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

**STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

**22nd NOVEMBER 2023**

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

Ms E Thomas – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC) (Chair)

Mrs S Curley – Chief Executive (CEx)

Mrs J Regan – Head of Axssurance and Compliance (HoAC)

Mr S Slater – Head of Strategy (HoS)

Mr R Guest – Head of Communications and Engagement (HoCE)

Mr S Howells– Standards and Governance Officer (SGO)

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

Ms P Kelly – Chief Constable (CC)

Mr M Hobrough – Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)

Mr N Stephens – Assistant Chief Officer Resources (ACOR)

Mrs N Brennan - Assistant Director, Head of Joint Legal Service (HoJLS)

Mrs V Townsend – Chief Superintendent, Head of Continuous Improvement (HoCI)

Mr S Payne – Head of Professional Standards Department (HoPSD)

Ms A Quartermaine – Head of Human Resources, Operations (HoHR)

Mr M Coe – Head of Finance (HoF)

**Staff Associations**

Mrs J Everson - Unison

Mr M Candy – Police Federation

The meeting commenced at 9:30am face to face and online via Teams.

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| 1. **APOLOGIES** | **Action** |
| Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Cuthbert – Police Crime Commissioner (PCC), Mr D Garwood-Pask – Chief Finance Officer (CFO), Ms Rachel Williams - Deputy Chief Constable (DCC), Mrs N Brain - Det/Ch/Superintendent, Head of Protective Services (HoPS),  The CC informed us that the DCC was an assessor at the national Police Executive Leadership Programme and could not be in attendance today. |  |
| 1. **MINUTES** |  |
| We received and confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 6th September 2023. We noted they were a correct record of the meeting and no amendments were required. |  |
| 1. **ACTIONS** | **Action** |
| We received and noted the actions from the meeting held on the 6th September 2023.  **Action 4, 6th September 2023, Estate Strategy Annual Report 2022/23**  The CEx advised that the actions relating to the Estate Strategy had been delayed due to the absence of the CFO. We noted that development of the Strategy would be discussed at the next meeting of the Estate Strategy Board (ESB).  **Action 6, 6th September 2023, Coercive Powers Report**  The CEx advised that the scrutiny relating to the recent use of section 60 was being progressed.  **Action 7, 6th September 2023, HR Strategy Annual Report 2022/23**  The HoCI provided an update and advised that work was ongoing in relation to culture. The draft Culture Strategy had been circulated for consultation and work had been done to capture potential risks. Further progress on the risk register was being made, with work being undertaken with the lead Joint Audit Committee (JAC) member for risk.  **Action 8, 6th September 2023, Communication Strategy Annual Report 2022/23**  The HoCE advised that he had discussed the communications and engagement annual report with the HOCC and that action 8 could now be marked as complete.  **Action 10, 6th September 2023, Fleet Management Strategy Annual Report 2022/23**  The ACOR advised that the requested information would be sent to the OPCC.  **Action 12, 6th September 2023, Collaboration Update**  The CEx clarified that once the force had completed their benefits realisation work on collaborative projects, further scrutiny work would then take place by the OPCC. | **SGO**  **ACOR** |
| 1. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC** |  |
| 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. **JOINT STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**   The HoCI informed us that there were 18 items on the risk register and that they had been reviewed at a recent Scrutiny Executive Board (SEB). We noted that there was a new risk in relation to ISO Accreditation.  The HoCI highlighted that an implementation plan would be presented to the JAC for the risks relating to property stores.  We were advised that there was now a plan in place to mitigate the Welsh Language risks and that it was likely that two of the low risk recommendations would be removed shortly.  The DPCC asked for an update on the risk associated with custody provision and the estate. The HoCI advised that work was ongoing and that conversations continued to take place as to whether custody was a risk or an issue and whether it needed to be on the force risk register. The CC commented that although there were no current health and safety risks relating to custody, the concern related to the effectiveness and efficiency of the custody units and the suitability of the custody estate which she advised was an ongoing risk linked to estate provision. The ACOR advised that there was a report being presented to the next ESB that covered all aspects of operational and strategic risk which should help to reflect it in the context of the risk register.  The DPCC stated that further conversations regarding the risk relating to custody would be discussed at the ESB. | **Action** |
| 1. **POLICE EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY AND LEGITIMACY (PEEL) UPDATE ON THE VICTIM SERVICE ASSESSMENT**   The HoCI presented us with an update after the recent re-visit by HMICFRS in relation to the Victim Service Assessment (VSA). She stated that HMICFRS had been supportive of the changes made since the initial inspection and had confirmed that 3 Areas For Improvement (AFI) would be finalised. The HoCI advised there was a report in the open section of the meeting that provided more detail on the work the force had been doing.  The DPCC commended the excellent work and felt the force had given significant assurance of progress in ’Responding to the Public’. She queried how the force would sustain the progress already made in order to ensure that performance remained positive in this area.  The CC also recognised the work undertaken and advised that the force now held meetings every Monday morning to review performance.  The ACC stated that communication was key to keeping the force focused on what they were trying to achieve long term.  The DPCC queried if we would receive the updates on Domestic Violence Disorder Scheme disclosures and stop and search as was discussed at the previous meeting. The HoCI confirmed an update would be provided along with the eight remaining areas contained within the PEEL inspection report. | **HoCI** |
| 1. **COLLABORATION UPDATE**   ACC Gunney, the All Wales Collaboration lead, provided an update on the governance of the collaboration units as well as an update on the operational work the units had undertaken.  The ‘Right Care, Right Person’ programme was discussed and it was agreed that further conversations would be needed to ascertain how this information could be shared with our partners across Gwent.  It was noted that work on the benefits realisation of the collaborative units for each force was in train. We also noted that this information would in future assist with the review of collaboration agreements.  The DPCC queried how culture and standards were applied across the collaborative units. ACC Gunney advised that there was work ongoing in relation to this area. A recent wellbeing survey had been completed which was positive and had led to action plans being developed in order to ensure any areas of concern were being addressed.  The DPCC made a request for the slides but asked for the CC to ensure she was content for the information provided in them to be shared. | **Action**  **CC**  **ACC Gunney/CC** |
| 1. **INCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC** |  |
| The information contained in the report(s) below has been deemed not to be subject 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 not deemed to be exempt from publication under Section. |  |
| 1. **HMICFRS PEEL INSPECTION REPORT INCLUDING THE ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN PRIORITIES** |  |
| 1. **HMICFRS PEEL INSPECTION REPORT, QUARTER 2, 2023/24 OVERVIEW**   The HoCI gave an update on progress with the PEEL inspection recommendations. She highlighted that the report had been reformatted to focus on areas of prioritisation for the force.  We were advised that Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) compliance was the best indicator of change in the identification of repeat and vulnerable callers. Force THRIVE compliance was currently 92.3% which was an improvement from the last report of 84.5%. It also showed a month on month improvement over the previous 6 months. In order to sustain progress going forward a new electronic process had been implemented to assist in the Force Control Room (FCR).  In relation to improving the advice provided to callers, including the preservation of evidence, we were advised that call scripts had been implemented along with relevant technical solutions. It was acknowledged this area was harder to monitor but was continuously reviewed during the processes required at the start of each shift.  In relation to non-emergency 101 calls, we were advised that the force had seen month on month improvements since July 2022 when the abandonment rate was 46.9% compared to July 2023 when it was 26.5%. It continued to reduce and in October 2023 fell to 16% with November currently standing at 8%. The FCR Manager was also due to share information on the improvement process at the Force Improvement Board (FIB) so it could be determined if other areas within the force could benefit from the lessons learned.  The HoCI explained there had been an improvement in both emergency and priority attendance. Attendance at emergency calls within the expected timescales currently stood at 56.5% and attendance at priority calls within the expected timescales at 52.5%. Both areas regularly achieved over 60% compliance. The HoCI advised that there was still further work to be done in this area to improve timeliness of attendance and to ensure a quality service was provided whilst there.  The HoCI shared that progress had been made in relation to updating victims. She added quality assurance was taking place on a regular basis. She did advise that this was an area that needed more focus over the coming months.  The HoCI stated that three AFIs had been reviewed during the HMICFRS revisit and included supervisory reports, investigation plans and evidence led prosecutions. We noted that supervisory oversight had improved. The timeliness of investigations had reduced from 55 days to 29 days in October. It will continue to be monitored but was now at a realistic level.  She added that there was a concern relating to Outcome 16s (where victims do not support or withdraw their support for prosecutions) as there was evidence that they had increased. However, these were now being audited twice weekly to ensure they were being progressed where possible.  The DPCC commented that there had been an improvement on the information we had received previously. She stated it would be useful to see in future reports, a visual table showing recommendations, priorities, milestones and timescales. She recommended working with the HoS in readiness for the next meeting.  The DPCC asked how confident the force was in meeting the 6 month targets. The HoCI advised the main challenge was showing HMICFRS that the force had made improvement and that she was confident the force would meet all targets.  The DPCC then asked how confident the force was that the areas where a good assessment was made were being sustained, while focus was placed on the areas identified for improvement. The HoCI advised the FIB had changed significantly with an element of that now including an audit planning cycle for areas in readiness for inspection. The outcomes from these audits were then provided to the Heads of Service and the DCC for scrutiny.  The DPCC recognised that Outcome 16 was an area of concern and one that needed to be focussed on. The HoCI advised all outcome 16s were assessed twice weekly with a daily audit undertaken to determine if there were any patterns or issues in relation to safeguarding before being added to force systems.  The CC informed us that the force was meeting with the senior management team of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to try to reduce the barriers being experienced; Outcome 16s would be part of those discussions. | **Action**  **HoCI/ HoS**  **Action** |
| 1. **ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN PRIORITIES, QUARTER 2, 2023/24**   The DPCC requested that the overview slides provided at the previous meeting were also provided at future meetings.  The DPCC queried what assurance the force received from the performance report and for an explanation to be provided on the scrutiny process the report had been through, highlighting the areas of concern as well as the good work undertaken.  The HoCI highlighted the improvement the force had made in relation to answering 999 calls and stated that they had been top of the league table in England and Wales for 2 months running. They were also the first force since April 2022 to achieve 90% of calls answered within expected timeframes based on BT timings. The abandonment trajectory was down almost 30% since July 2022 and continued to reduce despite the fact that demand across 999 and 101 had increased. We noted there had not been an increase in resource in the FCR but that there had been a change in how the current establishment was utilised to deliver a more efficient service.  The DPCC recognised the improvements made and asked how sustainable they were. The HoCI commented that a formal review of the control room and supervisory structure had been undertaken to meet the concerns set out by HMCIFRS which resulted in improvements being made immediately. These improvements had continued but they would be confident of sustaining them if performance continued into the new year.  The ACC added that essential changes were required in the supervisory structure of the FCR as a result of the Manchester Arena enquiry and the way in which forces respond to critical incidents. The ACC advised the force was prepared as best they could be to deal with a critical incident.  The HoCI shared the good progress on emergency and priority times advising that the force had evidence to meet HMICFRS requirements but there was still work to be done to ensure they were sustainable. She added this was monitored through FCR performance meetings which fed into the Operational Performance Board, through to Scrutiny Executive Board and to the formal Chief Officer Team (COT) meetings.  We were told that progress had been made relating to positive outcomes. The HoCI informed us that financial year to date figures stood at 12.4% which, from a national position, moved the force from 33rd to 24th which was a significant improvement, but that further work needed to be undertaken to ensure the most appropriate result was being achieved for the victim.  In relation to vulnerability, we were advised that the internal governance structure had recently been amended to provide more focus on this area. Our attention was drawn to the improvements made with a 15.6% reduction in overall offences, a 9.6% reduction in repeat domestic abuse victims and a 5.1% reduction in other repeat victims with vulnerabilities. The HoCI informed us that over the next 6 months, the force would monitor the governance arrangements to determine if the changes had been successful.    The DPCC queried if the increase in the use of community resolutions was related to the overall solved rates. The HoCI advised that there had been a spike in improvement but was not confident to state that this would be sustained. She clarified that there had been an increase in the use of youth restorative justice resolutions applied by the Youth Offending Service teams as they were involved at a much earlier stage. The DPCC advised the oversight of youth justice needed to be picked up outside of this meeting.  The DPCC noted there had been an increase in vehicle crime and asked for clarity on why this was happening. The HoCI advised there had been an increase in vehicle crime and a spike within the summer in Caerphilly, Newport and Monmouthshire areas. She added that the force had predicted an increase in vehicles crime during the period up to Christmas due to people leaving presents in vehicles. The ACC shared with us that there were 6 areas of focus for Christmas with one being a focus on vehicle crime. He advised that all 6 areas had a tactical plan in place with a Chief Inspector taking ownership.  The DPCC highlighted that Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) had increased and advised that she had been asked to attend a local authority meeting to discuss the concerns being raised in relation to this. She stated she was aware it was a complex issue and one that needed to be tackled jointly with partners but asked if there was anymore the force could do to prevent it. The HoCI informed us that there had been a slight reduction of 1.4% in the last quarter but overall there had been an increase. She advised that there was a difference in the type of ASB with a reduction in environmental ASB such as noise disputes but an increase in personal ASB that included neighbourhood issues and youth related issues. The ACC advised that the CC had recently increased the powers available to Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to provide them with better tools to deal with ASB. The CC also advised she was ensuring the right people were available and that they had the right skills to deal with these situations.  The DPCC commented that figures were low in relation to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation and asked for a view on why this was the case. The HoCI explained that she needed to review it in more detail and would circulate an update via email.  The DPCC highlighted the rise in non-schedule 3 complaints with the explanation in the report specifically stating it was a result of data cleansing. She asked if this explanation could be expanded on further. The HoPSD advised that the rise in the figures was due to a discovery of an area within the complaints system which held complaints that had not been reclassified. He confirmed that this had no impact on complainants and was a purely administrative issue. He added that the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) had been informed and that a footnote would be added to the force performance statistics they produced. He also stated that it would impact on the timeliness data provided in the short term.  The DPCC queried how PSD was approaching, understanding and tackling discrimination proactively within complaints. The HoPSD advised they had been working towards the inclusion of disproportionality data into the performance regime and stated that this would now be provided through force governance for the next quarter and would cover misconduct and vetting. He added that his team would be working on disproportionality in complaint cases and ensuring all members of our communities knew how to access the complaints system and were able to make a complaint if needed. The DPCC queried what the team do to proactively go out to certain communities to explain the complaints process which would help to build public confidence. The HoPSD explained that the recent uplift in the department to cope with demand included individuals who were engaging both externally and internally.  The DPCC advised there were additional questions around the IOPC performance report but asked for these to be picked up outside the meeting by the HoPSD and HoAC.  The DPCC stated that the reason more time had been spent on scrutiny at the meeting was due to the new force governance arrangements and the fact OPCC staff no longer attended the majority of force boards. She advised that the OPCC had been discussing the opportunity of introducing new scrutiny arrangements and there was a suggestion to pilot them between January and April to ensure there was a clear direction of travel for both OPCC and force governance prior to the PCC elections in May.  The CC requested that an initial conversation was had in relation to the proposed governance changes. | **HoCI**  **Action**  **DPCC/HoCI**  **Action**  **HoCI**  **HoAC/ HoPSD**  **DPCC/CC/CEx** |
| 1. **OFF ROAD BIKING UPDATE**   The HoCI advised that the Chief Superintendent for the East Local Policing Area prepared this report which provided a breakdown of incidents between May 2022 and April 2023. There had been approximately 800 incidents during this time period resulting in 95 off road bikes being seized by the force.  The HoCI explained that Operation Harley was the force’s designated off road biking operation that worked with other agencies, including Natural Resources Wales (NRW).  We were advised that a Chief Inspector had undertaken work collaboratively with local authorities which had resulted in a project recently being established to try and tackle this area of concern. The HoCI explained the project had identified a number of objectives and outcomes and clarified that the approach taken needed to be sustained. As the project only went live on 1st November 2023, the force did not yet have any information on the achievement of the outcomes. The Chief Superintendent for the East Local Policing Area would attend a future meeting to provide an update on the benefits realisation of the project.  The DPCC appreciated how challenging this area was and highlighted that the PCC had been involved at a strategic level to try and deal with these issues. She queried why the report did not cover the whole of Gwent and also asked if there was any guidance from the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) on off road biking that could add value to the work being undertaken.  The HoCI confirmed conversations were ongoing with all local authority areas and that there was a recognition that additional partners needed to be involved and that the work also needed to cover the whole of Gwent. An update would be provided to the OPCC via email regarding the work ongoing in the areas of Gwent not covered by the report. The ACC advised there was currently no NPCC lead on off road biking with the CC commenting that it was being discussed jointly by the College of Policing (CoP) and NPCC and she hoped some guidance would be shared in the near future. | **Action**  **Ch.Supt LPA East**  **Ch.Supt LPA East** |
| 1. **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023-26**   We received the Learning and Development Strategy 2023-26.  The DPCC was encouraged to see leadership and culture as a key theme within the strategy. She requested that the HoCI provided an update on any issues that had been raised as part of the force scrutiny process. The HoCI advised that the DCC had requested that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) was referenced in the strategy. The force was also developing a 5 year plan for staff across all levels of the organisation. The CC advised us that the Leadership Strategy was progressing well and was in line with the College of Policing (CoP) guidance. She highlighted that it was important to consider workforce numbers over the coming years and align the learning and development function to this in terms of core training and CPD.  The ACC stated that the abstraction from the front line for officers to undertake their operational safety training and driver training would be a challenge and would need to be managed.  The DPCC was pleased to see the development of this area and noted the long-term ambition the force had was very clear. She requested that the force ensured consideration was also given to all training for non-operational police staff as well as those on the front line in the development of the 5 year plan. The CC advised that the leadership training the force had put in place was for both officers and staff and that the policing ‘family’ was being considered as a whole and not just police officers. | **Action** |
| 1. **BUDGET BID TO PCC**   We received the Chief Constable’s Budget Bid to the PCC for 2024/25.  The ACOR advised that this was the CC’s bid based on the budgetary requirement for 2024/25 of £176,988,000. He highlighted that current projections indicated that the force would have a funding gap by 2028/29 of £12,536,000 recurrently.  The ACOR stated that there was currently a shortfall of £2,708,000 depending on the outcome of the Autumn Statement and confirmation from central Government of police funding. This was also after the force had identified and delivered on savings as well as an assumption that a 6.82% increase in precept would be agreed by the PCC. He advised that the force was then working on the basis that a transfer from reserves would take place to balance the budget for 2024/25. He added that this would be subject to the scrutiny of the OPCC and would be discussed and agreed during the course of 2023/24. The ACOR highlighted that the CC would be presenting her bid to the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) in December 2023 with the PCC’s final precept bid presented for discussion with the PCP in January 2024.  The ACOR shared that there were a number of factors the force needed to consider for 2024/25 including future custody provision, the collaborative firearms range, the review of the operational policing model, the review of the Command and Control system as well as implementing the ‘Right Care, Right Person’ initiative with partners.  The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) position was highlighted and we were advised that the £12,536,000 deficit presented at year 4 was significantly lower than had been included in the MTFP previously. The ACOR advised that the force had put a significant amount of financial control in place on expenditure and held back on spending in many areas to achieve this.  The ACOR advised that although no decision had been taken on the construction of the Gwent Police Operational Facility as yet, capital expenditure had been factored in, in years 3 and 4 of the MTFP.  The Welsh Government (WG) had confirmed finding for 400 PCSOs across Wales with Gwent’s share being 80. Based on current establishment and on a match funding basis, this indicated the force would also need to fund 80 posts which was higher than previously expected.  We also noted that there had been an additional £1 million moved from the revenue to capital budget to assist with short term capital costs linked to the fleet replacement programme and the purchasing of electric vehicles and the large inflationary cost increases linked to maintenance of buildings.  The ACOR highlighted that value for money was a key consideration across all areas of business when developing the budget bid.  The CC advised that it was important in terms of the custody estate that there was an agreed plan going into 2024/25. The CC also stated that the force had not received any written confirmation from the WG regarding future funding of PCSOs and was keen for documentation to be in place prior to the PCP meeting. She stated that the 6.82% increase in precept included in the MTFP was important to ensure policing services could be provided appropriately and would be very concerned if it decreased from this level.  The DPCC commented that the purpose of this report was to receive the bid and then commence the scrutiny but recognised the two significant challenges mentioned by the CC and agreed this was where scrutiny needed to be focussed. The DPCC requested that a meeting was arranged for herself, the CEx, CC and ACOR to discuss the budget requirements further.  The CC thanked the ACOR and his team for their work and re-iterated the concerns relating to the lack of a capital budget for policing nationally which was having an impact on force planning. She thanked the DPCC for raising this concern at the Welsh Affairs Select Committee. The DPCC stated that it was important that this was highlighted to the PCP during the precept discussions. | **Action**  **DPCC/CE/CC/ACOR** |
| **The meeting was paused at 12:05pm for a 5 minute break.** |  |
| 1. **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS INCLUDING THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**   We received the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2022/23.  The HoF stated that the unaudited accounts were published on 30th June 2023 in line with the reviewed timeline from Audit Wales. We were advised that the lead Joint Audit Committee (JAC) member for Finance had been sighted during the finalisation of the accounts with additional support provided by the Chief Finance Officer from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales. The audited accounts were due to be presented to the JAC on 27th November 2023 and would then be signed before the revised deadline of the 30th November 2023.  He shared that the outcome position of the PCC and CC group accounts was at a breakeven position against a requirement of £156,427,000. We noted that the cashable reserves now sat at £29.8 million which was £3.9 million lower than last year.  The HoF asked us to note there were a small number of changes arising from the audit related to the revaluation of the new HQ and the local government pension scheme. He added that these items had been discussed with Audit Wales and the accounts had been corrected to reflect them.  We were informed that the AGS had been drafted by the HoJLS and Head of Finance and reviewed by the force and OPCC in the absence of the CFO. The AGS would be presented to the JAC alongside the Statement of Accounts on 27th November 2023.  The DPCC and the CC thanked the HoF for the work undertaken and stated that the outcome of the audit from Audit Wales was a testament to the work of the Finance team. Thanks was also passed on to the HoJLS and the Chief Finance Officer from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales. The DPCC stated that it was important to note that the delay in the finalisation and signing of the accounts related to a delay by Audit Wales and not by Gwent Police. | **Action** |
| 1. **FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2, 2023/24**   The ACOR presented the Financial Performance Report for Quarter 2 of 2023/24. He stated that the force had reduced expenditure and by year end there was a forecast underspend of almost £3 million which was different to the significant financial gap the force had started the year with.  In order to explain the difference, the ACOR highlighted that the Efficiency Group had been established, and scrutinised and had made changes to delegated authority of powers to budget holders. Strategic corporate decisions had also been made regarding areas that the force would not spend on.  We were informed that Police officer pay was forecast to overspend by £600,000 by year end. The ACOR explained that the force had agreement from the Home Office to go above the number of officers allocated as part of the Police Uplift Programme by 21. He stated that income above that overspend would be higher but was reflected on a different budget line.  We noted that Police staff pay was overspent by almost £700,000, the majority which related to the reduction in funding from the WG for PCSOs which had been discussed previously. He advised that at the start of the financial year, the WG had agreed to fund 121 PCSO posts, however they were now only providing 6/11ths of their previous funding for PCSOs which resulted in an immediate pressure on 21 posts that would no longer be funded.  The ACOR advised there was an overspend on police officer overtime of £300,000 which was significantly lower than this time last year due to control measures implemented by the ACC. He added he was hopeful that the implementation of additional measures could reduce this further. He also highlighted that there was overspend on police staff overtime which related to project work being undertaken across the force.  The ACOR asked us to note that supplies and services, and transport had over £1 million of savings and that the delay in the capital programme relating to the Joint Firearms Range had also resulted in a saving on borrowing costs that would otherwise have been incurred of over £1 million.  We were also made aware that the force had benefited from over £1 million in interest due to increased interest rates.  The ACOR highlighted that these controls had more than covered the overspend and stated that the force had not experienced any detriment to its operational performance as a result.  The CC stated it was worth noting the amount of work the force had undertaken to save money this year, however, she shared her fears on how the force would continue to do this year on year. She highlighted the positive news that the force had been able to factor the apprenticeship scheme into the budget for the next financial year which she knew was an area the PCC was passionate about.  The DPCC welcomed the savings made but also stated that it had been made clear that budgetary pressures remained and acknowledged the magnitude of the challenge the force faced going forward to try and meet the projected deficit by 2028/29.  The DPCC queried if there was an element of police staff overtime that related to the improvements in the FCR. The ACC gave assurance that the overtime was not associated with the FCR and that it related to the provision of custody. He did assure us that he held monthly meetings with department heads to challenge them on overtime spend. The DPCC thanked the ACC for the confirmation and stated it was important that the wellbeing of staff and the overtime required was balanced appropriately.  The DPCC highlighted that at 3.26, the force was still using the term ‘Consultant Fees’. Whilst she was aware that this was the phrase used within the budget, she clarified that the OPCC was not spending significant amounts of money on consultant fees. She stated that a request had previously been made to change the description within the budget but if this was not possible, when it was reported, it was made clear to the public that it related to the provision of the substance misuse service. | **Action**  **Action**  **ACOR/HoF** |
| 1. **COMPLIANCE WITH THE VICTIMS CODE OF PRACTICE 2022/23 (ANNUAL)**   The ACC stated the Head of Victim Services was currently refreshing the way the force was dealing with victims and was developing a new performance framework in line with both local and national priorities.  The ACC advised that compliance with the 9 rights within the Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) had been explained and that performance over the past year was encouraging. He was confident that the framework being developed would improve performance over the 9 areas even further in 2024/25.  The DPCC noted the report thanked the Head of Victim Services and Policy Officer from the OPCC for driving the work on scrutiny for compliance on the VCOP.  The DPCC queried the difference between victim personal statements being declined and those not being taken by officers. The ACC offered to discuss this further with the Head of Victim Services in order to provide clarity.  The DPCC asked if the force understood why there had been a decline in relation to victims being provided with their right to a final court update. The ACC advised he had already challenged the Head of Victim Services to review this area and would provide an update in due course. | **ACC**  **ACC** |
| 1. **VICTIM SERVICES ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23**   The ACC introduced the report and highlighted that there had been a high turnover of staff with 9 members of staff moving onto new roles in the organisation which had then impacted on service delivery. Despite this we noted that all areas of victim satisfaction had improved.  The ACC advised us that survivor engagement had been a focus with a noticeable improvement in both force culture and response to domestic and sexual offenses with learning shared nationally. We also noted that the role had won a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) regional award and had been highly commended by Operation Soteria and highlighted nationally as the ‘gold’ model for all forces.  We were informed that the Investigation Quality Team had reviewed medium risk domestic abuse cases and provided learning and feedback on how cases could be improved in future.  We noted that Connect Gwent received 2,243 referrals over the course of the year. From those referrals that were engaged with the service long term, 1,584 people reported that they were better able to cope and recover as a result of the referral.  The ACC stated that a collaborative workshop was held with the CPS and His Majesty’s Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) to review the domestic abuse criminal justice process end to end. We noted work continued on the subsequent action plan that had been produced although the DPCC stated that a conversation was needed with partners to focus on the recommendations and ensure progression.  The DPCC stated that the OPCC and force needed to ensure they were confident they had oversight of estate issues in relation to victim services.  The DPCC noted that there were a number of victims who were not contactable and queried if the force understood why this was the case. The ACC advised there were links to certain crime types, such as domestic abuse, where victims were not contactable but that further work needed to be undertaken to understand how best this could be achieved in a safe way for the victim.  The DPCC stated court trials had been disproportionately affected by Covid and that it would be useful to understand what the pre-covid levels were as well as any ongoing issues/delays in trials taking place and the impact that was having, for reporting back to the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB). The ACC acknowledged this and advised this would be captured in future reports.  The DPCC requested that a review of the report was undertaken to determine if any information provided impacted on the work the PFCM was progressing in relation to the Victims Service contract.  The DPCC queried how confident the ACC was that the force was focussed on the service provided to the victim in all areas of business and that they were not entirely reliant on victim services and the victim care unit. The ACC advised that the importance of updating the victim was a key message that was being provided to all staff via the CC’s Roadshow, weekly Vlogs and Senior Management Team Meetings.  The DPCC shared that feedback received from victims was that they were not kept in contact with during periods where there were no updates to be provided and stated it was important that this contact was still undertaken even if there was no progress with the case. The ACC informed us that the force had listened to staff to understand why updates were not being provided; feedback indicated that capacity was the biggest reason. The force had therefore worked with the Digital Services Division (DSD) to simplify the way officers viewed their cases which should assist them in identifying the updates that were required.  The DPCC thanked the ACC for the report and the work that had been undertaken in this area of work. | **Action**  **ACC**  **ACC**  **PFCM/ACC** |
| 1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** 2. **OPCC SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS**   The DPCC advised that the item relating to OPCC Scrutiny arrangements had been discussed earlier on the agenda. | **Action** |
| 1. **TO IDENTIFY ANY RISKS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING**   There were no risks identified during the meeting. |  |
| **The meeting concluded at 13.00.** |  |