

## Minutes of the Joint Audit Advisory Committee Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – Part 1

### **Present:**

Phil Bearpark [Chair]  
Jean Gleave [JAAC Member]

David Gilbert [Vice Chair]  
Tony Snape [JAAC Member]

#### Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

John Dwyer, Police & Crime Commissioner  
Damon Taylor, OPCC Chief Executive

David McNeilage, Dep. Police & Crime Commissioner  
Clare Hodgson, OPCC Chief Finance Officer

#### Cheshire Constabulary

Mark Roberts, Chief Constable  
Wendy Bebbington, Head of Finance  
Jerry Faulkner, Chief Accountant

Julie Gill, Assistant Chief Officer  
David Bryan, Head of Legal Services  
Paul Woods, Head of Planning and Performance

#### Internal Audit

Anne-Marie Harrop (MIAA)

#### External Audit

Liz Luddington (Grant Thornton)

**Apologies:** Michael Green, Director (Grant Thornton)

### **Part 1 - Public Items**

#### **1. Minutes of the Joint Audit Advisory Committee**

The Minutes of the Joint Audit Advisory Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022 were discussed and approved. The JAAC chair thanked LC for the new format minutes which the Committee were really pleased with.

#### **2. Action Log – Reviewed by The Chair**

#### **3. Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable Updates**

##### **Police and Crime Commissioner**

###### GoodSAM

This has been installed in the FCC, as reported previously to the Committee, we are the first force to use this technology.

###### Additional Police Officers and Staff Recruitment

This is going well and we are on track to meet our target by the end of December 2022, which is 3 months prior to the end of the financial year.

###### 101

Vast improvement between Q1 2021 and Q1 2022 on abandoned calls and average answer times.

###### Online Child Abuse Investigation Team

Over the past 4 years it is estimated that viewing indecent images of children online has risen by 400%. The National Crime Agency have estimated that there are 700,000 active paedophiles on the internet in this country, which highlights the need for policing to be active online as well as visual policing on the streets. The 10 Detective team has now risen to 46 to enable the team to focus on this issue and safeguard and protect vulnerable children.

###### Road Safety

A competitive procurement process on average speed camera enforcement system has concluded and there is a preferred supplier. It is hoped the installation of these cameras will be in the next few months. Decision made to pilot the innovative use of an acoustic camera; Cheshire East Council have approved this 3 month pilot.

### Community Action Fund

The fund is now re-opened; this fund makes £100,000 available each year for projects that benefit local communities by working towards improving the safety of individuals in the area (in particular crime and anti-social behaviour). Applications for up to £5,000 can be submitted up until the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

### 999 British Sign Language

The 999 British Sign Language tool is now in place which allows individuals who are deaf to use 999 in their first language by linking them to an interpreter who passes the message to the Force Control Centre. This is being looked at for the 101 service also.

### Thin Blue Paw Awards

One of our dog handlers, PC McDonough, and Police Dog Toro, have received national recognition for their work, by winning The Crime Fighting Duo Award, at a presentation ceremony hosted by the Thin Blue Paw Foundation.

### Statement of Accounts

A discussion was held around the national issue of audit valuations of assets and pension fund figures. **Liz Luddington and Wendy Bebbington** explained why this process must be adhered to. Questions were taken and answered from the attendees.

**ACTION – Draft joint letter to be prepared to for the Commissioner and Chief to view. Clare Hodgson**

### Chief Constable

#### Current Dashboard Figures

The Chief Constable went through the positive upward trajectory on call response times. Since the commencement of the current Command Team and The Commissioner taking post the number of outstanding crimes have dropped from over 22,000 to 11,500/12,000 crimes.

Positive outcomes for rape and sexual offences. Cheshire are at the top of the table.

Charge and outcome rates for Domestic Abuse, Cheshire are nationally leading.

Overall outcomes in identifying offenders and bringing them to justice has risen from 8% to 18%.

Organisational – we are being responsive to the change in the current financial position.

#### Op London Bridge

Cheshire Officers were a significant contributor to this event with over 100 officers in London, including two protection officers within Westminster Abbey. Very positive feedback from the Met Bronze Commander regarding our officers and how they conducted themselves. Correspondence also received from a member of the public in relation to the help he had received.

Proclamation of the King – Feedback from the public was very positive at this event with officers praised for their smartness and friendliness. Members of the public wanted to interact with them.

## **Part 1 - Public Items – For Advice**

### **4. Statement of Accounts 2021/2022**

**Wendy Bebbington** stated that the Audit had been largely completed and wanted to thank Liz Luddington and Jerry Faulkner and their teams for their assistance in reaching this point. No significant changes or items to bring to the attention of the Committee as the figures are as those reported in July. Phil Bearpark confirmed the Committee did not have any questions and passed on their thanks for getting the Accounts to this stage at this time of year.

### **5. Annual Governance Statement**

**Clare Hodgson** thanked Jean Gleave for her help with the updated document. **Jean Gleave** noted that DCC Armitt's name had been used in the document rather than his role as with all others.

**ACTION – Annual Governance Statement to be amended. Clare Hodgson**

### **6. External Audit**

**Liz Luddington** thanked all involved for a very 'clean' set of accounts and gave an update in relation to the external Audit.

The audit of financial statements is substantially complete and subject to outstanding queries being resolved, it is expected that an unqualified audit opinion will be issued for the PCC and Chief Constable.

Assurances from the Cheshire Pension Fund Auditor is outstanding, which affects all authorities in Cheshire, therefore, nobody is able to sign off paperwork until this is received.

A discussion took place on the actions from the previous year. **The Commissioner** asked whether the follow up on actions from the previous year which were addressed through management responses

could be highlighted in a different way to avoid a 'cross' each year on the accounts, which could be interpreted differently by people viewing the accounts.

**ACTION – Cross to be changed to another symbol for follow up actions already discussed. Grant Thornton**

**David Gilbert** asked for confirmation that if there were any changes to the Outstanding Pension Valuation that it would not alter the accounts. **Liz Luddington** confirmed that this would not impact the bottom line.

**The Chair** thanked the Constabulary and Grant Thornton for an excellent audit and asked the Committee for their agreement that once the pension information was received to advise the Commissioner and the Chief to sign off the document.

**Tony Snape** requested that an email be sent to the Committee when the pension information has been received.

**ACTION – Email to be sent once outstanding Pension Valuation information received. Liz Luddington**

**Clare Hodgson** thanked Wendy Bebbington and Liz Luddington and their teams for the excellent work they have carried out to enable us to get to the point we are now.

## 7. JAAC Forward Plan Review

**The Chair** confirmed details of the Forward Plan.

### Part 1 - Public Items – For Information

## 8. Internal Audit Plan

**Anne-Marie Harrop** gave an update in relation to the Internal Audit Plan. It was confirmed that there have been no changes to the audit plan and timescales for audits remain on target.

**Jean Gleave** noted that on Page 35 there were references to the NHS and requested if this could be updated.

**ACTION – NHS reference to be amended on the NFI Briefing Report. Anne-Marie Harrop**

## 9. Service Assurance Plan

**Paul Woods** provided an update on the Service Assurance Plan. **The Chair** commented on the usefulness of this document, especially as the information is so up to date within it.

## 10. Any Other Business

**The Chair** discussed the recruitment process and timeline for Committee members. **Clare Hodgson** confirmed that she will bring a timeline to the next meeting. **The Chair** requested a more involved role in the recruitment process going forward. **The Commissioner** and **Chief Constable** agreed to this inclusion. **The Chair** also explored the possibility of recruiting an extra Committee member if there were two applicants of a high calibre. The PCC agreed this possibility will be considered subject to candidate suitability.