



## **Continuous improvement arrangements in policing**

Mr Kieran Donnelly CB, the Comptroller and Auditor General, today (12 October 2021) issued his report to the Assembly on continuous improvement arrangements in policing. The report examines the performance summary of the Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) in 2019-20 and the Annual Performance Plan for 2020-21.

Mr Donnelly said:

“The consultation and engagement between stakeholders, the Board and the PSNI on the Policing Plan should identify clear and appropriate outcomes, indicators and baselines which will demonstrate positive impacts for citizens and communities. Measures and indicators should be based on timely and accurate data, and appropriate baselines should be used to demonstrate the delivery of strategic outcomes.”

### Background

As the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for Northern Ireland, Mr Donnelly is 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 Policing Board, the Chief Constable and the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland (the Department). This report from the C&AG reviews the systems underpinning the plan and performance summary. It is not an audit of PSNI’s performance.

### Main Findings

- The C&AG has given an unqualified audit opinion on the on the 2019-20 Performance Summary and the 2020-21 Performance Plan.
- The Board’s Business Plan for 2019-20 included 47 measures structured around 3 Outcomes. Of the total measures, 34 are reported as fully achieved (73 per cent), ten are reported as partially achieved (22 percent) and three are reported as not achieved (5 percent).
- The Policing Plan for 2019-20 set out a total of 17 measures across 9 strategic outcomes, and the PSNI has reported its performance against the Plan in its 2019-20 Annual Report. Although the Annual Report adequately reflects the measures and outcomes included in the 2019-20 Policing Plan, it is difficult to summarise the PSNI’s overall progress as its assessment does not designate a status to each measure as achieved, partially achieved or not achieved.
- A new 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 across 3 outcomes. 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. The report recommends the inclusion of baseline data, as it becomes available, to enhance progress monitoring and support annual trend analysis.

**THIS STATEMENT IS ISSUED ON THE STRICT UNDERSTANDING THAT IT IS NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST BEFORE 00.01 hrs ON 12 OCTOBER 2021**

ENDS

Notes for Editors

1. The Comptroller and Auditor General is Head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (the Audit Office). He and the NIAO are totally independent of Government. He certifies the accounts of Government Departments and a range of other public sector bodies. He has statutory authority to report to the Assembly on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which departments and public bodies use their resources. His reports are published as Assembly papers.
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 its functions, and those of the Chief Constable, are exercised, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Policing Board is required to prepare and publish a performance plan for each financial year, detailing how continuous improvement arrangements are to be implemented. Under the Act, the Board must also prepare and publish a performance summary.
3. The report is available on the Audit Office website at [www.niauditoffice.gov.uk](http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk). The report is embargoed until 00.01 hrs on 12 October 2021.
4. Background briefing can be obtained from the Audit Office by contacting Tomas Wilkinson (028 9025 1073) or Garry Currie (028 9025 1126).