

# INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY AND OVERSIGHT BOARD

## ANNUAL REPORT 2025–2026

Reporting Period: April 2025 – March 2026

### 1. Leadership Messages

#### Message from the Chair, Jason Sinclair



This reporting year has marked a significant period of maturity and evolution for the Independent Scrutiny and Oversight Board. Throughout 2025–2026, our work has been characterised by a strengthened commitment to transparency, independence, and evidence-led scrutiny.

A key priority for the Board has been ensuring that the data sets presented to us are accurate, consistent, and meaningful. We have worked closely with policing colleagues to improve the quality, granularity, and accessibility of data across critical areas such as Stop and Search, Use of Force, staffing, and recruitment. This has enabled us to move beyond surface-level analysis and engage in deeper, more constructive challenge.

Importantly, this year has also seen an increased emphasis on hearing directly from operational policing leads. Their contributions have added valuable context to the data and supported more informed scrutiny. This approach has strengthened mutual understanding while preserving the Board’s independence.

The Board has continued to centre community perspectives in its work. We have listened carefully to concerns relating to disproportionality, trust, and fairness, ensuring that these are reflected in our scrutiny priorities and recommendations.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for a significant transition. The Board intends to evolve into the Independent Trust, Assurance and Confidence Board, supported by newly developed Terms of Reference. This change reflects a broader ambition: to move beyond scrutiny alone and more explicitly contribute to building public trust and confidence in policing.

I would like to thank all Board members, community representatives, and police colleagues for their continued commitment, professionalism, and openness. The progress made this year provides a strong foundation for the next phase of our work.

### **Message from OPCC Chief Executive, Gillian Ormston**



This year has highlighted, more than ever, the importance of listening to the people we serve. The work of the Independent Scrutiny and Oversight Board has been shaped by the voices of communities across Thames Valley—your concerns, your expectations, and your hopes for fair and respectful policing.

I want to begin by expressing my heartfelt thanks to every community member, volunteer, Board representative, and police colleague who has contributed to that work. Your honesty, your challenge, and your willingness to share lived experiences have directly shaped improvements in policing practice.

Over the past year, the Board has helped us focus on what matters most to the public: transparency, fairness, and accountability. By improving the clarity and consistency of the data we share, we have been able to have more open conversations—conversations that don't shy away from difficult topics such as disproportionality, Use of Force, and representation within our workforce. These are issues that communities have raised for many years, and we are committed to addressing them openly and responsibly.

I am particularly grateful to those who have taken the time to explain how policing feels from their perspective. These insights—whether concerns about fairness, questions about how decisions are made, or the desire for greater visibility and engagement—have helped shape improvements in how we listen, how we respond, and how we learn.



The coming year marks an important evolution to the new Independent Trust, Assurance and Confidence Board, which will place even greater emphasis on understanding and strengthening the trust and confidence our communities have in policing. This shift reflects what communities have consistently told us: that scrutiny and assurance is not just about checking processes—it is about ensuring people feel heard, respected, and safe.

The new framework provides more opportunities for community involvement and sets clearer expectations for openness and accountability. It places trust and confidence at the heart of scrutiny, where it belongs.

While there is still much to do, I am encouraged by the progress made and optimistic about the journey ahead. Together—with continued challenge, collaboration, and community participation—we can build a policing service that is fair, transparent, and genuinely responsive to the people it serves.

Thank you for your continued engagement, your feedback, and your commitment to helping shape a better future for policing across Thames Valley.

## 2. About the Group

The Independent Scrutiny and Oversight Board provides independent oversight of policing practices, policies, and outcomes. Its core purpose is to ensure that policing is delivered in a fair, ethical, and transparent manner, with particular attention to the impact on diverse communities.

The Board comprises a diverse group of independent members, including individuals with lived experience, community representatives, and subject matter experts. This diversity is central to the Board's ability to provide balanced and informed scrutiny.

The Board operates independently while maintaining constructive engagement with policing representatives. Its work is guided by principles of accountability, inclusivity, and evidence-based decision-making.

## 3. Meetings & Membership

**Number of meetings held:** 6

**Average attendance:** High (consistently above 80%)

**Police representation:** Senior leads and subject matter experts present at all meetings

**Member diversity summary:** The Board reflects a broad range of backgrounds, including different ethnicities, ages, genders, and professional experiences. Thames Valley Police covers a very large geographical area - Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes with the committee members representing those areas. This diversity supports robust and representative scrutiny.

**Identified gaps:**

- Increased representation from younger demographics
- Broader geographic representation across the force area

**Recruitment aims:**

- Targeted outreach to underrepresented communities
- Strengthening links with community organisations
- Encouraging applications from individuals with lived experience of policing interactions

## 4. What We Focused On

### Theme 1: Data Quality and Integrity

- Strengthening the accuracy and consistency of policing data sets
- Improving the clarity and usability of reports presented to the Board

### Theme 2: Stop and Search

- Examination of disproportionality across different communities
- Review of grounds and outcomes for Stop and Search

### Theme 3: Use of Force

- Analysis of trends and patterns in Use of Force incidents
- Scrutiny of proportionality and recording practices

### Theme 4: Staffing and Workforce Representation

- Review of workforce demographics
- Monitoring progress against diversity and inclusion objectives

## Theme 5: Recruitment and Retention

- Scrutiny of recruitment processes and outcomes
- Focus on attracting and retaining diverse talent

## 5. What We Heard from the Community – Key Themes

### Theme A: Trust and Fairness

- Concerns about disproportionality in policing powers
- Desire for greater transparency and accountability

### Theme B: Visibility and Engagement

- Need for stronger community engagement
- Requests for more accessible communication from policing

### Theme C: Confidence in Data

- Questions about how data is collected and used
- Importance of accurate and transparent reporting

## 6. Issues Raised → Actions Taken → Impact

**You said (issue):** Data lacked clarity and consistency

**We did (action):** Worked with policing to refine data sets and reporting formats

**What changed (impact):** Improved confidence in data and more effective scrutiny

**You said (issue):** Concerns about Stop and Search disproportionality

**We did (action):** Increased focus on detailed analysis and officer explanations

**What changed (impact):** Greater understanding of patterns and targeted recommendations

**You said (issue):** Limited context behind Use of Force data

**We did (action):** Invited operational leads to provide detailed briefings

**What changed (impact):** More informed discussions and constructive challenge

**You said (issue):** Lack of diversity in recruitment outcomes

**We did (action):** Scrutinised recruitment processes and data

**What changed (impact):** Increased focus on inclusive recruitment strategies

## 7. Feedback to Trust & Confidence Board & Responses

**Theme:** Data Quality → **Board response:** Continued investment in data systems and transparency

**Theme:** Community Trust → **Board response:** Commitment to enhanced engagement and communication

**Theme:** Workforce Diversity → **Board response:** Strengthened recruitment and retention initiatives

## 8. Key Messages for the Community

- Independent scrutiny is active, robust, and evolving
- Your feedback directly influences policing priorities – please get involved
- Transparency and accountability remain central to policing improvements

## 9. Reflections on How the Panel is Working

### What worked well:

- Improved quality of data and reporting
- Stronger engagement with policing leads
- Constructive and respectful challenge

### What we want to improve:

- Broader community engagement
- Increased accessibility of our work
- Continued development of member expertise

## 10. Areas of Future Focus

Cycle	Proposed Areas of Focus
April 2026	Transition to Independent Trust Assurance and Confidence Scrutiny Board. Trust and Confidence (T&C) Survey quarter data review.
July 2026	Outstanding Thames Valley Police Race Action Plan (PRAP) items update. T&C Pillar – Victimisation. T&C Survey quarter data review.
Oct 2026	T&C Pillar – Use of Powers. T&C Survey quarter data review.
Jan 2027	T&C Pillar – Internal workforce trust & confidence. T&C Survey quarter data review.

## 11. How to Get Involved

**Email:** [scrutiny@thamesvalley.police.uk](mailto:scrutiny@thamesvalley.police.uk)

### Transition to the Independent Trust Assurance and Confidence Board

During 2025–2026, significant work has been undertaken to prepare for the Board’s transition into the Independent Trust, Assurance and Confidence Board. This evolution reflects a strategic shift towards a more explicit focus on public trust, legitimacy, and confidence in policing.

New Terms of Reference have been developed to support this transition. These set out a clearer framework for the Board’s role, responsibilities, and governance, including:

- A strengthened emphasis on independence and transparency
- A clearer mandate to assess trust and confidence outcomes
- Enhanced mechanisms for community input and feedback
- Defined expectations for data quality and reporting

The transition will build on the strong foundations established by the Independent Scrutiny and Oversight Board, while enabling a more forward-looking and impact-driven approach.

This development represents a significant milestone and positions the Board to play a central role in shaping the future of policing accountability and public confidence in Thames Valley.