



## THE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF STAFFORDSHIRE AND THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF STAFFORDSHIRE

### Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee

Final Internal Audit Report: 6.25/26

2 March 2026

This report is solely for the use of the persons to whom it is addressed.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party.

---

# CONTENTS

Audit outcome overview .....	3
Summary of management actions .....	9

## Appendices

Detailed findings and actions .....	11
Appendix A: Categorisation of findings .....	14
Appendix B Internal audit assignment opinions .....	15
Appendix C: Scope .....	16

---

# AUDIT OUTCOME OVERVIEW

## Background / Why we did the audit

We conducted a review of Staffordshire Police's implementation of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee (NPG) as part of the approved 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan. The objective was to allow the Force to take assurance over work undertaken to date.

The Home Office have set the targets and measures for NPG although the Force are not required to undertake any additional reporting nor are there regular meetings with the Home Office to monitor progress, with informal ad hoc meetings taking place when or if required. The NPG has five pillars covering objectives and measures which Staffordshire Police are actively working towards which cover:

Pillar 1: Police back on the beat.

Pillar 2: Community-led.

Pillar 3: Clear performance standards.

Pillar 4: Tackling ASB.

Pillar 5: Safer town centres.

The Force has developed a new NPG Framework, drafted in December 2025 and due to be launched in April 2026. This will consolidate previous reporting with new data to become a single monitoring tool across all five pillars of the NPG and in its draft form, including a section looking at the impact the Force is having within local communities. This review has been undertaken as an advisory review and has therefore not resulted in a formal opinion.

---

**Conclusion:** We found that the Force had developed a strong approach to implementing the Government's NPG. This included new policies, systems to measure and report performance, methods to track progress, and a governance framework. A new NPG Framework Report had been drafted to bring together a broad set of measures linked to each NPG pillar. We confirmed that current reporting could show progress against the NPG and the effect this progress was having on local communities.

We agreed one medium priority action with management linked to the problem solving governance structure. The structure had not been clearly defined in the terms of reference for each group, and actions, decisions, issues and risks from meetings were not recorded. We also agreed one low priority action.

---

**Audit themes:** **We identified the following control exception resulting in the agreement of one medium and one low priority management action.**

#### **Problem-solving governance framework**

We found that only one of the groups in the governance structure recorded their activities in the form of minutes, however the Gold and Silver Groups maintained an action log. For both we confirmed that actions were recorded by date, owner and target completion date. There was also evidence that progress towards completion of actions was regularly recorded. There were no action logs for the other meetings in the structure, as a result there was no record of their activities and a risk they are not operating as intended. We also found that none of these meetings had a terms of reference other than the short description within the governance framework document, as a result there is a risk that their roles and purpose is unclear and activities ineffective. **(Medium)**

#### **Local Engagement Plans**

From our review of each of the local plans we confirmed the detailed daily, weekly and monthly activity across areas of their communities. However, we noted that the East Staffordshire Local Policing Team Engagement Plan was in a different format and was not aligned to the Force Engagement Plan, as a result there is a risk it may not meet the Force's engagement objectives. **(Low)**

**We confirmed that the following control areas were well designed and complied with:**

#### **NPG Delivery Tracker**

We reviewed the NPG Delivery Tracker updated to November 2025 which we confirmed was consistent with the national published performance framework. The tracker listed each measure across the framework pillars, data source, owner, status, completion date and notes on progress. We noted that all those due for completion were complete with the majority not due until April 2026.

#### **Data Quality**

We reviewed data presented in the monthly Hot Spot Policing Report which measures activity in areas hottest for Serious Violence, Knife Crime and ASB. We requested the source data used to populate the report produced via Power BI from Niche and reconciled these to the report produced in December 2025. We were able to confirm that the reported figures for the months January 2025 to November 2025 for arrests, shoplifting and robbery had been accurately reported. We also noted that the figures indicated the Force were making a positive impact with a reducing trend on the number of crimes and an increasing trend on arrests.

#### **Career Pathway**

We confirmed by reference to the College of Policing that the first part of the neighbourhood policing programme (NPP1), launched in June 2025, was designed to equip frontline police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) working in neighbourhood policing with the essential skills and knowledge they need to deliver a trusted and effective service to the public. NPP1 is exclusively online. We confirmed that completion of NPP1 modules have been monitored monthly since August 2025 when there was an average 17% compliance across all teams and modules. From our review of the reports we noted compliance increased month on month and as of December 2025 reached an average of 88%.

We were informed that the Force was ready to provide the monthly national reports to the College once NPP2 commences. The Force had not had the training information yet for NPP3 or NPP4 but it was known which roles they will need to target when the College releases them.

#### **Officer Establishment**

We confirmed that a dedicated mobile phone app on officers' police devices, tracks their location and activity via GPS to ensure officers are in the right place at the right time. This allows reporting through the Action Fund Update. The version reviewed was dated 1st December 2025 which included data on the number of patrols and time spent.

---

We confirmed from the draft NPG Framework dated December 2025 that establishment levels have been recorded as a target against current levels. Although in draft it measures as of November 2025 the target FTE against current. The same document, although not populated with figures has measures covering time spent in all neighbourhoods, hot spots and town centres and percentage of time abstracted broken down by rank.

### **Named Officer**

From a review of the Force website we confirmed that a section for each area gives the names with a photograph of the officers and PCSO's for each ward together with a means of contact.

### **Local Priorities**

We confirmed that through the use of engagement and feedback from local communities, together with the use of crime data, priorities are set within each neighbourhood and published on the Force website. We selected four local teams on the website at random and confirmed that there were updates at least every three month intervals on local concerns and the action taken. We also noted from the December 2025 draft NPG framework, data is to be reported covering Community-led Policing Priorities. Primary Measure: % of N'hoods with a priority in the last 3 months.

### **Community Engagement**

From our review we noted that the Force Community Engagement Plan categorises engagement work into several strands, which will form the basis of all tactical delivery plans:

1. Building relationships.
2. Improving visibility.
3. Strengthening partnerships.

The document sets out the process for developing tactical plans, delivery and responsibilities from Chief Inspector to PCSO's and Special Constables, it is also aligned to best practice set out by the College of Policing Neighbourhood Guidelines. The document goes into further detail with an example tactical plan with examples of activities and community stakeholders.

### **Engagement Monitoring**

From our review of the Force website we noted under community events it gave details of up coming events and meetings with the Public. We also confirmed that data is produced via a Power BI communities app which produces a dashboard showing all engagement events for the past year, how many people attended, how many officers attended and it breaks it down into specific locations and by community/event type.

From our review of the data produced we could confirm that this would allow command teams and Local Police officers the ability to select which areas of community representation are lacking and actively target those communities to keep them involved and informed. We also noted that it includes a Citizen contact record which can be broken down by the main issues reported back and is another avenue to understand community issues alongside Smart Alerts.

### **Smart Alert**

From our review of the Smart Alert website we found there was information for members of the public on how the system operates and how to sign up. It explains that by signing up to Staffordshire Smart Alert, individuals would receive localised messages from local officers about engagement events, appeals, crime, prevention advice and general policing activity. Individuals can also be kept informed about what their local policing team is up to, including public events and meetings they are attending within their community. The messaging system also allows individuals to reply and feedback information to their local policing teams to help look after their neighbourhood. We confirmed that performance data is produced from this system which as of November 2025 had 28,435 users, 37,262 interactions and overall engagement of 75.32%

---

### **Public Confidence Strategy**

We reviewed the Public Confidence Strategy published in July 2025 noting it was linked to the Force vision to deliver safe and confident communities, and committed to addressing low confidence and providing Staffordshire residents with the reassurance that the Force is committed to delivering an outstanding service to keep them safe.

The strategy also sets out principals of how the Force will interact with the public, stakeholders including victims and suspects and maintaining ethical and professional standards and explains the performance measures it will use to monitor adherence to this strategy with specific measure linked to neighbourhood policing. We noted that measures of public confidence and satisfaction had been included in the new NPG Framework drafted in December 2025

### **Partnerships**

The Force published within its plan on its website a commitment to develop active and productive partnerships, we also noted that Partnership working runs through the Forces's strategies and plans this included:

- Problem-solving governance framework
- ASB Strategic Action Plan.
- Public confidence strategy, and
- One of the key pillars of focus in the Policing Plan 2025-2027.

### **Surveys**

We confirmed that local and national survey results are being used as a data source for a number of cross cutting Pillar measures. We also confirmed that there was a survey in progress at the time of this review. Additionally from our review of the draft NPG Performance Framework dated December 2025 we found that it included data from previous surveys and will be able to used to track changes and trends.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Action Plan**

We confirmed that the Force had produced an ASB One-Page Strategic Action Plan 2026, the purpose of the plan was stated as to reduce ASB harm and repeat demand through targeted problem solving, victim-centred practice, visible policing, and accountable partnership delivery. It described areas of action including

- Targeted local problem solving.
- Partnership-driven prevention.
- Victim-centred approach.

We noted that although data relating to each of these areas has been reported separately they have been brought together within the new NGP Framework report drafted in December 2025, including Hotspot Policing visibility; Problem-solving packages; Repeat Victims and ASB metrics.

### **Problem-solving Roles and Responsibilities**

We confirmed that there is a job description for each of the roles within the Problem-solving structure covering ranks from Sargent to Chief Inspector and including responsibilities such as delivering against SARA, visibility in hot spot areas, supporting victims, liaising with partners and supporting problem-solving activities.

---

### **Draft NPG Framework**

A proposal was draft in December 2025 covering the data held in 'Our Communities' Power Bi product that already supports NPG & Problem Solving & Intervention work. It was proposed to redesign this instead of starting again. It will be rebranded as either "Problem Solving & Intervention" with a clear link to NPG or "Neighbourhood Policing" / "Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee" / "Safer Streets". This will be determined as the product is developed and will be guided by the business.

The product will:

1. Clearly distinguish what is 'Demand', what is 'Performance'.
2. Include rounded well balanced KPIs monitored against any 'Targets' / 'Ambitions' and other diagnostic measures/info.
3. As a standard across all sections provide a geographical view of direction of travel / data over time views / gaps or exceptions.
4. Include all Public Confidence sentiment datasets as a large proportion of this supports NPG Framework.
5. Be refined to provide greater insight / impact.
6. Include Engagement Plans documents.
7. Include NPG Priorities (currently sited on pubic facing single on-line home portal) so internally visible too.

From our review we noted that the document listed measures aligned to the NPG pillars and cross cutting performance measures. These include the national key performance indicators, crime survey results, local public confidence surveys with existing data sources and others under development. The aim is to have this launched by April 2026



# SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

The action priorities are defined as\*:

### High

Immediate management attention is necessary.

### Medium

Timely management attention is necessary.

### Low

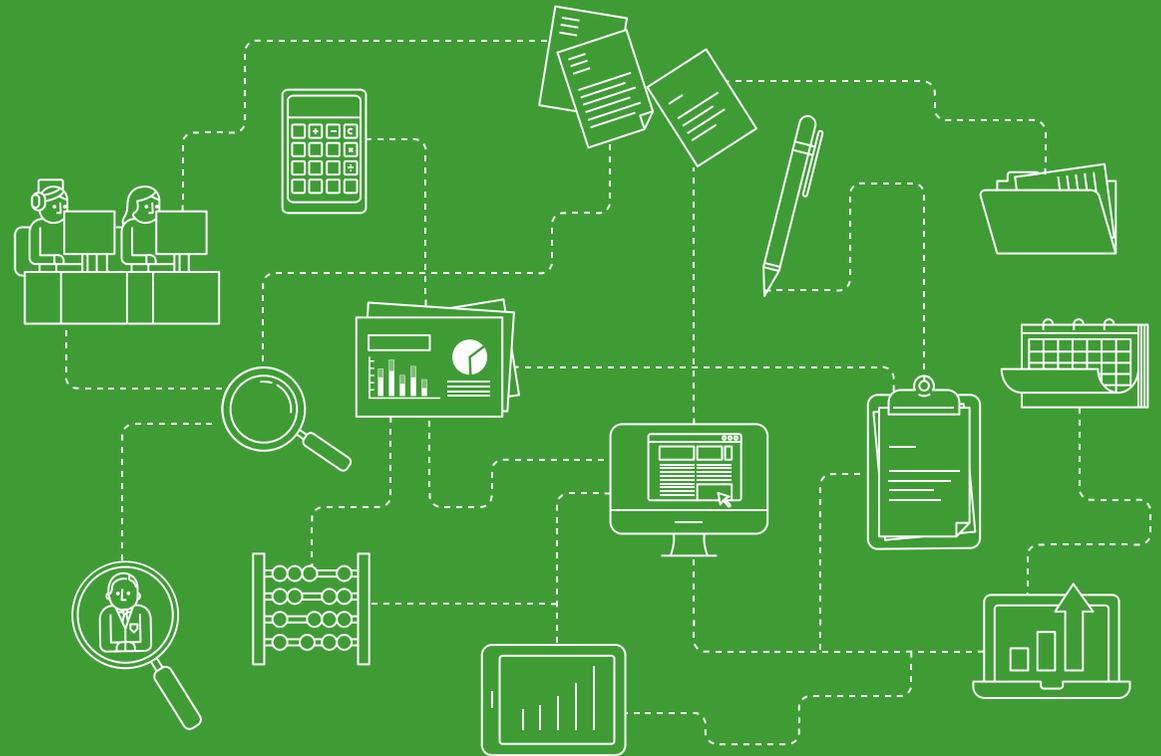
There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency.

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsible Owner	Date
1	The Force will ensure that all local engagement plans are aligned to the Force Engagement Plan.	Low	John Owen	Implemented
2	Each Group within the Problem-solving structure will have a terms of reference and each Group will also maintain a RAID (Risk, Action, Issues Decision) Log	Medium	John Owen	Implemented

\* Refer to Appendix B for more detail

# Detailed Findings and Actions

# 02



## DETAILED FINDINGS AND ACTIONS

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all audit testing undertaken.

### Tactical Engagement Plans

<b>Control</b>	Each of the Local Policing Teams have produced an engagement plan following the format in the Force Engagement Plan.	<b>Assessment:</b>	
		<b>Design</b>	✓
		<b>Compliance</b>	×

<b>Findings / Implications</b>	<p>From our review of each of the local plans we confirmed the detailed daily, weekly and monthly activity across areas of their communities, covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business and retail crime.</li> <li>• Youth engagement.</li> <li>• Public areas.</li> <li>• The vulnerable and isolated.</li> <li>• Rural communities.</li> <li>• Places of worship and faith groups.</li> <li>• Local government.</li> </ul>
--------------------------------	--

We found that the East Staffordshire Local Policing Team Engagement Plan was in a different format and was not aligned to the Force Engagement Plan, as a result there is a risk it may not meet the Force's engagement objectives.

We also noted from the Power BI Communities app that data is collected and reported on community engagement activities including number, location and type of events and attendance and community groups involved. This allows command teams and Local Police officers, who all have access, the ability to select which areas of community representation are lacking and actively target those communities to keep them involved and informed. Through this same tool, the Force track citizen contact records and then break these down to the main issues reported back and is another avenue to understand community issues alongside Smart Alerts.

We also noted that there is a section within the new draft NPG Performance Framework under development.

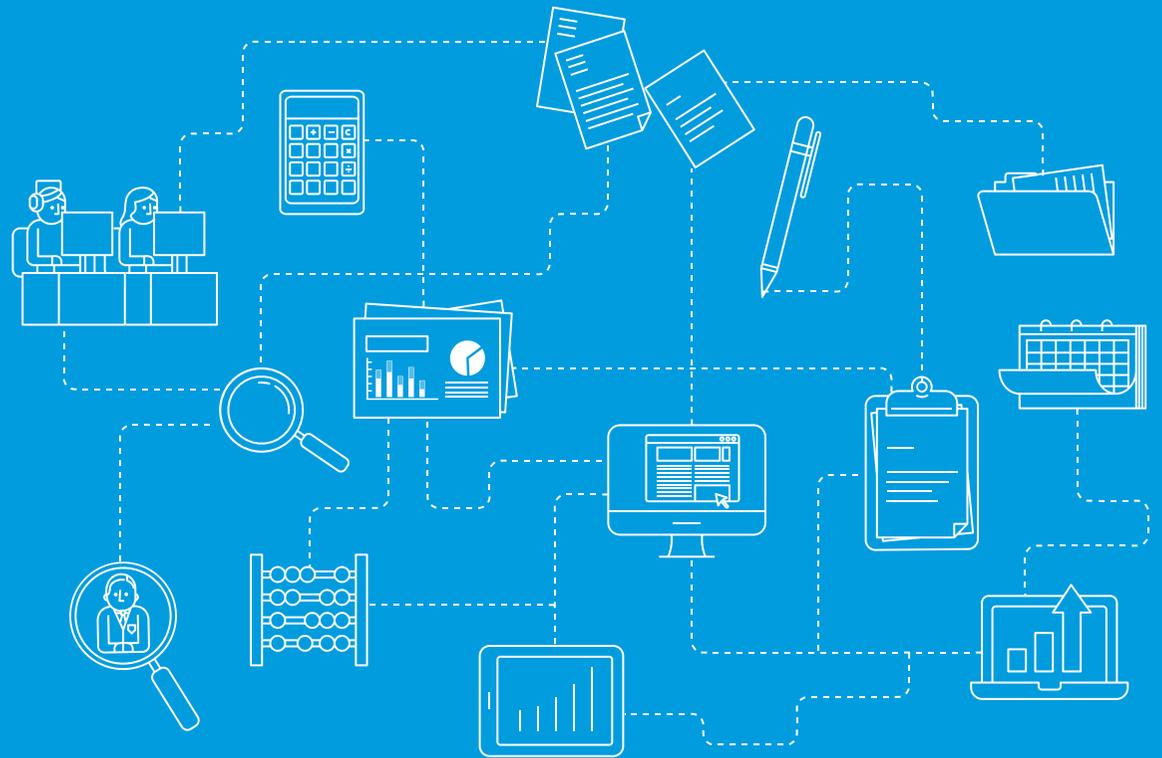
<b>Management Action 1</b>	The Force will ensure that all local engagement plans are aligned to the Force Engagement Plan.	<b>Responsible Owner:</b> John Owen	<b>Date:</b> Implemented	<b>Priority:</b> <b>Low</b>
----------------------------	---	--	-----------------------------	--------------------------------

## Problem-solving structure

<b>Control</b>	There is a Problem-Solving structure chart that sets out reporting lines and description of meetings within the structure.	<b>Assessment:</b>  <b>Design</b> ✓ <b>Compliance</b> ×
<b>Findings / Implications</b>	<p>We confirmed the Force had established a Problem-solving governance framework supporting the Force's delivery of NPG. This consists of a Gold Group, A Problem Solving Performance Silver Group with a monthly meeting chaired by a Problem Solving Superintendent. This framework reviews each LPT's individual: Repeats, Trends and compliance against problem solving policy.</p> <p><b>LPT Command - Local Problem Solving Meeting (Bronze)</b>          We confirmed that Local policing teams hold a regular local problem solving meeting, chaired by the local LPT Commander or Deputy, where local partners are invited. The local problem solving coordinator will present the current LPT problem solving picture including status of current problem solving initiatives and newly identified problems for adoption and allocation. Partners are invited to support and contribute to each phase of SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment) a structured problem-solving model designed to address community issues effectively.</p> <p><b>Neighbourhood Policing Teams</b>          Local officers on Neighbourhood Policing Teams are assigned problems to solve, identified within their ward. The Neighbourhood officer is expected to use a range of tools and networks available to them depending on the needs of the individual problems to manage the problem to a resolution</p> <p><b>Problem Solving Central Meetings</b>          The Problem Solving Inspector / Sergeant chair a daily Problem Solving DMM that is attended by the 10 local Problem Solving Coordinators from each LPT. During that meeting the force Top Repeat Callers, Locations, Suspects, Hotspots and Trends are reviewed for coordination between LPT's and teams to maximise the efficiency and prioritisation of their progress. LPT's can also use this as a tasking/bidding forum to report issues and request support against live matters of the moment so resources are coordinated and opportunities aren't missed. For this meeting we were supplied with a set of minutes for the meeting that took place in December 2025 noting coverage of trends, significant changes in activity and individual incidents covering for example, repeat caller, repeat crimes, outstanding suspects and hotspots.</p> <p>We found that only one of these groups recorded their activities in the form of minutes, however the Gold and Silver Groups maintained an action log. For both we confirmed that actions were recorded by date, owner and target completion date. There was also evidence that progress towards completion of actions was regularly recorded. There were no action logs for the other meetings as a result there was no record of their activities and a risk they are not operating as intended. We also found that none of these meetings had a terms of reference, apart from the short description within the governance framework document, as a result there is a risk that their roles and purpose is unclear and activities ineffective.</p>	
<b>Management Action 2</b>	Each Group within the Problem-solving structure will have a terms of reference and each Group will also maintain a RAID (Risk, Action, Issues Decision) Log.	<b>Responsible Owner:</b> John Owen  <b>Date:</b> Implemented  <b>Priority:</b> Medium

# Appendices

# 03



# APPENDIX A: CATEGORISATION OF FINDINGS

## Categorisation of internal audit findings

### Low

There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency.

### Medium

Timely management attention is necessary. This is an internal control risk management issue that could lead to: Financial losses which could affect the effective function of a department, loss of controls or process being audited or possible reputational damage, negative publicity in local or regional media.

### High

Immediate management attention is necessary. This is a serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to: Substantial losses, violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, reputational damage, negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact, such as loss of operating licences or material fines.

The following table highlights the number and categories of management actions made as a result of this audit.

Area	Control design not effective*	Non-compliance with controls*	Agreed actions		
			Low	Medium	High
Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee	0 (22)	2 (22)	1	1	0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

\* Shows the number of controls not adequately designed or not complied with. The number in brackets represents the total number of controls reviewed in this area.

## APPENDIX B INTERNAL AUDIT ASSIGNMENT OPINIONS



### Minimal Assurance

Taking account of the issues identified, the board cannot take assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied or effective.

Urgent action is needed to strengthen the control framework to manage the identified risk(s).



### Reasonable Assurance

Taking account of the issues identified, the board can take reasonable assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.

However, we have identified issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the control framework is effective in managing the identified risk(s).



### Partial Assurance

Taking account of the issues identified, the board can take partial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied or effective.

Action is needed to strengthen the control framework to manage the identified risk(s).



### Substantial Assurance

Taking account of the issues identified, the board can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.

---

## APPENDIX C: SCOPE

The scope below is a copy of the original document issued.

### Scope of the review

The scope was planned to provide advisory on the controls and mitigations in place relating to the objective:

#### Objective of the risk under review

To provide assurance over work undertaken to date in implementation of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee

---

### When planning the audit, the following were agreed:

#### Areas for consideration:

- Governance & Reporting:
  - A clear governance structure is in place overseeing NPG implementation including regular updates to senior leadership on NPG progress
  - Where gaps are identified there is a clear action plan in place, which clearly identifies owners and dates
- Performance Data & Monitoring:
  - KPIs are in place or being delivered at local/national level, and are monitored & tracked through performance dashboards
  - Data is collected reported on as specified by Home Office
  - As part of this review we will test a sample of any reported information to date back to source data to confirm accuracy
- Workforce & Deployment
  - Roles and responsibilities for NPG delivery have been clearly defined
  - Are the required numbers of neighbourhood officers, PCSOs, and specials allocated and available for neighbourhood duties?
  - Are abstractions monitored and minimised?
  - Is there a dedicated neighbourhood policing career pathway and training delivery?
- Visibility & Accessibility (Core NPG Promise)
  - Does every neighbourhood have named, contactable officers?
  - Are officers providing regular, visible patrol in priority locations (e.g., town centres, ASB hotspots)?
  - Are communication channels maintained (websites, email, social media updates)?
- Community Engagement & Priority Setting
  - Are communities and businesses regularly consulted?
  - Is there a transparent process for agreeing local priorities?
  - Are priorities publicised and progress reported back?

- Problem-Solving & Partnership Working
  - Are problem-solving approaches (SARA) used consistently?
  - Are partnerships with councils, housing, mental health, youth services active and productive?
  - Is there joint work on ASB, crime prevention, and vulnerability?
- Is public confidence improving in neighbourhood policing areas?
  - Are ASB/retail crime outcomes improving in targeted locations?
  - Are community priorities being resolved effectively?
  - Is the force measuring impact, not just activity?

**Limitations to the scope of the audit assignment:**

- This review will be limited to those areas detailed above
- This review does not provide assurance that the desired outcomes will be achieved
- This review does not provide assurance that all data reported is accurate as testing is undertaken on a sample basis only
- This review does not provide assurance that any action plans in place will be delivered
- Limited testing will be undertaken as part of this review as it is considering the design of the framework put in place
- This review will not provide assurance that the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee will be fully embedded and working as required
- This review will be undertaken on an advisory basis and will therefore not result in a formal opinion
- The results of our work are reliant on the quality and completeness of the information provided to us.
- Our work will not provide an absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

**Debrief held** 20 January 2026  
**Draft report issued** 13 February 2026  
**Responses received** 2 March 2026  
**Final report issued** 2 March 2026

**Internal audit Contacts** Dan Harris, Head of Internal Audit  
 Louise Davies, Managing Consultant

**Client sponsor** Paul Talbot, Assistant Chief Constable  
**Distribution** Paul Talbot, Assistant Chief Constable  
 John Owen, Superintendent

We are committed to delivering an excellent client experience every time we work with you. If you have any comments or suggestions on the quality of our service and would be happy to complete a short feedback questionnaire, please contact your RSM client manager or email [admin.south.rm@rsmuk.com](mailto:admin.south.rm@rsmuk.com).

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT



**Dan Harris, Head of Internal Audit**

Email: [Daniel.Harris@rsmuk.com](mailto:Daniel.Harris@rsmuk.com)

Telephone: **+44 190 868 7915**



**Louise Davies, Managing Consultant**

Email: [Louise.Davies@rsmuk.com](mailto:Louise.Davies@rsmuk.com)

Telephone: **+44 190 868 7894**

### **rsmuk.com**

The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Actions for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact. This report, or our work, should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and our work should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should our work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud and irregularity should there be any.

Our report is prepared solely for the confidential use of Staffordshire Police and Crime Commissioner, and solely for the purposes set out herein. This report should not therefore be regarded as suitable to be used or relied on by any other party wishing to acquire any rights from RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP for any purpose or in any context. Any third party which obtains access to this report or a copy and chooses to rely on it (or any part of it) will do so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party and shall not be liable for any loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature which is caused by any person's reliance on representations in this report.

This report is released to you on the basis that it shall not be copied, referred to or disclosed, in whole or in part (save as otherwise permitted by agreed written terms), without our prior written consent.

We have no responsibility to update this report for events and circumstances occurring after the date of this report.

RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales no. OC389499 at 6th floor, 25 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4AB.