

To: Joint Audit Committee

From: Chief Executive

Date: 03 September 2026

LOCAL POLICE GOVERNANCE TRANSITION TO MAYORAL MODEL

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Joint Audit Committee on the progress, approach and processes to ensure the effective transition.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to note the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 The previous update to the Committee on 31st July 2026 provided the full background to the transition, the preparations taking place within the OPCC and the links being established with the Combined Authority: <https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/governance/joint-audit-committee/2026/31-july-2026/agenda-item-005---mayoral-model-transition-update-jac.pdf> .
- 3.2 The Committee has expressed a view on the primacy of the role of the Combined Authority in respect of the transition. The Combined Authority is in agreement with this and has confirmed regular reporting into its Audit & Governance Committee and Board. Both organisations recognise the importance of working together to ensure a smooth transition, given the OPCC's considerable experience in providing effective governance for this complex and sensitive agenda and the transfer of relevant OPCC staff resources.
- 3.3 This update focusses on the governance in place within the Combined Authority to manage the transition, working alongside OPCC staff. It is important to

acknowledge the scale of change across the whole system currently, including significant additional responsibilities being transferred to the Combined Authority. It is important that these interdependencies are recognised and that all parties are able to work through this initial horizon scanning, scoping and mobilisation phase. Once the Government sets out its future plans for police force structures and local governance following the independent review, and how they plan to enact this through legislation, currently anticipated in the autumn, more detailed preparation and planning for implementation can be finalised.

4. Combined Authority transition governance arrangements

- 4.1 OPCC functions are expected to transfer to the Combined Authority in May 2028. The transition of OPCC functions sits alongside a swathe of other changes in the powers and responsibilities for the Mayor and the Combined Authority arising from the English Devolution & Community Empowerment Act 2026, other legislation such as the Infrastructure & Planning Act 2025 and more recently in the first weeks of the new Government, the Cabinet Office “Rewiring the State” statement setting out how they intend to re-shape how the public sector functions and empower local leaders to drive growth in their areas. The statement includes a commitment to implement a ‘new model of government’ by the end of the current Parliament. Key highlights include empowering local leaders, adopting a devolve by default policy and a commitment to progressing Fiscal Devolution. Further detail, which will be provided in the White Paper scheduled to be published this Autumn will need to be considered alongside information on police force structures anticipated in the autumn.
- 4.2 Transition planning is progressing with regular meetings taking place between respective senior teams in the OPCC and the Combined Authority to prepare for the integration into the Combined Authority. The respective senior leadership teams have established a joint working group to oversee the transfer. A high-level transitional plan has been developed and is attached at Appendix A. Theme leads from both organisations have been identified and are working together to further define and scope key workstreams, timescales and risks which will, over time populate the more detailed implementation plan.

- 4.3 One of the workstreams is Governance, with a focus on ensuring appropriate governance arrangements are in place for the CPCA to carry out the statutory responsibilities as the Elected Local Policing Body. Key deliverables include ensuring an appropriate Governance Framework is in place, a scheme of delegation, decision-making protocols, audit committee oversight and conduct and complaint arrangements
- 4.4 The Combined Authority continues to work with the UK Mayors Network to ensure learning is being drawn from other Strategic Authorities that have already effectively integrated the OPCC, most notable is dialogue with South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire Strategic Authorities where the transition has already been completed.
- 4.5 The Combined Authority's Strategic Corporate Risk Register now includes Police and Fire Reform, with oversight through the Combined Authority Board. The next update on "Rewiring the State" and wider Devolution activity is scheduled be taken to the Combined Authority Audit & Governance Committee on the 10 September and Board on the 23 September.
- 4.6 Following feedback from this Committee the OPCC strategic risk relating to the transition is being updated to more fully reflect the collaborative approach being taken.
- 4.7 Key issues were highlighted in the previous update to the Committee. As above, a key milestone will be confirmation of the Government's intended approach and timescales, currently anticipated in the Autumn. The Home Office currently anticipates working with local areas from Spring 2027 to progress implementation. Current planning across the two organisations will enable us to meet the requirements, proportionate with available resources.

5. Future governance arrangements

- 5.1 Ensuring future governance arrangements are clear as part of the implementation of the transition is recognised as an important workstream within the Governance theme. It is recognised that statutory and CIPFA expectations will need to continue to be met during the transition period and as the responsibility for police governance is transferred to the Combined Authority. We are aware there are different models in other established areas, including

retention of Joint Audit Committee arrangements and incorporation within wider Combined Authority arrangements. There are interdependencies here with police reform decisions and the future national footprint Government determines for policing, as well as wider devolution issues such as potential fire integration.

6. Recommendation

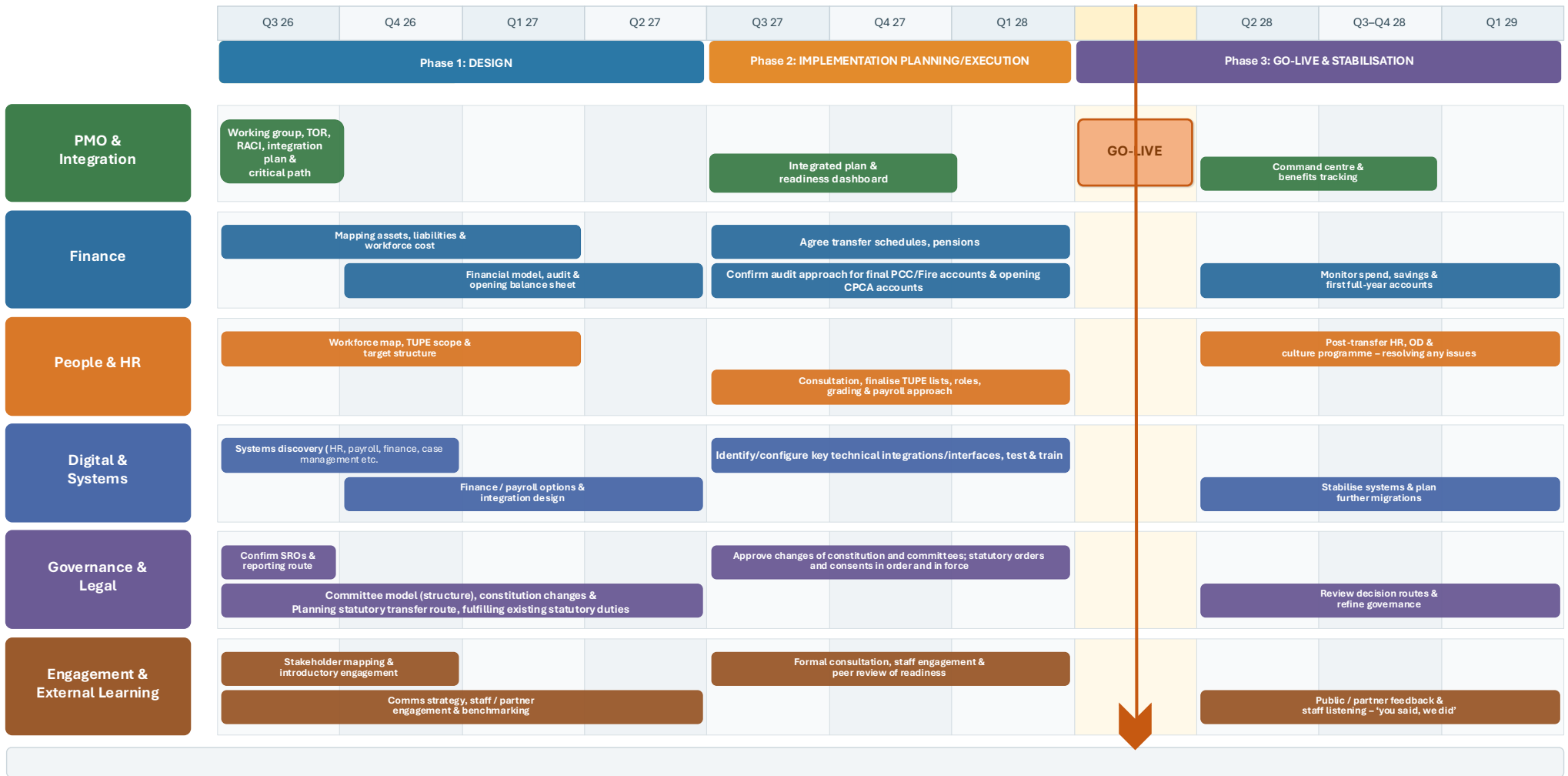
6.1 The Committee is recommended to note the report.

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Appendix A

Police and Fire Integration – High-Level Block Plan

Overview | Key activity and decision points – more in detail in integration plan



CPCA | Police and Fire Integration