



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

Chief Constable

Annual Governance Statement

2025/26

Foreword

Staffordshire Police's performance picture has been steady over this reporting period, which is as a result of the hard work and dedication of officers, staff and volunteers and their commitment to making Staffordshire safer.

In 2026, the force will be inspected by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as part of their PEEL framework which will assess the force's ability to deliver an effective and efficient service.

A sharp focus on providing a responsive service has seen 999 and non-emergency (101) call performance improve. There is however, still more work to do to ensure that the right resources attend the right crimes in an agreed timeframe.

The force continues to deliver a number of strategic change programmes in areas across the force to improve the service provided to the public. This includes an overhaul of Resource Management Unit to better assist with resource planning, digital forensics transformation to introduce new digital evidence processes, and a review of the forces Evidence Management Unit arrangements.

One of the success stories of recent change within the force is the dedicated Road Crime Team – established in late 2024 to carry out enforcement and preventative activity. The team plays a major role in tackling vehicle-related offences. In 2025, they carried out 3,744 drug and alcohol tests, arrested 1,003 people, seized 244 stolen vehicles, and recovered £16.2 million in criminal assets.

This reporting period has also seen a unique leadership challenge resulting in a number of temporary executive and senior lead roles following the suspension of the Chief Constable in August 2025.

The force like many others, has challenging financial circumstances to take account of, along with ensuring moving at pace in line with both national police reform and local government reform. The operating context is a difficult and fast changing environment where tough decisions will need to be made, but plans remain ambitious. This is complemented by ensuring continued key investment in the right technologies and capabilities for both the near future and the medium term.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Chief Constable has an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that appropriateness of all actions can be demonstrated and mechanisms are in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Chief Constable is required to put in place proper arrangements for governance and risk management of the force's affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions.

The Chief Constable has adopted a governance framework, which is consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government and Police' 2016. The framework outlines seven principles (as set out below) of good governance and aligns to the wider public sector Nolan principles of good governance:

1. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law (integrity)
2. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
3. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
4. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
5. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
6. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
7. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

The seven areas have been used to form the basis of the following review of the effectiveness of the force's governance arrangements.

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

The force has 3 statutory officers: The Chief Constable (CC), Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) and a Chief Finance Officer, Section 151 Officer (S151 of the Local Government Finance Act 1972).

- The Chief Constable is responsible for maintaining the King's Peace, and has direction and control over the force's officers and staff. The Chief Constable holds office under the Crown, but is appointed by the Staffordshire Commissioner (SC). This role is accountable to the law for the exercise of police powers, and to the SC for the delivery of efficient and effective policing, management of resources and expenditure by the police force. At all times the Chief Constable, along with officers and staff, are to remain operationally independent in executing their duties to the communities that they serve.
- The Deputy Chief Constable is a statutory post to act on behalf of the Chief Constable during any period of absence, thus ensuring there is a senior executive officer available at all times to exercise the post of Chief Constable.
- The Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) is appointed under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 which requires every local authority to appoint a suitably qualified officer responsible for the proper administration of its affairs. The S151 Officer has statutory powers of intervention under S114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The current policing plan clearly sets out the force's vision, values and areas of focus. Detailed delivery plans strive to create a safe and confident Staffordshire, secured by an outstanding local police service that is passionate about serving the public, caring for its people and working in partnership. Leaders from every area of the organisation have conducted face to face briefings to their teams to ensure clarity around understanding how each role contributes to achieving the force's ambitions.

The principles of the Code of Ethics are embedded across the force and are a key strand in training and policy development. The code was refreshed at the end of 2023 and now sets out three key policing principles (courage, respect and empathy, and public service) to help people in policing to do the right things, in the right way, for the right reasons. The force is using the revised code to ensure that the emphasis on standards is maintained for the year to come and beyond. The Chief Constable makes clear expectations of standards of behaviour setting out clearly the message that staff and officers are here to serve the public by working in the public interest, fostering public trust and confidence, and taking pride in providing an excellent service. The force has addressed the national recommendations made by His Majesty's Inspectorate of

Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) relating to vetting, misconduct and misogyny and will undergo further inspection and scrutiny activity around this area into the next financial year and beyond as part of a national programme of work.

The Chief Constable has been very clear in setting a strong focus around standards, not only in relation to serious misconduct matters but also around other key priorities such as standards of uniform, care for force assets and being respectful to colleagues and communities. This has been driven further by the PDR framework which sets a standards related objective for all employees. Each employee also undertakes an Annual Integrity Review (AIR) with their manager to provide adequate assurance to the force and the public that standards are being maintained and the force is aware of potential concerns.

Staff are appropriately trained to make ethical operational decisions within the framework of Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE). The National Decision-Making Model (introduced across the service in 2013) also supports dynamic ethical decision making around any given situation or as a situation progresses.

The force's Professional Standards Department (PSD) monitors standards and compliance and consists of three areas:

1. Professional Standards primarily deals with complaints from the public, misconduct and death or serious injury incidents.
2. Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) deals with corruption threats and prevention in line with the annual strategic threat assessment and identified priorities.
3. Force Vetting Unit operates in line with the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP).

PSD reports directly to the Deputy Chief Constable with Professional Standards and Force Vetting being co-located with Human Resources (HR) to provide a joined up approach to the management of people. The ACU is located separately to maintain the integrity of any covert investigations. The department works across the force with all roles and ranks, actively engaging to highlight themes of concern, deliver interventions and reaffirm the values of the organisation.

The PSD's monthly governance and assurance board chaired by the DCC and attended by key stakeholders provides an opportunity to identify harm reduction strategies, to develop preventive or proactive methods and to identify and investigate corrupt practice and review of ongoing cases.

The Professional Standards area of business runs a triage process to ensure the very earliest assessment, appropriate management and swift resolution for all dissatisfaction complaints.

The force has a whistleblowing policy which is supported by three confidential reporting lines; Bad Apple (internal only) and the Police Integrity line run by Crimestoppers (accessible to all police employees) and Police Anti-Corruption and Abuse Reporting Service (run by Crimestoppers but accessible externally). The force has quarterly meetings

and an effective ongoing dialogue with the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) who also have a confidential hotline.

The ACU team has successfully identified and brought proceedings against officers and staff during 2025/26 where their behaviour has fallen below the standards that are expected of them.

The force uses the National Crime Agency (NCA) threat assessment, supported by regular regional threat assessments to focus the forces resources around the three key identified areas; information management, abuse of powers or police authority and inappropriate associations. The force remains fully committed to tackling sexual misconduct, Abuse of Position for Sexual Purpose (APSP) and Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG). PSD continues to use the 'Know the Line' Campaign training to improve knowledge and understanding of sexual misconduct and APSP. There has been a continued increase in reporting, in part due to confidence in the investigations undertaken.

The previous investments made to dedicated triage function provision for complaints, introduction of a prevent and intervention officer and increase in detectives to effectively manage complex investigations within both ACU and PSD, continue to support delivering the best service to the communities of Staffordshire. The relationship with the compliance manager for complaints remains strong and forms the basis of an organisational learning platform with relevant governance and ownership.

The force requires that all gifts and gratuities are recorded for transparency, even where declined. There is an online system for recording this activity. This is regularly reported to the Joint Audit and Risk Committee (JARC) for transparency and scrutiny. Executive Officer expenses are available publicly and are also reviewed by the JARC. PSD and payroll undertake regular dip samples of expenses and other systems. Any agreed secondary employment is recorded and a process for authorisation of new business interests is in place. Gifts and gratuities and notifiable association portfolios now sit within ACU to provide an added layer of scrutiny and assurance on these areas of potential corruption.

The force's approach to misconduct cases is one of transparency. Regular updates are provided across the force from the Chief Constable to demonstrate the nature and outcomes of upheld misconduct cases.

The forces' assessment and risk identification process have forecasted an increase in demand and potential capacity issues for vetting arrangements which has seen this area of business undertake a forward-looking review in order to identify issues and gaps and ensure that mitigations are in place at an early stage. A comprehensive review of the Force Vetting Unit has identified several areas which require improvement. Through examination of best practice, HMICFRS inspections and most similar force comparison amendments to current practices are being implemented and have progressed. JARC have regular development inputs from PSD which include vetting to aid oversight in this area.

Staffordshire Police was inspected as a force around anti-corruption and vetting during November 2022. The inspection report was published in June 2023 resulting in an adequate grading. The force is yet to be inspected under the new integrity framework but

remains committed to continuous improvements using learning from other forces and in line with ongoing broader national work.

Following on from the force and national inspections and the publication of Baroness Casey's report around the standards and culture within the Metropolitan Police, the force continues to strengthen its approach to ensuring that officers, staff and volunteers work with the highest level of integrity at all times. The 'Know the Line' campaign supports this work along with a refreshed 'set the standards' campaign to underpin the role that officer and staff play in building trust and confidence with the communities served. Where standards do fall short, the effective mechanisms and processes within the PSD look to identify and deal appropriately with those individuals.

Support around legal matters is provided to the Chief Constable through the Head of Legal Services. The Head of Legal Service's role is delivered through a contract with West Midlands Police and is a joint legal service between the two forces.

The force has direct links to the College of Policing and reviews all Authorised Professional Practice in the context of its own policies and procedures. All policies and procedures are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and are reviewed in the context of the Code of Ethics. New or significantly revised policies and procedures are signed off at Executive Officer level. There is a dedicated Policy Review and Development Team for the area of Public Protection which ensures that all local and national lessons learned and recommendations around serious case and safeguarding reviews for both adults and children are used to enhance service provision to those most vulnerable in our communities.

The force gives due regard to the Equality Act 2010 as part of the process of decision making by ensuring that the following three aims are fully considered:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it and;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

In addition to the above, both internal and external audit arrangements give assurance or the opportunity to raise issues to ensure that laws, regulations, policy and expenditure are complied with lawfully, more detail around results is given later in the document. The force's approach to internal audit has moved from a focus on financial areas only to now include other business areas where issues have been identified, to provide an independent perspective on improvement activity.

2. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Staffordshire Police publishes a number of key strategic documents in line with the force publication scheme, along with other information such as Executive Officer expenses and responses to inspection activity.

The public can report crime and incidents online and seek advice and guidance on the force website and other social media channels e.g. Facebook, Messenger and X, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The move to online services and digital channels is in line with the public's preference for more online interactions and greater digital services.

The force endeavours to respond to all Freedom of Information requests in the required time frame with the utilisation of new technology being explored to ensure efficient and effective ways of working in this area.

The Force conducts specific consultation with victims of crime and wider members of the public to gauge the direction of its policing plan commitment to being an outstanding force.

Victim of Crime Satisfaction results of 'opinions before & after contact' remain stable, together with 'follow up contact' and 'satisfied with investigation' results remaining high. In addition, the Crime Survey England & Wales 'Public Confidence' result also remains relatively stable.

Information is also shared from the Commissioner's Independent Scrutiny Panels (CISPs) around specific areas of use of police powers e.g. stop and search and use of force. All information is taken through appropriate governance to support learning and development to drive service delivery.

The policing plan has a specific focus on improving engagement with the service and the force has a clear community engagement strategy and bespoke community engagement plans for each local policing area. The force has an embedded problem solving approach which is supported by a number of organisational structures and tools. Two-way engagement is utilised to address local, force and national priorities. Neighbourhood officers make good use of Power BI dashboards to help identify community issues that may benefit from a problem-solving response and works with partners to understand community perspectives. The force has also taken steps to improve the capability of neighbourhood officers and staff through training and the development of essential skills and knowledge.

The force has enhanced its commitment to neighbourhood Policing in line with the Government's Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee working with partner agencies on a local level. The force continues to work closely with communities through active citizenship, for example through Community Speed Watch, Neighbourhood Watch and Staffordshire Smart Alert and utilises the support of its Independent Advisory Group around decision making and community issues. Neighbourhood policing teams also seek to reach communities that traditionally have less contact with the police or have lower levels of trust and confidence.

The Police Support Volunteers scheme ensures continued opportunities for members of the public to be involved in policing their local communities. The force recognises the important contribution that is made by those who volunteer for example, as part of the Special Constabulary and Force Cadet Programme with an award category for each at the forces prestigious annual force awards ceremony.

The force continues to host a Staffordshire Police open day to support enhanced relationships and confidence across communities with officers and staff engaging with members of the community to show case the good work undertaken and the opportunities the service has to offer.

3. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

The policing plan sets out the force's vision of being an *outstanding local police service that cares*, supported by a clear set of deliverables aligned to the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan 2024-2028. This Plan establishes priorities focused on delivering high-quality local services, supporting victims, preventing harm, protecting people, and strengthening effective partnerships. The Chief Constable is held to account by the Staffordshire Commissioner for delivery against these priorities. The policing plan was refreshed for 2025-2027, maintaining a consistent focus on this vision while ensuring continued alignment with the Police and Crime Plan.

The policing plan has 4 delivery pillars as set out below. Each pillar is owned at chief officer level with a comprehensive and clear performance framework developed to measure and monitor delivery against intended outcomes for Staffordshire. Each Command also has a supporting Annual Delivery Plan which sets out clear timetabled delivery activities including correlation to areas for improvement and areas of vulnerability and risk identified through the Force Management Statement (FMS) as well as connectivity to efficiency programme workstreams.



The force has a coherent and integrated performance framework in place, aligning operational activity to the policing plan, clarifying organisational priorities and strengthening accountability. This is underpinned by enhanced use of Power BI, providing real-time performance insight and improved data visualisation to support informed, transparent decision-making.

Performance is governed through a structured framework, including a monthly Performance Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable and a quarterly policing plan delivery review cycle, enabling effective scrutiny, challenge and continuous improvement. These arrangements are aligned to operational tasking processes to ensure delivery against strategic priorities.

A daily Chief Officer-led pacesetter meeting further supports responsive oversight of current demand and risk.

Collectively, these arrangements strengthen organisational oversight, support continuous improvement, and contribute to the efficient, effective and economic use of resources in delivering priority outcomes.

In addition, the force has appointed a new head of change who has brought extensive experience in change delivery and an enhanced focus on the realisation of intended benefits to drive improvements.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which is jointly owned by the Police and Crime Commissioner's Section 151 Officer and the force Section 151 Officer, sets the strategic framework for financial resource planning and incorporates the following:

- Revenue budget
- Reserves Strategy
- Capital Strategy and Capital Investment Programme
- Treasury Management Strategy

The MTFS is presented in February each year to the Police Fire and Crime Panel for approval; it is refreshed annually to reflect updated (planning) assumptions, emerging risks, and the latest available financial information.

Within the context of the MTFS the 2025/26 budget aligns financial resources to areas of greatest risk and therefore is fundamental to the performance management of Staffordshire Police and the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office.

Once again, the MTFS for 2026/27 was set in a challenging and uncertain financial environment. Various factors have placed pressure on force budgets and increased the savings requirement to balance the budget. However, the force plans to invest further in a number of key areas as set out below:

- Supporting the on-going recruitment of additional police officers to continue the growth in police officer numbers.
- Investments into artificial intelligence around public contact, redaction, statement writing, translation and forensics analysis to improve productivity and thus service to the public.
- Electric vehicle infrastructure and sustainability
- Recruitment of transferees, bringing experience at pace into Staffordshire Police to complement the existing recruitment of student officers.
- Capital investment that continues to modernise estate, drive digital improvement as well as continuing the fleet replacement programme.
- New equipment for frontline staff including the latest body worn video technology, increasing vehicle based ANPR coverage alongside the latest Taser equipment

The force is focussed on ensuring that it utilises resources well to demonstrate value for money. There is a detailed Efficiency Plan with key areas of focus for closing the budget gap in future years. This will be supported by a programme of Efficiency Panels (previously known as Resource Allocation Challenge panels) which will be focussed on ensuring that the budgets reflect the required funding to address FMS risks and delivery of the Annual Delivery Plans.

The force has undertaken an analysis of the 2025/26 HMICFRS Value for Money Profiles published in March 2026. This highlights the following:

- Staffordshire has total net revenue expenditure per capita of £216.53
- Staffordshire has the 5th lowest number of police officers per 1,000 population in the country (change from 4th lowest in 2024/25) and is the 2nd lowest in MSG
- Despite the above, it has the 7th highest crimes / outcomes per officer
- Staffordshire remains a heavy investor in PCSOs.

- Staffordshire has the lowest number of police officers in support roles

A new Sustainability Strategy 2025 to 2028 has been developed following on from the first force sustainability strategy launched in 2023.

This new strategy aligns to the National Police Environmental Group Sustainability Charter and the goals and ambitions of the policing plan 2025-27. It also identifies the key areas for sustainable development across operational policing, fleet, estates and procurement. It demonstrates the force's commitment to its people, communities and the planet with a strong emphasis on efficiency and protecting the public purse.

There has been some real progress in the last 2 years with growth in solar panels and EV charging points, along with the introduction of the first EV vehicles in the force fleet. Salix Funding has been secured for decarbonising parts of the HQ estate, with the introduction of an air source heat pump along with rolling out LED lighting. There have also been improvements in waste, recycling and electric / gas consumption.

The force is committed to be Net Zero by 2050 and the strategy includes a roadmap identifying the top ten immediate priority areas that the force needs to address to achieve this.

The force established a carbon footprint for 2023/2024 and has set out an annual carbon report covering 2024/2025 and a carbon management plan to help the force further achieve its goals. This now gives a solid baseline to work against and measure progress and success to continue to reduce the force's carbon footprint in future years. A Climate Adaption Plan is also being developed to try and mitigate the pressures on operational policing and help to create a more resilient force in dealing with climate change.

The annual planning cycle has continued to be iteratively developed over the last year including improvements through better FMS and resource allocation integration, and the further development of demand assessments and improved governance arrangements through the auspices of the Policing Plan Delivery Board.

The cycle was more fundamentally reviewed at the beginning of the year to ensure it adequately supports the coherence and sequencing of available information to support decision making and prioritisation across the force in the planning context, including FMS centred assets and stages – this is now a key element of HMICFRS' PEEL inspection framework.

Accordingly, a new framework and structure to the annual planning cycle has been developed that supports the strategic intent of the force clearly connecting the policing plan, budget & resources, change and annual delivery plans in the context of a documented organisational assessment. This helps the force plan proactively and ensure understanding and alignment across all force commands and enabling functions.

The force continues to strengthen its approach to medium-term planning and performance management, ensuring that the FMS provides a clear, evidence-based assessment of demand, capacity and capability.

For 2025/26, the FMS has been further refined, building on the learning from FMS 7, through application of organisational learning and enhanced analytical capability. Key improvements include:

- Clearer supporting rationale across all sections, articulating trends, RAG movements, and underlying capacity and capability pressures
- Stronger alignment with the Force's change programme and benefits realisation framework
- Development of Power BI forecasting products to improve the forward view of demand and resource requirements
- Improved mapping of demand impacts across FMS areas to strengthen understanding of system-wide pressures and interdependencies.

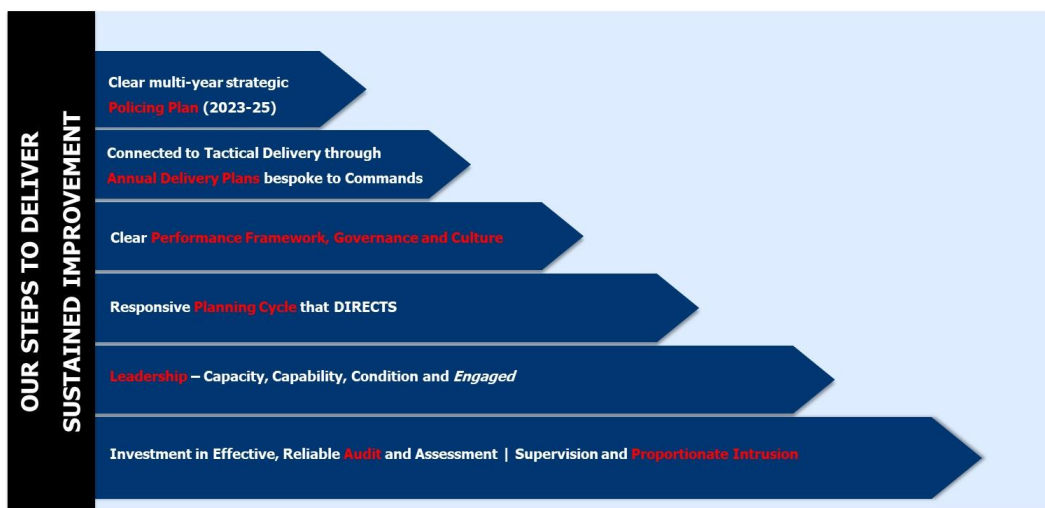
These developments ensure a more integrated and dynamic assessment, enabling the FMS to better inform prioritisation, resource allocation, and delivery planning, including its direct alignment to annual delivery plans and wider efficiency requirements.

4. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

During the last year the force has continued to deliver against key change programmes aligned to areas of significant risk and productivity / efficiency benefits. Key areas include an overhaul of Resource Management Unit to better assist with resource planning, digital forensics transformation to introduce new digital evidence processes, and a review of the force's Evidence Management Unit processes. The force is also rolling out Project Maximus following a successful Local Policing pilot. This will mean that where incidents do not require an immediate response or neighbourhood attendance, they will transfer to an Investigation Bureau for first contact and investigation. Overall, this will result in starting investigations earlier, contacting victims sooner and keeping Grade 1 and Grade 2 incidents, those that require immediate or priority attendance, a front-line focus to provide the best service for victims.

The force will continue to invest in enhancing technology to underpin effective change and transformation. This includes robotics and the appropriate use of artificial intelligence to drive productivity and efficiencies.

There is a clear focus on achieving and sustaining improvements from the strategic to tactical level. The below sets out the force's improvement approach in this respect.



Performance management arrangements allow the force to understand delivery against local and national performance measures to ensure early identification of issues and trends. Further investment has been made in the way the organisation is able to visualise data to support effective management and decision making. Year-end performance analysis has identified a number of areas of strength and stability compared the previous 12 months, including responding to emergency calls. Overall crime has remained relatively stable. Continued analysis has also identified areas which require additional focus going forward. Improvement plans in these areas will be driven through the forces daily, weekly and monthly governance arrangements and appropriate performance monitoring

The force’s monthly Performance Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable oversees how the force is delivering against its priorities. Every quarter this meeting is extended to undertake deep dive reviews against specific policing plan priorities areas and / or emerging expectation areas, holding local policing commanders to account around service delivery and improvement. The Performance Board is intrinsically linked to a number of other boards including a newly created Inspection and Audit Governance Board which is also chaired by the DCC and oversees the progress of all external scrutiny recommendations and ongoing inspection frameworks.

The force now has an embedded culture of better evidence based self-critical thinking which has supported better understanding of the current issues and focus on the evaluation of the impact of interventions. To support this approach the force continues to undertake its own scrutiny and audit of case files in line with the HMICFRS methodology. These results are used to support frontline supervisors and investigating officers to be as effective as possible resulting in tangible improvements around quality investigations, the impact of which is monitored and tracked through robust performance management arrangements.

The force’s internal performance monitoring and auditing have indicated improvement areas during 25/26. The force currently awaits its latest PEEL report (which will be published in July 2026) but anticipates that this will show a number of areas where improvements have been made and promising practice exists along with some continued and enduring areas

that will require additional focus through such change programmes as Operation Maximus as outlined above.

Staff continue to have a voice to support the forces improvement journey through a number of internal communications options including the viva engage platform 'We are Staffordshire Police' allowing real-time two-way engagement. In addition, the force has recently launched a formal force suggestion scheme application which will docks into force governance arrangements to harness learning and promising ideas from practitioners and staff.

The force has a system of internal control which is a significant part of the governance framework designed to manage risk. Internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Staffordshire Police's policies, aims and objectives, including partnership and other joint working arrangements.

Collaborative partnerships are successfully in place with other blue light services and local authorities to deliver around areas such as safeguarding (graded good in the latest force child protection inspection December 2025), regional organised crime, counter terrorism. Governance structures exist to oversee that these are providing value for money and these are subject to review via the Commissioners governance arrangements to hold the force to account for their part in effective delivery.

The force has established partnerships with academic establishments to commission work to help understand and develop best practice and culture. The Force has continued to support the excellent work of the Staffordshire Centre for Data Analytics along with other partners to deliver a number of key projects identified from key stakeholders.

The force is also a member of the Open University Centre for Policing Research and Learning and Keele Policing Academic Collaboration (KPAC) as well as working with Staffordshire University to develop upstream solutions for early intervention which assist around safeguarding issues, victims experience and increased capability and capacity.

5. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

During 2025/26, the force has experienced a unique leadership challenge following the suspension of the Chief Constable in August 2025. This in turn has resulted in the requirement for a number of temporary executive and senior lead roles. The force currently has an Acting Chief Constable and Temporary Deputy Chief Constable, however, there remains clear direction and leadership through the current arrangements.

The force has seen two of its senior officers successfully complete the national Executive Leaders Programme (a prerequisite to executive roles for police officers). In addition, the force also saw a newly appointed (external) ACC during 25/26 who has brought a wealth of experience from previous roles and forces; in line with the arrangements as set out above this officer was subsequently formally appointed as Temporary Deputy Chief Constable last

year. Also, during 2025 the force appointed an external candidate with significant private sector experience in transformational change to lead on, and drive a programme of strategic change across the organisation.

The decisions made around the selection and appointment of the Chief Officer and senior leadership team have resulted in retaining and gaining a wealth of proven leadership experience and knowledge of the force whilst bringing in an external leadership perspective to complement and add strength and depth to the broader team.

The tone and culture of the force is reinforced through an engaged leadership approach across the wider Chief Officer Team through to frontline supervisors alike. During 2025/26 the force has commissioned a cultural audit to explore areas where further improvements can be made in this respect. These findings will now inform leadership direction in order to continue to drive better policing for the residents of Staffordshire.

In line with the policing plan there are clear plans in place around how the organisation will develop an exceptional workforce. A significant element of this is a focus on developing engaged, modern and empowered leaders. This has seen close working with the College of Policing to develop coaching and mentoring practices and development programmes for first line and middle line leaders, inspired leadership programme, CPD and network events. In April 2025 the force worked with the College around 'leading inclusive teams' to equip first-line supervisors with the skills and confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviours and foster an environment of respect.

Quarterly senior leadership forums remain in place to bring all leaders together to have the opportunity to have two-way engagement with the Chief and other Chief Officers. These sessions are used to ensure leaders across the force hear first-hand key messages and have the opportunity to raise and discuss any matters relating to the direction of the force.

The force uses the formalised performance development review (PDR) process to underpin how it looks to develop an exceptional workforce. This formal review supports development opportunities, setting out and assessing accountability and identifying and managing talent.

The force has enhanced its approach to the assessment required for the FMS with a clear focus on understanding capacity to support the strategic planning cycle. Workforce planning is a critical part of this cycle with revised and enhanced governance set up in this area to ensure the force has the right people with the right skills in the right place now and in the future. Workforce Planning and recruitment/promotion activity is underpinned by the force's turnover timeline and promotion predictions products which detail forecast officer numbers against the Target Operating Model alongside future demand activity predictions and demand profiling. The force, in line with the national picture, still has a relatively young workforce with less experience than in previous years which has implications around capability and capacity in the shorter term. Governance and oversight around workforce planning is led by the Assistant Chief Officer for the force.

The FMS and other prioritisation methods are being utilised to identify gaps around managing demand and workload pressures to create more capacity to do a good job. The

force has adopted a number of technological solutions to bring efficiencies to processes and will continue to apply focus around this area for the year ahead looking to artificial intelligence and process automation where appropriate.

The force has a comprehensive approach to wellbeing linking in with the national Oscar Kilo wellbeing approach. Occupational Health services are available to staff and proactive support is given to those staff in particularly challenging and difficult specialist roles. In addition, there are wellbeing tours across the force estate and a wellbeing survey is undertaken to understand themes and trends.

The force has developed its data visualisation ability to offer real-time data and information to assist with day to day management. Human resources information is used in this format to assist with day to day and longer terms capability and capacity planning.

There is a clear scheme of delegation in place and the force continues to review and enhance governance arrangements where required.

Business heads for HR, Finance and Legal services are all professionally trained and qualified as are other practitioners leading around analysis, change and governance.

Where appropriate, the force has standard operating procedures and information sharing agreements to enhance partnership working especially in order to identify vulnerability. The Integrated Front Door is a good example where together with other agencies, the force is jointly located and sharing information effectively to enhance capacity and capability. Partnerships with external providers have governance arrangements in place to ensure effective decision making and accountability and clarity of roles and responsibilities.

The force ensures it has the capacity to be able to deploy to dynamic critical incidents across the country and specifically within Staffordshire when required.

The continued delivery of the policing plan and enhancement and further embedding of the FMS have resulted in developing understanding around the forces capacity and capability for 2025/26. This has been enhanced further by the use of a strategic demand assessment product to support planning and prioritisation.

6. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

All key strategic decisions are made at the monthly Executive Management Board (see section 7 for more detail) which is chaired by the Chief Constable. There is also a weekly force Chief Officer Team Meeting where socialisation of issues and direction setting takes place. By exception, this meeting can also review matters requiring expedited decision making outside of the governance cycle, where this is necessary relevant key post holders must be present such as the section 151 officer and matters are reflected in the agenda and minutes of the next formal board for transparency and completeness.

Command level boards are held monthly which provide oversight and appropriate decision making at this level in line with decision making thresholds. Matters which exceed this threshold are escalated to the strategic level boards along with any matters by exception.

During 2025/26, the force has enhanced decision making routes and refreshed the decision-making framework to address some of the gaps and issues identified from governance review work that has been led by the newly appointed head of change. This is a continual process which sees terms of reference and key functions regularly reviewed.

Organisational learning has become an embedded process to understand lessons learnt both internally and nationally and ensure these are used to drive improvements and mitigate against potential operational and organisational risks.

Staffordshire's PFCC leads on ensuring that collaborative arrangements between the police and fire and rescue services support maximising efficiencies in terms of shared service opportunities (e.g. Corporate Communications, Human Resources and Finance) and shared estates.

Strategic level partnership meetings with Local Authorities, Health and other blue light services form part of the wider governance arrangements and set the direction for broader County and City-wide issues. Partnerships have strengthened over the course of 2025/26 ensuring improved delivery around areas such as child and adult protection.

The Commissioner and Chief Constable work with colleagues and peers on a regional basis with the Commissioner chairing the Regional Collaboration and Partnership Board and oversees with colleagues the performance of regional and national collaborations between police forces such as the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) and the regional Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU).

Regional arrangements are in place to ensure the oversight of services such as Firearms Licencing Unit and Joint Legal Services, delivered in collaboration with West Midlands Police.

Risk is managed across the force in a variety of ways to ensure that both operational and business risks are identified, controlled / mitigated and managed as appropriate and in accordance with force policy. The force continues to review its risk management approach in line with national recognised principles and framework (see diagram below) to ensure that processes and tools are enhanced where possible, including the use of new technology and drawing learning from peers and from the NPCC National Risk Forum.

Risk Management Framework (Source: The Orange Book-Management of Risk-Principles and Concepts 2023)



The following measures continue to be undertaken to ensure effectiveness in this area:

- Monthly Chief Constable chaired Executive Management Board with risk as a standing agenda item
- Individual risk registers for each command as well as specific registers for key projects / change programmes
- Regular internal audit reports around risk management
- The Section 151 Officer ensuring the propriety and legality of financial transactions
- Financial regulations and contract standing orders supported by appropriately qualified finance and procurement staff
- Professionally qualified staff and business area leads in all key areas across the organisation
- HR procedures supporting terms and conditions of employment for staff supported by qualified HR specialists
- Reporting mechanisms and trained staff reviewing and taking action to address health and safety risks
- Risks from complaints and internal conduct issues investigated by the PSD or the ACU and appropriate action taken
- External audit arrangements

How the force identifies and manages risk is monitored on a monthly basis by the PFCC at the Strategic Governance Board. JARC also receive regular force updates and work closely with the force as required.

During the early part of 2026, forces have been informed around a number of changes to police performance monitoring arrangements, following the publication of the White Paper: From local to national: a new model for policing. The Policing Performance System will replace the current Scan and Engage HMICFRS monitoring processes. Under the new system, a new Policing Performance Monitoring Group (PPMG), chaired by His Majesty’s Chief Inspector (HMCI), will be established. Information provided to, and discussions at, PPMG will assist HMCI to assign each force to one of four levels, reflecting its current performance and the level of support and intervention required. The force currently awaits to be informed around which level it has been assigned to.

The force is continually evaluating the timeline and likely impact of the government white paper around force, regional and national issues through environmental scanning processes and its risk management framework, acknowledging the deadline that is already set for the removal of the PCC model and the end of the current term.

Internally, the force holds a monthly Strategic Performance Board chaired by the DCC. Under the direction of this board, the force continues to report against the performance framework which underpins the policing plan. The board also monitors against national ambitions, and this will be realigned again shortly to the new Government Performance and Scrutiny Framework.

There is a programme of force conducted internal scrutiny reviews which cover a wide range of operational areas to ensure that the recommendations, especially from HMICFRS and Internal Audit are being progressed and service provision enhanced. This process has identified that although still more to do, that improvements remain sustained across a number of key areas. The force has developed local capability (maintaining the corporate standard and methodology) to enable larger samples to be drawn and reviewed on a continual basis. The force has worked hard to ensure that it is as calibrated as possible with external methodologies such as the Victim Service Assessment (VSA) undertaken by HMICFRS as part of PEEL inspection. This process forms the bedrock for ensuring continuous service improvement in line with journey back to being an outstanding force.

In addition, force performance and outcomes are scrutinised at the monthly PFCC chaired Strategic Governance Board and at quarterly public performance meetings, chaired by the PFCC to hold the Chief Constable to account.

The force also holds a Quarterly Policing Plan Delivery Boards to track and monitor delivery against annual delivery plans and any changes across the FMS. This involves all chief officers and a wider range of senior leaders and local commanders to monitor local delivery more closely along with appropriate scrutiny across the entire organisation to ensure it is aligned to force and local priorities.

The Deputy Chief Constable is the named officer responsible for data quality. The force seeks reassurance via its information assurance arrangements and board that data is being used and shared appropriately and in line with data protection and information assurance requirements. In the event of any potential data breaches, the force has a record of early self-referral to the Information Commissioners Office for independent review and to ensure openness and transparency.

A review has been implemented during 2025/26 to assess the capability and capacity of the force's information governance team to ensure the force identifies and addresses compliance and risk issues. In response to these findings, the force has a newly externally appointed Data Protection Manager to strengthen leadership and ensure compliance in this area. The appointment of a Director of Digital, Data and Technology in 2024/25 continues to drive technologically innovative practices aligned to the change programme.

The organisation’s financial governance and management arrangements are all based on the CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice for the Police Service of England and Wales as presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 39A(5) of the Police Act 1996 and Section 17(6) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. This identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Chief Constable and the Chief Constable’s Chief Finance Officer separately from those of the Staffordshire Commissioner and the Commissioners Chief Finance Officer. The Code is based on a series of principles supported by specific standards and statements of practice which are considered necessary to provide a strong foundation to:

- Financially manage the short, medium and long term finances of the force;
- Manage financial resilience to meet foreseen demands on services; and
- Financially manage unexpected shocks in their financial circumstances.

The force is aligned to the Home Office Financial Code of Management and the relevant CIPFA codes of practice. The FMCP is issued under section 17 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, which permits the Secretary of State to issue codes of practice to all Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Chief Constables. As set out in section 17(4) of the 2011 Act, PCCs and Chief Constables must have regard to this code in carrying out their functions. In collaboration with the Staffordshire Commissioner’s Office (SCO) the force reviews the Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation to ensure the organisation remains up to date with its strategic financial control environment.

The financial performance of the force and SCO is monitored through quarterly out-turn reports and refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Any variances or longer term gaps identified are reported to the Executive Management Board. Financial control arrangements allow implications on budgets and value for money to be understood and corrective plans put in place where appropriate to either maximise or minimise the financial impact. There has been a clear focus to ensure that budget information is developed to

A Good and Balanced Budget

A **Balanced Budget** means that:

- Income equals expenditure
- Cost reduction targets and investment proposals are credible and achievable, and;
- Key assumptions are 'stress tested'



A **Good Budget** means that:

- It has a medium term focus, supporting the Policing Plan
- Resources are focused on our priority outcomes
- It is not driven by short term fixes
- It demonstrates how we have listened to our communities through consultation
- It is transparent and well scrutinised
- It is integrated with the capital programme; and
- It maintains financial stability

inform at various levels of the organisation to support accountability in budget management and the demonstration of value for money decision making. Despite the challenging economic environment, in 2025/26, the final outturn for the Group (Force and PFCC) for the year was £271.574m against a budget for the year of £272.364m. This is an underspend of £0.790m.

In 2025/26 Staffordshire Police had a net revenue budget of £256.823m (£15.541m Capital Financing & PFCC). The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which is jointly owned by the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Section 151 Officer and the force Section 151 Officer, incorporates the following:

- Revenue budget
- Reserves Strategy
- Capital Strategy and Capital Investment Programme
- Treasury Management Strategy

For the 2025/26 financial year, the Staffordshire Commissioner raised the precept by 5.12% or £14, which was the maximum amount permissible before calling a local referendum. This was supported by public consultation with 54.44% of respondents supporting an increase in local taxation to support increased running costs and invest in policing.

Key investments during the 2025/26 were:

- The recruitment of 16 additional police officers to provide additional uniformed capacity, plus the recruitment of transferees to bring experience at pace to complement existing recruitment of student officers.
- Technology improvements to improve contact systems to better meet public expectation and improve public contact and feedback.
- Automated document redaction software to ensure legislative compliance with Crown Prosecution Service requirements is automated, freeing up time to be reinvested back into Policing.
- A dedicated proactive team to tackle important priorities in rural communities and a new specialist Roads Crime Team to tackle crime committed on road networks
- A continued commitment to build a new firearms training facility and the re-provision of the public order training facility. Upgrades to both custody facilities to ensure safe detention and upgrades to operational police stations are to be considered as part of the operational investment programme for estates.

Making the best use of resources is a focus within the policing plan and is considered under Pillar "Outstanding Organisation".

Once again, the MTFs for 2026/27 was set in a challenging financial environment. Various factors have placed pressure on force budgets and increased the savings requirement to balance the budget.

For 2026/27, there is a requirement to use £1.488m of reserves to balance budget, the table below shows the underlying budget gap, before the use of reserves as a percentage of the projected net revenue budget. The table includes some known pressures to fund changes proposed in the FMS.

	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Net revenue expenditure – NRE (*future years projected)	287,810	297,342	305,139	313,225
Estimated funding gap before use of reserves to balance budget	(1,488)	(9,308)	(15,881)	(21,982)
Use of reserves	1,488	0	0	0
Underlying gap	0	(9,308)	(15,881)	(21,982)
Gap as a percentage of NRE	0.00%	3.13%	5.20%	7.02%

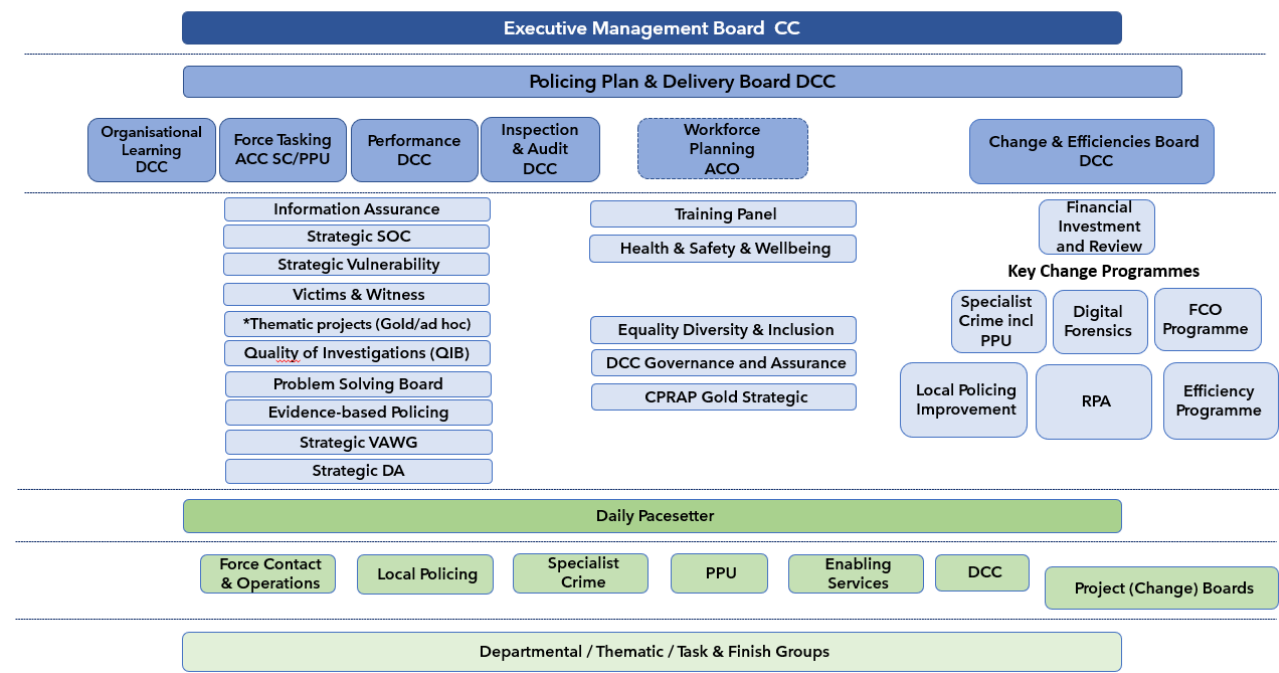
The force is focussed on ensuring that it utilises resources well to demonstrate value for money. There is a detailed Efficiency Plan with key areas of focus for closing the budget gap in future years. This is supported by a programme of Efficiency Panels (previously known as Resource Allocation Challenge panels) which will be focussed on ensuring that the budget reflects the required funding to address FMS risks and delivery of Annual Delivery Plans. In 2025/26, the Group delivered 87% of its savings of £9.977m. In 2026/27, the Group is required to deliver savings of £13.747m (£13.402m Force) and this will be monitored during the financial year.

7. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

In year adjustments have been made to the force’s governance structure which have included revisions to the key change programme governance and the introduction of a new strategic Policing Plan Delivery Board. The force has undertaken further review of the local policing operating model and its crime allocation policy to ensure to maximisation of capability and capacity.

In line with the clear focus on efficiency planning, governance around the force’s change and efficiency programmes of work have aligned to ensure robust and comprehensive decision making to support meeting the financial challenge faced across the service. The current structure is set out below:

February 2026: Force Governance & Decision-Making Structure



The Chief Constable is held to account formally by the Commissioner via a number of scrutiny meetings including the Strategic Governance Board and Public Quarterly Performance Meeting. In addition, monthly meetings take place which also include the DCC and Chief Executive of the SCO. To maintain an ongoing open dialogue there are also weekly less formal catch ups to discuss day to day business. Alongside this, the DCC meets regularly with the Chief Executive of the PFCC and the Chief Finance Officer also meets on a regular basis with the Director of Finance for the PFCC.

The force has a robust action planning system that tracks the implementation of external recommendations including internal audit and HMICFRS. This online tool is accessible to all managers across the force and is administered and managed centrally. Reporting against status and progress takes place through the Inspection Audit and Governance Board to hold those charged with delivery to account and to closely monitor progress and co-ordinate support where blocks and issues are reported. To support additional monitoring and scrutiny, a number of templates and tools have also been created and implemented to understand detailed delivery plans and how these link across the organisation.

JARC regularly review progress made against external recommendations and this forms part of the Chief Constable’s Governance report tabled biannually.

The force has an embedded process for environmental scanning to ensure Chief Officers are kept informed of a broad range of national issues that may affect policing. The Chief Constable attends the quarterly National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) meeting to ensure a co-ordinated approach to policing beyond the force and the region. Any national changes or consultations from the NPCC are monitored and actioned via the daily scanning process over seen as part of a weekly Chief Officer Team meeting.

The role of internal audit is provided to the force and SCO via a contracted arrangement, for 2025/26 this has remained as RSM (UK Group LLP). The Head of Internal Audit ensures that there is a strategy and plan developed on the basis of risk with appropriate levels of involvement from the force and the SCO. For 2025/26 the audit opinions have shown a stable and positive picture. Six audits of the control environment for the Chief Constable were undertaken that resulted in formal assurance opinions with a further two undertaken as advisory only. The table below sets these out:

All of the assurance levels and outcomes provided below should be considered in the context of the scope, and the limitation of scope, set out in the individual assignment report.

Assignment	Executive lead	Status / Opinion issued	Actions agreed				
			A	L	M	H	
Cyber Security	John Bowler / Director of DDAT	Reasonable Assurance	0	1	3	0	
Capital Programme – Southern Area Custody	John Bloomer, Director of Resources ACC	Reasonable Assurance	0	0	0	1	
Key Financial Controls and Finance System Implementation – Follow Up	John Bloomer, Director of Resources ACC	Reasonable Progress	1	0	1	0	
Income Generation	John Bloomer, Director of Resources ACC	Reasonable Assurance	0	0	2	0	
Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee	Paul Talbot, Assistant Chief Constable	No opinion / Advisory	0	1	1	0	
Overtime	John Bloomer, Director of Resources ACC	Reasonable Assurance	0	1	0	0	
Follow Up	John Bloomer, Director of Resources ACC	Reasonable Progress	0	0	2	0	
Public Protection Unit (PPU) Investment Benefit Realisation (DRAFT)	Sally Blaiklock, Assistant Chief Constable	No opinion / Advisory	0	0	3	1	
Change Management PMO	This review was substantially completed with feedback provided to management, however was then paused due to appointment of a new Head of Change and a subsequent full review by the Force of work being undertaken in this area.						
Commissioning – see note 1 below	Louise Clayton, Chief Executive, OPFCC						





Notes:

1. This review was not progressed with the time being utilised to increase the budget for the PPU review as well as a more comprehensive follow up review of previous negative assurance reports.

As part of an enhanced response to audit finding, the force now ensures that for any reports tabled at JARC with partial or minimal assurance, that the force’s senior lead for that area is in attendance to provide context and assurance around plans to address issues identified.

Overall, the Annual Internal Audit Report concludes that overall for the 12 months ended 31 March 2025, the Head of Internal Audit opinion for the Chief Constable for Staffordshire is as follows:

For the 12 months ending 31 March 2026 the DRAFT head of internal audit opinion for the Chief Constable of Staffordshire is:

Annual opinion				Factors influencing our opinion
 <p>The organisation does not have an adequate framework of governance, risk management or internal control.</p>	 <p>There are weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and internal control such that it could become inadequate and ineffective.</p>	 <p>The organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. However, our work has identified further enhancements to the framework of risk management, governance and internal control to ensure that it remains adequate and effective.</p>	 <p>The organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control.</p>	<p>The factors which are considered when influencing our opinion are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inherent risk in the area being audited; • limitations in the individual audit assignments; • the adequacy and effectiveness of the risk management and / or governance control framework; • the impact of weaknesses identified; • the level of risk exposure; and • the response to management actions and timeliness of actions taken.

JARC undertakes the statutory functions of an Audit Committee and operates in accordance with the Financial Management Code of Practice for the Police Service and CIPFA's Practical Guidelines for Local Authorities.

JARC continues to advise the Commissioner and the Chief Constable according to good governance principles, including the monitoring of the Strategic Risk Framework, recommending for approval the AGS and the Statement of Accounts as well as putting decisions made by both corporate sole under the spotlight.

The Force and SCO external auditors, (Azets) provide regular reports at the JARC public meetings and meet as required in private. JARC members, due to their independence, have the opportunity to consider the audit findings, to challenge and ask for further clarification where necessary and also to make recommendations on their findings.

The financial accounts for the year ending March 2026 have been published in draft form. It is unlikely however that these will be formally signed off by the new external auditors, Azets, due to the delay with EY LLP and the previous year's statements. A disclaimer has been added to the auditor's statements as they have still not received the appropriate assurance from the pension providers and they also cannot substantiate the opening balances until that assurance and information is received. Azets consider it will be 27/28 before the assurances can be obtained and the opening balance substantiated.

The force has continued to worked closely and collaboratively with HMICFRS over the previous year and has seen significant inspection activity including a full Child Protection inspection in May 2025 (reporting in December 2025), an inspection of custody arrangements (December 2025) and full PEEL inspection during March 2026 which is due to report in July 2026. The force has seen significant improvements in the results of the child protection inspection, recognising that there is still work to do to address the areas where gaps remain (see below). It is anticipated that the force's PEEL report this will show a number of areas where improvements have been made and promising practice exists, along with some continued and enduring areas that will require additional focus through such change programmes as Operation Maximus as outlined above.

Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good Staffordshire Police is at safeguarding children who are at risk. Our graded judgments are as follows:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Working with safeguarding partners	Leadership of child protection arrangements	Responding to children at risk of harm	
		Risk assessment and referrals	Investigating child abuse, neglect and exploitation	

The force continues to strengthen its understanding of good practice through links with the inspectorate, College of Policing and peer forces along with its evidence based policing and organisational learning approach.

All remaining areas for improvement are monitored closely on a monthly basis via the Inspection and Audit Governance Board chaired by the DCC. The board is attended by representatives from the SCO to allow openness and transparency around the forces own assessment of sustained delivery. The next phase of the change programme will continue to provide further opportunities for sustained delivery. The forces strategic planning process, utilising the latest information from the FMS, will ensure sound evidence-based plans are set for addressing future service delivery risks.

The force has continued throughout the year to focus on providing long term sustainable solutions against its highest risks and key areas for improvement. Whilst some enduring areas for improvement prevail, this is the foundation on which the force will continue to build into 2026/27 and beyond in line with the ambition to be an outstanding force.

OVERALL LEVEL OF ASSURANCE

In reflecting the overall position as outlined above, including internal and external assessments of effectiveness in a number of key areas, the Chief Constable offers a reasonable level of assurance. The force understands it's priorities and key areas of risk and has mitigation plans and appropriate governance and oversight in place to address these at pace. The policing landscape is ever complex and challenging with significant national reform planned for this sector. The force has continued to develop its insight, oversight and grip to support the appropriate stewardship of the use of resources in order to serve the public interest and to adhere to legislation, policy, ethical values and respect of the law. The force is able to offer a strong level of assurance around the financial management of public money.

This opinion is given to offer a fair and balanced assessment of the response to the on-going challenges during 2025/26 and the positive impact and outcomes that have been evident.

Actions and updates from the 2023/24 AGS

Action 1: To review the forces governance structures in line with the launch of the revised 2025 to 2027 policing plan. This review should look to create capacity within governance processes while ensuring robust accountability and effective decision making.

Update: The annual planning cycle has continued to be iteratively developed over the last year. This has included improvements through better FMS and resource allocation integration, and the further development of demand assessments and improved governance arrangements through the auspices of the Policing Plan Delivery Board. The cycle was more fundamentally reviewed at the beginning of the year to ensure it adequately supports the coherence and sequencing of available information to support decision making and prioritisation across the force in the planning context, including FMS centred assets and stages – this is now a key element of HMICFRS' PEEL inspection framework.

Status: COMPLETE

Action 2: To deliver increased productivity and efficiency through process improvements and increased use of innovative technology to ensure value for money and affordability.

Update: The force has delivered a sustained programme of productivity and efficiency improvements during 2025/26, underpinned by a strengthened change function, a benefits-led approach to investment, and delivery of the efficiency plan. This includes significant rollout of innovative technologies (such as RPA, AI-enabled tools and digital platforms) alongside productivity reviews, including the work with Ignite, and process redesign through programmes such as Project Maximus and front-end service improvements. These interventions have demonstrably improved productivity, released capacity and supported savings delivery, with the majority of planned efficiencies achieved. While this action is now complete, the force will continue to embed and extend this activity through its ongoing change portfolio, ensuring continued value for money and affordability.

Status: COMPLETE

Actions set from the 2025/26 AGS

Action 1: Ensure enhanced and sustained responsiveness through the effective delivery of intended benefits from Operation Maximus, including the implementation of an Investigation Bureau to support first contact and investigation.

Action 2: To continue to closely monitor and prepare for the evolving timelines and dependencies of the two significant and interrelated reform programmes: Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Policing Reform ensuring an effective operating environment for the force and necessitating careful consideration of the associated risks.

CONCLUSION

The detail given within this statement represents a transparent account of challenges and achievements identified during that last year. The force remains well positioned under the leadership of the Chief Officer Team to deliver against the ambitions for 2026/27.

Signed:

Becky Riggs
Acting Chief Constable

Caroline Marsh
Temporary Deputy
Chief Constable

John Bloomer
Chief Constable's
Section 151 Officer