

Minutes of the Joint Audit Advisory Committee Meeting 28th July 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

Ali Ross, Chief Superintendent
Wendy Bebbington, Head of Finance
Jerry Faulkner, Chief Accountant
Louise Willis, Planning, Performance & Risk Mgr.

Julie Gill, Assistant Chief Officer
David Bryan, Head of Legal Services
Stuart Rogers, Chief Information Security Officer (part)
Paul Woods, Head of Planning and Performance

Internal Audit

Charles Black, Principal Auditor (MIAA)

External Audit

Michael Green, Director (Grant Thornton)

Liz Luddington (Grant Thornton)

Apologies: Mark Roberts, Chief Constable Anne-Marie Harrop (M.I.A.A)

Part 1 - Public Items [Information/Discussion]

1. Minutes of the Joint Audit Advisory Committee

The Minutes of the Joint Audit Advisory Committee held on 2nd March 2022 were discussed. The Chief Constable has asked for an amendment in point 3.10 of the previous Minutes providing the latest figure in relation to Police Officer numbers which is 2,347. The Minutes from the last meeting will be amended accordingly.

ACTION: Minute Taker to ensure the Minutes from the last meeting are amended. [012]

The Chair commented on the previous Minutes thanking the Minute Taker for the speed of distribution and concise nature of the content. **Damon Taylor** requested that Minutes be trimmed down going forward, this was confirmed as the general consensus of the panel.

ACTION: Minute Taker to ensure content is more summarised. [013]

2. Action Log – Reviewed by The Chair

- JAAC Terms of Reference – Planned for November meeting.
- Meeting to be set up with External Auditors – now completed. A further meeting with the Internal Auditors is set for September 2022.

3. Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable Updates

Police and Crime Commissioner

Safer Streets

From May 2021 to April 2022 the OPCC have gleaned £4m of support from the Government for Safer Streets. This year from April to date we have secured a further £5m, to be spread over 3 years.

Average Speed Cameras

Out to procurement at the moment for three pilot sites for later this year.

Four sites also identified by local authorities on major roads, three for installing average speed cameras and one for a traffic light camera.

Estates

Plans to dispose of older buildings and replace with new, more efficient ones.

Fleet

Questions around do we go Hybrid, fully electric or do we wait and look at hydrogen? Looking at all options at the moment.

Chief Constable (update provided by Chief Superintendent Ross)

Administrative

T/ACC Dutton and Jennings are going on Senior Command Course, therefore, during September to December T/ACC Welsted is covering T/ACC Dutton and DCS Lees is covering T/ACC Jennings.

Page Refresh

Chief Constable's Plan on a Page (PoAP) to be refreshed

ACTION: Copy of the PoAP Refresh to be sent to JAAC Members – CS Ali Ross [014]

HMICFRS

The PEEL inspection was published in July. Force delivery plan in place and on track with some really positive results around rape, murder, arrests and especially 999 calls answered in 10 seconds which have moved us to 7th in the country from 29th.

Covid – Op Panda

Gold meetings have now been stood down from 25th July 2022.

We have won a National Award in regard to our response to Covid.

Sickness levels are down for Officers and staff

Pledge Events

Inspectors pledge and Sergeants pledge now completed and being rolled out.

Operational Updates

Operation Crossbow - Joint border operation with GMP – 12th July 2022. Plan to do these quarterly.

Operation Guardian – Public Protection – very positive results.

Operation Aztec – Firearms surrender operation held in May. North-West region hailed as best practice.

Road Safety – Recent jailing of drink driver for 12 years, these convictions are good results.

Hoax Calls – Individual who has made 85 emergency 999 calls within 10 months now has an order in place to prevent this.

The Chair asked if there were any questions for the Commissioner or Chief Superintendent.

Tony Snape asked if the force is happy to help out at the Commonwealth Games. **Superintendent Ross** stated there is huge support for the Games with 58 staff attending.

David Gilburt is pleased to hear the Commissioner's comments around average speed cameras as he feels they do make a difference.

4. Informing the Audit Risk Assessment

The Chair stated this is a really useful document, however, during the pre-discussion meetings the Committee felt some areas needed re-wording.

Page 18 - regarding advice by Committee needs amending.

Page 33 - regarding question 9 and the approval by the Committee, needs amending.

Page 23 - regarding fraud, formal reporting programme. Can this be amended as arrangements in place but no fraud needed to be reported as yet.? Clarification required for the Committee.

ACTION: Amend Audit Risk Assessment as per comments - Liz Luddington [15]

Michael Green stated that these questions are required to be asked around key areas such as fraud, to help them understand how the organisation manages these areas. Therefore, these questions were asked to prompt discussion and open debate around these arrangements to ensure all are aware what is required from them.

The Chair asked if there were any questions around the document. None were raised.

5. Internal Audit - Update provided by Charles Black, Principal Auditor, MIAA

Internal Audit Follow Up Report

Summarises the recommendations that have been raised during 2021/22 and progress against these. Only 2 outstanding. Valid reasons for this and they have revised dates of September and December. Credit to Louise and the team for making sure recommendations are followed and tracked and providing the evidence to show that they are being implemented.

The Chair commented that this is the best follow up report JAAC have seen, well done to Louise and the team.

Estates Strategy Review Final Report

Part of the 2021/22 Audit Plan. Received substantial assurance, only one recommendation raised around implementing an Estates Policy.

Performance Management Review Final Report

Substantial assurance with one medium and two low recommendations.

The Chair stated how positive the report is and wanted to thank everyone involved.

6. HMICFRS Value for Money Profiles - Update provided by Paul Woods

Overview given of the areas covered by himself and the department.

A full explanation given around the Value for Money Profiles including local policing, dealing with the public, intelligence, public protection and estates.

Phil Bearpark asked what the value is rather than the cost? How do we gain perspective against spend? **Paul Woods** explained this is picked up as part of the planning and performance at service levels and nationally through HMRC data sets, where available.

David Gilbert – Asked whether Page 83 of the pack could be checked for missing figures.

ACTION: Ensure all figures are displayed on Page 83 of the pack - Paul Woods [016]

Jean Gleave asked whether there are any gaps around key objectives or areas of concern for Cheshire? **Paul Woods** stated that we are fortunate as a force to be able to compare our historic data and that there is also a programme running at the moment working with Merseyside Police, using data warehouse and analytics.

7. Service Assurance Plan - Update provided by Louise Willis

The two outstanding audits from last year have now been completed.

The Chair thanked Louise and stated what a really useful and helpful document this is.

8. Joint Strategic Risk Register - Update provided by Louise Willis

No queries on this item which is discussed in detail in part 2 of the meeting.

Part 1 - Public Items [Advice]

9. External Audit Plan - Update on Plan provided by Liz Luddington

No questions raised.

10. Head of Internal Audit Opinion and Annual Report - Update provided by Charles Black, Principal Auditor, MIAA

Jean Gleave asked about Section 7 (7.2) of the report regarding Service delivery and outcome measures and whether there were any issues around access to personnel in any areas? Do you receive good cooperation or are there any areas that you have any difficulties in? **Charles Black** stated that there is really good contact with Louise Willis and anything required is chased up quickly and efficiently with no access issues.

David Gilbert stated that the Committee can take a lot of assurance from this plan and wanted to say well done to all involved.

11. **Statement of Accounts – DRAFT - Update on Accounts provided by Wendy Bebbington**

The draft set of accounts are presented today. These will be handed over to the Auditors to start their formal audit process and this will trigger a public notice on the PCC and Constabulary Websites. The final audited accounts will be brought back to JAAC on 30th September (if the new date of November has gone through legislation this date may be put back).

David Gilburt asked if there is an external valuer for pension figures on the Balance Sheet? **Wendy Bebbington** confirmed that Hymans are used for the LGPS for staff and for the Police it is the Government Actuary Department.

Tony Snape asked what the employer's contribution is for the staff pension fund. **Wendy Bebbington** confirmed this is 19.8%.

The next formal valuation for employer is March 2023, this is recognised as a potential risk.

12. **Annual Governance Statement – DRAFT - Update provided by Clare Hodgson**

This is a Joint Statement for the Constabulary and OPCC and includes internal and external governance.

Clare Hodgson thanked Jean Gleave for her input into producing the document.

Jean Gleave had two questions.

1. In relation to the internal audit report, is there anything in particular that the two sets of Auditors feel may be missing? Nothing to highlight from Auditors.
2. Paragraph 3.8 – Will this now be updated that the report has been issued? **Clare Hodgson** confirmed that yes, this information will be fed back.

ACTION: Update AGS for PEEL report – Clare Hodgson [018]

13. **Forward Plan**

The Chair asked if there are any concerns in relation to the Forward Plan. **David Gilburt** flagged that the External Audit Progress Report and Value for Money Report are listed as February 2023, however, they are due September or November. **Clare Hodgson** confirmed that the Value for Money Report is due November 2022.

14. **Any other Business**

The Chair stated that it would be really useful to have David Gilburt meet with a member of the Finance Team in the budget setting to go through the priority-based budget process. **Wendy Bebbington** said she will email a date and time for this to take place.

ACTION: Email with date to be sent to David Gilburt – Wendy Bebbington [019]

The Chair requested that meeting dates be set up for 2023 as soon as possible.

ACTION: Meeting dates to be diarised for 2023 – Clare Hodgson [020]

Duration of meeting: The meeting commenced at 13:00 and finished at 16:00