**Governance and Scrutiny Board agenda – 14 July 2026 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
James Davis, ASP Delivery Manager – Portfolio
Samantha Whyman, Major Crime Investigations Officer
Vicky Ellis, OPCC Secretariat Manager (Minutes)

**Partial meeting attendance:**
Nick Adams, Chief Officer – Finance, Resources and Innovation
Paul Butler, OPCC Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
Sally Fox, OPCC Director of Performance and Accountability
Ben Valentine, OPCC Senior Performance and Governance Manager
Jon Cummins, Assistant Chief Constable
Hannah Watts, Head of Business Services
Nick Lilley, Director of Information Technology

## 1 Apologies

## 2 Minutes and Action Updates

The Minutes of the June Governance and Scrutiny 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 August.
- The PCC's team would discuss possible options for a media campaign to promote the benefits to employers of supporting their employees with time to undertake Special Constable duties. This would be co-ordinated with the next round of recruitment of Special Constables.
- An update would be provided at the September board on work being carried out by the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development.

## 3 Finance

a) Draft Annual Accounts *(Oral update)*

The Chief Officer – Finance, Resources and Innovation provided an update to the Board on progress with the Annual Accounts:

- The draft accounts had been published on both the PCC and ASP websites in advance of the end of June deadline.
- The accounts had been shared with the Joint Audit Committee members (JAC), who had been invited to submit their questions on the accounts.
- The questions from JAC members would be discussed at their next meeting in September.
- The two new JAC members had met with both CFOs for an accounts familiarisation session.
- The audit of the accounts was in its 3rd week progressing well.
- Recommendation for sign off of the accounts would happen at the September JAC meeting.
- Evaluation of assets and consideration of pension liabilities were considered the areas that may lead to any delay but there were no concerns at present.

## 4 Estates Strategy

The Head of Business Services provided an update on the development of the Estates Strategy.

The work has been intentionally designed to provide a thoughtful assessment of current and future estate requirements, highlighting a number of complex and long-term challenges and opportunities. The strategy seeks to support the design and provision of effective workplaces while looking beyond immediate operational pressures.

Board members noted that consultation had taken place with relevant stakeholders and that further work would be undertaken to address any emerging questions. It was recognised that the strategy should support long-term organisational planning and take account of future changes in policing, local government and wider public sector reform.

The Board discussed a range of estate locations as part of the wider strategic review and recognised the need to balance operational effectiveness, financial sustainability, workforce considerations, community accessibility and future organisational requirements.

It was noted that several sites are currently underutilised, face condition-related challenges, or have limitations in supporting future operational needs. In some cases, lease expiries, building condition concerns, low public footfall, constraints on expansion, or significant investment requirements were identified as factors requiring further consideration. At the same time, a number of locations were recognised for their strategic value, geographic positioning, community presence or potential contribution to future service delivery.

The discussion highlighted the importance of considering assets within a broader organisational context rather than solely from an estates management perspective. The Board explored opportunities to improve utilisation through alternative operational uses, co-location with partners, and the potential to support workforce diversity and representation.

The Board recognised that while co-location can provide benefits, successful partnership working requires integrated service models and shared objectives rather than simply sharing buildings.
There was general agreement that, where possible, the organisation should seek to retain and optimise assets that continue to support operational and strategic objectives. However, it was acknowledged that all options should remain under consideration where buildings no longer represent value for money or are unable to meet future requirements. Further evidence gathering, cost modelling and engagement with operational leaders and partner organisations will be undertaken to inform future recommendations.

The Board also recognised that decisions regarding individual sites should be considered in the context of wider policing and public sector reform, ensuring that the estate remains agile, flexible and capable of supporting organisational needs over the longer term. More detailed options and supporting evidence are expected to be presented as the Estates Strategy develops.

## 5 Constabulary Change Portfolio

### a) ERP

The Director of IT provided an update on activities undertaken since the report to the Board had been written, confirming the project continued to move at pace. The team were looking to de-risk activities by bringing some forward; the Total Mobile release 12 of the rostering system would be brought forward to August and the payroll comparison testing by several weeks. These represented two critical areas for the project. Testing of core HR functionality on Oracle was going well and they were through 20% execution, with any defects being addressed quickly. There had also been positive feedback following the testing of core GRS function around timesheets.

The Board discussed the collective view on risk and confidence in the project, with a general consensus that there was nothing that would prevent go live but that the tight timeline remained, with the highest risks relating to the GRS system. The PCC checked on the resilience of the teams involved in the work, and was assured that support was in place for them.

### b) Portfolio Highlight Report

The Delivery Manager – Portfolio presented the Portfolio Highlight Report, outlining the streamlined project portfolio, progress on Mosaic programme projects, upcoming Transformation Committee business cases, and ongoing efforts to close legacy projects and track lessons learned.

## 6 Chief Constable's Update *(Oral update)*

The Chief Constable provided an update on the current strategic context facing policing and the organisation; noting that a number of significant pressures and uncertainties are emerging simultaneously, creating a complex and challenging operating environment.

Four key areas of concern were highlighted:

- **Demand:** Recent periods of extreme weather and peak seasonal activity have contributed to exceptionally high levels of demand.
- **Police Reform:** The pace of police reform activity has accelerated significantly. Ongoing developments relating to national performance frameworks, leadership reform,

governance transition arrangements and wider structural changes within policing were highlighted. While some aspects of police reform remain unclear, particularly regarding future national structures and oversight arrangements, it was recognised that forthcoming legislative changes are likely to have a substantial impact on policing and service delivery.

- **Police Legitimacy**: The Chief highlighted the continuing national debate regarding police legitimacy and public confidence. Issues relating to perceptions of fairness, impartiality and policing approaches continue to attract significant public and media attention, with differing views held across communities and stakeholders.
- **Threat and Risk Environment:** the threat picture has intensified and continues to evolve. Concerns were raised regarding increasing pressures on democratic institutions, community cohesion and the potential for protests to escalate into disorder. Emerging security and counter-terrorism risks can be difficult to identify, with some individuals coming to attention having had little or no previous contact with policing or partner agencies.

The Board recognised that these challenges represent complex issues with no simple solutions and require thoughtful, balanced and responsible leadership. The importance of effective coordination, collaboration and cooperation across policing and partner organisations at both local and national levels was emphasised.

The importance of maintaining public trust and confidence was also discussed. The Board noted the need for policing to remain transparent, balanced and impartial in its approach, ensuring that all communities feel protected, engaged and supported in response to emerging threats and concerns.

## 7 Police Performance Levels

The Board discussed the Policing Performance System which was due for announcement on 16 July 2026. Avon and Somerset Police were assigned to performance level 2. It was noted that the current assessment reflects a realistic position for the organisation and provides clear direction on areas requiring further improvement.

Particular attention is being given to:

- Investigative performance.
- Response timeliness.
- Victim outcome rates.

The Board noted that the areas highlighted by HMICFRS are already subject to ongoing review and development, with work underway to demonstrate robust improvement plans and progress.

Discussion focused on the extent to which the assessment draws on areas for improvement identified through the wider PEEL inspection process. While ASP is not currently a significant outlier in any particular area, crime recording performance continues to be closely monitored.

The PCC sought assurance regarding how progress and direction of travel will be measured over time. It was noted that formal closure of Areas for Improvement (AFIs) by HMICFRS is likely to be a key indicator of success. Members acknowledged that achieving and evidencing sustainable improvement may require several performance review cycles before any change in grading is reflected.

The Board also discussed performance data relating to investigations, crime outcomes and response to the public. It was noted that some performance measures are currently influenced by historic cases and ongoing data quality work, which can affect headline performance figures. Members were advised that once legacy issues have been fully addressed, performance measures should provide a clearer assessment of current operational performance. It is anticipated that this position will become clearer over the coming months.

The Board noted continuing challenges regarding the consistency of response-time measures across policing. National discussions are ongoing to establish a more standardised methodology, including how response times are defined and measured. It was recognised that any agreed national approach is likely to take time to implement.

An update was also provided on work being undertaken to understand the underlying causes of performance challenges. Root cause analysis is being developed to identify key barriers to improvement and inform delivery plans. Current activity includes reviewing domestic abuse attendance practices, examining demands placed on response teams, and assessing operational processes that may reduce frontline availability, including scene guarding, constant observations and handover arrangements.

A range of initiatives are being progressed to improve efficiency and effectiveness, including clearer expectations regarding deployment, accountability, leadership and the appropriate management of routine demand. It was recognised that any capacity released through these initiatives will need to be supported by clear accountability arrangements and a focus on achieving intended operational outcomes.

The Board noted that workforce arrangements, including shift patterns, may also require review as part of wider improvement activity. The PCC and the CC agreed on the importance of engaging fully with the College of Policing Performance Toolkit, Improvement Plan and Root Cause Analysis and confirmed that the Board will review this engagement/progress through GSB.

It was confirmed that work is underway to ensure both internal and external communications clearly explain the context of the HMICFRS assessment and the actions being taken in response.

The Board also noted that contextual factors, including officer numbers relative to population, form part of the overall performance picture and should be considered alongside headline metrics and inspection findings.

## 8 Police and Crime Plan

### Demand Management

The PCC sought to understand how ASP's demand management plans may affect partner agencies. The Chief advised she was drafting a letter that would be sent to partners in the autumn setting out the concerns and issues ASP are facing. It will be shared with the PCC for any input.

It was likely that ASP would be asking for help with practical things like looking after a child in a police station for 72 hours while waiting for Local Authority support or mental health situations in hospitals and officers on constant observations. The Board discussed the possible implications and responses from partners.

**Two-tier policing**

The Board discussed concerns raised through staff representative bodies regarding perceptions of "two-tier policing" and acknowledged that a range of views exist within the workforce on this issue.

Internal engagement has been ongoing through a combination of leadership communications, blogs and video messages, with the intention of encouraging open discussion and enabling local leaders to continue conversations within their teams. It was recognised that policing is a diverse organisation with a broad spectrum of perspectives, ranging from those who believe policing remains insufficiently inclusive to those who have concerns about the impact of current approaches on officers and staff.

The Board noted the importance of maintaining clarity around organisational values and reinforcing the principle of impartial policing. The Board discussed the need to distinguish between treating all individuals fairly and recognising that different communities may have differing experiences, expectations and levels of contact with policing. It was recognised that this forms part of a wider and ongoing conversation about legitimacy, trust and confidence.

The Board also discussed the importance of ensuring officers and staff understand the support available to them as these issues continue to be debated publicly and within policing. It was noted that differing approaches and public messaging across policing organisations can create inconsistency and make the wider narrative more challenging for staff to navigate.

The PCC and her team reflected on recent positive community engagement activity, highlighting the policing of the recent St Pauls Carnival. Positive progress was noted in terms of community relationships and engagement, with recognition of the value of sustained dialogue and partnership working in building trust and confidence.

The Board also considered workforce representation and community engagement more broadly. Discussions highlighted the importance of understanding the experiences of staff from racially minoritised backgrounds, including concerns about changes in the wider social environment and experiences of hostility. Members further recognised the need to strengthen engagement with communities that may be less connected to policing, including White working-class communities, and to improve opportunities for participation and recruitment from a wider range of backgrounds.

The Board noted examples of outreach activity aimed at increasing engagement with young people and communities that may traditionally have less contact with policing. Opportunities to build on this work through initiatives such as educational visits, youth engagement programmes and work experience placements, helping to strengthen understanding of policing and support future workforce diversity and inclusion objectives were discussed.

**Organised Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault**

The PCC noted that cases of Organised Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault have been prominent in the media recently, including a case that happened in Avon & Somerset where the victim was not satisfied with the response from the police. She sought to understand the learning ASP had taken from that case.

The DCC advised that the specific case quoted was initially investigated at a time when this type of offending was less well understood. ASP have since conducted a thorough review of the case and the case remained open and active. More widely, ASP were working with National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection to understand the crossover between Organised Crime Groups and sexual offending, noting it was now believed to be wider than previously known, underground and encrypted. ASP were upskilling staff to handle these cases and ensuring the focus was on being victim centred and providing victim care.

All forces were reviewing cases for any that may have been missed previously. It was noted the National Crime Agency are leading this work and looking to use Soteria for interim guidance.

**Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**

It was noted that the last Protection & Prevention Committee highlighted MARAC as a significant risk. The PCC sought to understand how ASP intended to improve this, noting a homicide-suicide case had been flagged whereby the individuals were due to have had a MARAC but because of backlogs this did not happen: the question was being asked could this have prevented those deaths.

The DCC confirmed a specific improvement plan was in place and due to report back to the Protection & Prevention Committee. As it requires a multi-agency partnership approach ASP may seek assistance from the PCC and her office.

**10 Monthly PEEL question:** How good is the force with regards to public treatment?
Police and Crime Plan Priorities 1 and 5

The Board received an update on the recording of Use of Force (UoF) and the use of Body-Worn Video (BWV) during Stop and Search (S&S) encounters. The importance of these processes in maintaining public confidence, transparency and legitimacy in the use of police powers was acknowledged.

The PCC noted recent engagement between her team and local policing commanders, which had provided additional assurance regarding the concerns raised around the declining use of BWV in S&S encounters. It was recognised, however, that maintaining strong compliance with recording requirements remains essential.

The ACC advised that leadership responsibility for S&S oversight had recently been strengthened and that a review of relevant policies and supervisory arrangements was underway. A particular focus being placed on day-to-day supervision, one-to-one performance discussions and the scrutiny of Stop and Search encounters.

In relation to BWV, the Board noted that new body-worn video equipment is expected to be introduced later in the year, providing enhanced capability and reliability. The Board discussed the importance of officers activating BWV at the earliest opportunity, particularly during S&S and UoF incidents, both to support accountability and to safeguard members of the public and officers.

The Board considered recent compliance levels relating to BWV use and discussed the need to understand the reasons behind instances where recordings are not activated. It was recognised that while the expectation is for officers to activate BWV whenever required, there will inevitably be occasions where human error occurs. Nevertheless, supervisors are expected to challenge non-compliance appropriately and ensure that learning, improvement and accountability are consistently applied. The Board agreed that understanding the reasons for non-activation is critical to determining the most appropriate management response.

Discussion also highlighted the importance of recording the rationale for decisions, both where BWV is not used and in relation to the exercise of police powers more generally. The need to continue strengthening compliance and data quality was emphasised.

The Board received an update on UoF reporting arrangements following the introduction of recording through the Pronto system. While the system has generated an increase in the number of transactions being recorded and the average time taken to complete reports has now reduced, it was acknowledged that the process is more complex than previous arrangements. To support improvement, dedicated champions have been deployed across the force to assist officers in completing records accurately and consistently.

The Board noted that Use of Force recording remains an area of continued focus and that ongoing monitoring is being undertaken to improve reporting rates, data quality and compliance. It was agreed that effective supervision, scrutiny and accurate recording are essential to maintaining public confidence and demonstrating the lawful and proportionate use of police powers.

**A.O.B**

The Director of Performance and Accountability reflected on the recent work experience student hosted by the PCC's office and thanked all the ASP officers and staff that had supported the week. The student left energised by all she had experienced and with a desire to become a part of the Major Crime Investigation Team. It was noted she had done an incredible job on her presentation to the Deputy PCC and the Assistant Chief Constable.

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