**DECISION NO: PCCG-2025-005**

**OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

**LEAD CHIEF OFFICER:** **Chief Executive**

**TITLE: Review of OPCC Governance Arrangements and Scrutiny of Gwent Police**

**DATE: 14th July 2025**

**TIMING: Routine**

**PURPOSE:****For Decision**

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| **1.** | **RECOMMENDATION**  To confirm that the Police and Crime Commissioner (Commissioner) approves the amendments to the governance framework through which the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) holds Gwent Police to account. |
| **2.** | **INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**  The Strategy and Performance Board (SPB) is the primary forum at which the Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account in accordance with section 1(8) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The SPB is also the primary consultation forum for strategic decisions that affect both the Commissioner and the Chief Constable.  A review has been undertaken of the current governance structure by the Head of Assurance and Compliance (HoAC) and Head of Strategy (HoS) in order to ensure the Commissioner is able to adequately hold the Chief Constable to account for their delivery of policing in Gwent and to ensure this process is transparent and provides accountability to the public of Gwent. |
| **3.** | **ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**  During a meeting between the HoAC and HoS, four options were developed to reflect changes that could be made by the Commissioner in relation to the governance structure and subsequent scrutiny of the Chief Constable.  These options were discussed at a meeting with the Commissioner in December 2024 and a proposed way forward initially agreed. The new governance structure consists of the following:  **Accountability and Assurance Board (AAB)**  This meeting has replaced the SPB and will be chaired by the Commissioner. There will be 4 key meetings per financial year that will focus on the following reports from Gwent Police:   * His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection Reports * Organisational Performance\* * Finance\* * Risk   These meeting will take place in March, June, September and November.  \*These items will be the sole focus of the November meeting.  There will also be 3 additional AAB meetings per financial year as follows:   * April – review of force strategies. * July – review of Force Management Statement. * October – review of force annual reports.   Please note that other reports will be reviewed for inclusion at any of the above meetings if deemed to be appropriate.  All meetings of the AAB will be available to watch live. A recording will also be made available online. This will allow the public to see the scrutiny the PCC undertakes with the Chief Constable.  A forward work plan detailing what reports are required is being finalised.  The updated Terms of Reference for the AAB will be drafted and discussed at a future meeting.  **Professional Standards Scrutiny Meeting**  This meeting was implemented in June 2024 and is chaired by the Chief Executive of the OPCC. It has been positively received by both the OPCC and Professional Standards Department of Gwent Police. Discussions take place in relation to all areas of departmental performance as well as any ongoing local and national recommendations from various outside organisations.  Meetings take place in March, June, September and December, in line with the publication of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) quarterly performance report.  Assurance will be provided to the Commissioner by the Chief Executive as soon as is practicable after each meeting.  **Commissioner and Chief Constable Walkabouts**  The areas to be visited will be determined by the Commissioner after consultation with the Chief Constable.  The areas to be visited will not be notified. This is to ensure the Commissioner and Chief Constable are both able to understand the issues being faced by the public living in these areas and officers and staff working within them.  **Public Assurance Meetings**  During each financial year, 5 meetings will take place, 1 in each local authority area, where the Commissioner and Chief Constable will discuss the concerns impacting communities in each area. The first meeting took place in Blaenau Gwent in June 2025.  This will not be open for public attendance but will use contact received by PCC to highlight the concerns of the community. A high level overview of the areas to be discussed will be provided to the CC prior to the meeting.  These meetings will be filmed and made available to the public online.  **Deep Dives**  Based on information from communities in Gwent, from our analysis of force data, from both internal and external inspections, national issues and other forms of scrutiny undertaken such as dip sampling, we may determine that an in-depth analysis of a certain area of Gwent Police’s work is required in order to provide assurance to the Commissioner and the people of Gwent.  There is no set number to be completed within a financial year but discussions will take place regularly within the OPCC to identify areas of concern prior to the Commissioner making a final decision on areas to be considered.  These deep dives may be undertaken by OPCC staff or the Commissioner may decide to appoint an external organisation who specialise in the area to be looked at, or consideration may be given to request that HMICFRS undertake the deep dive on behalf of the Commissioner.  **Commissioner and Chief Constable 121 Meetings**  These meetings will take place on a weekly basis and will be private and confidential. Every other week, the Chief Executive will attend these meetings in order for business matters to be discussed.  **Chief Constable Performance Development Review Process**  A Performance Development Review (PDR) process will be implemented in line with contractual obligations. The Commissioner will assess how the Chief Constable is personally meeting the priorities that have been set for them. They will also ensure there are opportunities for improvement and development to take place as well as discussing areas of success.  In relation to the above mentioned meetings, it is key to note that extraordinary meetings can be called in order to address urgent matters that arise outside of the planned meeting schedule.  It is important to note that there are other methods utilised by the OPCC to scrutinise Gwent Police. These include:  Estate Strategy Board – this is the forum in which all matters relating to the police estate are discussed, scrutinised and decisions made. A governance review will be undertaken to ensure there is an appropriate level of transparency in the decision making process.  Scrutiny panels – these include out of court disposals and a stop search/use of force panel to review the police action and highlight areas of improvement.  Dip sampling of police complaints – these currently take place twice per annum and will review the force handling of complaints closed within a 6 month period. Feedback is provided to the Professional Standards Department on areas for improvement with a decision log published to evidence scrutiny.  Volunteer schemes – the OPCC run an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme to check on the welfare of detainees and an Animal Welfare Scheme to check on the welfare of police dogs. Visits to custody and to see the police dogs are undertaken with concerns reported back to Gwent Police and the Scheme Manager in the OPCC. Meetings for both schemes are held quarterly with the minutes published on the OPCC website.  There is currently no change planned to these areas of work. Feedback on any scrutiny carried out, actions and follow-up activities will be formally reported back to the Commissioner, with relevant information published to the OPCC website. |
| **4.** | **NEXT STEPS**  The AAB terms of reference have been drafted and are being reviewed by Joint Legal Services and an amended Forward Work Plan is nearing completion. This will be shared with Chief Officers along with the force governance team in order for them to amend their work plan accordingly. The first AAB meeting took place in June 2025.  Meeting dates have been circulated to all attendees. The OPCC website will also be updated to reflect the changes.  The effectiveness of the new arrangements will be reviewed on an on-going basis. |
| **5.** | **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**  There are no direct financial costs or savings resulting from this proposal. |
| **6.** | **PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS**  It is noted that there will be an increase in meetings and that resource will need to be considered and kept under review within both the OPCC and the force. |
| **7.** | **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**  There are no legal implications as a result of this proposal. However, any changes will be incorporated into the Manual of Corporate Governance as evidence of our governance arrangements. |
| **8.** | **EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS**  This proposal has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.  Consideration has been given to requirements of the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998 in preparing this report. |
| **9.** | **RISK**  It was determined that the previous governance arrangements could be better aligned to the Police and Crime Plan and that they did not allow sufficient scrutiny to take place by the Commissioner. It is anticipated that the proposed change in governance arrangements will negate this risk.  These arrangements will be kept under review and will be amended as needed. |
| **10.** | **PUBLIC INTEREST**  This document will be made available to the public. |
| **11.** | **CONTACT OFFICER**  Joanne Regan, Head of Assurance and Compliance. |
| **12.** | **ANNEXES**  None. |

**For OPCC use only**

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| **Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent**  I confirm that I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct.  The above request has my approval. |
| **Signature:** |
| **Date:**  **14/07/2025** |