Governance and Scrutiny Board Minutes – 11 August July 2026 11:00-12:30 and 13:00-14:30

Venue: OPCC Meeting Room, Police HQ

Chair: Paul Butler

Attendees:
Clare Moody, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Sarah Crew, Chief Constable (CC)
Jon Reilly, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
James Davis, ASP Delivery Manager – Portfolio
Natalie Thatcher, Detective Inspector
Kevin Slocombe, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)
Paul Butler, OPCC Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
Ben Valentine, OPCC Senior Performance and Governance Manager
Vicky Ellis, OPCC Secretariat Manager (Minutes)

Partial meeting attendance:
Nick Adams, Chief Officer – Finance, Resources and Innovation
Ben Mohide, Programme Lead – Fleet Electrification
Jen Grannan, Head of Digital and Projects
Nick Lilley, Director of Information Technology
Jon Cummins, Assistant Chief Constable

1 Apologies

Karl Parfitt, OPCC Chief Executive
Sally Fox, OPCC Director of Performance and Accountability

2 Minutes and Action Updates

Following a minor typo amend, the Minutes of the July Governance and Scrutiny Board were confirmed as an accurate record for publication.

There was only one open action due to report to the August Board. The PCC, DPCC, CC and DCC had been unable to meet in August as planned and the discussion on ways to increase awareness of the Police and Crime Plan and the Strategic Objectives across the workforce was carried forward to their next meeting in September.

3 Finance

a) Q1 Financial Performance Report

The Chief Officer – Finance, Resources and Innovation highlighted the key points from the Q1 Financial Performance Report:

- The Revenue position at Q1 overall is £1.1m/0.9% underspent, with a forecast underspend of £0.1m/0.0% by year end.
- The report outlines the areas of over and under spend across the budget lines.

- Police staff pay, Transport Costs and Supplies and Services were overspent and there was an overachievement of income.
- The Capital forecast outturn predicts an underspend of £6.7m.

The Board discussed some of the areas highlighted. Staff pay pressures reflect over-established posts in Custody and additional capacity supporting learning and crime data integrity work as well as more generally lower turnover rates than expected. PCSO budgets are expected to return to establishment by year end. Overtime costs for both officers and staff are forecast to overspend due to operational demand, protests and mutual aid activity, although this is partly offset by additional income. Pension-related budgetary pressures and increasing ill-health retirements, particularly linked to mental health, were also highlighted as issues and were also reflected in national data.

Within the premises costs, the Board were advised utility costs were lower than anticipated and savings from IT contracts transitioning to cloud services are contributing to underspends. Transport costs continue to be affected by inflation, increased mileage rates and higher travel fares. Legal fees remain a significant and growing pressure that may need to be addressed through future financial planning. Income is forecast to exceed budget by around £2.3m, driven by higher-than-expected investment interest, strong performance in speed enforcement income, rechargeable operations, mutual aid activity and abnormal load escorts.

The PCC explored the management of overtime costs, to understand the details behind the figures and ensuring ASP are monitoring for welfare purposes. It was acknowledged that at this time there is an inability to carry out a deeper dive of the data to allow greater accountability.

The Board discussed the impact of the motorway camera outages on speed enforcement income. Work was ongoing with suppliers and cameras were expected to be fully operational again during the current financial year, although a delay of around three months before any associated income would be reflected in the budget. In response to questions about the newer two-way speed cameras, ASP noted their effectiveness would need to be evaluated before any decisions on further investment were made. Further deployment would be considered as part of any camera replacement programme with road safety remaining the primary consideration and known road safety hotspots would be prioritised.

The Board discussed the recent pension auto-enrolment exercise and the impact on the budgets, as well as opt out levels. Further information would be available in 3 months.

In response to questions, ASP confirmed the move to Oracle for finance functions had not affected the ability to run any finance reports.

Slippage in the capital programme was largely attributable to the timing of the Yeovil project and a number of smaller factors. The Bath station was due to conclude within budget, and the forecast also reflected assumptions relating to the ERP and the customer experience platform. Overall the capital position was broadly as expected, recognising that timing changes are common within major capital programmes. An update was provided on regional discussions regarding the customer experience platform, noting proposals for sharing implementation costs. It was anticipated significant savings could be achieved for each force through collaborative implementation.

4 Business Cases

a) Transition to Electric – Final Business Case – Rapid Charging

The Programme Lead for Fleet Electrification highlighted this as the first significant open tender in the transition to an electric fleet and while there had been some challenges establishing the regional approach there had been good engagement from the market. The winning bidders had a good track record with delivery for other organisations, including the Met. The investment outlined in the business case would accelerate the deployment of electric vehicles to response teams, with the installation of rapid charging at key sites.

The DPCC raised questions around the national approach, grid capacity, battery storage and operational impacts and prioritisation of charging sites. ASP confirmed:

- they were engaged in the stakeholder group regarding the Blue Light Commercial national strategy;
- they had secured the grid capacity required through a Distribution Network Operator;
- electric vehicles appeared to have less time off the road, and a lower cost in terms of parts and time spent on repair, which meant more time operational;
- the footprint of charging points is still in development but by next year this will be much improved and there will also be the option to use bus depots for charging;
- one site currently has a battery in place to test, public service focus is likely to be on generation of clean energy rather than storage of it.

Following the discussions above, the PCC approved the recommendation outlined in the business case.

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. A revised technical specification had been signed off on Friday following collaborative working across the 3 organisations. System-level interface testing had commenced in preparation for the User Acceptance Testing. The testing schedule had been impacted by the revision by approximately two weeks, which would lead to re-sequencing of some testing activity over the coming weeks.

The time related rule testing remained a complex area due to the volume and complexity of test scenarios, but was progressing without blockers. Testing of Oracle, HR, Total Mobile and release 12 were all progressing without significant concerns.

A key risk and challenge highlighted was the loss of a significant specialist resource and their expertise and additional resourcing opportunities were being actively explored with delivery partners.

It was noted there are now 83 calendar days remaining until go-live. Programme contingency is now very limited and additional resource may be required.

The PCC noted the programme team had been operating under sustained pressure for some time and sought assurances welfare support was in place. The Director of IT confirmed annual leave was still being taken where possible, though some team members continued to work extended hours and weekends. Team well-being was being monitored, including recognition of the impact on individuals and their families.

The PCC and her team thanked the programme lead for the open and candid update and noted the focus on managing resource risk while maintaining delivery momentum.

b) Portfolio Highlight Report

The Board discussed the delay and challenges seen in the implementation of Minerva for non-Niche forces. These were being addressed and it was not expected to have an impact on the implementation for ASP, who are part of a later tranche of implementation.

The Board noted the number of digital projects in the pipeline and considered issues with resourcing these. The national spending review discussions would need to consider this, though costs for projects such as the Emergency Services Network had not yet been calculated and there was little clarity on the scale of funding that would be required.

c) SOZE *(Oral update)*

The Head of Digital and Projects provided an update on the use of the SOZE investigation tool:

- Training had paused over the summer, with an initial cohort of 1000 users agreed, including staff and officers from CID, Bluestone, Topaz, SOCIT and PSD.
- All training was expected to complete by Christmas, after which a deeper dive on benefit realisation would be undertaken.
- Anticipated benefits included reduced interpreter costs, reduced hours required per investigation, reduced expenditure on additional analytical support.
- A Product Board had been established to maintain user engagement and oversee ongoing development and adoption.
- National discussions continued in relation to validation requirements; there is currently no mandated national standard and existing guidance remained advisory.
- Other forces had expressed interest in trialling the tool.
- An Acceptable Use Policy had been drafted and was progressing through the required legal review process and would be shared with the PCC and her team.
- No flaws or issues had been identified so far.

The PCC and her team requested ongoing quarterly updates on utilisation levels, case usage and benefits realisation to support continued governance and assurance.

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

The Chief Constable highlighted four key areas of concern currently facing policing, describing these as her principal "fears" rather than simply risks.

The first was Operational Demand, noting ASP is currently experiencing one of the busiest periods of the year, with summer demand pressures, recent heatwaves and increased calls into the Control Room affecting performance. Additional pressures were arising from major events, including the World Cup, where late decisions around licensing and potential bank holidays create planning and resourcing challenges.

The second was Police Reform, national police reform activity is accelerating, with a new Delivery Authority jointly chaired by the Home Office and policing leadership, driving rapid progress. Recent developments include the new performance framework, tiering arrangements and the Leadership Commission report, which focuses on leadership and

culture as well as organisational structures. Uncertainty remains regarding future governance arrangements, PCC transition plans and the development of the proposed National Police Service, with key legislative proposals expected later in the year. The Chief Constable noted concerns regarding information gaps and the potential impact of forthcoming national reforms on policing.

The third area was Police Legitimacy. Recent national events and high-profile cases have intensified public and professional debate around policing legitimacy, impartiality and inclusion. Ongoing discussions within policing include how commitments to inclusion and anti-racism are balanced with public expectations of impartiality. The Chief Constable highlighted the continuing need for careful and balanced leadership in navigating these issues.

Finally, the Chief Constable considered the national threat picture, expressing significant concern regarding a deteriorating and increasingly complex threat environment. Her concerns included attacks on democratic institutions, growing community tensions, the potential for protests to escalate into disorder, national security risks, extremism and state-based threats.

The Chief Constable emphasised the importance of recognising the human impact on both the workforce and local communities. Police officers and staff continue to operate in a challenging environment, often confronting emerging threats with limited prior intelligence indicators. She also noted the importance of understanding the experiences and concerns of different communities, particularly in relation to cohesion, confidence and feelings of inclusion. Engagement with community and faith leaders will continue to ensure concerns are heard and addressed locally.

In response to these challenges, the Chief Constable stressed the need for responsible, thoughtful and transparent leadership. She highlighted the strong collaboration and coordination taking place across forces and national policing bodies, and emphasised the importance of maintaining a balanced, inclusive and impartial approach while supporting the workforce and communities through a period of significant uncertainty and change.

The PCC recognised and shared the Chief Constable's concerns regarding the current operating environment for officers. She expressed concern about the increasingly polarised national debate on policing, with contributions from political discourse, traditional media, social media and misinformation all influencing public perceptions and noted the challenge of maintaining trust and confidence in policing while responding to heightened scrutiny and competing narratives.

The PCC endorsed the importance of responsible, thoughtful and effective leadership. The Board discussed the readiness and resilience of ASP and local partners, and strong collaboration was noted.

7 Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) self-assessment

The Deputy Chief Constable advised the SPR self-assessment remained a work in progress. There had been some delay in the production of it following changes in personnel but it was now in progress. He had provided some feedback on the draft which the team were re-working and there had been some changes to the format of the document.

It was anticipated it would be presented to the Strategic Planning Meeting in September and would then be presented to the Governance and Scrutiny Board in October.

Planning was already underway for the 2027 draft, which would be prepared by March 2027.

8 Police and Crime Plan

Call Handling/Control Room

The PCC sought an update on the resourcing of the control room, following the removal of the 25 over-established call-handler posts, seeking to understand if there had been an impact on performance.

It was noted there had been a significant uplift in 999 calls through the heatwave and ASP were monitoring capacity closely. Call response levels had not dropped significantly and the numbers were stabilising.

The Chief Constable confirmed a further review would be undertaken in September and highlighted there had been a few steps taken to support the call-handlers.

Fatal Road Traffic Collisions

The PCC highlighted the significant number of fatal road traffic collisions in Avon and Somerset so far this year, noting there had already been 34, compared to a total of 44 over the previous year.

The Board discussed resource allocation for roads policing units, problem-solving approaches, and the impact of local authority planning and national funding gaps. It was noted that no common factors had been identified from recent fatal collisions and there remained a need for increased public education and visible enforcement to road safety.

Resourcing of Roads Policing Unit and Armed Response Vehicles from Yeovil

The Board discussed the feedback the PCC received in relation to issues fulfilling the resourcing of RPU and ARV teams from Yeovil. ASP confirmed the intention to resource these teams from Yeovil.

Intel Capacity

The Board discussed concerns regarding intelligence capacity, including the ability to meet demand for problem profiles, gaps in neighbourhood crime analysis and increasing workload arising from new national requirements relating to protective orders.

It was noted that some of the issues may relate to prioritisation and processes rather than overall capacity alone, and ASP had a review of intelligence demand and operating models planned.

Concerns that current arrangements may focus too heavily on the highest levels of harm and serious violence, potentially overlooking lower-level but significant community harms and neighbourhood issue were discussed.

The increasing demand associated with protective orders was recognised as a growing pressure that will require additional research and analytical capacity.

The Board discussed opportunities to improve efficiency through better systems, processes and the use of AI-supported research tools, while ensuring intelligence products continue to meet operational needs.

The PCC also highlighted the need to ensure Organised Crime Group (OCG) mapping was appropriately prioritised.

It was agreed that both crime management and intelligence management processes require further review, with a focus on effective triage, prioritisation and ensuring the intelligence function is fully supporting operational policing priorities.

Victim contact (and satisfaction)

Following a discussion at ASP's Response and Investigation Committee, concern was raised around the decline in victim contact and satisfaction as a result of the removal of the 28 day victim contact policy. The PCC sought assurance on what ASP were doing to manage this issue ahead of the introduction of the customer experience platform.

The ACC provided some detail around the workshops planned to share learning, as well as the development of victim contracts to ensure understanding of what level of contact victims would like to receive.

9 Monthly PEEL question: How good is the force at crime prevention and deterrence? Police and Crime Plan Priorities 1, 2 and 3

The Board received an update on ongoing work to strengthen the Force's response to anti-social behaviour (ASB), noting that a comprehensive ASB plan has been developed and is viewed as a strong foundation for future activity.

- Significant work has been undertaken to improve the Force's response to ASB, supported by Problem Solving Plans (PSPs), enhanced performance data through Qlik, and improved oversight through governance arrangements.
- While positive progress has been made, rises in robbery, knife crime and ASB remain areas of concern. Action is underway to ensure BCU Commanders have sufficient analytical support to better understand and reduce these crime types.
- Three actions have been commissioned through the Constabulary Management Board, including improving local intelligence to better understand the drivers of robbery and knife crime, reviewing ASB crime recording processes, and ensuring alignment with Operation Mosaic and wider problem-solving activity.
- A reduction in Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) was noted and work is underway with the CPS and wider criminal justice partners to understand and address barriers within the court process.
- Positive community impact was reported from existing PSP activity, with examples including Cheddar Gorge and Castle Park, where targeted interventions have received favourable feedback from local communities.
- The importance of partner agencies, including local authorities, probation services and the wider criminal justice system, playing their part in addressing ASB and managing prolific offenders was highlighted.
- ASP continues to focus on identifying and targeting the small number of prolific offenders responsible for a disproportionate amount of ASB and crime, with positive feedback received from partners regarding this approach.
- Inconsistencies were noted regarding local authority engagement, and opportunities to strengthen multi-agency collaboration in some areas remained.

- A further update, including the Demand Management Strategy, will be provided to CMB.

Date of the next Governance and Scrutiny Board: 8 September 2026 11:00 - 12:30 and 13:00 - 14:30