
JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE (JAC)

**Minutes from public
meeting held on
28 September 2020**

**JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE (JAC)
PUBLIC MINUTES**

Notes of the meeting held on 28th September 2020

Present:

Sue Davis	-	Chair
Richard Hollands	-	Vice Chair
Brendan Connor	-	Board Member
Cath Hannon	-	Board Member
Gurinder Singh Josan	-	Board Member
Neil Chamberlain	-	Director of Commercial Services
Mark Kenyon	-	Chief Finance Officer
Harry Barton	-	Head of Strategy and Direction
Lynn Joyce	-	Head of Internal Audit
Gemma Brookes	-	Principal Auditor
Sean Phillips	-	Detective Superintendent – WMP
Shameem Ahmed	-	Inspector – WMP
Dean Sweet	-	Assistant Director Shared Services
Alex Walling	-	External Audit – Grant Thornton
Emily Maine	-	External Audit – Grant Thornton

Plus a note taker and an observer.

435	Item 1 – Apologies Apologies were received from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vanessa Jardine – Deputy Chief Constable • Jonathan Jardine – Chief Executive (PCC) • Davinder Jagpal – AD Finance (WMP)
436	Item 2 - Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest raised.
437	Item 3 – Minutes of the last meeting The considerations and questions of the previous meeting held on 2 July 2020 were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.
438	Item 4 - Matters Arising It was agreed that the report of VFM profiles will be deferred until such a time there is something to report.
439	Item 5 – Internal Audit Update <i>Presented by Lynn Joyce.</i>

The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and therefore Lynn Joyce highlighted the key points from this report:

- 4 audits have been finalised, with a further 4 in draft.
 - There is 1 audit categorised with minimal assurance and 2 with limited assurance.
 - 30 follow ups have been completed, with a 76% implementation rate. Progress has been impacted by COVID-19.
 - 23% of the plan has been achieved to date - usually it's around 30% at this time. Progress has been impacted by resource availability in the Force at the start of the year.
 - 50% of audits are in progress.
 - 3 audits are reported in Appendix A – Vulnerability, Missing and Training. These have recently been finalised.
 - The Missing report received minimal assurance. The Force asked Internal Audit to revisit this area following a minimal assurance opinion in 2019. HMICFRS have raised interest in the Missing report.
- Gurinder Singh Josan asked if the audit team have any benchmark figures to compare plan achievement against other authorities.

Lynn Joyce responded that we do not have percentages we can compare against at present. However, information detailed on the Institute of Internal Auditors website suggests numerous audit teams are struggling this year along with wider public sector organisations. The National Police Audit Group is meeting in November and I will ask for information in order to gauge our position in comparison to other forces. Recommendations are harder to benchmark as each organisation uses different measurement.

- Richard Hollands highlighted that some risks date back to 2016/2017. If these aren't posing a concern, can WMP accept the risks?

Lynn Joyce discussed with members that if a recommendation is over 18 months old, we could look to transfer the risk back to the Force. The OPCC and the Force would need to accept the amber and red risks rather than closing them off.

- Gurinder Singh Josan asked with the difficulties of the pandemic set to continue, what changes have been made in relation to how audit work is being carried out?

Lynn Joyce explained that audits are now largely undertaken virtually, using screen presentation facilities to review evidence, which can cause issues when multiple systems are involved. As restrictions ease, the Team have more flexibility and can now visit Lloyd House or external sites in order to undertake audit testing. All visits are risk assessed.

- Richard Hollands commented on the plan time scales and resource availability and if this should be reduced further, would moving to more agile planning and possibly having six months plans be considered.

The Chair noted that this is worth considering, and will come back to this in the next meeting.

The 'Missing' Report was circulated in advance of the meeting and therefore Sean Phillips highlighted the key points from this report:

- During the 12 months between the 1st and 2nd audit, work has been completed in collaboration with OPCC, HMICFRS and strategic leads.
- The plan hasn't been delivered to a conclusion yet, but is close to completion.
- 4 HMICFRS recommendations around missing people, supported by the OPCC internal audit action plan.
- Challenges are being delivered to Force Executive Team. The delivery against the plan suggests that crosscutting issues are not specific to Missing and are wider vulnerability issues.
- Response issues are indicative across all reports.

- Escalated 'Missing threat' to a 'Monitoring threat', discussed within the force tactical delivery board every month and tasking meetings every week. A criteria is set against service level agreements – e.g. timings, escalations, daily performance discussions.
 - Auditing is being undertaken monthly now and is bespoke to local departments. Support has therefore increased to allow this work to happen.
 - Vulnerability Gold Group in place that looks at cross-cutting issues across audits.
 - Incorporated into victim service assessment – newer way of auditing just commencing looking at call handling and how we are assessing and monitoring call logs, what services deliver and if on time etc.
 - Interdepartmental working has improved, especially between NPU's and Locate Missing Team.
 - Strategy and Direction have introduced a performance monitoring programme.
 - 10 key points identified in 1st and 2nd audit – 1 is now completed and closed. 7 are close to completion with minor changes needed. 2 are ongoing but require improvement.
- Gurinder Singh Josan noted that the report makes reference to a lot of things being developed but not yet in place and asked for an update on the progress of implementing performance monitoring.

Sean Phillips assured that progress has escalated since the 2nd audit was released. Each NPU now has a 'terms of reference' that highlights their role and responsibilities in Missing. A triage process is in place and a performance monitoring regime has also been completed where staff can use Business insights to look at their own performance and data; evidence of use is needed to ensure these arrangements are embedded rather than it just being a documented progress.

- Gurinder Singh Josan informed that the issue has been raised in the Strategic Policing and Crime Board, as results are minimal. What assurance do we have that these plans are going to be embedded?

Sean Phillips outlined the audit process now focusses on:

- Are the 12 questions being asked in every missing case?
- Is the case graded correctly?
- Are we achieving service level agreement to the grade?
- If not, what can we do better, are we escalating this?
- If we don't get there in time and person returns home, how do we revisit grade, response and safeguard?

The Force are considering alternative ways of improving response, for example whether the case can be investigated over the telephone rather than sending an officer out. The Missing Persons System is also being tested to include additional information. Call handlers need to upgrade records at the first point of call. The Force has its own quality and assurance measures and every month can assess and review its own performance against the audit recommendations

- The Chair enquired if there are certain geographic areas where teams are finding it more difficult to embed the process than others.

Sean Phillips responded that call handling and force contact are at the forefront of everything the Force does. It has been a significant challenge training these staff. The audits progressed have focussed significantly on this.

- Brendan Connor highlighted that one of the concerns is the number of logs which are left open. Do we know day by day how many missing person logs are still open and what the resolution of those are likely to be?

Sean Phillips confirmed that every day, each missing log is reviewed in the Force's Threat, Risk and Harm meetings that take place 3 times per day. The Superintendent's role in that meeting is to allocate

resources to the missing logs. 5 months ago, there were 80-100 missing logs without any resources allocated to them. At present, there is only 15-20, which is a significant improvement given increased demand.

- Brendan Connor added that data is needed to monitor the average length of open logs and the mechanism for closing these on a day by day basis.

Sean Phillips agreed this is data that can be provided to Audit.

- Gurinder Singh Josan thanked Sean Phillips for the detailed discussion, and asked when the committee will receive a follow up report.

The Chair noted that actions must be followed up, however sufficient time must be allowed for changes to happen. The Chair thanked Sean Phillips for his work and determination towards the audit.

Sean Phillips and Gemma Brookes agreed to plan a date for the follow up outside of the meeting.

The Chair invited Dean Sweet to give a progress update on the outstanding recommendations were management follow up was still awaited.

Dean Sweet added that his Team have cleared 70% of recommendations and has forecast within 6-7 weeks the rest will be embedded. This is being treated as a priority.

- Richard Hollands acknowledged reporting and monitoring issues in the vulnerability paper. Did the Audit Team uncover the reason for this?

Lynn Joyce responded that vulnerability has witnessed a change in governance arrangements. New sub groups and new Subject Matter experts not on place and the formality around reporting actions and identifying critical success factors for delivery plans is currently not embedded enough. This will be monitored over next few months. Gemma Brookes is maintaining contact with leads to ensure this is implemented.

440 **Item 6 – Treasury Management Update**
Presented by Mark Kenyon.

The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and therefore Mark Kenyon highlighted the key points from this report:

- The strategy was signed off in March.
- Government borrowing has increased significantly to help revert the economic consequences of the pandemic.
- Base rate is currently 0.1%.
- Treasury Advisors are indicating interest rates will remain at this level till June 2022.
- Gross domestic product has decreased and unemployment is increasing.
- The impact of the pandemic on the economy is significant and investment income has therefore decreased.
- Level of debt has reduced as we have repaid a loan. No additional borrowing has been taken out this financial year.
- The Commissioner is aware we invested 5 million into a property fund. This was suspended earlier in the year. This is a long term investment, and the value is therefore forecast to be recovered.

There were no questions from members.

<p>441</p>	<p>Item 7 – HMICFRS Update <i>Presented by Inspector Shameem Ahmed.</i></p> <p>The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and therefore Shameem Ahmed highlighted the key points from this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been no inspections carried out since the last meeting. • Covid-19 inspections are being undertaken and any national recommendations will be adopted by the Force when published. • Forces were invited to share key documents and complete a self-assessment, which WMP are completing. West Midlands Police was not identified as a Force that needed further inspection. • The second inspection targeted CPS response to rape. There are two phases – the barriers that stop the progression of rape reports up to the decision to charge. HMICFRS are visiting the Force as part of this phase. • HMICFRS have also just announced an inspection on Police Forces management of protests and WMP is one of 6 forces identified in this inspection process. This will be carried out by the end of November with the report published in January 2021. • An annual assessment of policing in England and Wales was published in July. • The West Midlands Road Policing report showed positive results. • HMICFRS are consulting on the PEEL assessment process and are aiming to introduce a 5th category of grading, sitting between the ‘requires improvement’ and ‘good’ category. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">- Brendan Connor asked if there were any negative comments raised about WMP during inspections. When will the next crime recording audit be taking place?</p> <p>Shameem Ahmed responded that no negative comments were made. HMICFRS have now incorporated the crime recording into Victim’s Service Assessments, meaning WMP will receive an inspection at the beginning of the new inspection process.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">- The Chair highlighted that certain Forces are being revisited in terms of their response to COVID and asked whether this was random or selected?</p> <p>Shameem Ahmed confirmed she had some data and that this information will be shared after the meeting.</p>
<p>442</p>	<p>Item 8 – Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy <i>Presented by Mark Kenyon.</i></p> <p>The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and therefore Mark Kenyon highlighted the key points from this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been no change since the previous JAC meeting. • Mark Kenyon consulted Neil Chamberlain and the Professional Standards Department to ensure the policy remains up to date. • An activity progress report is due to be shared with committee members in December. <p>There were no questions on this paper. The minor changes to the policy were noted.</p>
<p>443</p>	<p>Item 9 – Risk Management Update, including Force Risk Register and OPCC Risk Register <i>Presented by Harry Barton.</i></p> <p>The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and therefore Harry Barton highlighted the key points from this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harry Barton is the new Head of Strategy and Direction and has picked up responsibility for the Risk Register. Harry has received updates on various risks which have been taken to the Deputy Chief Constable and Organisational Risk Learning Board.

- Need to rebalance the contents in the Risk Register, for example including trend information and wider COVID related risks.
 - Richard Hollands noted that the trending indicator on the Force Register is really helpful and asked for Harry Barton's thoughts regarding how joined up the registers were in terms of ratings and risk exposures. Richard used the internal audit report on training as an example of how this was fed into the registers.

Harry Barton replied that the representation of the OPCC in the governance meetings contributes to the joined up approach and correlation between the data included within the Risk Register. In terms of what risks need to be included in the Force's risk register, guidance is needed on this which will form part of the wider review being undertaken.

Mark Kenyon added that the OPCC Risk Register highlights developing and modernisation. The OPCC has completed a lot of work around recruitment and efficiency, e.g. uplift programme. The training point and how this links into risk context will be taken on board.

The Chair recognised Richard Hollands for the good observation.

- Cath Hannon raised an observation about the Vulnerability Boards, as there is a definite focus on trying to ascertain where responsibilities lie. The next Strategic Board should clarify this.
- Gurinder Singh Josan asked for clarity on the proposed process of indicating changes to risk ratings over a period of time.

Harry Barton confirmed there is a scoring process that sits behind the scores presented in the register; over time a more precise method of assessment will be introduced. At present, indicating changes is difficult as there is not a way of aggregating and scoring risks that is consistent across the Risk Register. COVID-19 and transformation programmes are examples of this.

- Brendan Connor raised a question that given the risk that Connect and Controlworks maintains under benefits realisation, impact would be huge if we destabilise the key fundamentals that the Force operates on, should we therefore include Controlworks and Connect as a risk that is strategic to the whole force?

Neil Chamberlain responded that the Force has focused on implementing individual systems and project delivery around these. Financially, the Force are over the worst. Connect and Controlworks interface has been trickier to implement than originally forecast. Deliverables seen coming through makes us a lot more comfortable. Risks are being addressed within individual projects, so the feeling is we're in a better place, but are we reporting the risks in their entirety.

Harry Barton added that the 2020 programme on the Risk Register was the first part of the task in the new strategy. The portfolio needs to be assessed as a whole.

- Brendan Connor raised concern that risks are reported in separate projects but they have a multiplier effect, which is a concern. Major risk of Controlworks is what happens when it interfaces with connect.

The Chair asked the Force to consider the multiplier effect of risks going forward.

**444 Item 10 – External Audit – Progress Report and Sector Update
Presented by Emily Mayne.**

The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and therefore Emily Mayne highlighted the key points from this report:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Force were praised for their response to the Team during the pandemic. • The pandemic has presented challenges, and the deadline has therefore extended to the end of November as a result. • Value for Money work is still in progress. Delay is due to the financial planning landscape changes, as income and expenditure are less certain. Meetings with the Force are ongoing. • A risk around COVID-19 hasn't been included in the risk assessment as it only affected 2 weeks of 2019/20, however questions are being considered to ensure consistency. • External events were postponed for committee members due to the Government guidance. • PPE evaluations are still being written. • The Team have met with the Chief Constable and there is a meeting scheduled with the PCC. <p>Neil Chamberlain echoed how the Finance Team have been working remotely and how this has been positive in ways of response. He highlighted that a comprehensive spending review is due to be made in autumn 2020.</p> <p>The Chair praised everyone for adapting successfully to working from home.</p>
445	<p>Item 11 –External Audit Joint Audit Findings Report (Year Ending 31 March 2020) Presented by Alex Walling.</p> <p>The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and therefore Alex Walling highlighted the key points from this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date, nothing of significance needs to be noted by committee members. • Audits are taking longer to complete. The NHS and Local Authorities and Government are examples of this. • The 'Value for Money' work is ongoing and will be reported to the committee at a later date. • The McCloud pension issue continues – waiting for actuary reports. This is likely to cause material amendments to financial statements. • COVID-19 has impacted the evaluation of both land and buildings. Guidance has suggested that an 'Emphasis of Matter' needs to be reported which will ripple through to future plans and accounts. • Alex Walling reiterated thanks to the finance team for their continued hard work whilst working remotely. <p>There were no questions on the report. The Chair thanked Alex for her report.</p>
446	<p>Item 12 – External Audit KPIs</p> <p>A pragmatic decision was taken to remove the requirement for external audit to report on KPIs this year as it was not felt it would add value.</p>
447	<p>Item 13 - JAC Work Programme (For Information)</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and discussion.</p> <p>The public session concluded at 11:11.</p> <p>Date of the next meeting – 7 January 2021 at 13:30pm.</p>