
NORTHUMBRIA OPCC MINUTES

Title

Business Meeting

Date

15 January 2026

Location

Victory House

Duration

14.00 – 15:40

Present:

Susan Dungworth – Police and Crime Commissioner
Ruth Durham – Chief of Staff (OPCC)
Jayne Meir – Deputy Chief Constable
Clare Penny-Evans – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Tanya Reade – Corporate Governance Manager (NP)
Nicola Seymour – Superintendent Staff Officer
Gail Thompson – Joint Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
Joscelin Lawson – Assistant Chief Officer (Corporate Services)
Elizabeth Higham – Minute Taker (OPCC)

Apologies:

Vanessa Jardine – Chief Constable (CC)

OPEN SESSION

1. Minutes of the Open Session of Joint Business Meeting for 11 December 2025.

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. National Issues Impacting on Policing

Chief Constable's Strategic Update

The Metropolitan Police had published a review into historical vetting and hiring practices as part of a drive to raise professional standards. The Deputy Chief Constable would provide an agenda item to the Scrutiny Meeting relating to this review and would provide a briefing note to the Commissioner in advance.

Reassurance was provided that Northumbria Police are aware of the issues in the Metropolitan Police and have provided feedback and raised concerns with HMICFRS. The Deputy Chief Constable added that Northumbria Police have a good understand of their own vetting processes.



The Commissioner queried if Northumbria Police had a Vetting Panel as the review from the Metropolitan Police highlighted that the Panel had caused problems through overturning vetting decisions. The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that Northumbria Police do not have a Panel as they're confident in their vetting process.

It was uncertain how HMICFRS would progress these concerns though the Home Secretary had been asked to review if there were similar problems in other police forces though Northumbria Police are due a vetting and integrity inspection in the next twelve months regardless.

ACO Lawson shared that Northumbria Police are aware of the risk of deficit in Northumbria Police's provisional funding settlement.

It was added that there may be a potential effect on recruitment. February and March intake numbers have been reduced by frontloading onto the next financial year.

The Deputy Chief Constable added that the content of the Police Reform White Paper is rumoured to be announced in the next two weeks, though there is not a confirmed date.

The Deputy Chief Constable provided an overview of a recent issue in West Midlands Police Force regarding using AI to gather content for briefings.

Northumbria Police are confident that if the situation was replicated, stakeholders would have received appropriate briefings. The issue has provided opportunities for learning and Northumbria Police will review intelligence structures and revise their AI policy.

The Police and Crime Commissioner echoed the concern over AI usage and that intelligence needs to be reviewed as AI can be imaginative.

Police and Crime Commissioner's Strategic Update

The Police and Crime Commissioner shared that the office is in the process of responding to the Leadership Commission. ACO Lawson added that Northumbria Police are hosting the Commission on 30 January to provide an understanding from frontline officers on what leadership looks like.

The precept consultation is currently underway.

The Police and Crime Commissioner shared that the final results have not been received for the telephone survey, and the online survey has not yet closed however the majority of respondents have voted for an increase.

It was added that if there were no referendum limit, residents would vote for a higher precept as it would provide an opportunity to showcase the impact of higher funding which is a consideration for next year's precept.

The final details of the funding settlement have not been shared which has posed difficulties in setting budgets and preparing for the Police and Crime Panel.



The Police and Crime Commissioner that in collaboration with the North East Mayor, a letter has been shared with the Home Secretary to propose that in the devolution transition, powers and staff should move into the combined authority.

The Chief of Staff has also met with the North East Mayor's office to discuss the current position of the office and service provision to provide an understanding of what progress needs to be made.

4. Joint Strategic Risk Register

The Deputy Chief Constable presented this report.

The Joint Strategic Risk Register is reviewed on an annual basis whereby this year's review took place between September – November 2025.

The Chief of Staff shared that there are no major changes though the Risk Registers have been brought up to date.

Key changes to the Force Risk Register include:

- References to the announcement of the abolition of Police and Crime Commissioners
- A risk assessment is currently under review for capability and capacity to mobilise for public order events.
- Changes to the Public and Personal Safety training
- Northumbria Police have not met the deadline to deliver the backlog of pension remedy statements however an external consultancy has agreed to address the backlog in a timely manner.

Key Changes to the OPCC Risk Register include:

- Including a timebound control to ensure that the Police and Crime Plan is current with a consideration of refreshing the Plan
- References to the announcement of the abolition of Police and Crime Commissioners to reflect on the impact of partnership working and collaborative funding streams

The Deputy Chief Constable and Chief of Staff recently met with a member of the Joint Independent Audit Committee over concerns that specific risks required further clarity and it was agreed that the Risk Registers will be adapted to provide further understanding.

The Deputy Chief Constable queried what will happen to the Joint Independent Audit Committee during the transition. The Chief of Staff shared that they do not have this information yet but will make enquiries to understand this further.

5. Update from Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) following JIAC on 26 November 2025 and Progress Against the Internal Audit Work Plan

The Joint Chief Finance Officer presented this report.

The minutes and actions from the previous meeting were discussed though members felt the discussions were not reflected in the minutes. It was agreed that key points would be reiterated in the minutes of the November meeting to ensure they are recorded.

The key items covered at the JIAC Open Session are summarised below:

- Mid-Year Treasury Management Report
- Joint Strategic Risk Register
- Emergent Internal Audit Plan 2026/27 – 2028/29
- Draft Auditors Annual Report 2024/25
- Summary of External Inspection, Investigation and Audit Reports
- Update on Internal Audit
- Any Other Business

The Police and Crime Commissioner queried the deadline for when accounts would need to be signed off. The Joint Chief Finance Officer clarified that the deadline was the 27 February.

6. Capital Monitoring Q3

The Joint Chief Finance Officer presented this report.

As of Quarter 3, projects are progressing against the agreed capital programme with some now delayed until the next financial year.

The budgets have been revised to take account of the latest estimates and spend profile with the slippage being re-profiled into the new Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30 capital programme.

The movement in the forecast outturn position at Quarter 3 is currently projecting a reduction in expenditure of £15.411m against the position reported at Quarter 2.

The Joint Chief Finance Officer shared that the revised capital budget at Quarter 3 is therefore £27.289m aligned with the latest forecast outturn for the year.

The key budget areas include:

- Building Works
- Digital Policing and Digital Transformation
- Vehicle and Equipment

The Police and Crime Commissioner queried why there has been a delay to the start of building works for the new Force HQ. ACO Lawson confirmed that there were concerns over the cost of the project, so this is currently being reviewed.

ACO Lawson provided reassurance that there was no significant concern however Northumbria Police wanted to ensure they had made the appropriate financial decisions.

The Police and Crime Commissioner approved the revised capital budget and slippage to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30.

7. Group Revenue Monitoring Q3

The Joint Chief Finance Officer presented this report.

Based on the Quarter 3 spend the forecast outturn on all workforce budget headings is an in-year underspend of £0.813m.

The Joint Chief Finance Officer added that within this position there are some budgetary pressures and underspends resulting in the net outturn position.

Workforce budgets remain a focus around the forecasting and profiling given they form the majority of the overall force budget. The position includes the impact of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee delivery profile.

The Police and Crime Commissioner was asked to note the Group forecast outturn of £398.572m which is based on payments processed to date and current projections, against a 2025/26 budget of £400.780m which reflects an in-year underspend of £2.208m.

This is an increased underspend of £1.638m on the Group position reported at Quarter 2.

The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner noted that some overspends do not have end dates and queried what measures are in place to mitigate the overspends for the next financial year. The Joint Chief Finance Officer shared that progress is being made to mitigate these costs including budget reallocation and considerations to the budget planning process.

The Deputy Chief Constable shared that a paper was sent to the Executive Board to review if there is opportunity to mitigate costs that have stemmed from policing protests, football and other public order events. However, there are no confirmed funding streams from the government to mitigate these costs.

The Corporate Governance Manager added that a paper will be added to the next Joint Business Meeting to provide a further briefing on this issue.

The Police and Crime Commissioner approved the revised Group Revenue Budget of £400.780m.

8. Forward Plan

The forward plan had been noted.

9. Any Other Business



There was no other business to discuss.

10. The Next Joint Business Meeting will be held at Victory House on 15 March 2026, 14:00 – 16:00