

JOINT AUDIT PANEL

Date: Friday 12th September 2025

Time: 11:30 – 13:00

Venue: Room 330, Third Floor, GMP Force Headquarters, Central Park, Northampton Road, Newton Heath, Manchester, M40 5BP

Attendees

Peter Morris (Chair)
John Starkey (Panel member)
Foluke Fajumi (Panel member)
Joanne Downs (New panel member – Part A only)
Gemma Shephard-Etchells (New panel member – Part A only)

Chief Resources Officer (CRO) Lee Rawlinson (GMP) (Item 6 only)
Chief Finance Officer (CFO) Ian Cosh (GMP)
Dawn Royle (GMP - Director of Transformation) (Items 1-6 only)
Tim Harris (GMP – Enterprise Architect) (Items 6-12 only)
Sara Ashworth (GMP - Head of Strategic Planning, Policy and Governance) (online)
Hannah Gamage (GMP – Strategic Planning, Policy and Governance)

Claire Postlethwaite (GMCA – Director of Operational Finance)
David Welsh (GMCA - Head of Oversight and Performance) (online)

Cath Folan (Head of Internal Audit – Police & Crime)

Karen Murray (Forvis Mazars - Director (Public and Social Sector))

Apologies

Ian Cayton (Panel member)
Phillipa Nazari (New panel member)
Kate Green (Deputy Mayor for Safer and Stronger Communities)
Chief Constable Stephen Watson (GMP)
Neil Evans (GMCA - Director Safer and Stronger Communities)
Jerry Faulkner (GMP - Assistant Director of Finance)
Sarah Horseman (Deputy Director, Governance, Risk and Assurance)
Steve Wilson (GMCA – Treasurer)

M440/JAP **Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the meeting.

M441/JAP **Urgent Business (if any) at the discretion of the Chair**

None raised.

M442/JAP Declarations of Interest

None raised.

M443/JAP Approval of July 2025 minutes and actions

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record. Joanne Downs noted she had emailed GMP Governance requesting a minor change to M428/JAP. It was confirmed this had been amended.

M444/JAP Current GMP issues

CFO Cosh introduced the item, outlining the following updates to the Panel:

Records Management System (RMS) replacement

CFO Cosh commented that this has been an area which the Panel had sought assurances on over the period of procurement. A contract has now been agreed with Mark43, the initial contract will be for four years. There's a potential for this to get extended to 10 years.

The current iOPS system will end its service in 2027/28, and the aim is for the new RMS to go live in the first quarter of 2027.

Mark43 has been used by the Cumbria Constabulary since April 2025, however, it was noted that GMP is a very different Force, as it is larger with greater demand. Reality testing in other forces (including in America) has been undertaken by representation from GMP, to hear firsthand how officers and staff use the system.

The cost for the new system can be contained within the forecast provisioned within the capital and revenue budgets and reflects a robust negotiation on contractual terms, including no inflationary increases

David Welsh is a member of the Board overseeing the new RMS and the tender process. He noted that mayoral oversight has taken place.

Mark43 has opened an office in Manchester, employing local people into roles. This also ensures support is readily available and provides good social value benefits.

Operational pressures

The protest activity which was mentioned at the last meeting continues. Manchester has the second highest number of protests, behind London.

There have been several events occurred over the last few weeks, which have had operational gold meetings. Examples of these include Operational Wildflower (Hama-Israel conflict) and the housing of asylum seekers in local hotels. These operations require overtime to ensure sufficient policing levels, and the latter operation cost GMP £40,000 in overtime for July. Operation Wildflower has also cost the Force £2.5m in operational support, for which GMP is asking assistance from the Home Office.

Therefore, the Force has experienced financial challenges and has written to the Home Secretary seeking financial support.

Neighbourhood Guarantee

The Neighbourhood Guarantee is the government's aim for 13,000 neighbourhood officers being available nationally. GMP has placed a bid and secured funding for 176 officers.

The first amount of funding has been received and monthly returns regarding these are submitted.

Police Uplift Programme

The Policing Uplift Programme continues to work well, with the delivery within the target numbers and financial grant conditions progressing well.

Finance

GMP has seen some challenges, and within the latest update to the Deputy Mayor's Executive (DME) there was a forecast of £9.6million in revenue overspend for 2025/26. The August position will be established shortly. As mentioned, support is being sought from the Home Office.

Work has taken place under Operation Rydal to make the Force more effective and efficient. As part of this, there has been a reduction of staff posts. Some voluntary redundancies are being progressed, which have been contained within the police staff budget.

When asked by the Panel, CFO Cosh explained other avenues of revenue for the Force are being explored. Some options include:

- Increased payments from football clubs to cover the policing requirements which are not currently reclaimable from football clubs.
- GMP to become an international centre for training, which will bring revenue when training other forces.
- Lobbying the government for a greater share from the proceeds of crime legislation to come to police forces.

M445/JAP GMP estates

CRO Rawlinson and CFO Cosh brought the item to the meeting following a request from Foluke Fajumi, although it was noted that the Estates Strategy has not yet been formally approved by the Strategic Command Team and the Deputy Mayor.

The aim of the Strategy is ambitious, stretching to 2050, providing a refresh on estates issues, such as the changing operational requirements for training facilities, meeting de-carbonisation targets, addressing poor building condition and ensuring efficient and effective buildings are provided. The Strategy will be broken down into five-year segments (with understanding of the cost for each segment), and there will be a link between operational demands and policing with the Greater Manchester Strategy. For example, transport is a key issue for the Mayor, therefore, opportunities for collaboration with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) are reflected in the strategy.

The Strategy also seeks to release those buildings and land no longer required for policing purposes to support the Mayoral ambitions to build significant numbers of houses across Greater Manchester footprint. The strategy will initially focus on the transition of buildings currently delivered through a PFI contract, which will end in 2031.

There is a Plan on a Page (POAP) regime in place to oversee the delivery of the Strategy.

Claire Postlethwaite stated this is a project for GMP and GMCA to work together as GMCA owns the assets involved. The GMP strategy will embed into the GMCA strategy.

When discussing the locations for GMP sites, the Panel heard how many factors provide influence on this, such as housing development, the impact of response times to reach these areas and the availability and location of custody suites.

Dawn Royle delivered a presentation to the Panel which outlined the process in place for the implementation of programmes and projects within GMP. The slides will be shared with members following the meeting.

M446/JAP External Audit – Progress Report

Karen Murray presented the paper to the Panel, explaining that progress is being made on the 2024/25 audit, and that this is on track for completion within the statutory timescales.

The value for money commentary work for 2024/25 is underway, and the aim is for this to be presented at the next meeting.

It was noted that the pensions work remains outstanding as the team are reliant on other organisations for the information.

There has been a change of personnel within the audit team, however, this will not affect the delivery of the audit.

M447/JAP Joint Audit Panel Effectiveness Report

Cath Folan introduced the item, noting that areas for improvement have been identified and included in the paper. Actions have been created, with assigned action owners.

M448/JAP Internal Audit Progress Report

Cath Folan outlined the purpose of the paper is to report on the progress against the Internal Audit plan.

Since the last meeting, one report had been issued, which was:

- Business Continuity Planning - Limited Assurance

When asked about this report, Cath explained the actions within the paper have set deadlines, that have been agreed with the Force. The audit was undertaken to provide an independent assurance of the processes in place.

Cath noted that Internal Audit continue to attend the GMP Victims and Communities Performance Framework (VCPF) Meeting and the Risk and Assurance Board.

M449/JAP Process Automation and Artificial Intelligence

CFO Cosh stated this item could be heard within Part A of the meeting and introduced Tim Harris, GMP's Technical Architect, to the Panel.

Tim explained that process automation is being explored by the Force to help people and provide a better service to the public. The aim is it will:

- Reduce cost and time
- Reduce risk
- Be in line with regulatory compliance
- Create productivity benefits.

Tim outlined the process being applied to determine which processes are assessed for potential AI applications. This follows a rigorous set of criteria based on the delivery against the key outcomes. Tim gave a flavour of some of the initial projects and the benefits to be gained. He also addressed the safeguards which are in place to ensure that any risks associated with the use of AI are carefully assessed, managed and mitigated.

PART B

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public should be excluded from the meeting for the following items on business on the grounds that this involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as set out in paragraph 3, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

M450/JAP Risk Management Framework

The Panel were unable to discuss this item due to the meeting overrunning. It was requested that any comments or questions are emailed across to GMP Governance.

M451/JAP Action Tracker Updates

The Panel were unable to discuss this item due to the meeting overrunning. It was requested that any comments or questions are emailed across to GMP Governance.