

<b>Security Classification</b>	
NPCC Policy: Documents <u>cannot</u> be accepted or ratified without a security classification (Protective Marking may assist in assessing whether exemptions to FOIA <u>may</u> apply):	
<b>OFFICIAL</b>	
<b>Freedom of information (FOI)</b>	
This document (including attachments and appendices) may be subject to an FOI request and the NPCC FOI Officer & Decision Maker will consult with you on receipt of a request prior to any disclosure. For external Public Authorities in receipt of an FOI, please consult with <a href="mailto:npcc.foi.request@npfdu.police.uk">npcc.foi.request@npfdu.police.uk</a>	
<b>Author and Contributors:</b>	Business Support
<b>Force/Organisation:</b>	NPCC HO
<b>Date Created:</b>	09/12/2024
<b>Coordination Committee:</b>	NPCC Central Office
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Audit and Assurance
<b>Attachments @ para</b>	N/A
<b>Information Governance &amp; Security</b>	
In compliance with the Government's Security Policy Framework's (SPF) mandatory requirements, please ensure any onsite printing is supervised, and storage and security of papers are in compliance with the SPF. Dissemination or further distribution of this paper is strictly on a need to know basis and in compliance with other security controls and legislative obligations. If you require any advice, please contact <a href="mailto:npcc.foi.request@npfdu.police.uk">npcc.foi.request@npfdu.police.uk</a> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/security-policy-framework/hmg-security-policy-framework#risk-management">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/security-policy-framework/hmg-security-policy-framework#risk-management</a>	

**MINUTES  
AUDIT AND ASSURANCE BOARD (AAB)  
26TH NOVEMBER 2024**

**ATTENDEES**

Robert Light (RL)	AAB Chair (Online)
Gavin Stephens (GS)	NPCC Chair
Katy Bourne (KB)	PCC Sussex (Online)
John Campion (JC)	PCC West Mercia (Online)
Phillip Golding (PG)	APCC (Online)
Gemma Stannard (GeS)	NPCC Head of Strategic Hub

**APOLOGIES:**

Jo Coles (JoC)	Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime, North Yorkshire
----------------	--

**1.) WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

RL welcomed all to the meeting.

**Apologies – See above**

**Conflict of Interests**

- No Conflict of Interest Reports were declared or received.

**2.) PREVIOUS AAB MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The AAB minutes from September 2024 were agreed with no matters arising.

**3.) ACTION LOG**

RL reported that there were a number of items to be closed down on the action log with the exception of Action 97.

GeS explained that this action relates to the procurement process MPS are undertaking which is envisaged to take up to 24 months. GeS has had and will continue to have discussions with the MPS' Chief Financial Accountant to ensure that the NPCC business and user requirements are captured and considered as part of the procurement process.

Board member commented that the risks involved in moving to the new system should be captured in the NPCC's Risk Register. GeS agreed and clarified that whichever system was picked by the MPS, it would run in parallel to existing systems during testing.

DARA lead added that DARA, as the MPS's internal auditor, sit on the programme board for this programme of work and have oversight on the wider risks of this, so can feed this back to the board. AW added that as the Home Office has recently onboarded new software and the experience of unforeseen issues with the new system, she volunteered to contribute to this process too.

RL asked for this action to be updated when necessary, so that any potential risks can be considered at future AABs.

RL asked the board if they were happy to close the items marked as 'Recommended for Closure,' to which there was no dissent.

#### 4.) STRATEGIC

##### 4.1 CCC Report

GS presented slides as part of this agenda item and the additional points and questions below are in response to these:

- GS summarised the key topics for discussion at December's Chief Constables' Council (CCC) and highlighted two of the main topics would be seeking agreement to move to a Single Pensions Scheme Manager for UK Policing, and the additional focus of Police Reform that was given in the APCC/NPCC Summit held the previous week - Stronger Home Office Performance Arrangements, a National Body for Policing and the view that Police Workforce, Standards and Culture should form part of the programme. GS summarised the work that will run parallel to this around the design of the programme, the governance of this and the communications and engagement strategy.
- Discussion took place around NPCC budgets, a budget critical level and what services the NPCC could offer if this were not received. GS detailed that settlement is expected around 10<sup>th</sup> December and also highlighted that the NPCC had requested additional funds with the proposal to drive efficiency savings from the grant agreements that go out in the NPCC name but without NPCC oversight/coordination. GeS added that, with reference to NPCC staffing and based on previous experiences, the finer details will not available until January.
- A minimum figure was discussed below which the NPCC would not be able to operate. In response, it was detailed that the Home Office are scrutinising everything in fine detail so the minimum viable level is something of which they are very aware.
- A question was asked about the future of the Centre for Police Productivity, which will be hosted at the College of Policing. Again, the answer was given that the potential function of it depended on what budget was allocated in December.
- With reference to Right Care, Right Person, RL raised a question on the peer reviews and if independent members were involved.

**Action: GeS to confirm whether independent members were involved in the Peer Reviews for Right Care, Right Person.**

- RL asked about the management of the reputational issues/impact brought about by Operation Drakeful. GS responded:
  - The Government's Safer Streets mission is about giving confidence in the Police and Criminal Justice System.
  - Research has already been done that shows that there is a disparity between confidence in the institution of Police, which is low, and confidence in local policing that is relatively high. In addition, the response to the summer's disorder has also increased confidence in the Criminal Justice System.

- The National Performance Framework, which will be discussed at CCC, is looking to establish strong links with the Home Office Performance Unit and will more than likely contain confidence measures.
- RL then asked when the real changes on the Police Reform agenda will become apparent. GS explained there are a variety of factors involved, not least support from the Treasury, but it is unlikely that the National Body will be established before at least 2027/28.

#### 4.2 Hub Funding

Organisational Development Change (ODC) lead presented slides on the Strategic Hub funding. The additional points and questions below are in response to these.

- PG asked about the £1.9m increase in funding and if the detail of where it was likely to be spent was in the slides. ODC lead answered that it wasn't covered in the slides as the details was covered at previous AAB meetings but highlighted that it enabled NPCC to continue with business as usual and following the large budget reduction in 24/25, significant missed opportunities have been identified which the Hub does not have capacity to undertake but this is impacting on delivery of service.
- RL asked how the NPCC demonstrates its value for ongoing work and how much does that inform the decision on taking on new work? ODC lead replied that NPCC have not yet developed the process that describes the overall benefits but it does have benefits attached to the Shared Services provision this year. Work is being done to ensure that, in future, savings can be tracked and NPCC are establishing the governance structure around it to capture the benefits. This then prompted a discussion over quantifying and qualifying cost and quantitative benefits, benefit strategy and the speed and scope of future changes.
- KB pointed out a discrepancy on Slide 15 on Opal as Project Opal has two strands – Opal that has a budget of around £700k and focuses on Serious Acquisitive Crime and Pegasus/Opal that has a budget of around £1m that covers retail crime and is funded separately. ODC lead thanked KB for this and highlighted that the slide doesn't currently contain the full picture as data is still being verified but this would be looked at.
- PG then questioned the accountability and scrutiny around all of the functions detailed, whether there was confidence across all of the programmes/project/functions listed and whether the Home Office and APCC might have a wider role to play in this. GeS responded that this information only covers 2024/25 and will be going to CCC in December but has been shared with HO. It will likely look different for 2025/26. At present, the Hub hasn't had the capacity to do more than gather the information to describe the landscape - the request for additional funding would enable efficiencies to be drawn out and would be open to do something jointly. GeS also highlighted work being done to understand the NPCC contracts landscape. In response, KB suggested NPCC makes contact with the Chief Financial Officers in each of the PCCs for further information on budgets.
- RL asked if the National Policing Board would be covering this type of governance in future, to which GS responded that it was an option, but it will be a matter for government although the NPCC will have a strong view on how it should function.
- Board member wondered whether a letter from the AAB Chair to the Home Office in support of Hub funding might strengthen the proposal. Discussion was then held around the format, wording and signatories to the letter. A decision was made that RL will draft a letter to circulate to the Board for approval to support the proposal.

**Action: RL to draft letter to circulate to Board for approval before sending.**

#### 4.3 Annual Budget Plan

IM presented slides, the additional points and questions below are in response to these:

- Funding Submissions for 2025/26, IM talked of asking each area to make a 2.5% efficiency saving. KB raised that was not clear which has delivered the efficiency savings. IM responded that for some areas the money requested is for 1 role and therefore an efficiency saving was not possible, but all areas had subsumed inflation and pay award costs without additional funding. GeS also reminded the Board about the significant work done to review all National Operating Budget areas for 2024/25, including scrutiny panels, review of reserves and underspends, etc. This had driven out efficiencies but could not be fully repeated for 25/26 due to reduction in Hub capacity.

**Action: Funding Submissions slide to be amended to show which areas have been able to demonstrate the 2.5% efficiency savings target.**

#### **4.4 Progress of Committee and Hub Delivery Plans**

LH presented slides and the question below is in response to these:

- KB wondered if the Agenda for Reform had had any impact on Hub activity to which LH replied that it had and this will be reflected in a new objective shown on the Hub Delivery Plan.

### **5.) DELIVERY**

#### **5.1 NPCC Quarterly Finance Paper**

PT presented slides and the questions and additional points below are in response to these:

- Finance team confirmed that NPCC has submitted a claim to the Home Office around Operation Navette given the additional costs occurred. Response is awaited.
- Board member asked about the difficulties regarding getting the financial data required from CoP and if close to resolution. Finance team responded that work is underway to pull together the relevant information to help ensure resolution.

**ACTION: GeS to monitor and ensure resolution of current issues**

## 5.2) ICT Contracts update

Senior lead gave an update on the PDS contract.

- NPCC and National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC) both agreed to proceed submitting the Business Justification paperwork to the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) for sign off in early October. It is now in the latest stages of MOPAC sign off. The contract is, therefore, on track for agreement and sign off in December.
- Senior lead does not foresee any other issues and expects it to pass through and final checks are in process.
- Major issues have been resolved and only a small handful of minor issues are still being worked through but nothing which presents a risk to contract finalisation.

## 5.3) SyAP progress update

Data Protection Officer (DPO) presented the slides and provided an update on SyAP related activity and progress, including:

- NPCC and Blue Light Commercial (BLC) have agreed to jointly fund an Information Security Manager role to end March 2027. A candidate has been offered and accepted the role and is in the process of vetting. They will join on a fixed term contract and will likely start in March/April 2025.
- NPCC is working on a memorandum of understanding with BLC to ensure clarity and how joint management/resource will work.
- With regard to SyAP, temporary resourcing was created earlier in the year and a remediation action plan was created where particular recommendations that needed to be addressed first were prioritised.
- Access to College Learn is being progressed for NPCC.
- NPCC continues to respond and act to information security warnings and regularly circulates communication to staff to ensure vigilance is maintained.

## 6.) AUDIT AND RISK

### 6.1 DARA Internal Audit Update (Paper)

DARA lead presented the slides. The questions and additional points below are in response to these:

- RL questioned any concerns to raise regarding finance. DARA lead noted performance outcomes and informed a draft report on programme governance and delivery will soon be published that will highlight some of the issues raised.
- DARA lead suggested the NPCC should give consideration to producing an annual governance statement. Other members discussed and agreed it should be explored by NPCC as to what options could look like.

**ACTION: GeS and DARA lead to discuss possible options for an annual governance statement for NPCC and bring to next AAB for discussion.**

- Board member commented on the openness and transparency of publishing reports and papers and suggested that NPCC may benefit from a publication policy. GeS highlighted that CCC minutes, AAB minutes, expenses, expenditure over £500, FOI responses etc. are all published on the NPCC website. GeS agreed that NPCC could look at options for a publication strategy but will need to be mindful of resources available in order to undertake this work.

**ACTION: GeS to report back to the Board on options around a publication strategy.**

## 6.2 DARA Recommendations Tracking Update

Senior leader presented the slides and highlighted:

- That the majority of actions have been closed with the development of Security Assurance for Policing (SyAP). The final remaining action cannot be closed until the IT contract is signed and there is still work to be done to embed SLA work into the contract.
- Senior lead proposed to review and make recommendations once the contract is signed, noting that some items will be included in a continuous improvement approach. Senior lead raised the point that there may be need for a follow up audit as the landscape has changed.

## 6.3 NPCC Quarterly Risk Update

Risk team presented the slides and the following points were raised:

- Risk team updated that more portfolios and forces are wanting to adopt the risk management framework through exposure from the National Risk Management Forum.
- The decision has been taken to evolve the framework reducing objectives, due to its maturity and complexity, allowing for wider adoption and viewing from a 2-person capacity perspective.
- The National Risk Management Forum is continuing to be held quarterly with good attendance and engagement from all forces. Action has been taken to create smaller working groups for delivery.
- AAB have been given visibility of what has been submitted to CCC. Endorsement by Chiefs will lead to evolving the risk framework to embed strategic risk approach and gather input from national leads and regional feedback.
- Risk team confirmed that they will bring more visualisation of the framework to the next AAB.

## 7.) UPDATES

### 7.1 AAB Workshop October 2024 – Actions Arising

RL gave updates on the actions arising following October's AAB Workshop:

- Agreed that will keep a watching brief on if there are areas of discussions at AAB where representation from beyond England and Wales would be beneficial.
- Change and Improvement Board – it was suggested an AAB Board Member (independent) attends and observes the Change and Improvement meeting. Agreed that RL will attend December's meeting.
- A closer relationship with the College of Policing would be helpful – therefore agreed a meeting will be arranged between NPCC Chair, AAB Chair, CoP CEO and CoP Board Chair.
- GeS will arrange for Board member to shadow Comms lead to further understand NPCC staff and stakeholder engagement.

## 8.) ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB)

Health and Safety (H&S) lead informed the Board that we have received the outstanding Met IT assurance letter, updating that it was returned to the Met due to being in an incorrect format. RL questioned if there were any concerns in the letter to raise. H&S lead confirmed work is being done with AB and there nothing of concern to note currently.

**ACTION: AC to file the letter once received and bring to next AAB if there are any issues.**

RL raised that it is proposed the 2025 AAB workshop and the summer AAB should be merged into a one-day meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025 due to the difficulty of finding a suitable date in June for the Board meeting. No objections were raised. RL also highlighted that at the 2024 workshop, JoC offered to host next year's in North Yorkshire. NPCC has started to take this proposal forward with JoC's Executive Assistant.

RL will produce the annual report at the end of the year, it will focus on the work that has been completed over the last 12 months. JC queried compliance in terms of the annual report work, however, GeS confirmed the annual report does not have a set time of year to be published.

All confirmed the next AAB will be held on 25th March 2025.

RL thanked all the attendees both in the room and online for their continued support and contribution before closing the meeting.