



Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
of Constabulary for Scotland



# MANAGING IMPROVEMENT

A Thematic Inspection of Performance Management  
in the Scottish Police Service



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In common with other public sector services, the police operate in an environment where performance is closely monitored to ensure that communities receive a level of service which represents and provides value for money. The current level of spending on policing in Scotland is £1 billion, with governance of each force provided by a tripartite arrangement of the chief constable, the police authority and the Scottish Executive. The introduction of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 formalised a Best Value framework which enabled police forces (and police authorities) to be held to account for the delivery of continuous improvement. Further accountability in relation to resource management currently applies, in keeping with the introduction of the Scottish Executive's Efficient Government initiative, whereby the Scottish police service must contribute its share of efficiency savings during the 2005-2008 spending review period.

Demonstrating good performance in a policing context is a complex matter if one is to consider the wide spectrum of police work, from public order and road safety to international terrorism. When one further considers the commitment involved in community planning and the advancement of community well-being, the task of determining the overall performance of an individual police force, the overall performance of the Scottish police service as a whole or the individual contribution to performance made by a force to achieving outcomes in the joint advancement of community safety in its local area becomes more difficult. Of course, a simple view of police performance has traditionally been focused on recorded levels of crime and over recent years there has been a relatively steady fall across Scotland, notwithstanding the recent effects of the Scottish Crime Recording Standard. However, it would be wrong to consider this particular trend as being the single, most relevant indication of police performance at national or local level. Such an issue needs to be considered in context.

Indeed, the subject of performance management in general and the range of words and phrases used to discuss it are themselves often misunderstood and HMIC has taken the opportunity to examine the basis for performance management, its terminology and its applicability to policing in Scotland. In this regard, it identifies 5 common building blocks which provide a useful core template against which the state of performance management in the Scottish police service can be assessed:

- leadership
- planning and priority setting
- ownership and accountability
- review
- meaningful data capture and analysis.

Throughout the inspection, HMIC found many individual examples of good practice currently demonstrated in each of these areas. Particularly with regard to leadership, ownership and accountability and review, HMIC found evidence of strong visible strategic leadership, positive developments in internal structured accountability and well established internal performance review and public performance reporting arrangements. In contrast, HMIC found some evidence of processes for communicating organisational priorities to front-line operational officers and those for reviewing performance of support departments, to be underdeveloped.

However, it was in the areas of planning and priority setting and meaningful data capture and analysis that HMIC found substantial scope for development, mainly at a national level.

The National Intelligence Model (NIM) has become firmly established as a policing model to support and drive operational policing. HMIC found that forces were at different stages of fully integrating the NIM within business planning arrangements, an annual cyclical process which, in general, has become well-established across all forces and involves local consultation, indicator setting and performance review. These arrangements vary across forces but HMIC has identified a number of examples of noteworthy practice in this area.

Public debate at a national level, however, considers policing across the whole of Scotland. In that regard, police performance is measured collectively and individually by focusing on a range of national priorities and measures of accountability established by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS), the Scottish Executive and the Accounts Commission. While consultation arrangements exist to inform the identification of these measures, HMIC was struck by the limited relationship and connectivity that existed between the priorities identified by each body. In addition, it is difficult to establish the rationale for the identification of these particular suites of measurements, none of which extends to encompass performance measurement across the full range of policing activity.

HMIC identifies substantial scope for improving the process of priority setting, particularly at a national level. This report offers some principles, including full integration of the NIM, which would enable ACPOS and, therefore, the Scottish Executive and the Accounts Commission, to develop a fuller strategic oversight of policing. Engaging each in a single strategic steering group, would enable a co-ordinated approach to performance measurement and reporting for the Scottish police service to be established.

It is suggested that a systematic, co-ordinated and transparent process for priority setting at a national level, which allows for stakeholder consultation, enables public input to be incorporated and is driven jointly by local demand and available evidence, be established. Such a process would allow, for example, community issues, such as anti-social behaviour, to be balanced more easily with high level concerns, such as organised crime, when establishing national priorities.

However, HMIC recognises that establishing a systematic approach to performance monitoring which meets the needs of all partners, will require a fundamental review of existing performance indicators and targets and the processes for identifying these.

Currently, the development of electronic systems within forces which provides timely and robust performance data is in its infancy. HMIC is, however, aware of consideration being given by a number of forces to develop such an arrangement and it recommends the early introduction of IT support in this area which maximises the potential to hold and access meaningful information in a common manner across all forces. Such a development would help to provide clear reliable data which can be used to measure performance both locally and nationally. This in turn could assist in identifying local and national priorities, and contribute to the aim of performance management within the Scottish police service to secure continuous improvement in the delivery of its services.

HMIC had difficulty in assessing the extent to which the Scottish police service had embraced a performance culture. It saw fine examples of processes which contribute to effective performance management in all forces. Of course, the idea of performance in a policing context must always be considered with caution to ensure that good performance, translated to mean the attainment of a specific target, does not get in the way of good or even ethical policing, perhaps where there is a need for justifiable discretion.

Much has been achieved in developing performance management but, if meaningful progress is to be achieved in considering the performance of the Scottish police service, then ACPOS and its partners need to build on existing relationships and work together to provide a co-ordinated outcome. While this will naturally develop with the increasing sophistication of performance measurement in a community planning context, it is important to progress with this work now.



## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation 1

HMIC recommends that ACPOS, through the existing work of the NIM Development Team, maximise its efforts to establish compliance with the NIM Minimum Standards (1) across Scottish forces. (Page 25)

### Recommendation 2

HMIC recommends that ACPOS consider the training needs of the service around issues of indicator and target setting. (Page 31)

### Recommendation 3

HMIC recommends that ACPOS engage with the Scottish Executive to consider establishing a mechanism for feeding evidence from force consultation exercises into the design of the policing questions in the Scottish Crime and Victimization Survey, and allow its use for future performance monitoring. (Page 40)

### Recommendation 4

HMIC recommends that ACPOS engage with NCIS with a view to determining a mechanism to provide strategic analysis which looks across NIM levels 1, 2 and 3 and which will inform the Scottish Strategic Assessment and allow a control strategy to be set reflecting operational policing priorities at local, force and national level. (Page 44)

### Recommendation 5

HMIC recommends that ACPOS establish a formal arrangement whereby strategic oversight can be applied to the setting of national priorities which reflect the wide range of services the Scottish police service provides. The arrangement should include consultation with the Scottish Executive and the Accounts Commission and be timed to align with business planning cycles. (Page 46)

## Recommendation 6

HMIC recommends that ACPOS engage with the Scottish Executive and Audit Scotland towards the establishment of a strategic steering group, involving representation from each, to co-ordinate performance measurement and reporting in the Scottish police service. It also recommends that a priority area of activity for the strategic steering group should be a fundamental review of existing performance indicators and targets and the processes for identifying these, with a view to establishing a systematic approach to performance monitoring which meets the needs of all partners. (Page 47)

## Recommendation 7

HMIC recommends that forces and common police services continue to ensure that organisational priorities are effectively translated in a meaningful way to all members of staff whatever their role. (Page 51)

## Recommendation 8

HMIC recommends that forces and common police services ensure that they have structured processes which ensure that performance of the whole organisation, including support departments, is reviewed and that actions arising therefrom are appropriately pursued. (Page 67)

## Recommendation 9

HMIC recommends that forces and common police services establish systems whereby robust performance data can be captured easily and on a timely basis. Such data should be readily accessible, involving a minimum of bureaucracy in the process. (Page 73)

## Recommendation 10

HMIC recommends that ACPOS, in liaison with the Scottish Executive, pursue the procurement of a suitable common IT solution to support performance management across all Scottish forces, as a top priority. (Page 74)

# PREAMBLE

## Role of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)

HMIC has a statutory duty under section 33(3) of the Police (Scotland) Act 1967 to report to Scottish Ministers on the effectiveness and efficiency of the police service in Scotland. This duty is discharged through primary and review inspections of forces and common police services and also through conducting thematic inspections on areas of particular interest or concern.

The main objective of thematic inspections is to establish the state of current practice within the Scottish police service by consulting with the various stakeholders and then, taking account of developments and good practice in other police forces or organisations, provide comment and recommendations to move the service forward within that particular field of policing.

## Context of the Thematic Inspection of Performance Management in Scotland

The current level of spending on policing in Scotland is £1 billion. Governance is provided by a tripartite arrangement of chief constables, police authorities and the Scottish Executive. HMIC and Audit Scotland, on behalf of the Accounts Commission, provide regular inspection and audit arrangements and, while differing in emphasis and chronology, act as a stimulus for maintaining or improving police performance at individual force and national levels. Forces also demonstrate accountability through public performance reporting against local and force policing plans and at a national level by reference to the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) Policing Priorities for Scotland 2003-2006.

However, while the current map of police performance management and accountability in Scotland can be shown to be well populated, there is an increased focus by the Scottish Executive on performance management within the public sector generally. The emergence of a centrally driven Police Performance and Assessment Framework (PPAF) in England and Wales, linked to a National Policing Plan, and the challenge of measuring activity across partnership working, are further influences in the debate about how best to develop further a positive performance culture in Scotland.

The question as to how the Scottish police service can most effectively demonstrate performance over the full spectrum of police work is not a new one. Public satisfaction with the service provided must be considered an important indicator of success and, in Scotland, Accounts Commission figures demonstrate a level of satisfaction consistently between 75% and 90%. For many people, however, recorded crime remains the definitive measure of police performance. In this regard it is an extremely positive message that in the period up to April 2004, when the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) was introduced, the Scottish police service had experienced a period of sustained reduction in overall recorded crime, while witnessing a corresponding increase in detection rates.

Yet crime figures can be misleading or, at times, obscure the true picture, if merely reported without contextual background. Factors affecting crime and detection rates are diverse, from public under-reporting to the police use of special initiatives, from new technology to new legislation, as well as social and geographic variances, all of which bear explanation when publishing results. In his Annual Report for 2002-2003, Sir Roy Cameron, then Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMCIC), commented:

*“We have previously registered a health warning on the validity of founding on recorded crime statistics for comparative purposes... With an increasing focus on performance indicators, we consider these reservations to remain relevant.”*

So, while crime and crime solvency rates can be useful indicators of performance if viewed as part of a wider suite of measures, they must also be recorded consistently and to a common standard. The SCRS has recently been introduced to address this issue and is itself the subject of a thematic inspection by HMIC.

The need for some form of overarching monitoring arrangement for Scotland was commented upon in the most recent Annual Report of HMCIC (2003-2004). Referring to ongoing work by ACPOS, the report, at Chapter 4, states:

*“This year, work has begun on developing a framework to provide centralised co-ordination and oversight of force responses to the various national reporting requirements. These key performance indicators require a combined response from the Scottish police service and this ACPOS led initiative should significantly enhance the police service’s ability collectively to collate, monitor, evaluate and report on performance. HMIC strongly supports this development and will assist where appropriate.”*

Against this background, HMIC is well placed to draw on the positive work already being undertaken in Scotland in relation to performance management, both at force and national level.

### **Aim**

The aim of the thematic inspection is to undertake an examination of the current state of performance management within the Scottish police service.

### **Objectives**

The objectives are to:

- consider the leadership, policy and strategy, people, partnership and resources and processes of performance management and accountability across Scotland
- examine the role of performance management in developing strategies and policies, business planning and accountability
- consider the attributes of successful performance systems and measures
- identify instances of good practice
- make recommendations designed to ensure continuous improvement of the service provided by the police in Scotland.

## Methodology

Following an initial literature review and desktop research, HMIC visited 6 police forces in England, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Home Office, the Police Standards Unit and HMIC (England and Wales), together with non police organisations such as NHSScotland and the Fire Service in the public sector and the Royal Bank of Scotland in the private sector. HMIC sought academic opinion from the Universities of Aston, Edinburgh, Manchester, Newcastle and University College London.

Liaison was established with representatives of all relevant Scottish Executive departments, Audit Scotland, ACPOS, the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents (ASPS), the Scottish Police Federation and UNISON.

In previous thematic inspections, value has been derived from seeking out good practice internationally. Consideration was specifically given to this during the research phase of the inspection but after careful scrutiny of performance management texts, policing databases and through consultation with practitioners, the team formed the view that there was little to be gained from fieldwork visits to policing organisations which had already been the subject of analysis and comment in contemporary literature and on the internet. As an example, since the development of 'Compstat' in various US cities since the late 1990s, elements have been adopted in UK policing and widely discussed by commentators.

The inspection of all 8 Scottish Forces and the 4 common police services, namely the Scottish Police College (SPC), the Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency (SDEA), the Scottish Criminal Record Office (SCRO) and the Scottish Police Information Strategy (SPIS), was conducted in April and May 2005, preceded by the completion of a comprehensive 32 question protocol.

The protocol was adapted from the standard HMIC inspection format, based on the familiar EFQM model, although subsequently the main headings of this report were amended to reflect more appropriately the scope of police performance management.

Analysis of the responses provided a wealth of detailed information, permitting the inspection team to focus on the most relevant issues during the fieldwork visits. Fieldwork consisted of examination of systems and reports and interviews with police and support staff across a range of levels and responsibilities. An important aspect of this work was the face to face interviews with chief constables and directors of common police services.

HMIC acknowledges the valuable assistance of the nominated liaison officers in collating the return of the protocols and in negotiating workable timetables in respect of the visits.

At various points the report highlights a range of activity in the Scottish police service and beyond, much of which can be considered to be good practice.

The inspection was carried out by HMIC staff under the direction of Kenny McInnes, Assistant Inspector of Constabulary.



# CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 WHAT IS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT?

In seeking to define 'performance management' it is clear that the term is not new to the police service, nor are the challenges involved in embracing the concept unique to policing. There are common principles across the private and public sectors and HMIC has attempted to draw on relevant sources in this report.

Enter 'performance management' into any internet search engine in an attempt to better define the phrase, and the casual researcher is immediately overwhelmed by the sheer scope of literature on the subject.

While the large body of available material speaks volumes for the importance placed on the subject, particularly in the public sector, it also initially serves to disguise the simple yet fundamental function of performance management, which in police terms, is to maintain and improve the service to the public.

This is clearly emphasised in the following references, which are drawn from both police and non-police literature:

*"Performance management is not an end in itself. It's one of a set of tools, a way of working, that helps you to identify what needs doing, a means to deliver improvement and a way to maintain high quality services."* Improvement Network, 2005

*"Both private and public sector organisations face increasing demands to demonstrate improvements in their performance. This requires a strong understanding of past and present performance, enabling the appropriate actions to be taken to ensure organisational aims are achieved. In short, performance management is taking action in response to actual performance to make outcomes better than they would otherwise be."* 'Managing Police Performance - A Practical Guide to Performance Management', Home Office et al, 2004

*"Performance management is a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organisational performance. As such, it establishes shared understanding about what is to be achieved and an approach to leading and developing people which will ensure that it is achieved."* 'Performance Management: the New Realities', Armstrong and Baron, 1998

*"The term performance management system can be misleading. It can give the impression that it is something separate, something in addition to what goes on in the day to day planning and management of the authority. Rather than being separate, effective performance management arrangements can help integrate planning, review, financial management and improvement systems, to enable managers to make informed decisions and improve services."* 'A Manager's Guide to Performance Management', Improvement and Development Agency, 2004

*“Managing performance is about more than having an effective performance management system. The elements of performance management, targets, indicators, plans and so on, are important, but they are not enough by themselves. In councils that are good at managing their performance, the people involved, councillors and staff, have a shared understanding of the Council’s priorities and of what they need to do to realise those priorities. Because people know what matters most, they can solve problems and overcome barriers quickly. They recognise that the point of managing performance is not to hit targets and fulfil plans as ends in themselves, but to do so in a way that produces high-quality services for local people.”* Audit Commission, 2003.

Performance management is therefore a process, not an event, which operates as part of a continuous business planning cycle. It does not work in isolation, but rather in a holistic fashion, pervading every aspect of the organisation. In performance management terms, the aim should be to create a culture where high standards and quality of service are part of everyday life of the organisation.

A ‘culture’ may be defined as a pattern of shared beliefs, values and assumptions which are acquired over time and which shape behaviour within an organisation. But policing is dynamic and cannot sit back and wait for something to develop. A conscious effort is required to make it happen. If people are the key to service delivery and improvement, leadership is arguably the driving force towards achieving it, through actively seeking to establish and reinforce the supporting performance culture and empowering them to act where appropriate.

HMIC considers the development of a fully formed culture of performance management to be a critical aspiration for the Scottish police service, and has therefore sought evidence from forces and common police services, throughout the inspection process, as to what extent this is currently being achieved.

## 1.2 POTENTIAL CONFUSION OF TERMS

While the meaning of performance management in the above terms appears straightforward, nevertheless HMIC has noted, both in the course of research and in practice, that it can be taken to mean different things to different people. This may be due, in part, to a lack of knowledge on the part of the practitioners but also as a result of the tendency for commentators to use some phrases and terms interchangeably. Whatever the reason, the potential for confusion exists.

For the avoidance of doubt, the following phrases have been taken by HMIC to mean as indicated below in a policing context:

**Inputs** are the resources that contribute to production or delivery, such as staff, physical assets and equipment.

**Outputs** are the products or services of the organisation, such as stop searches or actual policing services provided.



**Outcomes** are the impacts or consequences for the community arising from policing activity, such as to create safer and stronger communities.

**Indicators** are the same as performance measures which are monitored to inform on the achievement of an organisational priority, such as monitoring crime rates to determine whether crime is reducing.

**Targets** express a specific level of performance the organisation is seeking to achieve.

**Performance measurement** consists of the collection and collation of quantitative and qualitative data and information relating to performance, the processing of the data and its presentation in the form of reports, figures and charts. Performance indicators (PIs) feature heavily in this process but performance measurement is not synonymous with performance management.

**Performance monitoring** involves examining the results of performance measurement, assessing any variations in performance indicators and making value judgements about performance, for example, good, bad, indifferent, better, worse, unchanged.

**Performance management**, as noted above, is a process aimed at improving or maintaining performance and depends heavily on performance measurement and monitoring.

**A performance management system** establishes a framework for planning, monitoring and revising what an organisation does, towards achieving improvement.

### 1.3 BUILDING BLOCKS FOR AN EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Having established that a performance management system is a framework, what might it look like and how might this approach assist HMIC in structuring this report?

There is a plethora of performance management models and general guidance, produced both by academics and, notably, in the public sector. While too numerous to itemise individually, they include, in England and Wales, agencies such as the Audit Commission, the National Audit Office, the Improvement and Development Agency (I&Dea), HM Treasury, Cabinet Office, Home Office and Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). Distinctive Scottish sources are less numerous but, in the current context, this is considered to be of little material consequence, as the basic principles are intended to be applicable generically to all public services.

However, it has proved useful to consider the statutory guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. This makes clear to local authorities, police authorities and chief constables what they are expected to demonstrate in fulfilment of their duty of Best Value, the essence of which is to secure continuous improvement in performance. This is complemented by an Audit Scotland guide for councils on the same topic.

More detailed research has allowed HMIC to distil from a number of the guidance documents, the main components considered crucial to an effective system to manage performance. Each of these is examined briefly in turn.

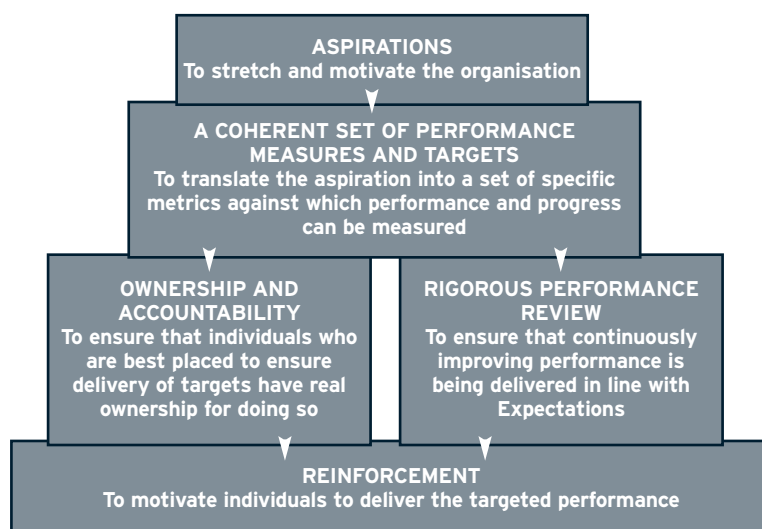
### Devolving decision making:<sup>1</sup>



The model was developed by investigating best practice in health, education, policing and local government. The 5 critical features are largely self explanatory. To achieve an effective performance management system one needs:

- real time, robust performance information
- strong leadership and a performance culture
- individual accountability
- challenging review processes
- transparent rewards and sanctions.

### Measuring the Performance of Government Departments:<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Devolving decision making: 1 - Delivering better public services: refining targets and performance management - HM Treasury and Cabinet Office, March 2004

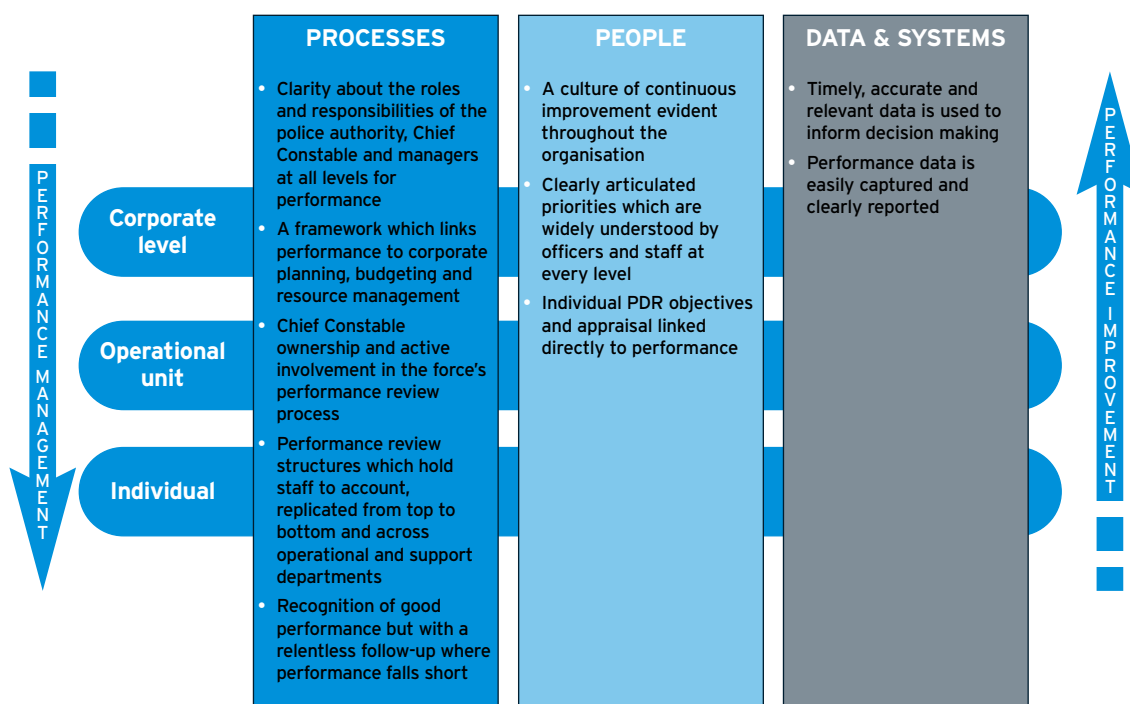
<sup>2</sup> Measuring the Performance of Government Departments - A Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, March 2001

This model is also advocated in A Manager’s Guide to Performance Management,<sup>3</sup> and Choosing the Right Fabric, a Framework for Performance Information<sup>4</sup> and has its origins in Meeting the Challenge.<sup>5</sup>

While the terminology is different, the key features are broadly similar:

- aspirations align with an organisational vision and priorities
- coherent performance measures and targets provide the basis of management information
- ownership and accountability and rigorous review are self evident
- reinforcement equates to leadership driving a performance culture.

**Managing Police Performance: A Practical Guide to Performance Management:<sup>6</sup>**



The guide aims to set out the key principles of performance management along with practical advice for implementing an effective performance management regime in a force or Basic Command Unit (BCU). It draws on substantial improvement programmes conducted in two English forces, by the Police Standards Unit (PSU) and a management consultancy. While specifically applicable to England and Wales, the core information in the guide is transferable to any organisation and of relevance to practitioners in Scotland.

The framework shown divides a police force into 3 tiers - corporate, operational and individual - and emphasises the need to get performance management right at each level.

3 A Manager’s Guide to Performance Management - Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA) and Audit Commission, 2004  
 4 Choosing the Right Fabric, a Framework for Performance Information - HM Treasury, 2000  
 5 Meeting the Challenge, Public Services Productivity Panel - HM Treasury, 2000  
 6 Managing Police Performance: A Practical Guide to Performance Management - Police Standards Unit and Accenture in association with HMIC, ACPO, et al, 2004

This is achieved across the organisation through 3 headings, each of which sub-divide into some of the more detailed characteristics reflected in the previous models:

- processes - includes clarity of roles at all levels, integrated planning and performance, leadership and review
- people - includes establishing an improvement culture, clearly articulated priorities with individual appraisal linked to performance against priorities
- data and systems - includes the need for timely, accurate and relevant data which is easily captured and reported.

#### **The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 - Best Value Guidance:<sup>7</sup>**

The statutory framework for Best Value under the Act sets out the criteria which Audit Scotland, on behalf of the Accounts Commission, will look for when carrying out a Best Value and Community Planning audit. While currently only applied in practice to local authorities, it is planned that the Scottish police service will be the subject of a similar form of audit by Audit Scotland, in early course. Like performance management, Best Value seeks to deliver continuous improvement.

An authority, which secures Best Value, will be able to demonstrate:

- commitment and leadership
- responsiveness and consultation
- sound governance (including performance management systems)
- sound management of resources
- use of review and options appraisal
- competitiveness and trading
- sustainable development
- equal opportunities
- joint working
- accountability.

HMIC has noted that the ACPOS Finance and Best Value Standing Committee Annual Report 2003-2004 is already structured according to these criteria.

There is currently no single accepted model of a performance management system across the police service, nor does HMIC advocate there should be. Systems will vary across forces and evolve over time to reflect different circumstances. From the foregoing examples, it is however possible to identify a number of key 'building blocks', common to each, which are critical to an effective performance management system for the police.

<sup>7</sup> The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 - Best Value Guidance - Scottish Executive, 2004

HMIC considers there are 5 common building blocks or characteristics which provide a useful core template against which to assess the current state of performance management in the Scottish police service. These will form the main chapter headings in the report. The integrity of the EFQM methodology, used initially in the inspection protocol, is maintained with equivalent EFQM headings shown in brackets.

**Leadership** (leadership) - how the behaviour and actions of management at all levels inspires, promotes and supports a culture of continuous improvement.

**Planning and priority setting** (policy and strategy, partnerships and resources) - how the organisation determines its priorities, including the use of local consultation.

**Ownership and accountability** (people and processes) - how the organisation itself is accountable to the public and how priorities are communicated to individuals who are held accountable for delivery and given empowerment to act.

**Review** (people and processes) - how performance review structures which challenge and support staff and processes are replicated from top to bottom in the organisation.

**Meaningful data capture and analysis** (processes and results) - how timely, robust and easily captured performance data is used to inform decision making at all levels of the service.

#### 1.4 PUBLIC SECTOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN SCOTLAND

The Scottish Executive vision for high quality public services broadly mirrors the improvement aspirations of UK central government, and is set out in the document, 'A Partnership for a Better Scotland'.<sup>8</sup> Current spending review plans and targets are arranged by department in 'Building a Better Scotland, Spending Proposals 2005-2008'.<sup>9</sup>

The Scottish Executive Justice Department portfolio includes police, fire, criminal justice, Scottish Courts Service and the Scottish Prison Service, and has the overall aim of creating safer stronger communities.

The way in which Scottish Executive departments are structured further emphasises its continuing focus on public service performance. A Performance and Improvement Division sits within the Public Services Group and has a focus on providing support to local authorities and public bodies around the performance improvement agenda. There are 4 main areas of activity, all of which potentially impact on the police service:

- Local Government Improvement Team
- Community Planning Team
- Better Cities Team
- Best Value Team.

<sup>8</sup> A Partnership for a Better Scotland: Partnership Agreement - Scottish Executive, 2003

<sup>9</sup> Building a Better Scotland, Spending Proposals 2005-2008: Enterprise, Opportunity, Fairness - Scottish Executive, 2004

Best Value, originally a replacement for compulsory competitive tendering, is a duty that applies to local authorities and the Scottish police service. It became a statutory responsibility, under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, as part of the Scottish Executive's drive to modernise the way in which public services are provided. Under Best Value, the Scottish police service must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way it exercises its functions, having regard to a combination of economy, effectiveness and efficiency.

Public bodies have developed their performance management systems to enhance service delivery and improve their accountability. An example of this is the development of the Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) in NHSScotland. Audit Scotland carries out performance audits of the organisation and management of services, taking account of clinical standards. In addition, local authorities have continued to develop their performance management systems which are also subject to regular scrutiny by Audit Scotland through their Best Value and Community Planning audits.

Audit Scotland, a statutory body established in April 2000, was set up to provide services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission, together ensuring that the Scottish Executive and public sector bodies in Scotland are held to account for the proper, efficient and effective use of public money. The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1992 requires the Accounts Commission to give such directions as it thinks fit for requiring councils, fire and police authorities to publish information to allow comparisons in performance. The results of these directions are commonly known as Statutory Performance Indicators.

In terms of public access to all types of performance information held by public bodies, the Freedom of Information Act 2002, which came into effect in January 2005, provides a further impetus to the police service to ensure its systems are robust enough to sustain close enquiry, without at the same time becoming overly bureaucratic.

## 1.5 EXTERNAL MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SCOTTISH POLICE SERVICE

Given the foregoing, there is an expectation that the police will develop, use, monitor and publish information on performance both at a local level and nationally. This is currently achieved through:

- reporting on progress against the ACPOS Policing Priorities
- reporting on Scottish Executive spending review targets
- reporting on Accounts Commission statutory performance indicators
- the statutory duty to secure Best Value
- HMIC inspections, reviews and statistical return for its annual report
- performance reporting to respective police authorities and the wider public.

It is apparent, however, that some development of the current performance management arrangements is required. In May 2003 ACPOS published its Policing Priorities for Scotland 2003 - 2006 which set out the strategic priorities for the coming years. At this time the need was recognised:

*“to develop and implement an agreed and effective framework for the management of police performance to ensure the Scottish police service is consistently able to collect, record, develop, use and report accurately, required performance information in the determined areas of business.”*

Over the last 2 years, ACPOS has been actively engaged in determining that framework. In May 2005, it established a Performance Management Business Area. HMIC is aware that a report from a short term working group established under the ACPOS Best Value Sub Committee, entitled "Developing a Performance Assessment Model for ACPOS", is currently under consideration. Further developments are awaited in due course. A key area of this work centres around the need for performance data that is timely, accurate, relevant and is easily captured.

In addition, the ACPOS Best Value Sub Committee recently established a sub group to review target setting at a national level, specifically addressing:

- difficulties inherent in setting Scottish Executive 3 year targets which are subject to spending review every 2 years
- baselines utilised
- national versus local target setting
- whether the current suite of indicators reflects the range of services provided by the police service
- the handling of performance information by the media.

Such were the difficulties encountered around the subject matter, the group has not yet resolved fully these issues and concluded that there would be value in a fundamental review of the whole target and indicator setting process.

In addition, the Accounts Commission stated in its report on Police and fire Performance Indicators 2003/2004<sup>10</sup> that some doubts existed regarding the reliability of some of the information provided by some forces. An ACPOS review team, again established under the Best Value Sub Committee, has since reported and an Action Plan has recently been implemented.

HMIC notes the considerable work undertaken and in progress in this respect, the basis of which is vital to effective performance management across the Scottish police service.

## 1.6 EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT

The commitment to improve the performance of public services is complemented by raising efficiency through best use of resources. The potential benefit, in terms of better use of financial resources, is not inconsiderable. Given also that finance for public services is unlikely to increase in relative terms, then additional resources for policing may only come from efficiency gains.

<sup>10</sup> Police and fire Performance Indicators 2003/2004, Comparing the performance of Scottish Councils - Audit Scotland, December 2004

'Building a Better Scotland, Efficient Government - Securing Efficiency, Effectiveness and Productivity',<sup>11</sup> builds on the Best Value regime and Modernising Government agenda. Efficiency savings for all departments, including the Justice Department, are expected to yield £745 million cash releasing savings during the 2005-2008 Spending Review period into which it is incorporated. Further time releasing savings will also be required. The Scottish police service will be expected to contribute to the overall Justice Department target of £30 million cash releasing savings.

In addition, a number of 'work streams' will be examined to release further cash savings, including procurement, managing absence, asset management, shared support services and streamlining bureaucracy.

With regard to bureaucracy, two specific topics are considered by HMIC to be of particular moment to the monitoring of performance. Firstly, the Scottish Executive has established a Joint Scrutiny Forum to develop better arrangements for:

- sharing information
- joint inspection
- exchange of best practice
- common standards and harmonisation of data collection standards.

HMIC is participating in this work and will monitor progress with interest.

Secondly, it is the Scottish Executive's intention to improve and streamline local government performance information, especially in respect of community planning. This will be achieved through close liaison with relevant stakeholders, in order to minimise duplication of effort, standardise requirements and thereby add value.

To ensure delivery, all departments, including the Justice Department, and public bodies are being required to develop project plans for their efficient government projects, including identified lead roles, governance arrangement measures for identifying and tracking benefits and risk management. Thus the police service is encountering further demands in terms of managing its performance, in addition to those already identified.

HMIC notes that efficiency savings are currently monitored and collated by individual forces, with information provided to ACPOS where it is published in its 'Annual Best Value Report'.

The Efficient Government agenda within the Scottish Executive is proving to be something of a catalyst in seeking to evaluate best practice in respect of performance management. HMIC's attention has been drawn to a pilot scheme, newly commenced by the Scottish Executive Performance and Innovation Unit, which has its roots in the 'Compstat' policing model pioneered in New York in the late 1990s.

<sup>11</sup> Building a Better Scotland, Efficient Government - Securing Efficiency, Effectiveness and Productivity - Scottish Executive, 2004



The project will conduct 3 pilot studies in Aberdeen, Orkney and Edinburgh. The aim is to demonstrate the extent to which the 'Citistat' model, used in Baltimore USA, can be used to inform resource allocation, increase accountability, embed continuous improvement principles and obtain productivity savings within a local authority. In policy terms, the project is prompted both by the Efficient Government Initiative and by the Executive's drive for continuous improvement in service delivery. It highlights the Scottish Executive's willingness to improve public sector performance by referencing good practice from elsewhere.

Having briefly examined the background to police performance management in general, the particular requirements and arrangements for monitoring police performance in Scotland, as well as some of the contemporary influencing factors, this report will now seek to assess the current state of performance management across the Scottish police service against the identified building blocks of:

- leadership
- planning and priority setting
- ownership and accountability
- review
- meaningful data capture and analysis.

# CHAPTER TWO

Leadership

# LEADERSHIP

The Audit Commission publication, 'Performance Breakthroughs',<sup>12</sup> revealed that managers expressed similar reasons when asked why performance management was not working effectively in their area of business. Of the many underlying factors contributing to these negative feelings, number one was *"leaders aren't interested"*.

With reference to the five building blocks, effective leadership is critical to the successful development of a performance culture. This will ideally start with the chief officer team developing and promoting a vision for the organisation, setting out clear ethical policing principles, translating this into priorities via the planning process and personally articulating what this means in performance terms for all staff.

Leading by example is not just a trite management phrase. While it starts from the top, leaders at every level need to be visible in developing a positive management culture in which high performance is the norm.

How the behaviour and actions of management in general, and senior management in particular, inspire, promote and support a culture of performance, translates across most of the characteristics of a performance management system.

## 2.1 VISION

A traditional definition of leadership might include the perception of a leader as a figurehead, through whom the collective aspirations of the organisation are reflected and who embodies 'what the organisation is all about' both for staff and the public.

HMIC has found the manner in which these strategic aspirations are published and communicated is broadly similar across the Scottish police service, with variations on Vision and Mission Statements, Statements of Purpose, Community Promise etc, forming part of or contained in a force or corporate business plan. A feature of all is the high profile taken by the chief constable or common police service director, in the foreword or introductory part of the document in which the ethos of the organisation is established.

## 2.2 VISIBILITY

HMIC is pleased to report ample evidence that chief officers, directors and other members of the force executive team play a very active role in terms of visible, dynamic leadership. This is demonstrated in a myriad of ways which vary according to individual management style and situation.

Crucially, it is manifested in the way in which the vision and priorities of the organisation are presented and promoted, internally to all staff and externally to the public. It is also shown at strategic level, through forging and cultivating partnerships with other agencies, in formal relationships with elected representatives and the police authority or other governing arrangements, and in how the public face of the organisation is represented in the media.

<sup>12</sup> Performance Breakthroughs: Improving Performance in Public Sector Organisations - Audit Commission, 2002

As might be anticipated, there is a commonality of approach across many of the organisations inspected. A list of practical examples of visible strategic leadership observed by HMIC includes:

- A structured programme of visits by chief officers and members of the executive team to operational units and departments to articulate priorities, objectives, performance and explore other issues. This provides an opportunity to discuss matters directly with staff and managers. Although levels of formality vary, minuted debriefs are in some cases carried out, allowing for feedback and follow up.
- Participation in all relevant strategic meetings, for example, Community Planning and Criminal Justice Boards.
- Chairing and championing key strategic performance management meetings and participating in the performance review process at the appropriate level.
- Personally encouraging and acknowledging staff contributions to suggestion schemes and rewarding good practice through an awards scheme or similar process.
- Use of force or organisational publications to personalise key issues.
- Where appropriate, making full use of 'open forum' style consultation days, as part of an overall business planning cycle, to articulate the vision and ethos of the force or organisation.
- Utilising available information technology (intranet, video links, e-mail, messaging etc), to communicate key policies or performance related initiatives to a wide audience.

Direct personal involvement by senior management at all levels is generally considered more effective in communicating vital strategic messages. Where information is cascaded by others or through memoranda or orders, it is important that it is done in a structured way. The following, while by no means exhaustive, are a number of useful examples noted by HMIC:

Within **Northern Constabulary** 'Team Brief' is an effective leadership tool that not only disseminates information quickly and accurately but also allows the sharing and discussion of matters relevant to staff.

The Core Brief is prepared approximately every fifth week and delivered on dates to coincide with the force Policy Forum wherever possible.

The Chief Constable's Briefing Team will brief their respective teams within 48 hours. This will, wherever possible, be done face to face in teams. Third, and in some cases, fourth level teams will be briefed within a further 4 days. Once again, this is done face to face in teams.

In **Tayside Police** the 'FOCUS' electronic briefing board is used by Divisional Commanders to post messages and key priorities to staff. All operational officers and selected members of support staff have access to this briefing board. Statistics on performance are also posted on this briefing board, providing a mechanism for communicating performance information linked to priorities and a way of acknowledging good work.

As part of a commitment to staff awareness and consultation, the **Scottish Criminal Record Office** undertakes a structured programme of informal meetings which take place over a buffet lunch known as 'One Lunch'. Consultation meetings, chaired by the Deputy Director occur twice yearly, while awareness meetings, chaired by Bureau Heads, take place quarterly. A representative sample of staff is encouraged to attend.

A summary of points raised is recorded which, along with feedback, becomes available to all staff via the intranet.

All staff at the **Scottish Police College** are expected to attend at least one 'Let's Talk' meeting per year, by invitation. The meeting is informal in nature and is chaired by a member of the College Executive. The focus of the meeting is to permit senior management to keep staff up to date with all relevant developments in policy and legislation, while at the same time allowing staff to air their views on any issues of concern.

Topics for discussion can be provided ahead of the meeting, which is minuted, with formal recording of follow up actions. The minutes are circulated by e-mail and published on the college intranet.

When it comes to the way in which operational commanders/departmental managers demonstrate leadership and active involvement in reviewing performance and how this translates down to a team and individual basis, HMIC again noted a variety of approaches evidenced in the responses, each tailored to organisational needs.

Most demonstrate a hierarchical structure of meetings and reviews providing, in theory, 'top to bottom' coverage from strategic organisational level to individual performance. Clearly, whatever system of meetings is in place, there has to be a supporting performance reporting framework ensuring the provision of appropriate information and results.

Review of performance is also conducted under the remit of the National Intelligence Model (NIM) at strategic, tactical and operational level Tasking and Co-ordinating Group meetings.

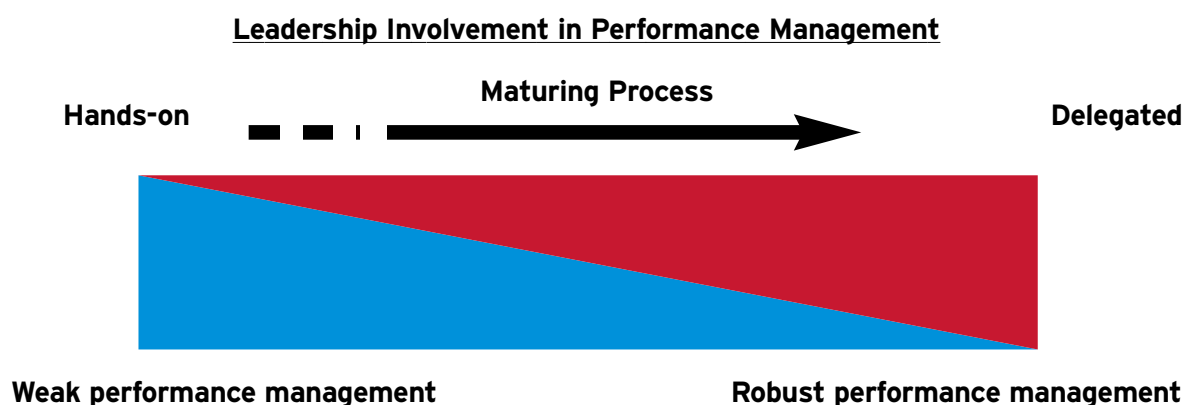
Measures to monitor divisional/departmental, team and individual performance, where observed, appear to HMIC to be well founded, although not without potential unintended consequences again linked to the reporting mechanisms which have been put in place. These are examined in more detail under Chapter 4.

## 2.3 CULTURE

Critical to the establishment of a 'can-do' culture of challenge in the pursuit of continuous improvement, is the involvement of leaders at every level. To embed a performance culture, every leader needs to be committed to making performance management meaningful on a day to day basis. The starting point for this is an acceptance that improvement is necessary and all play a part in achieving it.

Good working relationships are a strong determinant of success. While participation is important in its own right, leaders need to balance personal visibility and involvement with the confidence to delegate responsibility to others, where appropriate empowering individual action.

In theory, the less well developed the performance culture, the more involved senior management needs to be. Where performance management systems are weak or processes have been recently implemented, direct engagement by the organisation's executive team may be called for, delegating responsibility only when satisfied that the process is well established, will not deteriorate and there remains a clear line of strategic accountability.



Adapted from HMIC E & W

In seeking to drive the performance agenda, it is of paramount importance not to encourage, inadvertently, behaviour or practices which may be deemed as unethical or indeed illegal or which centre on one priority or target to the exclusion of others. Leadership at every level is the key to ensuring that all staff act professionally.

In a previous report, 'Quality of Service',<sup>13</sup> HMIC noted that ACPOS had drafted a Code of Ethical Practice, which has since been adopted. If integrated into policy and properly endorsed and promoted by senior management, the Code provides an ideal blueprint for defining appropriate behaviour and values. HMIC continues to endorse this approach.

In this section HMIC has noted the positive lead taken by management in terms of visibility and setting the ethos of the organisation. However, the constituent elements of leadership are diverse, touching on most of the main characteristics of a performance management system, and there is considerable evidence across forces in each. The extent to which these aspects come together to form a fully matured performance culture is less clear but again there is evidence of development towards this goal.

The continued importance of leadership in planning, accountability and review, will be the subject of specific comment under later chapter headings.

<sup>13</sup> Quality of Service, A review of the investigation of complaints against the police in Scotland - HMIC 2004





# CHAPTER THREE

Planning and Priority Setting



## PLANNING AND PRIORITY SETTING

As was observed in Chapter 1, the first stage in developing a performance management culture involves setting out the wider aspirations for the organisation. Having established a vision of where an organisation wants to go, it is necessary to plan how it intends to get there.

Business planning is well established in the Scottish police service. The policing environment is characterised by ever expanding demands and increasing public expectations which the police service must take into account when developing its future plans. The policing environment however, has a finite capacity to meet the vast demands placed upon it, hence the relevance of priority setting. The police service has to establish its priorities based on its vision and then link available resources to them. Policing needs to reflect local public desires whilst also considering issues which may be of national importance. In terms of business planning, which is cyclical, a clear set of priorities is required which will not only allow for progress to be monitored but also inform future planning. The number of priorities set must be limited to ensure they are achievable.

The monitoring of performance towards priorities is currently achieved through the setting of indicators and, where set, specifically associated targets. Priorities, indicators and targets can be set at national, force and local levels. It is important that indicators are directly linked to priorities and to the key processes which will attain them. The excessive use of indicators can, in itself, hinder performance.

Consultation is a key aspect of establishing priorities. During research and fieldwork, a recurring theme in regard to a well formed performance management system lay in the adoption of the National Intelligence Model to drive operational performance and through which local and national operational priorities can be considered and reconciled.

### 3.1 THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE MODEL

The National Intelligence Model (NIM) was adopted by the Scottish police service in 2000. It derives its strength from well-defined national standards, products and terminology and relies upon intelligence and information being analysed using specific techniques. Summaries of problems, whether local, force-wide or national, are then provided within the context of tasking and co-ordinating meetings at appropriate levels, where actions are raised and resources are directed towards resolution of the problem. Key to the success of the NIM is the effective use of intelligence and information, which includes the results of local consultation and the concerns of the local communities.

The NIM levels are used to identify problems locally, nationally and internationally and are defined as follows:

- **Level 1** - Local issues - usually the crimes, criminals and other problems affecting a division, sub-division or small force area.
- **Level 2** - Cross-border issues - usually the actions of criminals or other specific problems affecting more than one division or sub-division within a force or neighbouring force.
- **Level 3** - Serious and organised crime - usually operating on a national and international scale requiring identification by proactive means and response, primarily through targeting operations by dedicated units and a preventative response on a national basis.

The analysis is multi-directional, with consideration at force level of both national and more local issues. This analysis informs a Strategic Assessment which is considered by the force. The force then conducts a risk analysis resulting in a force Control Strategy reflecting all the relevant operational policing priorities. Specific strategic action plans are prepared to address the priorities contained in the control strategy. Similar multi-directional processes are conducted at a local level.

In terms of identifying significant threats within the United Kingdom and, specifically, Scotland, the NIM structure allows intelligence and information to be analysed properly, thus enabling the Scottish police service to identify the high level priorities. The process at a national level results in a Scottish Control Strategy. Therefore successful application of the NIM allows for the development of meaningful operational priorities determined in a logical manner at all levels.

An auditable assessment of risk is an important part of determining relevant priorities. An example of a basic risk assessment matrix is shown below:

Impact ↑	High	3	6	9
	Medium	2	4	6
	Low	1	2	3
		Low	Medium	High
		Likelihood →		

Priorities are determined by consideration of perceived impact and the likelihood of them occurring. Using the above matrix as an example, issues which scored 9, high risk and high impact, would be identified as areas of greatest priority. This allows senior managers to use a scoring mechanism to identify priorities.

It is important to place the NIM in the context of a business model which can identify and drive operational policing priorities, rather than hold on to a misconception that it is linked solely to tackling crime issues. Road safety, anti-social behaviour and community tensions also present significant problems that may be addressed through appropriate use of intelligence and information.

If properly managed, the NIM should:

- provide a greater consistency of policing across Scotland
- allow operational strategies to focus on key priorities
- allow priorities to be risk managed
- allow the integration of NIM assessments into business planning
- improve and develop liaison with partner agencies.

### 3.2 FORCE BUSINESS PLANNING AND THE INTEGRATION OF NIM

The use of NIM processes in relation to the setting of strategic priorities is present in a number of forces but, at the time of the inspection, lacking in others. Without being prescriptive, HMIC considers that the harmonisation of the priority setting process across Scotland is desirable, if effective operational priorities are to be set within forces which link in a meaningful way to those at a national level.

Police business planning processes must, by nature of emerging and developing external influences and factors, be cyclical. The importance of timetabling activity around key dates, for example, the publication of the Scottish Strategic Assessment, allows for informed corporate decisions to be taken on the basis of up to date and assessed information.

The business planning cycle should, amongst other things, take account of internal and external consultation, community planning, past performance, budgets, resource allocation and activity based costing. In 2003 ACPOS approved the application of an activity based costing model within the Scottish police service with implementation left to the discretion of individual forces from the start of 2004/05. As yet this remains to be implemented fully across all forces. The development of operational priorities is established through the NIM process, based on analysis and consultation as previously outlined.

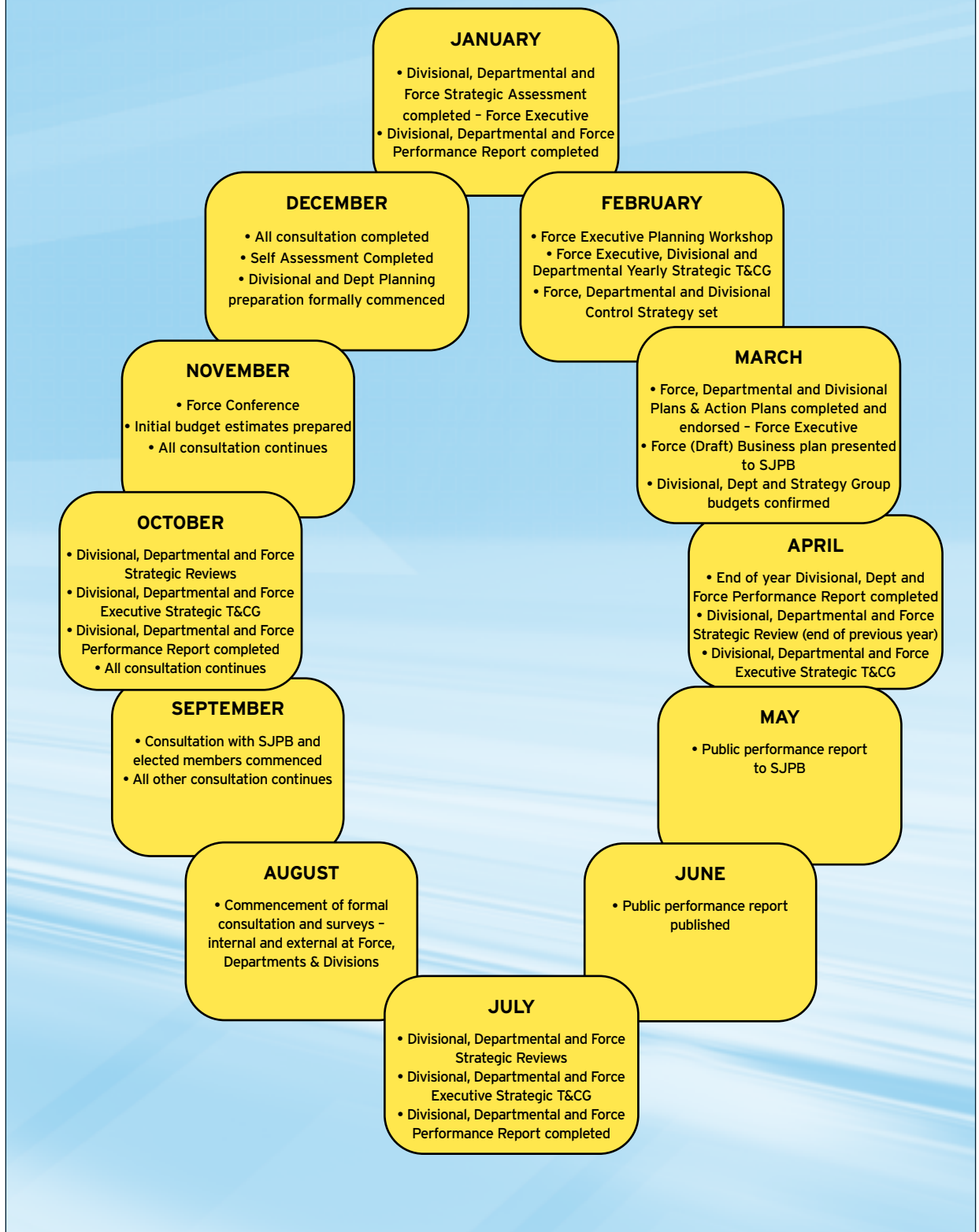
The following examples illustrate the timetabling of activity in a police business planning process and in particular, alignment to the NIM process.

The **Strathclyde Policing Model** (SPM) is being developed to minimise duplication of effort and ensure clear linkages between the National Intelligence Model, Community Planning, Best Value, Problem Solving Policing, Divisional Call Handling Units, Briefing and Debriefing, Business Planning and Performance Management.

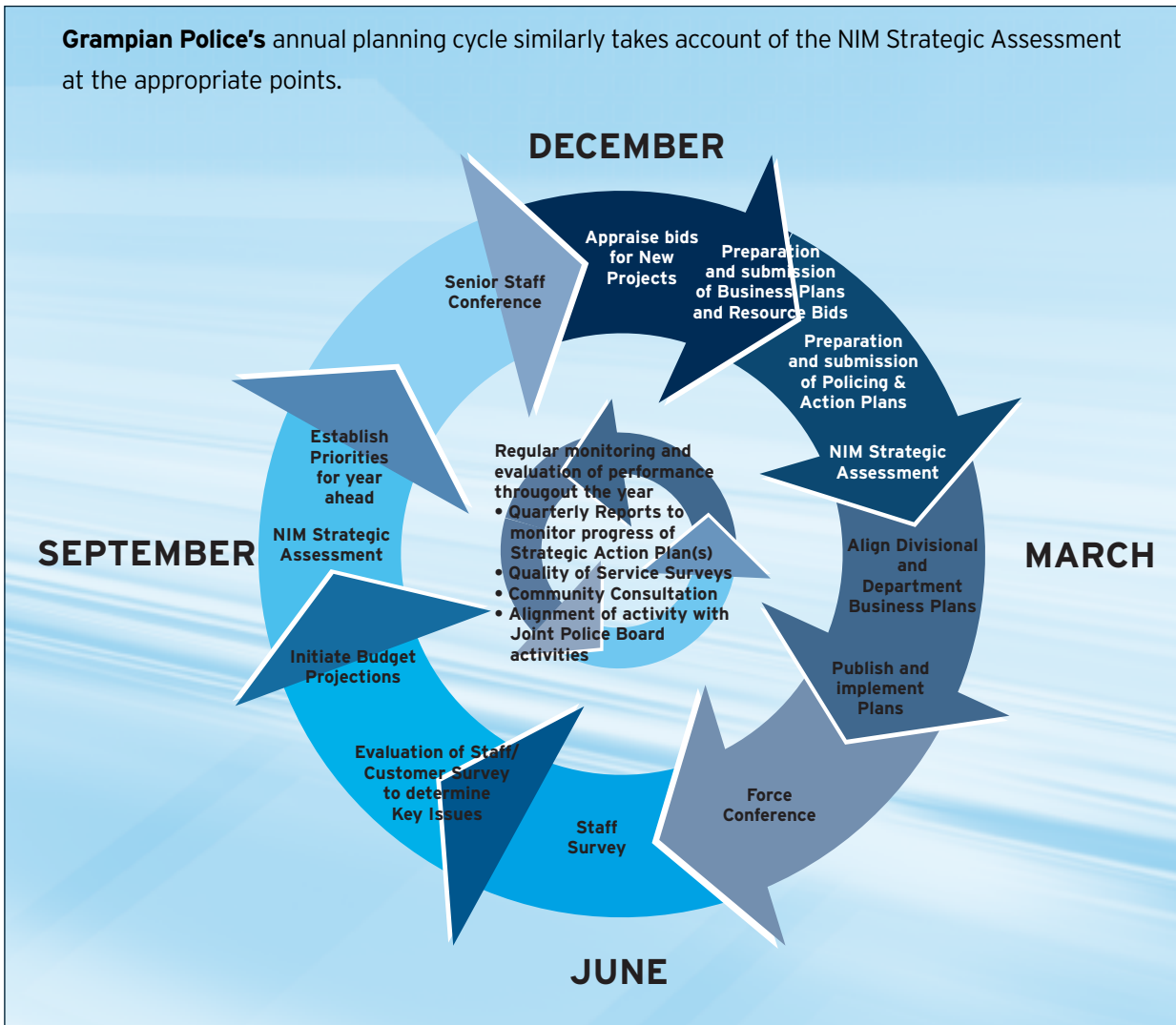
The SPM Implementation Team is presently engaged in work with staff from Corporate Planning and Development to align the strategic processes of the NIM and the Business Planning processes.

A corporate calendar for tactical and strategic Tasking & Co-ordinating Group meetings and the production of tactical and strategic assessments has been produced. Account has been taken of the production of the UK Threat Assessment by NCIS and also the holding of Scottish Strategic and Tactical Tasking & Co-ordinating Group meetings. Phase 1 of the three-phase plan has positioned the NIM as the central thread of all business planning processes. Phases 2 and 3 will consolidate and develop the NIM into the business planning processes of financial and support services and Community Planning. Phase 3 illustrates the fully developed model.

### Strathclyde Police's Integrated Planning Cycle, Phase Three:



**Grampian Police's** annual planning cycle similarly takes account of the NIM Strategic Assessment at the appropriate points.



**Central Scotland Police** has restructured the timing of the delivery of the NIM Strategic Assessment and the Strategic Tasking & Co-ordination Group specifically to inform the business planning process.

Scotland currently benefits from the support and guidance of the ACPOS NIM Development Team, established to achieve standardisation of the process throughout Scotland. HMIC is aware that the eight Scottish forces and the Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency (SDEA) are at different stages of fully integrating the NIM within an organisational context and is fully supportive of the role of ACPOS in its aim to establish a consistent approach and attainment of a national minimum standard.

However, given the importance of the NIM in business planning when establishing meaningful operational priorities at local and force levels, and its linkages through the Strategic Assessment to national priorities, HMIC considers it crucial that the Scottish police service use the NIM in the most effective manner possible. ACPOS, through the NIM Development Team, has a role in ensuring that this is achieved without delay.

## Recommendation 1

HMIC recommends that ACPOS, through the existing work of the NIM Development Team, maximise its efforts to establish compliance with the NIM Minimum Standards (1) across Scottish forces.

### 3.3 FORCE BUSINESS PLANNING AND SUPPORT DEPARTMENTS/BUSINESS AREAS

Whilst the NIM provides a mechanism for determining operational priorities, it does not necessarily establish all priorities for support departments or business areas, such as finance, human resources, information technology and corporate/strategic development.

In terms of the business planning cycle, HMIC noted that, generally, each support department or business area will develop its own priorities, setting these out in a departmental plan or similar document. These are then considered, through a structured process, with operational business plans, to produce an overarching force plan.

Support departments or business areas generally align their priorities to the overall force vision and have a natural role in supporting certain operational priorities. However, there is also recognition that some support department and business area priorities are of strategic significance. Force responses indicate that such priorities tend to be managed through programme or project boards, with appropriate links to force corporate planning arrangements. Examples from forces include centralising call handling, developing IT systems generally, introducing amended shift rotas and centralised custody handling.

HMIC notes that whilst there is well established and effective integration of support departments or business areas in the business planning cycle, forces are currently at varying stages of actually monitoring the performance of those departments as part of a performance management framework.

### 3.4 LOCAL CONSULTATION

National, corporate and local priorities should inform the planning process and so it is important to have in place a clear structure for this. Utilising the NIM processes to identify operational policing priorities at all levels can be seen as a stage in a planning process. Local consultation can provide additional important information to develop meaningful priority setting.

The forces that make up the Scottish police service are organised so that the majority of policing effort is delivered locally. As such, HMIC recognises that, following local consultation, priorities, indicators and targets identified at a national level may not be as relevant to each force.

To achieve effective local policing, consultation between the police and all sections of the communities they serve, including the police authority, is vital. During the current inspection, HMIC was pleased to find all forces and common police services regularly engaging in some form of public or user consultation to help identify local priorities.



Various approaches are taken by organisations. These include:

- the levels at which consultation takes place - sub divisional, divisional, force-wide
- who conducts or facilitates - in-house, externally commissioned, in conjunction with partners
- format adopted - ad hoc feedback, formal consultation, force planning days
- methods used - paper forms, quantitative survey, focus group, citizens' panels
- audiences targeted - service users, wider community, partners, hard to reach groups
- frequency - from monthly to triennially.

HMIC recognises that different approaches will be relevant for different consultation questions and audiences. It is crucial, though, that the most appropriate methods are applied to ensure that all views captured are accurate, informative and useful.

**Lothian and Borders Police** conducts a series of eight focus groups with members of the public and community representatives prior to distributing its main community consultation survey. The groups are facilitated by the Performance Improvement Unit. In addition, Divisional Commanders/ Superintendents attend the groups in order to provide some preliminary input concerning divisional performance. The scene is then set for a wider, informed exchange of views around the relevance of the force goals and priorities. The more qualitative results from this method of consultation allow for deeper understanding of the views and experiences of respondents, that surveys alone are often unable to yield. The results from these groups are then used to inform the content of the force questionnaire, thus ensuring its immediate relevance to current local community concerns, which can then be distributed to a wider number of respondents.

While some variation between forces is inevitable, differences in approach were also evident within forces. While HMIC appreciates the need for flexibility at the local level, forces may wish to consider what advantages there may be in the consistency, comparability and opportunities for shared learning that come from a greater sense of corporacy. To this end some forces either have in place or are in the process of developing, a force consultation strategy or framework, while another is developing a consultation database for improving awareness and sharing learning points.

A number of forces conduct some form of public consultation, usually general public surveys, in tandem with partner agencies. These can include local authorities as well as other community safety partners. Other forces have expressed their intention to follow suit.

Obvious benefits from collaboration include sharing expertise as well as reduced costs, resources and 'survey fatigue' amongst respondents. Depending on the nature of the information collated, joint consultation can also provide data on wider related issues that can help to contextualise responses. The results also potentially offer an opportunity to develop public satisfaction performance indicators. It must be recognised that competing priorities can sometimes serve to limit the amount of influence each individual partner can hope to have on the survey design.

As well as explicit questions concerning public views on priorities, forces are recognising the value of feeding in other types of consultation data to inform local priority setting. Quality of service surveys examining the experiences of those coming into contact with forces, are one such example.

One of the ultimate arbiters of success of a public service body must be the views of those it serves. Across the wider public sector, indicators relating to this aspect of performance tend to come under the heading of quality of service. Academic work within the health field<sup>14</sup> has identified three dimensions to service quality, namely access to the service, technical proficiency and overall quality of service/experiences. This work will examine whether an emphasis on elements such as access and technical proficiency necessarily has a positive impact on the overall quality of service.

Within areas such as public access and technical proficiency, indicators are relatively easy to identify. Both ACPOS and the Accounts Commission set an indicator relative to emergency calls. Crime trends and the creation of police reports might similarly be seen to fall into the area of technical proficiency.

More difficult to assess are overall quality of service issues. Current measures include complaints against members of police staff and public satisfaction surveys. Despite the obvious importance of user satisfaction, the existing Accounts Commission indicator is rather limited. Under the direction of the Accounts Commission, forces are required only to ask two questions of users concerning quality of service at least once every three years.

Some forces already take advantage of this survey requirement to question respondents more frequently and in more depth on these and other relevant issues. HMIC welcomes this move, and appreciates the benefits in terms of making the process of recall easier for respondents, generating more robust data for analysis and enabling forces to respond more quickly to locally emerging issues.

**Grampian Police** posts out 300 surveys per month to those who have been in contact with the force. The sample is stratified in accordance with Accounts Commission requirements. On a quarterly basis the results are reported to the Force Police Group, the force Tasking & Coordinating meetings and the Stewardship Sub-Committee of the Joint Police Board, and where appropriate, acted upon. As part of its quality of service assessment process, the force has stated its intention to conduct thematic/geographic focus groups to explore issues arising in more depth.

**Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary** conducts quarterly quality of service surveys. Here too, the results are fed back to force management on a regular basis for consideration. In addition, any respondent with a particular grievance and who is willing to discuss it further, is visited by the Area Inspector with a view to reaching a satisfactory resolution.

<sup>14</sup> Professor Martin Rowland, Professor of General Practice and Director of the Primary Care Research and Development Centre, University of Manchester



HMIC believes that quality of service is central to a holistic view of force or service performance. As such, it should be given greater precedence as an indicator in terms of both priority setting and performance scrutiny. With the exception of Fife Constabulary, those forces with a quality of service strand to their priorities at the present time have tended to restrict these indicators to one or more of those required by the Accounts Commission.

Objective 4 of **Fife Constabulary's** Policing Plan is *Maximising Accessibility and Quality of Service*. Under this objective the force is proposing to develop qualitative public perception based performance indicators around aspects of quality of service. These will be identified from the findings of its annual community consultation survey.

HMIC considers this to be a good example of how local evidence may be developed to feed into force priorities in a way that is transparent and responsive to local concerns.

Equally important to performance are an organisation's internal standards of service. In this respect staff feedback is another essential information source for informing local priority setting. Most forces and common police services now conduct some form of paper-based staff survey, though at varying degrees of regularity.

**Strathclyde Police** commissioned an external agency to design and conduct their first staff survey in February/March 2003. The methodology is such that it not only asks about various aspects of the working environment, but also gauges how important these aspects are to respondents. It also provides respondents with the opportunity to add further comments. The results were well publicised and action plans were put in place to address the key findings.

**Lothian and Borders Police** questionnaire contains a 'Managing Change' section, which has questions relevant to areas of change in the force. There is also a transparent and systematic process for identifying areas for further action, following on from analysis of the results.

The **SDEA** uses a similar approach for its questionnaire.

A few, however, rely primarily on fora that involve face to face discussion, albeit formalised and structured in their own way. These include staff/management meetings, appraisals, mentoring, EFQM self-assessment, individual and collective structured debriefs with the Human Resources department. HMIC is concerned that, where there are no formal processes in place for staff to submit their views anonymously, forces risk basing decisions on an incomplete or inaccurate picture of staff opinion. Similar concerns may apply to the reliance on intranet-based staff polls, where savings in time, effort and cost of administering paper-based surveys should be weighed against the loss of respondent anonymity.

As with external quality of service matters, where forces have included an internal quality of service component to their priorities, the indicators adopted have tended to be taken from the Accounts Commission suite. Again Fife Constabulary is the only force intending to reflect the results of its staff surveys in its force priorities and performance indicators. HMIC views this responsiveness to staff concerns as an effective way of reinforcing the value the force places on them.

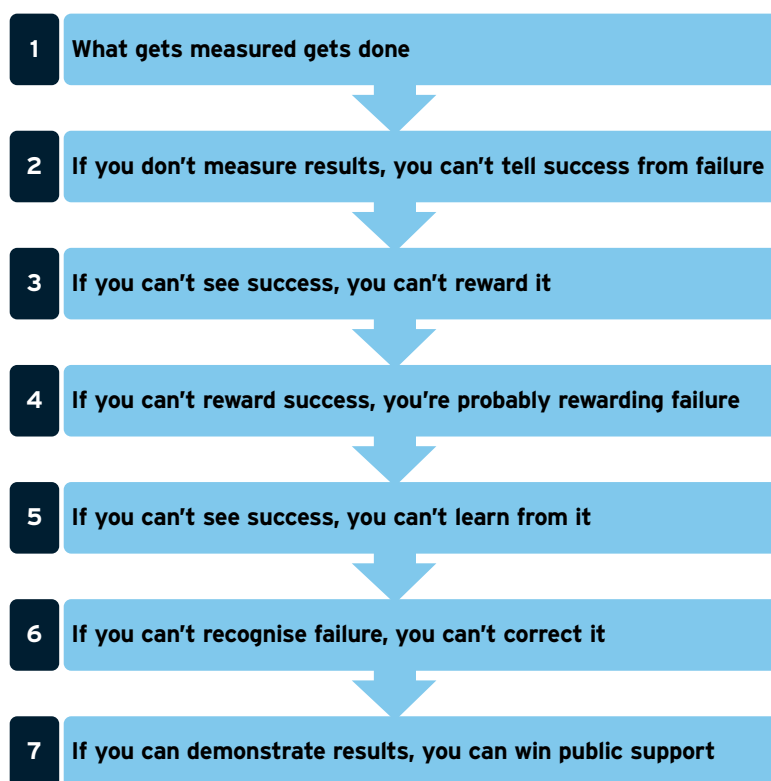
Police authorities naturally have a role in establishing force priorities. They are routinely engaged in a consultation process with the force during the planning cycle and HMIC received evidence of attendance of members at force planning and awareness days.

### 3.5 FORCE INDICATOR/TARGET SETTING

The planning cycle, based on strong local consultation, allows for clear evidence based priorities to be determined. Performance against these priorities is measured through the establishment of suitable indicators and, where set, targets. Exactly how these are determined, how many are needed, their relevance and value as a true reflection of policing activity, is the subject of much debate.

There is a growing body of academic, policy and practitioner literature around the use of performance indicators and target setting. Few would argue with the basic premise that service providers in receipt of public funds should be accountable to the public for their performance, nor that the public expects sustained improvements in the delivery of services. More contentious, perhaps, is the assumption that setting targets is necessarily the best means of realising this expectation.

From Aiming to Improve, The Audit Commission 2000



Source: Extract from Osborne & Gaebler, Reinventing Government, 1992

Performance measurement cannot take place in isolation, but must be linked to the overall strategy and priorities of the organisation. Otherwise the proposition that 'what gets measured gets done' becomes a double edged sword, whereby inappropriate measurement systems or indicators can have major adverse consequences for management and those to whom the service is provided.

Available research offers little by way of hard empirical evidence of what effect performance targets *per se* have on the quality or performance of public services. Questions arise, for example, as to whether short term effectiveness in meeting targets compromises longer term efficiency or, for that matter, whether there is conclusive evidence of a positive impact of such measures on public perceptions of service performance.

What is apparent is that the use of targets can be problematic and this was a subject touched on by many chief officers when interviewed by HMIC. Much of the negative comment of relevance here arises fundamentally from the perceived lack of coherence between national targets on one hand and local trends, needs and ownership on the other.

Other difficulties may stem from the way in which targets themselves are applied. For example, not all performance lends itself to quantitative measurement, a point particularly pertinent to public sector services. Key questions include whether meeting performance output targets equates to improved service delivery outcomes and whether the drive to meet prescribed targets actually prevents the police from properly addressing other legitimate concerns.

While HMIC does not express a view on the validity of the arguments for or against target setting in principle, the reality is that the present system relies on performance measurement in terms of indicators and, where considered appropriate, targets.

HMIC acknowledges that all forces are influenced by national priorities and notes that most retain at least some of these within their force priorities. While some have simply adopted the same numerical targets as apply to the service as a whole, others have applied their own target setting processes to generate, typically, non-numeric directional targets indicating improvement or otherwise. A commonly observed technique was the use of baseline averages derived from a number of previous quarters, or years, performance data. This helps to smooth out fluctuations and produces a more representative numerical baseline from which to compare or predict future achievement.

Responsibility for the process of target setting varies between, and sometimes even within, forces. Though the actual department titles differ, more often than not, responsibility rests with the force performance unit or similarly named team, comprising both police and support officers. HMIC again noted that, while organisational structures and departmental names varied considerably, the force performance units generally sit within the main department charged with the responsibility for strategic or corporate development.

HMIC was impressed by the knowledge, skills and commitment shown by the staff in these units. Moreover, in keeping with the general trend towards continuing development, the units within various forces expressed a desire to revise existing practices further. However, frustration at the perceived lack of available guidance in this area was a common observation. While training in related areas such as intelligence analysis is more firmly established, there appears to be scant provision of specialist guidance on decision-making around indicator and target setting.

There is a considerable range of literature on the subject, offering a variety of differing opinions regarding indicator and target setting. Amongst the main criteria to be considered when engaged in indicator/target setting are the following practical considerations:

- relevance of indicator
- qualitative and/or quantitative
- directional or numeric
- if numeric, how to decide on the level
- the contribution to an overall target (disaggregation)
- ease of collection
- sufficient to cover full scope of policing.

While further detailed discussion is outwith the scope of this report, there is nonetheless a need for training or guidance to be made available to those specifically involved in the indicator/target setting process.

## Recommendation 2

HMIC recommends that ACPOS consider the training needs of the service around issues of indicator and target setting.

In the meantime forces and common police services continue to differ in their indicator/target setting practices. Some examples of where forces are already incorporating some of the above aspects into their target setting processes are given below:

In **Central Scotland Police**, Command Areas nominate targets based on their appraisal of local priorities and available resources. The nominations from the three Command Areas are then aggregated to form the Force Target, which is reviewed by the Force Policy Group.

**Fife Constabulary** has made a conscious effort to move away from solely operational/criminal activity-based priorities, towards those which reflect the performance of the force as a whole. Included in this move is the proposition to also move from a reliance on hard statistics and targets, to more qualitative and quality of life/service indicators. Also proposed is a change from numerical targets to a focus on sustainable, continuous improvement. Although precise indicators have yet to be set, the intention is to develop these from the findings of the force's community and staff perception surveys.

**Northern Constabulary's** policing plan divides its force priorities into operational and organisational categories. The latter consists mainly of a series of qualitative milestones. Local area and departmental plans set out their intentions or contributions against each relevant force priority, as well as containing their own locally derived priorities.

HMIC acknowledges that, having established its priorities it is up to individual forces to then determine what indicators and, where considered appropriate, targets, are set to fully reflect their performance. Priority setting for forces however has to take account of national priorities, which in turn may lead to the setting of national indicators to ensure consistency.

### 3.6 NATIONAL PRIORITY SETTING

Policing priorities may be expected to display marked variation between forces if they are to reflect local concerns properly. Yet a number of issues, common across all police forces, demand priority attention, sometimes in a co-ordinated way. These often emerge from public debate, from within the Scottish Executive as matters of policy or legislative change, from within the police service itself or in the context of other agencies charged with scrutinising police service delivery. How these issues of perceived high importance translate into policing priorities is therefore of interest and it is of value to examine what the current national priorities are and how they are established.

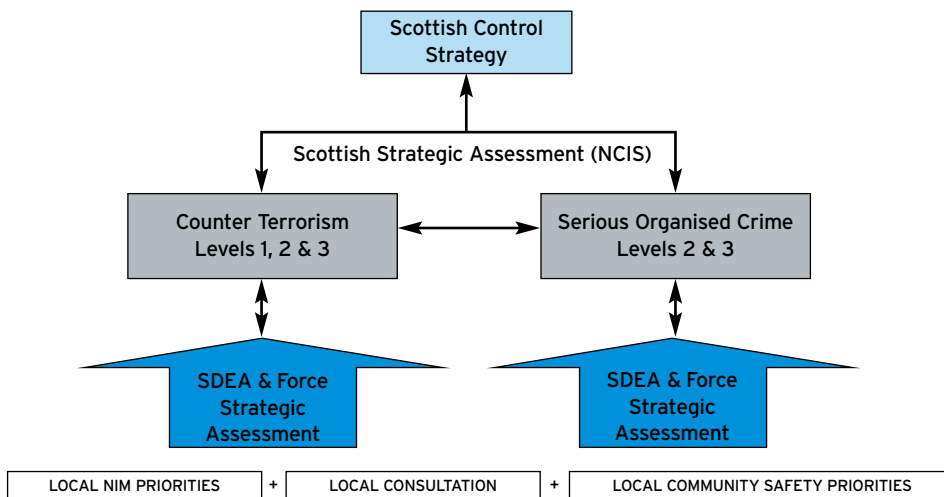
National priorities and measures of accountability for the Scottish police service are currently determined through a variety of processes. These are:

- Scottish Control Strategy
- ACPOS Policing Priorities
- Scottish Executive Targets
- Accounts Commission Performance Indicators.

#### Scottish Control Strategy

The Scottish police service establishes strategic operational priorities based on the Scottish Strategic Assessment which examines the principal threats to Scotland from serious, organised and cross-border criminality. The Scottish Strategic Assessment is provided by the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) and provides a comprehensive analysis of NIM level 2 and level 3 criminality. This is illustrated by **figure A**.

Figure A



Intelligence for the Scottish Strategic Assessment is drawn from the strategic assessments prepared by the eight Scottish police forces, the Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency (SDEA) and intelligence held by NCIS. The force strategic assessments are, by definition, a longer term, high level look at policing problems which will take into account and report on local needs but in a format that may be aggregated to a higher or lower level.

Decisions regarding the prioritisation of the threats contained in the Scottish Strategic Assessment rest with ACPOS through its Crime Business Area. The Scottish Control Strategy, which flows from this process, therefore reflects the areas of threat and criminality to which the Scottish police service should be giving priority. The Scottish Control Strategy is reviewed every six months by ACPOS to allow decisions to be made on the inclusion of any emerging serious threats.

In essence, the Scottish Control Strategy reflects intent in tackling high level criminality. This is very much in the domain of the SDEA, with appropriate involvement from the eight Scottish forces in terms of responding to specific criminality in particular areas of the country.

In terms of the provision of information on which to set strategic direction, a number of NIM level 1 issues which may be of significant national interest, such as serious violent crime and youth disorder, and which demand significant resource levels in each force, are not currently considered within the Scottish Strategic Assessment. Therefore these do not feature in the Scottish Control Strategy.

HMIC considers that this reflects a gap in the current assessment structure which needs to be filled by way of identification of a full range of operational policing issues to inform policy and priority setting at the national level.

### ACPOS Policing Priorities

The ACPOS '*Policing Priorities for Scotland 2003 - 2006*' was launched in May 2003. In what was the first publication of its kind, ACPOS set out its strategic priorities for the ensuing 3 years.

In brief, the document describes a series of operational and support priorities linked to four overarching priority areas - delivery of police performance assessments, community engagement, intelligence led policing and improving police productivity.

**Table 1** is a summary of the document and shows how achievement of the priorities is articulated through the use of performance indicators, numerical targets, and textual statements of intent which refer specifically to neither targets nor indicators.

Table 1: ACPOS Policing Priorities for Scotland 2003-06

Operational Priorities		
Crimes of Violence	Numerical Target	To reduce the incidence by 5% and increase in clear-up rate by 2 percentage points, of serious violent crime by end 2005/06.
Housebreaking	Numerical Target	Reduction in incidence of domestic housebreaking by 5% by end 2005/06.
Public Order Offences	Statement of intent	Support of the implementation of the Scottish Executive's 10-point action plan for reduction in youth crime.
International Terrorism, Internet & Organised Crime	Statement of intent	Increased police activity with an emphasis on prevention through greater vigilance and sharing of global intelligence.
Drugs	Numerical Targets	Increase in weight of class A seizures by 10%; and increase in offences of possession and possession with intent to supply drugs by 10% by 2005/06.
Community Reassurance	Statement of intent	Increase the establishment of the Special Constabulary by 500 officers.
Fear of Crime	Statement of intent	Improved consultation processes that ensure that the diverse nature of the communities policed are accurately identified and addressed.
Racial Diversity	Numerical Target	Increase in detection rate of racially aggravated crime by 5 percentage points by 2005/06.
Crime Prevention	Statement of intent	To promote social inclusion and a victim centred approach.
Road Casualties	Numerical Targets	Against a baseline from 1994-98 for Road Accidents, by 2005/06, reduce the number of: people killed or seriously injured by 33%; children killed or seriously injured by 40%; number of people slightly injured by 10%.
Support Priorities		
Staff	Statement of intent	Identifying the right people for the right roles and enabling the Future Leaders of the Service to be identified and developed.
Health & Welfare	Indicator	Reduction in the proportion of working time lost to sickness absence.
Operational Roles	Statement of intent	Return of a further 250 police officers from non-operational to operational policing roles replacing them with suitably skilled support staff.
Technology	Target	Completion of the rollout programme for Airwave to all Scottish forces by June 2005.
Call Handling	Indicator	At least 90% of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds.
Finance	Statement of intent	To keep financial strategies targeted at achieving the maximum advantage to the public from every £1 spent on policing.
Bureaucracy	Statement of intent	Maximise the percentage of police staff engaged in delivering a community style police service with only minimum numbers of officers involved in back-office duties.

HMIC is aware that the ACPOS 'Policing Priorities' do not currently align with the contents of the Scottish Control Strategy, but acknowledges they were set out with the Scottish Strategic Tasking and Co-ordinating process. Furthermore, HMIC considers that the way that specific targets and indicators are mixed with statements reflecting additional priority areas, within the text of the document, lends little to the clarity of a document at the forefront of priority setting for the Scottish police service.

The current ACPOS 'Policing Priorities' document relates to the period up to the end of the financial year 2005-2006 and HMIC understands that revision is being actively considered. The process model for national priority setting outlined later in this chapter may be useful to ACPOS in considering a revision.

### Scottish Executive Performance Indicators and Targets

Though not articulated as priorities *per se*, certain areas of policing across the service are additionally highlighted by the Scottish Executive as being worthy of particular focus and are linked to providing a strong response to matters deemed by them to represent public concerns.

Since May 2001 the Scottish Executive has, through successive Spending Reviews, established a range of key performance indicators and targets intended to measure, monitor, and drive improvement of police efficiency. In practice the Scottish Executive has concentrated exclusively on operational priorities. These targets and indicators are outlined below in **table 2**:

Table 2: *Scottish Executive Targets 2003-06*

Scottish Executive SR2002	Allied Target 2003-2006
<b>Crime &amp; offence related performance indicators</b>	
Number of serious violent crimes recorded	5% reduction
Percentage of serious violent crimes cleared up	2 point increase
Number of domestic housebreakings recorded	5% reduction
Number of vehicle crimes recorded	15% reduction
Percentage of racially aggravated crimes cleared up	5 point increase
Weight of class A drug seizures	10% increase
Number of offences of supply and possession with intent to supply class A drugs	10% increase
Number of people killed/seriously injured in road collisions	33% reduction
Number of children killed/seriously injured in road collisions	40% reduction
Number of people slightly injured in road collisions	10% reduction



From April 2005, following Spending Review SR2004, a further suite of targets for the Justice Department is set out in 'Building a Better Scotland'.<sup>15</sup> A significant difference lies in the move from centrally driven targets to targets derived through stakeholder consultation:

**Objective 1** - Targeting the causes of crime and tackling crime directly especially violent crime

- Target 1 - to continue to increase the police clear up rate for serious violent crime (desired level of improvement to be discussed with police forces)
- Target 2 - an increase in the number of criminal networks disrupted (the number to be set in consultation with law enforcement agencies)
- Target 3 - a 10% reduction in the number of young offenders
- Target 4 - a 10% increase in the number of drug mis-users entering treatment.

**Objective 2** - Reduce re-offending

- Target 5 - a 2% reduction in reconviction rates in all types of sentence.

**Objective 3** - Modernising the courts and legal system (in partnership with Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS))

- A 10% reduction in High Court trial adjournments
- 60% of Sheriff Summary and District Court cases to be disposed within 26 weeks of caution and charge.

As previously noted in the introduction, an ACPOS Best Value Sub Committee working group is still considering the detail of the police contribution to the latest set of targets. However, it is of note that the Scottish police service is, in effect, during 2005, managing two sets of Scottish Executive targets, with the inherent difficulties and potential confusion that entails.

#### Accounts Commission Performance Indicators

Under the terms of the Local Government Act 1992, the Accounts Commission issues an annual Direction to local authorities (including police forces) specifying a range of performance information, in effect performance indicators, to be published. This information is intended to assist in making appropriate comparisons between the standards of performance achieved by different authorities in a financial year, and individual authorities from year to year. In this way the Accounts Commission, aided by Audit Scotland, aims to hold forces to account for the proper, efficient and effective use of public funds. An annual guide is published by Audit Scotland providing more detailed information on the process and the indicators.

At a national level the Accounts Commission also reports on force performance by way of year on year comparisons and/or individual progress against the Scottish Executive targets. HMIC is aware that this presentational format remains a matter of concern within the service. The main concern stems from the fact that the Scottish Executive targets are intended to reflect the overall performance of the Scottish police service, where each force will contribute in a different way to that total, whereas, the Accounts Commission figures attribute the national target equally to every force, having no regard to how that target fits in a local context.

<sup>15</sup> Building a Better Scotland, Spending proposals 2005 - 2008: Enterprise, Opportunity, Fairness - Scottish Executive, 2004

The current suite of Accounts Commission Performance Indicators is outlined below in **table 3**:

Table 3: *Accounts Commission Performance Indicators*

Accounts Commission Statutory Performance Indicators 2005/06	
Crime & Offence related PIs	Quality of Service PIs
Percentage of all recorded crimes cleared up	Number of complaints per 100 members of the police force
Number of serious violent crimes recorded and the percentage change compared with previous years	Sickness absence: proportion of working time lost for police officers
Percentage of serious violent crimes cleared up	Sickness absence: proportion of working time lost for civilian staff
Number of domestic housebreakings recorded and the percentage change compared with previous years	Percentage of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds and the number of calls in the sample
Percentage of domestic housebreakings cleared up	User satisfaction with initial contact with police (triennial)
Number of car crimes recorded and the percentage change compared with previous years	User satisfaction with overall police handling of their matter (triennial)
Percentage of car crimes cleared up	
Number of racist incidents per 1,000 population	
Number & percentage of racially aggravated crimes cleared up	
Weight of class A drug seizures and the percentage change compared with previous years	
Number of offences of supply and possession with intent to supply class A drugs and the percentage change compared with previous years	
Number of people killed/seriously injured in road collisions and the percentage change compared with previous years	
Number of children killed/seriously injured in road collisions and the percentage change compared with previous years	
Number of people slightly injured in road collisions and the percentage change compared with previous years	
Number and percentage of police reports sent to Children's Reporter within 10 days	
Number and percentage of police reports sent to the Procurator Fiscal within 28 days of caution	

The Accounts Commission is an independent body which uses its own professional judgement as to the indicators it sets and, whilst consultation takes place with stakeholders including the police service and HMIC, the ultimate decision on the resultant indicators rests firmly with the Accounts Commission.

That said, HMIC acknowledges that every effort is generally made by the Accounts Commission not to set indicators that would be of limited or no value to the Scottish police service, and that this aim is the basis for continuing dialogue and consultation.

There is a view within the Scottish police service, shared by HMIC, that the ACPOS policing priorities, Scottish Executive targets and Accounts Commission statutory performance indicators, are each narrow in their focus, being predominantly crime related, and therefore do not adequately reflect police performance over the full range of policing activity.

### 3.7 MONITORING OF NATIONAL PRIORITIES

#### Scottish Control Strategy

HMIC is aware that this is an underdeveloped area. As has been observed, in seeking to determine the high level policing priorities, ACPOS considers all aspects of threat contained in the Scottish Strategic Assessment and prioritises activity accordingly, resulting in the formulation of a Scottish Control Strategy. In recognition of an apparent gap in the performance measurement process, the Scottish Tactical Tasking and Co-ordinating Group, in December 2004, discussed how to measure performance against the National Control Strategy. As a result they requested that the ACPOS NIM Development Team examine this area with a view to providing a solution. It remains under review and HMIC is aware that ACPOS is considering the formation of a specific short term working group to examine the measurement of performance in this area.

HMIC is encouraged by these developments which link closely to recommendations set out later in respect of national priority setting.

Comparative work carried out by HMIC suggests that, prior to putting in place any indicators, each identified priority contained in the control strategy should be thoroughly examined in order to provide a fully contextualised picture of the threat or problem to be tackled. This assessment stage is important as it effectively introduces a baseline, or datum point, from which to measure impact and harm reduction at the end of the planned policing activity. HMIC believes that it is difficult to introduce a measurement process into this area without fully articulating the nature of the problem through detailed analysis.

HMIC notes that the establishment of a baseline is undertaken in certain parts of the control strategy, however, to include this exercise in all priority areas would allow for meaningful and informed indicators to be set, both numerically and qualitatively. HMIC considers that this challenging area for further development falls within the remit of the proposed ACPOS working group.

#### ACPOS Policing Priorities, Scottish Executive and Accounts Commission

A range of performance indicators and targets underpins the priorities for the Scottish police service and provides a focus for monitoring progress towards their achievement. The actual collation of information is undertaken by forces who report individually to the respective bodies as, at present, no central repository exists. There are currently a number of structures which influence how these indicators and targets are set and monitored to ensure they are 'fit for purpose'.

Supporting the ACPOS Best Value Sub-Committee, the Performance Indicator Working Group (PIWG) is a multi-agency forum, chaired by ACPOS and comprising members of external bodies including Audit Scotland, the Scottish Executive, Crown Office, CoSLA and HMIC. The Group is tasked with developing a partnership approach to performance measurement, albeit at a tactical level, with a view to rationalising varying approaches to performance monitoring. An example of this is the adoption by Audit Scotland of the Scottish Executive's indicators within their own suites of indicators. In addition, the Scottish Executive targets are almost entirely reflected within the ACPOS Policing Priorities. HMIC recognises the potential gains to be made in terms of tighter focus, better co-ordination and the minimisation of duplication of effort, which this level of co-operation provides.

A second sub group, the Performance Indicator Practitioners Group (PIPG), comprising police staff only, co-ordinates the development and maintenance of the Scottish Executive and Accounts Commission indicators.

Members of the PIWG and PIPG jointly prepare the 'Scottish Police Service Performance Manual' which is intended to rationalise the diverse approaches to performance measurement, improving co-ordination and avoiding duplication of effort. The manual however does not include reference to the ACPOS Policing Priorities and has recently been shown to be inconsistent with the Audit Scotland guidance.

While these structures have been in place for some time now, as previously highlighted, there are concerns expressed by a number of partners around existing national indicators. Here too, as with priorities, questions concerning their 'fitness for purpose' and relevance to policing activity generally, as well as to each force specifically, have been raised. Other concerns include matters of consistency in their definition and counting conventions, the reliance on quantitative output measures and the application of numerical targets.

HMIC is aware that Audit Scotland recently commissioned a review of its statutory performance indicators, seeking views from a range of stakeholders. This forms part of an ongoing process by which the Accounts Commission seeks to ensure that performance indicators remain relevant and fit for purpose.

### **3.8 PUBLIC SATISFACTION MEASURES**

One of the most challenging areas for the police service is the measurement of public satisfaction. At a national level this has historically been measured by Audit Scotland through its public satisfaction indicator and the Scottish Crime Survey, now known as the Scottish Crime and Victimization Survey (SCVS). The latter measurement is a public consultation exercise funded by the Scottish Executive. It is used to gather information from a representative sample of Scottish adults on victimisation rates as well as perceptions of crime, criminal justice partners and processes. The information is intended both to inform and monitor the impact of government policy. Until recently the survey was conducted at fairly infrequent intervals, once every three or four years. Now, additional funding has allowed for a more continuous, annual, rolling programme of consultation modules to be conducted. The sample size has also been extended to permit comparison of results down to police force area.

A review of the survey content revealed that many of the policing related questions were no longer considered relevant. While some changes have since been made, HMIC believes there remains scope for further focus on policing issues. As identified by an independent review,<sup>16</sup> the situation has been exacerbated by the intermittent nature of the survey, leading to other problems including a lack of management continuity. Opportunities to review the survey questions are available to members of the SCVS Advisory Group. However, since membership is restricted to Scottish Executive staff and HMIC, there are no representatives from the criminal justice organisations themselves or from the general public.

HMIC believes that the introduction of a more evidence based approach to the review of the police-related modules of the survey would strengthen it. As already shown, all forces engage in some form of consultation with their communities. The value of regular, local consultation to identify matters of interest to local people concerning service delivery is self-evident.

But these findings can also be of value at the national level. The principles supporting priority setting suggest that the results of individual force surveys be fed upwards for wider consideration at a national level. HMIC believes that this same evidence could usefully assist in informing the nature of questions to be included in the SCVS. Thereafter, the SCVS could be a valuable indicator of police performance that is reported on a regular basis, in the same way as the British Crime Survey is used in England and Wales.

### Recommendation 3

HMIC recommends that ACPOS engage with the Scottish Executive to consider establishing a mechanism for feeding evidence from force consultation exercises into the design of the policing questions in the Scottish Crime and Victimisation Survey, and allow its use for future performance monitoring.

### 3.9 IDENTIFIED ISSUES

HMIC acknowledges the unavoidably lengthy nature of the analysis undertaken in order to reflect accurately where the Scottish police service stands in respect of local and national priority setting and associated measurement activity.

It should now, however, be clear that legitimate questions result from the analysis as to whether the Scottish police service has a sufficiently clear direction from the range of disparate internal and external priorities it currently faces and whether the indicators and targets, in turn, adequately reflect the performance of the Scottish police service. The key areas of difficulty can be summarised as follows.

<sup>16</sup> E. McCaig in association with T Leven, Fundamental Review of Scottish Crime Survey - a report to the Scottish Executive, 2003

### Alignment of Priorities

While there is some evidence of alignment across key stakeholders in terms of a number of priorities, indicators and targets, a lack of connectivity is nonetheless evident in other areas. The gaps become clearer when set out in tabular form shown in table 4. No account is taken in the table of priorities arising from the Scottish Control Strategy, as it currently only deals with high level criminality and not level 1 issues. 'X' indicates that the indicator or target is not included.

Table 4: *Current priorities/indicators*

Indicator	Accounts Commission	Scottish Executive Target	ACPOS
<b>Crime and Offence related PIs</b>			
Percentage of all recorded crimes cleared up	Yes	X	X
Number of serious violent crimes recorded	Yes (& % change)	5% reduction	5% reduction
Percentage of serious violent crimes cleared up	Yes	2 point increase	2 point increase
Number of domestic housebreakings recorded	Yes (& % change)	5% reduction	5% reduction
Percentage of domestic housebreakings cleared up	Yes	X	X
Number of car crimes recorded	Yes (& % change)	15% reduction	X
Percentage of car crimes cleared up	Yes	X	X
Number of racist incidents per 1,000 population	Yes	X	X
Percentage of racially aggravated crimes cleared up	Yes (& Number)	5 point increase	5 point increase
Weight of class A drug seizures	Yes (& % change)	10% increase	10% increase
Number of offences of supply and possession with intent to supply class A drugs	Yes (& % change)	10% increase	X
Number of offences for possession and possession with intent to supply drugs	X	X	10% increase
Number of people killed/seriously injured in road collisions	Yes (& % change)	33% reduction	33% reduction
Number of children killed/seriously injured in road collisions	Yes (& % change)	40% reduction	40% reduction
Number of people slightly injured in road collisions	Yes (& % change)	10% reduction	10% reduction
Number and percentage of police reports sent to Children's Reporter within 10 days	Yes	X	X
Number and percentage of police reports sent to the Procurator Fiscal within 28 days of caution	Yes	X	X
Support of the implementation of the Scottish Executive's 10-point action plan for reduction in youth crime	X	X	Statement of intent
Increased police activity with an emphasis on prevention through greater vigilance and sharing of global intelligence	X	X	Statement of intent
CONTINUED			

Indicator	Accounts Commission	Scottish Executive Target	ACPOS
<b>Crime and Offence related PIs (continued)</b>			
Increase the establishment of the Special Constabulary by 500 officers	X	X	Statement of intent
Improved consultation processes that ensure that the diverse nature of the communities policed are accurately identified and addressed	X	X	Statement of intent
To promote social inclusion and a victim centred approach	X	X	Statement of intent

Indicator	Accounts Commission	Scottish Executive Target	ACPOS
<b>Quality of Service PIs</b>			
Number of complaints per 100 members of the police force	Yes	X	X
Sickness absence - police officers	Yes	X	Yes indicator
Sickness absence - support staff	Yes	X	Yes indicator
Percentage of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds	Yes (& no. in sample)	X	Target 90%
User satisfaction with initial contact with police (triennial)	Yes	X	X
User satisfaction with overall police handling of their matter (triennial)	Yes	X	X
Identifying the right people for the right roles and enabling the Future Leaders of the Service to be identified and developed	X	X	Statement of intent
Return of a further 250 police officers from non-operational to operational policing roles replacing them with suitably skilled support staff	X	X	Statement of intent
Completion of the rollout programme for Airwave to all Scottish forces by June 2005	X	X	Completion by June 2005
To keep financial strategies targeted at achieving the maximum advantage to the public from every £1 spent on policing	X	X	Statement of intent
Maximise the percentage of police staff engaged in delivering a community style police service with only minimum numbers of officers involved in back-office duties	X	X	Statement of intent

Given the roles of the Accounts Commission and the Scottish Executive in holding the police service to account, it follows that ACPOS Policing Priorities should take proper cognisance of their respective priorities when deciding upon its own. However, HMIC is aware of the concerns around current priority areas, in terms of their relevance to policing generally and to forces specifically. A major stumbling block would appear to be a lack of coherence and co-ordination in the existing process, despite there being in place a number of consultation processes between stakeholders. In addition to the lack of alignment in priorities, there is no mechanism which allows for the central collation of performance information.



### National v Local Priorities

The HMIC report 'Local Connections',<sup>17</sup> commented upon the growing acceptance by forces that consultative processes require a strong citizen focus of listening to community concerns in establishing policing priorities, rather than merely imposing policy decisions driven by national targets. The report stated that one of the main inhibitors to developing a local performance ethos was the need to observe national targets and indicators set by the Scottish Executive and the Accounts Commission. HMIC recognises a great deal of good work in this respect but there remains a need to ensure that the setting of national priorities is properly harmonised with community aspirations and the requirements of community planning.

### Public Satisfaction

The intention of ACPOS, the Scottish Executive and the Accounts Commission is to give weight to matters of significant public interest and concern, balanced against professional knowledge and evidence of how these might be represented. In fact, the balance of priorities for all three tips towards the operational side of the service and, more specifically, to crimes against the person. The Accounts Commission has widened this focus to consider some areas of service quality, both internal and external. It is the only one of the three bodies to set an indicator that tries to gain a direct measure of customer satisfaction outcomes, albeit only every third year, a situation which appears to HMIC to be unsatisfactory.

### Support Department or Business Area Functions

The nature of policing is complex, having to cope with demands as diverse as local antisocial behaviour and global terrorism. So too are the factors that will influence incidences of, and solutions to, problems of criminal activity and disorder. No less important is the organisational support that is essential if the service is to be able to meet these demands and provide a quality service to public and staff alike. Thus HMIC would argue that an effective approach to priority setting and thereafter measurement and monitoring, should consider a balanced and holistic picture of policing, involving not only operational priorities but also those relevant to business support and internal and external quality of service.

## 3.10 THE FUTURE OF PRIORITY SETTING?

It is vital to establish a clear direction for the Scottish police service that will allow it to focus on the issues which matter most to the public. It is clear from the foregoing that the current process of priority, indicator and target setting could be improved.

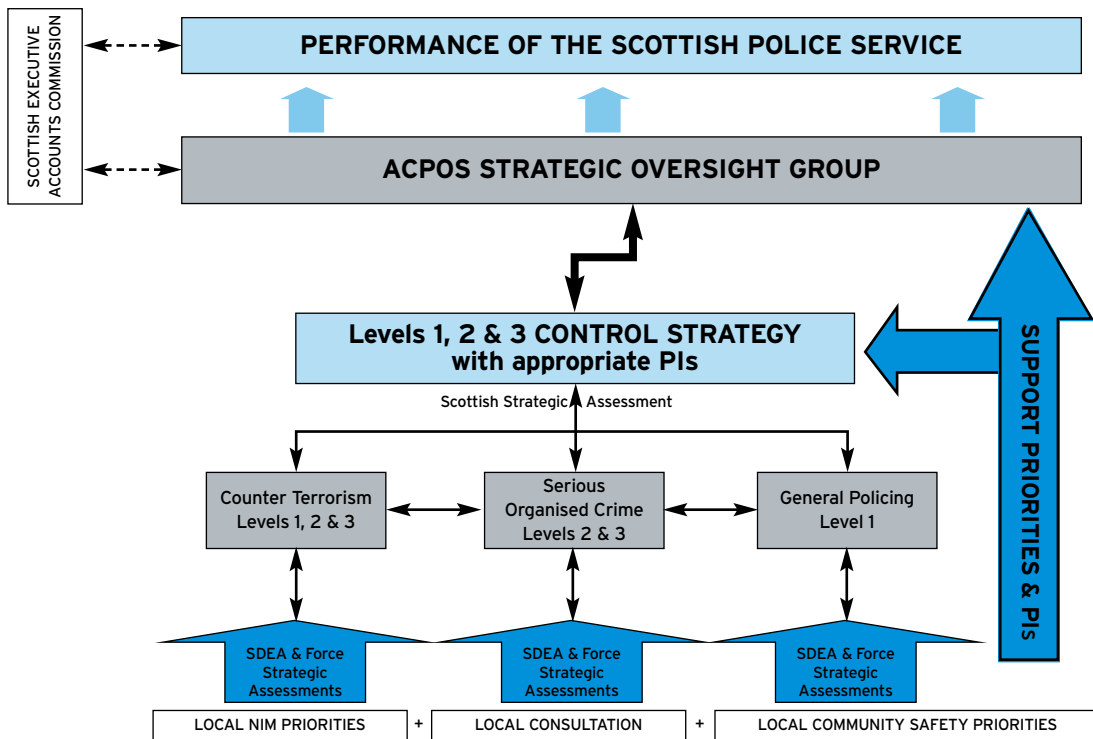
The Scottish Strategic Assessment does not currently consider NIM level 1 issues such as serious violent crime and anti social behaviour. Taking account of this gap, and building on the national work in progress, the process model set out below at **figure B**, is used by HMIC to demonstrate how level 1 issues, which are already an integral part of force strategic assessments, might be included in a more comprehensive Scottish Strategic Assessment, from which a broader Scottish Control Strategy can be derived. This control strategy would in effect establish the operational policing priorities for the Scottish Police service.

<sup>17</sup> Local Connections, Policing with the Community, A Thematic Inspection of Community Engagement - HMIC, 2004

## Recommendation 4

HMIC recommends that ACPOS engage with NCIS with a view to determining a mechanism to provide strategic analysis which looks across NIM levels 1, 2 and 3 and which will inform the Scottish Strategic Assessment and allow a control strategy to be set reflecting operational policing priorities at local, force and national level.

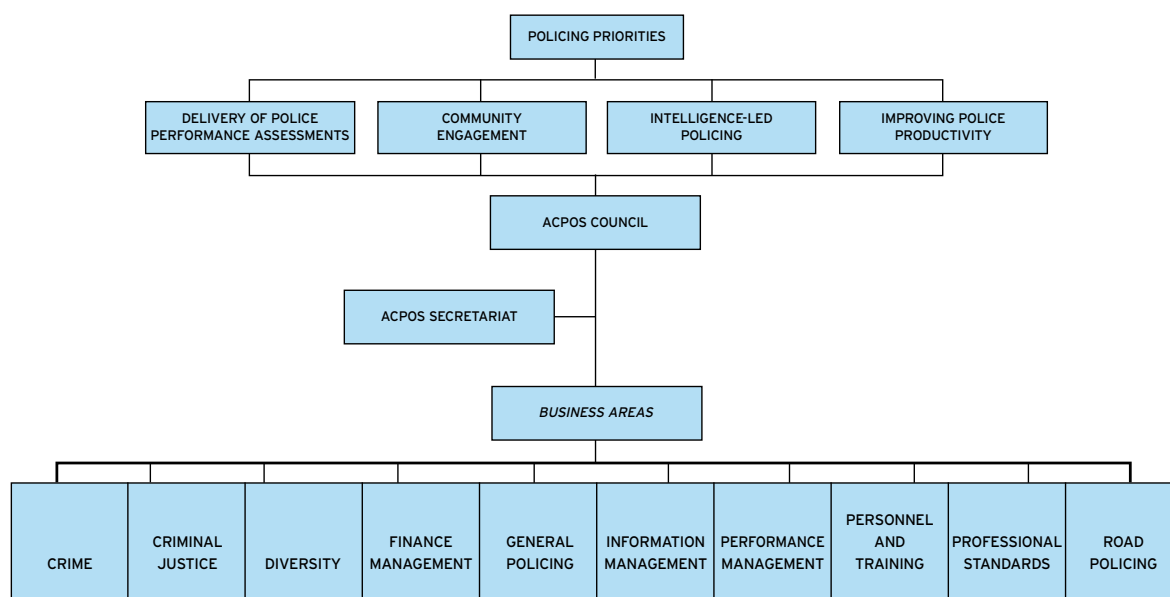
Figure B



To obtain a full picture, however, priorities relating to support departments or business areas must also be included. As was observed at force level, support departments or business areas develop their own priorities as part of business planning. Most will link to operational priorities and, therefore, will be included in the control strategy. A number, however, will relate to strategic priorities of national significance, for example the implementation of Airwave and the National Performance Development Review system, which will not be taken into account in the control strategy. Management for such issues currently rests with the appropriate ACPOS business area.

ACPOS has recently undergone restructuring and has identified 10 business areas to provide the appropriate focus for policing in Scotland: Crime, Diversity, Finance Management, General Policing, Information Management, Personnel and Training, Professional Standards, Road Policing and the recently formed Criminal Justice and Performance Management business areas, as shown below in **figure C**.

Figure C (taken from ACPOS annual report 2004/05)



HMIC recognises the challenge in articulating the activity of each of the business areas in a performance management and performance measurement context, including managing the linkage with national priorities and emerging developments in, for example, a change in law or advances in technology.

However, the ACPOS business areas would seem to be the natural channels for identifying these strategic priorities, focused through the Performance Management Business Area. HMIC also acknowledges the work which ACPOS has undertaken through the Finance Management Business Area and Best Value Sub Committee to develop a performance management framework which would allow ACPOS to monitor and manage both operational and support priorities effectively.

It is important that further strategic consideration be given by ACPOS when priority setting to take account of not only the operational priorities derived through the control strategy, but also the support priorities identified by the Business Areas. The influence of other strategic stakeholders, for example, the Scottish Executive and/or the Accounts Commission must also be taken into account.

It is not for HMIC to prescribe the precise means by which priority setting is achieved, but it would require the establishment of an ACPOS strategic oversight group or similar mechanism, as illustrated in **figure B**, involving existing groups such as ACPOS Council and the ACPOS Business Areas. Such an arrangement would offer the prospect of priorities being set for the Scottish police service in a manner which more accurately reflects the range of services it provides. Subsequent involvement of the Scottish Executive and the Accounts Commission in this process would further provide the basis for a co-ordinated view of policing to be established, building on existing consultation and liaison arrangements.

## Recommendation 5

HMIC recommends that ACPOS establish a formal arrangement whereby strategic oversight can be applied to the setting of national priorities which reflect the wide range of services the Scottish police service provides. The arrangement should include consultation with the Scottish Executive and the Accounts Commission and be timed to align with business planning cycles.

The identification of priorities in consultation with the Scottish Executive and the Accounts Commission would also provide a strong basis for co-ordinated activity around performance measurement in the Scottish police service. Earlier in this chapter HMIC identified the difficulties encountered by the Performance Indicator Working Group in seeking to establish better alignment in the individual scrutiny arrangements used by ACPOS, the Scottish Executive and the Accounts Commission, to monitor performance, including the setting of indicators and, where set, targets. This, when linked to the unco-ordinated publication timetable used to provide information on performance, has the unintended consequence of confusing rather than informing the public.

Consequently, HMIC would support the establishment of a strategic multi-agency steering group to build on the proposed arrangements to set priorities for the Scottish police service. This group, as an adjunct to the amended arrangements for ACPOS proposed by HMIC, would allow each organisation to set and develop its monitoring structure in a more co-ordinated manner.

ACPOS, the Scottish Executive and Audit Scotland, on behalf of the Accounts Commission, would then have an opportunity to identify a co-ordinated set of indicators and targets linked to priorities which would satisfy their particular needs and be subject to a properly co-ordinated schedule of publication of performance reporting.

Indeed, there already exists a high level Scottish Police Best Value Group with representation from ACPOS, the Convenors Group (representing police authorities), the Scottish Executive, Audit Scotland and HMIC, in which these issues have, from time to time, been discussed. HMIC believes that, subject to a review of representation on that group, it could become the strategic steering group envisaged.

## Recommendation 6

HMIC recommends that ACPOS engage with the Scottish Executive and Audit Scotland towards the establishment of a strategic steering group, involving representation from each, to co-ordinate performance measurement and reporting in the Scottish police service. It also recommends that a priority area of activity for the strategic steering group should be a fundamental review of existing performance indicators and targets and the processes for identifying these, with a view to establishing a systematic approach to performance monitoring which meets the needs of all partners.

In summary, what is needed is a balanced approach to assessing and driving public service performance that is realistic about the complexity of public service provision and the internal and external factors that influence it. Such an approach must be able to take cognisance of any national requirements, whilst also meeting specific public demands for local service delivery improvement in a way that is both visible and meaningful to local communities.

The same process model also potentially provides a vehicle for continuity of national initiatives, for example Safer Scotland. The rolling programme of initiatives could dovetail into the problem areas identified through the strategic assessments and provide high profile responses. A tiered approach to national initiatives may allow some forces legitimately to opt out of specific challenges, based on the force and local assessments, whilst tackling relevant issues, again identified through proper assessment.

HMIC is aware that the issue of Safer Scotland campaigns was recently discussed at the ACPOS Crime Business Area and welcomes the agreement between members that Strategic Tasking and Co-ordinating should drive national campaigns.



# CHAPTER FOUR

Ownership and  
Accountability



## OWNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Having established the desired priorities, outcomes, indicators and targets, the focus turns to delivery. Organisational leaders will wish to establish a culture of high performance throughout each constituent part of their organisation to ensure the attainment of stated outcomes.

HMIC noted that the extent to which performance management systems were embedded within each of the forces and common police services varied considerably. While the majority of organisations do not yet have a fully matured culture of performance, they are making progress with positive development of processes and practices.

As has been noted, within existing performance management systems there is clear evidence of chief officers and directors taking ownership of strategic performance issues. This is further evidenced by their direct involvement in the regular review of performance, outlined in the next chapter.

In simple terms, establishing ownership relates to individuals accepting personal responsibility for key performance aspects and, at managerial level, the performance of the team. Individuals should recognise that they will be scrutinised and be held accountable for performance. Just as important, however, within this context, is the need to ensure that people within the organisation are empowered to achieve real improvements in service delivery and do not feel unnecessarily constrained by organisational barriers.

### 4.1 COMMUNICATION

In order to establish ownership and accountability, the first step is the effective communication of the desired outcomes of the organisation and the chosen priorities on which to focus.

HMIC found a number of common methods being used by forces and common police services to deliver their key messages. These included:

- the personal issue to all staff of force plans for the coming year
- publishing of force plans on intranet sites
- the use of internal publications, leaflets and posters
- establishing a force conference or similar forum, where all staff benefit from direct contact with senior management.

In addition, most organisations also reinforced these messages through the regular circulation of performance updates, as well as ensuring there was clear information arising from tasking and co-ordinating meetings in relation to ongoing operational priorities.

The recently revised **Strathclyde Police** communications strategy has been devised to have direct linkage with the force's NIM control strategy. Having carried out a review of the previous strategy, the force identified a gap in the communication of consistent and relevant information to staff within the organisation and to its varied external audience.

The revised communications strategy includes a specific Corporate Communications role to provide clear direction on communications, backed by professional advice, expertise and tactics to support delivery of the business plan and force control strategy. The key initiatives emanating from the force control strategy will be examined by Corporate Communications where plans will be drawn up to ensure the relevant audience receives only the relevant information.

The crucial area in communicating organisational priorities is ensuring that it is relevant to the individual and that the individual is clear about the personal message it conveys. Naturally, personal briefing was found to be the most common method of achieving this.

Either through entire executive teams, individual chief officers visiting command areas and departments or through structured awareness and feedback meetings throughout the year, the visibility of the force executive was generally found to be high. This was clearly appreciated by members of the relevant focus groups spoken to by HMIC.

In general terms, considerable evidence was also presented regarding the involvement of local senior and middle management in regular briefings of operational or departmental personnel, particularly in relation to the delivery of key messages. This was reflected in the ability of officers and support staff, within focus groups, to explain the main force and local priorities and where these may be found.

This was not, however, a universal finding and HMIC was disappointed to hear from some front line operational officers who experienced infrequent contact with senior management in a briefing or information sharing context. The continued need to focus on effective communication cannot be overstated.

## Recommendation 7

HMIC recommends that forces and common police services continue to ensure that organisational priorities are effectively translated in a meaningful way to all members of staff whatever their role.

### 4.2 ESTABLISHING OWNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

HMIC noted that, within the existing performance management systems, the need to establish ownership and agreed lines of accountability at different levels of the organisation is clearly recognised.

At the various levels of the organisation, actions are directed to those individuals best placed to ensure their achievement and these actions are recorded and time bound. At managerial level, ownership is established for strategic actions leading to key actions for individuals throughout the organisation. Managers are responsible for the performance of their departments or command areas, as well as for their own personal performance. Team leaders are similarly responsible for the performance of their teams. Evidence for this was provided through specific examples of action plans and minutes of meetings in which responsibilities are clearly set out.

As part of its structured performance system **Northern Constabulary** requires every officer to receive a performance review from their immediate supervisor 3 times a year. In this meeting past performance is discussed and future actions agreed. These actions are tailored to the rank and post holder involved to ensure that the actions are directly relevant. For example, a constable's action plan could include a greater road traffic emphasis to reflect the local and force road safety aims.

In addition, annual action plans set by the area command to achieve force targets have clearly named persons responsible for the monitoring and delivery of key aspects of the plan. This allows the commander to have clear reporting lines, holds individuals to account and serves to reinforce the performance culture through effective communication of organisational priorities.

A small number of forces establish lines of accountability, particularly for support departments or business areas, through the use of service level agreements, or similar plans, linked to organisational outcomes. HMIC noted the intent of a number of other forces to develop this area and utilise such plans as a means of structured accountability.

Within **Fife Constabulary** the Human Resources Department annually sets development activities in support of the policing plan and the ACPOS People Strategy 2003 - 2013. Staff are invited to choose which activity they wish to participate in and a member of staff is assigned lead responsibility. Action against the activity is then monitored at quarterly intervals at the departmental meeting.

This year each of the functional units within the department was asked to set performance indicators. These are reported on at regular intervals at the unit head meetings. An end of year report will be generated for the force based on these indicators to show how the department performed and how it contributed to the policing plan. Fife Constabulary believes the approach promotes accountability and the spirit of continuous improvement within a framework geared to support the policing plan.

Three forces also provided evidence of the direct formal monitoring of team and individual performance, with another stating its intent to develop this area. The type of information collated in relation to operational officers remains fairly limited. Presently it includes incident attendance, number of intelligence submissions, crime reports submitted, crimes detected, the resultant detection rate, cases submitted to the procurator fiscal and the number of fixed penalty/conditional offers issued. The rationale of collation of information at area command level lies in the fact that first and second line supervisors are in the habit of collecting this information anyway in the course of their supervisory duties, albeit on a less formal basis.

Whilst the type of information may differ slightly between forces, it is collated either monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly and tends to be in the form of simple spreadsheets allied to existing IT. Fieldwork by HMIC indicates similar systems in a number of forces in England and Wales.

In addition, individual and team performance would appear to be monitored more frequently in departments where the process itself is easily measured in productivity terms. Some SCRO departments, force contact centres and a number of similar departments have examined their processes and identified a guide to what average productivity should be. Naturally, this is more applicable to departments where processes are repetitive and similar in nature and allows departmental managers to challenge poor performance and provide support as required.

However, a productivity approach should be complemented by stringent quality control to ensure that the calibre of service provision is not sacrificed by maximising throughput. HMIC noted evidence that this important factor, where relevant, was recognised and addressed.

HMIC acknowledges there are many factors which should be considered in determining an individual's performance and the quantitative information should be used only as an indicator to prompt more in depth investigation where appropriate. While there are clearly advantages in formalising what is, after all, a legitimate function of line management, a limited quantitative measure of output, be it for team or individual, must not be mistaken for a complete picture of performance.

A number of forces also publish performance information by station or local policing area and the local officer in charge of the station or area is held to account for that performance.

The effort to drive performance improvement through the monitoring of team and individual performance is undertaken to ensure that poor performance is challenged and good performance acknowledged. Some have termed this as 'intrusive supervision', others simply as 'good management', each acknowledging the need for any area of poor performance to be supported to bring it back on track.

The key to performance improvement depends on what action is taken with the information available. During the fieldwork HMIC became aware that if individual performance is perceived solely to relate to the targets and indicators being monitored, then this can lead potentially to a reduction in the quality of service delivered and can, in fact, in an operational environment, lead to ethical questions about the actions being taken to achieve the targets. Staff morale could be seriously affected. Clearly a balance must be struck between monitoring of performance via performance measures and ensuring that the measures do not become an end in themselves.

A number of examples of how good performance is recognised and rewarded were highlighted to HMIC during the inspection, which again bring into focus elements previously discussed under effective leadership and communication. Typical examples were:

- the senior manager simply being complimentary regarding performance by personally speaking to the individual or team
- informal e-mails praising good work
- acknowledgement of good work in force publications
- positive performance review notes for an individual's file
- recommendations for local or force commendations
- force awards schemes, an example of which is shown below.

**Strathclyde Police** has based its Excellence Awards scheme on the CoSLA quality awards. The award categories are aligned to the force business principles of people, customer focus, quality and operational strategy. Entries are submitted via commanders or heads of department and illustrate an area of particular good work or a particular initiative which is linked to one of the business principles. A judging panel then considers the relevant entries and short lists them. Following presentations on each short listed entry an awards ceremony, hosted by the chief constable, is convened and winners chosen. All entries have a short summary included which is disseminated within the force to spread good practice.

### 4.3 STAFF APPRAISAL

All organisations utilise staff appraisal systems to monitor and report on individual performance. There are obvious benefits in having all staff clearly focused on what they have to do to contribute towards organisational priorities, linked to personal development and training. It is important for organisations to focus effort on staff development in order to enhance performance.

There is, however, some disparity in the way this is achieved. At least two forces have moved away from the current Police Advisory Board for Scotland (PABS) model for staff appraisal, while common police services such as the Scottish Police College and the SDEA rely on an amalgam of systems based on the seconded officer's 'home' force.

These and other perceived deficiencies have been recognised by ACPOS and a new National Performance Development Review System for the Scottish police service is currently under consideration. One of the key aspects of the proposed system is a stronger linkage between personal and organisational performance. HMIC notes this ongoing work and will continue to monitor developments.

#### 4.4 EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The tripartite arrangement ensures that chief constables are held accountable to the public through governance arrangements involving the police authority, comprising local elected officials, and the Scottish Executive. The Accounts Commission seeks to monitor police performance through the use of statutory performance indicators, while HMIC fulfils an independent role in ensuring effectiveness and efficiency through inspection. Locally, command areas are also subject to some scrutiny from their locally elected representatives, MSPs and MPs and various community based arrangements. The emerging statutory requirements of community planning will be examined in the following section.

An important arm of the tripartite arrangement is the relationship between chief constables and their respective police authorities. During inspection visits, HMIC was pleased to record the many positive comments made by chief constables in terms of how effective this working relationship is in practice, based as it is on mutual trust, co-operation and consultation. This view also receives support from a police authority perspective and reflects the situation HMIC finds across its range of inspection activity.

As well as the statutory reporting requirements, where police authority members receive and scrutinise performance information provided by the force, there is also a more pro-active element of oversight provided by a structure of police authority sub-committees. These vary in name and constitution between forces but generally cover areas such as physical resources, human resources, complaints against the police and Best Value.

Nonetheless HMIC noted from comments made by a number of forces that, in practice, there would appear to be differing levels of actual scrutiny carried out by the police authorities and sub committees. Despite this, and in the absence of strong evidence to the contrary, HMIC believes the current police authority scrutiny arrangements of police performance to be soundly based and capable of enhancement, through dialogue, without the need for fundamental change.

Chief constables have a duty under section 15 of the Police (Scotland) Act 1967 to submit an annual report to the police authority on policing within their force areas. Recently some forces have moved away from a strong focus on statistics in favour of trying to provide a more contextualised report on their performance. This change is based on the premise that raw statistics are of little meaning to the public and there is a need to provide a more holistic view of what the force has set out to achieve.

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 Best Value guidance also suggests that public performance reporting should, amongst other things, cover future priorities and be open and honest about past performance. Section 13 of the Act sets out the duty for a police authority to report publicly upon the outcome of the performance of its functions. In addition, January 2005 saw the implementation of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 which gives a general right of public access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities including information pertaining to police performance.



As performance management systems develop, there is an opportunity to provide more regular and relevant information to the public and police authority. The majority of forces report performance to their police authority on a quarterly basis. The information provided is based on quarterly performance reports used by the forces themselves.

It is intended by some forces to publish their performance reports on internet web sites and circulate the reports to their police authority members on a monthly basis to ensure they are placing as much information as possible in the public domain. HMIC noted that forces also use a number of publications, ranging from local press articles to official council bulletins, to report on their performance. Community officers regularly report local performance results to a multitude of public groups.

The Chief Constable of **Northern Constabulary** reports formally to the joint police board on a quarterly basis. Prior to this meeting local area commanders invite their respective board members to their offices to discuss the local performance aspects of the report about to be presented. This allows local board members to consider force performance in a local context. According to the force, this has led to stronger local accountability and understanding of police performance.

A similar practice exists with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) as a result of the amended constitutional arrangements arising from the Patten Report.

Under legislation, a local area commander in the **Police Service of Northern Ireland** must produce a local policing plan after consulting with the local District Policing Partnership (DPP). Thereafter, the plan is monitored and the local commander reports on progress to the DPP at least 6 times a year. This is over and above the central accountability of the Chief Constable who reports to the Northern Ireland Policing Board at least 10 times a year.

There have been some recent concerns regarding potential confusion over performance information which is publicly reported. In part this was due to the Scottish Executive reporting crime and detection statistics on a calendar year basis whilst the police service and the Accounts Commission reported on a fiscal year basis. This particular matter has been resolved and all parties now report on a fiscal year basis.

Perhaps the most significant factor in lingering public confusion, however, arises due to the timing of published information. The SDEA and most forces report their annual performance information individually between April and June, after it has been presented to their respective police authorities. HMIC publishes its annual report containing all Scottish forces' crime and detection figures in September. The Scottish Executive Justice Department releases its annual Scottish crime bulletin around October and, subsequently, Audit Scotland reports on the statutory performance indicators it collects on behalf of the Accounts Commission around December. While the figures used for all of these reports are now based on the same timeframe, they still differ slightly to take account of reports or detections referring to this time frame but identified and recorded in subsequent months.



ACPOS also provides an update on some of its policing priorities within its annual report, published around June. However, this cannot be said to provide a comprehensive report on the performance of the Scottish police service as a whole.

The number of reports and manner in which they are presented can potentially cause further confusion, especially without the relevant contextual information to explain any variances. HMIC considers that this is an issue which is capable of resolution by the strategic steering group recommended at Chapter 3.

It is also important to consider the performance reporting of the common police services and HMIC notes that governance arrangements in respect of the common police services as yet remain to be settled in the light of proposed legislative change. At present scrutiny and higher level accountability is undertaken by the recently formed Common Police Services Programme Board. The Director of each common police service reports on organisational performance to the board every 6 to 8 weeks.

#### 4.5 COMMUNITY PLANNING

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 places a statutory obligation on local authorities to initiate, facilitate and maintain community planning, while requiring other agencies including the police to participate in the main aims of engaging with communities and working together to provide better public services.

As was recorded in 'Local Connections',<sup>18</sup> forces are continuing to adapt to the new arrangements, with perhaps the greatest progress being noted in local authority areas initially piloting community planning or those with existing strong community safety arrangements.

During inspection, HMIC noted that all forces demonstrated a commitment to the formation of Community Planning Partnerships and Community Plans. Furthermore, despite the difficulties of establishing cross-cutting local priorities and resultant action planning, there was also evidence of effective linkages between this process and the force business planning cycle.

HMIC, however, acknowledges that, if priority setting in a multi-agency environment remains particularly challenging, then the effective management of performance across the partnership is even more difficult. To achieve effective performance management, a number of practical difficulties will have to be overcome by practitioners from the police, housing, social work, education, and other council services. These include the absence of reliable and valid joint indicators, geographical boundaries that are not co-terminous, differences in definitions and the way in which data is collected between organisations, issues surrounding the sharing of operational data and the resources and technology required to collate relevant, timely data across the partnerships.

<sup>18</sup> Local Connections, Policing *with* the Community, A Thematic Inspection of Community Engagement - HMIC, 2004

HMIC has noted that Community Planning Partnerships have already identified the need to develop structured performance management systems but much more work has yet to be done. This has also been recognised in the context of Best Value and Community Planning Audits, recently carried out by Audit Scotland in various local authorities. While it is not suggested that a single performance management system or set of indicators would necessarily apply to all partnerships, there will still be some priorities which are relevant to all and for which common indicators might be developed.

This was previously identified as an issue in 'Local Connections'<sup>19</sup> where HMIC recommended:

*'that ACPOS, in consultation with the Scottish Executive, ensures the development of performance indicators is consistent with the local context of community planning'.*

HMIC found that all forces are interested in exploring and expanding their joint working practices. This includes, for example, the use of joint databases and community analysts, the measuring of partnership activity using partnership audits, the application of balanced scorecard and joint public perception surveys. Also, in recognition that a significant portion of activity is difficult to measure, some forces are also monitoring progress by setting milestones for strategy implementation and utilising external evaluations. The use of liaison officers within local authorities and local health boards, and inviting partners to tasking and co-ordinating meetings, help to facilitate this process.

HMIC acknowledges that there is a great deal of positive working ongoing within forces and encourages the development of structured performance management systems to provide a greater degree of evidence and accountability in respect of community planning.

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<sup>19</sup> Op cit

# CHAPTER FIVE

Review

## REVIEW

Chapter 4 established the importance of the right individuals having ownership and being held accountable for established priorities. The need therefore arises to ensure that there are structured processes in place to monitor and review performance against these priorities. This is a particularly crucial area if organisations are to have confidence that they are achieving their priorities, identifying areas for improvement and sharing good practice. Elements of team and individual performance appraisal have already been looked at, but the focus now turns to performance at an organisational level.

Performance review meetings are considered to be a key aspect of a performance management system. The purpose of the review meeting is to focus on organisational priorities and assess performance to date. This allows areas of under performance or good performance to be identified. It is in this way that performance monitoring becomes performance management. Decisions that are taken at these meetings move the organisation from simply monitoring its performance to managing it by using the information provided to make informed decisions about future actions.

For the meetings to be effective they must be well informed and relevant. Having said that, there is clearly a need to ensure that performance against priorities is being monitored in a manner which does not involve a heavily bureaucratic process and that only indicators which will inform on progress of priorities are being monitored.

A necessary ingredient of an organisation which demonstrates a strong performance management culture is a structured review process, ranging from the strategic to the operational level.

Matters arising from such meetings are progressed and thereafter reviewed at subsequent meetings. Much of the literature in relation to performance management highlights the need for 'relentless follow up' of actions to ensure that performance improves or evidence is documented as to why improved performance is not being achieved. Where performance against a declared priority is not being achieved, it may be that there are other factors which now exist that make the achievement of the said priority unrealistic. However, through a robust review structure, the organisation can evidence its decision making process and also has an opportunity to confirm or amend its priorities as necessary.

### 5.1 LINK TO NIM

Within police forces, a natural link exists between performance meetings and tasking and co-ordinating groups convened in accordance with the NIM, with an overlap of information used by each. HMIC found that the majority of forces have, or intend to have, separate force level tasking and co-ordinating group and performance meetings. The general view being expressed is that some performance areas are beyond the remit of tasking and co-ordinating, the focus of which should remain firmly operational.

Naturally, actions from the performance meeting which relate to operational matters should be given a high priority by the tasking and co-ordinating group. However, the imperative to pursue a force or national performance target should not be allowed to take precedence automatically over a local issue identified through the NIM process. If operational priorities are properly aligned to the NIM control strategy, the potential for such conflict is reduced.

## 5.2 REVIEW STRUCTURES - FORCE

HMIC noted during inspection that different forces use slightly different review processes and there is no one structure better than the others. What matters most in deciding on a structure is what suits the organisation concerned. Factors which might usefully be considered include organisational size, geographical spread of resources, spans of responsibility and perceived need in terms of frequency and desired attendance.

Within a policing context, 'Compstat' is perhaps the most familiar example of a review process. That said, a considerable mythology now surrounds the process since it was first introduced in New York, in 1994, which detracts from what, at a basic level, is simply a data driven, problem solving approach combined with rigorous challenge. Without offering a view on its overall efficacy, HMIC considers that a brief description of the key processes nonetheless adds value to the issue under current discussion.

'Compstat', as operated by the New York Police Department, is widely seen as the seminal case study of local, real-time performance management leading to performance improvement. That said, its success in reducing crime has also been attributed to other issues including an increase in police numbers, implementation of the 'Broken Windows' theory and a rise in economic growth.

'Compstat' involves four key steps in a weekly cycle:

- At a local precinct level, data is captured and problem solving conducted.
- Central analysis and quality assurance then takes place via a 25 person team.
- This paves the way for the weekly accountability meeting, during which precinct commanders are challenged by a high level management panel, on their efforts to reduce crime. Analysis of crime patterns is pursued in detail with an emphasis on ensuring that robust crime reduction plans are in place.
- Senior representatives of specialist units and other support agencies are also present and held to account against their commitments to crime reduction initiatives.

Among the myths surrounding the 'Compstat' process, much weight is given to the role that IT plays. IT was not a pre-requisite for success, indeed manual data entry was the norm at the outset and most precinct level analysis was done by hand. As the system has matured, greater use has been made of IT based systems. The critical success factor was the collection of timely, robust data.

Equally, peer comparison may not necessarily be the critical incentive that it is often perceived to be. In practice, the key challenge for precinct commanders is to make year-on-year improvements against historic results.

In UK policing terms, 'Compstat' has erroneously become synonymous with a confrontational review meeting, rather than as a whole process ensuring accountability. However HMIC notes that, where a similar review meeting process has been adopted in Scotland and observed elsewhere in the UK, organisations have shown a tendency to develop their meetings in a more inclusive and supportive style, which nevertheless remain challenging and deliver strong accountability.

The scheduling of review meetings must also take into consideration whether sufficient time has elapsed for any actions arising to have been resourced and supported for progress to be made, while also recognising the potential loss of effectiveness if there are lengthy gaps between meetings. In Scotland, existing performance review meetings are generally being held on a monthly basis, either at area command and/or at force level, to prevent the latter occurring. As well as monitoring performance since the previous meeting, consideration is also given to emerging trends over a longer time frame. HMIC considers that performance reviews over a longer period risk losing their ability to address under-performance effectively.

HMIC noted a common theme across forces and common police services was the involvement of chief officers and directors in the performance review process. This illustrates leadership and commitment and helps to ensure that the process is focused on the attainment of the goals of the organisation. The review processes involved are tending to evolve over time as forces determine which method best suits them.

All forces have recognised the need to have processes in place through which they can review performance, particularly in respect of operational command areas. The process of reviewing the performance of support departments or business areas against organisational priorities is less well established. The development of service plans, as previously mentioned in Chapter 4, will assist in establishing suitable review processes. It should be noted that programme boards, or similar, perform a review function for strategic priorities, generally along project management lines.

The examples highlighted below illustrate the different types of review processes currently being used.

**Lothian and Borders Police** recently introduced a Performance Activity Management (PAM) meeting. The meeting is currently held on a quarterly basis and is chaired by the Chief Constable and is attended by other members of the force executive, all area commanders and heads of relevant support department. Performance is reviewed against performance measures which have been identified either as priority areas for improvement or as high risk areas for the force. The force performance improvement unit produces a report for this meeting, outlining performance at force and command area level. Monthly performance reports are also produced to feed divisional performance meetings.



The PAM meeting is seen to be evolving into a discussion forum for improving force performance based on informed dialogue with individual area commanders and departmental heads, in turn allowing the meeting to concentrate on anomalies and best practice rather than 'business as usual'. While designed to be a challenging environment, the style of the meeting is not aggressively confrontational.

**Fife Constabulary** holds its Force Operations Group (FOG) meeting, which is chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable, on a monthly basis. The role of the FOG is to ensure the achievement of force goals within the territorial and functional command areas of the force by considering data on progress against targets set in the policing plan and other relevant performance information, and identifying areas of underachievement.

In addition, the Assistant Chief Constable ensures accountability by visiting command areas and operational headquarters departments on a quarterly basis to focus on performance issues with the management teams. Also, the Deputy Chief Constable attends biannual meetings with departmental management teams (headquarters) to focus on how departments support operational performance within the command areas and how they perform against pre-set objectives. The Deputy Chief Constable then holds meetings with the command areas to assess the support given by headquarters functions.

**Tayside Police** similarly has a monthly Operational Commander's Meeting (OCM) chaired by an assistant chief constable who also reviews individual divisions on a quarterly basis.

**Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary** conducts a daily video conference between commanders and the force executive at which ongoing performance issues can be addressed. Performance is a standing item at the monthly force executive policy group meeting and the Chief Superintendent also conducts a quarterly review of command area performance.

**West Midlands Police** holds a central performance meeting for its operational command units every 2 months.

Each assistant chief constable in the force has been allocated responsibility for the performance of a number of operational command units, ensuring full involvement of the force executive. On months when there is no central meeting, each assistant chief constable will hold a performance meeting with their cluster of operational command units, looking at cross border issues as well as individual unit performance. These meetings are more focused than the central force meeting.

It should be noted that, where a central performance meeting takes place, this can often involve a large number of senior managers. It is therefore vital that there is a clear agenda for the meeting, that matters discussed are relevant and that the business is conducted efficiently.



HMIC was pleased to note that forces actively pursue outstanding actions arising from previous meetings, using structured records of outstanding actions and of the individuals with responsibility for progressing the actions.

### 5.3 REVIEW STRUCTURES - COMMAND AREA

It is equally important to review performance at a command area or departmental level. This provides managers at all levels with a focus on performance. As illustrated previously some command areas and departments utilise team and individual statistics to monitor performance.

At command area level HMIC has noted that the majority of forces do not hold separate performance meetings. Instead issues of performance are discussed at management team meetings and are fed into tasking and co-ordinating meetings. The majority of forces see tasking and co-ordinating as the key driver for command area performance, linked to individual performance meetings with team leaders. However, where there is no separate command area performance meeting, the previously stated benefits of separating performance from tasking and co-ordinating to ensure all aspects of performance are considered, should not be overlooked.

HMIC considers that the style of performance review used at this level is a matter for individual forces. What remains the key issue, however, is that command areas must regularly monitor and review their performance to ensure that they are achieving their desired outcomes, as well as identifying and addressing any areas for improvement.

### 5.4 REVIEW STRUCTURES - SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

With regard to the performance of support departments, HMIC found strong formalised structures for reviewing performance within the common police services, with individual departments having well established links to desired organisational outcomes. It was also found that the majority of forces had recognised the need to review the performance of their support departments in a more structured manner. Forces also acknowledged the need to develop the linkages between departmental and organisational priorities. This is demonstrated in the intention of Tayside Police to establish a Policy and Performance Committee.

Within the **Scottish Criminal Record Office** (SCRO) the Director holds a monthly management meeting where each of the individual bureau heads are present and are held to account for bureau performance. Service area performance reports capture a range of performance information relevant to each bureau and set against agreed targets. The content of these reports is a constantly evolving process, as key indicators are identified and methods of capture improve.

A similar structure of management meetings is also used within the Scottish Police College and the **SDEA**.

## 5.5 PROCESSES

The information provided to performance review meetings should serve to highlight areas within the organisation/force/department that are performing well and those which are not. When choosing indicators and measures of performance it is stressed that organisations should seek to keep these to a limited number and should focus on key areas of business.

By identifying and critically examining the key processes required to achieve the desired outcomes, an organisation can achieve performance improvements. Review of the processes involved could arise as an action from a performance review. Examining organisational processes as a means of achieving sustainable improvements can often lead to training implications for teams and individuals.

Areas for improvement can often be identified by staff working within particular departments, either as a result of something going wrong or simply, through an individual's experience in that role, identifying a better way to do business. This is every bit as valid as more formal methods.

The Scottish Executive Guidance to Chief Constables on Implementing Best Value in the Scottish Police Service<sup>20</sup> advocates that police authorities should agree a systematic approach to service reviews designed to achieve real improvements in resource use, focused on priority areas or areas of concern.

During inspection, HMIC noted evidence that Best Value reviews and schedules remain an important feature within forces' continuous improvement effort. The means by which the areas of work are identified and the manner in which reviews are managed, differ considerably. The level to which police authorities are engaged in the process is less clear, although most forces indicate in their responses to HMIC, that a dedicated Best Value Sub Committee is a feature of the authority structure.

Within **Strathclyde Police**, selected individuals at divisions and headquarters departments have been designated to carry out process mapping, supported by staff from Corporate Planning and Development. With the introduction of a new business continuity planning initiative, the Standard Operating Procedure specifies that it is incumbent on local business continuity teams to identify their processes in order to assess risk and prioritise management actions and business continuity plans.

The recent change in the role of the Deputy Divisional Commander within Strathclyde Police to ensure a stronger focus on performance management, brings with it a role in managing the performance of local processes. To this end, in February 2005 a workshop was held for Deputy Divisional Commanders to develop their understanding of process management and their role therein. This was closely followed by a process mapping workshop for divisional and departmental quality assurance staff.

<sup>20</sup> Scottish Executive, Police Circular 11/2003

In addition, the use of internal inspection by forces and common police services has often resulted in improved processes and procedures leading to performance improvement. The EFQM self assessment tool is still widely used in the Scottish police service, its use highlighted by the Scottish Police College obtaining an award from the European Foundation for Quality Management for Excellence in Europe in 2003. The balanced scorecard approach is also being developed by a number of forces, either as a means of reviewing a particular department or business area or, as in the case of the SDEA, SCRO and Grampian Police, as an integral part of their business planning cycle. Both methods allow the organisation or command areas and departments to identify processes or areas which would benefit from review.

HMIC considers the review of processes to be an important aspect of performance management. Ongoing examples of work in this area in Grampian Police and Lothian and Borders Police are worth noting.

**Grampian Police** and **Lothian and Borders Police** have both undertaken similar but separate projects to review criminal justice procedures, with a view to recommending and implementing changes that improve speed, efficiency and effectiveness of their local criminal justice systems.

The need to examine and improve upon the various processes embedded within a complex criminal justice system was recognised in the review of summary justice undertaken by a committee chaired by Sheriff Principal McInnes and the report by the then Crown Agent, Andrew Normand, on the integration of elements within the criminal justice system. Grampian Police and Lothian and Borders Police have engaged with their local Criminal Justice Boards, and partners in the projects and include Crown Office, the Procurator Fiscal Service and the Scottish Courts Service.

The inter-agency project teams employ a proven methodology originally developed in manufacturing but successfully adopted within the service sector. The fundamental principles of this approach are outlined in this abbreviated list:

#### **CHECK**

Understand demand.

Obtain clarity of purpose of the system from the customer's point of view.

Understand work flow i.e. identify value work and waste.

Identify the conditions that help or hinder performance.

#### **PLAN**

Identify value steps from the customer's point of view.

Redesign process flows.

Tackle the main system conditions e.g. new structure, new measures, new job roles.

#### **DO**

Experiment with demand using the redesigned process flows.

Act on system to remove system conditions.

Evaluate and return to 'check'.

This is a holistic approach which can provide an end-to-end view of the current capability of a system to meet its stated purpose. The approach should identify weaknesses at each stage of the criminal justice process and suggest possible solutions through to a re-design stage.

HMIC was sighted on the progress of both forces' projects. HMIC also saw the results of the process analysis which had included the gathering of end-to-end data from all agencies concerned. This allowed the project teams to understand demand, variation and system capacity with a view to designing out weaknesses.

Although at the early stages of practical implementation, HMIC commends this approach to tackling complex multi-agency issues and looks forward to seeing positive developments in criminal justice system processes.

## Recommendation 8

HMIC recommends that forces and common police services ensure that they have structured processes which ensure that performance of the whole organisation, including support departments, is reviewed and that actions arising therefrom are appropriately pursued.

As well as reviewing areas of apparent poor performance, the examination of why performance is apparently good needs to be reviewed. Examination of a highly performing department or area command may lead to the identification of good practice that could be applied across the organisation or indeed the country.

ACPOS has recently introduced a Business Benefits Database which will be populated on an ongoing basis with good practice that has led to efficiency savings for the submitting force. A number of forces are attempting a similar approach at a force level.

All forces also feed into a national suggestion scheme which is currently facilitated by Strathclyde Police. In practice, facilitators for each force suggestion scheme submit what they consider to be notable suggestions to Strathclyde Police who, in turn, collate them into a single document which is then circulated to each facilitator. HMIC noted that contributions from some forces to this system were sporadic and that therefore it may not be realising its potential. Further, the process of introducing national suggestions into forces does not necessarily ensure that these suggestions are being given due consideration by the senior managers in every force. HMIC considers that there may be value in forces considering their contribution to the national suggestion scheme to ensure the sharing of information and potential good practice is maximised.

Internally, some forces are highlighting good operational practices or tactics on their intranets, in order to allow other area commands to examine their action plans and results achieved. At the conclusion of a particular action plan or operation, pressures upon forces to move on and tackle the next issue are great. However, the future savings and potential for the organisation to learn from a structured review should not be underestimated.

## 5.6 BEST VALUE

All forces are committed to Best Value and this is highlighted by ACPOS through its Best Value Sub Committee and its annual report on Best Value. HMIC notes that the themes for Best Value reviews are often decided by chief officers following consultation with police authority members and, on occasion, police authority members are directly involved in the review process. Resultant efficiency benefits from force reviews are reported to police authorities to illustrate their achievement in securing Best Value. They are also submitted to the ACPOS Best Value Sub Committee and collated into an annual report on Best Value. It is also worthy of note that Audit Scotland is currently developing a Best Value inspection for specific use with police authorities. This promises to be a substantial development in the scrutiny of performance in the Scottish police service.

## 5.7 BENCHMARKING

The general concept of benchmarking is one of seeking improvement through the discovery of the methods used to achieve superior performance elsewhere. One of the common themes in benchmarking is the identification of others from whom one might learn either within an organisation or from outside. The choice of a benchmarking partner is therefore crucial to the process.

The Audit Scotland guide for councils on Best Value<sup>21</sup> states:

*“No league tables or scores: The emphasis on local context recognises the difficulty of making comparisons between councils. In addition councils are large and complex organisations, with a range of strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, there will not be any use of simplistic league tables or overall labels for each council. Instead, reports should provide a robust assessment of each council’s strengths and weaknesses, focusing on the need for specific improvements.”*

It should be noted that the statutory guidance on Best Value under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003<sup>22</sup> states that an authority should demonstrate sound governance at a strategic, financial and operational level by:

*“effective performance management systems, which include the use of external comparison, through which performance issues can be identified, monitored and addressed.”*

The value that can be derived from benchmarking cannot, therefore, reasonably be taken from broad organisational comparison but from a more focused comparison of individual areas of performance. For example, some forces feel that benchmarking has been beneficial in certain areas where there is strong commonality, such as in property or fleet management.

21 The Audit of Best Value - A guide for councils - Audit Scotland 2004

22 The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 - Best Value Guidance - Scottish Executive, 2004

The use of benchmarking in police circles is probably best known in the 'most similar families' methodology used in England and Wales. The Policing Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF) has been developed by the Home Office in conjunction with ACPO, the Association of Police Authorities (APA) and HMIC in England and Wales and is intended to provide a mechanism to make rigorous and fair assessments of performance within policing.

The framework has been designed to assess performance across the breadth of policing responsibilities and attempts to include the range of activities that the police are asked to undertake. In order to achieve a balanced assessment, policing responsibilities have been divided into six outcome areas or domains, which recognise the importance of priorities set locally and nationally.

Comparison via the 'most similar' forces, basic command unit (England and Wales) or command area (Scotland) is in itself a contentious issue generating much debate from practitioners as to the validity of such comparisons. This is explored in Chapter 6.

The value of external benchmarking has, however, been questioned by some academics on the basis that it encourages imitation rather than innovation. Instead it is advocated that the organisation's own people are used to review working practices, which engenders a better understanding of what does or does not work and leads to longer term improvements.

HMIC considers that there can be value in both internal and external comparison, although any data or information used must be put in context and consideration given to that context before any conclusions are drawn. In addition, broad organisational comparisons should be avoided and focused comparisons sought regarding individual departments or processes as a means to improve performance. Failure to do so can lead to the development of league tables which are presented without context.





# CHAPTER SIX

Meaningful Data Capture  
and Analysis

## MEANINGFUL DATA CAPTURE AND ANALYSIS

The need for performance data has been a consistent theme throughout this report. Data, or the performance information it becomes through analysis, underpins each of the constituent parts of an effective performance management system.

In Chapter 3, the importance of priority, indicator and target setting is stressed at all levels of the organisation, based on information covering the full range of policing activity. In Chapter 4, information needs are articulated around the requirements of accountability and empowerment, from individuals, through team to organisation level. Chapter 5 underscores the necessity of data to inform reviews of performance and processes, not only to recognise what might be improved but also to understand what works. Thus it is essential that such information is able to provide a complete picture of performance, and to do so from the local to the national level.

Performance data is also ultimately the source of evidence as to whether or not a performance management system is achieving its aims, that is, driving service quality. In order to answer that question, forces and scrutiny bodies must define what they mean by quality of service and have a clear understanding of what constitutes success in this regard. From this, valid and reliable indicators can be developed that will allow for more robust and focused assessment of progress towards achieving success, however this is defined.

### 6.1 DATA CAPTURE

It is probably fair to say that, across the Scottish police service, the capture of meaningful data is the least well developed aspect of local performance management systems. Nor is the issue always necessarily to do with a lack of basic data. Often the difficulties lie in ready access to the data and the ease with which it can be converted into meaningful information which can be used for performance management purposes.

Ideally, what is needed is real time access to data so that managers at all levels, are able to monitor progress on a regular basis. At the tactical level, managers need information to enable them to identify areas of concern and to make responsive tasking and co-ordinating decisions. Timely access to data is also a prerequisite for effective strategic performance management.

During inspection, HMIC noted that, across all forces, the most well established automated processes for data access, are those dealing with crime and incident data. All forces hold their crime and incident reports on electronic databases. Nonetheless, this does not necessarily enable real time, electronic access for analysis purposes. In the case of one force in particular, the data has had to be extracted manually and converted into a spreadsheet format before then being transferred to a statistical software package for analysis.

Moreover, even where electronic access to data has been automated, the ease with which it is subsequently analysed to produce performance information varies. This appears to depend in part upon whether or not these databases link directly with analytical software. HMIC notes that both Tayside Police and Lothian and Borders Police, for instance, use additional systems that facilitate pre-set queries to be run on crime data. A further crucial factor is how well the underlying software is structured to meet analysis requirements. Fife Constabulary is an example of a force which uses specially designed analysis software to provide the performance information required.

However, dealing with crime is just one facet of policing. As has been discussed already, at the local level most departments and command areas also record information, in some form, relating to other activities. With the implementation of new force contact centres, additional performance information is becoming available in this area too.

The scrutiny demands of the Accounts Commission and of HMIC, through its own annual statistical return, also require data from forces covering wider organisational performance. HMIC is aware of continuing difficulties experienced by some forces in collating this data accurately within established timescales. A contributory factor appears to be limitations in data capture and storage systems that restrict ready access to the data, either within the departments themselves or by the central units charged with compiling the returns.

In summary, performance management requires accurate, timely and meaningful data. If performance management is not to become overly bureaucratic then it must have strong IT support. Managers need to have performance information which informs their decisions allowing them to identify areas of concern and respond to them. The information presented must be concise and not overwhelm them, potentially resulting in useful findings being lost somewhere in an unwieldy statistical report. The performance information must be capable of being understood and interpreted, and managers should be able to obtain the relevant information they need from their own desktops.

## Recommendation 9

HMIC recommends that forces and common police services establish systems whereby robust performance data can be captured easily and on a timely basis. Such data should be readily accessible, involving a minimum of bureaucracy in the process.

Clearly this is best achieved with the optimum support of IT. Ideally an overarching database arrangement should exist that links to existing systems and by which the required performance data and information can be extracted. This system should also be capable of producing meaningful contextualised reports direct to relevant managers' desktops.

HMIC notes that some forces, in recognition of the foregoing, have initiated enquiries with the Scottish Executive to secure funding for such a system through the Efficient Government Fund. HMIC considers that there is an imperative for such systems in all forces and the benefits of a single system for the Scottish police service cannot be overstated. Achievement of this aim, taking due account of the co-ordinating influence of the Scottish Police Information Strategy, appears vital to HMIC.

## Recommendation 10

HMIC recommends that ACPOS, in liaison with the Scottish Executive, pursue the procurement of a suitable common IT solution to support performance management across all Scottish forces, as a top priority.

### 6.2 PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Generally, the more automated the data processes, the less time and effort is expended and the quicker the performance management information can be provided for a range of reporting purposes. Responses revealed a certain amount of variation in the purpose and frequency of collated performance reports.

This was true not only between forces but also within forces, where a number of different performance reports were produced. Not surprisingly, the more frequent reports were those reporting exclusively on crime trends. Dumfries & Galloway Constabulary and Tayside Police for example, both provided short, weekly reports showing crime figures down to local level.

All forces and common police services provide what could be termed their main corporate performance report on a monthly and/or quarterly basis, generally linked to the cycle of associated meetings. These tend to focus on performance against crime rates, local objectives, and statutory performance indicators where these do not already form part of force priorities. Because of this, the emphasis tends to be on operational and, in particular, crime-related, performance information. For the same reason, information relating to business support activity tends to be included in force reports only where this relates to force or national priorities.

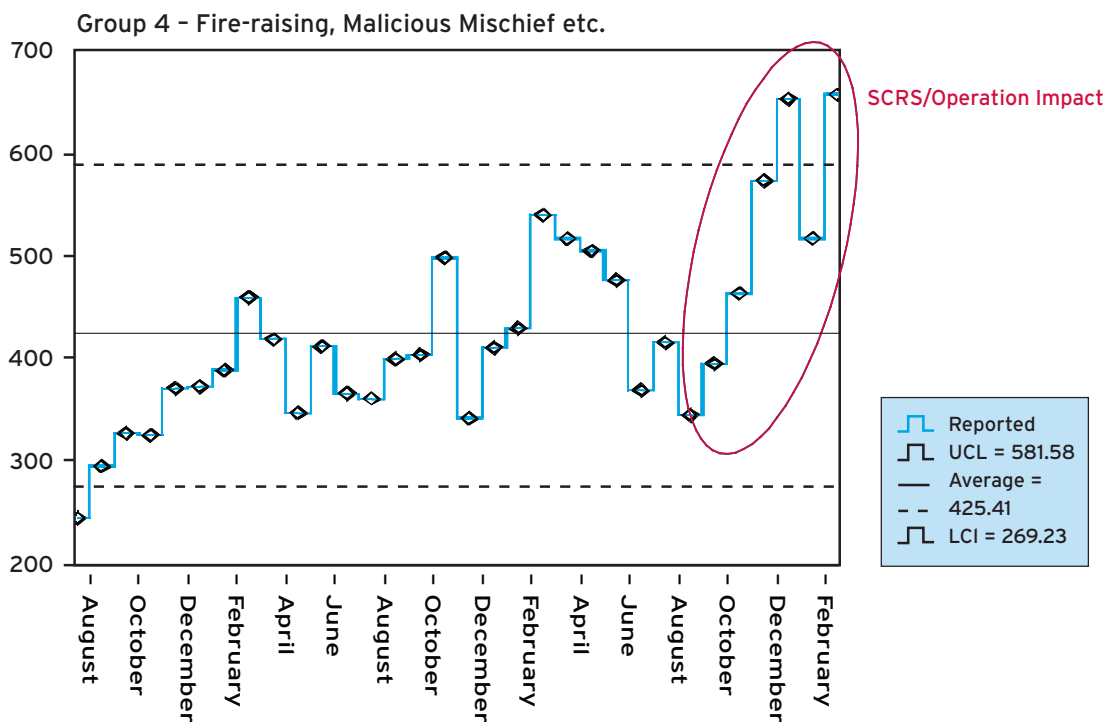
Some forces, however, have extended the contents further to include additional information. These include graded responses to incidents and call handling statistics by Fife Constabulary, human resources statistics by Tayside Police and Northern Constabulary and local finance and asset management, also by Northern Constabulary.

The incidence of crime, offences, road traffic collisions and so on, are affected by numerous factors, some police-related, others not. Because of this, the presentation of top line statistics can be limited in the extent to which it can convey a more rounded understanding of apparent changes in policing performance. One way of adding meaning to statistical data is to set figures in a broader context. Tayside Police's *'Performance Profile'* report, for example, includes brief explanatory comment around performance trends, provided by force intelligence analysts.

Another way is to contextualise data within a longer timeframe. A number of forces report recent trends against baselines derived from longer term average performance. Others are seeking to add more statistical rigour to their trend analysis. Whatever the approach adopted, recipients should be able easily to locate, extract and interpret all information relevant to them. Where too much detail is provided to the target audience, this is arguably worse than no information at all and can affect motivation. Most forces use colour coding in some form in order to highlight progress towards targets or objectives. Most also present data in graphical as well as numerical form.

**Central Scotland Police's 'Force Performance Report'** contains crime control charts. Here, upper and lower control limits (UCL and LCL) are derived from historical crime trends. Where subsequent crime rates fall outwith these limits or where consistent upwards or downwards trends emerge, these are likely to reflect causal factors rather than random or natural variation at work. In addition, the performance report shows whether or not the force and respective command areas are on target by colour coding for ease of reference. In relation to some targets, variance is shown in numeric terms rather than by percentages, making it easier to see what further action might be required. Examples are shown in the following charts:

**Central Scotland Police**



OVERLORD 1. "Tackling the Dealers"		Force Performance	Area Command Performance			
			Clackmannan-shire	Falkirk	Stirling	
2. Increase reporting for Class A drug supply offences	Target	≥26	≥7	≥9	≥10	
	Actual	33.1	7.4	14.9	10.8	
Increase Class A drug seizures	No. of Doses/ Tablets	Target	Force level target			
		Actual				185.8
	Weight (g)	Target				≥96
		Actual				85.3

**Key:**

Target achieved or surpassed

Improvement on 3 year average, but target not fully met

Target not met

≥ Denotes figure being greater than or equal to    ≤ Denotes figure being less than or equal to



**Strathclyde Police** produces a monthly *'Forecast Bulletin'* for selected crimes and crime groups. The report contains charts showing actual and average incidence of these crimes at monthly intervals. Forecasts, based on the last 60 months of crime data, are given for the following four months. These are updated on a monthly basis in order that emerging trends can be identified and so that any change in trends can be taken into account.

**Tayside Police** has a *'Points of Note'* section at the front of its report, which provides a text-based summary of force performance against targets. All figures or text relating to progress towards targets are colour coded. In addition, performance management staff train all inspectors and above in how to access management information from the electronic system.

It was clear from the inspection that forces are generating a number of performance reports designed for different purposes and audiences, and which are presented in various formats. HMIC would not wish to be prescriptive about this, beyond underlining the benefits of regular internal review to identify opportunities to streamline the reports and of maintaining external feedback mechanisms to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

**Tayside Police** in its monthly performance profile report retains a tear-out section for recipients to fill in with their comments and suggestions concerning the content and format of the report. In addition, a named contact and telephone number is given as an alternative means of providing feedback.

**Tayside Police** and **Fife Constabulary** ensure that Performance Management staff regularly attend Tasking and Co-ordinating Group meetings. This enables staff to gain, at firsthand, an understanding of how the information they produce is used in such fora.

It is vital that performance information be valid and reliable and takes a holistic view of a force's performance. It should be reported regularly and in a way that is meaningful and relevant to users. Having reliable data will ensure that subsequent debate will focus on the management of the information rather than be deflected over arguments surrounding its capture and reliability. HMIC is satisfied that, with improved access to a wider range of information as recommended by HMIC, forces will be well placed to achieve this.

### 6.3 DATA CAPTURE AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

At the national level, performance information is desirable in order that the Scottish police service as a whole can gauge its progress towards its priorities and, in so doing, demonstrate to an external audience its ability to deliver a service to the public. As was mentioned in the Preamble, while the Scottish police service is subjected to scrutiny from a number of sources, HMIC has previously commented on the need for an overarching monitoring arrangement.

HMIC has also commented on the advantages of procuring a suitable single performance management IT solution for all Scottish forces. Such a system has the potential to be the 'engine room' for the collation of data at the national level.

The ongoing work in attempting to develop a performance assessment model for ACPOS, linked to its 'Policing Priorities' has previously been noted by HMIC. A report in this regard currently lies for consideration with the new Performance Management Business Area which, *inter alia*, contains proposals for an ACPOS performance management framework, what a resultant performance report might look like and what infrastructure would be required to support such a structure.

It appears to HMIC that this is a particularly pertinent and important area of work which links closely with a number of recommendations from this report. An additional benefit of collating information in this manner would be that HMIC and other relevant stakeholders would have access to the same information, thereby streamlining the current statistical requirement from forces. HMIC will monitor progress in this area closely.

In the meantime, forces remain subject to demands for regular statistical information from various bodies. For example, the Scottish Executive, Audit Scotland and HMIC all require some form of statistical return from forces, at least annually and sometimes quarterly. In all cases the same information is requested of each force. Some of the time the same information will be requested by the different bodies. Even so, inconsistencies both within and between individual force data sets are not uncommon. While long recognised, these matters remain of some concern to HMIC.

All forces have in place some form of auditing procedures through which system data can be checked. The more robust these mechanisms are the greater likelihood that decisions can be made on the basis of accurate information. Forces are also subject to varying degrees of external audit, primarily of crime and incident recording procedures, by the various scrutiny bodies:

- as part of its primary inspections, HMIC regularly conducts a crime/incident audit in each force
- a thematic inspection by HMIC is currently underway, examining force compliance with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard
- as part of its statutory responsibility, Audit Scotland carries out an annual audit of performance indicator arrangements in each of the forces.

In addition, on a more ad hoc basis, staff within the Scottish Executive Justice Statistics Department also perform short audits of crime statistics within the forces.

The emphasis of these audits is about presenting an accurate picture of policing performance to the public. Over the last three years, the Accounts Commission has highlighted unsatisfactory arrangements for producing certain statutorily required information in several forces. HMIC recognises and values the Accounts Commission's crucial role in driving improvement within the Scottish police service. HMIC also shares its concern where shortcomings are found in force procedures for producing the required information. The use of the term 'unreliable' in this respect and its possible implications has been raised with the Accounts Commission by ACPOS.



## 6.4 COMPARISON

In the absence of an overarching system to monitor the overall performance of the Scottish police service, valid and useful comparison between forces is difficult. One force produces a quarterly report which aims to show forces' individual and combined progress against national targets however local difficulties at the data capture stage mean that not all forces are able to provide this data on such a regular basis. Another force attempts to utilise comparative data from England and Wales. In this case incomparability of data between systems is unavoidable and the resulting analysis, therefore, can at times be incomplete or flawed. HMIC recognises the need which drives these initiatives but has reservations over their current effectiveness.

Other methods of collating information in such a way as to facilitate comparison do exist. *iQuanta* is a web based tool that has been developed to facilitate centralised data capture, dissemination and analysis across all 43 forces in England and Wales. Forces are required to provide the data, relating primarily to statutory indicators and measures but also including recorded crimes and offences, on a monthly basis. Data is available at force, basic command unit and crime and disorder reduction partnership level. In this way the system provides users with shared access to a unified set of policing data that is consistent.

There is no doubt that a system such as *iQuanta* can be a powerful facilitator for the provision of regular, robust and consistent performance data. By drawing together disaggregated data from the constituent forces in this way, a more reliable picture of national performance can emerge.

Where there is, perhaps, a need for caution, it is in how data is subsequently analysed and the resulting performance information reported. It is apparent that collating data in this way facilitates comparison between the constituent forces. Nonetheless HMIC recognises that league tables can be drawn from information currently placed in the public domain by forces and other related bodies. Indeed, there have been occasions where the media has constructed national league tables, particularly around recorded crime levels. To compare at such a simplistic level does little to help identify genuine areas for improvement.

The need to avoid simplistic league tables also finds support in a recent report<sup>23</sup> which examined the introduction of a Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) for NHSScotland. The following quotes are of interest:

*“Support for the Scottish PAF per se was strengthened by the absence of league tables and its importance as a stimulus for discussion at the Accountability Reviews”*

*“In order to retain the high commitment of NHSScotland, it is important to avoid the pitfalls of other similar systems, such as league tables and strong financial incentives”.*

<sup>23</sup> The Performance Assessment Framework (PAF): experiences and perceptions of NHSScotland. A Report to the Analytical Service Division, Directorate of Performance Management and Finance - Scottish Executive Health Department, 2004

In assessing performance data, particularly at a national level, the wider context should be considered, including demographic, geographic, economic and other influencing factors. Otherwise the potential for drawing misleading and unhelpful conclusions is very real.

To an extent these factors have been taken into account in the Most Similar Families (MSF) groupings developed in England and Wales and used within *iQuanta*. The MSF concept is intended to offer a more rigorous approach to comparisons of forces, basic command units and crime & disorder partnerships. It applies a statistical technique to derive families that are different but whose internal members are as similar as possible, along demographic, socio-economic and geographical lines. To be more meaningful, comparisons would then be restricted to those between members of the same family.

HMIC acknowledges the value to be derived from comparing or benchmarking performance and is supportive of any drive towards establishing more valid processes for doing so. However a number of limitations with the MSFs remain. In terms of the concept itself, even those who constructed the revised families, acknowledge that there is no definitive and unchallengeable<sup>24</sup> method of deriving such groupings to enable like-for-like comparisons. In addition, the interpretation of findings associated with MSF are limited, particularly where families represent looser groupings of forces. Furthermore, the model in England and Wales is based on a crime reduction focus and therefore the constitution of each family represents factors particularly relevant to that issue, suggesting that different families might be needed for other matters.

Practically, with only eight, somewhat diverse, forces in Scotland the most similar families concept could only realistically be applied at a lower level. There are 36 force command areas of considerable diversity across the Scottish forces, covering 32 local authority areas. Sitting within each of the 32 local authority areas is a community planning partnership. There is nothing definitive in the statistical literature to suggest that this is too small a number to which to apply clustering but it is clear that the diverse map of Scottish forces and community planning partnerships offers little to suggest significant value can be derived from clustering these basic units into families.

Nonetheless, HMIC acknowledges that there may be a desire for comparison between local authority areas in respect of community planning based on the much wider range of information available at that level. If so, there may be alternative and potentially more meaningful ways of achieving comparison.

For example, the inspection team is aware of independent, academic research examining the MSFs, being conducted by staff at University College London.<sup>25</sup> As well as producing an evaluation of existing Home Office families, the research is also examining alternative models that are based on more localised geodemographic (geographical and demographic) area profiles. These profiles are used to describe socio-economic and socio-cultural behaviour and work by clustering smaller geographical areas on the basis of social similarity such as lifestyle types, rather than, more arbitrarily constructed administrative locations such as force areas.

<sup>24</sup> Policing Performance Assessment Framework: Revisions of Most Similar Force Groupings - Accenture July 2003

<sup>25</sup> David I Ashby Personal communication, 2005

Several such classification systems are already well established in the UK.<sup>26</sup> Though widely used by business, their application within the public sector to date remains rare. Some work in this field has however been conducted with several forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.<sup>27</sup> The main thrust of this has been to enhance understanding of small area crime and policing environments in order to aid resource management and deployment. The research underway may additionally show that, where force or other organisational level comparisons are desirable, clustering and comparisons between areas, on the basis of geodemographic classifications, could prove to be a useful and complementary informative strategy to that of traditional geographic comparisons.

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<sup>26</sup> For example, Mosaic UK (Experian) and ACORN (CACI Ltd)

<sup>27</sup> For example, DI Ashby & PA Longley Geocomputation, Geodemographics and Resource Allocation for Local Policing, Transactions in GIS 9(1): 53-72, 2005

# CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusions

## CONCLUSIONS

Managing the improvement of services to the public lies at the very core of policing. Performance management is the means by which an organisation measures, analyses and makes decisions on service delivery to ensure that standards are met.

However, performance management is not just about the setting and measuring of targets. Rather, it also involves instilling a sense of ownership and accountability for performance issues in staff at every level, driven by effective, visible leadership with the ability to review and challenge where necessary, all of which is underpinned by the availability of relevant, timely and accurate information.

The Scottish Executive's continuing emphasis on improving public services ensures that the spotlight remains firmly focused on police performance through the delivery of Best Value and efficiency. At the same time, an ever more informed 'customer' demands to be kept up to date through effective public performance reporting.

This inspection has established clear evidence that performance management within forces and common police services is substantially developed through existing accountability arrangements. The message that everyone has a responsibility for the achievement of high quality services through continuous improvement has also started to permeate through all levels of the organisation and will, with continued effort, lead to a fully embedded performance culture.

Against this positive background however, areas for improvement are nonetheless evident. Notable in this respect is the need for clearer mechanisms for priority setting at a national level and agreement on performance indicators which are fit for purpose and which more accurately reflect the full ambit of policing activity, as well as the ability to collect and process timely, reliable performance data in a way that is not overly bureaucratic.

HMIC is encouraged to note that these areas of weakness, where they occur within forces and common police services, are well recognised, with improvement work either in progress or in prospect. HMIC also recognises that many areas of performance management are in the early stages of implementation, making firm conclusions as to their efficacy difficult. This will be an important consideration when progress towards the recommendations arising from this thematic inspection report, is reviewed.

At the national level, as well as the need for a more consistent approach to priority setting, there remains a recognised need to collate, monitor, evaluate and report on performance across the whole of the Scottish police service. The formation of the ACPOS Performance Management Business Area represents a positive step towards this, and should prove to be a strong focus for those recommendations directed at ACPOS, as well as for driving existing performance related projects.

HMIC believes that the recommendations contained in this report recognise and complement existing effort across the Scottish police service and build positively for the future.

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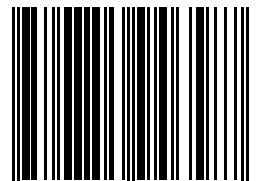
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