

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- In 2022 the first review of the OPCC was carried out since it was established ten years ago. It was found to be overall functioning well, with a good team in place, bringing rich and varied experience and expertise to the task of supporting the PCC.
- However the review found that the OPCC did require realignment in two senses: first with the priorities and ways of working of the current PCC; and secondly, with the requirements of an expanded team and responsibilities.
- OPCC structure, decision-making arrangements, internal processes and capacity had not kept pace with expansion of responsibilities, and this had been exposed by the change in PCC and statutory officers. People management and the use of technology were also found to be lagging behind good practice in several respects.
- The review was concluded at the end of May, setting out a series of proposals designed to achieve this realignment through focus, efficiency and building capability. They are summarised under each of the five elements of the review, but should be read as an integrated package of proposals.
- First, it was proposed that the OPCC adopt a Strategy and Business Plan which articulates overarching aims for the term of the Police and Crime Plan. This was intended to put the PCC's priorities in focus for the whole team, and provide a basis for senior leaders to allocate resources within their teams, as well as for re/deprioritisation of workstreams to respond to changing demands in a fast-moving environment.
- Secondly, a revised team structure was proposed, bringing staff into four functions that align more clearly with strategic aims, as well as providing a more balanced structure of activity across the office. In particular, a new performance and accountability team would bring together scrutiny functions that were fragmented across the OPCC. The new structure was also intended to support clearer ownership and effective decision-making.
- Thirdly, the review identified scope for greater efficiency in OPCC systems and processes through better use of digital tools. It was proposed that streamlined HR processes should be implemented as a priority as the existing processes were found to be absorbing significant capacity from a very small team.
- Fourthly, it was recognised that the proposals above would not fully address current capacity gaps. In order to maintain prudent use of public funds, it was proposed that these were filled with a mixture of permanent roles and fixed-term roles, the latter to provide capacity that may not be required in the longer term. Changes to existing roles would ensure capability was better aligned with priorities, provide greater resilience, and support skills development including in line management.
- Finally, it was proposed that an OPCC learning and development plan should identify how existing and new staff can develop in key areas, as part of a broader People Plan that also embeds values and behaviours into the HR approach.
- These proposals were accepted in full by the PCC, and have now been substantially implemented. In particular, a new staff structure is now in place as at Annex A.

## Background

The Avon and Somerset (A&S) OPCC has developed and expanded over the decade since the introduction of PCCs across England and Wales, in order to deliver the increasing remit and responsibilities of PCCs, and reflecting the first A&S PCC's priorities. Most recently the second and current PCC, Mark Shelford, appointed a Deputy PCC in March 2022. Expansion over the decade has been largely ad hoc, and this was the first review of the OPCC to be carried out in A&S.

The PCC commissioned the review in order to assess the extent to which the Office was set up to deliver his priorities effectively and efficiently, and to make recommendations.

## Purpose and scope

The review was aimed at ensuring the OPCC is set up to:

- support the PCC to deliver his statutory functions effectively and efficiently, with due regard to limited public resources;
- support the delivery of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan 2021-25; and
- respond to future changes to requirements in an agile way, including the outcomes of the government's PCC Review.

The scope of the review was agreed by the PCC and Senior Leadership Team (SLT), to encompass five elements which required varying degrees of focus:

1. Strategy and business plan. *What are the OPCC's strategic aims for 2022-25 and how will we work towards these in 2022-23?*
2. Structures and decision-making. *Is accountability clear and do we have efficient decision making arrangements?*
3. Systems and processes. *Will the current systems and processes that support the operation of the OPCC enable us to deliver our business plan effectively and efficiently?*
4. Skills, capability and capacity. *Do we have the right capabilities in the right places? Where do we need to strengthen? How do we meet new or changing needs?*
5. Culture and behaviours. *Does our organisational culture and behaviours enable the OPCC to best support the PCC? Are our values fully embedded in how we work day-to-day?*

## Approach

The PCC asked the Chief of Staff to lead the review. This was done with the support of the SLT, and with independent advice from Policing Insight Advisory (part of CoPACC). A range of information was considered, including:

- OPCC team member views through structured discussions with senior leaders, as well as directly from the wider team, including through a pulse survey carried out in March 2022
- statutory requirements and published plans
- internal data including organisational structure, role profiles and financial data
- external data including on other OPCCs (in particular our most similar force colleagues) to see how they operate and what we could learn from them
- observations and issues arising from discussions with stakeholders
- specific circumstances and responsibilities including the complexity of local government within the force area, the PCC's national APCC portfolio lead, as well as ongoing changes to the PCC role and duties.

Steps were taken to engage the whole team from the outset, to explain the purpose, scope and approach, and encourage contribution and discussion of their views and experience.

Findings and conclusions were tested with the PCC and SLT as well as the Chief and Deputy Chief Constable through an interim report.

## Summary of review findings and action taken

### 1. Strategy and business plan

The OPCC had already defined its overall purpose, vision and mission as below; these were articulated in 2020, and were endorsed by the current PCC after he took up post. However at the start of the review there was no existing business plan setting out how these were to be achieved. While the OPCC was smaller, with little change in individuals at the PCC/senior staff level, this may not have been a priority. However long-standing members of staff described the OPCC operating in silos, with only a small number of individuals having a good view of the whole business and how the collective efforts of teams were directed to overarching aims.

Setting out a strategy and business plan for the OPCC helps each team member to understand the role *they* play in achieving the PCC's priorities, the role that *others* in the OPCC play, and how they can work *together* to do so efficiently and effectively. It provides a basis for SLT to allocate resource, and to reprioritise in response to changes in demand and/or capacity.

The PCC's Police and Crime Plan ('the Plan'), which sets out what the PCC wants to achieve with Avon and Somerset Police (ASP) and partners during this term, was taken as the basis for developing OPCC objectives, setting out how the OPCC itself will support delivery of the Plan. The Plan was considered in conjunction with the full statutory functions of PCCs.

During the period of the review, in collaboration with the wider team, a business plan was developed that identifies five strategic aims for the term of the Plan; and the key projects and activity that will contribute to these over a three-year period. The aims are set out below, together with the OPCC purpose and values.

#### **Our purpose**

*To lead improvement in efficiency and effectiveness of policing, victim support and criminal justice services on behalf of local people.*

#### **Our mission**

- *We improve*
- *We listen*
- *We innovate*
- *We lead*
- *We challenge*

#### **Our vision**

*Excellent victim support, accountable policing, and fairer criminal justice services for all.*

#### **Strategic aims for 2022-25**

- *Engage with diverse communities and facilitate external scrutiny of police performance, supporting legitimacy and public confidence*
- *Support and challenge ASP to provide an efficient and effective service, focussed on preventing crime*
- *Work with partners to improve community safety, provide an effective criminal justice system, and support victims of crime*
- *Support delivery of OPCC aims in line with our values, including through improved digital tools and learning and development*
- *Lead the national PCC approach to economic and cyber crime, informing national strategy and supporting local response to fraud*

The business plan sets out how the OPCC will work towards these in 2022-23 and beyond.

## Statutory functions

All OPCC activity has, and must have, a statutory basis in the list of PCC functions. These encompass a broad range of duties, some much more tightly prescribed than others, as well as a number of discretionary powers. The approach that was taken to these statutory functions in the business plan is summarised below.

### *a) Governance*

The PCC's duties in respect of police governance are clearly prescribed, and include: setting an annual budget for the police, and council tax precept for the police force area; setting a five-year police and crime plan; and appointing a chief officer to lead the police. For the most part, the PCC has no significant discretion in how these duties are carried out, and there is limited variation in how (O)PCCs do so. A&S has an established joint governance framework, and compliance with this was largely satisfactory.

However it was proposed that a comprehensive review of the framework should be carried out in light of the change in both PCC and Chief Constable, to ensure it reflects best practice; minimises gaps and ambiguities; and to support effective oversight of budgetary control.

This was therefore reflected under aim 2 of the business plan.

### *b) Oversight and scrutiny – holding to account*

In contrast, the PCC's duties to hold the Chief Constable to account do not prescribe *how* this is done, and there is wide variation in how OPCCs ensure these duties are met. The following strengths of the current A&S approach were identified:

- the open and constructive relationship with ASP, good access to their data and ability to analyse it
- robust and established oversight arrangements that are separate from the police's internal governance structures, including monthly oversight boards
- active scrutiny panels involving diverse A&S residents.

The OPCC and joint OPCC/ASP scrutiny panels have been established ad hoc, and vary significantly in their approach, as well as the support arrangements provided by the OPCC.

The business plan therefore aims to build on existing strengths, setting out a focus of scrutiny on the PCC's priority areas; to be informed by joined-up working across scrutiny panels, contacts and complaints to ensure insights are being fully utilised. In slower time, a review of the longer term provision for scrutiny panels should be considered, drawing on learning from other OPCCs to ensure a strategic approach that supports the PCC in his scrutiny of ASP. This should encompass how the PCC responds to requests for involvement in ASP and other panels; and must be carried out in a way that draws on any learning from the *Identifying Disproportionality* report.

### *c) Oversight and scrutiny - complaints*

The PCC has specific duties to deal with complaints against the Chief Constable, and to handle the reviews (appeals) of less serious misconduct cases against other police officers. With regard to handling of original police complaints (i.e. not appeals), since the start of 2021 the PCC has been under a duty to operate one of three levels (models) of involvement. Currently in A&S along with most other OPCCs, the lowest level (model 1) is in operation, with the PCC having oversight of ASP handling. How this is done is not prescribed and OPCCs take a range of different approaches even within this model. In A&S it is done through both panel scrutiny and OPCC 'keeping in view' complaints that have been notified to the office.

The comparative strengths of the A&S approach were found to be:

- the level of OPCC access to the handling of police complaints, which is key to the PCC's oversight
- an outcomes-focused approach, and open and constructive relationship with PSD, which together support a better service to (potential) complainants

- the efficient and effective handling of a high volume of reviews, as confirmed by internal audit and comparison with other OPCCs.

However it was concluded that it would be appropriate to evaluate the operation of the overall complaints model during the course of this PCC term, taking into account learning in A&S and other OPCCs. Therefore a review is included in the business plan. Such a review should consider whether relevant learning is being effectively communicated and/or acted upon by PSD, as to date they continue to receive a comparatively high number of complaints.

#### *d) Commissioning services and partnership working*

The PCC has broad duties with regard to partnership working, including to cooperate with responsible authorities, and to make arrangements for an efficient and effective criminal justice system for the area. Alongside these, the PCC has broad powers to commission services for victims and to reduce crime. There is wide variation in how OPCCs fulfil the former and use the latter, reflecting factors including the diversity of local needs and different partner landscapes. However the conditions attached to the regular MoJ Victims Grant to each PCC prescribe that these funds must be used for victim support services, with specific ringfences for CSA, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and prescription of minimum types of support.

The PCC commissioned an internal review of OPCC commissioning and grant funding in 2021. This identified a series of recommendations to ensure activity is focused on PCC priorities, and that arrangements are in place to ensure and monitor effectiveness – including in respect of pilots and other one-off commissioned services, to inform decisions as to whether and how to seek continuation or roll-out. These have now been implemented, and the business plan includes a refresh of the commissioning strategy in line with the PCC’s focus on crime prevention including reducing reoffending.

The business plan also includes strengthening the effectiveness of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), ahead of LCJBs being put on a statutory footing as indicated by the government; supporting partners in implementation of their new ‘serious violence duty’; and developing the PCC’s overarching partner plan including review of how and why the PCC and DPCC engage with partners and how outcomes are tracked, to ensure strategic and efficient focus on his priorities.

The implications of the business plan for team structure and roles are set out in the sections below.

#### ***Progress against recommendations:***

- *The OPCC Strategy and Business Plan has been adopted and is being taken forward by the team. It is a living document, with any changes to be agreed by the SLT and communicated to the whole team. Individual work objectives now link through to the Business Plan.*

## **2. Structure and decision-making**

**Internal governance and decision-making arrangements** were found to be a mix of those previously in place and those which had developed since the election of the current PCC, and included a large range of meetings with overlapping attendance. The review identified scope for greater clarity and efficiency, to align more fully with the PCC’s ways of working, and also to reflect the appointment of a Deputy PCC. Development of the business plan and tracker would also support clearer ownership of workstreams.

**The structure of the OPCC** had developed and evolved over time, with change taking place on a largely ad hoc basis to address expanding PCC responsibilities, as well as the turnover in PCC/DPCC/Chief Executive/CFO over the last three years. The review was the first instance in a decade that the overall structure had been considered.

The review revealed that, while the overall structure largely met the PCC’s requirements, there were aspects that were less well aligned with these. The following issues were identified in respect of current

functions within the OPCC. These should be considered in conjunction with the issues identified in respect of capability and capacity below.

- In some areas, accountability and ownership were not clear. This can hinder efficient progress in designing improvements and owning execution.
- Scrutiny of ASP, a core statutory function of all PCCs and a particular priority of the current PCC as now reflected in the Business Plan, was spread across a number of teams. The different elements of this function - oversight board(s), scrutiny panels, complaints – were found to be strong. The location of public contacts/casework within the same team as complaints was also a strength. However, the overall fragmented approach did not support effective focus and risked adding up to less than the sum of its parts. It could also lead to either gaps or duplication; and is less resilient to change in personnel.
- The commissioning and partnerships team encompassed policy and scrutiny functions. Commissioning and grants activity was part of almost every role within the team, providing resilience in respect of this activity. In contrast to most OPCCs, the central lead for the Violence Reduction Unit was also embedded within the commissioning and partnerships team. This and other portfolio focus areas were well established, enabling the development of deep expertise within the team. However the combined impact of these factors meant the policy function could be side-lined, and in particular the ability to monitor wider policy developments and advise the PCC on these.
- Both the CoS and Head of C&P had a large span of control (number of direct reports). Given the complexity and range of the OPCC's work, this presented a challenge to providing effective and efficient oversight and support.
- The LCJB business manager/coordinator role sits outside of the organisation, an arrangement that predated the PCC taking on the chairing of the Board. The review concluded that this arrangement should be updated, in order to ensure efficient and effective support to the PCC. This was underlined by the priority of criminal justice in the Police and Crime Plan, current court backlogs, and the government's stated intention to put both LCJBs and the PCC's chairmanship on a statutory footing.
- The finance function was split across two teams, which resulted in some inefficiencies and lack of clarity on roles to those in other teams.

### ***A new structure***

A model was developed for a new OPCC structure to address the issues identified through the review. The capabilities required to deliver PCC statutory functions and operate the OPCC were identified, assessed and grouped into four functions, summarised below.

Performance and Accountability	Policy, Partnerships and Commissioning	Communications and Engagement	Finance and Business Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Monitoring Officer</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Performance</li> <li>• Assurance</li> <li>• Scrutiny panels</li> <li>• Independent custody visiting/visitors</li> <li>• Complaint management/review</li> <li>• Fol response</li> <li>• Public contact</li> <li>• Secretariat</li> <li>• Executive support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy advice and development</li> <li>• Partnership working</li> <li>• ECC portfolio lead</li> <li>• LCJB management</li> <li>• CSP engagement</li> <li>• VRU leadership</li> <li>• Funding bid management</li> <li>• Service commissioning</li> <li>• Victims Code compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media relations</li> <li>• Public relations</li> <li>• Public affairs</li> <li>• Community engagement</li> <li>• Public consultation</li> <li>• Internal communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 151 Officer</li> <li>• Financial strategy and management</li> <li>• Funding and grant management</li> <li>• Corporate governance</li> <li>• Human resource management</li> <li>• Information management</li> <li>• <i>ICT management*</i></li> <li>• <i>Legal services*</i></li> </ul>

\* Indicates function provided by ASP

This model:

- aligns OPCC functions more clearly with the PCC's priorities, in particular bringing together scrutiny activity into one team;
- supports a greater focus on policy alongside partnership working;
- brings together finance and related functions;
- provides a more balanced structure of activity across the office; and
- addresses several other issues identified above.

The full proposed organisational structure is considered below under *Skills, capability and capacity*.

#### **Progress against recommendations:**

- *Implementation of the new structure was phased in from the start of September, grouped around four functions: performance and accountability; policy, partnerships and commissioning; communications and engagement; and finance and business support.*
- *Internal governance arrangements are under ongoing review and improvement, also taking into account developments within ASP.*

### **3. Systems and processes**

At the scoping stage the SLT agreed that review of OPCC systems and processes was not overall as pressing a priority as structure and capability. However a number of issues were identified, with a recurring theme being the need to exploit technology and explore greater automation:

- Governance and scrutiny processes are currently subject to change, with the introduction of new oversight boards to hold ASP to account, and a review of the governance framework as covered above.
- Public contacts and complaints provide valuable insights for the OPCC that support scrutiny of ASP. There has been a significant increase in contacts since the arrival of the current PCC. There is scope for the processes used to manage these to be both more efficient, including through better use of technology, and more effective in feeding these insights into the wider team.
- HR systems and processes remain largely 'manual', due to a range of factors including that they do not all easily map onto ASP systems. This means they can be resource-intensive, involving duplication of effort across the Office & HR team and line managers, and are not fully in line with employee expectations of a modern workplace. As well as absorbing capacity, this risks making the OPCC a less attractive place to work.

- One particular area of HR processes which attracted a number of queries from staff was pay and banding. There were no arrangements for job evaluation in place, and a large number of overlapping pay scales of widely varying breadth, with some very narrow. While overall there were few significant concerns around pay levels, this approach lacked clarity and transparency and risked inconsistency. Further, very short pay ranges did not allow for progression within a role.
- Further areas with scope for greater use of digital tools or automation included communications and engagement, and potentially management of bidding processes.

#### **Progress against recommendations**

- *The operation of new PCC oversight boards has been refined on an ongoing basis, and a planned review for the six-month point is under way.*
- *The approach to managing public contacts is being developed to increase efficiency and support sharing of insights across the broader team, exploiting the potential of new software.*
- *The OPCC has adopted a fair and transparent approach to pay and banding, that allows for progression in all roles.*
- *Temporary additional resource has been recruited to implement recommendations around automation of HR processes and moving the OPCC application process online.*

#### **4. Capability, skills and capacity**

The review found there were broad skills and experience within the OPCC team, and deep expertise in a number of areas, which had developed over time to support the previous PCC. A key element of the review involved consideration of whether there was sufficient capability in the right areas in order to deliver on the priorities of the current PCC, and to be sustainable for the future.

While the OPCC has expanded over its first decade, like most OPCCs it remains a small team when considering the range of complex functions it carries out. Even minor changes in demand or gaps in capability can have a significant impact on performance. The demands on the team have significantly increased since the election of the current PCC, in the form of developing the Plan, consideration of initiatives to support its delivery, and increased engagements and public contacts. This comes on top of increasing government interest in policing and criminal justice, reflected in successive legislative and other policy initiatives as well as funding rounds.

A clear business plan, and efficiencies resulting from both clearer ownership of workstreams and better use of technology, will go some way to addressing these concerns. However the review identified a number of areas where capability and/or capacity was limiting the effectiveness of the OPCC, including: communications and engagement; direct support for the PCC (and now DPCC); and secretariat for key oversight meetings. There was also limited resilience in some areas including statutory functions, for example in the secretariat for scrutiny panels, complaints reviews, and Police and Crime Panel liaison.

There is more resilience in commissioning, partnership working and policy work, with a large number of staff involved in each of these, including in comparison to most other OPCCs as noted above. However what appears to be high capacity needs to be viewed in the context of particular factors including:

- the highly complex local government and partnership landscape within A&S
- the A&S approach to the Violence Reduction Unit, with the central lead embedded within the OPCC
- the PCC taking on the national APCC portfolio lead for the complex, high-volume area of economic and cyber crime (ECC); and
- increased government activity in policing and criminal justice in the shape of the PCC Review alongside other statutory and non-statutory initiatives, consultations, and funding opportunities.



Learning and development has taken place on a largely ad hoc basis. While L&D has been supported in a range of ways, there has not been an assessment of training needs across the OPCC. Leadership and line management skills were one of a number of areas identified as requiring development.

### **Proposed roles**

The roles **summarised** at Annex B are intended to:

- provide the capacity and capability required to deliver the PCC's functions and priorities effectively and efficiently;
- do so through both focussing existing skills and expertise on the PCC's priorities, and increasing capacity where there are gaps, for example in public engagement and ECC;
- increase resilience across the OPCC, and agility to respond to changing requirements, including those developed internally in line with the Business Plan; and
- be supported by ongoing learning and development based on a strategic assessment of requirements across the OPCC and each team.

### **Progress against recommendations**

- *New job descriptions were developed for all roles within the new structure at Annex A. Following consultation with all staff, roles have been filled through a combination of matching existing staff and recruitment to key new roles. Opportunities were opened to existing staff in the first instance. Staff were supported during a phased transition into new roles by end October, with almost all roles filled at that point.*
- *The arrangements for future VRU support will be reviewed ahead of the next financial year.*
- *Immediate individual training needs have been identified and prioritised. An exercise to analyse wider training needs is in the planning stage, and will inform the development of a learning and development plan that identifies appropriate formal and informal opportunities to develop the skills needed across the OPCC and within individual teams.*

## **5. Culture, values and behaviours**

At the scoping stage, culture and behaviours were assessed by the SLT as a lower priority area for the review, on the understanding that the OPCC culture was largely healthy with no major concerns. The OPCC articulated a set of values in 2020 as part of the work to define mission and vision mentioned above: *openness, partnership, courage and compassion*. The review bore out initial indications that, for the most part, these are visibly demonstrated by the team on a day-to-day basis. Other behaviours identified as key for the whole office include collaborative working, flexibility, and delivering efficiently and effectively. The proposals in the sections above should support these behaviours.

There were indications of an 'always on' culture that has developed or been exacerbated in many workplaces since the COVID-19 pandemic. These issues were explored in a staff survey and subsequent all-team away-day in the spring, where actions to support wellbeing and connectivity were agreed. Progress against these is a standing agenda item at the monthly internal OPCC management board.

### **Progress against recommendations**

- *The OPCC values have been embedded in relevant processes, including in a refreshed approach to objective-setting and appraisal that also reflects the wider key behaviours identified. All senior leader objectives include role modelling the values.*

## **Conclusion**

The OPCC review identified strengths including rich and varied experience within the team, alongside the need for realignment in key respects. It put forward a broad set of recommendations designed to achieve this realignment and ensure the OPCC is fully set up to support the PCC in a fast-moving

environment. Key elements, including a new staff structure, have been implemented as a result. These are already bringing some of the intended benefits, and we will continue to monitor these closely over the coming months.

## **Annexes**

Annex A: OPCC structure November 2022

Annex B: OPCC teams and roles

Annex C: Previous OPCC structure