



Minutes of the Joint Audit Advisory Committee Meeting 30th November 2023 – Part 1

Attendees:

Joint Audit Advisory Committee

Phil Bearpark, JAAC Chair
Jean Gleave, JAAC Member
Elaine Smith, JAAC Member
Paul Birtles, JAAC Member
Dr Vellore Karthikeyan, JAAC Member

Cheshire Constabulary

Julie Gill, Assistant Chief Officer
Wendy Bebbington, Head of Finance
Louise Willis, Planning, Performance & Risk Mgr.
Amy Davies, Senior Management Analyst, Planning and Performance.
Paul Woods, Head of Planning & Performance (Part)

Apologies

Mark Roberts, Chief Constable
Damon Taylor, Chief Executive
David Bryan, Head of Legal Services
Anne-Marie Harrop, Regional Assurance Director (MIAA)
Michael Green, Director, Grant Thornton

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

John Dwyer, Police & Crime Commissioner
David McNeilage, Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner
Clare Hodgson, Chief Finance Officer

Internal Audit

Charles Black, Audit Manager (MIAA)

External Audit

Liz Luddington, Manager, Grant Thornton

Part 1 - Public Items

1. Minutes of the Joint Audit Advisory Committee

The Minutes of the Joint Audit Advisory Committee held on 27th September 2023 were approved.

2. Action Log – Reviewed by The Chair

The two outstanding actions were discussed and approved for closure.

Discussions were held re the new external audit contract, contact details for new auditor and arrangements for future. A new action is to be added to ensure initial contact details are confirmed with Mazars, via PSAA if further details required, and Mazars are invited to future JAAC meetings.

ACTION: Contact to be made with Mazars, initial meeting arranged and JAAC meeting invitations to be sent. To be raised via PSAA if no contact possible by the new calendar year. **CH**

3. Assistant Chief Officer and Police & Crime Commissioner Update

Police and Crime Commissioner

Contractual Information Land at Crewe had been purchased to build a new police station. This is in line with the police and crime plan to update the police estate, as some buildings are not fit for purpose. A contract has also been signed with a builder to enable building to start on a new police station in Wilmslow.

Force Performance. The force is performing extremely well with arrests up and crime figures down.

Budget. Discussions are taking place between the force and the OPCC team in preparation for 2024/25 budget setting. The OPCC will go out physically in January 2024 to consult with the public of Cheshire.

Root and Branch Review of the Constabulary. This is ongoing work to identify any changes that can be made in the future.

Working Together Events. The PCC and the Chief Constable have recently held meetings across the nine LPU's with members of the public invited to attend and ask any questions they may have.

Parish Council Meetings. Several meetings have been held with the local Parish Councils which has given the opportunity to advise the public of all the positive police work being carried out.

Economic Crime Unit. Money has been invested into this unit. We have the power to attain criminals' ill-gotten gains, some of which can be retained and put back into our communities to benefit them.

Assistant Chief Officer

Force Performance. The ACO gave an overview of the force performance across all areas, including the ongoing murder trial for Brianna Ghey, Operation Hummingbird and Christmas Operations.

Part 1 - Public Items – For Advice

4. External Audit Annual Report 2022-23 DRAFT

Liz Luddington presented the draft report and confirmed that at the next JAAC meeting the finalised versions of reports will be available. Recommendations made were discussed.

The Chair stated that as one of the recommendations in relation to Root and Branch encourages JAAC to monitor progress, they felt it should be added to the forward plan.

ACTION: JAAC lead member to be identified by the Chair and progress review to be added to forward plan. **Chair and CH.**

The Chair asked what the OPCC website was stating at the moment in relation to the delay of the accounts. **Wendy Bebbington** confirmed that it states that the accounts will be showing in due course and that the delay is outside of our control as we are awaiting information from external organisations.

5. Internal Audit Charter

Charles Black reported on the Internal Audit Charter. **The Chair** advised that the JAAC had noted a numbering issue and a grammatical error and requested that the report be reissued.

6. JAAC Forward Plan Review

The Chair asked if a Terms of Reference review for JAAC could be added to the Forward Plan.

ACTION: Terms of Reference for review JAAC to be added to the Forward Plan. **CH**

Jean Gleave said that the Counter Corruption Unit have offered to do a presentation at the February 2024 meeting and suggested an ongoing slot for the CCU. **Clare Hodgson and Julie Gill** confirmed that this subject is covered in the Annual Governance Statement and this would provide updated information going forward.

ACTION: Counter Corruption Unit presentation to be added to the forward plan. **CH**

ACTION: External Audit Letter of Representation to be moved to September. **CH**

ACTION: JAAC Effectiveness Review to be added to plan. **CH**

Part 1 - Public Items – For Information

7. Internal Audit

Charles Black gave an update across all areas. Nothing of concern was raised.

8. Medium Term Financial Strategy Mid-Year Update

Wendy Bebbington reported on the mid-year update summary and the financial challenges faced.

9. HMICFRS Value for Money Profiles

Paul Woods reported on HMICFRS Value for Money Profiles and explained comparisons are based on budget not actual spend. **Paul Birtles** asked about the criteria used for the most similar group. **Paul Woods** explained the rationale behind this and the range of factors used. **The Chair** commented that this is a really useful report.

10. Service Assurance Plan

Louise Willis presented the Service Assurance Plan. **Elaine Smith** asked if the initial briefing has been issued for the National Fraud Initiative. **Wendy Bebbington** gave an update.

11. JAAC Annual Report 2022-23

The Chair stated the Cheshire OPCC website is fully up to date with JAAC reports. He said from next year he would like to add a section on the effectiveness of the Committee. **The Commissioner** confirmed that himself and the Chief Constable do welcome the input from the Committee.

12. Any other Business

No other business to discuss.