

Annual Value for Money Statement

2024/25

1. Context

- 1.1 The Constabulary's Value for Money (VfM) Strategy was approved at the Force Executive Board (FEB) in November 2023. The strategy formalises the work that the Constabulary undertakes in respect of VfM enabling greater demonstration as to how VfM is being achieved.
- 1.2 The VfM Strategy includes the production of an Annual VfM Statement to summarise the activities undertaken in respect of VfM, significant pieces of work and how they drive benefit for the Constabulary and align to the policing missions such as the Safer Streets Mission and the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee. This Annual Statement covers the 2024/25 financial year.

2. 2024/25 VfM Activity

- 2.1 This section of the report provides an overview of the areas of VfM that can be reported on from 2024/25.

Chief Officer Team / SLT

- 2.2 During 2024/25 the Chief Officer Team has continued its commitment to providing greater focus on VfM through the SLT meeting with the savings programme being a regular focus, dedicated VfM discussions and considerations of investment opportunities including electric vehicles and solar energy generation options. The Enterprise Strategy and associated cost recovery activity with the Home Office under the Memorandum of Understanding in support of global safety and allegiance in policing is another area kept under review.

Governance Arrangements

- 2.3 The OPCC and Constabulary has a strong Corporate Framework where governance arrangements consider VfM in decision making. This includes the CamSTRA business planning process, the Change Board chaired by the DCC and upwards to the Force Executive Board (FEB) and PCC's Business Coordination Board (BCB). These arrangements provide a formal route for investment, business change, innovation and new initiatives to be overseen with the benefits tracking and VfM forming part of the arrangements.
- 2.4 The Change and Research Team (part of the Organisational Improvement Centre) work to a Change and Business Management Framework for formally assigned project. The purpose of the framework is to provide all stakeholders with comprehensive guidance that facilitates consistent and effective management of change initiatives and benefits included within the Cambridgeshire Constabulary 'Change' Corporate Portfolio. The framework adopts a seven-stage approach to managing a project or programme throughout its lifecycle covering start up, pre-delivery, delivery, and post-delivery requirements.
- 2.5 The Constabulary holds a Risk Review Board on a monthly basis chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. The Board is attended by all representatives from across the Constabulary and reports on and assesses all corporate and strategic risks. The OPCC is also invited to the Board meetings and also has sight of the risk register. The Medium Term Financial Strategy has been tracked through the Board during 2024/25 given the external financial climate and challenge to balance the financial plans. In addition, a fraud risk register is reported to the Board on a six monthly basis for consideration.

Project for the Web Tool

- 2.6 The Constabulary as of March 2025 has fully implemented a project management tool called 'Project for the Web' to facilitate improved project management, benefit tracking and project delivery with much enhanced management information reporting. This replaces the previous excel based VfM register with a much more intuitive project register against which VfM can be reviewed. The Project for the Web tool is part of the approach in delivering the Change and Business Management Framework.

Independent Assurance

- 2.7 The external auditors as part of their auditing standards are required to report annually on the Constabulary and OPCC arrangements to secure VfM making recommendations for improvement as necessary.

2.8 The national audit backlog has in recent years created a gap in the external arrangements to assess VfM. During 2024/25, because of the statutory requirements that were set by government in relation to the issue, the external auditors have cleared the backlog of the accounts. This meant that for 2021/22 and 2022/23 that a VfM assessment only was undertaken by the auditors – BDO. For 2023/24 an audit of the financial statements was undertaken by KPMG although some areas were not audited fully due to the statutory deadlines set. As a result, the Constabulary received a disclaimed audit opinion but the VfM assessment was completed as normal.

2.9 The VfM assessments reported the following:

- For 2021/22 and 2022/23 BDO conclude that they had “not identified any weaknesses in the PCC and CC’s arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources”, for the two financial years covered they “had no matters to report by exception in the audit report on the financial statements” and that they had “no matters to report in [their] closing audit certificate, on completion of [their] work on the PCC and CC’s value for money arrangements”.

Further on financial sustainability BDO reported that the PCC and Chief Constable has adequate arrangements in place to plan and monitor its financial resources so that it can deliver services. However, attention was drawn to the increasing savings requirement for the MTFS period ending 2026/27 and the financial challenges that will bring in the coming years.

Regarding governance arrangements BDO’s conclusion did not identify any significant weaknesses for 2021/22 and 2022/23.

- For 2023/24 KPMG’s VfM assessment was also positive being summarised as follows:

Domain	Risk assessment	Summary of arrangements
Financial sustainability	No significant risks identified	No significant weaknesses identified
Governance	No significant risks identified	No significant weaknesses identified
Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness	No significant risks identified	No significant weaknesses identified

2.10 The external audit of the 2024/25 financial year and accounts is being undertaken at the time of writing with the final assessment of VfM being reported in the 2025/26 VfM Annual Report.

2.11 The latest Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection for the Constabulary was undertaken in 2023/24 by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The inspection provided an overall assessment of the Force’s performance. The PEEL inspection framework reports against five graded judgements which are outstanding, good, adequate, requires improvement and inadequate in several areas. The Constabulary’s HMICFRS judgments from the 2023/24 inspection are provided below.

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Police powers and public treatment	Preventing crime	Investigating crime	Leadership and force management	Responding to the public
	Developing a positive workplace	Protecting vulnerable people		Managing offenders

2.12 In response to the inspection the Constabulary has monitored the delivery of improvement activity through the Business Assurance Meeting (BAM) to ensure sufficient pace and resolution to the HMICFRS findings.

2.13 The Constabulary has made focussed efforts to remedy the findings by recruiting and training additional call handlers in the Demand Hub and training 50 police constables to support call handling as required. A transformation of the Demand Hub was also instigated overseen by a Gold Group with task and finish groups. Improvements have been made by looking at best practice, enhancing the Constabulary’s understanding of abandoned calls, implementing rapid video response (RVR) and video response as well as work on the Demand Hub leadership and culture through workshops alongside an operating model review. The performance in response to both 999 and 101 calls is much improved due to this focussed improvement work. March 2025 figures demonstrated 96.5% of 999 calls responded to in under 10 seconds and 96.8% of 101 calls in under 30 seconds. Abandonment rates are also improving, reaching a low of 6.6% in March.

2.14 Another aspect of the cause for concern was the response in getting to the scene of incidents within a locally published 15 minute response time for immediate grade incidents. Performance has again improved from the work undertaken and in February 2025 was 51.2% compared to 35.5% the prior year. However, more importantly has been the consideration of the appropriateness of the target and work continues to explore response targets utilising evidential data and community safety factors.

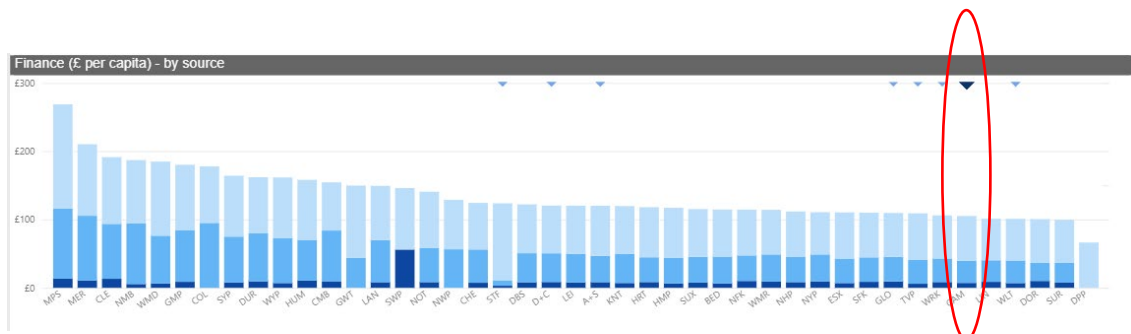
2.15 Whilst the cause for concern is not yet officially removed the Constabulary has been making good progress against the issues raised.

2.16 In December 2024, Government inspectors praised the force for improvements made in managing offenders and suspects. The 2023 PEEL report rated the Constabulary “inadequate” in this area, citing areas of concern including supervisor reviews of registered sex offenders, intelligence checks on registered sex offenders, welfare support for staff and a backlog of online child abuse cases. During 2024/25 the Constabulary made significant progress in respect of this finding and in December inspectors officially closed this cause for concern.

Delivery of Budget Savings

2.17 The Constabulary is one of the lowest funded police forces in the country. HMICFRS publishes benchmark data as part of its Value for Money Profiles and using the latest 2024 profiles Graph 1 shows Cambridgeshire as 6th lowest in terms of all Government funding (formula funding, police grant, other grant and council tax legacy grant). Coupled with this Cambridgeshire has one of the highest, if not the highest, level of population growth reported in the 2021 census. Cambridgeshire’s population grew by 11.1% compared to the England national average of 6.6%. The impact of this population growth is not recognised in the government grant received by the Constabulary.

Graph 1 – All Government Grant Funding per Head of Population – 6th lowest for Cambs (2023 VfM Profiles)



2.18 Table 1 sets out the budget savings that were identified in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and how the Constabulary has performed in delivering these savings. In total £4.2m of savings has been delivered against the planned £4.3m for 2024/25 putting the Constabulary in a robust starting position moving into 2025/26. The Constabulary used its well established business planning process, CamSTRA and overlaid a set of business change principles to review the force further with a service led approach being emphasised to identify what services are required, current and new demand and the resource needed.

2.19 The delivery of these savings has been vital in setting a balanced budget but also in demonstrating the VfM achieved by the Constabulary in minimising as

far as possible the cost base, in the context of the low funding position, to deliver an efficient and effective police service.

2.20 Further budget savings have been identified in 2025/26 totalling £6.7m which are being progressed by the Constabulary.

2.21 Importantly the Constabulary has not used any unplanned reserves in 2024/25 meaning a sustainable financial position remains, delivered through recurrent budget savings. In turn the reserves position remains strong with various ear-marked reserves totalling £17.3m and the General Fund reserve being maintained at the targeted level of 5% (£9.6m). Total usable reserves being £26.9m providing financial resilience for the Constabulary.

Table 1 – 2024/25 Budget Savings and Delivery

Area, Dept	Category	2024/25 Saving £	Forecast savings delivered Final	Notes
Investigations & Safeguarding				
Inv Stds & Devt	Interpreters	-40,000	-32,000	Interpreter reduction
Protecting Vulnerable People Consultancy, Legal & Audit Costs		-31,000	-31,000	SARC Contract Renewal
Investigations & Safeguarding Total		-71,000	-63,000	
LP - Operations				
Northern/Southern Hubs	Support Staff Pay	-179,000	-165,794	Enquiry Office changes under review
BSU	Support Staff Pay	-6,548	-10,036	Staff post reduced to 7 months
BSU	Building Repairs, Alterations & Maintenance	-3,000	-3,000	Reduced requirement
BSU	Equipment & Materials	-15,000	-15,000	Printing solution to be arranged by ICT
BSU	Clothing, Uniforms & Laundry	-15,000	-15,000	Full removal of PPE budget
BSU	Equipment & Materials	-3,000	-3,000	Breathalysers not used
BSU	Computing Costs	-10,000	-10,000	Reduced Demand
BSU	Computing Costs	-5,000	-4,550	Budget not used
Partnerships & Prevention	Other Grants & Contributions	-55,849	-55,849	Income revisions
Northern Hub	Other Grants & Contributions	-50,000	-54,791	Peterborough City Council Grant (BID)
Command	Police Officer Overtime	-90,000	-90,000	Additional bh reduction
LP - Operations Total		-432,397	-427,020	
Insurance				
Fleet/Insurance	Vehicle Running Costs	-117,000	-114,224	Motor Insurance Premium
Insurance Total		-117,000	-114,224	
People and Professionalism				
People & Professionalism	Police Officer Pay, Pension & Allowances	-160,109	-160,109	Removal of supernumerary Superintendent po
People & Professionalism Total		-160,109	-160,109	
Estates				
Estates	Overall (coded to Building Maintenance)	-150,000	-150,000	Estate Rationalisation
Estates	Utility Costs	-5,887	0	Water services
Estates	Building Repairs, Alterations & Maintenance	-2,400	0	Planned Mech Engineering works
Estates	Sales, Fees & Charges	-12,000	-11,077	Solar Panels
Estates	Other Premises Costs	-5,000	-5,000	Grounds Maintenance
Estates	Consultancy, Legal & Audit Costs	-50,000	-50,000	Consultants Fees
Estates	Building Repairs, Alterations & Maintenance	-23,000	-50,891	Access Control
Estates Total		-248,287	-266,968	
In-house General/Corporate				
In-house Overall	Support Staff Pay	-1,200,000	-1,200,000	Holding Branch Savings Target
In-house Overall	Police Officer Pay, Pension & Allowances	-50,000	-120,574	PCDA Apprenticeships
Corporate	Other Supplies & Services	-250,000	-250,000	Non-pay Analysis
Corporate	Sales, Fees & Charges	-50,000	-18,495	Income Generation
In house General/Corporate Total		-1,550,000	-1,589,069	

Table 1 Continued

Area, Dept	Category	2024/25 Saving £	Forecast savings delivered Final	Notes
PCC				
OPCC	Independent Audit Committee	-300	-300	Casual Users Mileage Staff
OPCC	Other Running Costs	-23,000	-23,000	Agency/Temp Staff
OPCC	Other Running Costs	-2,385	-2,385	External Training Courses
OPCC	Other Running Costs	-2,000	-2,000	Conference & Seminar Fees
OPCC	Premises Costs	-1,000	-1,000	Rent
OPCC	Other Running Costs	-500	-500	Rail Travel
OPCC	Other Running Costs	-6,100	-5,612	Software Licences
OPCC	Other Running Costs	-1,000	-1,000	Corporate Hospitality
OPCC	External Audit Fees	-10,940	0	External Audit Fee
OPCC	Other Running Costs	-700	0	Custody Visits
OPCC	Other Running Costs	-50,885	0	Income/Top Slicing
PCC Capital Financing	Interest & Charges	-500,000	-765,302	Investment Income
PCC Total		-598,810	-801,099	
BCH Collaboration				
BCH	Cameras, Tickets & Collisions	-129,335	-88,963	Vacancy Factor
BCH	Cameras, Tickets & Collisions	-38,651	-38,571	
BCH	Corporate Comms	-76,960	0	
BCH	Criminal Justice (unit + SMT)	-32,814	28,058	Vacancy Factor
BCH	Criminal Justice (unit + SMT)	-29,032	-47,281	
BCH	Human Resources (incl L&D)	-252,352	-252,270	
BCH	ICT	-31,120	9,021	Vacancy Factor
BCH	ICT	-77,800	-77,765	Vacancy Factor
BCH	Information Management Dept	-46,369	-46,348	Vacancy Factor
BCH	Information Management Dept	-23,340	-23,330	
BCH	Joint Strategy & Transformation	-28,319	65,323	Vacancy Factor
BCH	Joint Strategy & Transformation	-31,120	-31,106	Vacancy Factor
BCH	Major Crime Unit	-50,180	-48,214	Vacancy Factor
BCH	Major Crime Unit	-5,525	5,599	
BCH	Protective Services Command	-10,270	-11,509	Vacancy Factor
BCH	Scientific Services Unit	-106,733	-106,071	Vacancy Factor
BCH	Scientific Services Unit	-6,260	0	
BCH	Special Ops (incl APU, RPU, Dogs, OSU, CCU)	-102,883	-53,502	
	Balancing BCH	23,062	0	
BCH Total		-1,056,000	-716,929	
Regional Collaboration				
Regional Collaboration	Collaboration - Regional Collaboration	-51,691	-51,691	7F ESMCP Resources
Regional Collaboration Total		-51,691	-51,691	
		-4,285,294	-4,190,109	

Enterprise Strategy

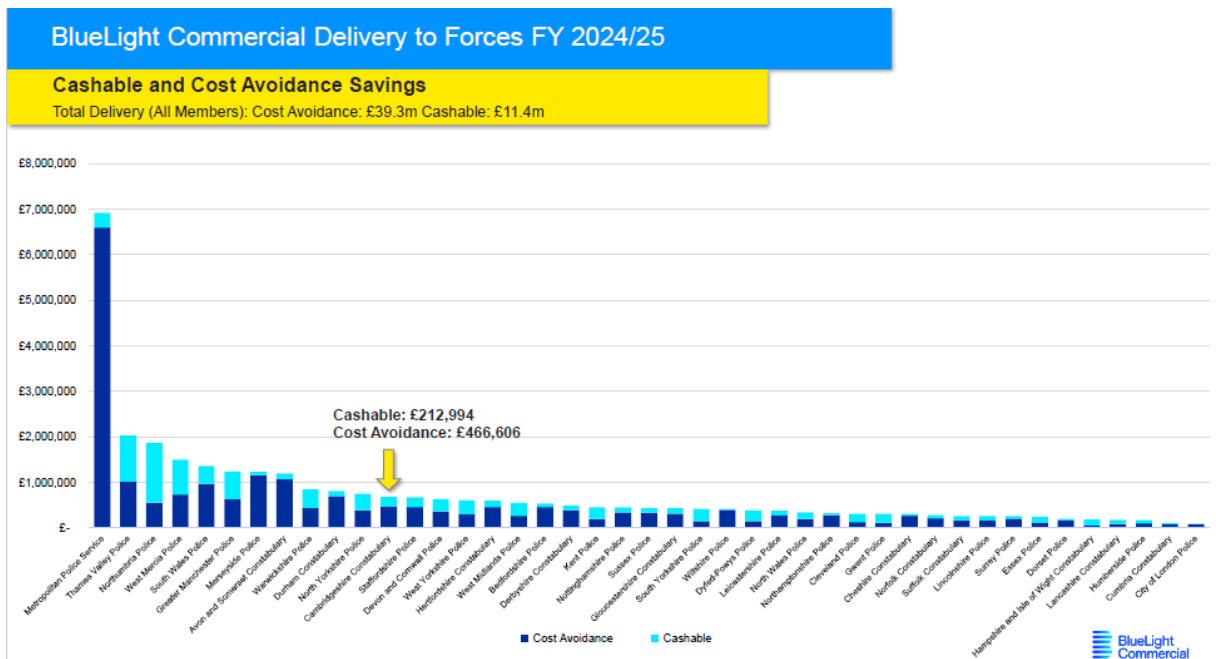
2.22 The Constabulary continues to promote its Enterprise Strategy. Activity during 2024/25 includes:

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Home Office to deliver learning with other England and Wales police forces as well as overseas forces. During 2024/25 the Constabulary achieved £19k of cost recovery through the MoU. Whilst this is much reduced compared to the £127k in 2023/24 it reflects the projects assigned from the Home Office. This helps to reduce the Constabulary's cost base to the benefit of the Cambridgeshire public.
- Development of Ethics Cards with a private sector specialist company for the benefit of training and development of police officers in respect of ethical scenarios and dilemmas. The cards are supported by an App

and web version which officers will have access to. This is a first for policing and was rolled out in 2024/25. An agreement has been developed with the company that will provide a revenue benefit to the Constabulary if the product is rolled out more widely across UK policing.

Procurement Savings and Cost Avoidance

2.23 The Constabulary is part of the national Blue Light Commercial service which joins up procurement on a national scale where appropriate. The areas of the Constabulary's participation in BLC are set out below. During the 2024/25 financial year the Constabulary achieved £726k of benefit from the BLC arrangement. This is broken down into £213k cashable savings, £467k cost avoidance and £46k revenue generation. The following chart shows how the Constabulary compares to other forces in this regard (for cashable and cost avoidance benefits taken together). Cashable savings predominantly relate to vehicle purchases whilst the majority of the cost avoidance benefits have come from ICT costs.



credits totalling £153k. 7F Commercial also ensure social value is delivered where possible through contracts that are put in place, one example being the Milton Police Station capital contract with further details provided below. The 7F Commercial benefits achieved by for the Constabulary during 2024/25 are as follows:

Cashable	£43k	IT: Athoc Blackberry, ANPR Hardware Operational: Clothing Corporate: Credit Reference Service
Non-Cashable / Cost Avoidance	£81k	IT: Auto-redaction tool, GIS & Compass Software, QAS Software, PINS Operational: Forensic Reporting
Service Credits	£153k	Vehicle Recovery contract £146k Custody Healthcare £7k

Major Capital Investments

- 2.25 As reported in previous years the Constabulary began the year with several major capital projects underway both locally and in collaboration with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. These projects will cost many millions of pounds and represent the largest investment in the PCC's estate in recent years. Given the scale of these projects, the Constabulary's project management approach has focussed on due diligence and robust challenge to ensure VfM. The two largest projects are summarised below.

Milton Police Station

- 2.26 Milton Police Station is a project to relocate the geographic hub in the south of the county from the city centre Parkside police station to an out-of-town police station. The relocation will include the provision of expanded modern state of the art custody facilities to meet growth. The project commenced construction in September 2024 with a total construction cost of £38.5m.
- 2.27 The approach to secure the construction contract was led by the Strategic Estates Director with legal and technical advisors to ensure the contract was robust and de-risked as far as possible. This required a significant amount of due diligence in the design, project costings and contractual negotiations to achieve an affordable and largely fixed project cost. This approach ensured a robust contract was in place enabling the construction to make progress, as planned, through the remainder of 2024/25 and into 2025/26. As part of the management of the project a series of early warnings and compensation events are raised for unforeseen or unexpected issues as the build progresses. The Constabulary has taken a collaborative but firm approach with the contractor to find solutions to mitigate cost increases and risk whilst maintaining quality in the construction. In short contract management and project management has been strong to deliver this strategically vital project.

- 2.28 Social value for the local community has also been delivered throughout the project with examples being employment of an apprentice on site, a 2 week T-level placement for a local college student, a work experience placement for school pupil, a session with Police Cadets to provide information about the project and pathways into the construction industry and numerous events within local schools to develop employment skills among young people. Events have been held and are planned in future to share the findings of the archaeological investigation of the site.
- 2.29 The project benefits will be tracked once the construction is complete.

BCH Specialist Training Facility

- 2.30 This project, commonly referred to as Monks Wood due to the location, is a jointly funded project by BCH to relocate the Operational Support Unit's training facilities.
- 2.31 The Monks Wood project has been affected by the economic conditions with costs significantly exceeding budget available across the three forces. The Constabulary had budgeted and planned for the cost of the project in line with the approved business case and project cost forecasts, however the project relied upon the collaborative partners being in the same position which they were not. Numerous value engineering options have been explored to secure a more affordable solution and demonstrate VfM to contain costs on a challenging site. The project made a start on site in April but a subsequent decision has since been made by the 3 BCH forces and PCCs to cease the project. This is due to affordability concerns.
- 2.32 This will incur a write off of the costs incurred in 2025/26 which has therefore not proven to be value for money, although in the long-term the decision has avoided significant capital expense, which in the current financial climate will benefit the level of capital loan financing that the PCC needs to undertake significantly reducing interest and borrowing costs in the revenue budget.

Sustainability

- 2.33 The Constabulary has a Sustainability Strategy underpinned by 5 themes. Transition Plans have been developed for the Fleet, Estate and People and Behaviour themes. The sustainability agenda for the Constabulary must continue to strike a balance between affordability and carbon reduction measures since all activity in this area is having to be met from the same resources required to deliver operational policing.
- 2.34 During 2024/25 the Constabulary's electric vehicle pilot completed and a post implementation review was reported to the December 2024 Change Board.

The pilot removed 12 petrol / diesel vehicles from the fleet replacing them with electric vehicles. A project management approach was adopted by the Constabulary to ensure lessons learned are well considered and documented. The pilot has been successful and continues providing the Constabulary with a blueprint to replicate the same approach using the same vehicles across the same teams when the new Milton Police Station becomes operational.

- 2.35 Alongside the work on the fleet the Estates team continued to complete a programme of introducing new building management systems across the estate to ensure efficient energy management and is year on year driving down energy consumption. Works have continued to make the ageing estate more carbon efficient, through introduction of LED lighting and air source heat pumps. One of the biggest gains for the Constabulary in terms of carbon reduction will be when the new Milton Police Station is operational enabling operations to cease at Parkside Police Station. This will have a significant downward impact on the Constabulary's carbon emissions.
- 2.36 The Estates team continue to look at options to develop renewable energy solutions to reduce carbon emissions and deliver cost reductions in the long term. The solar farm feasibility project has been slowed due to discussions with the NHS about acquiring the site in support of the hospital redevelopment supporting the one public estate agenda. This is however subject to commercial negotiation. Other options for renewable energy opportunities continue to be explored.

Policing Productivity

- 2.37 The Constabulary continues to engage with the Home Office on its Policing Productivity Review providing examples of good practice. Meetings held so far have covered the Cambridgeshire benefit framework, neighbourhood policing and partnership, change management and innovation, programme Sho-Shin and the roll out of Auto Redaction. Further requests have been made by the Home Office and the Constabulary continues to engage in the review with the next planned discussions on:
- How the Constabulary evaluates and manages failure demand; and
 - Potential fundings for AVMM funding (visual recording redaction tools).

These latter discussions will be progressed during 2025/26.

3. Areas of Focus for 2025/26

- 3.1 VfM arrangements continue to be a focus within the Constabulary and for 2025/26 the areas of focus are set out below.

Delivery and Reporting of Projects

- 3.2 The Project for the Web tool outlined in 2.5 was fully implemented in March 2025 although the 6 and 12 month review process went live earlier in the year in September 2024. Reporting from the tool through Power Bi which has been live with reports presented to Change Board and FEB from May 2025 onwards. Future Annual VfM Statements will provide an overview of the projects for the year.

Benchmarking

- 3.3 Benchmarking using the HMICFRS VfM profiles was undertaken in 2024/25, however capacity within the finance team did not allow this to be followed up further. This will be considered more as the budget position tightens to help identify outliers where there may be scope for savings.

BCH Business Planning Reviews

- 3.4 The BCH business planning process has improved with a much better understanding of collaborated function metrics such as:
- a) Baselineing current service levels.
 - b) Staffing.
 - c) Threat, risk and harm considerations.
 - d) Transformation opportunities.
- 3.5 Improvements in the process during 2024/25 has enabled robust savings plans to be developed for 2025/26 which are now being formally tracked and monitored through BCH governance. This is a good development increasing accountability and transparency in the BCH collaboration. In addition, areas for detailed review were identified which will be progressed at pace during 2025/26 to deliver further savings in 2026/27. This work is underway with plans beginning to be developed. Overall whilst a fully developed 3 year plan is not in place across the BCH collaboration, the business and financial planning is evolving and becoming more robust.

Milton Police Station

- 3.6 The major capital project to build Milton Police Station will be managed through to completion and occupation. Linked to this but as a separate project will be the disposal of the old Parkside Police Station for best consideration although this is likely to be realised in 2026/27.

Sustainability

- 3.7 Work will continue in 2025/26 to progress the sustainability agenda within available resources, both financial and non-financial.

Budget Savings

- 3.8 The Comprehensive Spending Review has left the financial planning in a no firmer position i.e. the Constabulary still does not know what the police funding settlement is likely to be over the MTF5 even though the CSR was set for 3 years. There is much uncertainty other than that savings need to be found, which will be a key focus of the Constabulary in 2025/26 and future years.

National Police Reform

- 3.9 The Home Office are progressing a Police Reform Programme which started to gather momentum during 2024/25. The Programme will see some fundamental changes to policing which are yet to be fully defined but are likely to include a National Centre for Policing which will seek to pull certain national capabilities under a single governance structure. Examples may include the National Police Air Service, Blue Light Commercial, Police Digital Services and potentially forensics to name a few. At the same time local government reform is taking place which may affect the operating model of the Constabulary. The Constabulary will actively engage in these areas as the plans develop to ensure the impact, implications and VfM considerations are assessed.