



Police Performance Management: Practical Guidance for Police Authorities

June 2006

Summary for
Authority Members


Home Office

*Association
of Police
Authorities*

Performance management in policing

The police have a key role within society in tackling crime and ensuring community safety, and they are one of the most fundamental and recognisable service providers in our local communities. **Police authorities**, as the representatives of the local community, have a duty to secure an efficient and effective police service, and performance management and effective holding of chief officers to account goes to the heart of police authorities' purpose.

This document is a short reference guide developed from a more comprehensive guidance document published in June 2006. This shorter version is aimed at police authority members, particularly those new to performance management or policing. Overleaf you will find more about the role of the police authority in police performance management, as well as the ten **hallmarks** of effective performance management which are explored in the full guidance. Three key **enabling factors** underpin the police authority role – **people, processes and data** – and the key aspects of these are covered below.

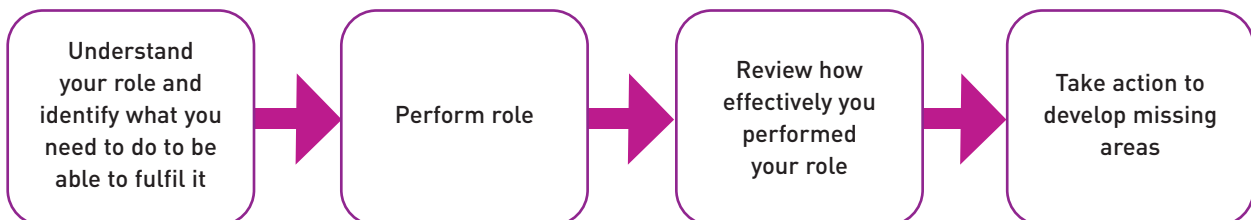
Enabler 1: People and relationships

“How can I develop the skills I need to be effective?”

To get to grips with their performance management roles, it will help all members if the authority has a proper role description for each role. It's worth including basic requirements like attendance at meetings and expected workload, because these are easily neglected when the authority is busy or members need to take on multiple roles.

The effectiveness of the authority is dependent on the contribution of members. One way to develop your skills and knowledge is to participate in appropriate activities your authority has in place, such as:

- Seminars and workshops run by officers, the force or other members – these can be a good way to develop your understanding of operational policing or technical areas such as budget setting
- External training such as the Association of Police Authorities' (APA's) course “Can You Manage It?”



“How do we ensure we have effective professional support?”

You should ensure that you have the level of expertise and resource needed to effectively assist members in their performance management role - not just make do with what you have. Planning your resources means they can be targeted to the areas they are needed.

Advantages of planned professional support

- Members are supported with an appropriate level of professional expertise in performance management
- Authority officers can undertake independent analysis of performance data for members
- Authority is more resilient – when membership changes or individual authority officers leave, the impact is minimised

Potential consequences of not planning your support

- Authority is dependent on the force for supplying analysis and other information
- Members do not have access to specialist advice on performance management issues
- Authority officers need to focus on administrative tasks such as servicing meetings
- Authority may rely on close working relationship with force, making it harder to exercise independent scrutiny, especially if a conflict arises

“We have an open and honest, supportive but challenging relationship with our chief”

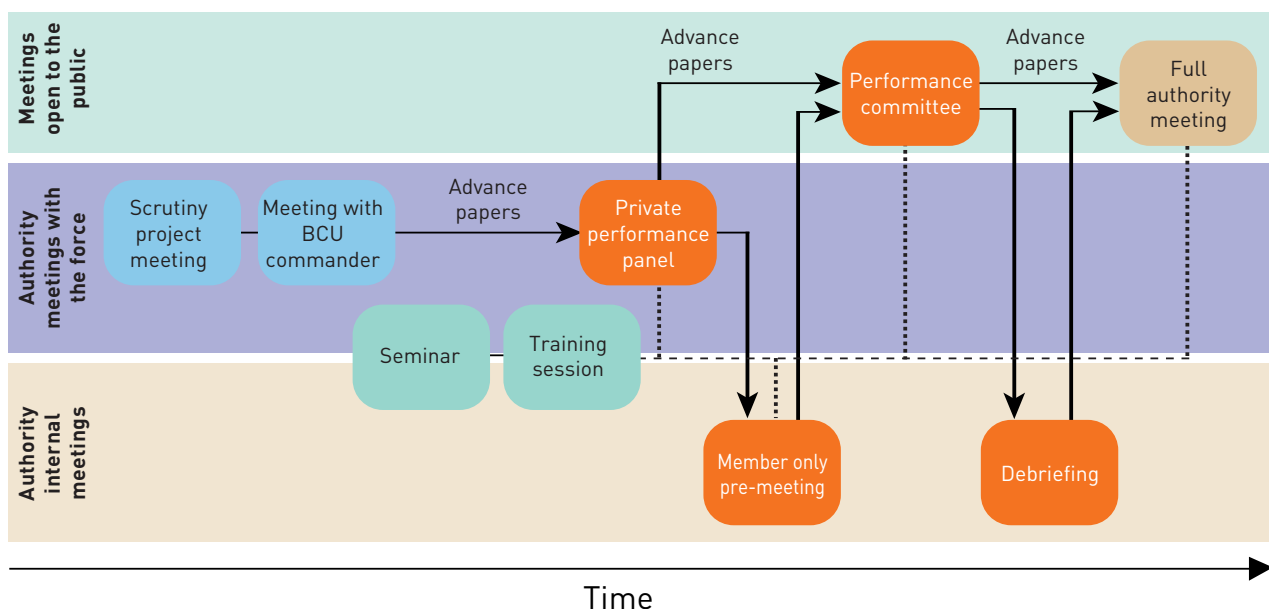
Most of the authorities interviewed for this guidance said the same – and yet their perceptions were not always shared by the force! A force and authority don’t always share the same understanding of the authority’s role and the influence it should have. The relationship between the authority and the chief officer is one of the most difficult areas for identifying “what works”, but nevertheless you should evaluate your relationship with the chief officer, probing more deeply how individuals on the force and the authority interact and work together. Think about what **you** mean by “supportive”, “challenging” or other descriptions. Working out what leads you to describe your relationship in these terms should give you more insight into the nature of your relationship and help you to build on it.

Enabler 2: Structures and processes

For the **authority’s** monitoring and review of performance, it should be the **authority** that sets the agenda, rather than the force. Your role as a member in performance management is to lead during performance meetings – making sure that you challenge areas of performance that appear to be unsatisfactory, praise good performance and follow up rigorously on areas where the authority needs more work done. The structures and processes your authority has in place for managing force performance should enable you to lead the performance management process more effectively.

“We have a formal committee that covers performance, but I’m not sure if it’s the right forum for all the discussions we need to have with the force or each other”

Authorities use a range of structures for performance management – a diagram of these structures showing how they might fit together is shown below. No authority uses, nor would want to use, **all** of these mechanisms for holding the force to account – you just need to make sure that your authority’s structures and processes help it to fulfil its role.



You should also evaluate how **effective** your authority’s performance management structures and processes are – do they contribute to the authority fulfilling its role?

- There needs to be enough time set aside for performance in committee and other meetings
- Make sure that the authority is **prepared**, and clear on what its **objective** is for the meeting.

Enabler 3: Data, analysis and reporting

“It can be difficult to ask questions of the force when we don’t understand all of the detail of policing on the ground”

Being able to ask effective questions on performance issues is facilitated by an understanding of how to use performance information. Turning data into useful information involves three stages of **analysis**, and you should satisfy yourself that information presented to the authority has been analysed appropriately:

- **Stage 1:** Understand the patterns in the raw data by using numerical techniques
- **Stage 2:** Consider what the possible competing interpretations of the analysed information are and, if necessary, find further information to support or dismiss some of those interpretations
- **Stage 3:** Draw conclusions using all of the information that is available, acknowledging any remaining uncertainty about the nature of actual performance.

The authority needs to be proactive in defining its own requirements for the performance information it receives (e.g. its performance report) – this is part of setting the agenda for monitoring delivery. The authority will have many possible sources of information, and analysis may be provided by the force, authority officers or a combination. You will need your performance reporting to be **timely, accurate and relevant**, so that members can have just the information that they need to take decisions, and not be overwhelmed by large amounts of unspecific data.

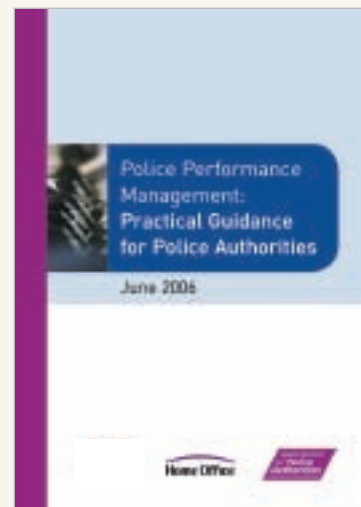
Greater detail and key practical examples are provided in the main guidance

The guidance produced by the APA and Police Standards Unit will help you to:

- Take practical steps to assess and improve the performance management in your authority
- Ensure consideration is given to a strong capability in performance when establishing strategic authorities.

The guide provides:

- In-depth exploration of the key areas and enablers of performance management
- Illustrative examples and case studies from a range of authorities
- A self-assessment framework for assessing your authority’s capability in performance management.



Want to know more...?

Police authority performance management training

The APA provides a training course for police authority members and officers, “Can You Manage It?”, to help you to understand performance information, and to discharge your duties relating to performance, planning and accountability. The courses comprise a series of introductory (foundation) modules and more specialised advanced modules. For further information, or to book places, please contact the APA.

Copies of this document and the main guidance can be found on the APA website: www.apa.police.uk/apa

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For more information, please contact the Association of Police Authorities

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