**OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT**

**ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSURANCE BOARD**

**4th JUNE 2025**

**Present:** **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)**

J Mudd – Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) (Chair)

S Curley – Chief Executive (CEx)

E Thomas - Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)

D Garwood – Chief Finance Officer (CFO-OPCC)

J Regan – Head of Assurance & Compliance (HoAC)

S Slater – Head of Strategy (HoS)

R Guest – Head of Communications & Engagement (HoCE)

E Lionel - Principal Finance and Commissioning Manager (PFCM)

V Ashford – Staff Officer (SO)

S Howells – Standards and Governance Officer (SGO)

**Office of the Chief Constable (OCC)**

M Hobrough –Chief Constable (CC)

N McLain – Temporary Assistant Chief Constable, Organisation (T/ACC Organisation)

M Yasir – Head of Finance (HoF)

N Brennan - Director of Joint Legal Service (DoJLS)

**Staff Associations**

J Everson – Unison

D Lanfear – Police Federation (PF)

The meeting commenced at 10:00am.

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| 1. **APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTION**   Apologies for absence were received from N Brain, Temporary Deputy Chief Constable (T/DCC), V Townsend, Temporary Assistant Chief Constable (T/ACC - Operations), D Garwood, Chief Finance Officer – OPCC (CFO-OPCC), M Coe, Chief Finance Officer – CC (CFO-CC), K Thomas, Head of Continuous Improvement (HoCI).  The PCC welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the Accountability and Assurance Board (AAB) meeting. It was noted that this was the first meeting under the revised scrutiny arrangements designed to align with the objectives of the new Police, Crime and Justice Plan. | **Action** |
| 1. **MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM THE FINAL STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 5TH MARCH 2025**   The PCC confirmed that the purpose of this item was to close the minutes and actions from the Strategy and Performance Board (SPB) meeting held on 5th March 2025. The PCC asked members to confirm whether the minutes were a true and accurate record. One outstanding action was noted, which the CEx clarified related to the development of a new sustainability strategy. It was agreed that this would be more appropriately addressed through the forward work plan, and the action was therefore closed. | **Action**  **SGO** |
| 1. **REVIEW OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSURANCE BOARD DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**   The CEx advised that the draft Terms of Reference were available and requested any comments or feedback to be provided within the next two weeks. The CEx also noted that this was an opportunity for the CC to consider who they would like to attend the meeting from Gwent Police. | **CC**  **CC** |
| **4a HMICFRS INSPECTION PROGRESS REPORT**  The CC introduced His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection Report and informed us that HMICFRS had recently conducted a full inspection of the force. A draft version of the report had been received, however, as it remained in draft form, it could not be discussed in the public domain. The CC advised that the final report was awaited and recommended that additional time be allocated to this item on the next AAB agenda to allow for a more detailed discussion once the final document was available.  The CC referred to the previous inspection, noting that several areas had been rated amber and could not be signed off due to the commencement of a new HMICFRS inspection. In relation to First Point of Contact, the CC highlighted that the force was ranked among the top five nationally for consistent delivery across both assessed areas.  We were directed to the Public Protection Unit (PPU) recommendation and Areas for Improvement (AFI) and advised that the force must ensure its governance and scrutiny arrangements had sufficient capacity and capability to effectively protect vulnerable people. It was noted that governance relating to this AFI was monitored through monthly boards. In relation to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), the T/ACC Operations chaired dedicated boards. A resource planning process was in place under the crime pillar, which reviewed recruitment developments over the past two years to ensure appropriate staffing levels within the PPU. It was confirmed that by the end of summer 2025, an additional 35 Detective Constables (DCs) would be in post. We were informed that the force was continuing to ensure that training within the PPU remained current, particularly in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults. Enhanced training had also been implemented to address exploitation and modern slavery. Additionally, control room staff were receiving specific training to support the early identification of vulnerability at the first point of contact.  The CC provided an update on additional PPU matters, including national standards relating to the use of Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) disclosures. It was noted that the Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Team (DAST) team was responsible for completing applications under Clare’s Law on behalf of the force. As of 7th April 2025, the force had processed 192 Clare’s Law applications. A dedicated dashboard, monitored by a Chief Superintendent, tracked this activity. The CC also highlighted the use of GoodSAM technology, which the force had invested in to support positive outcomes while ensuring individuals were not placed at risk  The CC addressed the final AFI under the PPU, which related to the force’s management of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) demand to reduce the threat of serious harm to high-risk victims of domestic abuse. A quality assurance process had been embedded within the force, involving a multi-agency panel to ensure that cases were prioritised based on proportionality rather than the order in which they were received. It was highlighted that MARAC Chairs had been introduced and were working towards establishing a more sustainable and effective long-term approach to managing these meetings.  The PCC thanked the CC for the update and noted that inspections represent a snapshot in time. It was emphasised that there was a commitment to continuous improvement, and therefore, it was important that regular updates were provided at this meeting to enable effective scrutiny.  The PCC noted that the CC had outlined the governance structures implemented to ensure senior officers were fully informed about performance in key areas. The PCC asked whether the CC was satisfied with the governance measures in place. The CC acknowledged that these governance changes were a necessary foundation for the effectiveness of the new operating model, ensuring that each of the five main governance boards had chief officer oversight and reported into the Scrutiny Executive Board (SEB), chaired by the T/DCC.  The CC also noted that the force remained an outlier nationally, particularly in comparison to others facing significant challenges with detective shortages. However, it was highlighted that our force is not experiencing such issues, thanks to proactive recruitment strategies and effective resource management.  The PCC commented that the public would likely welcome the addition of the 35 DCs, recognising the positive impact this would have on service delivery and public confidence.  The DPCC noted that the CC had reported improvements in the first point of contact within the contact centre and asked how this level of performance was being maintained. The CC responded that the current performance was unrecognisable compared to 20 months ago, when the force ranked around 30th out of 43 forces in handling 999 and 101 calls, with high abandonment rates. It was explained that there had been a steady and sustained improvement in performance for over a year, attributed to a change in leadership and a shift from a geographical to a functional model.  The PCC thanked the CC and noted that the performance improvements would be well received by the public. The PCC also noted that Gwent Police had been allocated a new Inspector from HMICFRS, His Majesty’s Inspector Kathryn Stone and asked whether there was any indication of a start date. The CC advised that her start date could be towards the end of the summer. | **SGO**  **Action**  **Action** |
| **4b ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**  The PCC highlighted that this performance report marked a significant change in reporting, with efforts made to align performance reporting with the objectives of the Police, Crime and Justice Plan.  The T/ACC Organisation, presenting on behalf of the T/DCC, introduced the first iteration of the new performance report, developed in collaboration with the OPCC team. The report was heavily focused on the CC’s priorities around operational effectiveness and served as a reflective overview of the force’s performance over the past year.  In terms of workforce representation, the T/ACC Organisation highlighted that, according to the 2021 Census, 5.8% of Gwent’s population identified as being of ethnic heritage, compared to 3.8% of police officers. This was an improving figure, though still below the desired level. Female representation among officers stood at approximately 38%, with notable progress made over the year, but it was acknowledged that further focus was needed. A three-year Human Resources (HR) strategy was in place to support the development of a more representative workforce.  Significant progress was noted in the Community Support Officer (CSO) cohort, where ethnic representation had increased to nearly 10%, although the total number of CSOs remained small at approximately 130. The T/ACC Organisation emphasised that successful recruitment tactics used for CSOs would need to be applied to other police staff roles to further improve diversity. Female officer representation had also increased by 1% over the past year.  It was reported that overall crime had increased by approximately 2,500 offences over the past year, equating to a 5.5% rise. This increase was partly attributed to improved crime recording practices. While the last crime data integrity inspection had identified a need for improvement, the T/ACC Organisation advised that the force’s current crime recording standards were now considered ‘Outstanding’ and anticipated that this would be reflected in future HMICFRS assessments.  A 30% increase in drug offences in 2024/25 was also highlighted. This rise was attributed to proactive policing measures such as warrants and stop-and-search operations and was viewed as a positive reflection of increased enforcement activity rather than an actual rise in criminal behaviour.  The T/ACC Organisation reported that shoplifting had become an area of concern, with a 27% increase recorded over the past year. It was noted that as crime volumes rise, maintaining solved rates becomes more challenging. The force’s solved rate had decreased by 1.4% to 12.5%, though this remained above the national average. Improving the solved rate was identified as a priority for the coming year, and a superintendent had been appointed to lead on crime investigations, with a focus on enhancing processes and procedures to improve detection and resolution.  In terms of overall demand, the number of recorded incidents had increased last year by 5%, rising from 188,000 to 192,000. Of these, 27% were linked to crime, further highlighting the growing operational pressures on the force.  The T/ACC Organisation reported that incidents of anti-social behaviour had decreased slightly last year, from 12,500 to 12,000. It was noted that some of these incidents had been reclassified as crimes, contributing to the overall increase in recorded crime.  In terms of service delivery, the T/ACC Organisation highlighted strong performance at the first point of contact. The 999 service level reached 97% last year, the highest on record with an average answer time of four seconds, placing the force among the top 5. The 101 call abandonment rate had improved significantly, falling from 20% to 9%, and the average answer time had reduced from eight minutes in 2022/23 to one minute and 43 seconds during 2024/25.Response times were also improving. Although previously a challenge, the force had increased its performance from 77% last year to regularly exceeding 80% this year.  Investigation timeliness continued to show positive progress and the average time to investigate offences had reduced from 36 days in 2021 to 29 days in the current year. While this was an increase from the previous year’s 22-day average, it was explained that the rise was due to the closure of a large number of historic cases, which had skewed the data. Nonetheless, investigative processes were considered more efficient, and the number of open investigations had dropped in 2024/25 from approximately 13,000 to under 10,000, reflecting improved case management.  The T/ACC Organisation also reported a reduction in the number of repeat offenders, which had fallen by 1,000 for the second consecutive year, now standing at 28,000. This was seen as evidence that the force’s interventions were having a positive impact. Similarly in 2024/25, the number of repeat victims had decreased from 31,000 to 29,000, with safeguarding and engagement efforts playing a key role in preventing re-victimisation.  Finally, the number of young offenders entering the criminal justice system had reached its lowest level since the COVID-19 pandemic. This was attributed to effective engagement, diversionary initiatives, and the implementation of targeted protocols aimed at keeping children out of the system.  The PCC asked the T/ACC Organisation to clarify the meaning of solved rates for members of the public. The T/ACC Organisation explained that when a member of the public contacted Gwent Police, the incident was recorded, and if it met the criteria defined by the Home Office Crime Recording Manual, it was classified as a crime. All such crimes were investigated and a crime was considered solved when a suspect was charged, reported for summons, or received an out-of-court disposal such as a caution. The PCC noted that a single incident could involve multiple crimes. This was confirmed by the T/ACC Organisation. The CC further explained that if an offender committed a crime involving multiple victims, a separate crime would be recorded for each victim, which would increase the overall crime count. The PCC thanked the CC and emphasised the importance of ensuring that members of the public understand the language and terminology used by Gwent Police.  The PCC commended the force’s outstanding performance in 999 and 101 call handling, highlighting it as an area of excellence. In relation to the Police, Crime and Justice Plan, the CC identified an emerging concern not fully reflected in the report—namely, the rapid rise in fraud, which was increasingly linked to more serious offences such as child sexual exploitation. The CC noted a growing threat from online criminal activity, particularly targeting vulnerable groups such as the elderly, who were being exploited by fraudsters, and young people, who were at risk through social media interactions. It was acknowledged that these issues were escalating and that there was a need for greater investment in officers to address these evolving threats. The PCC emphasised the importance of clearly communicating to the public the engagement work being undertaken by the force and the OPCC and recognised an opportunity to enhance public awareness through these activities.  The PCC welcomed the progress made in improving workforce diversity and asked what further steps were being taken to ensure Gwent Police better reflected the communities it served. The CC acknowledged that engagement and visibility were key, noting improvements in the female-to-male ratio and an encouraging increase in PCSO numbers. The CC emphasised the importance of deploying officers from diverse ethnic backgrounds into communities where they could build the greatest trust. It was also highlighted that during periods of fear or uncertainty, the force made a concerted effort to support staff with a clear message that their inclusivity and individual needs would always be respected by Gwent Police. The T/ACC Organisation reported that a positive action plan and strategy was in place, with a strong focus on outreach and engagement, and confirmed that this would be shared with the OPCC.  The PCC referred to the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee and the Home Office’s intention to invest in neighbourhood policing, and asked what proportion of the deployable workforce were frontline or neighbourhood officers. The CC confirmed that the force was working to strengthen neighbourhood policing assets and agreed to provide the relevant workforce data.  The PCC welcomed the reduction in knife crime and the proactive work undertaken in that area, asking if there was a specific reason for the decline. The T/ACC Organisation explained that the neighbourhood strategy focused on removing young offenders from the streets and highlighted the success of a funded schools programme that had enabled effective engagement with young people. They also noted the effectiveness of the Joint Firearms Unit in responding to incidents. The CC added that previous increases in knife crime had been linked to overseas imports, identified through work with the Border Force, but that recent collaboration with third sector organisations had supported the decline. The CC also noted that the reduction in knife crime had coincided with a decline in domestic violence.  The PCC referred to the report’s mention of rising robbery trends involving e-bikes and scooters and asked what preventative measures were in place to support residents and businesses through neighbourhood policing teams. The CC confirmed that this was one of the fastest-growing concerns within communities, particularly following a surge in the purchase of e-bikes, scooters, and Sur-Rons (electric motorbikes). The CC stated that neighbourhood teams had been tasked with addressing these issues, with a particular focus in Blaenau Gwent, where CSOs were monitoring not only off-road bikes but also the increasing presence of such vehicles in town centres. It was also reported that a dedicated operation would run over the summer, including test purchasing at garages, to identify any sales to underage individuals.  The PCC highlighted that tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) remained a key priority within the Police, Crime and Justice Plan and expressed interest in the performance data. They noted that members of the public might perceive the figures as low and asked the CC to clarify what proportion of reported incidents were non-recent crimes. The CC agreed to provide the specific percentage. The CC confirmed that the PCC’s observations were accurate and outlined the force’s investment in the Rape Investigation Team (RIT). As an Operation Soteria force, Gwent Police had demonstrated a strong national commitment to addressing VAWG. The CC stressed the importance of ensuring victims felt supported and believed when coming forward. It was noted that the force had exceeded its establishment in the RIT by deploying Police Constables (PCs) to cover detective shortages. The CC reported that the team’s performance in securing positive outcomes for rape and sexual offence cases was the best in Wales and among the best in the UK.  The PCC raised the issue of stalking and noted the force’s ongoing collaboration with the Suzy Lamplugh Trust to review and enhance performance in this area. They asked whether there was any update on when the associated report would be published. The CC responded that the Trust had provided positive feedback on the force’s submitted plan and confirmed that the actions were being overseen by the Head of Public Protection and the T/DCC. The CC acknowledged that stalking and harassment had historically been challenging for the force, as it had been for many others, and that it had received significant media attention. They explained that the force was working with Joint Legal Services (JLS) to ensure that appropriate and robust case files were being prepared to support positive outcomes. Additionally, it was noted that a dedicated member of staff would be joining Gwent Police specifically to focus on stalking and harassment matters.  The PCC referred to the presentation, which outlined actions taken to improve investigation times and close ongoing cases and raised interest in how victims were being engaged by highlighting the link between victim satisfaction and public confidence in policing. They asked what assurances could be provided that victims were being effectively supported. The T/ACC Organisation explained that before a crime could be closed, a series of checks were carried out to ensure all commitments made by the force had been fulfilled, in line with statutory obligations to contact victims. It was confirmed that no crime could be finalised without the victim being updated. The T/ACC Organisation emphasised that it was the force’s responsibility to follow up with victims, inform them when a case was being closed, and clearly communicate the outcome.  The DPCC referred to the introduction of a new operating model and asked whether it had impacted the force’s performance. The CC explained that performance was influenced by a combination of factors, but the new model had enabled the force to move away from a geographically based structure. The revised model was built around three pillars: crime investigation, response, and neighbourhood policing with clearly defined responsibilities within each area. The CEx raised concerns that stalking and harassment were not always recognised and asked whether there was improved understanding or training for officers, particularly around coercive control. The CC responded that domestic abuse training formed part of a broader programme of work identified as an area for improvement. They noted that this work extended beyond policing and that effective partnership working was essential to addressing these issues. | **Action**  **Action**  **T/ACC Org**  **CC**  **Action**  **CC**  **Action** |
| **4c FINANCE MONITORING REPORT AND DRAFT ACCOUNTS**  The HoF provided an overview of the force’s financial position. At Quarter 3, the force had forecasted a surplus of £2.8 million, which had increased to £6.9 million by Quarter 4, representing a difference of £4.1 million. This increase was primarily attributed to a £1.4 million adjustment related to the cessation of a capital scheme. Additionally, there was a £2.3 million increase due to Police Uplift Programme (PUP) and CSO grants, following a change in accounting estimates.  We noted that there were four one-off, non-recurring items that had not been identified until period 12 and, therefore, were not included in the quarter 3 forecast. This included a £210,000 saving from the Shared Resource Service (SRS), which related to non-pay savings in the 2024/25 financial year. Additionally, £198,000 was received from the national hate crime initiative.  A meeting was held with the CFO (PCC) to discuss how Gwent Police could utilise this surplus. It was agreed that the Capital Receipts Contribution (CRC) would be ring-fenced and allocated for future capital purchases.  The SRS saving was to be earmarked by Gwent Police and held as a contingency to offset future transition costs. Similarly, the funding received from the national hate crime initiative would also be earmarked for future initiatives. The HoF confirmed that the remaining surplus funds would fund the 2024/25 Capital Programme.  The HoF provided key dates for upcoming financial reporting, noting that an update to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was expected by 6th June 2025, and the year-end report, was scheduled for completion by 16th June 2025. The HoF explained that the financial year had presented several challenges in preparing the draft statement of accounts, primarily due to staff resourcing issues. The departure of the Senior Financial Accountant at the beginning of the financial year had resulted in a significant gap in knowledge and skills within the team. Additionally, the implementation of International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 16 lease accounting standards had a substantial impact as anticipated. Despite these difficulties, the HoF confirmed that the team was working towards meeting the statutory deadline of 30th June 2025.  The PCC highlighted one of the ongoing challenges across policing in England and Wales was the limited availability of capital funding. It was noted that several police forces had accumulated significant levels of debt due to the need to borrow in order to support capital investment. The PCC emphasised that this was not an issue faced by Gwent Police. The investment of the remaining surplus to support capital funding was seen as a continuation of the organisation’s prudent financial management. The PCC stated that this approach reflected a commitment to minimising the level of debt the organisation needed to incur. The PCC asked if this understanding was correct. The HoF confirmed that the PCC was absolutely correct in their assessment, stating that a significant portion of the surplus was the result of sound financial management. It was noted that the organisation had benefited from a strategic approach to finance, particularly by choosing not to borrow, which contributed to the £2.8 million surplus through savings on borrowing costs. Additionally, the organisation had achieved a good return on its investments, although it was acknowledged that maintaining such returns may become more challenging in the future. The HoF indicated that, going forward, borrowing may be necessary to continue supporting capital expenditure. The HoF reiterated the importance of maintaining prudent financial management and improving the management of reserves to ensure continued financial stability.  The CC advised that Gwent Police was one of only four forces in the country with a zero borrowing rate, highlighting that this demonstrated a deliberate and disciplined approach to financial management. This position had been recognised and commended by the Joint Audit Committee, which reviewed financial planning. The CC also clarified that the national hate crime funding should not be viewed as part of Gwent Police’s core funding. As the National Business Coordination (NBC) lead, the CC had taken on the associated portfolio, and the funding was linked to that national responsibility. It was emphasised that this was a UK-wide initiative overseen by the force in its national capacity.  The PCC raised an important point regarding capital finance, noting that, collectively and collaboratively through the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC), a submission had been made to the Comprehensive Spending Review. This submission emphasised the critical importance of sustained capital investment in policing infrastructure and capabilities. | **Action**  **Action** |
| **4d CHIEF CONSTABLE’S DELIVERY PLAN 2025-2029**  The CC introduced the Delivery Plan, explaining that its development followed the publication of the Police, Crime and Justice Plan 2025–2029 by the PCC. The delivery plan was designed to provide clarity, purpose, and understanding for staff across the organisation on how the force would deliver the PCC’s Plan. The CC confirmed that the five strategic priorities—Preventing Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour, Making Communities Safer, Protecting the Vulnerable, Putting Victims First, and Reducing Reoffending—were fully embedded within the plan and aligned with Gwent Police’s overarching goals.  The CC presented a visual version of the Delivery Plan, which would be displayed across the organisation. The visual outlined Gwent Police’s mission to improve public trust and confidence, and its vision of being an inclusive, caring, and connected organisation that delivered outstanding service to the communities of Gwent. The CC explained that achieving this required a strong foundation of core values—being positive, proud, compassionate, courageous, and committed to continuous learning. These values had been retained by staff, who felt a strong connection to them.  The PCC reiterated the importance of operational effectiveness, noting that while performance scrutiny was essential, it must be balanced with a strong organisational culture and good conduct. They emphasised the need for genuine engagement with both the public and the internal policing community. These themes, operational effectiveness, conduct, culture, and engagement were identified as central to the 2025–2029 Delivery Plan.  The CC reaffirmed operational effectiveness as a priority, highlighting the importance of timely, high-quality service, crime prevention, and victim support. This included effective response from the control room to frontline officers and alignment with Safer Communities and Safer Gwent objectives. The CC also stressed the need to recognise vulnerability in both physical and digital contexts and to provide a “platinum service” to victims, ensuring they were kept informed throughout investigations.  On organisational development, the CC highlighted the force’s commitment to innovation and continuous improvement, including benchmarking best practice nationally and internationally. Collaborative work with South Wales Police on the Digital Services Programme had positioned the force as a leader in mobile technology, body-worn video, live streaming, and facial recognition. The CC noted the importance of maintaining this momentum, particularly following the benefits seen during the pandemic through early investment in mobile working.  The CC summarised the force’s focus on three key areas: operational effectiveness, professional conduct and culture, and meaningful engagement. They stressed the importance of a diverse and representative workforce, ethical leadership, and a supportive culture, particularly given Gwent Police’s status as having one of the youngest workforces in the UK. Key initiatives included participation in the College of Policing’s Needham Inclusive Teams Programme and cultural awareness training in partnership with the University of South Wales. Staff wellbeing was also prioritised, with investment in the Occupational Health Department and national recognition for the “OK” programme. The CC reinforced the commitment to ensuring staff “join well, train well, work well, live well, and leave well,” which in turn supported staff retention and improved public service.  The CC further emphasised the importance of staff wellbeing and health and safety, noting that the Occupational Health Department had received national awards for its work, including the Oscar Kilo programme. Management of health and safety was described as robust, with a focus on risk elimination and investment in safer working practices.  Finally, the CC addressed the fifth pillar of the plan as true engagement, stating that it required understanding the needs of communities and being visible and responsive, not only to national priorities but also to local concerns. The CC stressed the importance of working with partners across blue light services, public sector bodies, third sector organisations, and voluntary agencies. Each pillar lead covering crime, response, and neighbourhood was tasked with breaking down the plan for their teams to ensure a strong focus on victim care and vulnerability identification.  The PCC welcomed the structure of the delivery plan, noting that it was helpful in enabling individuals across the organisation to clearly understand the CC’s intentions and aspirations.  The PCC expressed interest in the pillar of the delivery plan focused on conduct and culture, noting that concerns had been raised regarding the culture within Gwent Police. It was acknowledged that some of these concerns were based on media reports reflecting a specific point in time, rather than recognising the progress made. The PCC welcomed the CC’s decision to make conduct and culture a key pillar of the delivery plan, providing reassurance to the public that the issue was being taken seriously. The PCC also commended the senior officer team’s proactive approach in seeking external expertise, including support from the College of Policing and the University of South Wales, to develop innovative methods for enhancing staff understanding of organisational culture. Additionally, the PCC expressed their appreciation for the strong emphasis placed on engagement.  The PCC asked whether the CC was confident in the governance structures that had been established to support the monitoring of effectiveness. The CC confirmed their confidence and reiterated that the success of the delivery plan was heavily dependent on strong governance, which was key to achieving the organisation’s strategic objectives. It was outlined that the five main governance boards had been comprehensively redesigned and now reported into the SEB, chaired by the DCC. The CC added that while some of these boards had existed previously, others were newly created to address gaps where no formal engagement mechanisms had been in place.  The CC noted that while the force had traditionally focused on operational effectiveness, this was no longer seen as the sole priority. Emphasis had shifted towards meaningful engagement, with the Engagement Board now examining how the force engaged with its internal workforce, wider communities, and victims, and identified ways to improve. The CC highlighted a noticeable increase in social media activity, which had enhanced the force’s ability to communicate its successes more effectively. Additionally, the CC referred to the People and Culture Board, now renamed the People and Resources Board which focused on staffing, sickness, and broader people-related matters. A bespoke Culture Board, led by the T/ACC Organisation, had also been established, alongside the development of a culture strategy aligned with the College of Policing’s national culture strategy.  The DPCC referred to the report’s mention of Community Action Teams and asked the CC to explain their purpose and intended outcomes. The CC confirmed that the Community Action Team would be launched on 9th June 2025, with the aim of using neighbourhood funding more effectively to maximise impact in targeted areas. The team would consist of 16 Police Officers, 10 CSOs, and a number of Sergeants and Inspectors, organised into four teams operating across four different areas of the force. The deployment would last for four months, after which the initiative would be reviewed to determine whether the teams should remain in place or be redeployed to other areas. | **Action**  **Action** |
| **4e ANNUAL REPORT ON DATA QUALITY IN RELATION TO CRIME AND INCIDENTS 2025**  The T/ACC Organisation introduced the report on data quality, advising that it formed part of the T/DCC’s portfolio and focused on the ethics and integrity of crime recording within the force. It was explained that in 2014, HMICFRS conducted a national inspection into crime recording practices across policing, which revealed that police forces was under-recording crime by approximately 20% for various, unacceptable reasons. Since then, there had been a concerted effort to improve the accuracy of crime recording. The T/ACC Organisation emphasised the importance of accurate crime data, particularly for victims, as incorrect recording could result in them not receiving the service they were entitled to. Furthermore, accurate crime recording enabled the force to produce reliable reports that reinforce public confidence in both the police and the integrity of crime statistics. The T/ACC Organisation stressed that accurate crime recording was a vital aspect of Gwent Police’s operations. It was noted that reliable data allowed the public to understand the extent of crime in their communities, supporting transparency and public confidence in policing.  The T/ACC Organisation noted that the most recent HMICFRS inspection on crime data integrity, published in 2018, had assessed Gwent Police as requiring improvement in crime recording practices. Over the past seven years, the force had made significant efforts to enhance performance in this area. It was reported that crime recording standards were now considered outstanding and it was hoped that this progress would be recognised in future HMICFRS inspections.  The T/ACC Organisaiton explained that the report outlined how the force audits crime to ensure the correct crime category was applied and that offences were accurately recorded. It was noted that the most recent internal report indicated a 97% crime recording accuracy rate. The T/ACC Organisation expressed confidence that, if this level of performance was reflected in a future HMICFRS inspection, Gwent Police would be rated as outstanding in crime recording.  We were advised that the force aimed to record crimes as soon as practicable, and within 24 hours of the incident being reported. The latest data indicated that Gwent Police recorded 98% of crimes within this timeframe, suggesting that the force’s crime recording procedures were effective and timely.  We noted that there were 20 possible crime outcomes that could be applied to recorded crimes. The force regularly audited how accurately these outcomes were applied by both crime recording and frontline teams. It was reported that, in April 2025, only 82% of crime records had an outcome that was accurately recorded. The T/ACC Org advised that further work was needed to understand the reasons behind this low accuracy rate.  The PCC noted that the report reflected positive performance and asked whether the force was confident this level of performance could be sustained, and whether there were any challenges. The T/ACC Organisation responded that they were confident the current model could be maintained, provided that resourcing remained in place. It was acknowledged that crime recording involved significant administrative effort and could be costly. Looking ahead, the T/ACC Organisation shared a vision for the future involving the use of artificial intelligence to support crime recording processes.  The CC stated that there had been a cultural shift within the force in relation to ethical crime recording and this had now been embedded, positioning the force well for the future. The CC emphasised that Gwent Police had developed the capability to respond to and manage crime appropriately, reflecting a mature and ethical approach to crime recording. | **Action**  **Action** |
| **PART 2** | |
| 1. **The information contained in the report(s) below has been subjected to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent’s public interest test and is deemed to be exempt from publication under Section 7.** |  |
| 1. **STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**   The T/ACC Organisation reported that there had been minimal change to the risk register, with four high risks remaining. It was noted that while these high risks persisted, they had been addressed from a financial perspective.  We discussed the three new medium-graded risks that had been recently added as well as the risks that were proposed for downgrading due to mitigations that had been put in place to reduce the risk. |  |
| 1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**   The PCC expressed gratitude to all volunteers in recognition of Volunteers’ Week and acknowledged the volunteer recognition event taking place that evening at Gwent Police Headquarters. The PCC thanked all volunteers who supported the work and activities of both Gwent Police and the OPCC. |  |
| **The meeting concluded at 13.20pm.** |  |