

Report to: Policy and Review (Performance) Panel, March 22nd, 2007
Report by: Head of Strategy
Written by: Dave Adams, Corporate Performance Manager

Quarterly overview of key issues from performance monitoring

1. Purpose of the report

To inform the Policy & Review (Performance) Panel of key issues arising from performance reporting over the last quarter. The report is part of the regular programme of reporting every quarter to give an overview of progress on performance management.

2. Recommendations

The panel is recommended to:

1 - Note the performance issues considered by the Strategic Directors Board in the last quarter, and the plans agreed to address performance issues

2 - Decide whether there are any issues previously considered by the Strategic Directors Board that the panel wishes to receive a more detailed report on, and whether there are any other performance issues the panel would like the strategic directors board to monitor and report on.

3. Background

This report provides a summary of progress over the last quarter against key areas of the council's performance management framework and highlights issues picked up at the Strategic Director's Board (SDB). SDB have received monthly reports on the Corporate Scorecard throughout 2006/07, highlighting areas where performance is failing against targets, as well as areas that have shown considerable improvement. Section 5 of this report identifies key areas of performance reviewed by SDB during the last quarter. A summary of indicators reviewed by SDB in January 2007 is attached.

4. Best Value

Since the last report to the Policy & Review (Performance) Panel, the Community Involvement Review has been progressing well and the Baseline Statement was completed in December 2006 as planned. The working group is now undertaking consultation with stakeholders to challenge the Baseline and produce the areas for improvement.

Changes to Best Value have been proposed in the Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper. The main changes are:

- The removal of the legal requirement to undertake Best Value reviews (although local authorities are still expected to undertake 'robust' reviews of its services)
- A requirement for local authorities to "inform, consult, involve and devolve (services)", to communities

These changes are expected to come into force in April 2009.

5. Major issues from the Corporate Scorecard

The Policy & Review (Performance) Panel received a report in March 2006 on indicators to be monitored on a monthly and quarterly basis through the corporate scorecard. A set of just over 50 indicators was agreed for this financial year. SDB has received monthly reports throughout 2006/07 on the indicators in the scorecard.

Performance Summary – December 2006

Appendix One provides a traffic-light summary of all indicators included in the revised Corporate Scorecard, with three lines of analysis:

- Performance vs Target
- Performance vs previous month/quarter
- Performance vs same month in 2005/06

The trend of gradual improvement across the range of scorecard indicators has continued throughout most of the current financial year, though a number of monthly indicators have dropped in December, at least in part due to seasonal variation (eg Staff sickness and Culture indicators)

Data were unavailable in December 2006 for:

- Housing Repairs (due to change in reporting arrangements)
- Some City Helpdesk Indicators

Performance compared to agreed targets

57.5% of indicators hitting target (GREEN), **37.5%** missing target with significant variances (RED). This represents disappointing overall performance compared to October 2006 (which itself was the best month of 2006/07 so far). However, it should be noted that a number of indicators are low in December 2006 due to seasonal factors (eg Libraries).

Performance compared to last month/year

72.5% of indicators showing improved performance when compared with last month (or at least remaining stable)

Performance compared to equivalent month/quarter in 2005/06

72% of indicators showing improved performance compared to performance in equivalent month of 2005/06.

Performance compared to national top quartile for unitary authorities

Only six indicators (out of more than 20) within the Corporate Scorecard set are currently at top quartile levels for unitary authorities (two in Children Families, and Learning, four in Health Housing and Social Care). In addition, performance for visits to museums is top quartile for the year-to-date, but not so for the month of December 2006.

Appendix Two provides a more detailed view of performance in each Directorate, with data compared to national benchmarks, where appropriate.

Exception Reporting

The following have been identified as key issues with indicators in the scorecard based on returns received for December 2006:

Social Care (Adults) – SDB received a report on the Corporate Scorecard on August 30th, showing that Social Care performance was well below target in a number of key areas (out of nine targets, five were assessed as ‘red’ and four as ‘amber’). At the meeting, it was suggested that performance was not actually as bad as the reported figures suggested and that data quality was a concern. As a result, Social Care adjusted two key targets downwards to take account of this. These were:

PAF D55 – Acceptable Waiting Times for Assessment
PAF D56 – Acceptable Waiting Times for Care Packages

Furthermore, at the October 2006 meeting, it was decided that Social Care indicators would be reported on a quarterly basis. December 2006 was the first month of quarterly reporting. The only indicator causing concern for the month was PAF D55 (Acceptable Waiting Times for Assessment). The cause of this is unknown at this time and relevant personnel are investigating.

Council Tax - Below target, and below equivalent point in 2005/06 (though slightly more collected in absolute cash terms, due to larger base).

Processing within the Local Taxation team continues to be assessed by Head of Service, as part of an on-going performance review.

As of January 2007, revised document scanning and workflows are being introduced, in order to improve processing – separating collection and debt recovery work. The effect of these changes will take some time to become apparent. Collection-related correspondence will be cleared by April 2006 – this will improve the accuracy of collection rate performance data. At that point, the Head of Service plans to introduce more “inactive” collection methods, which should improve performance overall.

City HelpDesk - Due to system problems, only limited data was available from the City Helpdesk for December 2006. Revisions to the City HelpDesk scorecard from January 2007 onwards will mean that a slightly altered set of indicators will be monitored from February 2007 onwards.

Planning Applications and Appeals - Cycle time performance is currently below target for all types of planning application. Meanwhile, performance on BV 204 (planning appeals allowed) continues to be very poor.

Culture – Performance in libraries and museums is below target for December 2006. It should be noted, however, that museum visits remains on target for the year as a whole, and has merely dipped slightly in December.

A number of areas have shown improved performance over recent months, and these are highlighted below:

Acceptable Waiting Time for Care Packages – Performance improved in December 2006 to 93.2%, up from 80.8% in October 2006. Current performance represents top quartile standard for unitary authorities.

Social Care Indicators PAF C29-C32 – These indicators all measure the number of service users enabled to live at home with help from Social Care Services. PAF indicators C29-C32 cover, respectively, people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health problems, and older people. All have improved when compared to October 2006 and are above target levels.

Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) – A quarterly assessment of progress on the CYPP has been included in the Corporate Scorecard for 2006/07 to cover progress on the range of issues covered by the plan. As of December 2006, progress with actions for eight judgement areas were rated as GREEN, one AMBER, while the remaining four were not reported on this month.

6. Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

A separate report summarising PCC's 2006 score in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is scheduled for discussion at the Policy & Review (Performance) Panel in March 2007.

7. *Strong and Prosperous Communities* – The Local Government White Paper

In October 2006, the government published the Local Government White Paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities', setting out its future agenda for local government across a range of issues. The White Paper was the basis for the *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill*, which is currently going through the parliamentary scrutiny process.

The White Paper and bill have significant implications for the performance management framework for local government as a whole. The key issues are:

- The replacement of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) with a new, less burdensome Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA);

- A reduction in the number of performance indicators required to be reported to central government;
- A greater focus on customer satisfaction data;
- A greater focus on providing performance data in 'real-time' to the public; and,
- An enhanced role for scrutiny by elected members.

The changes proposed in the White Paper, in relation to performance management, are set out in the briefing note attached.

Martin Evans
Head of Strategy

Corporate Scorecard 2006/07 - Appendix 1 - Summary of Performance Indicators

Directorate of Children, Families, and Learning	Dec-06	Target	Last month/year	Dec-05
% of LAC without allocated Social Worker	0%			
Reviews of Child Protection Cases	100.00%			
Stability of Placements for LAC	8.46%			
Directorate of Corporate Resources and Services	Dec-06	Target	Last month/year	Dec-05
PCC-wide Staff Sickness (Short Term - 1 month behind)	2.11			
Council Tax Collected	81.34%			
NNDR Collected	90.52%			
Cycle Time for New HB Claims (days)	29.9			
HB Claims - Accuracy (prev quarter)	90.40%			
Invoices Paid	92%			
Directorate of Health, Housing, and Social Care	Dec-06	Target	Last month/year	Dec-05
Average Time to Re-let LA Dwellings (Weeks)	3.91			
% of Arrears for Current Tenants	3.12%			
Homelessness Acceptances	23			
Average Stay in B&B (Weeks)	1.39			
Homelessness Preventions	14			
Intensive Home Care per 1,000 pops	13.72			
Direct Payments	101.5			
Items of Equipment Delivered on Time	79.50%			
Acceptable Waiting Time for Assessment	79.50%			
Acceptable Waiting Time for Care Packages	93.20%			
People With Physical Disabilities Helped to Live at Home	3.45			
People With Learning Disabilities Helped to Live at Home	2.03			
People With Mental Health Problems Helped to Live at Home	2.4			
Older Persons Helped to Live at Home	80.1			
Directorate of Environment & Transport	Dec-06	Target	Last month/year	Dec-05
% of Minor Planning Applications in 8 weeks	59%			
% of Other Planning Applications in 8 weeks	79%			
% of Major Planning Applications in 13 weeks	59%			
% of Planning Appeals Allowed	50%			
Days to Repair Street Lights	4.8			
Abandoned Vehicles Investigated	89.54%			
Abandoned Vehicles Removed	92.63%			

Directorate of Economy, Culture, and Community Safety	Dec-06	Target	Last month/year	Dec-05
Library Visits per 1,000 Population	373			
Book Issues per 1,000 Population	290			
People's Network Utilisation	53.8%			
Museum Visits per 1,000 Population	34.1			
Schools Visits to Museums	797			
Portsmouth Enterprise Centre Occupancy	100.00%			
Challenge Enterprise Centre Occupancy	100.00%			
Victory Enterprise Centre Occupancy	74.00%			
Violent Crime (No of Incidents)	280			
Criminal Damage (No of Incidents)	515			
Corporate Priority Teams	Dec-06	Target	Last month/year	Dec-05
CHD - Call Abandon Rate	14.01%			
CHD - Average Speed of Call Answers	1.04mins			
CHD - Visitors Seen within 10 mins	90.00%			
CHD - E-mail replies in 1 day	100.00%			

Directorate of Children, Families, and Learning

Education - CYPP Judgements	December 2006 Assessment		Top Q	Bottom Q	Current		
	Actions	Outcomes					
1 - Improve Adolescent Health	Amber	Amber					
2 - Improve Emotional and Mental Well-being	No Report	No Report					
3 - Prevent, protect and support vuln children	Green	Green					
4 - Improve Attainment	Green	Red/Amber					
5 - Access to Education	No Report	No Report					
6 - Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour	No Report	No Report					
7 - Ready for Employment/Adult Life	Green	Green					
8 - Improve involvement and participation of CYPP	Green	Amber					
9 - Improve Outcomes for Looked After Children	Green	Green					
10 - Early Identification, prevention and support	Green	Amber					
11 - Inter-agency data management	Green	Amber					
12 - Info, Sharing, and Assessment processes	Green	Red					
13 - Develop and Monitor Local Workforce Strategy	No Report	No Report					
Social Care (Children)	Target	Dec-06	Last Month/Year	Dec-05	Top Q	Bottom Q	Current
% of LAC without allocated Social Worker	0	0%	0%	na			
Reviews of Child Protection Cases	100%	100.00%	100.00%	na	100%	98%	Top
Stability of Placements for LAC	10.00%	8.46%	8.71%	7.34%	9.70%	15.97%	Top
Generic Data	Target	Dec-06	Last Month/Year				
Directorate Sickness (month)	0.42	0.39	0.37				
Directorate Spend vs Budget							

BVPI 162
BVPI 49

* Sickness data for the Directorate now excludes staff working in schools

Directorate of Corporate Resources and Services

Human Resources (PCC-wide figures)		Target	Dec-06	Last Month	Dec-05	Top Q	Bottom Q	Current
	Staff Sickness (Short Term - 1 month behind - cumulative)	2.23	2.11	1.67	2.12			
	Staff leaving within 1 year	na	21.10%	23.60%				
	Appraisals Complete		399	275				
Revenues and Benefits		Target	Dec-06	Last Month	Dec-05	Top Q	Bottom Q	Current
BVPI 9	Council Tax Collected	83.64%	81.34%	71.64%	81.00%	97.63%	95.72%	na
BVPI 10	NNDR Collected	89.35%	90.52%	80.93%	89.65%	99.19%	97.75%	na
BVPI 78a	Cycle Time for New HB Claims (days)	42.1	29.9	37.41	66.25	27.5	41.4	Between
BVPI 79a	HB Claims - Accuracy (prev quarter)	93.00%	90.40%			98.6	94.1	Bottom
Financial Services		Target	Dec-06	Last Month	Dec-05	Top Q	Bottom Q	Current
BVPI 8	Invoices Paid	88.00%	92%	90%	89.15%	93.18%	88.42%	Between
	Spend vs Budget (not yet available)							
Generic Data		Target	Dec-06	Last Month				
	Directorate Sickness (month)	0.42	0.36	0.36				
	Directorate Spend vs Budget							

Note - National quartile data for BVPIs has been updated as of January 2007, following the December 2006 publication of 2005/06 BVPI data for all LAs in England.

Directorate of Economy, Culture, and Community Safety

Culture		Target	Dec-06	Last Month/Year	Dec-05	Top Q	Bottom Q
BVPI 220	Library Visits per 1,000 pops	493	373	475	381	na	na
	Book Issues per 1,000 pops	362	290	368	306	na	na
	People's Network - Utilisation	60%	53.8%	59.9%	55.9%	na	na
BVPI 170b	Museum Visits per 1,000 pops	88.4	34.1	54.3	45.1	942	273
BVPI 170c	School Visitors to Museums	na	797	1984	587	19422	2997
Regeneration and Business - Enterprise Centre		Target	Dec-06	Last Month/Year	Dec-05	Top Q	Bottom Q
	Portsmouth Enterprise Centre	na	100.00%	100.00%	na	na	na
	Challenge Enterprise Centre	na	100.00%	100.00%	na	na	na
	Victory Enterprise Centre	na	74.00%	70.00%	na	na	na
Community Safety		Target	Dec-06	Last Month/year	Dec-05	Top Q	Bottom Q
LPSA 2	Violent Crime (no of incidents) ¹	308	280	374	na	na	na
	Criminal Damage (no of incidents)	361	515	633	na	na	na
Generic Data		Target	Dec-06	Last Month			
	Directorate Sickness (month)	0.42	0.29	0.28			
	Directorate Spend vs Budget						

¹Violent Crime PSA includes only common assault and wounding

Note - National quartile data for BVPIs has been updated as of January 2007, following the December 2006 publication of 2005/06 BVPI data for all LAs in England.

Directorate of Health, Housing, and Social Care

Housing		Target	Dec-06	Last Month	Dec-05	Top Q	Bottom Q	Current
BVPI 212	Average Time to Re-let LA Dwellings (weeks)	4	3.91	3.81	4.32	4.28	8.14	Top
HIP BPSA	Urgent Repairs on Time		NA	95.69%	94.59%	97%	88%	NA
HIP BPSA	Non-Urgent Repairs - Cycle Time (days)		NA	9.15	15.47	11 Days	24 Days	NA
BV66a - Proxy	% Arrears for Current Tenants	2.70%	3.12%	3.10%		1.80%	2.93%	Bottom
HIP HSSA	Homelessness Acceptances	33.3	23	26	47			
BVPI 183a	Average Stay in B&B (Weeks - YTD)	2	1.39	0.76	1.86	1	3.37	Between
BVPI 213	Homeless Preventions	42	14	26				
Adult Social Care		Target	Dec-06	Last Month	Dec-05	Top Q	Bottom Q	Current
PAF C28	Intensive Home Care per 1,000 pops	16.00	13.72	13.37	15.22	12.70	8.23	Top
PAF C51	Direct Payments	68.00	101.50	75.44				
PAF D54	Items of Equipment Delivered on time	75-80%	79.50%	76.13%	66.50%			
PAF D55	Acceptable Waiting Times for Assessment	83-87%	79.50%	74.40%	72.10	78%	64%	Top
PAF D56	Acceptable Waiting Times for Care Packages	70-75%	93.20%	80.80%	70.70%	87.70%	75.40%	Top
PAF C29	People with Physical Disabilities helped to live @ home	3.3	3.45	2.73				
PAF C30	People with Learning Disabilities helped to live @ home	1.75	2.03	1.77				
PAF C31	People with mental health problems helped to live @ home	2.5	2.4	2.11				
PAF C32	Older Persons helped to live @ home	80	80.1	75.9	64.80			
Generic Data		Target	Dec-06	Last Month				
	Directorate Sickness (month)	0.42	0.45	0.44				
	Directorate Spend vs Budget							

Note - For BVPI Indicators, 2004/05 Top and Bottom Quartiles for Unitary Authorities have been provided, with the exception of CPA measures, where the upper and lower thresholds for 2006 are given - these figures are generally broadly comparable

Directorate of Environment & Transport

Planning		Target	Dec-06	Last Month	Dec-05	Top Q	Bottom Q	Current
BVPI 109b	% of Minor Applications within 8 weeks	65%	59.00%	49.00%	74.84%	80.79%	69%	Bottom
BVPI 109c	% of Other Applications within 8 weeks	80%	74.00%	81.00%	84.90%	89.21	81.10%	Bottom
BVPI 109a	% of Major Applications within 13 weeks	60%	59%	57%	52.94%	72.22%	55.00%	Between
BVPI 204	% of Planning Appeals Allowed	40%	50%	50%	na	25.6	36.8	Bottom
Transport & Street Management		Target	Dec-06	Last Month	Dec-05	Top Q	Bottom Q	Current
BVPI 215a	Days to Repair Street Lights	7	4.8	5.8		3.72	7.41	Between
BVPI 218a	Abandoned Vehicles Investigated	75%	89.54%	89.38%	73.53%	95.78	80.83	Between
BVPI 218b	Abandoned Vechiles Removed	89%	92.63%	92.09%	89.24%	93.65	72.54	Between
Generic Data		Target	Dec-06	Last Month				
	Directorate Sickness (month)	0.42	0.49	0.41				
	Directorate Spend vs Budget							

Note - National quartile data for BVPIs has been updated as of January 2007, following the December 2006 publication of 2005/06 BVPI data for all LAs in England.

Corporate Priority Teams

Customer First (City HelpDesk)	Target	Dec-06	Last Month
Resolution at point of contact - telephone	80%	NA	96.16%
Resolution at point of contact - In person	80%	NA	87.84%
Resolution at point of contact - e-mail	80%	NA	50.66%
Call Abandon Rate	6%	14.01%	15.77%
Calls Answered within target time	80%	NA	45.00%
Speed of call answers	20 secs	1.04mins	1.09 mins
Visitors Seen within 10 mins	85%	90.00%	75.00%
E-mails replied to within one day	85%	100.00%	89.02%
Total Contact Volume		19193	
Generic Data	Target	Dec-06	Last Month
Directorate Sickness (month)	0.42	0.5	0.31
Directorate Spend vs Budget			

Note - Scorecard data for CIED and Strategy Unit still under development

Note - Staff sickness for CPTs actually refers to Chief Executive Group, so therefore includes Corporate Secretariat

STRONGER AND PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES

Summary of Implications for Performance Management and Comprehensive Performance Assessment

1 – General Principles –

The White Paper sets out, in broad summary terms, the government's proposals for a new performance framework for local government. The new framework must:

"... make the public's views on service quality the core test of local performance." (Vol 1; 6.4).

Therefore, the government aims to:

"... reduce radically the number of nationally required local targets, performance indicators and reporting and to replace these with new opportunities for citizens to hold their local providers to account for the quality of services." (Vol 1; 6.6)

Overall, the new performance framework aims to:

- **Strengthen accountability to citizens and communities**

This will be achieved through the provision to the public of more timely information on services, the introduction of new means of redress, and greater opportunities for local communities to run and manage local services and facilities

- **Give greater responsibility to local authorities and their partners for securing improvements in services**

This will be achieved through the Local Government Association (LGA)'s role in cross-service and cross-authority challenge and support; by streamlining Best Value, and by promoting real-time performance reporting.

- **Provide a better balance between national and local priorities**

This will be achieved through a "drastic reduction" in the number of national performance indicators and a revised Local Area Agreement (LAA) process.

- **Improvement the arrangements for external assessment and inspection**

This will be achieved through better co-ordination between inspectorates and an inspection regime based on risk.

The White Paper sets out in broad terms the changes to be introduced by central government to develop the new performance framework. Because of the nature of a White Paper, only limited detail is provided at this stage on how each of these elements will function. The implications of the

changes for PCC's own performance arrangements are discussed on pages 2-4.

2 – Structure of the new performance framework –

The key elements of the new performance framework will be:

- An **annual risk assessment** – This will be undertaken jointly by public service inspectorates led by the Audit Commission. The methodology for the risk assessment will be developed in time for full implementation from April 2009; (Vol 1; 6.49)
- An annual scored **Use of Resources** judgement – As now, an annual scored judgement, produced by the Audit Commission. The White Paper suggests that the scoring and reporting system will change, but confirms that the system will ensure comparability between all local authorities; (Vol 1; 6.51-6.53)
- An annual scored **Direction of Travel** judgement – As now, an annual scored judgement, produced by the Audit Commission, highlighting capacity for improvement; and, (Vol 1; 6.50)
- **Inspection activity** by relevant inspectorates – In general, there will be no rolling programmes of inspection in future, with inspection activity triggered by risk assessment. The exception to this rule will be services involving vulnerable people, where a system of regular inspection will need to remain in place.

Collectively, the new approach to assessment and inspection will replace the existing Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) regime, with the new system to be known as Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

In addition to the abolition of CPA, the Annual Performance Assessment (APA), Joint Area Review (JAR), and Star Ratings for Social Care will all be abolished from March 2009. (Vol 1; 6.46)

The White Paper also sets out the statutory sanctions available to the government to support (or tackle) under-performing authorities. Most of these powers already exist under the Local Government Act 1999. However, the new tools include:

Improvement Notices – Issued by the appropriate Secretary of State to relevant local partners, highlighting areas of concern, the level of improvement required and the timeframe expected. Progress in responding to an Improvement Notice will be monitored by regional Government Offices (GOs). (Vol 1; 6.68)

Directive Action – Where the government feels that a local authority is not taking the correct action to address a problem area, the relevant Secretary of State may direct local authorities to carry out specific actions. (Vol 1; 6.69).

Finally, the government retains the right (under powers introduced in the Local Government Act 1999) to remove functions from local authority and appoint a nominee to exercise those specific functions (Vol 1; 6.7)

3 – Performance Indicators and Targets –

The government has pledged in the White Paper to reduce the number of nationally reported performance indicators and centrally-agreed targets 'drastically'. The document estimates that there are currently around 1,200 performance indicators required by the various government departments from local authorities. The stated aim in the White Paper is to reduce this number to around 200. There is very little in the document to indicate which performance indicators will remain, but it is made clear the Public Service Agreements (PSAs - between government departments and the Treasury) will form the basis of the national indicator set. A new set of PSAs will be agreed as part of the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR 2007) process, so it would appear unlikely that we will receive any detailed view on changes to the national performance indicator set until that process is completed. (Vol 1; 6.31)

This process will mean the end of existing indicator sets, such as BVPI and PAF, and their replacement with a single national set of indicators.

In addition to the national indicator set, Local Area Agreements (LAAs) will be further developed to provide the key instrument for the delivery of a limited number of improvement targets jointly agreed between central government and local authorities. The number of targets will be limited to 35, plus statutory targets from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Performance against the targets contained in the LAA will be reported annually to central government and promoted to local people (Vol 1; 6.42).

As well as a reduction in the number of centrally-required performance indicators the government expects to see changes in the way that performance is managed locally, including:

Shift to user satisfaction PIs – There is an expectation in the White Paper that local authorities will seek to gather more information about user satisfaction and preferences, to be used both in performance management and service planning. This will build on an existing shift away from process-orientated (output/input) measures, towards a set of indicators that measures outcomes for users, and their experience of services. There is likely to be a cost implication for the authority attached to any increased requirement to gather user satisfaction data.

Provision of real-time performance data – Local authorities will be expected to provide citizens with "accurate, accessible, and up to date

information on service performance”. The government has said that it will look to support work to develop “sophisticated local information systems”.

4 – Implications for PCC

The White Paper clearly has a series of wide-ranging implications for PCC’s own approach to performance management. These are briefly summarised below.

Overall Approach – PCC’s overall approach to performance management is based on the “Golden Thread” theory, with objectives cascaded from the corporate level, through Directorate business plans and service plans, through to individual Performance Development Reviews (PDRs). To date, this has ensured, with varying degrees of success, that individual members of staff can see how their work contributes to the overall aims of the authority, while Strategic Directors and Heads of Service are able to ensure that key corporate objectives are achieved, with contributions from multiple directorates and services, where appropriate.

There is nothing in the White Paper that is contradictory to this general approach. Where change will be required is in the way PCC’s objectives are agreed, how progress is reported to members, senior officers, and the public, and the extent of public scrutiny of service performance.

Performance Indicators – In theory, the reduction in the national performance indicator set from 1200+ to around 200 should see a reduction in the reporting burden placed on the authority. However, until the new set of national indicators is known, it is not possible to quantify the potential savings (either in time or money) that might accrue from this reduction in reporting. There are certainly some BVPIs, such as those involving environmental surveys, which are costly to collect, while the overall process of reporting and audit is very time-consuming. Again though, there is a lack of detail in the White Paper about future audit arrangements, and the new National Indicator Set may, if it follows a similar process, be just as costly as the existing system at the corporate level.

It is also unclear at this stage whether the indicators that are cut from the national set will still need to be monitored locally for service management, or whether we will be able to abandon whole systems of monitoring, collection, and reporting. In general, the IT systems that have been put in place over the last decade to monitor service performance are a sunk cost, so there would be few savings in that regard. Savings from the reduction in the reporting burden are most likely to be achieved through efficiency gains – where elements of staff time previously spent on national performance requirements are saved. It is likely that PCC will be able to make savings in some areas as a result of the reduction in the reporting burden, but as noted above, until it is known which specific indicators we will no longer be required to report on, it is difficult to quantify the size of the savings, or identify specific areas where they might be achieved.

CPA and other external assessments – The replacement of CPA with the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) should also lead to a reduction in the burden of government and inspectorate monitoring and reporting. Two elements of the existing CPA will remain – the Use of Resources and Direction of Travel judgements. The removal of all service assessments will see a small reduction in the burden placed on directorates, though more significant is the ending of the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) for children’s services and the Social Care “Star Rating” system. As well as saving staffing time, the move should also provide us with greater freedom and flexibility to target our resources on key local areas of need.

The Audit Commission has been charged with developing the “Annual Risk Assessment” process, which will form the main corporate element of the CAA process. It does not appear from the description included in the White Paper that the risk assessment process will be particularly burdensome, provided that PCC’s levels of performance overall do not drop drastically from current levels. We will, however, need to have mechanisms and capacity in place to address the issues raised by the Audit Commission in the risk assessment each year. It is anticipated that this will need to be similar to our existing approach to addressing recommendations in the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.

As with the reduction in national performance indicators, the end of CPA, APA, and Star Ratings should ensure that we are able to make significant efficiency gains in staff time.

Publication of Data – The White Paper sets out an expectation from government that local authorities will provide greater amounts of performance information to the public, and that this information will be up-to-date. This will present PCC with a significant challenge, although it is consistent with on-going work to develop a system for monitoring our Local Area Agreement (LAA).

Firstly, there is the issue of a ‘platform’ on which to report the performance. It may be possible to develop a system ‘in-house’ or adapt one currently in use by other authorities. It is also possible that the government may support the purchase or development of a bespoke system for ‘real-time’ performance reporting to the public, as is hinted at within the White Paper.

The second issue is more one of procedure. Our current reporting processes involve a considerable degree of time-lag, as performance information is required to go through a hierarchy of meetings at officer and member level, at which point it becomes publicly available. It is likely that this degree of time delay between production of performance data and public reporting will prove to be unacceptable post-2009.

5 - Conclusions –

Overall, the White Paper should hold no fears for PCC in terms of performance management. Indeed, the changes should free up existing resources from reporting data to government and supporting inspection, towards managing performance on the issues that matter most to local people. There are likely to be financial and staff-time savings available from the changes, though it will not be possible to quantify these until detailed guidance is made available on the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) process and the new national performance indicator set is identified.