

**NORTHUMBRIA PCC MINUTES**

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**Title**

Business Meeting

**Date**

15 May 2025

**Location**

Teams/Victory House

**Duration**

2pm-3.15pm

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**Present:**

Susan Dungworth – Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)  
Clare Penny Evans – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner  
Vanessa Jardine – Chief Constable (CC)  
Jayne Meir – Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)  
Ruth Durham – Chief of Staff of the OPCC  
Gail Thompson – Joint Chief Finance Officer  
Joscelin Lawson – ACO for Corporate Services  
Alastair Simpson – ACC for Crime and Safeguarding  
Sarah Robson – Staff Officer (NP)  
Tanya Reade – Corporate Governance Manager (NP)  
Vicki Wilson – Minute Taker (OPCC)

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**OPEN SESSION**

**1. Minutes of the open session of Business Meeting held on 27 February 2025**

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

**2. Minutes of the open session of Business Meeting held on 13 March 2025**

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

**3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

There were no actions to be addressed on the Action Log.

**4. National Issues Impacting on Policing**

**Chief Constable's Strategic Update**

The CC referenced the HMIC report which had been published this week. It was felt that the outcome was fair and reasonable, and it was clear that progress was being made and relevant work was in place to tackle areas for improvement.



The call handling figures regarding 101 were soon to be published. The median average indicated that 50% of the time, in April, any 101 call was answered within 2 seconds, with the national average standing at 8 seconds. However, the mean average stood at 6 minutes 47 seconds; this was likely due to a volume of 101 calls during weekend evenings when 999 calls were also particularly high. This was seen as another indication of the continual progression within the force. The PCC advised that there were fewer complaints regarding call answer times, and more relating to the lack of follow ups after a complaint/issue was being dealt with. The CC was aware of this and the issue was being tackled appropriately.

All submissions had now been completed regarding the Neighbourhood Guarantee, including a commitment regarding more PCSOs and Special Constables. Northumbria were also going to be the first and only force to do 'direct centering' which would offer new recruits a direct route into community policing.

ACO Lawson would be running a Local Coordination Group which would keep abreast with national policing issues which in turn would be cascaded to staff to ensure guidance and information was always up to date.

The Human Rights Commission would be publishing a consultation exercise within the next week with the Code of Practice being published around June. Many services were waiting on this guidance before finalising facilities. Provision across the force estate would be considered once this had been released.

The PCC queried whether there had been any complaints regarding strip searches. The CC advised there had been none and it was noted that appropriate systems were in place to ensure staff, and those being searched, were not left in vulnerable positions.

#### Police and Crime Commissioner's Strategic Update

Due to the recent local elections, there had been no national issues currently impacting the Office of the PCC.

#### **5. Update from Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC)**

The Joint Chief Finance Officer highlighted the main points from the report.

Updates from the JIAC meeting held on 24 February 2025 had been outlined in detail as per the report. It was highlighted that the Police and Crime Plan had been commended.

#### **6. Annual Review of the Governance Framework and JIAC Terms of Reference**

The Chief of Staff (OPCC) explained the report was split into three sections.

- Annual Review of the Corporate Governance Framework



The review proposals had been outlined in detail and would reflect the Procurement Act 2023 with regards to thresholds. There would also be further clarity as to what the PCC could delegate to the Deputy PCC and other persons within the current legislative framework.

- Revised Terms of Reference (ToR) for JIAC  
In the last review of the ToR in November 2023, the ToR were amended to allow appointment for an initial four-year term with the option of a second and third year term, each term being four years. Following a targeted recruitment campaign and the appointment of new members, it was proposed that the ToR were amended to revert to an initial four-year term with the option of a second appointment for a further four years, eight in total. It had also been proposed to increase the JIAC membership from five members to six.
- Agree to review remuneration levels for members of JIAC  
When considering the difficulties in recruitment over recent JIAC vacancies, the CFO and Chief of Staff of the OPCC had explored the level of remuneration for members of the committee. An early assessment of this had shown that the rate that Northumbria JIAC members received was in general lower than the rates paid for similar roles across policing. A review would be undertaken and if an increase was deemed appropriate a further report/recommendation would be provided at a future Joint Business Meeting.

The PCC and CC approved the recommendations outlined within the report and agreed to the Key Decision. The proposals would be presented at the JIAC meeting in June.

## **7. Joint Strategic Risk Register (JSRR)**

The DCC highlighted the main points from the report.

There were two main changes to the JSRR:

- Operational: Inability to implement centralised force coordination ensuring sustainable capacity and capability to meet statutory requirements under the Civil Contingencies Act and responsibilities from the Strategic Policing Requirement.

Following a review of major incident readiness, risks to delivery had been identified regarding capability, particularly public and personal safety training, and availability, servicing, storage and procurement of kit and equipment, which were now reflected in current factors for this strategic risk area.

A new Major Incident and Business Continuity Board would ensure appropriate oversight and governance, which included capacity, capability and readiness, with appropriate reporting and escalation through the Force governance framework.

This reassessment had resulted in the risk changing from Medium to High.



- Workforce: Standards, conduct and behaviours of the workforce are not in-line with Northumbria Police values and the Code of Ethics. Inability to maintain an effective workforce profile through a reduction in attraction, recruitment and retention.

Vetting delays within recruitment had now been addressed and were in-line with hiring pace, however delays remained with pre-employment checks and were attributed to medical assessments.

There had been significant improvement in recruitment to select specialist and technical roles in Digital Policing.

There was an error in the report which outlined the risk. The report should have stated the risk would remain Medium with impact at High. This would be changed along with any other that may be incorrect.

An assessment of risk following the recent Supreme Court judgment that the terms 'man', 'woman' and 'sex' in the Equality Act 2010 refer to biological sex, was currently being undertaken.

The Chief of Staff outlined the two key changes to the OPCC Strategic Risk Register.

- Finance (OPCC) - Government reduces funding to PCCs/Police Forces which results in a reduced service ability. The need to contain expenditure within available resources and enable Northumbria Police to police effectively.

Updates had been made to the current factors to reflect understanding around specific grants and one year funding settlements, and the Comprehensive Spending Review expected in June 2025.

There were no changes to the risk, remaining at Medium, with an impact of Medium.

- Public Confidence (OPCC) - Loss of public confidence in the PCC resulting from a lack of engagement and communication, leading to a failure to reflect public priorities in the Police and Crime Plan. Failure to hold the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the public for delivery of their priorities or other statutory obligations.

Updates had been made to reflect the context that the Police and Crime Plan had now been formally launched and the current factors had been updated highlighting the work needed to understand the impact of the recent Supreme Court Ruling on the legal definition of women.

There were no changes to the risk, remaining Low with an impact of Medium.

## **8. HMICFRS Crime Investigations – An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime**



The ACC for Crime and Safeguarding highlighted the main points from the report.

In response to the long-term decline in successful prosecutions, with too few criminal investigations leading to justice for victims, HMICFRS inspected how effectively police forces investigated crime as part of their 2022-25 programme of inspections. The report outlined eleven recommendations; eight had been allocated to chief constables.

With regards to Northumbria's current position, the force was confident that the progress made in relation to the improved resolution rates could be maintained. The force continued to solve more crime, with a consistent increase in the positive outcome rate for all crime types and better use of Out-Of-Court-Resolutions, however, there was more to do. The positive outcome rate for the 12 months to February 2025 was now 16.7%, which was higher than the national average at 13.5%.

The force had maintained a good understanding of the current investigative demand levels and although open crime levels remained high, the force now allocated more than 53% of recorded crime, compared to 47% the previous 12 months.

The recommendations included within the report had been outlined. The PCC felt that recommendation one, ensuring a model was in place to be used as a tool to determine the number of investigators needed based on crime demand, may assist with a reduction in volume of 101 calls.

Other recommendations were highlighted alongside the force's current status and it was made known that there was a current Investigations Plans Policy in place, and that the NIK Platform provided officers and staff with guidance in respect of PND and facial recognition.

The CC was confident the correct policies and procedures were in place, and the main aim would be ensuring these remained up to date and utilised effectively. The DCC felt the more these were used, the more confidence would be built within the staff and officers.

## **9. HMICFRS PEEL Inspection**

This would be discussed at the meeting in June.

## **10. Forward Plan**

Following a review of the Forward Plan, the current set up of alternating Business and Scrutiny meetings on a monthly basis might need to change based on business needs. There would remain six of each throughout the year, but the order might change when needed. With this in mind, it was proposed and agreed that another Business meeting was held in June, and Scrutiny would be held in July.



Also, as the agenda for October was light, it was suggested an item be added to commence discussions regarding the Precept and financial planning. It was also likely that the Confidence Spending Review would be finalised and available at this point.

The CC and PCC would be attending a JIAC meeting. This had been planned for June, however it was felt that the November meeting might be more effective. Arrangements would be made to accommodate this.

### **11. Any Other Business**

The DCC requested more clarity regarding the Legally Qualified Persons (LQPs) and the recruitment, and costs associated with this. The OPCC would share this relevant information to ensure shared knowledge.

The force requested an increased line of communication with the OPCC with regards to work they were carrying out. It was agreed that two presentations a year would be given.

The CC highlighted the Camera Partnership and felt the lengthy process was causing concern. It was agreed that an update report from ACC Wykes would be requested for the next meeting in order to give more clarity of the current situation.

### **12. Date and Time of next meeting**

The next meeting would take place on Friday 13 June 2025 – 1pm-3pm – Victory House/Teams.