



Governance and Scrutiny Board – 17 September 2024 11:30-13:00 and 13:30-15:00

Venue: Gordano Room, Police HQ and Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Clare Moody, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Jon Reilly, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)
Nick Adams, ASP Chief Finance Officer
Alice Ripley, OPCC Chief of Staff
Paul Butler OPCC Chief Finance Officer
Sally Fox OPCC Director of Performance and Accountability
Ben Valentine, OPCC Senior Performance and Governance Manager
Nick Ridout, ASP Governance Officer
Liz Parr, PA to OPCC Chief of Staff and Chief Finance Officer (Minutes)
Holly Watson Hill, OPCC Policy, Partnerships and Commissioning Manager (Observing)

Partial meeting attendance:

Will White, Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)
Hannah Watts, Head of Business Services
Kristina Windsor, D/Superintendent for Vulnerability
Jane Wigmore, C/Superintendent, Head of CID
Helen Jeal, Improvement and Assurance Manager
Jason Shears, Superintendent, Supporting Head of Performance and Assurance
Jon Dowey, Head of Performance and Insight
Louise Hutchison, Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development

GOVERNANCE

1 Apologies

Sarah Crew, Chief Constable (CC)
James Davis, ASP Portfolio Delivery Manager

2 Minutes and Action Updates

The minutes of the Governance and Scrutiny Board held on 13 August were agreed as an accurate record for publication.

The Board had received updates to close several of the actions due.

The remaining actions that were due for an update at the September Board were discussed:

- Action 052/23 – An update had been provided to the Board in advance which showed that there has been progress. The PCC requested for some further scrutiny, and this will be reported back to the Board on a later date. IBM's ongoing work and the findings from this will be reported firstly, back to the Portfolio Steering Board, Programme 1 for scrutiny and then to GSB on a later date. It was recommended to close the action pending the further updates.
- Action 069/23 – a new fix is happening today at Bridgwater. A further update to be provided at October's GSB.
- Action 078/23 – a verbal update will be provided as an Agenda item at the GSB in October. Close action.
- Action 024/24 – a revised timeline and the cost implications were not able to be provided at this time. Continue to report at the monthly GSB through the Portfolio Highlight Report. Close action.
- Action 025/24 – disproportionality of vehicle stops will be monitored through ASP scrutiny structure and can be reported back to GSB when required. Close action.
- Action 027/24 – Linked to the Risks and Issues paper on the Scrutiny agenda. Use of BRAG in stop searches is monitored through the Confidence and Legitimacy Committee. Close action.
- Action 032/24 – Further update to be provided at October's GSB.
- Action 033/24 – Discussion and updates have happened outside of GSB. Close action.

3 Finance

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) update

The MTFP update had been shared with the Board in advance of the meeting. ASP's Chief Finance Officer made the Board aware that the MTFP update had been based on assumptions and on the previous MTFP.

The Board recognised that there will be some opportunities and some challenges over the next year and that there should be more clarity on any changes that may occur over the next few months.

ASP's Chief Finance Officer answered questions from the PCC and their Chief Finance Officer. There are a number of uncertainties including the newly elected Government's manifesto commitments to recruit more officers: it is not known how this will be funded or the timeline for this. The Government have signalled that public finances are challenging, and this will affect the October budget. There is also uncertainty about the Precept – which will not be finalised until February – and whether the Precept will need to be used to fund additional officers.

Despite inflation being more stable currently, there have been some challenges around inflation increases in the forensics market.

ASP are maintaining the Police Officer uplift numbers until the end of this financial year, but it is unclear if the new Government will continue this scheme.

It was brought to the attention of the Board that the savings plans have not achieved their intended targets and further work will need to be undertaken to look at available options to achieve the necessary savings.

Some additional challenges across the MTFP include delays in the implementation of the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems and related cost implications, abstraction and overtime pressures, increases in kennelling costs due to the ban on XL Bully dogs and the uncertainty of whether ASP will be able to realise the planned savings identified through the First Point of Contact Business Case.

There may be opportunities for savings to materialise with future use of electric vehicles, however capital investment will be needed to manage the transitional costs.

The challenges, opportunities and upcoming changes will be discussed in more depth at the next Strategic Planning Meeting.

4 Portfolio Highlight Report

The report was received in advance of the Board and highlighted the ongoing works at Trinity Road which continues to be developed for occupation by a number of tenants including ASP.

Some concerns were raised by the OPCC's Chief Finance Officer regarding the technical specification of the heating that do not comply with requirements and may result in an increase in heating costs, however this is not something that ASP can influence and is the owner's responsibility.

Other highlights of concern that were raised by the Board were around the timeliness of contractor's vetting which is currently undertaken by Warwickshire Police. The delays appear to ebb and flow and some improvements had been seen more recently. Extensions to contractor's contracts are being looked into by the Estates team.

The PCC confirmed that she will be underwriting the costs for the implementation of the Soteria style approach to Domestic Abuse.

5 Decisions/Business Cases

a) Final Business Case – Force Collisions Investigation Bureau

The Board read the Business Case in advance of the meeting which proposes moving the Force Collisions investigation Bureau from Almondsbury Police Station to Police Headquarters (HQ).

The costs of the proposed move had been allocated in the MTFP and post tender the costs have shown a possible reduction to the allocated amount.

The proposed moves of teams to HQ will diversify and make better use of the site. The disposal of HQ is not being considered.

The Board agreed to approve the Business Case.

b) Final Business Case – SW Forensics DFU (Bristol KSH)

The Board were asked to review the Business Case to remodel the Data Forensics Unit at Kenneth Steele House to create ISO accredited facilities for the regional South-West Forensics Data Forensics Investigations.

The Board were assured that ICO accreditation is being worked towards and that it is in line with other forces for compliance.

The proposed move will see an improved performance of the unit and a reduction of the backlog of work. Other forces have committed £277,000 to this work.

The Board agreed to approve the Business Case.

c) Custody Resilience Business Case

The Board noted that the Business Case was approved at the Constabulary Management Board and was funded using the money received from Operation Safeguard. This provided for a temporary, one year uplift of 6 Detention Officers and 2 Inspectors into the Custody function, along with changing the Inspector coverage to 24/7. The uplift will ensure that Custody can better meet the demands on the service.

The PCC recognised that there is a need across ASP for additional officers and staff, and this needed to be considered in the round.

If this change were to become a permanent a new business case would need PCC approval. The PCC requested that any future proposals for custody resilience are brought to GSB within the next 6 – 9 months. The PCC would look at this in the context of the needs of the whole organisation.

6 Quarterly Joint Audit Committee (JAC) Update

The most recent JAC was held on 12 September looked at a variety of work streams. Updates were provided to the Committee on the Police and Crime Plan consultation, Strategic Risk Registers, the impact of the recent disorder; and the PCC's assurance to provide serious violence funding for 2025/26 if no grant is received from the Government.

The key ASP element of the Committee was around Artificial Intelligence and Cloud development as well as an update on Independent Office for Police Conduct investigations, the current PEEL inspection and ERP.

The SWAP audit reports looked into the key estate's obligations for compliance and controls.

The Committee considered and endorsed the accounts together with the Chief Constable, and Police and Crime Commissioner. An additional fee from the auditors was noted and is expected.

The Committee members requested that the outturn papers be published as they are not currently published on the OPCC's website, other than within the Police and Crime Panel papers.

7 Quarterly Update on Estate Asset Management Plan

The OPCC's CFO and the PCC will meet with the Estates Business Manager to look at any future plans and the development strategy for the Estate Asset Management Plan.

The Board were updated on the work that continues to progress at both Minehead and Chard and that it will be finalised in the next few months. The Board heard that this work has been positive and that there is great excitement amongst the workforce to be able to move into these premises in the near future.

Broadbury Road will be finalised in Quarter 4 and is currently at Stage 3.

AOB

Update to be provided at November's GSB on IBM's work (see Action 052/23) and the use of AI.

SCRUTINY

8 Chief Constable's (DCC) update

The DCC was pleased to inform the Board that the Open Days held at the weekend were well attended and saw around 10,000 visitors and that the days provided ASP with a great opportunity to showcase the breadth of policing and quality of service that is provided to A & S residents.

The DCC explained that the Summer Demand period will be coming to an end in two weeks as the seasons are changing. He stated that there is a feeling of renewed sense of positivity and that there have been some key promotions, movement and key appointments within ASP's Senior Team.

The DCC was pleased to inform the Board that in person 'Talk Time' sessions had started again with Chief Officers speaking to colleagues at various locations across ASP to understand their thoughts and concerns. A People Survey will be launched in October and the results of the survey will be used as a benchmark moving forward.

The DCC remarked on the recent pressures on the workforce due to the national disorders and knife crime issues and that difficult decisions have had to be made on how ASP could provide the best service.

The DCC said that ASP are perceived positively as a force and had received high levels of officer applications from other forces.

9 Key organisation Risks and Issues

The Board had read the Risks and Issues paper which focussed on Stop and Search Disproportionality. This has been a significant focus of the tackling disproportionality work and the response was provided as part of the updates under the next agenda item.

10 Tackling Disproportionality and Racism update

The ACC stated that ASP are in a strong position to meet the national recommendations which are expected to produce tangible and measurable metrics and to increase engagement with external stakeholders. The ACC and colleagues will be attending the National Black Police Association Conference in Mid-October.

The ACC confirmed that ASP have set up a Tackling Disproportionality Independent Scrutiny Board (TD ISB) to look at inclusion and to work with Black heritage police. The TD ISB are engaging with new people and organisations to work with the police and are moving into the interview stage for its potential new members.

There has been gradual take up of the deferred prosecution 'Chance for Change', and there will be analysis of how it is being used and who is using it to ensure it delivers the proposed benefits.

The DCC confirmed that the new Stop and Search policy is live and the training programme is half-way through; this is being delivered by the Stop and Search lead.

The ACC explained that the 'Root Cause' analysis is now called a 'Deep Dive' analysis as this better reflects the understanding provided by the report. It looked in detail at different aspects of disproportionality and showed significant disproportionality in strip searches. The recommendations from the report are being prioritised. It has been shared with some stakeholders and will be discussed at the Independent Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel on 26 September.

The Board discussed the National Black Police Association withdrawing support for the National Police Race Action Plan. ASP will continue the work they have started and continue to engage with the Avon & Somerset Black Police Association (now called REACH).

The PCC expressed that since the Chief Constable's declaration of Institutional Racism that it is fundamental to embed this work and ensure progress.

The ACC explained that ASP Colleagues are working on a strategy and linking in with HR to address disproportionality at recruitment stage.

Recent Upstander training had been delivered by the College of Policing. The first part is an online short course and may be able to be developed as a package to train staff. The opportunity is being looked into.

11 Performance against the Police and Crime Plan:

a) Integrated Performance and Quality Report (IPQR)

ASP have arranged an independent peer review of their Crime Data Integrity (CDI) which will use the same methodology as HMICFRS. The review will be followed by a debrief and recommendations. This will form part of improvement plans and scrutiny over the following 12-18 months. The findings of the peer review will be reported through the IPQR in November.

Investigative Standards

There was a discussion of how ASP might improve their positive outcome rate for crimes. One aspect of this is creating more time for officers, especially in Patrol, to be able to give to investigating crimes. A proposal on how to create capacity will come to Portfolio Steering Board later this month.

There is now a drive for consistency of performance across different teams. ASP are also looking at how they can take the good practice from Bluestone and apply this to other crime types. It was noted that they are using the Bluestone model in relation to Domestic Abuse. CDI has improved which has led to an increase in recorded crime therefore a stable positive outcome rate has been maintained by a higher volume of positive outcomes.

Service for Victims

The Board agreed that the HMICFRS' victim service assessment had some really Good findings but it also had a few areas of concern, and they discussed the plans to address these concerns which will be a balance between compliance and consistency for every victim. The assessment was based on data from March and April this year and that progress has been made since this time: for example, the increased use of THRIVE.

b) Quarterly Vulnerability and VAWG Report

The Board were given updates since the report had been submitted. Nine priorities for VAWG had been identified and agreed through risk assessment methodology. Each Pillar lead will develop a bespoke plan and outcomes. There will be a review of performance outcomes to ensure that they are in line with the agreed priorities. The performance framework will be based on what ASP want to achieve and will involve improving officers' skill base and this will take time to design and ensure it is fit for purpose.

The part two Angiolini inquiry visit will happen on 7 October. The DCC explained to the Board that there will be national coordination from the NPCC with Gold and Silver Groups. There are some recommendations from part one which ASP will need to respond to the National Police Chiefs Council within two weeks.

The Professional Standards Department will prepare case files ready for inspection to evidence where ASP are with recommendations.

12 HMICFRS Recommendations and AFIs

The DCC alerted the Board of two recommendations that are a cause for concern and advised the Board that progress is being made. There is one outstanding 'old' recommendation which he will look into. The recommendations do in the first instance come to the DCC and then following his sign off go the Confidence and Legitimacy Board.

There are some police super-complaints with three elements outstanding and these will be closed shortly.

The Joint Audit Committee had also raised the timeliness of recommendations.

13 Professional Standards Update

a) Quarterly Report

The DCC explained that this agenda item had been delayed since the August GSB and therefore the papers are not fully up to date. There are two highlights:

Ethnicity

The Ethnicity and Faith of complainants is not requested, and it was agreed that it would be good to have this information.

Increase in reporting

Seeing an increase in non-reporting but cannot indicate the proportion.

There are 938 outstanding complaints. Some are being dealt with out of area and would normally be dealt with more quickly if in house.

The DCC explained that any officers or staff who are suspended do receive regular wellness checks and where it is possible will be restricted rather than suspended.

b) IOPC Independent Investigation Update

The OPCC Director of Performance and Accountability highlighted that the OPCC are not always being alerted to any complaints that are over 12 months old and requested an IOPC update every 6 months.

it was agreed that a vetting update would be brought to a future GSB.

Post GSB meeting note that the quarterly meeting with David Ford scheduled for 9th October is being rearranged.

c) OPCC complaints review.

The contents of the paper were noted.

14 People and Organisational Development Update

ASP's Director of People and Organisational Development confirmed that they had 3,344 police officers which has surpassed the September Uplift target of 3,331 and is on track to meet the March 2025 target of 3,351.

She explained to the Board that ASP are considering additional officer entry routes from next year. She explained that applicants are assessed by a National Police Assessment followed by an in-person interview, by ASP, to ensure they display the values that fit ASP's desired culture. She confirmed that there had been some dismissals of PCDA students – under Regulation 13 – where they did not fit that desired culture.

The Board discussed the PCDA survey recently launched which showed some positive results. A small capture of answers had been presented to the Board, but it was agreed the full question set and response rate would be provided to the OPCC.

Items for Publication

Minutes of the last meeting.

Decision notices for the two business cases that were approved.

**Date of the next Governance and Scrutiny Board: 15 October 2024 11:30 - 13:00 and
13:30 - 15:00**