



Governance and Scrutiny Board Minutes – 17 March 2026 11:00-12:30 and 13:00-14:30

Venue: OPCC Meeting Room, Police HQ and Microsoft Teams

Chair: Karl Parfitt

Attendees:

Clare Moody, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Kevin Slocombe, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)
Karl Parfitt, OPCC Chief Executive
Sally Fox, OPCC Director of Performance and Accountability
Paul Butler, OPCC Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
Ben Valentine, OPCC Senior Performance and Governance Manager
James Davis, ASP Delivery Manager – Portfolio
Vicky Ellis, OPCC Secretariat Manager (Minutes)

Partial meeting attendance:

Nick Adams, Chief Officer – Finance, Resources and Innovation
Jon Cummins, Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)
Hannah Watts, Head of Business Services
Steph McKenna, Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee (NPG) Implementation Delivery Lead
Jen Grannan, Head of Digital and Projects
Nick Lilley, Director of Information Technology
Richard Marsh, Detective Superintendent – Planning and Change

1 Apologies

Sarah Crew, Chief Constable (CC)
Jon Reilly, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

2 Minutes and Action Updates

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

Updates had been provided in relation to most open actions in advance of the meeting and those actions closed. Three actions were carried forward for a further update at the next meeting.

3 Finance

a) General Reserve Risk Assessment

The PCC's Chief Finance Officer (CFO) provided a brief oral overview of the General Reserve Risk Assessment, which set out agreements made previously at the GSB. The drop in reserve levels to 2.7% of turnover was highlighted as being slightly below the generally accepted

threshold of 3%. The Board discussed the process for agreeing the level of reserves and the PCC requested the team address the question of index linking as part of the MTFP process.

The planned police reform and the current world situation were highlighted as the key risks.

The PCC approved the recommendation within the paper to confirm the General Reserve at £12m as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

b) Treasury Management Strategy

The Board noted the Treasury Management Strategy, noting that the borrowing strategy aligned with the current capital programme and that prudential indicators had not changed from the previous year. It was confirmed that all operations remained within the established parameters, and the PCC accepted the recommendations as set out in the report and noted the prudential indicators.

4 Decisions/Business Cases

a) Professional Standards Department – Final Business Case

The Board discussed the business case which set out the requirement for six additional vetting posts and two misconduct legal services post to address the ongoing capacity challenges within both functions. The funding had already been provisioned in the MTFP.

The PCC and her team sought trend data on outstanding vetting volumes to understand links with workforce size and demand. It was noted that delays often stemmed from individual case issues, including incomplete forms, and that detailed issue-level data was not available. A continuous improvement plan was in place, and the impact of the additional capacity would be monitored, with further assessment required if improvements were not seen. The Board noted the likelihood of vetting moving to a national service in future.

Concerns were raised about whether six posts were sufficient, and a clearer rationale was requested for the investment relative to expected outputs. It was noted that the unit was underfunded, in the bottom quartile nationally, and the uplift would align ASP with a force in the most similar group.

Questions were asked regarding vetting processing times, comparisons with other forces' staffing ratios, MTFP provision, and estates implications. It was confirmed that the team worked largely on a hybrid basis and did not require additional estate, with hot-desking arrangements considered sufficient.

The Board noted the limited availability of robust vetting metrics and the reliance on anecdotal information. Work was underway to develop a stronger performance framework, and reporting would be included in the quarterly People report at the Constabulary Management Board. The continuous improvement plan would be shared with the PCC and her team.

Recruitment timelines for the six posts were discussed, with an estimated three month period from approval to start date.

Under Legal Services, the PCC queried ongoing reliance on external counsel. It was reported that pressure continued, though oversight was improving. Financial impacts would continue to be monitored and reported to GSB.

The PCC approved the business case.

b) Customer Experience Platform (Salesforce) – Outline Business Case

The Head of Digital and Projects and the Director of IT presented the outline business case for adopting Salesforce as the strategic customer experience platform, detailing its initial deployment in command and control, anticipated benefits, regional procurement collaboration, and governance considerations.

The Salesforce platform was expected to initially enhance command and control operations, particularly through a victim portal and improved customer engagement. Expected benefits included a reduction in 101 call volumes, improved experiences for victims, and the potential for application rationalisation and future cost savings and these had been seen by other forces already using the platform.

The final business case would address points raised by the PCC and her team, including plans for training the workforce and ensuring the benefits expected to be seen, which included keeping pace with public expectations and the change from a response centred approach to a victim centred approach.

ASP were exploring a collaborative procurement approach with neighbouring South West forces, aiming to share implementation costs and product management. The PCC highlighted the requirement for a robust governance structure, including a section 22A agreement and specific service level agreement, if a collaborative approach was taken.

The PCC provided her endorsement to the proposed approach as set out within the Outline Business Case.

5 Estates

a) Quarterly Update on Estate Asset Management Plan

The PCC congratulated the Head of Business Services on the swift response to meet the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure grant requirements and secure the additional funding support.

The Head of Business Services outlined the ongoing refresh of the Estate Strategy, which would be presented to the Strategic Planning Meeting (SPM) in June. It was noted that most of the 2024 roadmap had been completed and the team were now focusing on the next four to five years.

The Board discussed the ongoing difficulties in forecasting and meeting future learning and training space requirements, given changing national training mandates and recruitment patterns. Multi-use spaces were identified and provided by the team as a priority, with short-term solutions such as rental or lease arrangements being considered while longer-term strategy was developed. The Estates team used the Force Management Statement cycle to drive work and shape future priorities.

The PCC and her team queried whether there had been any impact on estates from the change in operating model to Basic Command Units (BCU). It was reported that the BCU model provided a cleaner line of communication to reach out in relation to communications on buildings to ensure staff feel safe and looked after. An example of a light-touch review at Bridgwater Police Station, driven primarily by CID needs, was highlighted as an example. It had led to a collaborative reallocation of space, including the creation of quiet rooms to support neurodivergent staff and the process was quoted as a positive example of this new process.

The Board discussed the ongoing financial pressures due to the ageing infrastructure and the unpredictability of building maintenance needs. The estates team was focusing on improving service request processes, prioritisation, and resource planning to manage constrained budgets effectively.

The PCC raised the issue of inadequate fridge facilities for storing evidence that had been reported to her by the Road Safety team. The Head of Business Services confirmed awareness of the issue and committed to developing a robust and sustainable proposal which would be shared with the PCC.

6 Constabulary Change Portfolio

a) ERP

The Board received an oral update on the progress of the project since the report that had been submitted with the papers. The User Acceptance Testing (UAT) and preparations for cutover continued to progress as planned, with go-live scheduled for 7 April and a high degree of confidence for that date.

Resource management was discussed and planning was underway to ensure this was in place.

The PCC noted the positive progress of the project and acknowledged the role of the new delivery partner in this progress.

b) Operating Model (*Oral*)

The Board received an oral update on the progress of the Operating Model. The programme team had completed a week of onboarding activities and staff had been brought to a consistent level of background knowledge. The programme had now moved into the design phase, focused on defining and agreeing programme outcomes. A final draft had been shared with the Chief Constable the previous week, and updated outcomes would be shared with GSB attendees following the meeting.

It was confirmed that the first project within the programme would address digital forensics and evidence capability. This work related to internal digital investigative capacity rather than the South West Forensics (SWF) collaboration, covering areas such as router surveys, Level 1 device kiosks, and the ability to develop digital strategies. Current expertise and tools were dispersed across the organisation, and the proposal sought to consolidate capability under a single command to provide consistent investigative advice, reduce Digital Forensic Unit (DFU) queues, and limit outsourcing. The project was aligned with ongoing SWF work to replace kiosk capability and drew on learning from West Midlands Police, whose model had recently been assessed and passed accreditation. A full paper was scheduled for presentation to the Portfolio Steering Board the following week.

The Board noted the existing pressures on DFU and supported the intention to improve the timeliness and consistency of digital evidence handling. It was acknowledged that PCC engagement would be valuable, and opportunities for the PCC's staff to attend relevant team meetings would be explored.

c) Portfolio Highlight Report

The PCC and her team had reviewed the report ahead of the meeting and shared questions in advance, receiving written responses. A summary is provided here:

- It was confirmed Minehead station had not yet been sold and the profile had been updated to reflect the intended sale and revised forecast capital receipt.
- The planning for Plymouth House in Bath was close to being determined (with some conditions) but not yet formally approved. The project team were working to confirm timescales.
- The PCC requested sight of the communications plan for the Yeovil project.
- The SOZE entry on the project management system had been updated to reflect the agreement made at GSB in February.
- The new Investigation and Response Committee would oversee the usage and performance of the new EBIT application.

7 Race Matters discussion (Oral)

The Board received an update on the Race Matters programme, which continued to operate across four pillars: Involved, Not Over-Policed, Not Under-Protected, and Represented. Each pillar had a defined plan and priority focus and a recent workshop had created a two year roadmap which would be presented to the SPM in June. The programme aimed to address issues of over-policing, under-protection and representation.

The next major step would be an in-person workshop in May which would bring together a broad range of stakeholders from across ASP to look at how ASP can design out racism.

The Board discussed the recent workshop on Tackling Disproportionality and the need to link the group into the Race Matters work, suggesting the attendees should play a central role in shaping future activities. The workshop had identified the lack of progress on some key measures and the importance of bringing the group back together to provide an update was agreed.

The Board acknowledged that the representation of the workforce has now started to decline despite action taken by ASP so new approaches need to be considered. One idea discussed was whether ASP could offer work experience placements to children aged 14-18.

At the March Local Criminal Justice Board, representatives agreed to independently review the recommendations from their respective agencies and convene to define a proposal for the next 12-18 months. This work should assist the force to consider the recommendations they held and subsequent progress alongside the other Criminal Justice agencies.

8 Police and Crime Plan

a) Hotspot Funding – Op Haven

The Board received an update on the plans to build Hotspot Policing into business as usual once the dedicated Home Office funding has ended. All BCU commanders had agreed to the plan which included bespoke hotspot mapping for each area and the use of existing analytical tools. There had been positive public feedback on the initiative, although it was noted that results from hotspot policing had been mixed, with some reductions in violence and total incidents but increases in certain crime types in specific areas. The team were working to refine data collection and analysis to better understand the impact of the tactics. Analytical support would continue to be required to monitor demand and outcomes. It was confirmed that analysis could be re-run on a 3–6-month cycle, with the option to seek additional analytical support if service loss was identified.

The Board discussed the potential impact of the summer demand period on the hotspot requirements and the need for BCU commanders to direct resources in the best fit for their

area. The Board noted the importance of avoiding abstractions of PCSOs to maintain local visibility and effectiveness.

The PCC requested a report to GSB in 3 months to assess the impact of Neighbourhood Tasking Teams and the hotspot teams.

b) Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee – Officer/PCSO numbers

The PCC confirmed her recognition of the important role that PCSOs undertake and noted that she did not support further conversions of PCSO posts into officer posts. The PCC considered PCSOs as a crucial part of the Neighbourhood Policing teams.

9 Monthly PEEL Question

How good is the force at responding to the public?

Priorities 1, 4 and 5

The Assistant Chief Constable provided a brief summary of the report from the pack, highlighting:

- Improvements in 999 and 101 call handling performance, with 98% of calls answered within 10 seconds and extremely low abandonment rates, in part due to increased resources.
- Staffing gaps within Enquiry Offices were being reviewed, noting Enquiry Office staff deal with digital contact forms.
- Trials in Somerset had seen improvements in response times to priority calls and ASP were exploring models to replicate this across other areas.
- A potential future risk was identified that national performance measurements may change the way response times are reported and this could negatively impact reported performance.
- Purple call logs (those over 200 hours old) have increased following the transition to BCU and work was underway to improve the process.

Following questions from the PCC and her team, the Board discussed the position on response timeliness, the AFI relating to Immediate response performance, and recent changes to DA call grading.

The Board noted that new national targets later in the year would require 90% of Priority calls to be attended within the service level agreement. Current performance against the forthcoming national measurement sat at 63%, leaving a substantial gap to close. There was, however, no confirmed timeline from the Home Office on when the new standard would take effect or how long forces would be given to reach compliance. This would form part of a wider national performance framework still in development.

In relation to AFI 3 which covered response times, and was scheduled for closure in October, the Board acknowledged that this target remained challenging. While improvements had been seen in Domestic Abuse response, the overall timeliness of Immediate attendance remained an area of concern. Ongoing work was focused on freeing up response capacity, but the scale of improvement required meant that meeting the October target remained ambitious.

The Board also discussed the change in Domestic Abuse call grading. It was confirmed that a strengthened quality assurance process had identified previous overgrading rather than undergrading of DA incidents, and the current distribution of call grades was considered broadly appropriate, acknowledging a normal margin for error. A recent snapshot showed 16 Immediate graded DA calls and two Priority graded calls.

In considering an example of high Immediate demand, the Board explored whether this reflected a one off scenario or a wider issue linked to resource availability. It was noted that ongoing work on demand, including a review of shift patterns and abstractions, formed part of efforts to increase capacity. Current abstraction levels of around 43% illustrated the complexity of the resourcing picture.

Date of the next Governance and Scrutiny Board: 14 April 2026 11:00 - 12:30 and 13:00 - 14:30