AVON & SOMERSET POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

**Governance and Scrutiny Board Minutes – 12 May2026 11:00-12:30 and 13:00-14:30**

**Venue: OPCC Meeting Room, Police HQ**

**Chair: Karl Parfitt**

**Attendees:**
Clare Moody, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Sarah Crew, Chief Constable (CC)
Jon Reilly, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
Karl Parfitt, OPCC Chief Executive
Sally Fox, OPCC Director of Performance and Accountability
Paul Butler, OPCC Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
Nick Adams, Chief Officer – Finance, Resources and Innovation
Kevin Slocombe, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)
Ben Valentine, OPCC Senior Performance and Governance Manager
Nick Ridout, Governance Officer
Vicky Ellis, OPCC Secretariat Manager (Minutes)

**Partial meeting attendance:**
Ben Mohide, Programme Lead – Fleet Electrification
Hannah Watts, Head of Business Services
Nick Lilley, Director of Information Technology

## 1 Apologies

James Davis, ASP Delivery Manager – Portfolio

## 2 Minutes and Action Updates

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

Sufficient updates had been provided in relation to most open actions in advance of the meeting and those actions closed as a result. A summary of those carried over for additional work is provided:

- The PCC, DPCC, CC and DCC will discuss ways to increase awareness of the Police and Crime Plan and the Strategic Objectives across the workforce at a separate meeting in June.
- Specific briefings would be provided to the PCC on the progress of Yeovil as needed in advance of meetings with stakeholders or partners.
- ASP requested additional time to prepare a more detailed report on cuckooing as understanding the data required more in depth analysis than originally anticipated.

## 3 Business Cases

### a) National Grid Update – Fleet Electrification Final Business Case

The Board noted that ASP had started early in exploring fleet electrification, which had put them in a good position. The Board discussed the level of certainty regarding risks around securing network capacity and Distribution Network Operator (DNO) prioritisation. It was reported that early engagement had acted as a mitigation, supported by strong relationships with DNO planners. This proactive approach ensured that plans were understood in advance, enabling better sequencing of works and awareness of other major projects. Capacity had been secured at the point of purchase order, effectively locking in network headroom, albeit with the option to withdraw if required.

The Board considered the extent of regional and national coordination. It was noted that more forces had recently started advancing their transition plans, with examples including Devon & Cornwall, West Mercia, and Thames Valley. Progress across regions had varied due to differing financial positions, which had slowed earlier momentum from 2023. However, there was increasing recognition of the importance of this work. Collaboration was emerging in the North, where forces were working together and engaging contractors to explore delivery options.

Discussions also covered cross-border charging and interoperability. It was confirmed that enabling solutions, such as cloud-based software, were being explored, alongside national developments led through Blue Light Commercial. Engagement with central government remained unchanged, although upcoming work led through the finance portfolio, including the spending review submission, would incorporate this area.

An update was provided on Blue Light Commercial activity, noting that work was at an early stage and being treated as a portfolio of projects. Charge point management had been identified as a significant component, with interoperability remaining a key priority. It was also noted that ongoing work to transition forces onto a common electricity tariff had, in some cases, slowed progress.

The PCC approved the Business Case as presented.

**b) Radstock Final Business Case**

The Board noted strong delivery performance, with many Estates projects completed on time and within budget. It was acknowledged that the iterative development of Estates projects, particularly refurbishments, introduced cost variability due to market conditions and changing requirements. Higher contingencies (up to 30–40%) were considered appropriate by the Estates team, and the Board agreed on the need to formalise a point within the process to review scope, contingencies, and distinguish essential from non-essential elements to ensure appropriate challenge.

The Board noted that the current business case for Radstock had increased by approximately 40% from the original estimate. While no immediate value engineering opportunities had been identified, further engagement with contractors following approval was expected to explore potential savings. It was recognised that earlier identification of cost reduction options was limited without contractor involvement, and that pursuing a reduced initial scope could lower costs but impact quality and outcomes.

The financial impact on the wider programme for Estates was discussed, with the Crewkerne scheme likely to be delayed offsetting cost pressures on the Radstock project.

The Board also noted plans to present an estates map at a future Strategic Planning Meeting.

The PCC approved the recommendation in the business case, to progress with the comprehensive option, ensuring better outcomes for the workforce, setting an expectation that savings would continue to be explored as the project developed.

### c) Force Duty Commander

The PCC and her team noted there was a strong and compelling case for the proposed changes and queried whether the requirement could have been identified earlier to allow consideration within the Strategic Planning Meeting (SPM) process. It was also questioned whether, as an unfunded business case, there had been confirmation that the associated savings requirement was acceptable. Further clarity was sought on whether additional unfunded business cases, including a potential investigations model, were likely to be brought forward outside of the SPM cycle.

It was acknowledged that, while ad hoc growth bids during the financial year were not desirable, there remained a need to recognise areas requiring growth, which would be addressed through the SPM process. It was emphasised that the proposal did not represent actual growth at this point in time, but this would be kept in view through the strategic planning process. This business case addressed operational challenges identified during Phase 1 of the operating model, particularly the unsustainable nature of “double hatting” roles. The Board noted that the decision to move to the revised structure had already been agreed in principle in order to maintain public safety.

The requirement to identify offsetting savings from elsewhere in the organisation was recognised, with further work needed to determine how this would be achieved. It was reiterated that SPM was the appropriate forum to undertake this planning, with further consideration expected following Phase 2 in September, alongside the development of contingency options.

The Board also noted that the in-year financial pressure was not considered acute, as there would be no immediate impact on frontline resources or recruitment plans. However, the ongoing transition to new ways of working was acknowledged and the PCC agreed that there was sufficient urgency to proceed now rather than defer to the SPM cycle in September, given limitations identified during Phase 1 of the Op Model changes.

## 4 Constabulary Change Portfolio

### a) ERP

The Director of IT provided an oral update, confirming that the critical phase of system integration testing was on track and expected to complete by the end of the month and the team would move into User Acceptance Testing in June. The go-live target remains 2 November as identified to mitigate payroll and implementation risks and there was high confidence this date would be met.

An update was also provided on the SAP infrastructure resilience issue, which had been partially resolved. A further scheduled outage may be required and the Board would be kept updated on this.

The PCC was reassured by the transparency and the confidence of the team. The dedication and the resilience of the team working on the project was praised and it was believed the relevant support was in place.

### b) Portfolio Highlight Report

The Trinity Road project remained on track and an internal meeting had been held with the new commanders in Bristol to bring them up to date on it.

The substantial refurbishment of Yeovil police station at Horsey Lane continues to proceed well and, subject to the usual caveats associated with this sort of complex scheme, ASP currently anticipated a fully operational police station in Autumn 2027.

## 5 Chief Constable's Update

The Chief Constable reflected on what leadership felt like in ASP, policing more generally and in the context of global events. She described leadership as requiring a dual focus: maintaining a clear long-term strategic vision while managing immediate operational pressures. She emphasised that, while the organisation remained focused on its long-term ambitions – particularly in relation to improving its service for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and women and girls – there were significant reasons for optimism as progress continued through Phase 2 of the operating model (the Mosaic programme).

The Chief Constable noted that current pressures included increasing social polarisation, heightened community tensions, rapidly changing demand, resource constraints across both enabling services and frontline functions, accelerating technological change, and rising performance and reform expectations. The PCC acknowledged these challenges.

In relation to strategic programmes, the Chief Constable confirmed ongoing work on anti-racism, noting that significant progress had been made over the past three years in understanding underlying issues, with the next phase focused on developing and implementing a clear theory of change. For Phase 2 and the Mosaic programme, she outlined an expectation for pace, with a full business case anticipated by November and implementation timelines extending to April 2027. In parallel, continuous improvement activity would continue, including work on crime recording, crime allocation and digital capability.

The Chief Constable also highlighted the introduction of a new national police performance framework from July, which will see forces put into one of four levels.. It was noted that communication of the new framework, both internally and externally, would need to be managed carefully to avoid confusion, with further clarity expected following publication in September. Engagement with the Inspectorate and other bodies, including the Independent Office for Police Conduct, was ongoing, with no significant concerns currently raised. The Board also discussed the potential implications of performance assessments on organisational resources, including the demands associated with higher levels of scrutiny and the potential impact on leadership capacity.

The impact of demand pressures was highlighted: particularly in areas such as managing Registered Sex Offenders and for the Internet Child Abuse Team. Resources may need to be reallocated to meet these challenges, despite there being limited recognition of this demand within funding arrangements.

## 6 Police and Crime Plan

### a) Child Strip Searches (including disproportionality)

The PCC noted the report published by the Children's Commissioner which had included the use of strip searches of children by the police. She noted that based on ASP's data there had been 66 Exposure of Intimate Parts (EIP) searches of children in custody during 2025/26. 12 of these were Black children and the disproportionality compared to White children was 7.2, and while this was a decrease on the last year it was still too high.

The DCC acknowledged the clear disproportionality concerns that had been raised but advised that the data needed clearer breakdown. Some custody procedures counted as EIP searches even when no intimate exposure occurred, citing the example of removing tracksuit bottoms with a cord for safety reasons. The Board agreed the need for stronger data clarity and to separate out the data for custody and ASP were working on this. The DCC highlighted that EIP searches must be authorised by a Sergeant in Custody and by an Inspector in other circumstances. The new Use of Force Scrutiny Panel would also have oversight of this data.

The Board also discussed EIP searches of children specifically following stop and search. While these are a rare occurrence ASP are considering their policy on this.

**b) Delay of training courses for Custody Sergeants**

The delay in running in-house training courses for Custody Sergeants was acknowledged, however this was not causing an issue as the risk was mitigated through external courses and vacancy management and there was no need to run a course at the moment. ASP acknowledged the learning around aligning promotion processes with course scheduling going forward.

**c) Over-established posts and vacancies/resourcing levels**

The CX highlighted a theme that had been raised with him as he met frontline teams. They felt that they are carrying a high number of vacancies but on paper it did not match.

ASP discussed the impact of the Basic Command Unit (BCU) model implemented in November and associated resourcing pressures. Phase 1 of the model was reported to have delivered clear benefits, particularly in exposing underlying imbalances in workforce distribution that had previously been masked within force-wide establishments. While the visibility of these gaps was welcomed, it had reinforced concerns from frontline teams that operational capacity did not align with recorded establishment figures, with factors such as abstractions, student officers not yet deployable, and restricted officers reducing effective team strength. Rebalancing activity was underway through recruitment, transfers and voluntary moves, although this was being progressed cautiously to avoid destabilising teams. It was noted that over-establishment levels had reduced significantly, contributing to a greater sense of pressure. Phase 2 of the model was expected to address patrol remit, crime allocation and investigative capacity, supported by further strategic planning around demand and service delivery.

The Board also considered ongoing pressures within response and patrol functions. A significant proportion of officers were unavailable for full duties for various reasons, and patrol teams were carrying complex investigative workloads beyond the intended model. Current shift patterns were not yet sufficiently aligned to fluctuating demand, and further work was required to develop more sophisticated, demand-led resourcing and scheduling approaches. Whilst some localised flexibility had been trialled, there were risks associated with inconsistency, and a more structured approach may be considered as part of wider workforce planning. Short-term rebalancing was taking place within BCUs, although large-scale redistribution between areas had not been pursued at the request of the Commanders.

**d) HMICFRS Report – The policing response to the investigation of online child sexual abuse and the management of RSOs**

This was a significant report published in the last month and included nine recommendations for Chief Constables. The Director of Performance and Accountability sought ASP's response to the report and the findings, noting the link to a point in their performance report about visits to and risk assessments of Registered Sex Offenders.

ASP confirmed there were challenges facing all forces in and agreed with all nine recommendations and were taking action to address the issues. A new Offender Management Investigation Team had been created to provide extra resources and flexibility across these areas of business following increased demand. However, as mentioned in the Chief Constables update the demand and resourcing challenges in this are particularly acute.

**e) Special Constabulary APCC Report**

The report highlighted a significant decline in the number of Special Constables nationally over the last 14 years. The PCC sought to understand ASP's current position and the support provided to their Specials.

ASP confirmed their Specials were highly valued and some of the reduction seen in the numbers in ASP had been intentional, to prioritise quality over quantity and ensure sufficient support could be provided. ASP had Specials with highly specialised skills such as advanced driving motorcyclists, Police Support Unit officers and within the Fraud and Crypto team. When Specials left it was often to rejoin as a regular, employed police officer.

Training capacity was sighted as the main constraint for recruiting more SC and a proposal will be presented at the People Committee in June, to address this.

The Board noted that Specials develop a range of transferable skills, including problem solving, teamwork, creativity and leadership. It was agreed that there is a need to strengthen engagement with employers to better support Specials in securing the time required to undertake their duties.

**f) Sentencing Act changes and impact**

The PCC highlighted her concern about the impact on community safety and the additional demand that may be caused for policing as a result of the Sentencing Act changes – which came into effect in April – and sought ASP's views.

ASP provided an example of a case where these changes may have had an adverse impact. While ASP are not seeing this in their strategic level data yet it is anticipated there will be a noticeable impact soon. The Board discussed the possibility of evidencing the unintended consequences to inform national policy.

**g) Culture and Inclusion Strategy**

The Deputy PCC sought an update on the progress with the Culture and Inclusion Strategy. ASP confirmed the Strategy continued to progress through their governance structure. It would be shared with the PCC.

**h) Most Similar Force Group**

The PCC and the Chief noted their shared concerns regarding the new Most Similar Force Group listing for Avon and Somerset and agreed they would send a joint letter to the Home Office outlining those concerns.

**i) Palantir**

The PCC outlined her concerns regarding Palantir: there has been notable negative media coverage about them and concern from the public about their use in this country.

ASP confirmed they were not currently exploring any additional software and would follow a robust and transparent procurement procedure should the need arise.

**7 Monthly PEEL question: How good is the force at leading & managing its services to make sure they are efficient, effective & sustainable?**
Priority 5

The PCC and her team provided positive feedback regarding ASP's leadership training offering and sought assurance on how its effectiveness was evaluated in practice. In particular, querying whether there was monitoring of leadership performance before and after training, and whether comparisons were made between trained and untrained leaders.

The DCC reported that significant investment had been made in leadership development programmes, including First Line Leaders (FLL), Middle Line Leaders (MLL), and Elevate. Each programme incorporated feedback mechanisms to assess the quality and delivery of training. However, it was acknowledged that a gap remained in systematically evaluating the impact of training once individuals returned to their roles, particularly in terms of behavioural and performance change in the workplace.

The Board noted that wider organisational measures, including staff survey results, generally indicated positive perceptions of leadership, and that performance data presented through Daily Management Meetings at Chief Inspector and Inspector level enabled comparison across teams. Emerging evidence suggested improvements in performance, supported by a range of metrics, and there was increasing visibility of participation in training programmes, allowing for further scrutiny and testing.

It was recognised that a more structured and proactive approach was required, including greater engagement with leaders before attending training and follow-up after completion to reinforce learning and assess impact. The application of learning from initiatives such as the Bright Light study was also highlighted, with a need to ensure that insights gained in training environments translated effectively into operational practice.

Members noted opportunities to strengthen communication and learning, including the use of internal briefings (e.g. Sway), and agreed that further work was needed to explore evaluation methods in greater depth.

**AOB**

The PCC sought clarification on a request that had been made at CMB for her to help ASP understand the view of the community. The Board acknowledged that 'the public' is not a single voice but the PCC and her team were seen by ASP as being a key route to feed in community insight into decisions. There was recognition that there will be future choices facing ASP that will involve difficult service compromises and ASP would look to the PCC to help getting feedback from the communities on those choices.

**Date of the next Governance and Scrutiny Board: 9 June 2026 11:00 - 12:30 and 13:00 - 14:30**