Unitary Board

Minutes

Date and time: Wednesday 10 September at 10:30hrs

Venue: Virtual on MS Teams

Members Present:

Kathie Cashell	Deputy Director General, Strategy, Engagement and Communications
David Cryer	Director of Finance and Corporate Resources
Christine Elliott	Non-Executive Director
Suzanne Jacob	Non-Executive Director
Rommel Moseley	Non-Executive Director
Julia Mulligan	Senior Independent Director
Steve Noonan	Deputy Director General Investigations, Oversight & Casework
Clive Quantrill	Non-Executive Director
Rachel Watson	Director General/Chair

In Attendance:

David Emery	General Counsel
Penny Finch	Governance Officer
Elinor Howard	Head of Public Safety & Immigration Sponsorship, Home Office
Keeley Jacques	EA to the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources
Misha Upadhyaya	Chief of Staff

UB 09/25/01 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting commenced at 10:30hrs and was quorate. The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.

UB 09/25/02 APOLOGIES

Jodie Gibson, Head of Home Office Sponsorship Unit

UB 09/25/03 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Julia Mulligan is the Chair of the Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) and Chair of the North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

UB 09/25/04 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2025 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record and can now be published.

UB 09/25/05 MATTERS ARISING/ACTION LOG

The Board reviewed and provided updates for the outstanding actions, and the following were noted:

- Action 7 – The Board were advised that proposed dates will be communicated as soon as possible. A suggestion was made by a Board member for the Director General's Roadshow dates to be provided to see if any NED visits could be aligned.
  Action – Roadshow plan to be shared with KJ.

  In addition, it was noted that CQ and RM would like to attend the Birmingham office and would like this to be factored into the planning.
  Action – KJ to include CQ and RM in the Birmingham office visit.

- Action 9 – The Board were advised this is outstanding however KJ will liaise with CE to provide an update.
  Action - KJ to speak with CE to update action ahead of next meeting.

- Action 10 – The Board were updated that conversations have taken place, and this is being dealt with.

UB 09/25/06 DIRECTOR GENERAL UPDATE

The Director General presented her report and highlighted the following:

- On 28 August, the outcome of Operational Tilland was announced, following the deaths of two children in Cardiff. The investigation determined that there was a case to answer and a South Wales officer should face a gross misconduct hearing.
- A joint letter with the Metropolitan Police was written following the decision to withdraw gross misconduct proceedings against a former Met officer. The letter to the Minister of Policing and Crime outlined organisational learning for both the IOPC and the Met.
- Preparations are underway for the launch of the national Investigations model on October 6th. The national launch will welcome new Investigations Managers and Investigation Team Leader roles, supporting a wider leadership approach to the handling of investigations. The new model will continue to be rolled out with a phased implementation over the remainder of the financial year.
- Interviews are taking place next week for the Director of People position. Due to scheduling conflicts, a Non-Executive Director was not available to join the panel.
- The PCS strike action was cancelled, development is underway for a new disability policy and changes to clarify flexibility within the hybrid working policy.

The Board thanked the Director General for an insightful and instructive report.

The Board spent time in discussion about the Cabinet reshuffle on 5 September and the appointments of Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP as Home Secretary and Sarah Jones MP as new Policing Minister.

The Board emphasised the importance of the coming months for the organisation due to political shifts, budget implications, and transformation. Continued engagement, support, and challenge from Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) will be critical in maintaining momentum and ensuring delivery against our objectives.

Clive Quantrill shared feedback from attendance at a recent Line Manager call. Clive noted that the discussion conveyed a positive tone and highlighted encouraging developments, suggesting that the IOPC is beginning to move in the right direction.

Action: KJ to circulate the recording of the Line Manager call to all attendees.

UB 09/25/07 HEADLINE RESOURCES REPORT

The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources spoke to the circulated paper: -

- The financial forecast for year-end indicates a challenging position. Although significant efforts have been made to improve expenditure since the initial figures were released, the overall financial outlook remains difficult.
- At the beginning of the month, an overspend of £560,000 was projected above the allocated budget. A portion of the overspend is the expenses associated with delayed exits and the relocation of the Croydon office. The Board heard that the relocation of the Croydon office requires additional steps, and a feasibility process is essential, this contributes towards pressures on the cost-saving strategy.
- Within the cost-savings, Investigations, Oversight and Casework have been ringfenced, leading to challenging decisions within the Finance and Corporate Resources directorate, particularly concerning Digital Data and Technology (DDaT). A decision was made to refrain from the recruitment of 10 positions (initially scheduled for later this year), to achieve further cost-savings.
- Turnover in the organisation is lower than previous years, so further forecasting will include these projections accordingly.

The Board returned to the discussion of a previous meeting, regarding the length and delays of exit processes. A suggestion was made to draft a letter to the Cabinet Office to formally convey the concerns and the impact this is having. The schedule of forthcoming engagements may present, the Director General with an opportunity to raise this issue directly at senior levels within the Home Office.

There was a short discussion about the Medium Term Financial Plan and concerns that were discussed and addressed at the Performance and Finance Committee. The Medium Term Financial Plan is not scheduled to be presented at meeting in March, and it was AGREED to bring the Medium Term Financial Plan forward to January's Unitary Board meeting.

UB 09/25/08 HEADLINE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Deputy Director General (Investigations, Oversight & Casework) spoke to the circulated paper and highlighted the following:

- **Assessment Unit**: Referral volumes reached a five-year high. The average processing time rose slightly from 4.2 to 4.5 days, remaining within the 5-day target. The Head of Assessment Unit will oversee activity in early September to reduce the backlog which accrued during the annual leave period in August.

- **Casework**: Strong team performance over 6 months has led to long-term decline in the cases backlog. Short-term changes in August saw a shift in case types handled and a slight increase in the case backlog despite this performance, increasing from 200 to 210 new referrals since the last report to the Board. Modelling is underway to manage demand. The case backlog is expected to stabilise at 350 cases by 26 October and all cases from 2024 have been allocated. It was noted that the use of artificial intelligence has not yet been implemented; however, a pilot is scheduled to take place later in the year. A Transformation initiative, the introduction of proportionate outcome letters is awaiting full rollout. This approach has already been successfully trialled within selected teams, and further implementation is planned, as it is anticipated to have a positive impact on productivity.

- **Customer Contact Centre (CCC)**: August saw a backlog increase, with September focused on recovery. AI-generated referrals are inflating workloads, as CCC team members are finding that minimal complainant input is producing extensive automated content.

- **Investigations**: The 12-month KPI stands at 67.1%. This is a rolling average which demonstrates a stabilisation in investigation performance. In August the 6-month KPI rose to 44.4%. New data tools will support improved KPI delivery. As of August, 255 open cases remain and increasing. There are 381 cases are in the ‘post-final’ stage where conclusions fall outside IOPC control.

The Board discussed the total caseload and the incoming new structure of the Investigations team. In light of the new national model for Investigations, the ability to utilise the enhanced data from the operational level upwards will enable teams to ensure that each office is aligned with and capable of achieving the targeted closure rates, driving consistency and performance across the organisation. The new structure prioritises investigation quality and the Investigations Team Leader (ITL) role ensures stronger case supervision and adherence to target completion dates.

The Board held a discussion about the increase in the average cost of investigations. Board members explored how this additional spend translates to better outcomes, what is driving the increase in cost, and whether the outcomes undertaken are leading to better compliance with minimum standards being observed.

The Board heard that costs can fluctuate due to the number of cases closed in a month, and a suggestion was to change the measures to a rolling 3-month average rather than in month average. It was noted that this is a longer-term piece of work and refinement is required on these measures.

The Board was informed that a meeting has been scheduled with the Head of Artificial Intelligence at the Government Legal Service. It was noted that while AI has made it easier to generate complaints and actionable Judicial Reviews, the process of responding to these remains largely manual and reliant on human input. Looking ahead, it is anticipated that AI will be increasingly utilised to summarise and extract relevant data and information. This development is expected to support a more automated and efficient approach to managing responses.

It was noted that the Turing Institute has developed an ethics framework for artificial intelligence, and it was recommended that the IOPC consider reviewing this as part of the ongoing work in the area.

Following this discussion, it was **AGREED** that a broader meeting should take please to discuss AI governance, key tenets, explainability, accountability and proportionality.

ACTION – DC and RW to co-ordinate a discussion on AI governance, with expertise as appropriate.

UB 09/25/09 PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND POLICING RELATIONSHIPS

The Deputy Director General, (Strategy, Engagement and Communications) spoke to the paper. The Board were invited to consider both assurance and constructive challenge in relation to the progress of stakeholder relationships this year.

The Board heard that there is clear evidence of the positive impact of the new organisational structure, particularly through the work led by the Directors of Engagement. Feedback has been consistently strong, reflecting the effectiveness of this approach. Significant contributions have been made by the Policy and Strategy teams, as well as across the wider organisation, in responding to legislative changes.

The Board reflected that it is essential to ensure that the IOPC maintains a credible and influential voice in these developments. There has been a notable shift in how the organisation communicates the impact of accountability, with a focus on making it more proportionate and meaningful. This aligns with the ongoing review of end-to-end timeliness and post-final casework, which is central to improving overall performance. The relationships with policing partners are in a strong place and it is important to continue to sustain these relationships, to avoid complacency.

The Board was informed that a key priority is to review and develop a strategy that aligns with current resources, including defining support structures and expected outcomes. This will also consider how the IOPC responds to the evolving political landscape.

The Board heard about the ongoing preparation and briefings of the new Ministers and Special Advisors. Board members were updated about the ongoing Parliamentary engagement activity including MP events, engagement with the House Library, and the Officer Confidence campaign.

The Board discussed the effectiveness of the engagement activities to achieve KPIs in this area and the requirements to engage stakeholders to both address political divergence and consider proactive messaging for our audiences. The Board highlighted that stakeholders in Wales should also be considered central to this political engagement.

UB 09/25/10 ONE IOPC, LEADERSHIP, DIVERSITY AND CULTURE CHANGE

The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources spoke to the paper. The paper supports three key organisational priorities: the plan on increasing diversity across all levels of the organisation, with a particular emphasis on race and ethnicity; ensuring leaders can effectively communicate the organisational vision and empowering them to drive cultural transformation, performance enhancement; and achieving a unified national identity under the "One IOPC" approach.

The Board heard that the proposed programme of actions is intended to be delivered through the Transformation programme. During August's Management Board meeting, cultural change was discussed in depth and questions were raised regarding whether the current initiatives sufficiently address organisational culture. The Board discussed this particularly in relation to behaviours and these discussions are scheduled to be further explored during the upcoming Management Board away day.

Board members highlighted that there will be significant challenge in achieving both diversity and a 'one IOPC'. To effectively address this, Board members strongly recommended that engaging staff, as well as the staff networks, is crucial to the success of this process. Staff must be empowered to be part of the change with emphasis on individual actions and ownership at all levels.

The Board asked about the data available about EDI in the organisation – specifically, whether there is sufficient data on both retention and progression. If this data is not available presently, can it be prioritised.

The Board were informed continued worked will take place to develop the paper incorporating the feedback provided, additional support from other Senior Leaders and presented at the next appropriate Unitary Board meeting.

UB 09/25/11 ARAC ANNUAL REPORT AND TOR (ANNEX (11A)

ARAC JULY MINUTES (ANNEX 11B)

The ARAC Chair spoke to the papers. The deadline for the Annual Report to be signed is 28 November.

The Board heard that the report covers the period, 1 April 2024-31 March 2025, within which period four meetings were led by previous Chairs, and one meeting was led by the current Chair (CQ). The paper included oversight of the terms of reference, the three audit strands, and risk. Also included were sections of the GIAA report on Quality, which detail the upgraded rating of the IOPC, following last year's work.

The Board discussed the role of Quality and the need to share insights and information between committees. It was noted that the Quality Committee would ordinarily report back after the GIAA report and before a paper is presented at Unitary Board. A suggestion was made to discuss Quality and the outcomes of the GIAA report at a future Unitary Board meeting. An item would be welcome within the context of Transformation and how Quality fits into the wider Transformation programme.

ACTION - RM and CQ to arrange a meeting to discuss the Quality Committee.

The Board were advised that that as a result of this feedback, a paper will be commissioned and included in the forward plan for November's meeting. The paper will provide assurance on several points that have been addressed.

It was noted that some Board members were unable to attend the Quality Committee meetings, and it would be of benefit to arrange a follow-up meeting to update members and to ensure that Board members are present at future meetings.

ACTION – Meeting to be arranged with KC, RM, JM to discuss the Quality Committee meeting and link with Transformation.

UB 09/25/12 PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE JULY MINUTES

The Board were advised of the following updates from the last People and Culture meeting in July 2025:

- There was a discussion about how staff reflect on their 'lived experience of the IOPC' against the organisation's values. In the committee meeting, members discussed the suitability of this investigative work to sit within Transformation and the leadership of the internal people experience.
- The update also highlighted the effectiveness of the wellbeing programme to the Board, which is supported by measurable outcomes. Research indicates that enhanced employee wellbeing positively correlates with increased organisational productivity.

Following a request from a Board member regarding the status of the Stonewall Membership, the Board was advised that the current subscription has ended. A review of the membership is currently underway, with the expectation that it will not be renewed. Efforts are in progress to manage internal communications on this matter across the organisation.

The Board heard that the IOPC is shifting its focus from delivering general support across the organisation to a more strategic approach to wellbeing, guided by evidence that demonstrates improved staff wellbeing when employees are part of a clearly defined purpose and mission, which operates effectively.

One of the key challenges relates to systems, processes, and behaviours which do not enable quick action and prevents staff from carrying out their responsibilities efficiently. The wellbeing strategy is therefore being shaped in direct response to the staff survey, with a commitment to driving meaningful change and addressing the issues that have been identified.

UB 09/25/13 VERBAL REPORTS FROM UB COMMITTEES:

PERFORMANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

During the course of this meeting, several matters previously discussed at the Committee meeting were addressed. The Board was informed that the Committee is assured by the progress and improvements observed within Operations.

UB 09/25/14 BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCE

The Board meeting attendance report was considered accurate and noted.

UB 09/25/15 FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was discussed: -

- It was **AGREED** that the Medium Term Financial plan to be moved from March to January.
- The Strategic Risk Review and an item on Quality will be added to the November meeting.
- AI governance discussion to be added as a future agenda item.

UB 09/25/16 DATES, TIMES AND LOCATIONS OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Various Committee meetings have been organised during half term dates, which are now being rescheduled. Board members would like clarification on dates due to several emails which have recently been sent out.

UB 09/25/17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no additional business.

UB 09/25/18 MEETING REFLECTION

Suzanne facilitated the meeting reflection and observed a notable difference in dynamics when meetings are held online via Teams. Suzanne reflected that prior to the meeting, having reviewed the papers, she was particularly attentive to any shifts in tone among Board members. Given the evolving financial landscape, the transition of our transformation programme into its development phase, and the persistence of certain challenging KPIs, Suzanne was keen to understand whether these pressures were influencing the nature of our discussions whether the Board remained imaginative, constructive, and forward-looking.

Board members were pleased to note that this was indeed the case. Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) raised thoughtful challenges that were constructive and clearly aimed at supporting progress and development.

While financial constraints and other pressures can sometimes strain relationships, this was not evident in the current meeting. Nonetheless, it remains important to stay mindful of this potential. If Board members continue the current ways of working with a constructive tone, it will serve us well.

The Chair thanked the Board and closed the meeting.

Name	Rachel Watson
Signature	
Date	22 September 2025