

Unitary Board Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: Wednesday 16 April 2025 at 10:30hrs

Venue: Canary Wharf Room 2.10

Members Present

David Cryer	Director of Finance and Corporate Resources
Christine Elliott	Non-Executive Director
Suzanne Jacob	Non-Executive Director
Julia Mulligan	Senior Independent Director joined at 10.45am during item 6
Steve Noonan	Deputy Director General Investigations, Oversight & Casework
Clive Quantrill	Non-Executive Director
Rachel Watson	Director General/Chair

In Attendance:

Rob Barnes	Director of Transformation items 7 and 8 only
Michael Cordy	Head of Police Integrity Unit (Home Office)
David Emery	General Counsel
Lindsay Harvey	Strategy Unit Manager items 7 and 8 only
Marie Morrissey	Head of Governance
Misha Upadhyaya	Chief of Staff

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting commenced at 10:30hrs and was quorate. The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting. The Board noted that Michael Cordy was in attendance as the Home Office Observer as Jodie Gibson, Head of Home Office Sponsor Unit, was unable to attend.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Kathie Cashell Deputy Director General Strategy, Engagement and Communications and Rommel Moseley Non-Executive Director.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Julia Mulligan declared an interest as Chair of the Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA). The Board noted this and agreed that no further action was required.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 19 MARCH 2025

The Board considered the minutes of the last meeting held on 19 March 2025. It agreed to approve them as an accurate record of the meeting to be signed by the Chair and published with the following amendment:

- Remove reference to 'special processes' from item 7.

5. MATTERS ARISING/ACTION LOG

The Board considered progress against the open actions. The log will be updated to reflect updates given at the meeting.

6. DIRECTOR GENERAL UPDATE

The Director General spoke briefly to her circulated report. The Board discussed and noted the following in particular:

- Since the last Unitary Board meeting the Union had informed Management Board of Action Short of a Strike. We entered conciliation via ACAS on 31 March 2025. After a positive full day meeting, the concessions offered by Management Board were taken to Union membership for consideration and were rejected. Following questions about voting process, the Director General set out that a Union meeting to consider the offer had been held online. She did not know how many members joined or have taken part in the vote but understood that approximately 40% of staff are Union members. A further conciliation meeting is planned and Management Board members continue to routinely work in person in all offices to engage with staff. Unitary Board echoed the desire to resolve the situation and offered to support in any way appropriate.
- The work underway which will shortly lead to a decision on whether there is a Case to Answer for misconduct in Operation Irpin in line with the thresholds set out in legislation.
- The Government announcement at the start of April that it would be conducting a review of all Arms' Length Bodies with an expectation that they would be merged, closed or their functions brought back into Government Departments. Discussion about the review's potential impact on the IOPC included the requirement that cases relating to Article 2 and 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights be investigated by an independent body. This limits the possibilities of where else such investigations could be allocated.
- Michael Cordy gave a brief overview of the work Home Office officials are undertaking in support of Ministers across policing. This includes the provision of advice on the Arms' Length Bodies review as well as vetting standards, officer probation regulations and guidance for Police and Crime Commissioners around Chief Officer suspensions. The Board welcomed the update and took assurance from the relationship we have with Home Office, noting our engagement on the Police Reform white paper as an example and looked forward to being informed of progress in these areas later in the year.
- The Director General's witness statement to the Angiolini Inquiry and a suggestion made in relation to point 39 to synchronise first responders with community first responders in relation to police perpetrated domestic abuse.

7. BUSINESS PLAN 2025-26

The Director of Transformation and Strategy Unit Manager joined the meeting to speak to the Business Plan for the current financial year for which Board approval was sought.

- Prior to consideration of the Business Plan, the work underway on the repackaged corporate strategy, which will be brought to the Board in May, was discussed. As the plan flows from the corporate strategy, there was appetite to have sight of this work prior to its inclusion in the May pack. As set out in 2.30 of the supporting paper, it was noted that the repackaged strategy and external Business Plan would be shared as soon as possible following review by the Director General.

The Board discussed the following:

- The level of confidence that all critical priorities for the year would be delivered. To ensure a sharper focus on critical operational priorities, priorities in other areas may not be fully delivered.
- A clearer distinction between what is critical and what is a priority would be welcomed alongside a disaggregation from 'business as usual' workstreams.
- The need to be more explicit about tensions recognised between different elements of the plan. For example vacancies may be positive from a budget perspective but at the same time may negatively impact staff morale.
- Simplification of the overall messaging of the plan to ensure it may be readily understood. It was noted that work is underway on communications planning to address this.
- Use of capital budget to replace ageing fleet vehicles and opportunities to do so sustainably. For example through purchase of electric cars, use of shared schemes and increased use of hire vehicles which may represent better value than the depreciation of owned vehicles.
- Legislative changes to thresholds for CPS referral and confirmation from General Counsel that modelling its impact is underway. An increase in Victims Right to Review cases is anticipated which would increase demands on decision making in addition to the ambition to move towards 500 investigations a year. Decision making training as well as exploring the introduction of a novel and contentious decision making team were noted to support colleagues in effectively delivering against these changes.
- The move to manage risk to budgets centrally, given the current context of operating with a consistent organisational underspend, was welcomed.
- The increasing granularity of data being captured which will be used to improve the level of insight for the wider the business. This should improve our agility in assessing and addressing what impacts our performance and drive productivity in the right places through the Transformation Programme.
- Support for reallocation of £0.77m to improve operational performance. As this figure represents not quite half of the £1.58m requested by the Deputy Director General, Investigations, Oversight and Casework he was invited to speak to the implications. It was noted that these include turning off additional recruitment into Casework which would mean the trajectory of improving timelines would be impacted.
- The process for identifying further budget to move across to support operational improvement was discussed. There was agreement that this had been thorough; further reallocation of budgets at this time has the potential to require exits in other parts of the business for which there is also a financial cost. Further work to review this at the end of quarter one with a view to identifying additional potential funding for Investigations, Oversight and Casework was noted. The results will be presented to the Board.
- Work to refocus staff efforts such as the policy team working on operational policy in a way they have not done previously was noted and welcomed.

- A suggestion to peer review potential savings to provide internal debate was noted.
- Partnering with Capgemini to determine the senior management structure has resulted in regrading some roles and including five more senior decision makers than initially envisaged. It was noted that this means operational capability has been bolstered rather than achieving the savings originally targeted.
- It was noted that headcount for the current and previous year is not currently available but would be useful data for the Board in the future for assurance it matches strategic intentions.
- The refreshed approach to Drive sessions to ensure performance is routinely discussed with line managers in a standardised way was noted. For the first time this will include a grading of performance. It was noted that the revised process had been designed to support improved performance which in turn will help us to deliver against the Business Plan.

Action: Director of Transformation to ensure disaggregation of priorities with business as usual and simplify messaging within the finalised business plan document.

The Board **agreed** the following recommendations:

- The budget position and proposals to reallocate £0.77m to support improvements in operational performance.
- The level of financial risk.
- The proposed capital allocation of £2.24m in Annex 2f.
- The final deliverables set out in Annex 1b, noting the risks to delivering our priority activities.
- The Key Performance Indicators for 2025-26.

8. DEEP DIVE OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The Deputy Director General, Investigations, Oversight and Casework spoke to the circulated paper on operational performance. The Board discussed and noted the following in particular, which was a progression on the Business Plan item above:

- Driving productivity and working more effectively are at the heart of our Transformation Programme to stabilise performance.
- Improving data quality was noted as a welcome step change which gives significantly better visibility of areas that require attention and in turn supports the creation of measurable plans to address them.
- Turnover of Lead Investigators and how efforts may be strengthened regarding retention of high performers in this role as well as more broadly across the organisation. Challenges competing in the market when higher salaries are on offer elsewhere particularly in London and the South East was noted as a key factor.
- There was appetite to undertake a deep dive into retention at a future Board meeting.
- The wider Transforming Investigations Programme and the consultation currently underway with Ops Managers.

- The importance of onboarding new Investigations, Oversight and Casework staff to ensure personal accountability and high quality work are baked into their career here.
- Moving towards a more balanced culture for these staff that is both high support, for example when it comes to welfare, but that also provides challenge. It was noted that the refreshed Drive process will support this.
- The impact of the Recovery Plan and how progress is being overseen through Assurance Groups and Management Board.
- Which elements of the Transforming Investigations Plan and work beyond this could benefit from Artificial Intelligence and the potential for it to radically change the work we do. The pilots planned to test use of Microsoft Copilot in across our different functions and the reasoning for limiting testing to it at the current time.
- The Board would welcome a deep dive in to Artificial Intelligence, its applications across the business and considerations for rollout.

9. HEADLINE RESOURCES REPORT.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources spoke briefly to the circulated report. The Board briefly discussed and noted the following:

- The updated year end position of £2.42m resources underspend and a capital underspend of £0.12m This position has been finalised since the paper was written.

The proposed changes to schedule B of the Financial Authority Policy as set out in paper and which reflect the changes in senior management structure and require the joint approval for special payments and staff exit costs were **agreed**.

10. BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCE

The Board meeting attendance report was considered accurate and noted.

11. FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was noted. There was discussion about the Non- Executive Directors Engagement Plan being developed following agreement of the outline plan in March. It will be shared shortly.

12. DATES, TIMES AND LOCATIONS OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board noted the upcoming meeting dates. It was keen to agree a date for the September Board away day and establish the schedule and reporting pattern for the Finance and Performance Committee.

Action: The Senior Independent Director as Chair of the Finance and Performance Committee and the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources to discuss outside of the meeting.


13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

14. MEETING REFLECTION

Christine Elliott led the meeting reflection drawing on the approach from the recent Board Effectiveness Review day of seeking to support critical thinking as well as celebrating success. The Board agreed with her assessment that there had been appropriate challenge and curiosity for example in exploring use of AI and its potential positive impact on our work and culture. There was also recognition that the quality of the pack, particularly on Business Planning and the Deep Dive on Operational Performance, had enabled well informed discussions.

The Chair thanked the Board and closed the meeting.

NAME	Rachel Watson
SIGNATURE	
DATE	2 June 2025

Schedule of Actions

Agenda Item	Responsibility
7	Director of Transformation
I2	Director of Finance and Corporate Resources / Senior Independent Director