

Unitary Board Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: Wednesday 14 May 2025 at 10:30hrs

Venue: Canary Wharf Room 2.10

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 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
David Emery	General Counsel
Lindsay Harvey	Strategy Unit Manager items 7,8 and 10 only
Elinor Howard	Head of Public Safety & Immigration Sponsorship, Home Office
Marie Morrissey	Head of Governance
Sarah Moynihan	Head of Quality and Standards item 8 only
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 Elinor Howard was in attendance as the Home Office Observer as Jodie Gibson, Head of Home Office Sponsor Unit, was unable to attend.

2. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

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 16 APRIL 2025

The Board considered the minutes of the last meeting held on 16 April 2025. It agreed to approve them as an accurate record of the meeting to be signed by the Chair and published.

5. MATTERS ARISING/ACTION LOG

The Board noted the circulated updates against the open actions.

6. DIRECTOR GENERAL UPDATE

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

- An overview of the ongoing conciliation with PCS and progress since the last Board meeting. This included the counteroffer which was annexed to the report. Management Board's continuing commitment to resolving the situation and keeping this Board updated on developments was welcomed.
- The annexed compilation of media coverage regarding Op Irpin, the amount of public interest and the considerations that inform our public statements. The service received from the company contracted to provide clippings and the approach to monitoring social media conversation and trends which includes internal teams monitoring social channels. The Deputy Director of Communications and Engagement will join shortly and is expected to review working practices and contracted services to ensure they are serving us effectively as possible.
- Appetite for NEDs to be briefed ahead of milestones in high profile cases and agreement that the planned upcoming session to work through the practicalities of managing investigative challenges, stakeholder landscape and the statutory scheme associated with these cases would also address establishing more proactive briefing.

7. STRATEGY AND BUSINESS PLAN 2025-26

The Strategy Unit Manager joined the meeting to speak to the circulated paper for which Board approval was sought.

Following an introduction from the Deputy Director General Strategy, Engagement and Communications which summarised the reasoning for shortening and streamlining the strategic plan; strategic objectives were agreed in 2022 and there is appetite to refresh them to set out the ambitions of the Transformation Programme and the direction of the Director General, the following was discussed:

- Benefits of refreshing the strategic document which included transparency on updated priorities and providing a bridge to transition towards a new strategic period.
- How the document might be amended to more clearly set out the role all functions play in delivering Transformation.
- Funding for Transformation work to support achieving the impacts sought.

- The reasoning for expanding the IOPC's remit which is determined by Government to ensure that bodies with PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence) powers have sufficient oversight. Options to oversee these bodies are limited which explains why the remit now includes the Food Standards Agency.
- Replanning of the remaining work required on Hillsborough to bring it to a close within this calendar year, leaving just archiving work outstanding in the 2026 calendar year. The Board welcomed the efforts to do this informed by achieving both closure for families and the cost to the public purse.
- Presenting our work on core activity, currently expressed as a percentage, differently to better articulate it.
- The welcome ambition to address improving diversity at senior grades alongside a recognition that a more robust plan to deliver against it will need to be developed.
- Executive views on the elements of the plan they expect will be most challenging. In addition to the stretching nature of the overall plan, there was a shared view that performance recovery will be one of the most significant areas of focus. It was noted that work to better model live caseload and identify 'green shoots' will support progress. The Finance and Performance Committee will play an important role in overseeing performance on behalf of the Board.
- The significance of public perception of the plan as well as the importance of its delivery. The Board noted that external communications planning is baked in to how we articulate our wider Transformation work, with the Deputy Director General Strategy, Engagement and Communications speaking to work underway to develop stakeholder engagement plans.

The Board **agreed** the Strategy and Business Plan document for 2025-26 and to a revised order, setting out the Business Plan first.

8. SERVICE USER STRATEGY

The Deputy Director General Strategy, Engagement and Communications introduced the circulated paper. The Head of Quality and Standards gave an overview of its key elements, noting that the Quality Committee had previously discussed the approach and supported it.

The Board welcomed the ambition and focus on improving engagement of service users and discussed the following:

- Plans to increase the focus on service user experience as part of dip sampling.
- Efforts underway to establish at least one involvement panel and to identify opportunities for service users to genuinely influence the work of the IOPC.
- Connections made with other bodies to learn from their approaches to service user involvement. This included meeting with the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI). Teams learned about high response rates to their surveys with a view to achieving similar results to help build our data so that it may in turn better inform our work.
- The scale of the work described as a huge cultural undertaking which cannot be driven by the Quality and Service Improvement Team (QSI) alone.

Ensuring consistent effort and an appropriate pace to bring the expertise of service users further into our work was considered key to success.

- The value of true co-production which is at the far end of the ladder from where we stand currently.
- The consideration given to the work of improving service user involvement in the Transformation Programme and the joined up work that is continuing between the teams.
- The risks associated with not progressing the work which were considered to outweigh any associated with adopting the strategy.
- The importance of assessing our progress in this area and the role of the Quality Committee in overseeing this on behalf of the Board..

The Service User Strategy was **agreed**.

The Board recorded its thanks to QSI team for their work to develop it.

9. QUARTERLY RESOURCES REPORT.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources spoke to the circulated paper which set out the financial results reported at the end March.

The Board considered the report and discussed the following:

- The full year resource cash spend reported to the Home Office at the beginning of April was £70.86m and represents a full year underspend of approximately 3%.
- The challenges associated with forecasting and the more stable trajectory now anticipated.
- The risk appetite necessitated by annual funding, the ambition to move to multi-year funding and the continuing conversation with the Home Office regarding this.
- The definition of 'Taxpayers' Equity' included in Annex A and an offer for further discussion regarding this outside of the meeting made by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.
- Risk of Judicial Review and the approach to ensuring sufficient budget held centrally should it be required.
- The expected impact of the Crime and Policing Bill on our work and anticipated timeline for royal assent, meaning current thresholds will continue to be applied for some time to come.
- The budgetary impact of consistent recruitment delays and work to address them.

10. QUARTERLY STRATEGIC REPORT

The Strategy Unit Manager introduced the circulated report. The Board discussed and noted the following:

- The current overall 'Amber' status rating by strategy-end.

- Work underway to finalise the transformation road map and benefits. Both elements are expected to be available by the end of July. Following questions from members, the Director of Transformation confirmed this will take account of optimism bias and give consideration to contingency planning.
- Work, also referenced in the discussion regarding the quarterly resources report, in pursuit of multi-year funding to better align to corporate strategy.
- A continued downward trend in performance against KPIs, which saw us fall short of public targets at year end. It was noted that this was anticipated and had informed previous Board discussions.
- The work to improve forecasting performance alongside the work in transformation to give greater clarity to the delivery on the strategy.
- Whilst it remains outside of target, the improving situation regarding the average review duration with closures outpacing opening. March saw the highest number of completed reviews across the year with 251 completed.
- The up to date work of the Assessment Unit which is tracking very close to its target of five working days.
- The potential for AI to support both our transformation and business-as-usual work and pilots underway to explore its applications across our different functions.
- The more positive up to date picture against six and twelve month targets covered verbally by the Deputy Director General, Investigations and Casework.
- The potential impact of phase three of the Senior Management Review which includes Operations Managers due to commence imminently.
- The work undertaken with Yonder, an external partner, to understand the value of IOPC independent investigations.

11. VERBAL REPORT FROM THE APRIL 2025 AUDIT,RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (ARAC)

Clive Quantrill gave a verbal report of his first ARAC meeting as its Chair which included the following:

- A focus on audit:
 - the progress made by the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) in closing required actions.
 - The move away from Azets to the National Audit Office (NAO) as auditor.
- The outstanding annual report from the ARAC Chair which is currently being worked on and will be shared in due course.
- The draft minutes of the meeting will shortly be available to share with the Board.

12. BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCE

The Board meeting attendance report was considered accurate and noted.

13. FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was discussed and the ongoing work to further populate it was noted. It was agreed to move the annual review of governance documents from June to July.

14. DATES, TIMES AND LOCATIONS OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meeting dates were noted.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

16. MEETING REFLECTION

Kathie Cashell led the meeting reflection through the lens of having struck a balance of being both supportive and challenging of one another and the papers considered. She acknowledged the breadth of discussion covering a range of important issues whilst also taking key decisions.

The Chair thanked the Board and closed the meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Watson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rachel Watson, Chair