



Governance and Scrutiny Board Minutes – 17 December 2025 11:00-12:30 and 13:00-14:30

Venue: OPCC Meeting Room and Microsoft Team

Chair: Paul Butler

Attendees:

Clare Moody, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Kevin Slocombe, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)
Sarah Crew, Chief Constable (CC)
Joanne Hall, Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)
Paul Butler, OPCC Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
Ben Valentine, OPCC Senior Performance and Governance Manager
James Davis, ASP Delivery Manager - Portfolio
Vicky Elis, Secretariat Manager (Minutes)

Partial meeting attendance:

Sally Fox, Director of Performance and Accountability
Louise Hutchison, Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development (online)
Carlos Filippesen, Detective Chief Inspector – Serious and Organised Crime Investigation Team (online)
Scott Chadwick, Detective Inspector – Complex Crime Unit, Financial Investigation Unit, Volume Fraud (online)
Richard Marsh, Detective Superintendent – Planning and Change
Nick Lilley, Director of Information Technology
Hannah Watts, Head of Business Services
Steph McKenna, ASB and NPG Implementation Delivery Lead

1 Apologies

Jon Reilly, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
Nick Adams, Chief Officer – Finance, Resources and Innovation

2 Minutes and Action Updates

The Minutes of the November Board were confirmed as an accurate record for publication.

Updates had been received in advance of the meeting that closed all but two of the actions. ASP had tasked their Business Analyst team with some in depth work to explore the take up, usage and benefits of the EBIT system.

No update had been received in respect of the linkage of information from PCC engagements into the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and this was carried forward to the next meeting.

3 Finance

a) Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update

The report that had also been presented to the Police and Crime Panel earlier in the month was noted. The announcement from the Home Office that would inform any update to the MTFP was expected the following day and an update would be provided to the next Board meeting.

It was noted that the only change was that the Council Tax base for Somerset had improved in line with expectations.

b) Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) Report

The DCI highlighted some of the key points from the report provided to the Board and responded to questions from the PCC and her team. The report combined previous data with current information to provide an overview of the financial and operational position of the Financial Investigation Unit (FIU). The financial position indicated minimum Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS) returns for 2025/26 were estimated at £549,000, against FIU running costs of £569,000. Performance highlights included 52 confiscation orders, £6.5m in criminal benefit identified, and £1.3m in assets recovered allocated for victim compensation.

Significant operational support had been provided by the unit across Avon and Somerset Police (ASP), including criminal investigations and missing person enquiries. A formalised 24/7 FIU on-call process had been introduced in recent months, resulting in positive outcomes, such as locating a missing person following one enquiry.

Future challenges and opportunities were discussed, including the impact of the discontinuation of Operation Remedy, which had previously generated warrant-related work. While this was a concern, opportunities were identified to focus on Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs). The team had received nearly 2000 SARs in a year from banks and financial institutions and increasing capacity to investigate these would increase the number of asset seizures, taking funds away from criminals. The team had also started work to increase their cryptocurrency capability, noting that approximately 30% of the UK population now holds crypto assets and £2.2m had recently been seized and some of this would be returned to ASP to use.

The group noted that additional investment in investigators had led to improved performance, with ARIS returns increasing from £350k in previous years to £549k. However, attraction and retention of investigators remained a national challenge, with some staff lost to other sectors.

The forthcoming replacement of Action Fraud with Report Fraud was highlighted as a significant risk, with potential local impact due to changes in the dissemination process and resource demand. This had been added to the risk register, and feedback mechanisms were in place to address emerging issues.

The Board also noted Section 27 where monies confiscated from drugs offences are used to support community projects.

4 Business Cases

a) Operating Model Phase 2 Concept Report

The new Head of Strategic Planning and Change provided a brief oral update to the Board on progress with Phase 2 of the Operating Model changes, following discussions at the recent Strategic Planning Meeting.

Leaders had been asked to draw out what they saw as priorities and consider appropriate delivery mechanisms (such as leadership-led actions, business-as-usual processes, support from improvement consultants working with department heads or organisational change programmes).

It was agreed that the organisational change strand would focus on redesigning the investigative response to ensure it is:

- Victim-centred
- Suspect-focused
- Contact-driven
- Embedded with anti-racism principles and measures to tackle disproportionality

The programme will place particular emphasis on public protection and vulnerability-related crime, including domestic abuse, stalking, and other relational offences.

Key components of the programme were outlined as:

- Crime Allocation and Management: Ensuring crimes are directed to the appropriate teams (uniformed officers, CID, specialist units).
- Project Bright Light: Focused on domestic abuse, with insights applicable to wider investigative practice.
- CID Capacity and Alignment: Reviewing CID structure and its integration with the new BCU model and public protection unit.
- Volume Crime Management: Defining the level of investigative responsibility for uniformed officers and ensuring complex cases are allocated to appropriately skilled investigators.
- Risk and Needs Assessment: Moving from incident-based assessments (e.g., DASH) to a person-focused model to improve pattern recognition and reduce duplication.
- Families First Programme: Piloting in Somerset and South Gloucestershire to align with legislative changes and partner agencies; includes changes to Lighthouse services.

The group noted that these elements form a coherent programme supported by academic research (Soteria, Bright Light) and internal discovery work.

Next steps will involve early-stage design to translate findings into a practical investigative model aligned with best practice and expert recommendations.

The PCC noted she would receive a more detailed briefing at a separate meeting booked in January, with an opportunity to ask more in-depth questions and was grateful for the useful update and overview.

The CC confirmed that the programme of work would receive the resources it needs to ensure it could be delivered.

5 Constabulary Change Portfolio

a) Portfolio Highlight Report

The PCC and her team had highlighted areas of interest from the report with ASP ahead of the meeting and received an update on these:

- The Guinness Partnership continued to work to a long stop date of February 2027 as per the contract.
- The closure report for the Customer Management System project was at the final comments stage and would report through the governance cycle early in the new year.
- Work on the Achieving Best Evidence suites is still awaiting new digital interview recording guidance. Updates on this would be provided to the PCC through the informal Estates meetings.

The Board discussed the level of information provided within the report, which were sometimes too detailed. The PCC confirmed she would want to know of any deviations that impacted time, cost or quality for projects and expected these to be escalated through the usual governance channels.

It was noted the report would not include the dashboard for the next couple of months while project closures were undertaken and new projects introduced.

b) ERP

The Director of IT provided a brief oral update to the Board and responded to questions from the PCC and her team.

- The programme was reported to be in the System Integration Testing (SIT) phase, which involved testing the build, integrations, and data migration across technical environments. This was progressing ahead of schedule.
- Testing would pause over Christmas and resume in January, with completion expected in January.
- Quality of the build was reported as strong, providing reassurance ahead of User Acceptance Testing (UAT) scheduled to begin in February.
- Issues identified during SIT were being managed effectively, supported by strengthened programme resources.
- Additional resourcing requirements for Finance and HR areas had been clarified and were being processed to support Phase 2 and Phase 3 delivery.
- Internal challenges with project support were noted but considered resolvable through resource adjustments and improved processes.
- Risk management processes had been enhanced, with greater focus on detailed risk tracking and rapid response to emerging issues.
- Overall delivery remained on plan, though 2026 was expected to be an intense year for execution.
- Oracle had restructured its customer support model, reducing some executive-level engagement but maintaining sponsorship through the lead contact.
- SAP de-risking activities for 2026 were largely complete, including transition to a new third-party support arrangement in January.
- The programme continued to operate with transparency through shared tools ensuring visibility of risks, design decisions, and test results.

6 Estates

a) Quarterly update on Estate Asset Management Plan

The PCC noted the plan as a useful reference document.

The Estates Strategy would be refreshed ready for the June Strategic Planning Meeting and would be linked in with the wider programme of change work that ASP would be undertaking. Other data sets such as demand data, population growth, housing growth, indices of multiple deprivation would also feed into the refreshed strategy.

The timeline for a decision on the future of the Fishponds Police Station would be completed as part of that work.

b) Annual Sustainability Report

The DPCC questioned what good looked like for sustainability work within ASP, seeking to understand how success should be measured. It was noted that historically there had been no formal performance framework for sustainability within policing; early work originated from previous inspection requirements on resource use. There was regional collaboration in the South West, with expectations of a national strategy and consistent reporting framework emerging, which would enable clearer performance standards and assurance mechanisms.

Discussion highlighted confusion in the standing report between value for money and carbon footprint, and the need for clarity on:

- Whether performance measures related to financial efficiency or environmental impact.
- Existence of a sustainability plan and associated roadmap for achievement.

The Head of Business Services confirmed that:

- A sustainability plan exists and would be shared.
- The organisation had avoided unrealistic targets such as full carbon neutrality, focusing instead on achievable, business-integrated actions.

Key areas of impact were identified as:

- Fleet transition toward electric vehicles, aligned with market availability.
- Buildings and energy use, including renewable electricity tariffs already adopted.
- Supply chain emissions, now being measured through carbon accounting linked to spend categories.

The Board acknowledged that some reductions (e.g. renewable tariffs) were achieved through procurement choices rather than operational changes, and that supply chain reporting was a developing area. It was agreed that:

- Future reporting would clearly distinguish between financial efficiency and carbon reduction objectives.
- Realistic milestones and progress indicators would be used rather than aspirational targets.
- Sustainability work must remain proportionate and relevant to policing priorities, ensuring operational effectiveness is not compromised.
- The approach should balance data accuracy with practicality, avoiding excessive resource investment in marginal gains.

7 Chief Constable's Update

The Chief Constable provided an oral update to the Board on the outputs from the Strategic Planning Meeting (SPM), noting holistic output was still evolving but direction and clarity had been provided for the next 12 to 18 months as a more involved strategic plan was generated.

The Chief Constable's worry list still reflected previous conversations:

- Community Cohesion was still strained.
- Frustration with policing responses weren't seen as good and actions were perceived as unfair or disproportionate.
- There was ongoing speculation about the shape and probability of policing reform, which was creating uncertainty for officers and staff.
- Financial uncertainty.
- These all create uncertainty for force leadership and workforce planning.

The Chief Constable also highlighted opportunities identified through national initiatives such as the forthcoming VAWG strategy, alongside strong foundations from Bluestone, Bright Light, and academic partnerships, which positioned ASP well for innovation and change. ASP also had strong links in with the National Centre of Vulnerability and Public Protection, supporting ASP to experiment in different areas and enable change more widely.

At SPM the strategic plan had been reframed around four core priorities: responding to emergencies consistently and well; cutting crime and protecting the public from perpetrators; treating everyone with fairness and integrity—reflecting Race Matters and disproportionality work; and maintaining legitimacy and trust across all communities. These priorities were supported by three key workstreams: redesigning the crime investigation model to be victim-, suspect-, and context-led; driving continuous improvement within BCUs with greater transparency and governance; and refocusing work on fairness and disproportionality, embedding lived experience and scrutiny into decision-making.

The Chief reflected on progress over the past year, including the transition to the geographical BCU model, positive cultural indicators from Area Commanders, insights from the staff survey, and academic reports. Further discussion would take place at the next SPM in March, when more information was available, including the white paper on PCC Reform. There would be additional forums to manage emerging risks and ensure alignment with national developments. Leadership visibility and clear communication were highlighted as critical to maintaining confidence and coherence during reform.

8 Police and Crime Plan

a) People Survey 2025

The PCC had highlighted some of the data from the People Survey 2025 ahead of the meeting for discussion. Some of the positive indicators included improvements in manager engagement and the quality of 1:1 meetings, which were valued by staff, as well as improved visible leadership and progress in courageous and upstanding behaviours.

There were also some areas for focus identified:

- Patrol workload and crime volume pressures remained a concern.
- Staff reported feeling undervalued and under-recognised.

- Quality of briefings was inconsistent; need to upskill sergeants to deliver effective briefings that reinforce purpose and agency for officers.
- Burnout and wellbeing – there were persistent issues around resilience and inability to take breaks; presenteeism was noted.
- Innovation gap: Staff have ideas but lacked the mechanisms to share them and expressed frustration at not being heard.
- Pride and inclusion: Pride in policing and ASP had declined; inclusion scores had fallen despite reduced discrimination—further insight on this had been requested by the People Committee.
- Change Management: there were mixed perceptions of organisational change; most staff neutral, some negative

The Board discussed the need to strengthen feedback loops to show action taken on staff input and how some positive changes (e.g., EVR) were not always recognised as change initiatives by staff and leaders might need to craft coherent narratives to make change relevant and visible to staff.

Other observations on the results noted the engagement levels: 1 in 2 staff were engaged, but only 1 in 4 were positive. The survey had been completed in the middle of change, and it was noted it would be interesting to see the results the following year.

9 Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee

The Board received an oral update from the ASB and NPG Implementation Delivery Lead, a summary is provided:

- The Winter of Action continues until the end of January. ASP have mapped the areas of focus which differ to the Summer Streets initiative and are now more representative of areas with youth violence and vulnerability issues.
- Report to the centre is due at the end of January.
- ASP are gathering weekly statistics on work in this area, which includes arrests within street crime and shop theft.
- Noting that arrests aren't always made in these circumstances ASP have made representations to the centre to include voluntary attendance figures in the data that will be submitted and are already collating this information.
- Good partnership cooperation continues, innovative work is being seen and the ASB Delivery work is progressing well.
- The team were exploring how they can deliver against the Race Action Plan and contribute to improved community confidence in ASB and disproportionality.
- The NPP2 training had been receiving good feedback from attendees and the team were exploring how this could be delivered across the wider organisation.
- Permission to issue ASP laptops to partners to improve collaborative working and information sharing had been agreed.
- A national template was anticipated in relation to risk assessments for ASB reports.
- ASP were at 72% compliance on the 72-hour contact rule for ASB reports, this is a recognised problem nationally and forces have been asked to pause on that pending a policy decision.
- Problem-solving plans have doubled to around 50, with a pilot underway to mandate plans for all ASB interventions (e.g., CBOs, injunctions, closure orders) to improve quality and consistency.
- Training and methodology improvements have been introduced, including securing specialist courses for officers; quality still needs development, and options such as “problem-solving plan light” are being explored for feasibility.

- Exploring out of court disposal options for ASB as currently that can only be used for criminal offences.
- ASB dip-sampling of TRIVE assessments is undertaken on a monthly basis in the Comms department.

10 Monthly PEEL Question – How good is the force at safeguarding children and adults at risk?

Police & Crime Plan Priority 3

The PCC had highlighted some ASP data in advance of the meeting for discussion and a summary of the discussion follows.

It was noted that all AFIs were on track for closure following the submission of the closure letter earlier in the week.

Issues identified by the Vulnerability Committee included low domestic abuse (DA) arrest and outcome rates, particularly in patrol, CID had better charge rates. It was noted DA crimes had increased in volume and complexity, when a charge is made compliance was improved.

Work had commenced to review national guidance and arrest/attendance rates, with a plan being developed based on learning from BRAG and DASH. A fuller update was expected in January.

DVPN/DVPO performance was discussed: conversion rates were strong, but national guidance was contradictory, creating compliance challenges. An internal paper was being prepared to set out the force's approach and mitigate HMIC grading risks.

Anticipated changes from the forthcoming national VAWG strategy and potential introduction of DAPPOs were noted; implications for force processes would be assessed once details were confirmed.

Concerns were raised about the force's position as an outlier in some areas; it was confirmed this reflected compliance rather than manipulation, with improvements achieved through better understanding of inspection criteria.

Plans for a mini-Strategic Performance Meeting (SPM) were outlined, focused on DA and would include OPCC involvement, to address problem statements and blockers and develop BCU plans.

The board reflected on improved engagement in safeguarding partnerships and acknowledged significant trust-building work that had been undertaken by Superintendent Liz Hughes. Succession planning for Liz Hughes' retirement was confirmed, with a candidate selected for February to ensure continuity and a thorough handover.

A.O.B

Next Governance and Scrutiny Board: 13 January 2026 11:00 - 12:30 and 13:00 - 14:30