

Digital Business Strategy 2023-2026



Cheshire
Constabulary

Foreword

Cheshire Constabulary have a history of being at the forefront of embracing Digital technology to support and enable the delivery of first-class policing services for the public of Cheshire. Digital Business needs to support front line operational policing and this strategy ensures that a joined up approach is in place from identification of a problem through to implementation, using subject matter and technical expertise.

This strategy recognises the changing face of public sector funding, and the mechanisms by which our financial strategies must be amended to adapt to our need to utilise capabilities from global, national, and local organisations to deliver our vision. Working in partnership with other law enforcement agencies and strategic delivery partners will be key to delivery.

My vision is to be the best police force in the country, and in this strategy, I will set out how Cheshire will pave the way in policing, by becoming a digital organisation that creates a hostile environment for criminals by equipping our Constabulary with the digital capabilities that protects the public making our communities even safer.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Roberts'.

Mark Roberts QPM
Chief Constable

Introduction

The Digital landscape is the fastest growing area within UK Policing and making our digital services accessible to the public is critical for the long-term stability of public confidence. New technologies can provide significant societal and policing benefits. Our aim is to enable and support new ways of working through the introduction of new technology, which will drive even greater efficiencies in our services.

Cheshire Constabulary puts digital at the heart of both its Digital Business and IT Strategies. The organisation has consolidated all Digital Business and Technical Resources into a single function with a single governance structure, key to which is regular dialogue with the Senior Command Team and operational leads across the organisation.

New initiatives are aligned with respective Chief Officer portfolios, which in themselves align with the Police and Crime Commissioners objectives. A key link is to the force IT strategy and whereas that concentrates on ensuring there is a fit-for-purpose, secure and up-to-date technology base, this strategy focuses on delivering and improving digital business outcomes.

As well as local priorities, Cheshire Constabulary takes account of regional and national initiatives linking to the NPCC vision for 2025 and the National Policing Digital Strategy 2020-2030. [National-Policing-Digital-Strategy-2020-2030.pdf \(pds.police.uk\)](#) The organisation is also cognisant of the work coming from the National Police Technology Council and the Chief Scientific Advisor to Policing. The latter being particularly important for initiatives such as Artificial Intelligence and Facial Recognition.

The outcomes outlined within this document will not come at the expense of information security, data protection and privacy rights – our approach to digital business will bring security and innovation together to create true trust and data integrity and confidence.

Governance and Outcomes

Police and Crime Commissioner's Strategic Objectives

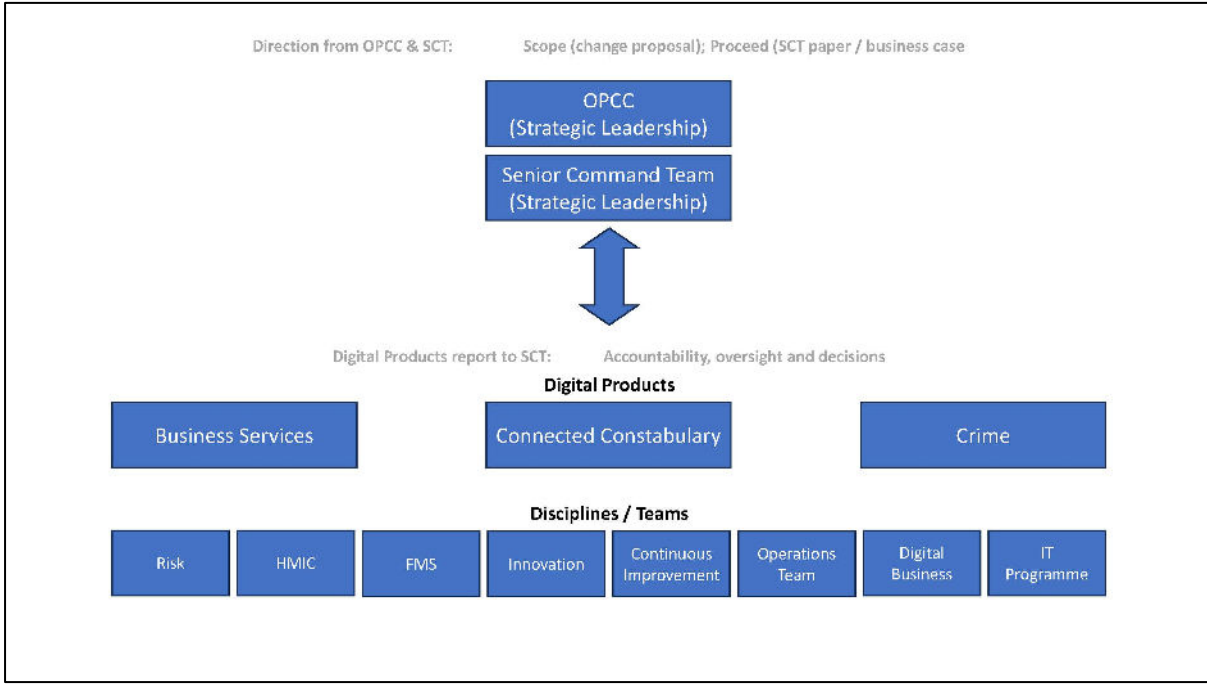
The following outlines the PCC's objectives, to which all digital business will align.



Digital Business Governance

The governance framework for managing digital business is shown below:

Digital Delivery Model



Successes, Benefits and Future Technology

Continue to Lead as a Pioneer Force

Cheshire have worked with several national teams to act as a lead force in several areas, notably LEADS Vehicles and Drivers. In addition, for LEADS Cheshire have worked to provide security assurance against the system, embedding a Home Office team on-site.

We trialled officer initiated facial recognition working to test the technology against a large pool of images providing access to officers at the roadside. Continuing this we have now been selected as a pioneer force for a new national initiative utilising PND and a much wider set of images.

Our Digital Forensic teams are part of a national trial on streamlining recovery of data from devices, such as mobile phones as well as improving the end-to-end digital forensics process.

Benefits

A new digital evidence management system has been implemented leading to a more efficient process for the upload, management and submission of digital media evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service.

The team are leading the expansion and use of the system for local and national businesses to register their CCTV cameras for upload of media files via our Community Portal.

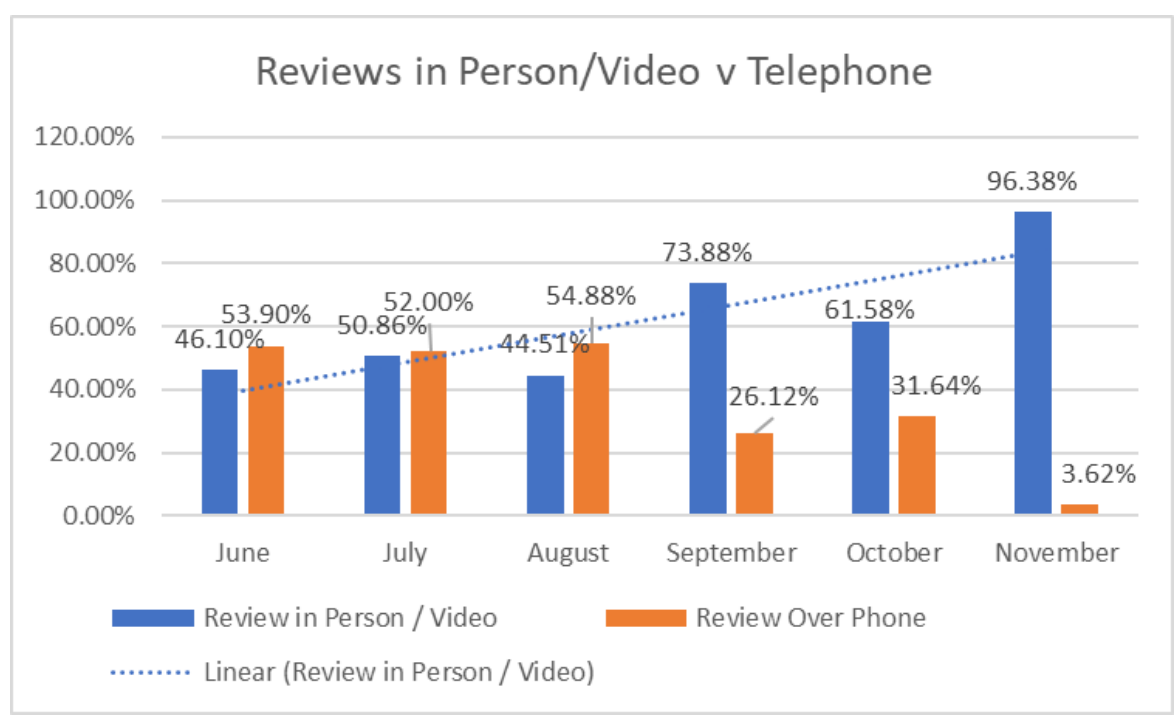
Over the next 18 months we will continue to deliver media upload capabilities to the general public (files from dashcams, video doorbell technology) which will support high risk/impact investigations, operational campaigns and intelligence gathering.

Our aim is to maximise the investment in this technology and improve the service we deliver to the public; by working closely with Forensics we are improving processes and technology to reduce turnaround times between upload and submission of media to identification of offences/offenders using Facial Recognition technology. We are also exploring using the upload capability to avoid taking victims mobiles phones from them, minimising their distress at the most traumatic time.

The system will also deliver opportunities for Cheshire to consolidate digital media storage and processing, enabling increased value for money for ongoing management of media storage.

Several applications to aid officers' performance and improve data quality have been released. This includes improved Stop Search, Vulnerable Person Application, and Custody Inspector Review Apps. Development is completed by our in-house team, in conjunction with frontline operational staff and tailored to support officer experience.

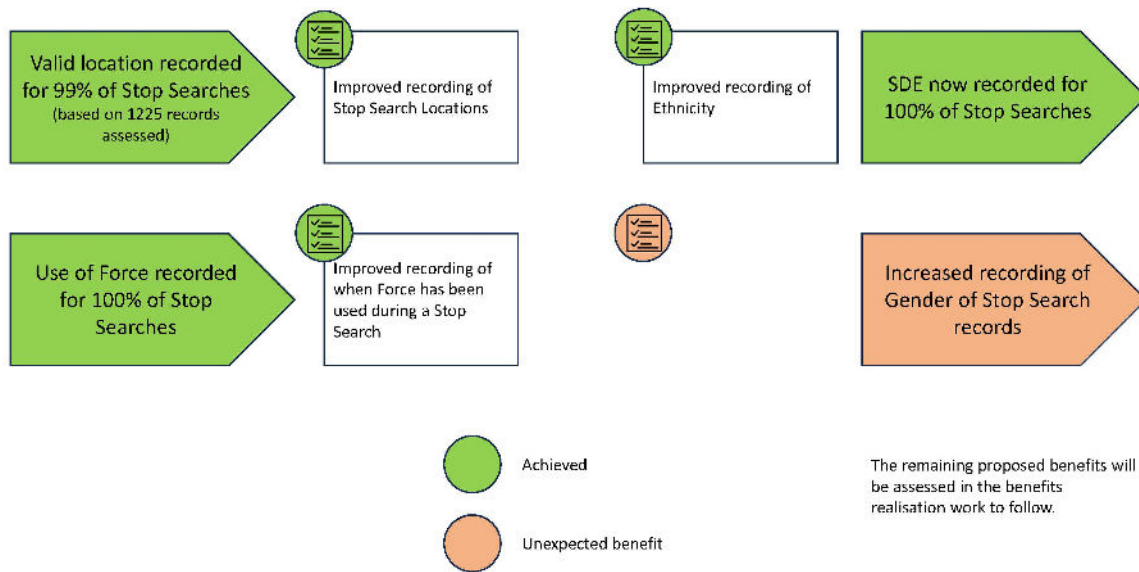
The tablet-based Custody Inspector Reviews have made an immediate difference with the following graph clearly showing a shift from phone to in-person/tablet, plus an overall increase in reviews overall:



The Inspector commissioning the new App highlighted the following benefits:

- Good clear connection to the detainee.
- Provides more personable interactions and service to our detainees.
- Provide easier access to the custody suites as a supervisor.
- Improves our service in line with HMIC and Legislation expectations.

The updated Stop and Search App provided the following:



Automation has been successfully implemented locally and as part of the Niche West Coast Collaboration to reduce poor data quality. The slide below is an extract from a recent review taken highlighting the benefits up to October 2023.

**AUTOMATION
BENEFITS &
INVESTMENT
TO DATE
OCTOBER 2023**



West Coast Collaboration
Working together and sharing information to keep our communities safe

Delivered automation benefits:

- Automations – Address Deduplication, Criminal Justice (CM02) and Reporting
- Staff cost avoidance **£506,763** (equates to 12,280 hours) to Oct 2023
- Manual tasks now automated 207,722
- Business data providing performance insights to Criminal Justice
- Reduction in repeat errors, by informing officers
- Actioning CPS tasks reduced from 48 hours to actioned in 6 hours

Investment to date - £475,368

The technology for automation is now mature and embedded within the organisation. As part of Continuous Service Improvement we will take further processes and work to automate, realising further benefits.

GoodSAM, introduced first to the Force Communications Centre and then to our Firearms Licencing Team, is an initiative utilising different contact channels. Benefits included reduction in grade 1 response times and the reduced need for specialist resources. Within Firearms licensing, when used as part of the renewals process, there has been increased enforcement, and reduced travelling costs with many non-compliance issues followed up without the need for attendance.

As part of Cheshire Police's focus on our response to child protection, vulnerability and safeguarding, a training plan was delivered for all police officers and front-line staff on child protection with a focus on voice of the child, neglect, vulnerable person assessment (VPA), missing from home and police powers (PPO). A key part of the delivery of these sessions was the use of VR headsets. These headsets contained relevant material around Neglect and Safeguarding to provide an immersive experience.

On a non-operational basis, we have also assisted and introduced solutions for our volunteers. The history of our organisation is very important to us, and our dedicated Museum volunteers have been supported with the provision of equipment and a new system to manage the wide variety of exhibits and information they now manage. This links directly to our support and mentoring of new police officer recruits, who visit the museum as part of their cultural induction to Cheshire Constabulary.

Future Tech

The organisation has a strong track record of leading on technology and this will continue. We were the first force to take 999 emergency calls via digital telephony; first to adopt a new hybrid software driven Force Communication System using the Saab platform; first globally to have wholesale adoption of next generation Airwave radios.

We will continue to monitor the landscape and just as we couldn't ignore the adoption and shift to cloud, that is equally the case with the likes of artificial intelligence and live facial recognition. Any introduction of technology such as this it must be cost effective, deliver benefits, and fit within our privacy and security framework. We will work with the Chief Scientific Advisor to Policing and take opportunities to use the STAR bid process, where possible.

The three chief officer portfolio digital boards monitor progress, develop initiatives and champion the adoption of digital business solutions across the Constabulary, with some examples for future investment and development highlighted in the section below.

Business Services

The vision and mission of Business Services is to ensure the smooth running of the frontline. This includes ensuring fit-for-purpose resources, including IT, Estates and Vehicles, as well as maintaining back-office support systems that make possible resource planning, recording of officer skills/training, recruitment, payroll, and uniform/kit supply, to name but a few.

Business Services brings together several different systems and integrations which greatly enhance the information available to the frontline, whilst supporting initiatives, such as the national Police Uplift Programme. Notable successes include replacement of our Enterprise Resource Planning tool with Unit4 and upgrades/integrations with our Duty Management System to better support operational deployment.

Priorities

Following on from the successful implementation of a replacement Enterprise and Resource Planning system **Unit4**, work will continue to review and improve processes used by Business Services to support the frontline more effectively. A continuous improvement programme will be implemented to ensure that the product continues to meet the needs of those who use it. This will include implementing a new Unit4 mobile application, but also enhancing the links into other core business systems, such as those used for vetting and duty management (DMS).

Planning will commence to move the Unit4 platform from our private cloud to Unit4's own SaaS (Software-as-a-Service) offering following the company's decision to cease support on any other variants, as well as aligning with our own cloud-first approach.

Following the Duty Management System (**DMS**) upgrade, which provided better data analytical capability, work will continue to make a greater set of information available from additional systems through the integrations we have in place, including **Oleeo**, **Corevet** and **Saab**. This will provide the frontline a greater pool of data to make informed decisions.

Vehicle Telematics is already implemented across the fleet helping ensure that we are making the best use of the vehicles we have, with examples of Fleet management that has delivered efficiencies and improved access to vehicles for frontline staff. On a wider basis, vehicle telematics is already being used by individual departments to help manage and monitor resources. As an example, telematics in the IT department vehicles helps provide visibility of technicians across the county, measuring time on-site, providing data back to Chief Officers.

We have completed several refits within our buildings, including working with local partners in shared locations, including supporting food banks. As part of our **Estates** Strategy we will continue to invest in our buildings and plan to replace several of our buildings over the next

few years with modern and sustainable designs in locations allowing for optimum response to members of the public.

Outcomes

- Unit4 will be moved to a SaaS (Software as a Service) platform that will be continued to be supported for many years to come.
- Enhanced data analytic capabilities with improved integrations between back office systems allowing more information to be available to the frontline.
- Replace Wilmslow and Crewe Police Stations with modern and sustainable buildings.

Connected Constabulary

The vision and mission for Connected Constabulary is to enhance and extend the digital capability to create a police force that feels enabled, empowered, and supported to protect and serve our local communities.

This enables the delivery of a service to the public and maintaining communication. It keeps vital information flowing, overcome process and system inefficiencies and provide our Constabulary access to information to ensure we are “connected”.

Priorities

Cheshire was the first force in the UK to implement the **Saab SAFE** Force Control Room Solution and it remains core in responding to members of the public. Key priorities for the SAFE product will be moving the telephony platform away from Skype to a bespoke system. Other additions will include Geofenced patrolling, automated calculations for estimated time of arrival at incidents, and implementing ability for public to respond directly to logged incidents via e-mail.

Now that **NICE Investigate** has been successfully implemented, use of the system will be expanded further. Emphasis will be put on the public portal and streamlining how businesses submit CCTV material. This work will link to a joint initiative by the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner to engage with businesses to help reduce crime.

The organisation will concentrate on further embedding retrospective **Facial Recognition**. This will expand the existing process of checking against the Police National Database with the aim of using a more powerful matching system, against a greater pool of images.

Expanding on the pioneer work already undertaken, **LEDS (Law Enforcement Data Service)** will be made available to more officers and staff across the organisation on as many platforms as possible. Rollout will provide a more efficient enquiry process and opportunity to detain suspects quicker.

Currently there is limited access to Interpol information, relying on checks being carried out in Custody or requesting over-the-air checks from the Force Control Room. A new platform integrating with **iLeap** will be implemented on all officers' mobile devices giving them access to information wherever they require it.

Making the best use of officer and staff time as well as improving data quality will be a key focus of our **Automation**. Inefficient processes will be identified, and where appropriate Automation used to reduce double-keying. As a leading force in this space we will also engage with the national automation initiatives, sharing ideas and accelerating development.

An evaluation of **DyTask Patrol Planning** will be completed allowing the organisation to make an informed decision as to the success of the technology and whether there is a need to feed into the financial planning process for wider expansion.

Developing internal apps to support front line officers will continue and following on from an updated Stop/Search app, a new way to record **Vehicle Stops** app will be released. This will be incorporated into another internally developed system (Electronic Pocket Notebook).

Our Central Ticket Office will seek to enhance its public facing capability with the introduction of a new **Digital Citizen Portal** allowing enhanced self-service from members of the public.

Outcomes

- Enhanced business crime reporting through single portal and more efficient uploading of material.
- Cheshire will continue to be a leader in facial recognition technology and will work collaboratively to develop a viable national product.
- Promote the use of LEDS and make available to as many staff who will need it and migrate from using legacy access routes to PNC.
- Through iLeap Interpol data will be available for searching in real time through an app on an officer's mobile phones removing the reliance on the control room or custody for checks.
- Introduce Vehicle Stops via the Electronic Pocket Notebook (EPNB)

Crime

The vision and mission for this digital product board is to enhance and extend the digital capability to create a police force that enables all investigative opportunities to be considered in a thorough and timely way; sufficient information is made available to act upon and that processes are in place so victims feel they are being listened to and a high level of service is being provided. This product will also manage enhancements to systems allowing for more effective decision making around threats, including serious and organised crime, linking with our partners, where appropriate.

Priorities

There are several legacy reporting tools currently used which need decommissioning. Reports and dashboards will be migrated to PowerBI providing **Enhanced Business Reporting** that meets the needs of senior officers and front line staff. This will make use of the most appropriate tools, such as PowerBI or our replacement data warehouse, and improve our information and management of demand and performance.

Within the **Forensics** business area there is currently a reliance on several legacy forensics tools. The continued use of these is incompatible with an efficient way of working. An initiative has launched that will see a wholesale review of all Forensics products, and implementation of improved solutions. It also includes a new digital capability with the rollout of **Footwear Scanners**. These are being installed at all custody suits to help improve investigations. They replace the current Bigfoot paper based solution and make the process of collecting evidence much quick and easier.

The North West is the lead region on implementing **SSAS** (Surveillance Situational Awareness System) used by Serious and Organised Crime Teams and Firearms. This will bring greater situational awareness and allow better visibility of resources on the ground.

Work with partner agencies to improve threat management for **organised crime groups** in the North West. This will see the review of current processes and introduction of a new system that all North West forces will have access to allowing for improved data sharing.

Nationally, there is a move towards a common **Digital Case File**, linking directly with case management systems and we will work with partners within the Niche West Coast Collaboration to plan and implement.

A project has been initiated for **Missing Persons** which will enable the streamlining of the Missing Persons process and use of new technology. This will enable our internal staff to focus on value-add activities, align to HMIC recommendations and allow us to better serve the public.

Redaction is a key requirement, something identified via the Productivity Review, and we already extensively use Adobe products purchased via the national agreement, however, this remains largely a manual process. As an organisation we will review the opportunities to automate, saving resource time, through newer tools that are now available.

Digital Fingerprint Capability (DFC) functionality provided by Fingerprint Exchange is a solution developed by Police Digital Services (PDS) which provides an end-to-end process for fingerprint submissions from crime scene through to identification is currently being rolled out to forces that have submitted notice to onboard. This is currently in assessment stage to explore this solution to provide a more efficient and effective process for fingerprint submissions.

Outcomes

- Completed migration of reports and dashboards from legacy reporting tools allowing decommissioning and removal of old data warehouse from infrastructure.
- A full review of Forensics business area with a costed plan to implement replacement solutions, making best use of existing technology we have available.
- Delivery of an enhanced capability to manage missing persons enabling value-add activities.
- SSAS will be successfully implemented in conjunction with North West region partners allowing better visibility of operational resources on the ground.
- A review of automated Redaction Tools will take place with options presented to Chief Officers for review.
- Work with North West Regional Organised Crime Unit to implement data sharing platform to manage OCG's more effectively.
- Keep a watching brief on Digital Case File and implement when appropriate.

Digital and IT Investment Plans

The IT department maintain a financial forecast covering at least the next 5 years. This shows key investment points for initiatives, but also outlines expenditure required to maintain infrastructure and end user equipment. This allows for better long-term financial planning, feeding into the force medium term financial strategy, as well as the annual Priority Based Budgeting process. 3 year snapshot shown below (all expenditure subject to PCC approval):

Investment Plan Snapshot – 2024/25 – 2026/27

Front line equipment

2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Digital Interview Recorders £230K		
Body Worn Video Camera Replacement £850K		
End User Devices (Tablets/Laptops/Desktops) £1.08M per annum		
Force Control Room Terminals £310K		Teams Room Device Replacement £100K

Infrastructure

2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Corporate WiFi Upgrade £100K		
Infrastructure (Servers etc.) £200K	Infrastructure (Servers etc.) £225K	Infrastructure (Servers etc.) £250K
	Storage infrastructure Replacement £700K	
	WAN Infrastructure Upgrades £500K	
	Virtual Infrastructure Upgrades £800K	Firewall Upgrades £100K

Digital Business

2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Automation 106K per annum (plus inflation)	
	Unit4 move to SaaS (scoping underway)	
Patrol Planning (evaluation underway)		

Continuous Service Improvement

Once an initiative/system is live within the organisation then opportunities will be taken to enhance further and provide as much benefit as possible. Opportunities can be identified via any of the different disciplines/teams shown in the Governance section. Many will be treated as business-as-usual, whereas others may need additional resourcing, in which case they can be fed into the appropriate digital product board.

Niche is a key service used locally within Cheshire and as part of the West Coast Collaboration. To ensure sufficient input from the organisation, a dedicated **Niche Working Group** has been established, chaired by the same business lead who sits on WCC Management Boards.

Automation (or **Robotic Process Automation**) is firmly embedded in the organisation having used Blue Prism and working with a partner to develop processes for several years. Several processes are live locally and Cheshire host the infrastructure for automation integrated into the Niche West Coast Collaboration platform. The latter has been highlighted as part of the National Police Productivity Review as being good practice.

Microsoft 365 is now well embedded within the organisation and gives opportunities for enhancing business. We will look to unlock capability within the toolset, where appropriate, and ensuring the correct governance is in place. This is already happening with proof-of-concepts taking place with PowerApps, and understanding how we can use new functionality to replace legacy ways of working.

The use of **GoodSAM** will be further considered and potentially expanded in the areas of Domestic Abuse, Sex Offender Management, Forensics, CCTV retrieval and SOCU.

The Continuous Service Improvement team will work pro-actively with the three digital product boards to seek opportunities for digital enhancement of our activities to support and improve policing outcomes, and updates provided regularly to the Chief Officer Team.

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