver more positive outcomes for victims.	4.1.1 Demonstrate progress in providing a more efficient and effective delivery of Justice, including evidence of progress made with legacy cases.
<b>5. More efficient and effective policing</b>	1.1 An efficient and effective police service.	5.1.1 Demonstrate a comprehensive assessment and understanding of both current and likely future demand for services, matching resources to meet the needs of the public and protecting frontline services.
		5.1.2 Development of clear and realistic plans for achieving the likely savings required beyond 2019/20.

Source: NIAO summary based on Policing Plan 2019-20

2.8 Both the Board and the PSNI have reported on the PSNI's performance against the 2019-20 Policing Plan. The Board's assessment of PSNI's performance against the Policing plan 2019-20 should be read in conjunction with that of the PSNI.

2.9 The PSNI published its performance report against the 2019-20 Policing Plan in its Annual Report 2019-20. The performance report broadly reflects the outcomes and measures included in the Policing Plan and encompasses a large volume of both narrative and numerical information.

2.10 The narrative focuses at the operational level, providing detail about those activities which were undertaken during the year. However with this detail, it is not always clear as to which of the measures set out in appendix 1 of the 2019-20 Policing Plan have been achieved, partially achieved or not achieved as no status has been designated to them. A summary of overall progress against the 2019-20 Plan would provide further meaning to the report. In my previous report I have commented on both the need for an assessment of each measure and the inclusion of adequate baseline data.

strategic outcomes included the 2019-20 Policing Plan albeit a summary of overall progress against the Plan would be beneficial.

### Recommendations

The PSNI's performance summary should include an assessment of each measure at the end of the reporting period. A summary of progress against the Annual Plan would be beneficial.

## Conclusion

2.11 Performance against the Corporate Plan and the Business Plan is consistently disclosed in the Board's Annual Report and Accounts. The PSNI's Annual Report adequately reflects the measures and



## Part Three:

Review of the Performance Plan 2020-21

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## Part Three:

### Review of the Performance Plan 2020-21

#### Introduction

- 3.1 In this part of the report, I consider;
- whether the Performance Plan for 2020-21 meets the Board's statutory obligations; and
  - whether the proposed performance measures are reasonable.

longer-term strategy covering the 5 year period 2020 to 2025.

- 3.3 This new strategy, *The Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-2025*<sup>7</sup>, sets out three Outcomes for policing to deliver over the next 5 years. It will be accompanied by Annual Performance Plans which will contain indicators and measures used to evaluate the PSNI's progress on a twelve month basis against the Outcomes.

#### Development of the Annual Performance Plan 2020-21

- 3.2 Section 25(1) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 provides for the Board to determine the objectives for the policing of Northern Ireland. In 2020 I reported that the Board had developed in partnership with the PSNI, a new

#### Review of Performance measures and indicators

- 3.4 The Annual Performance Plan 2020-21 includes 9 indicators and 11 measures (**Figure 5**) covering the three Outcomes and as such meets the Board's statutory obligations.

**Figure 5: Annual Performance Plan 2020-21**

Outcome	Indicator	Measures 2020-2021
<b>1. We have a safe community</b>	1.1 Fewer repeat victims of crime	1.1.1 Repeat victimisation rate and report on initiatives to support repeat victims with a focus on victims of (i) Domestic Abuse, (ii) Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) and (iii) Hate Crime in 2020/21.
	1.2 Fewer repeat offenders of crime	1.2.1 Repeat offending rate and report on initiatives to reduce repeat offenders with a focus on Domestic Abuse in 2020/21.
		1.2.2 Repeat offending of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and paramilitary organisations.
	1.3 People in all communities feel safe	1.3.1 Number of people in Northern Ireland who feel safe in their; local area, local high street or town centre and own home.
		1.3.2 Rate of places repeatedly victimised.

<sup>7</sup> replaces the 'Strategic Outcomes for Policing 2016-20' document

Outcome	Indicator	Measures 2020-2021
	1.4 Crime rates and trends showcase an effective police response	1.4.1 Benchmark PSNI crime rates against previous PSNI levels and other most similar police services.
<b>2. We have confidence in policing</b>	2.1 The level of public confidence in policing	2.1.1 Number of people in Northern Ireland who are confident that PSNI is accessible, visible, responsive and victim focused.
	2.2 The level of satisfaction with the service received	2.2.1 Number of victims who are satisfied with the service they have received.
	2.3 The representativeness of the police service	2.3.1 Improve representativeness of the service across ranks, grades and departments by gender and community and socio-economic background.
	2.4 Delivery of effective crime outcomes	2.4.1 Levels of crime outcomes to identify and respond to areas of concern in outcomes statistics, with a particular focus on domestic abuse in 2020/21.
<b>3. We have engaged and supportive communities</b>	3.1 Police in partnership with local communities, including PCSPS, identify and deliver local solutions to local problems.	3.1.1 In collaboration with the community deliver the commitments outlined in the Local Policing Review.

**Source:** NIAO Summary based on Annual Performance Plan 2020/21

3.5 The reduction in the number of measures to 11 (2019-20: 17 measures) in the 2020-21 Performance Plan will help to focus on those areas which require most improvement. The continued progress towards developing an outcome based approach is recognised through the consultation and engagement which was undertaken to support the development of the new Policing Plan 2020-25 and the Annual Performance Plan 2020-21.

3.6 In my previous reports I have recommended the Policing Plan should

identify clear and appropriate outcomes, indicators and baselines which will demonstrate positive impacts for citizens and communities. While the link between outcome, indicators and measures is clear, many of the measures although quantifiable have no baseline data or numerical targets attached to them for meaningful comparison. Consequently it may prove difficult to assess if individual measures have been achieved, to demonstrate data trends and to evaluate the PSNI's overall annual performance for the year.

## Part Three:

### Review of the Performance Plan 2020-21

#### Conclusion

- 3.7 At the end of the first year of the Policing Plan 2020-25 there is an opportunity for the Board and PSNI to further develop an outcomes approach through clear defined outcomes linked to indicators and quantifiable measures which can be used to clearly demonstrate performance and the positive impacts for citizens.

#### Recommendation

The Performance Plan would benefit from the inclusion of baseline data as this becomes available. This would allow the progress of individual measures to be monitored; and the establishment of data trends would support the evaluation of success against outcomes and the resulting positive impact for citizens.

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## Part Four: Operation of the Continuous Improvement programme

### Introduction

- 4.1 The Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires the Board to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement within its and the PSNI's functions, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Board is also required to carry out reviews of the way in which its functions are exercised.
- 4.2 This part of the report examines the specific continuous improvement programmes operating within the Board and the PSNI.

### Continuous improvement within the Policing Board

- 4.3 The Board established a three year continuous improvement project for 2017-20 which supported the action plan to obtain the Investors in People (IIP) reaccreditation which was due to be completed in May 2020. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the Board's ability to

undertake the necessary steps and a full reaccreditation was not feasible in May 2020. A strategic review was conducted in December 2020 with a new reaccreditation date planned for October 2021.

### Continuous improvement within the PSNI

- 4.4 The PSNI Service Executive Team selected nine projects (Figure 6) which comprised the Continuous Improvement Programme for the period 2016-20. I have commented on various individual projects before in my previous reports. This report covers the final year and summarises the four year Continuous Improvement Programme. A synopsis of all nine projects was provided to the Policing Board in May 2020 including an update on projects status and details of benefits realised from each. The Post Project Evaluations for the 2016-20 programme have all been produced in line with my previous recommendation.

**Figure 6: PSNI Continuous Improvement Programme 2016-20**

Project	Period	Delivery Date
Video Identification Parade Electronic Recording (VIPER)	2016-17	Completed March 2017
District E-Crime Support Unit (DESU) & Video Identification Units (VIU)	2016-19	Completed July 2019
Demand Profiling and Priority Based Resourcing (PBR)	2016-18	Completed January 2019
Review of Business Services	2016-17	Completed May 2017

Project	Period	Delivery Date
Review of Corporate Communications	2016-17	Completed June 2017
Review of Crime Operations Department	2016-17	Completed September 2017
Working Together Project	2016-19	Completed January 2019
Policing With the Community Project (PwC).	2016-20	Completed March 202
Custody Reform	2016-20	Rolled forward to 2020-21

**Source:** NIAO Summary based on PSNI Continuous Improvement Projects 2016-2020 synopsis

4.5 Eight out of the nine projects have now been reported as completed with only the Custody Healthcare part of the Custody Reform project incomplete. This is mainly due to the uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the project has now been rolled forward into the next continuous improvement period.

4.6 I note that the Performance Plan 2020-21 does not include reference to future continuous improvement projects. The implications of this will be considered in my future reports. However I do note that a new Service Modernisation Plan, 'Horizon 2025<sup>8</sup>', has been developed by the PSNI. This outlines how the PSNI intends to shape its business to deliver the Policing Plan outcomes and build a modernised policing service.

## Conclusion

4.7 There is now opportunity to further develop the outcomes for policing; and to build on the gains made as a result of the successful completion of the 2016-20 continuous improvement programme.





## Appendix 1:

### The Comptroller and Auditor General's certificate and opinion to the Assembly on the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Performance Plan and Performance Summary

1. In accordance with section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 as amended, I certify that I have audited the Northern Ireland Policing Board and Police Service of Northern Ireland's:
  - performance summary for the year ended 31 March 2020; and
  - performance plan for the year ended 31 March 2021.

#### Basis of my opinion

##### **Audit of the Performance Summary**

2. I planned and performed my work 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 a summary of the Board's assessment of its own, and the Chief Constable's, performance in 2019-20, measured by reference to performance indicators and performance standards.
3. My work comprised a review and assessment and, where appropriate, examination on a test basis of the evidence supporting performance against the indicators and standards as prescribed in the 2020-25 Policing Plan. I obtained sufficient evidence to satisfy myself that the summary provided includes those matters prescribed in legislation, and that the arrangements for publishing the summary complied with those requirements.

##### **Audit of the Performance Plan**

4. I planned and performed my work 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 performance measures for 2020-21 are reasonable.
  5. 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.
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## Appendix 1: (continued)

### Opinion

6. In my opinion:

- the Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published its and the Police Service of Northern Ireland's performance summary for the year ended 31 March 2020 in accordance with the requirements of section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000;
- the Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published its Performance Plan for the year ended 31 March 2021, as required by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000; and
- the performance indicators included within the Performance Plan 2020-21 are reasonable.

### Recommendation to the Department of Justice

7. Under section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, I am required to make a recommendation as to whether the Department of Justice should issue a direction to the Policing Board under section 31 of the Act.
8. On the basis of my work, I do not recommend that the Department of Justice issues a direction under section 31 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.



Kieran Donnelly  
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30 September 2021

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## Appendix 2:

### Progress on Recommendations in the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report

#### NIAO Continuous Improvement Arrangements in Policing Report 2020

<b>NIAO Recommendations</b>	
<p>The consultation and engagement between stakeholders, the Board and PSNI on the Policing Plan should identify clear and appropriate outcomes, indicators and baselines which will demonstrate positive impacts for citizens and communities.</p>	<p>Measures and indicators should be based on timely and accurate data and appropriate baselines should be used to demonstrate the delivery of strategic outcomes.</p>
<b>NIPB Management Response</b>	
<b>Accepted</b>	
<b>Progress as at April 2021</b>	
<p><b>The Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-2025 and Performance Plan 2020-21 Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The process for the development of the Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-2025 and Annual Performance Plan 2020-21 commenced on 1 August 2019 with a Policing Plan Strategic Planning event. The event was attended by Board Members, PSNI Service Executive Team (SET) and representatives from both the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJINI). The event identified a number of high level priorities for policing and it was agreed that a Policing Plan Working Group (PPWG), comprising of Board and PSNI representatives would be formed to develop the Plans.</li> <li>The first meeting of the PPWG was held on 23 August 2019 with 6 meetings held in total until the last meeting of 11 February 2020. Within the PPWG, supported by Board officials and PSNI, led and delivered</li> </ul>	<p>on the Terms of Reference to recommend a Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-2025 and Performance Plan 2020-21 to the Board for approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within this journey there was agreement that both Plans would be developed using the principles of Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA). Subsequently the Plans outline Outcomes, Indicators and Measures which clearly demonstrate improvement in police performance, in line with the draft Programme for Government (PfG).</li> <li>At the Policing Plan Strategic Planning Event and the first PPWG the one recommendation from the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Continuous Improvement Arrangements in Policing report 2018 was considered. It was agreed on both occasions to address the recommendation across both Plans. This included the recommendation being considered at all stages of development, with the resolutions subsequently embedded throughout both</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2: (continued)

- Plans in order to identify and implement improvements to the economy, efficiency
- and effectiveness of policing. This included a significant reduction in the number of Indicators and Measures, clearly defined and Outcome based Measures, appropriate baseline usage and a definition of continuous improvement.
  - The development of the Outcomes commenced from the first PPWG meeting when members considered a summary of exercises following the Strategic Planning event of 1 August. As meetings progressed the Outcomes for the consultation, which are what 'we' want for the people of Northern Ireland over the next five years, were agreed as:
    - o We have a safe community;
    - o We have confidence in policing; and
    - o We have engaged and supportive communities.
  - Discussion to develop the Indicators ran parallel to the Outcomes and subsequently 9 draft Indicators were agreed for the public consultation in order to collectively tell the public if 'we' have made progress towards achieving the outcomes.
  - A comprehensive public consultation took place from 21 October 2019 until 6 January 2020. During this period the Board and the PSNI, in partnership with PCSPs, engaged with a range of representative groups and local people. This included a number of public outreach events, supported by an offer to deliver events to groups on their request. The outreach events were supported with a programme of communications activity running alongside in order to further support and raise awareness of the consultation through online media, including an email invite for people to engage with the Consultation which was sent to over 600 people through the Board's communication channels. At the close of the consultation a total of 68 responses were received; 50 from individuals and 18 from representative organisations; a significant increase from the previous Policing Plan consultation for the 2016-2020 Plans. All responses were considered in the development of the final draft Plans.
  - Following the consultation and on analysis of the feedback the PPWG developed 11 Measures. The development of these was also supported alongside a range of supplementary information which was also considered. This included the Minister's Long Term Policing Objectives, Local Policing Review and key strategic policing issues focusing on the most vulnerable in our society.
  - This enabled a Policing Plan and Performance Plan that included three Outcomes, nine Indicators and eleven 11 Measures; a significant reduction when compared to the Policing Plan 2016-20.
  - The final draft Plans were considered by the Policing Plan Strategic Planning Group on 25 February 2020 and agreement was reached to approve the content of the Plans subject to minor amendments. Subsequently, the Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-2025 and the Annual Policing Plan 2020-21 was agreed by the Board at its meeting of 5 March 2020.
  - The Performance Plan 2020-21 was reported to the Board's various Committees

## Appendix 2: Progress on Recommendations in the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report

### Progress as at April 2021 (continued)

throughout the 2020-21 report year. This was inclusive of an OBA Report Card provision for each Measure.

#### **The Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-2025 and Performance Plan 2020-21 Review:**

- In the absence of a 2019 NIAO 'Continued Improvement Arrangements in Policing' Report the Policing Plan Review Working Group (PPRWG) Members agreed to consider the recommendations from the 2018 report and continue with the approach adopted by the PPWG in 2019 when reviewing both Plans.
- The 2020-21 monitoring enabled a number of baselines to be established, however there was recognition by the PPRWG that the work envisaged to establish additional baselines was curtailed due to Covid-19. To support the delivery of further baselines the PPRWG identified the absence of relevant and up-to-date survey information and the necessary requirements for developing survey instruments that would facilitate the creation of baseline data for specific Measures within the Performance Plan. To fill this gap and inform Members,

the Board is currently undertaking scoping work with NISRA partners to develop a bespoke Policing Plan 2020-2025 survey.

- With regards to future monitoring, the Performance Plan 2021-22 contains a Measure specific to crime rates and trends (Measure 1.4.1). As this Measure was in developmental stages in 2020-21, it is expected that recorded data provided by PSNI would be used as a baseline to identify long term trends to plan, move forward and benchmark.
- In light of two new Measures being developed and agreed for inclusion in the Performance Plan 2021-22 the PPRWG recommended the Board establish an Outcome 3 Working Group (O3WG) to identify recommendations to the Board on how Measures 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 will be measured and who will have responsibility for reporting on these Measures. One of the objectives of the O3WG is to determine a measure of effectiveness on a 'year-on-year' basis highlighting those areas where improvements have been made and also highlighting areas of emerging challenges.

## Appendix 3

### PSNI Inspection Programme 2019-20

<b>CJINI Inspections</b>	<b>Status</b>
Treatment of Victim's and Witnesses	Published report July 2020
Police Custody	Published report September 2020
Inspection of Public Protection Arrangements NI (PPANPI)	Published report October 2019
Police Community Safety Partnerships	Published report August 2019
The role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in the criminal justice system	Published report May 2019
Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery	Published report October 2020
Safety of Prisoners	Published report November 2019
Inspection of Domestic Abuse and Violence	Published report June 2019
Child Sexual Exploitation	Published report June 2020
Leadership and development training across the criminal justice system	Ongoing
Effectiveness of Youth Interventions and Diversions	Ongoing
Unannounced Prison Inspections	Published reports June 2020
Approved Premises (Offenders Hostels)	Ongoing
Pre-Release Testing of Prisoners	Published report October 2019
Review of BASE 2	Published report March 2020
PSNI disclosure of information to OPONI	Published report April 2020
Court Custody	Ongoing
Review of Probation Practice	Published report December 2020
Restorative Justice schemes	Ongoing
Local Policing Arrangements	Ongoing
<b>HMIC Inspections</b>	<b>Status</b>
PEEL: Police efficiency and effectiveness	Published report June 2019
An inspection of how well the service treats its workforce and the people of Northern Ireland	Published report September 2020

# NIAO Reports 2020 and 2021

## 2020

Injury on duty schemes for officers in the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Prison Service	10 March 2020
Governance issues in Sport Northern Ireland	11 March 2020
Reducing costs in the PSNI	28 April 2020
The National Fraud Initiative: Northern Ireland	11 June 2020
The LandWeb Project: An Update	16 June 2020
Raising Concerns: A Good Practice Guide for the Northern Ireland Public Sector	25 June 2020
Addiction Services in Northern Ireland	30 June 2020
Workforce planning for nurses and midwives	31 July 2020
Impact Review of Special Educational Needs	29 September 2020
Generating electricity from renewable energy	13 October 2020
Capacity and Capability in the Northern Ireland Civil Service	17 November 2020
Managing Attendance in Central and Local Government	23 November 2020
Managing Children who Offend: Follow-up Review	01 December 2020

## 2021

Management and Delivery of the Personal Independence Payment Contract in Northern Ireland	23 March 2021
Closing the Gap - Social Deprivation and links to Educational Attainment	05 May 2021
Broadband Investment in Northern Ireland	17 June 2021
Sports Sustainability Fund	22 June 2021

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