

## Commissioner's covering note

The role of Police and Crime Commissioner was created to help make the police more accountable to the people they serve, and the holding of our local police to account on behalf of the people of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is my core responsibility.

I do this in a number of ways and recently, I have convened a new Accountability Board at which as Chair, I select a number of areas of policing activity and related performance, and scrutinise them in detail, requiring the Chief Constable and his team to explain both current performance, and any plans they have in place to make improvements where required.

Following this, I then make a judgment on how assured I am, again both in terms of current police performance and the quality of any improvement plans. I then publish a statement describing my levels of assurance for the public to see, along with the agenda and attendance at each Board, to ensure as wide a visibility as is possible.

I remain committed to ensuring that Devon and Cornwall Police delivers a service to our communities as effectively and efficiently as is possible, and my office and I will continue to not only scrutinise and challenge robustly, but also to celebrate and champion whenever appropriate, on behalf of the people of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

My statement of assurance from my Board meeting of 4th September 2025, and the meetings agenda, can be found below.

**Alison HERNANDEZ**

Police & Crime Commissioner

# Commissioner's Accountability Board












**Date & venue:** Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September, Andy Hocking House, Middlemoor, Exeter  
**Chair:** Alison HERNANDEZ, Police & Crime Commissioner  
**Chief Constable:** James VAUGHAN QPM

## Statement of assurance

Within this meeting, the Commissioner explored two specific areas of force performance for the purposes of assurance:

- Firearms Explosives Licensing Unit update
- OPCC Councillor Advocate Scheme
- Force Management Statement

No.	Title	Rationale	Current performance	Force plans
1	Firearms & Explosives Licensing Unit (FELU)	The Commissioner recognised the progress made in the FELU to stabilise this high risk area and to improve customer service, including eliminating the legacy backlog of applications seen up until December 2024.	Renewals of licence 	Assured 
		The Commissioner was assured by both the force's current performance and future plans in the management of renewals, noting that 87% of renewals were now being completed within the national target of 112 days.	Grant of licence 	Part Assured 
		The Commissioner was part assured by the force's current performance in relation to grant applications, noting that only 54% of grants were being completed in the same timeframe. The Commissioner recognised that this difference in performance is due to longer processes due to the additional legal requirements for grants, and at times the need to prioritise renewals due to the additional physical risk involved (owing to the applicant already possessing a firearm), as well as the often ongoing occupational needs of applicants requesting renewals.  The Commissioner also recognised the force's work to ensure compliance with the 71 identified changes required following the publication of recent Home Office statutory guidance for firearms licencing. The Commissioner was assured that plans were in place to make the changes required and continue to monitor compliance.	New statutory guidance  N/A	Assured 
2	OPCC Councillor advocate scheme	The Commissioner noted some inconsistencies with neighbourhood Inspectors engagement with local councillors, including supporting the delivery of the councillor advocate scheme. This had become more evident following changes to elected members as a result of the 2025 local elections, and personnel changes in neighbourhood policing teams.  The Chief Constable recognised the inconsistencies described and undertook to ensure improved involvement in the scheme and with local councillors more widely.  Due to the current inconsistencies in engagement with the councillor advocate scheme, the Commissioner was part assured on the current performance of the scheme, and assured by the force's plans	Part Assured 	Assured 

		to improve engagement.		
3	Force Management Statement (FMS)	<p>The Commissioner noted the forces work in response to HMICFRS' feedback on the FMS submitted in May 2025, and the force's progress in delivering the next iteration of the FMS for May 2026.</p> <p>The Commissioner was assured by the force's current performance in developing the FMS, and also assured on the force's plans for further development and final submission of the FMS.</p>	<b>Assured</b> 	<b>Assured</b> 

Key:

Assured	Part assured	Not assured
Sufficient evidence has been provided to assure the Commissioner.	Some evidence has been provided, however insufficient to offer full assurance. Some further work is required.	Insufficient evidence has been provided to assure the Commissioner. Improvements are required.

Alison **HERNANDEZ**, Police & Crime Commissioner for Devon, Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

# Commissioner's Accountability Board



Thursday, September 4, 2025, 11am–2pm  
Fowey Room, Andy Hocking House, Middlemoor

## Agenda

Item no.	Title	Lead
	Arrival	
1	Chair's opening address	Chair
2	Review of Previous Meeting	Chair
3	<b>Chief Constable's update report</b> To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Force performance against the Police &amp; Crime plan</li> <li>Force budget &amp; financial performance</li> <li>HMICFRS/PPOG matters</li> <li>Recent homicides or serious crimes the Commissioner should know about</li> </ul> <i>The aim of this item is for the CC to inform the PCC of key issues happening in the force, including areas of concern &amp; success</i>	James VAUGHAN
4	<b>Firearms Explosives Licensing Unit</b> Performance deep dive To provide a post summer update on FELU service levels during the expected annual surge.	Joe MATTHEWS
5	<b>OPCC Councillor Advocate Scheme</b> OPCC deep dive To deep dive sign up and activity of the Councillor Advocate Scheme, including levels of sector engagement.	Fran HUGHES
6	<b>Force Management Statements</b> Risk deep dive To present the details of the FMS to the Commissioner, in advance of the Force Management Risk Register being considered on the agenda at the November meeting.	Jim COLWELL and Charly BARTLETT
7	Assurance statement summary	Chair
8	AOB	Chair
9	Date & time of next meeting Meeting close	Chair

## Attendance

Role	Name	Attended
<b>Office of the Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>		
Police & Crime Commissioner	Alison HERNANDEZ	Y
Chief Executive Officer	Fran HUGHES	Y
Interim Deputy Chief Executive	Clare GOLLOP	Y
Treasurer	Nicky ALLEN	Y
Head of Communications and Public Affairs	Ben WOOLVIN	Y
Accountability and Standards Manager	Vicky CHURCH	Y
OPCC Executive Staff Officer	Nella BARKER	Y
<b>Devon and Cornwall Police</b>		
Chief Constable	James VAUGHAN	Y
Deputy Chief Constable	Jim COLWELL	Y
Assistant Chief Constable (Justice & Vulnerability)	Jim PEARCE	Y
Director (Finance & Resources)	David WILKIN	Y
Director (Legal, Reputation & Risk)	Mike STAMP	Y
Assistant Chief Officer (People)	Alexis POOLE	Y
Staff Officer	Zoe SMITH	Y

## Guests

Supt – Firearms Licensing	Joe MATTHEWS
Senior Analyst	Charly BARTLETT

## Apologies

Head of Performance & Scrutiny (OPCC)	Jon BACK
Assistant Chief Constable (Local Policing), D&CP	Glen MAYHEW
Assistant Chief Constable (Contact & Strategic Planning), D&CP	Nikki LEAPER
Assistant Chief Constable, D&CP	David THORNE
Non-Executive Director, D&CP	Dinah COX