



MINUTES OF JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON FRIDAY 06 MARCH 2026 COMMENCING AT

13:00HRS AND CONCLUDING AT 17:00 HRS - PART I

Committee Members Present:

S Page (Chair), M Strange, K Taylor, C Westcott, L Raffellini

Present:

B Snuggs (Deputy Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police TVP)

G Ormston (Chief Executive, OPCC)

M Thornley (Chief Finance Officer, OPCC)

V Waskett (Head of Governance, OPCC)

M Lattanzio (Chief Digital & Information Officer, TVP)

C Widdison (Head of Governance and Change, TVP)

A Nicholls (Head of Strategic Governance, TVP)

N Langton (Deputy Head of Strategic Governance, TVP)

N Cornelius (Director of People, TVP)

J Lynn (Head of Accounts, TVP)

N Shovell (Chief Internal Auditor, TVP & OPCC)

A Shearn (Principal Auditor, TVP & OPCC)

Kay Hanam (Head of Forensic Services, TVP)

M Foley (Head of Strategic Planning, OPCC)

S South (Head of ICT Business Services, TVP)

J Katouzian (Governance Manager, OPCC)

Apologies – L Waters, A Brittain, A Kennett

Observers: None

PRELIMINARIES

1. Apologies and Introductions

No apologies.

2. Minutes & Actions of the JIAC Meeting held on 12.12.25 (Part I)

The Chair, Stephen Page (SP) reviewed the minutes and actions of the JIAC meeting held on 12 December 2025.

The following actions are complete and can be removed from the Action Log:

JIAC 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009, 010, 016, 017

Regarding business and IT continuity, (SP) offered a framework which is useful in crisis planning: define a “Minimum Viable Enterprise” whereby the Force assesses the absolute lowest level of operating service in times of extraordinary crisis or critical events. (SP) requested that TVP Strategic Governance look at the current level of assessment and update the committee.

Action: Provide the committee with an update on business and IT continuity, referencing the Force’s current assessment of the Minimal Viable Enterprise and whether TVP’s resilience plans would get them there after a major disruption. – AN (JIAC 019)

REGULAR UPDATES

3. Internal Audit Strategy & Joint Internal Audit Plan 2026/27. (Neil Shovell – NS).

(NS) gave an overview of the Joint Internal Audit Plan and Internal Audit Strategy. The process is going smoothly and the Audit Team are comfortable with the progress being made.

(SP) questioned if the audit plan includes those areas of business that require regular monitoring and are higher risk, are we certain that nothing relevant is missing? Ben Snuggs (BS), Martin Thornley (MT) both affirmed that they were very satisfied that all relevant areas were covered.

The Committee endorsed the strategy for adoption by the PCC.

No Actions

4. Progress on the Delivery of Agreed Actions in the Internal Audit Report. (Gillian Ormston – GO & Martin Thornley – MT, for the OPCC) (Ali Nicholls – AN, for TVP).

Chris Westcott (CW) noted again that the dates for overdue actions have been extended and follow on from the next scheduled JIAC meeting, especially priority 1 actions. How do you propose to reduce overdue actions? (NS) from an outside perspective the trend is positive and they have reduced from 67 to 50, it may require further analysis to understand why other actions are not quite complete, the Force may have a view on this. (SP) To be clear, we want to see actions completed and resources allocated where appropriate, rather than further analysis.

Gillain Ormston (GO) recommended (AN) link in with Rachel Gilbert and Martha Foley in the OPCC, as this area can be included in the OPCC continuous assessment framework of the Force.

(SP) the committee have noted MASH has appeared again on the Risk Register, having a higher number of outstanding actions – is it an area of concern? (BS) MASH is an area of heat for the organisation and is subject to an HMICFRS inspection. We are working with local authority partners and have invested further in additional people resources and robotic processes, but it is subject to peaks, troughs and surges in demand.

No Actions

5. 2025/26 Joint Internal Audit Plan Delivery. (Neil Shovell – NS)

(CW) in the audit plan there is reference to end user device management, specifically memory/USB sticks, is there a device management plan for the use of these items?

Mike Lattanzio (ML) - there is a policy for the use of memory sticks.

(SP) requested at the next meeting there is an update as to the current usage of memory sticks.

Action: Update the next meeting with the current policy, compliance levels, and usage of memory sticks - ML (JIAC 020)

6. TVP Risk & Business Continuity update. (Ali Nicholls – AN)

(SP) noted on pages 83 + 84 there are a number of risks in the Red category, with a target date of 3 weeks, is this realistic? The JIAC committee is interested as to *when* the risks will be reduced. (AN) the Risk Improvement and Learning meeting has reviewed these dates, some may need to be packaged better and looked at again.

(BS) I receive assurances of the active management of the risks, through my risk assurance and review process. Attrition is an example highlighted by the JIAC, there are measures put in place this year and next year to mitigate these risks. The traction is broadly in a good place on managing the Red category risks.

(GO) what would help us understand, from the PCC's perspective, is the maximum tolerable risk? It seems some risks are above that? It would be useful to help us assess the impact of this and when a risk becomes an issue. Martha Foley (MF), the Head of Strategic Policy for the OPCC will examine that further.

The risk appetites and their priority order were discussed further.

(AN) agreed at the next meeting to provide definitions in the reporting, to help with clarity.

Natalie Langton (NL) - in the meantime we can provide a copy of the guidance document. The Committee welcomed this as it will assist in their understanding of the terminology used.

(LR) highlighted on page 84, Custody premises remains a Red risk, is it improving? This is not shown in the monitoring section?

(BS) we are investing in Loddon Valley, Maidenhead, and through the Strategic Estates Group we are prioritising these. There is additional external scrutiny around the Custody Estate from HMICFRS and the PCC. We are mindful of the fact and trying to strike a balance of having an ageing Custody Estate that requires improvements, but at the same time accepting we have no specific capital assigned to this and we must keep the current provision going.

(CW) Page 84 cyber security is listed as stable, but in the heat map on page 85 it is shown to have gone up. Is it an error in the table or a discrepancy? (NL) not certain as to why there is a discrepancy. (AN) will check this and advise further.

Action: OPCC to assess risks at or beyond the maximum tolerable status - MF (JIAC 021)

Action: Provide the Committee with the guidance document for the strategic risk assessment - NL (JIAC 022)

Action: Clarify and update the risk assessments for Cyber Security – AN (JIAC 023)

7. OPCC Risk Register. (Gillian Ormston – GO)

(SP) noted that there are two significant risks in the future. 1) a period of instability with staff leaving, decisions deferred, the PCC may have left – i.e. transitional risks. 2) this may result in a lack of control and oversight of the Police Force – i.e. governance risks.

Some of the decision-making is outside of the control of the OPCC, but may be inside the sphere of influence.

Martha Foley (MF) Head of Strategic Planning for the OPCC, added that we are doing a great deal of work in foreseeing and mitigating risks, with a view to trying to influence positive change in terms of Police reform. (GO) confirmed she is meeting with the Home Office team tasked with delivering the Police reforms, at the highest level, to understand the planned changes and try and influence the future shape and the replacement of PCCs.

(MF) in terms of the OPCC risk register, we are developing this in light of the changes referred to and the wider Police Reforms. We are actively looking to identify risks vs issues and improve our risk and issues log and the risk register.

No Actions

Final Accounts

8. Final Accounts (*Martin Thornley – MT & Joanne Lynn – JL*).

EY were unable to attend today's meeting. Melissa Strange (MS) noted a new accounting process is about to begin and there was some discussion regarding the fees and future costs. There were no specific issues or risks that were highlighted. (MT) advised that factored into the fees and costs are the new IFRS 16 accounting standards.

(SP) the volume of misstatements is one matter that does concern the committee, how will this be avoided in the next year? (MT) Corporate Finance have reorganised their team and added extra resources to address this.

No Actions

FINAL ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL POSITION

9. Budget Long Term Financial Strategy (*Martin Thornley – MT & Joanne Lynn – JL*)

Kay Taylor (KT) noted in the two middle years 2027/2028 + 2028/2029, the revised funding is less than the budget requirements. The budget requirement includes considerable sums going from reserves, query as for what reason? (MT) replied that taking money from the reserves is for funding the long-term capital plan, ensuring sufficient and sustainable capital funds.

(MT) point of Clarification, 2027/28 there is a reduction in use of reserves for expenses by £8.3 million, lower than in the years 2026/27.

No Actions

Break

10. Treasury Management Strategy Statement (*Martin Thornley – MT*)

The committee reviewed the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, as part of the discussion regarding the Budget Long Term Financial Strategy and Final Accounts.

The Committee endorsed the strategy for adoption by the PCC

No Actions

Substantive Items

11. Corporate Governance Framework inc. Draft Annual Governance Statement (Ali Nicholls – AN, Gillian Ormston – GO, Vicki Waskett – VW)

(KT) observed that the strategy within the document is on track, VW was complimented on the hard work and quality of the document. (KT) recommended keeping a clear focus and separation between the Annual Statement and Corporate Governance Framework.

(MS) the title on P.182 “Accountability of JIAC”, this requires a change of name to reflect correct description please.

(CW) with Police Reforms and transitions upcoming, including from Police and Crime Commissioners and local government reforms, there will be a lot of people and agencies who will need to be up to speed on the work of the Police Force and its oversight. Recommend you make the document as readable and easy to follow as possible.

(GO) We are conscious of this and we are involved in discussions with local authorities and central government over Policing reform and local government reforms. We are operating very much as ‘business as usual’, now and as we move into the transition phase. (GO) VW will be considering these changes in our Corporate Government Framework.

(SP) P.328 refers to stakeholder engagement. Corporate best practice is to define a list of stakeholders and set out annually what mechanisms we are using to listen to stakeholder views; what we have learned; and what we have changed as a result. This helps to provide a checkpoint that the most critical stakeholders are being heard—and that we are listening not just transmitting—and confirm how stakeholder needs are connected to management process. It could be beneficial for TVP to do something similar, while not taking this too far as there are many possible stakeholders.

(GO) more broadly, we could improve the way we engage with stakeholders, not only in the financial arena but across all business areas. We are going through a process of continuous improvement, we will take this away and look to expand engagement through our Strategic Planning Team.

Action: Update definition on P.182 Accountability of JIAC – VW (JIAC 024)

Action: Review and widen stakeholder engagement – GO (JIAC 025)

12. Victims First Hub overview (Gillian Ormston – GO)

(GO) presented a report on the working and support for victims by the Victims First Hub (managed and operated by the Office of the PCC). (CW) had visited the Victims First Hub in November 2025 and was impressed by their working process, methods and staff dedication.

(GO) In terms of maintaining the service as an in-house operation, this is constantly under review as support for victims is the key focus of the service.

(SP) charitable services provide the specialist support, as commissioned services, is there enough oversight if their governance were to fail and the organisations start to deviate from their core roles, values, or operating priorities? (GO) due diligence is carried out on commissioned services, Helen Wake the OPCC Director of Service Delivery keeps a close working relationship with the commissioned services and the OPCC maintains control of the contracts in the event of issues arising.

No Actions

13. AI training and guardrails within TVP (Mike Lattanzio – ML)

(KT) the report refers to the current use of AI as low volume and low risk across users in TVP and a 'citizen developed' AI, can this be expanded further? (ML) to put simply, it means using our workforce as a community to build, with guard rails, a set of agents and capabilities that they can use the AI technology, i.e. power apps.

(ML) there are pockets of activity, our focus is very much on the training of the workforce, with more strategic work to come in terms of future uses and activities, in development of AI technologies.

No Actions

14. HR policy process and Talent Strategy (Nicky Cornelius – NC, verbal update)

The TVP Director of People, Nicky Cornelius, provided a verbal update to a report submitted in 2025: Some points of note:

- Occupational Health improvements, no backlog of DSE assessments, workplace needs assessment and RAMP (reasonable adjustments). This is down from 3500 to 0.
- Lower-level assessments have been developed for staff and Line Managers, thus speeding up response time.
- Robust process in place to require specific clinical requirements for a reasonable adjustment to be made. This process is for cases going forward, TVP are doing a review of past cases as well, which is included in an upcoming internal audit.
- We expect to see a reduction in Officers taken out of their roles, preferring they continue to perform in their role with reasonable adjustments.
- Staff promotion process is more evidence-based and transparent following the staff survey feedback.
- Grievance Policy will be relaunched as a 'Resolution Policy', shifting the emphasis to resolving workplace issues and disputes.

The Committee thanked (NC) for her work which is addressing a number of areas of concern raised by JIAC in the past.

No Actions

UPDATES & REQUESTED BRIEFINGS

15. Misconduct and complaints (inc whistleblowing policy + procedure) (DCI Nicola Underhill – NU)

The Committee reviewed the report submitted, one item of note was the amount of work carried out by the Professional Standards Department (PSD) including case work, investigation, counter corruption etc, given PSDs small number of staff and Officers. (SP) noted that members of JIAC would be visiting PSD shortly to learn more about current governance and risks.

(SP) Are the resources too low for the investigation and casework for Misconduct? (NU) clearly, we could do more work if we had more resources. Some of the extra work we do - which is not a statutory requirement - is to provide education and training to staff and officers. More resources would be very welcome.

(BS) we do accept that our PSD is quite lean, and we have put extra resources into the Vetting Department and we do keep this under constant review. We recognise the PSD are a very effective and hardworking department and achieve a great deal given they are a lean in terms of resource.

(NC) Whistleblowing policy is wholly owned by People Services, though the investigations are conducted by the PSD.

(GO) we do work closely with PSD and VW is involved in regular meetings to review complaints and carry out dip-checking.

No Actions

16. Fire Safety update (Ali Nicholls – AN & Claire Widdison – CWI)

The Committee were provided with a written update

(AN) confirmed the Action Plan for Fire Safety is now complete, all onsite actions finalised. The Gold Group is being maintained as there remains ongoing improvement work. (BS) added that TVP have made demonstrable progress in addressing compliance issues. We can report by exception in the future.

(SP) it is noted that an Audit is pending for Fire Safety, as it is an area of high importance, we will retain this as an Agenda item for the next meeting to learn about the Audit outcomes.

No Actions

17. Force Strategy Update (Ali Nicholls – AN & Claire Widdison – CWI)

Claire Widdison (CWI) gave an overview of the current progress of the 5-year Force Strategy.

- 3 Programmes of transformation which shall underpin progress in the next 5 years
- 1 = Future Workforce Programme, headed by Nicky Cornelius.
- 2 = Future Communities Programme, headed by ACC Chrisitan Bunt.
- 3 = Crime investigation journey, headed by ACC Olly Wright.

(SP) noted the extensive work and activities in this area and that not many other Forces are planning ahead in this way. JIAC continues to emphasise the value of driving decisions (eg capability investments, talent strategy, premises strategy) from a multi-year view of how TVP will evolve.

(KT) have you factored in the ability to monitor changes that take place in the future, especially the unforeseen? (CWI) yes, we are continually performing futures and horizon scanning, tracking trends and engaging with communities.

The Committee gave feedback on the monitoring risks and refining the definitions contained in the report, which will aid the reader having a better understanding of the terminologies.

No Actions

18. Progress on the new forensics building project (Kay Hannam – KH)

Kay Hannam (KH) gave the Committee an overview of the progress of the new forensic building project in Bicester.

- We continue to monitor closely the programme timeline and the risks.
- The project is at Amber level risk, the actual build project is ahead of time, the commissioning space we are still anticipating moving into in July 2026.
- The most significant hurdle has been overcome; there remain some smaller issues e.g. moving specialist equipment and the availability.
- The most difficult part of the project is the transition itself. For example, ICT and forensic equipment moves and installation is currently being worked out, we are also liaising with UKAS The United Kingdom Accreditation Service. The timings and dates are scheduled right down to the fine detail.
- Our fall-back position is to keep activity at HQ South, should this be necessary.
- All these risks are factored into our risk management, which is Amber level, we are working toward a Green status – though this won't be realistic until we actually move into the new premises.
- Budget considerations are at Red level risk, whilst we work closely with contractors regarding any overspend, these will not be truly understood for another year.
- Staff Resources, we are aware of some staff who have chosen to take early retirement, others have submitted flexible working arrangements. This remains a risk, but we know of the potential changes and are managing their impact.

No Actions

19. HMICFRS inspection (DCC Snuggs – BS, verbal update)

(BS) some findings in the recent HMICFRS published report are graded 'Adequate', whilst it may not sound impressive this does refer to the service level being acceptable. Some of the highlighted areas of the Inspectors we do fundamentally disagree with and are a complete overreach.

There were areas picked up in the report that are fair, i.e. some decisions being made internally not at the appropriate authority level. This has since been corrected. Another example are samples of case files that ought to have been referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct sooner, again this has been corrected. The report references an inspection that took place 8 months ago, we received a 'hot debrief' at the time and have acted immediately upon these areas mentioned.

No Actions

20. Any Other Business (AOB)* (Chair, Dr Stephen Page)

*Note: 1 item AOB – statutory obligations audit (*Vicki Waskett*)

(VW) regarding the Statutory Obligations Audit, would the committee welcome a paper on this subject? (SP) confirmed that this would be very helpful. (GO) recommended a member of the committee visit the OPCC and meet with (VW) to discuss further.

Action: Update the committee with a short paper re: Statutory Obligations Audit (JIAC 026)

The meeting concluded at 16.25
Part II – Confidential 16:25-17:00

Date of next meeting: Friday 12 June 2026 at 1300-17:00hrs to be held in the CCMT Conference Room, HQ South/MS Teams