



Governance and Scrutiny Board Minutes – 16 September 2025 11:00-12:30 and 13:00-14:30

Venue: Main Conference Room, Police HQ and Microsoft Teams

Chair: Clare Moody

Attendees:

Clare Moody, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Kevin Slocombe, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)
Sarah Crew, Chief Constable (CC)
Jon Reilly, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
Paul Butler, OPCC Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
Ben Valentine, OPCC Senior Performance and Governance Manager
James Davis, ASP Delivery Manager - Portfolio
Julie Wheeler, PA to CEO, CFO and DPCC (Minutes)

Partial meeting attendance:

Nick Adams, Chief Officer – Finance, Resources and Innovation
Louise Hutchison, Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development
Nick Lilley, Director of Information Technology
George Headley, Head of Strategic Planning and Change
Hannah Watts, Head of Business Services
Mark Almond, Change Programme Lead for Investigative Standards
Neil Bennett, Director of Communications and Engagement

1 Apologies

Sally Fox, OPCC Director of Performance and Accountability

2 Minutes and Action Updates

Following the amendment of a minor typo the minutes of the August Board were confirmed as an accurate record for publication.

Updates had been received in advance of the meeting that closed all but one of the actions due.

Discussion of the need to maintain oversight of the Stalking Protection Orders.

The open action will require two separate meetings: a shorter meeting about the geographic realignment before 3 November and a longer meeting in December about Phase 2 of the Operating Model.

3 Finance

a) Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update

An initial draft of the MTFP was presented, outlining early thinking ahead of the final

version due in February. The update set the context of the recent spending review, which announced a 2.3% increase over the course of the Parliament and 1.7% over the next three years. Work was ongoing with intelligence from the Home Office, though no formal announcements had been made. Despite efforts by NPCC and APCC, confirmation of the settlement was expected by mid-December.

Funding assumptions were discussed, including adjustments to grant funding and the impact of shifts between funding streams. National-level extrapolation suggested a more positive grant funding position, with an annual increase of £13.3m, tapering to just over £4m by the end of the review period. While the funding outlook was better than forecast, pressures were expected to increase due to national reform and precept constraints.

Council Tax funding assumptions included a 1.1% average collection fund surplus across five local authorities. In keeping with the council tax precept increase for this year, the MTFP assumes a £14 increase for each of the next three years. It was acknowledged that this assumption alone is subject to three variables: (1) the maximum allowed increase, set each year by Government (2) the PCC decision and (3) the Police & Crime Panel decision.

Pay cost assumptions included a 4.2% police officer pay award; while the staff pay increase is still under negotiation it is expected to be set at the same level as officers. The award was treated as an in-year grant and not built into the base budget. Future pay modelling assumed 3% from 2026 and 2.5% thereafter, in line with national trends. It was noted that each 1% change in pay equated to £3.5m. Pension contributions were expected to remain stable, though LGPS schemes were under revaluation.

Injury pensions remained a significant legacy cost, with £7.5m spent annually. The force was among the highest nationally, attributed to historical awards from the 1990s. A meeting was proposed to explore this further.

Assumptions for inflation included 3% for electricity and gas, 4% for vehicle fuel, and 5% for IT costs. A deeper review of IT spending was underway, with a general 2% assumption applied. The Customer Experience Platform was identified as a future cost not yet factored into the MTFP.

Savings would continue to be necessary despite improved funding. Planned savings had experienced slippage, and future savings would be aligned with Phase 2 of the geographic model. Concerns were raised about the national approach to efficiency savings and its potential impact on funding distribution.

4 Constabulary Change Portfolio

a) Portfolio Highlight Report

The meeting reviewed the impact of moving PSI savings into Phase 2 of the operating model. Staff feedback indicated concerns, particularly within one team, with perceptions of being targeted. The Change Team worked to address this through clear communication, framing savings in financial rather than headcount terms. Progress had been made via vacancy management and planning, with minimal impact on job security. Four redundancies were noted, and further savings were being explored, including non-pay areas. Unison had been kept informed and responded positively to the approach.

b) ERP

The ERP project entered a critical phase, with a draft plan reviewed and feedback received. The plan aimed to meet business case milestones, with resource and activity levels under assessment. No scope changes were identified, and the plan was deemed logical. However, the resource challenge was greater than initially anticipated. Risks, particularly around migration, were acknowledged but considered manageable. Monthly reporting was requested to monitor progress.

c) Operating Model

Phase 1

Phase 1 remained on track, with staff consultation concluding and an 87% response rate from 439 submissions. 53 volunteers expressed interest in relocation, with 27 opting for Bristol East Central. Approximately 60 moves were anticipated, with some potentially mandatory. A Posting Panel was scheduled to assess skillsets and ensure operational balance. Communication of decisions was planned for the end of the month.

A leadership workshop involving 40 senior officers focused on Day 1 processes and daily management practices. Scenario testing informed command structure planning. A one-month execution plan was being developed, including a BCU blueprint and operational details, to be presented to the Project Board on 29 September.

Phase 2 Feasibility

Feasibility work on vulnerability and geographic alignment highlighted systemic challenges, including decision-making inefficiencies and complex guidance. Data science was applied to assess demand and inform a new response structure. Three streams of investigative demand are being considered: incoming for Response & Neighbourhood teams, secondary crime demand for those local team, and PIP 2/detective-led crime investigations. A high-level product outlining future structure and savings was expected in November, followed by a detailed design phase.

d) EBIT

Usage has remained low, averaging nine uses per day and covering only 8% of eligible crimes. The DBIT team accounted for 81% of usage, while NPT usage was minimal. Challenges included inconsistent adoption and lack of encouragement from supervisors. A comprehensive communications plan was underway, including vlogs, briefings, and integration into training. Performance frameworks and targeted engagement with exemplar teams were planned to improve uptake.

A user survey was being developed to assess usability and tailor communications. The EBIT tool is due to be built into Pronto, for early next year, and this will make it easier for officers and staff to use. The PCC welcomed an evaluation report on disproportionality and supported showcasing successful teams to encourage wider adoption.

5 Quarterly Update on Estate Asset Management Plan

Update provided on the Estate Asset Management Plan.

The discussion focused on the impact of the geographic operating model on estate capacity and pressures. Analysis of current estate data highlighted capacity constraints and the need for site-specific modelling, which varied depending on operational functions and shift patterns. The team expressed confidence in managing the changes brought by geographic alignment, supported by local operational leadership.

The PCC emphasised the importance of aligning estate planning with the MTFP, particularly in light of the projected increase of 70 officers. It was agreed that Estates must be involved in planning to accommodate increased in-person presence, ensuring adequate space and facilities such as quiet rooms and breakout areas. Hannah welcomed the growth but stressed the need for careful planning to avoid compromising building design.

The PCC raised the public-facing role of the estate, referencing the Enquiry Office Strategic Approach. Hannah confirmed that transaction data analysis had been completed, with a closure point expected this month. Recommendations on next steps for enquiry office space were in progress, with a strategic review planned for spring next year. Qualitative insights had been gathered through independent advisory group research.

Regarding Yeovil, it was confirmed that the business case had been signed off, with the completion date extended to 2027. Hannah reported that both informal and formal discussions had taken place with the contractor, and internal communications were being used to keep staff informed. Efforts were ongoing to engage staff and build anticipation for future developments, while ensuring clarity around the temporary nature of current accommodation.

6 Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee (*inc. Safer Streets Summer Initiative*)

Updated provided on the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, including concerns around the Home Office's 72-hour public contact rule, which excluded crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) from its scope. While the force remained compliant with Home Office guidelines, efforts were made to go beyond minimum requirements to better support communities and improve public perception.

There was not full compliance across Neighbourhood Policing Teams, and letters had been received regarding the 72-hour rule. Steph agreed to draft a response. As part of the ASB Action Plan, work was underway to establish a process for responding to members of the public within 72 hours. Nearly 100% compliance had been achieved in uploading photos and priorities, and discussions with the Home Office were ongoing to find a workable solution for priority refreshes every three months.

Nearly 90% of people required to do the NPP1 training had now completed it, with the Head of the Response Directorate leading efforts to address remaining blockers.

The first draft of the ASB plan by is expected by January, ahead of the Home Office deadline in April. An ASB Manager role had been approved and was expected to be filled by October. Bristol was recognised as a centre of best practice, and the new role would be key in aligning local authority areas under the geographic model. Partner engagement was improving, with the ASB Manager set to provide monthly reports and share best practices through local partnerships. ASP are looking at how they can make their processes relating to Nuisance and Environmental ASB more robust. ASB disposals were being handled effectively, and public engagement had improved, supported by initiatives like Op Haven. Local Neighbourhood Tasking Teams (NTTs) were performing well, and dashboard metrics showed healthier trends.

As part of Op Justice a new model targeting high-risk offenders, particularly in relation to shop theft. The initiative had gained momentum and was expected to deliver positive outcomes. A postal requisition process was being used for shoplifting cases captured on

CCTV, reducing the need for custody and gaining support from the Criminal Justice System.

Efforts were being made to communicate the impact of policing work to the public to enhance feelings of safety. Officers were reviewing every problem-solving plan across the force to assess performance and align with the ASB plan, with the aim of contributing to national best practice by April.

The PCC noted positive feedback from recent community meetings. The PCC also referenced engagement with the Criminal Justice System and the need to advocate for victims, particularly in relation to CCTV compliance linked to alcohol licensing.

7 Chief Constable's Update

The Chief Constable and PCC discussed recent events and their impact on both internal and external environments. The external climate was described as combustible, with racially motivated incidents in the West Midlands and London raising concerns about community safety. Stakeholders and partners reported feeling unsafe, prompting a need for proactive monitoring and reassurance.

Internally, the organisation was at the beginning of a significant change process, with seven weeks remaining until the November Geographical Model transition. This change aligned with the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) programme and required substantial communication and engagement. Command teams will be supported by some external leadership resource. COG and SLT were actively considering shifts in roles, accountability, and performance frameworks. The Chief Constable has written to senior leaders outlining three key expectations: delivery of 1:1s, standards (including uniform and conduct), and improving outcomes for victims of crime. Feedback from SLT has been positive, and the updates provided as part of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee agenda item were evidence of this.

To manage the scale of change, and increase strategic planning capacity and support digital opportunities ASP are proposing to appoint a Chief Transformation Officer initially on an interim basis for 12–18 months. This would allow the Chief Officer – Finance, Resources and Innovation to focus on budget planning and the DCC to focus on accountability. It was acknowledged that while COG and SLT were strong on support, they needed to improve on challenge.

The PCC expressed alignment with The Chief's priorities and welcomed the clarity and focus. The Chief highlighted the work that will be done on Project Bright Light and the positive impact that should have.

The Board discussed the current community tensions and having a Strategic Steering Group with several stakeholders. It was noted that hate crime and intimidation often go unreported, and the organisation must be ready to respond with confidence and clarity. DPCC suggested forming a representative group to include white working-class communities and faith leaders, acknowledging the loss of identity felt by some. The Board agreed on the need for broader engagement and consistent messaging.

8 Police and Crime Plan

The PCC raised concerns about the recent high-profile stabbings that had happened in Stapleton Road in Bristol. The DCC confirmed the four incidents were not linked to each other. The DCC also highlighted the Clear, Hold, Build approach working with partners to

prevent crime in this local area. The DCC noted that while the incidents were not linked from an intelligence perspective, each had the potential to result in homicide and significantly impact the community. He emphasised the importance of reviewing current data in comparison with other forces and triangulating findings with A&E data. Despite the recent incidents, the overall direction of travel showed a reduction in knife crime, supported by early intervention and the work of Neighbourhood Tasking Teams (NTTs). Operation Haven patrols continued to support this effort.

The PCC acknowledged the positive trend and stressed that such improvements were the result of deliberate action, not coincidence.

There was discussion of PEEL Areas for Improvement related to management of Registered Sex Offenders and the Domestic Violence Disclosure scheme; the improvements made and the sustainability of these.

PCC raised the issue of crimes being incorrectly classified. It was confirmed this was an error with the Robotic Process Automation (RPA) which has been fixed now. ASP are exploring how they can fix the errors that the RPA had already made.

9 Monthly PEEL Question – How good is the force at building, protecting & supporting its workforce?

The PCC raised concerns about cultural issues at Kenneth Steele House (KSH) and Almondsbury, including indicators of disproportionality and inappropriate language. ASP confirmed that conduct and standards were being addressed through the Confidence and Legitimacy Committee, with findings shared with SLT leads. An internal audit at Almondsbury revealed discrepancies between reported and experienced culture, particularly within specialist teams. The geographic model was expected to improve visibility and leadership presence in buildings.

Training and leadership development were being strengthened through the College of Policing's Code of Ethics, first-line leadership programmes and upstander training. The ACC was aware of cultural concerns at Almondsbury, and a holistic, location-specific approach was being taken. The PCC highlighted the importance of early identification of issues. The Chief emphasised the need for visible leadership and intelligence gathering to inform tactical responses to corruption and misconduct. Superintendents were expected to lead on culture locally.

Sickness absence levels were discussed, with concerns that recorded figures might underrepresent reality. Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development noted that short-term sickness among police staff had increased, while police officer sickness remained low. Quarterly attendance management meetings were being held to monitor trends. The PCC suggested dip-sampling to verify data accuracy.

One of the characteristics of good relates to inclusive recruitment processes. Two new roles have been introduced to support with the diversity in the recruitment process. Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development confirmed strategic planning was underway, and talent campaigns were being developed.

Items for Publication

- Minutes of August Board

A.O.B.

**Date of the next Governance and Scrutiny Board: 14 October 2025 11:00 - 12:30 and 13:00
- 14:30**