



PCC

Office of the Police and
Crime Commissioner
Devon and Cornwall

Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

Office of the Police and Crime
Commissioner for Devon & Cornwall
and the Isles of Scilly

June 2026



Foreword from the Commissioner

Welcome to the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2025/26. The AGS outlines what the key governance structures and processes were during the financial year and captures the main findings arising from the annual review of those arrangements. This is the second AGS of my third consecutive term of office. This year the benefits of strong governance in policing, which is accountable to the public of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly could not be more relevant and topical with the changes to policing governance across England and Wales announced by the government.

The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) Annual Governance Statement is produced separately to that of Devon and Cornwall Police. The AGS is a key document which provides the OPCC with the opportunity to reflect on the processes, activities and behaviours which deliver decision making and activity within the organisation and across Devon and Cornwall Police and our strategic alliance with Dorset Police

It is vital that the statement itself, the process to develop it and the political review and discussion of the statement are taken within the operating context of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the emerging opportunities, risks, and threats that policing faces.

The legal duties of a Police and Crime Commissioner are clearly defined within the following:

- Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
- Policing Protocol Order 2023
- Financial Management Code of Practice for the Police, Fire and Rescue Services 2018
- Local Government Act 1999



My team deliver high quality services to our communities. To be effective we rely on our Code of Corporate Governance and other governance arrangements as the framework to make sure that service delivers against my statutory duties and Police and Crime Plan priorities. We have a responsibility to ensure that our governance arrangements, as a single organisation and where we share arrangements with others, remain fit for purpose and we undertake a review on an annual basis.

Where our review has identified positive practice or areas for improvement, we will capture those in the relevant section of this AGS.

Overall, the review undertaken to inform this AGS indicated that the key structures and processes that were in place during 2025/26, were robust and continued to provide a high level of confidence in the governance arrangements and that:

- Decisions are ethical, open, honest, and evidence based.
- Public money is safeguarded.
- Risk is effectively managed.
- Transparency comes as a matter of course.
- Processes are continually improved.

2025/26 Operating Environment

At the outset of this statement, it is important to record the operating environment and context in which services were delivered and this AGS drafted.

The Police and Crime Commissioner and her office are charged with the governance of policing in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. This includes all police funding (capital, revenue and investments) and all income for Devon and Cornwall Police as well as the ownership of most assets and the ownership and management of the police estate. The Code of Corporate Governance is reviewed on a bi-annual basis.

There is no doubt that 2025/26 has been a challenging environment both locally and nationally. The Police and Crime Commissioner Alison Hernandez was re-elected for a third consecutive term in May 2024. In the general election which followed in July 2024 a Labour government was elected and the national landscape relating to policing and public services changed. This political landscape and a variety of local, national and international events have shaped the delivery of policing and the OPCC and continue to do so.

Locally, the leadership challenges for policing were resolved during 2025 with the retirement of Chief Constable Will Kerr QPM in July 2025 and the return to work of James Colwell following a misconduct process. Continuity in leadership continues to be provided by Chief Constable James Vaughan QPM.

In November 2025, the government announced that Police and Crime Commissioners will be abolished when their current terms of office end in May 2028. The subsequent announcement of the policing reform white paper (From Local to National: A New Model for Policing) intends to change the governance and delivery models of policing in England and Wales over the coming years.

The announcement on the future of police and crime commissioners was made without consultation and OPCCs were given less than an hour's notice of this announcement leaving little time to inform staff.

This announcement and the impending changes to local government are now inextricably linked. In any areas which are unlikely to have a mayoral governance model such as Devon and Cornwall then the proposed model will be a Local Policing Board. This Board will be made up from leaders of upper tier local authorities. The details of these arrangements are yet to be worked out, but it is unlikely that OPCC functions and therefore its staff will transfer in totality to these new arrangements. We understand this also to mean that the two statutory officers will not be required as these salaries and that of the Police and Crime Commissioners have been accounted for in the government's estimated savings by changing the model. This effectively means that the OPCC is now entering a period of transition to the new arrangements.

As part of the introduction of elements of this White Paper the government will be commissioning an independent review of policing boundaries to determine what the future structure of policing across England and Wales will look like. This has significant implications for Devon and Cornwall Police and its communities and the level and type of policing services that our communities will receive in the future.

Further changes to police funding arrangements and the late announcement of the police funding settlement in December 2025 have added complexity to strategic planning arrangements and a further reliance on local taxation (43%, an increase of 1% from the previous year) to deliver policing across both counties and islands.

2025/26 Operating Environment

The government has also announced a leadership review of policing through a specially appointed board. This review is due to seek feedback during 2026.

Under the leadership of Chief Constable Mr James Vaughan QPM Devon and Cornwall Police was removed from HMICFRS enhanced monitoring, reflecting the commitment of officers, staff and volunteers to deliver continuous improvement. What is clear is the need for strong, stable and experienced leadership in policing without the distractions of external changes to enable a focus on policing's primary focus for preventing and detecting crime.

The leadership within the OPCC has remained stable throughout with continuity being provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner and her two statutory officers.

There is no doubt that public confidence in policing both locally and nationally remains a concern. High profile cases of police misconduct across all ranks locally and nationally continue to undermine public trust. Previous lack of stable and experienced leadership in Devon and Cornwall Police has restricted the scale of pace of overall improvements required.

The breadth of the work within the auspices of police and crime commissioners continues to grow and evolve. Partnerships and collaborations have become more complex and working across geographic boundaries is a vital component of influencing and improving systems. The OPCC remains at the forefront of innovation and being creative with the way it develops and influences partnership to reduce victims of crime and reduce reoffending.

There is a consequential impact from changes elsewhere in the public sector to policing and the OPCC. The changes to NHS England, integrated health boards, local government reorganisation and devolution, to name but a few, are challenging the partnership landscape and making short, and medium-term, funding decisions difficult.

In 2025/26 the costs of additional responsibilities for police and crime commissioners absorbing oversight of the provision of specialist advisors to police misconduct panels was challenging. Ongoing internal changes have been required in-year to realign these pressures. The government's £1million investment into 'Hotspot Policing' was a welcome intervention, which enabled the Commissioner to invest in street marshals and match funding to increase the impact of this approach. The Commissioner has also rolled out her Street Focus approach which started in Torquay and is being extended to Camborne. This, along with efforts to make it easier for businesses to report crime with the development of a partnership with UKPAC (UK Partners Against Crime and PARC (Plymouth Against Retail Crime), is driving down retail crime and anti-social behaviour.

In July 2025 the Commissioner also launched her "Disruptive approach to Violence Against Women and Girls". This along with a call for ideas from the community is shaping the approach that is now being taken by the OPCC in its delivery of this agenda.

Scrutiny remains a core area of focus. Although this remains part of business as usual, the OPCC also undertakes formal scrutiny of key areas of concern. In 2025/26 this resulted in scrutiny activity including: Out of Court Disposals, Victims Codes of Practice, welfare and legal services in custody; and file quality.

The Commissioner also undertakes reviews of police complaints and antisocial behaviour case reviews.

2025/26 Operating Environment

The Commissioner's Annual Report on the work of the OPCC and the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan was agreed by the Police and Crime Panel in July 2025.

One of the biggest areas of spend within the OPCC is on the commissioning of services (approximately £9.2Million for 2025/26). The way in which the money is allocated is published annually, in advance, through a Commissioning Intentions Plan which outlines the areas which the Commissioner intends to prioritise. The funding available is a combination of grant money received by the Commissioner from the Ministry of Justice for victims' services and from the Commissioner's own budget. During 2025/26 this approach was reviewed and replaced with a Strategic Investment Plan for 2026/27 to better reflect the totality of the income and expenditure of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Commissioner has a wide variety of convening powers to bring partners together to bring further reductions in crime, improving services for victims or to improve the criminal justice system.

Formal partnerships in this area include:

- Vision Zero South West – road safety partnership
- Serious Violence Partnership
- Local Criminal Justice Board
- South West Reducing Reoffending Partnership
- Prisoners Building Homes

The Commissioner also enters into a wide variety of collaboration agreements locally, regionally and nationally through s22a collaboration agreements. The regional infrastructure of policing collaborations is overseen by a Policing Collaboration Board comprising all the South West police and crime commissioners, chief constables and OPCC chief executives. This collaboration is the senior governance board for the delivery of £86Million of policing services through four force and five force collaborations.

Some of the successes of the OPCC in 2025/26 were recognised with awards including the OPCC Chief Executive winning the Westcountry Women's Award: Director of the Year and our Prisoners Building Homes Scheme winning the Civil Service Programme of the Year.

The governance of partner organisations is also having direct impact on our operating environment with devolution and local government reorganisation impacting on our local authorities; changes to boundaries for integrated care boards; and significant changes in NHS England to name but a few. In light of this changing landscape the Police and Crime Commissioner announced her intention to serve the remainder of her term of office without any political affiliations in January 2026 so that she could better represent the communities she serves.

Corporate Governance

What is Corporate Governance?

Corporate governance refers to the process by which organisations are directed, controlled, led, and held to account. In other words, corporate governance is how we make sure we do things properly.

Governance is about how policing ensures it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people in a timely, inclusive, open, honest, and accountable manner. It comprises of systems and processes, cultures, and values by which the relevant policing bodies are directed and controlled.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has a responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control.

Good governance is an essential part of local democracy and through the continued adoption of transparent processes the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will strive to ensure that strategies, policies, and operational matters are transparent and understood by residents and visitors to Devon, Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly.

The Corporate Governance Framework sets out the systems and processes, culture and values by which the Chief Constable and the Police & Crime Commissioner (Commissioner) manage their respective roles and responsibilities.

Each year the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is required to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The AGS is the formal mechanism we use to report on the effectiveness of our internal controls and decision-making systems.

Our AGS complies with the reporting requirements contained in the CIPFA– Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and accompanies our accounts for the financial year. This is a document that describes how well our governance system has functioned during the year ended 31 March 2026 and sets out areas for development for the year ahead.

Good corporate governance helps to put people first in everything we do. This gives us confidence that we are doing the right thing in the right way for those who we deliver services to, for and with.

Corporate Governance

The principles and guidance have again informed the review of governance arrangements for 2025/26. More specifically, the structure of this AGS has been prepared with reference to themes from key elements of the structures and processes referred to in the CIPFA AGS guidance.

In addition, the CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code) provides the public sector with guidance for good and sustainable financial management. Devon and Cornwall complied with the principles and standards within the FM Code that provided assurance on financial sustainability.

Risk Management

Risk management is a key facet of Devon and Cornwall OPCC's governance framework. The framework comprises the systems, processes and values through which activities are monitored and managed. It is essential that the threats to achieving objectives are consistently identified and assessed. This is achieved through the adoption and implementation of an effective risk management process that supports the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.

In the CIPFA publication "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework" which was followed by specific guidance notes for Policing Bodies. The Framework sets out seven principles of good governance which are taken from the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA) ('the International Framework') and interprets them for local government.

The seven principles are:

- A –** behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law
- B –** ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- C –** defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- D –** determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- E –** developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- F –** managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- G –** implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Codes of conduct and standards of professional behaviour

Ethics and standards are core to the corporate governance arrangements

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner aspires to the highest ethical standards in all its activities. The OPCC has its own Staff Code of Conduct, and the PCC swears an Oath on election.

The 'Nolan Principles' (the Seven Principles of Public Life) apply to all holders of public office – and in this case specifically apply to the Police and Crime Commissioner and her staff. These standards are:

- ***Selflessness***
- ***Integrity***
- ***Objectivity***
- ***Accountability***
- ***Openness***
- ***Honesty***
- ***Leadership***

Further information -

[Commissioners Oath of Office](#)

[OPCC Staff Code of Conduct 2026](#)

[Ethical Policing Principles \(2024\)](#)

Complaints and Recognition

All complaints about the Police and Crime Commissioner are reported to the Police and Crime Panel. Complaints about OPCC staff are handled by the OPCC Chief Executive.

The Commissioner is also responsible for complaints about the Chief Constable. Most complaints against the police are, by law, handled by police professional standards departments, however the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has the responsibility for undertaking the majority of appeals, or reviews, for police complaints

The Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account for the provision of an efficient and effective police complaints service.



Ensuring Compliance

Code of Corporate Governance

The Code of Corporate Governance is a key governance instrument which acts as a reference point for the expectations and rules about, for example, who in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner can make decisions and on what issues. It details the roles and responsibilities of the Police and Crime Commissioner and her two statutory officers, namely the OPCC Chief Executive and the OPCC Treasurer.

Finance Regulations

Aligned to the Code of Corporate Governance are the Finance Regulations. These translate into practical guidelines and is the framework for decision making on financial matters.

Sources of Assurance

Various sources of assurance, both internal and external, are relied on to test and ensure compliance with laws and regulations and that governance arrangements and expenditure are in line with the Finance Regulations.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit Services were provided by the South-West Audit Partnership (SWAP). The internal audit plan for the year and regular progress reports detailing the outcome of the assignments in the plan were prepared and reported to the Independent Audit Committee.

The plan is risk based and targeted at areas where Internal Audit is the appropriate assurance provider. It is designed with a large degree of flexibility so that changes can be made to test emerging areas of concern.

Based on the internal audit assignments completed throughout the year an audit opinion is formed by SWAP for both the Commissioner and Chief Constable. Both the Commissioner and Chief Constable received positive opinions in the Annual Report for the reporting period.

The positive opinion of the internal auditors for the year ended March 2025 was used to inform the judgement on the level of assurance provided by the governance arrangements.

Head of Internal Audit (SWAP) opinion in support of the Annual Governance Statement (December 2025)

“On the balance of our 2024/25 audit work for Devon and Cornwall Police and OPCC, enhanced by the work of external agencies, I am able to offer a **Reasonable Assurance** opinion in respect of the areas reviewed during the year.”

Further information

[The Code of Corporate Governance and Financial Regulations](#)

[Annual Internal Audit Report](#)

Ensuring Compliance

External Audit

External Auditors work independently of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. They examine records, operating systems and financial accounts and provide assurance around compliance. Our external audit service is provided by Grant Thornton. The appointment is made independently by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) who manage the arrangements for appointing auditors as set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. In 2025/26 our external auditors assessed us as having a “green status” for value for money.

To support their roles, all committee members regularly reviewed and considered their training requirements. All the IAC sessions in the reporting period were quorate and there was active engagement from members and officers.

Further information

[Independent Audit Committee](#)

[External Auditors Report 2024/25](#)

Good governance is about how organisations ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, and accountable manner.

The Commissioner has in place structures, systems, and internal controls by which the police service is directed and controlled.

There are also processes and procedures in place that enable the Commissioner to hold the Chief Constable to account for policing. The Commissioner engages with the local people and communities to ensure robust public accountability and transparency.

Grant Thornton the external auditor delivers an audit opinion based on their verification of the financial accounts.

Opinion on Financial Statements

During the year External Audit gave an “Unqualified” opinion on the Group, Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable’s financial statements 2024/25

Summary of Value for Money assessment 2024/25

Auditors are required to report their commentary on the PCC’s and CC’s arrangements under specified criteria. The auditors did not identify any risks or significant weakness in the arrangements for financial sustainability or governance. An improvement recommendation was raised that the CC maintains focus on fully addressing the remaining causes of concern and other areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS as well as maintaining grip on delivery of wider sustained performance improvement.

Independent Audit Committee

The Commissioner and Chief Constable operate an Independent Audit Committee (IAC) which is a joint arrangement with Dorset under the working together arrangements of the Policing Alliance.

During 2024/25 the Committee Chair reviewed issues through regular meetings with the Executive and Chief Officers. Committee members worked together, to develop and use their knowledge and expertise, and that of others to the best effect. They have a non-political, evidence-based approach that has been proven to achieve good results.

Ensuring Compliance

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires each police area in England, other than the metropolitan police district, to establish a Police and Crime Panel. The Panel scrutinizes their Police and Crime Commissioner who themselves will hold the Chief Constable of their force to account for the full range of their responsibilities.

The Police and Crime Panel has its own 'Panel Arrangements and Rules of Procedure' which are available via the host authority website, currently Plymouth City Council. The Panel comprises 20 members, 18 of which are drawn from local authorities across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, plus two members independent from the local authorities. In terms of political proportionality, the allocation of seats on the Panel is based on the political makeup of each authority.

Either the Chair or the Vice Chair of the Panel will be a Member from Cornwall (and the Isles of Scilly) and the other position will be filled by a Member from Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay).

Sustainability

The OPCC and the Force have a shared Sustainability Strategy. The OPCC also manages the Estates function directly and a separate Estates Strategy provides the framework for how this service develops and takes account of sustainability. Priority areas for estates investment are agreed at the Resources Board.

Transparency and Engagement

The Commissioner is the voice of the public in policing. The view of the Commissioner is that transparency is one of the pillars of good corporate governance. The stated aspirations are that statutory requirements are not only complied with but exceeded.

Active engagement with the communities that we serve helps to create a positive working relationship with them and a more detailed understanding of their needs and issues which helps shape service delivery.

A range of tools are used to help us listen to and understand the experiences of our communities.

The communities of Devon & Cornwall were regularly invited to have their say during 2024/25 in a wide variety of formats. Details of the range of activities and engagements are provided in the [Commissioner's Annual Report 2024/25](#).

The Commissioner actively encourages public engagement and aims to bring people and communities together to address issues of common importance, to solve shared problems and to bring about positive social change. This includes a range of partnerships to help improve public confidence and overall community safety.



How the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner was managed in 2025/26

The way in which a Police and Crime Commissioner operates, is set out in law. The APCC also produces [a helpful publication](#) on the function a PCC must carry out. These functions have elements of discretion as to how they are applied locally within an overall operating framework.

Code of Corporate Governance

The Code of Corporate Governance contains the scheme of delegation and consent which sets out the parameters for who can make decisions across the business.

Police and Crime Plan

The plan sets out the vision and priorities of the Police and Crime Commissioner for their term of office for policing and community safety, as well as the objectives and ambitions that the Chief Constable is held to account against. Community engagement informs a refresh of the Police and Crime Plan priorities annually.

Financial Management and the Resources Board

The forum for oversight of corporate health during 2025/26 was the Resources Board which is Chaired by the OPCC Chief Executive and the Chief Constable alternately. During the year the Board operated monthly to monitor the management of resources including land, property, finance, projects, and people. The Board received regular reports on workforce supply, litigation, estates, capital health checks and group financials.

The Resources Board has supported the achievement of the strategic objectives as recorded in the Annual Report.

Commissioner's Accountability Board

In 2025/26 the OPCC replaced one of its formal meetings with the Force with a new Commissioner's Accountability Board. This Board, chaired monthly by the Police and Crime Commissioner holds both the Chief Constable and the OPCC Chief Executive to account. Its consistent members are members of the OPCC Executive Team and the Executive Team from Devon and Cornwall Police.

At this Board the Commissioner selects a number of areas of policing activity and related performance and scrutinises 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, the Commissioner then makes and publishes a judgment on assurance, both in terms of current police performance and the quality of any improvement plans. A statement is then published describing the 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.

OPCC Executive Leadership Board

The OPCC Executive Leadership Board is the primary governance board for the OPCC and its core membership is made up of the OPCC Chief Executive, OPCC Treasurer, and OPCC Executive Team. The OPCC Leadership Board meets the following functions:

- It is the primary decision-making board within the OPCC
- It is the central point for oversight of delivery of the Police & Crime Plan
- It has oversight and signoff of OPCC budget expenditure (commissioning budget, plan delivery budget, offender management budget and office budget)
- It has oversight and sign-off for OPCC policies
- It maintains oversight of the OPCC Risk Register

How the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner was managed in 2025/26

Structure of the OPCC

The Police and Crime Commissioner is elected by the people of Devon, Cornwall and the Isle of Scilly.

Details of all officers and senior staff salaries within the OPCC are published on the OPCC website. The OPCC has been proactively reducing its headcount and commissioning arrangements during 2025/26 to manage additional financial pressures.

The internal board and governance structure is set out in the Code of Corporate Governance.

OPCC Senior Management Team

The OPCC Executive Leadership Board (ELB) meets regularly, membership includes the Chief Executive, Treasurer and OPCC Executive Team.

The OPCC Executive Leadership Board is the primary governance board for the OPCC where members consider items submitted by the OPCC team for information and decision.

Regular updates are also provided to the wider OPCC team via monthly all-staff meetings, fortnightly newsletters, dedicated Teams channels and weekly senior managers meetings.

OPCC Chief Executive (Monitoring Officer and Head of Paid Service)

Every Police and Crime Commissioner must have a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who supports and advises the Commissioner and assists in the discharge of all statutory duties.

The Chief Executive is a statutory appointment and is also the Head of Paid Staff and Monitoring Officer with responsibility for delivery, the appointment and management of OPCC staff, compliance and the provision of specialist advice.

The CEO's main role is to directly support the Commissioner to discharge the primary responsibility of securing the maintenance of an efficient and effective policing service for the area. This includes the development and delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.

The Chief Executive leads on:

- Strategy and resource planning governance arrangements.
- Partnership working, commissioning and some direct service delivery engagement, communications and information management (including obtaining the views of the public, media relations, research, strategic needs assessments).
- Assurance arrangements – evaluation, scrutiny and performance management of complaints reviews
- Specialist teams within the OPCC including accountability and standards; partnerships and commissioning; communications and customer contact; Local Criminal Justice Board business manager; Serious Violence Prevention Programme as well as the hosting of a number of regional assets for the five Police and Crime Commissioners across the Southwest.

As Monitoring Officer, within the governance framework of policing the role is to ensure that the Commissioner, or anyone acting on the Commissioner's behalf, acts lawfully and in such a way as not to constitute maladministration.

OPCC Chief Finance Officer (Treasurer)

The OPCC Treasurer fulfills the role of Chief Finance Officer for the Commissioner's office and is responsible for the totality of the budget and specifically the capital budget, investment strategy and reserves for policing.

The OPCC Chief Finance Officer (CFO) recognises our commitment to the Home Office Financial Management Code of Practice for the Police Service in England and Wales.

The CFO arrangements have also considered the CIPFA Code of Practice recommendation that the CFO reports directly to the Commissioner. If different arrangements are adopted the reasons should be publicly reported in the AGS.

During the reporting period the Commissioner's CFO reported via the Chief Executive Officer to the Commissioner.

This provides an effective solution to engage on all material matters via a dedicated line manager. The Commissioner's CFO has direct access to the Commissioner as well as to the Chair of the Independent Audit Committee.

Every Police and Crime Commissioner must appoint a Chief Finance Officer or Treasurer. This is a statutory appointment.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring that proper financial controls are in place for the Police and Crime Commissioner, including arrangements for budget-setting and monitoring, and achieving value for money. The Treasurer also leads the estates' function.

This role has a statutory responsibility to ensure the Commissioners financial affairs are exercised in accordance with relevant legislation and codes of practice. She is responsible for financial probity and value for money in the use of public funds.

The Treasurer leads on:

- Providing financial advice to the Police and Crime Commissioner on activity including the strategic planning and policy making process
- Advice on budgetary matters including any consequential long-term implications.
- Advice on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of financial reserves. Ensuring that strategies are produced for treasury management, reserves and capital before the start of each financial year.
- Audit and risk management of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Treasurer also has a responsibility to report to the Commissioner and Police and Crime Panel any expenditure, or decision that will lead to expenditure, that she feels is unlawful.

Further information
[Force Executive Team](#)
[OPCC Executive Team](#)

Scrutiny Arrangements

Holding the Chief Constable to Account

Holding the Chief Constable to account is the statutory role of a Police and Crime Commissioner and can be done in several ways. Locally the Commissioner uses a mix of public meetings, reports, and research; organisations such as HMICFRS; and formal complaints to assess the Chief Constable against expectations. The Commissioner and the Chief Constable meet regularly to discuss the totality of policing.

In Devon and Cornwall, the Commissioners Police and Crime plan (2024-2029) focuses on the following four priorities for towns and cities, the countryside and coastal areas, on the roads and in homes and neighbourhoods:

- *Anti-social behaviour*
- *Drugs and alcohol*
- *Serious violence*
- *Theft*

The Commissioner actively seeks the input of the public to effectively carry out her holding to account scrutiny function. Whether formal or informal, scrutiny is informed by public views, needs and feedback, and the Commissioner is the voice of the public in policing. There is a rolling programme of engagement events across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly for the Commissioner and her team.

The Commissioner annually engages the public on their priorities through her “Your Safety, Your Say” survey which runs throughout the year. The outcome of this survey is reported to the Police and Crime Panel every February as part of the overall budget papers.

Scrutiny Arrangements

To ensure that scrutiny activity is consistent and fair, the Commissioner for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly aims to uphold several principles when conducting scrutiny.

The Commissioner conducts scrutiny in many ways. Some of this is carried out directly, whilst some is delegated to the Chief Executive, office staff, volunteers, or specially convened panels: -

- Informal Scrutiny and Oversight (through regular meetings with the Chief Constable and force leadership)
- Quality Assurance Scrutiny (checking that police processes and procedures are being carried out properly and appropriately)
- Thematic Scrutiny Enquiries (which may be delivered through a Scrutiny Panels)
- Shared governance arrangements including Commissioner’s Accountability Board, Resources Board, Working Together Board, Independent Audit Committee.
- The Commissioner’s Independent Custody Visiting Scheme
- Oversight of the Police Misconduct Processes including assessing whether proven police misconduct matters reach the threshold for police pension forfeiture.
- Ensuring HMICFRS thematic recommendations are delivered locally.

Scrutiny Arrangements

Police and Crime Panel

The Panel has the statutory responsibility for scrutinising the performance of the Commissioner and is a joint committee of the twelve local authorities and two independent panel members in the area. The Panel undertakes its scrutiny function through a range of mechanisms and considers such matters as:

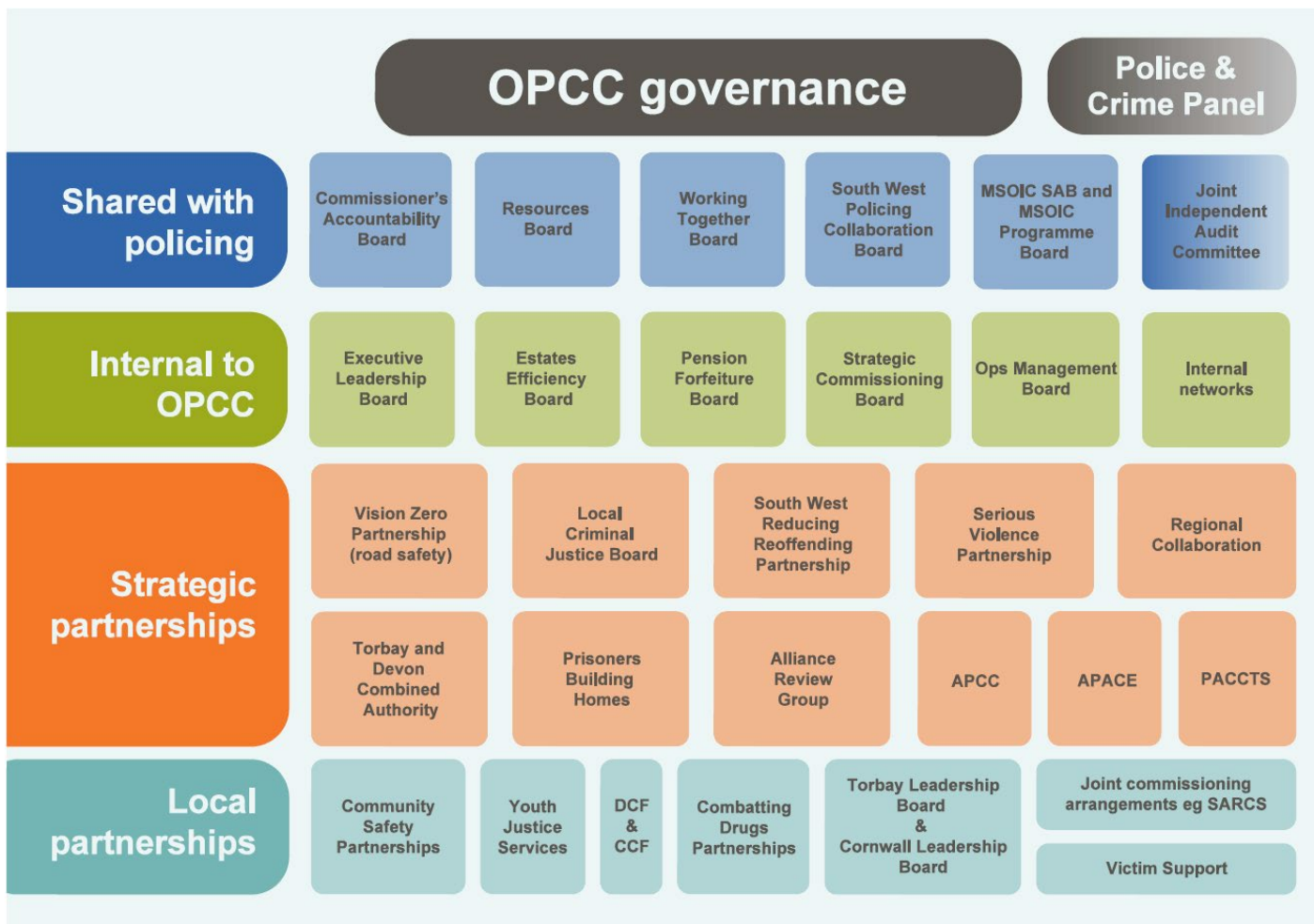
- *Reviewing the Commissioner's proposals for council tax precept. It has the power to veto these proposals if it considers the amount is inappropriate.*
- *Considering the Commissioner's proposals for the appointment of new Chief Constables and OPCC Statutory Officers*
- *Commissioners Annual Report.*
- *Reviewing the Police and Crime Plan.*
- *Investigating non-criminal complaints about the Police and Crime Commissioner*
- *The Police and Crime Panel met on four occasions during 2025/26 and one informal briefing was provided to panel members on the annual funding settlement for policing.*

Further information

[Police and Crime Panel](#)

[Police & Crime Plan 2025-29](#)

Higher Level Governance



Working with others

OPCC Key Partnerships

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner work with partners to help create safe, resilient and connected communities.

The Commissioner holds a key political role with a democratic mandate across Devon and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly; she is the elected representative of the public and holds the democratic mandate and the legal duty to hold the Chief Constable to account with regards to the delivery of policing services across the two counties and the Isles of Scilly. The PCC works in conjunction with the Chief Constable to set the force's strategic direction which is drafted into a published Police & Crime plan.

The Commissioner invests in a wide variety of partnerships to deliver improvements to policing and overall community safety. These include:

- Local Criminal Justice Board
- South West Reducing Reoffending Partnership
- Vision Zero South West
- Serious Violence Prevention Partnership
- Community Safety Partnerships (x10)
- Combatting Drugs Partnerships (x4)
- Prisoners Building Homes
- Youth Offending Teams (x4)
- South West Policing Collaboration Board

Local Criminal Justice Board

Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) are the forum in which the local criminal justice organisations at police force area (PFA) level come together to work in the common interest to improve the criminal justice system (CJS). Working in partnership with strategic leaders representing the Police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Courts (HMCTS), Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS), Youth Justice Service (YJS), and support services, Devon and Cornwall LCJB aims to address cross cutting issues, improve the experiences of victims and witnesses, reduce reoffending, agree, and deliver strategic priorities to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the local CJS. As yet LCJBs are not statutory.

South-West Reducing Reoffending Partnership

The PCC works in partnership with CJS organisations across the peninsula and now chairs the Reducing Offending Board for the South-West region (Avon & Somerset, Devon & Cornwall, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire). The South-West Reducing Reoffending Partnership was established in March 2019 and brings together partners from across the south-west to support multi-agency work to tackle some of the main causes of reoffending, such as lack of accommodation, access to health services and employment opportunities.

Working with others

Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Strategic Advisory Board

The Commissioner continues to act as the accountable body for all funding nationally for the modern slavery and organised immigration crime programme which is hosted within Devon and Cornwall Police for national benefit. The government announced the cessation of the modern slavery funding at the end of March 2026 following many years of recurrent funding. Organised immigration crime will remain within the Force under separate funding arrangements.

Vision Zero South West

The Vision Zero South-West Road Safety Partnership is chaired by the Commissioner and is a collaboration of all the organisations in Devon and Cornwall who deal with road safety. Vision Zero South-West has set itself the ambitious target of halving all fatal and serious collisions by 2030 and eventually eradicating them completely. This partnership is responsible for part of the income generated by road safety fines and oversees its reinvestment into road safety improvements across the Devon and Cornwall policing area.

Serious Violence Prevention Partnership

The OPCC convenes a Strategic Violence Summit which brings together a wide range of public sector partners to assist those specified authorities in the exercise of the functions and fulfillment of their statutory duties to prevent serious violence.

Prisoners Building Homes

The Prisoners Building Homes (PBH) Programme is led by the five South-West Police and Crime Commissioners under the auspices of the South-West Reducing Reoffending Partnership (with representatives from HM Prison and Probation Service, Ministry of Justice, the Police, NHS England, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Youth Justice Board, Department of Work & Pensions, South West Councils, and the Voluntary Sector).

It was set up to enable prisoners to be employed and trained by modular housing providers to build low carbon, modular homes for local communities and vulnerable people. It provides an opportunity to reduce reoffending by ensuring prisoners have the skills they need to help secure employment upon their release.



Working with others

Community Safety Partnerships

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) have a statutory responsibility to work together to protect their local communities from crime, and to help people feel safe.

They are tasked with tackling local issues including anti-social behaviour, drug or alcohol misuse, preventing serious violence and reducing re-offending.

The partnerships include the police, fire and rescue services, local authority community safety teams, local authority councillors, public health and probation services.

There are CSPs for Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth, Torbay, the Isles of Scilly, Exeter, East & Mid Devon, North Devon & Torridge and South Devon & Dartmoor.

The Commissioner works with and supports the local CSPs to address their priorities, local issues and concerns. The Commissioner has successfully worked with CSPs to secure external funding opportunities which help tackle issues in local areas.

Combatting Drugs Partnerships

Combatting drugs partnerships exist in all four of the upper tier local authority areas within Devon and Cornwall. They are chaired by Directors of Public Health and were set up in response to the government's drugs strategy "From Harm to Hope". There is limited connectivity between these groups across Devon and Cornwall and the Commissioner, driven by the concerns of those groups. However, the Commissioner does fund criminal justice support through an annual grant.

Youth Offending Teams

Youth Justice Teams (formerly Youth Offending Teams) are hosted within Children Services in our four upper tier local authority areas. These multidisciplinary partnership teams get involved with young people who get into trouble with the law or are arrested; are charged with a crime and have to go to court, are convicted of a crime and given a sentence. The Commissioner part funds the YOTs through a pooled budget arrangement with other partners.

South West Police Collaboration Board

The South West Police Collaboration Board is the governance mechanism by which the five Police and Crime Commissioners and five Chief Constables in the South West come together to deliver a range of shared policing services. There are a variety of four force and five force collaborations including forensics services, Procurement and Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU).

The Review of Governance Arrangements in Place During 2025/26

Police Reforms

Plans to create the biggest and most significant changes in policing this country has seen in years have begun and it cannot be underestimated how significant they will be for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

The Home Secretary has announced the government's White Paper for reforming what they called the "broken" policing model in England and Wales. There are plans to create a new national police force and for new regional police forces to be created by merging existing forces. Much of the detail around how these proposals will be brought into effect has yet to be released.

The government also referred to Police and Crime Commissioners as a "failed experiment". This is not an expression which the Commissioner and OPCC Leadership in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly recognise, and we can clearly evidence our effectiveness over many years. This information was not sought by the government before they reached a decision.

The work of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) remains business as usual, and Devon & Cornwall Police will continue to listen to and act in the public's best interests and deliver on priorities of tackling violence, antisocial behaviour, drugs and alcohol and theft. As well as delivering a full range of statutory duties and commissioning of essential services.

During 2025/26 more rigour was introduced into day-to-day business through a range of collaborative Boards with Devon and Cornwall Police. These include the Estates Efficiency Board and the Police Misconduct and Pension Forfeiture Board

Through the powers and scrutiny functions of the OPCC we will continue to hold the police to account, and along with the great leadership of Chief Constable James Vaughan, our force continues to improve its performance.

Police Reform White Paper

The Police Reform White Paper has set out the following areas for change:

- Introduce a new National Police Service (NPS)
- Perform an independent review of the number of police forces
- Develop a workforce strategy
- Deliver a set of nationally mandated wellbeing standards
- Changes to police funding arrangements
- Creating a single set of policing priorities and a new police performance system
- Develop new guarantees for police response
- Create a centre for police AI (artificial intelligence)
- Refocus on prevention
- Review the police funding formula to reflect new police structures
- Reform the police vetting and misconduct system
- Overhaul police governance

Governance arrangements surrounding police reform will undoubtedly need to change significantly. However currently the information has not yet been published on how this will be taken forward.

Governance Arrangements

The review of effectiveness of the joint governance arrangements in place during 2025/26 indicated that the framework provided a high level of assurance. Based on reflection of the key structures and processes which comprise those arrangements it can be judged that appropriate mechanisms existed to:

- promote and monitor codes of conduct and professional behaviour.
- ensure compliance with internal and external requirements.
- promote transparency and acting in the public interest.
- develop channels of communication with all sections of the community
- manage the business to deliver the organisational vision of being synonymous with exemplary service.
- apply good governance arrangements to collaboration activity and partnerships.
- appropriately scrutinise performance.

The areas for development detailed overleaf have been identified from the review process. The implementation of these will be monitored and reported in our AGS for 2026/27.

Areas Identified for Development for 2025/26

The key areas as reported in the previous statement for development during 2025/26 are updated below.

Area for Development	Owner	Target date
Hold the Chief Constable to account for the removal of the Force from the HMICFRS PEEL inspections Engage programme.	Commissioner	Complete: May 2025
Hold the Chief Constable to account for the governance arrangements for the reporting of national, regional, and local multi-agency operational partnerships.	Commissioner	Audit rescheduled: 2026

New Areas Identified for Development for 2026/27

The key areas for development during 2026/27 are summarised below.

Area for Development	Owner	Target date
Understand and develop any transition plans for new governance arrangements following the Police Reform White Paper 2026, including the abolishment of the OPCC and the potential merger of Forces.	Commissioner, OPCC & Chief Constable	May 2028
Hold the Chief Constable to account for the implementation of the improvements required by the HMICFRS in the Integrity & Standards Report October 2025 and PEEL inspection 2026	Commissioner	December 2027
Hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of the agreed Priority Based Budgeting plans to meet the requirements of the MTFS	Commissioner & OPCC	April 2027
Hold the Chief Constable to account for the maintenance of the police officer and PCSO establishment figures in the MTFS	Commissioner & OPCC	April 2027

Summary

This statement is intended to provide assurance on governance arrangements. It is stressed that no system of control can provide absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

No significant governance issues have been identified during this year's review. For completeness, the minor issues identified are recorded and will be addressed to ensure continuous improvement.

We hope that this document provides you with some helpful insight into how we decided to lead the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon & Cornwall, the systems we have put in place to ensure our decisions are open and accountable, and that your money is safeguarded.

Signatures

Alison Hernandez

Police and Crime Commissioner
for Devon & Cornwall

Frances Hughes

Chief Executive
and Monitoring Officer

Nicola Allen

Chief Finance Officer