MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ETHICS AND TRANSPARENCY PANEL
22ND SEPTEMBER 2026 – 13:30–16:00 HRS
MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM, FHQ
Tina Lee, Executive Secretary – Minute Taker

Office of Police and Crime Commissioner
Mrs C Trewartha (Chief Executive)
Mrs C Hornbuckle (Assurance Officer)
Miss Tina Lee (Executive Secretary)

Office of Chief Constable
ACC James Avery

Ethics and Transparency Panel Members
Dr Frances Deepwell (Vice Chair)
Dr Louise Bradley
Ms Nikki Plant
Ms Katie Walker
Mr Matthew Young
Mr Kieran Breen
Miss Lisa Vine
Dr Denis Tanfa

1. Apologies

   T/DCC Michaela Kerr (Deputy Chief Constable)
   Ms Kathleen Harris-Leighton (Chair)
   Mrs N Chamund (Director of Governance and Performance)
   Mr O Bryan (Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner)

2. Declarations of Interest

   None.

3. Minutes of meeting of the Ethics and Transparency Panel held June 2026 & Rolling Action Log

The Chair requested circulation of minutes of the previous meeting to be clear when agenda is sent out. OPCC confirmed minutes were attached to the meeting invite, in future members will be altered of documents that should be attached and to raise in advance if not received/viewable.

The Panel confirmed that the Minutes of previous meeting 25 June 2026 are approved with no requests for amendments, however noted that they were 'wordy' and this could be reviewed going forward.

The following Actions were updated:

Update Action No 56 – The summary was redacted. Clare to provide Summary of update from Nicole, to circulate and add to December agenda.

Update Action No 80: – Update the Terms of Reference based on outcome of scrutiny audit anticipated in November 2026.

Update Action 76 - A query from the Panel from the Pre-meet regarding Rape Review Panels and if these were taking place. This was an item discussed last November at the team away day and Louise and Kathleen had suggested sitting on these panels as ETP were not represented. Claire Trewartha advised she would review with Lizzie and provide an update via assurance officer. Claire to take away, to look at what was discussed at the Away day and bring back to the panel.

Update Action 25 – this item was due to be discussed in September. The external review has not been published. Item to be added to the December agenda and ACC Avery to give an update on local response.

Update Action 53 – action not to be closed. ACC Avery to arrange for an overview of the Code of Ethics training, what it is and examples from the training.

Update Action 61 –To be added to December agenda for a more detailed update.

Update Action 64 –To be added to December agenda for a more detailed discussion and can be circulated to the Panel prior to the December meeting.

Update Action 65 – 16 November meeting with Rape Team has not yet taken place, so action not closed.

4. Urgent Business & Chair Updates

Street Wardens Update

The OPCC provided an update on the Street Wardens programme which will now be delivered through Leicestershire Police and PCSOs rather than as originally proposed. The revised model aims to maintain the PCSO numbers and increase foot patrol visibility in market towns before Christmas, although coverage will be more limited than originally planned.

The panel welcomed the decision but queried the decision-making process, to which Claire provided clarification that the Force did not initially state that they could provide the service, which they are now in a position to do.

Vernal Scott delivered a presentation to the Panel on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), which will be circulated to the Panel. Panel members were assured by Vernal's updates that EDI programmes are carefully considered and intentional in Force.

There was a query from the Panel regarding members visiting the Custody Suite as agreed with Kathleen. Dates were circulated twice and a few members visited. The Chair queried if others could still attend to which the Assurance Officer advised that as two opportunities were provided, the offer could not remain indefinite and that members who have visited should report back to fellow members, this was agreed with Kathleen.

The Custody Sensory Pack (Action 49) was circulated and panel members were welcoming of the range of items included. Panel members requested to visit the suite specifically focusing on the use of the packs and process for individuals who require additionalsupport.

New action – Assurance Officer to arrange an additional visit to custody to understand support for neurodivergent detainees.

5. Gifts and Gratuities

The Panel confirmed that the Gifts and Gratuities register has been taken as read.

6. Papers

The panel started with paper C to avoid running out of time to review this paper.

C. Grooming Gangs

ACC Avery presented the force's response to recommendations arising from Baroness Casey's National Audit on Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

ACC Avery highlighted that Leicestershire Police has a dedicated exploitation team and strong multi-agency arrangements focused on child sexual exploitation and safeguarding. Every missing child incident is recorded separately, allowing patterns and risks to be identified. Around 600-700 historical cases meeting the revised National criteria for group-based offending have been submitted for review through a National Crime Agency-led process. No cases have yet been reopened, pending National feedback. The review process aims to identify missed investigative opportunities and links between offenders and victims across Force boundaries. The Force continues to use National Intelligence systems and databases to identify cross-border offending.

The panel discussed the definitions of group-based offending and Grooming Gangs and cross-border responsibility for investigations and whether Leicester experiences this type of offending, and this was confirmed as a policing priority locally. The panel also discussed the treatment of child sexual exploitation within a serious and organised crime framework, the collection of ethnicity data for Victims and Suspects to improve the National understanding of offending patterns, and how intelligence-led policing could improve safeguarding.

New Action (77): ACC Avery to keep the Panel informed of any Nationally returned cases or significant developments.

B. AI Policy

The Panel reviewed the Force's AI policy and discussed concerns regarding the heavily redacted paper.

ACC Avery highlighted that AI is intended to support, not replace, human decision-making.

Technology is currently used to assist with identifying and categorising indecent images of children through National Databases, however Officer reviews of seized material remains mandatory. Technology is also being used to reduce the time required to review large volumes of digital evidence while retaining human oversight. Facial recognition is used on images however live facial recognition is not currently deployed by Leicestershire Police, although future use is being explored. Any new AI technology must undergo due diligence and the governance and scrutiny processes before deployment as there are operational risks and public concern. AI-assisted tools can be used within the Force (such as co-pilot) and other AI tools are being piloted to support Victim or Witness statement-taking in partnership with the CPS, this will alleviate the Victim having to repeat giving their statement, with extensive quality assurance and auditing before it is submitted. Leicestershire Police are leading this pilot nationally.

The Panel raised concerns within the paper and discussed the potential bias and adverse impacts on LGBTQA+ communities and other protected characteristic groups and the reliance on AI-

generated outputs and the continued responsibility of Officers for all reports and decisions and to take in consideration unconscious bias.

New Action (78) : ACC Avery to review and clarify the Equality Impact Risk Assessment, particularly around potential impacts on LGBTQA+ communities and the mitigating measures.

A. AI Policy

The Panel reviewed the Force's AI Policy and discussed concerns regarding the heavily redacted nature of the accompanying paper. The assurance officer explained that the paper is heavily redacted and therefore hard to comment on, however if the paper was presented and discussed in full the session would need to be closed from public. As the topic is of public interest, a redacted version was provided to allow for discussion and ACC Avery advised that he would be able to provide some additional context that could still be suitable for the public.

No comments with policy directly due to redactions.

B. Supporting Paper on Force use of AI

ACC Avery explained that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is intended to support, rather than replace, human decision-making. However, all outputs continue to require Officer review. Technology is also being used to reduce the time required to review large volumes of digital evidence, while maintaining human oversight throughout the process.

The Panel was informed that facial recognition technology is currently used on images; however, live facial recognition is not deployed by Leicestershire Police at present, although future use is being explored. ACC Avery emphasised that all new AI technologies are subject to due diligence, governance arrangements, and scrutiny processes before deployment, given the associated operational risks and public concerns.

AI-assisted tools, including Microsoft Copilot, are available for internal use. In addition, Leicestershire Police are leading a National Pilot, in partnership with the CPS, exploring AI-supported victim and witness statement-taking. The purpose is to reduce the need for victims to repeat their accounts while ensuring extensive quality assurance, auditing, and Officer oversight before statements are submitted.

The Panel discussed concerns around the potential for bias within AI systems and possible adverse impacts on LGBTQA+ communities and other groups with protected characteristics. Members highlighted the importance of recognising unconscious bias. ACC Avery reaffirmed that Officers remain responsible for all reports, decisions, and outcomes generated with AI assistance.

The Panel sought assurances regarding how risks to different Communities would be identified and managed. Members noted that the expansion of AI across public services, including healthcare, demonstrated that AI adoption was becoming increasingly widespread. While recognising the opportunities presented by AI, the Panel stressed the importance of ongoing scrutiny and due diligence.

Panel members suggested that a review be brought back in 12 months to evaluate operational and corporate uses of AI, including the impact of the policy across three key areas: organisational and corporate use; operational use and individual/decision support and process improvement functions.

Nikki also highlighted the need to consider public understanding of AI and how information is communicated to diverse audiences, including: people with learning disabilities; individuals with different learning needs, People living with mental health conditions who may have concerns about surveillance and AI technology; and children and young people.

Nikki further suggested developing accessible information, including an Easy Read guide, explaining how the Police use AI in investigations, reviews, and report writing. They also encouraged collaborative work with Community Mental Health Teams and Healthcare providers to help build public understanding and confidence in the responsible use of AI which was welcomed by ACC Avery.

New action (79): ACC Avery to explore developing accessibility for publishing of AI usage in Force.

ACC Avery acknowledged that AI use had largely been internally focused to date, but that the Force was now moving towards greater public engagement and consultation to increase public confidence and understanding.

Questions were raised regarding data security. The Panel were advised that all AI systems are subject to cyber assurance and digital security processes aligned with national frameworks. Using Microsoft Copilot as an example, ACC Avery stated that security arrangements are as robust as possible within those frameworks.

In response to a query regarding recruitment, the Panel was advised that AI is not currently used within vetting or vetting checks.

The OPCC confirmed that, as it operates on the same systems as the Force, it is subject to the same policies and controls. Members were reassured that the final safeguard remains with the individual Officer or staff member responsible for reviewing and approving reports. By signing off documents, staff confirm compliance with all relevant policies, including the AI Policy, and remain accountable for the content. Any failure to comply with policy requirements would be dealt with through appropriate conduct and disciplinary procedures.

The Panel also discussed public concerns regarding personal information and the use of AI systems. Questions were raised about whether individuals understand how their information is used and whether information entered into AI systems could remain permanently accessible. It was explained that, where AI is used operationally, outputs remain within core policing systems. Consent is not routinely sought for operational information where a policing purpose exists; however, all relevant procedures and data protection requirements are followed when personal data is stored and processed.

D. AOB

The Ethics and Transparency Panel Annual Report is due by 20 November 2026.

New action (80): Clare and Kathleen will prepare the report and incorporate feedback from other panels before submission to the OPCC.

E. Actions:

Action No 56 – The summary was redacted. Clare to provide Summary of update from Nicole, to circulate and add to December agenda.

Action No 72 – Nothing to note.

Action No 80: – Update the Terms of Reference based on outcome of scrutiny audit anticipated in November 2026.

Action 76 - A query from the Panel from the Pre-meet regarding Rape Review Panels and if these were taking place. This was an item discussed last November at the team away day and Louise and Kathleen had suggested sitting on these panels as ETP were not represented. Claire Trewartha advised she would review with Lizzie and provide an update via assurance officer. Claire to take away, to look at what was discussed at the Away day and bring back to the panel.

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