



Northern Ireland Audit Office

MEDIA RELEASE

Continuous improvement arrangements in policing

Mr Kieran Donnelly, the Comptroller and Auditor General, today issued his report to the Assembly on continuous improvement arrangements in policing. The report examines the Policing Plan for 2015-16 and the performance of the Policing Board and PSNI in 2014-15. Mr Donnelly said, "*The Policing Board and PSNI have continued to make progress in developing appropriate targets for the Policing Plan, but there is still room for further improvement. In particular, there are too many targets. A reduction in the number of targets would help to ensure that efforts are clearly focused on improving performance in line with strategic priorities.*"

Background

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 for each financial year, detailing how the continuous improvement arrangements are to be implemented. Under the Act, the Board must also prepare and publish a performance summary. 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 gave an unqualified audit opinion on the Policing Plan for 2015-16 and the performance summary for 2014-15.

- The Policing Plan 2014-15 included 50 measures of performance for PSNI spread across four main themes (confidence in policing; personal policing; professional policing and protective policing). Overall, PSNI achieved 24 (48 per cent) measures, with the remaining 26 measures (52 per cent) not achieved.
- The Annual Report of the Policing Board provided only an overview of performance, headlining PSNI's performance against the 16 quantitative performance measures. PSNI's Annual Report did not summarise the overall performance against all measures set in the Policing Plan. As a result, the reader may not fully understand the overall performance achieved from reading the annual reports alone.
- The 2015-16 Plan comprises 11 outcomes, with 16 associated performance indicators and a further 41 associated performance measures. The Plan has an increased number of performance measures expressed in quantitative terms, 32 compared to 16 in last year's Plan.
- Although the 2014-15 Plan had more quantitative measures, greater consideration needs to be given to ensure that these measures are meaningful. There remains a need for the further development of performance measures which are specific, measurable and focused on outcomes rather than activities.

THIS STATEMENT IS ISSUED ON THE STRICT UNDERSTANDING THAT IT IS NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST BEFORE 00.01 hrs ON Tuesday 8^h March 2016

Key Recommendations

- The Board and the PSNI should report on all performance measures set out in the Policing Plan.
- The Board and PSNI should reduce the overall number of performance indicators and measures in future Policing Plans, focusing on key aspects of policing performance in line with the Board's and the PSNI's strategic priorities.

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. This report is available on the Audit Office website at www.niauditoffice.gov.uk. The report is embargoed until 00.01 hrs on Tuesday 8 March 2016.
3. Background briefing can be obtained from the Audit Office by contacting Neil Gray (028 9025 4345) or Suzanne Walsh (028 9025 1021).