Agenda Item 14a

JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE
25 September 2025

Risk Management Update
(Corporate and departmental high and critical)

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1   To provide members of the committee with oversight of the Corporate and departmental (high and critical) risks for the Chief Constable. The report also provides an update on the developments in the organisational risk processes of the force.

2. **BACKGROUND**

2.1   Following the last Committee meeting, we continue to improve and develop the risk management offer across the force as seen on the continuous improvement deliverables on the PowerPoint slide attached.

2.2   Horizon scanning documents continue to be distributed to all departments monthly, the Risk Team align all potential horizon scanning risks with relevant departments, providing tailored inputs for SLT meetings consideration and scoping within their respective business areas with a view to proactively report on risk. This is then reported through relevant governance across the force.

2.3   To support this initiative further, the Risk Team are now focussing on drafting risks from the Horizon Scanning for business areas to consider and approve.

3. **ORGANISATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT IN WEST MIDLANDS POLICE**

3.1.   In relation to risk management, a summary of our forward plan and activities undertaken over the last quarter are listed below:

3.2.   The Risk Assurance has been signed off and went live at the start of July.

3.3.   The Risk Team have been in the process of conducting assurance reviews on all risks that are requested for closure, all open high and critical risks and those that fall into corporate governance.

3.4.   Additionally, the team is now reviewing risks that were closed six months ago, examining any available data and raising questions with SLT members where appropriate. This process allows the force to assess whether those previously closed risks have led to any further issues and to confirm that the controls implemented at the time are still effective, contributing to significant assurance metrics.

3.5. The Risk Team continue to report into SLT's and Portfolio Governance Boards the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for risk and our monthly assessment of where we are when compared to previous months reporting.

3.6. The team continue to host lunch and learn sessions, which focus on a specific topic within risk management. These sessions are promoted through the monthly risk bulletin, SLT meetings, and Corporate Communications. For those that cannot attend the sessions, the sessions have been recorded and uploaded to SharePoint for people to access as well. The next session on Risk Process and Governance will be hosted in September due to the abstractions expected in August.

3.7. We continue to play a key role nationally through the NPCC led National Risk Management Forum, contributing significantly to working groups across the country.

4   PROJECT RISKS

4.1   No projects have closed in the last quarter.

5   STRATEGIC RISKS

5.1   WMP as reported in the last paper have now incorporated a number of risks that fall into strategic governance. A separate paper containing these with current mitigation / control have been forwarded with this paper.

6   NEW CORPORATE RISKS

6.1   There have been no new risks escalated to corporate level in the last quarter.

7   CRITICAL RATED CORPORATE RISK UPDATED

7.1   No corporate risks reflect a critical rating.

8   INCREASED CORPORATE RISKS

8.1   During the last quarter no corporate scores have been increased.

9   REDUCED CORPORATE RISKS

9.1   During the last quarter no corporate scores have been reduced.

10   ACTIVE/ OPEN CORPORATE RISKS

FINANCIAL RESILIENCE	MEDIUM
There is a risk that WMP's finances are not sustainable over the medium term. and/or efficiency savings required *There is a risk that the outcome of the Funding formulae may not be a favourable change for the force.* *There is a risk that future Spending Reviews do not provide sufficient funding for the force.* *There is a risk that spending and budget reviews and necessary restructures and changes may negatively affect dept core service delivery, operational services, dept performance levels as well as retention and wellbeing in the areas.*	

10.1. Risk title changed from Financial Management to Financial Resilience, as this better reflects the focus on long term sustainability.

10.2. Police Officer pay increase has been approved, whilst the pay award is greater than the amount the force had budgeted for, the portion of the £120m grant payable to the force will make up most of this difference.

10.3. WMP had forecasted an underspend of £11m at the 2.8% previous forecasted rate, therefore with the rate agreed it will potentially reduce the reserves to £7m, however the grant will contribute to the reserves to bridge the gap.

MENTAL HEALTH DETENTIONS	HIGH

There is a risk that legally permissible detention times are expiring before transfer to healthcare can be completed

and as a result:

WMP will be forced, frequently, to choose whether to Breach the law by exceeding the legal limitations established under the Mental Health Act (MHA) or,
Comply with the law and release an individual who may pose a risk to themselves or others.
After the 24hour detention period it is unclear what powers, we can use for use of force. Risk of corporate and personal liability for the officers involved.
The current legal opinion would suggest that either scenario leaves the force liable to legal challenge or impacting significantly on public confidence.

10.4. The risk is still ongoing; despite RCRP being followed by partners, we are yet to see a reduction in detentions at the point of contact.

10.5. Demand from S136 remains high, WMP Force MH Lead reviews ongoing trends. However, officer time spent has significantly reduced following the implementation of RCRP.

10.6. Majority of the MOU's have been signed off, further discussions to be had in the upcoming multi agency strategic meeting.

10.7. Governance continues and data reviewed and monitored at the Mental Health strategic board chaired by ACC with oversight from the DCC at the Risk and Organisational Learning Board.

10.8. No legal claims to date.

OP BRIGHTMIND- CONNECT NOMINAL MATCH AND MERGE PROCESS	MEDIUM

In 2022 WMP Data Analytics Lab algorithm was implemented to identify duplicate records, the list goes to a Robotic automation process referred to as Radical Robot to use the connect match and merge system to merge the records together.
Since launch (Oct 2022) it will have processed hundreds of thousands of records.
In 2024 several records come to light where individual records that are different people have been incorrectly merged. Having checked the Match and Merge process we know:
-The current rules are too expansive
-The algorithm does not 'apply' them correctly

It is beneficial to WMP to merge duplicate records together to reduce the risk of not acting on information that is known but linked to a duplicate record. However, merging records also carries the risk of incorrectly merging Nominal records that do not in fact relate to the same person.

10.9 The current approach is to mitigating this risk is being governed through the Data Analytics and Assurance Board (DAAB).

10.10 Dip Sampling continues through Phase 5 and insights gained

10.11 Additional updates to the code are being made through the Data Lab to allow for a more consecutive approach to the phases rather than relying on one selection option.

10.12 Updated process will be presented to DAAB in September for further review and action.

11. CORPORATE RISKS AWAITING MOVEMENT

11.1 There are currently no corporate risks awaiting movement.

12. CLOSED AND DE-ESCALATED CORPORATE RISKS

12.1 There are currently no corporate risks closed in the last quarter.

DEPARTMENTAL RISKS AND ISSUES (HIGH/ CRITICAL)

13 OPEN/ LIVE DEPARTMENTAL RISKS SCORING HIGH/ CRITICAL

REGIONAL IT CONNECTIVITY- CITRIX	HIGH

Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs) from non-WMP forces require system access but are currently unable to gain it, hindering their ability to fulfil operational responsibilities.

Also, problematic the other way with WMP SOI's unable to access other Forces systems.

13.1 West Midlands Police IT&D have been working with West Mercia and Staffordshire Police to enable the AVD technology within these forces.

13.2 West Mercia have taken the required changed through their internal governance and WMP are waiting for these changes to be implemented before testing can commence between both forces.

13.3 Warwickshire ROCU K&E have been testing the AVD for a number of months which has been a huge success, the plan over the next 2 months is to transition the current user base to the production environment before migrating all Warwickshire ROCU users to the AVD platform.

JLS SOLICITOR ATTRITION AND DEMAND	HIGH

Due to solicitor resignations, it is likely there will be a period of time where we have reduced solicitor capacity to litigate work for WMP and Staffordshire Police in the field of misconduct and inquests.

13.4 The Principal Lawyer sitting over Operations and Regulatory (Misconduct, Inquests and Public Order) has resigned and their last day in force is likely to be early October.

13.5 JLS have received authority to recruit using and external agency due to the specialism of the role.

13.6 Previous attempts to recruit into these posts without using agencies have not presented many appointable candidates.

13.7 The Regulatory Team are currently running with a 1XFTE vacancy (Team of three) and another lawyer in the Team is soon to vacate post (estimated December).

13.8 Internal recruitment have been used to advertise for a Reg Lawyer post to help with the vacancies. This resulted in one candidate with a planned interview. If this fails, authority may be sought to use Venn to try and fill this post.

CLOSED FLAGS- INFORMATION VISBILITY	HIGH
The existence of closed flagged information is completely invisible to the majority of the Force, which could result in the availability of intelligence being missed within risk reviews and decision making.	

13.9 Title changed from Covert flags within connect system linked to intelligence to Closed Flags – Information Visibility.

13.10 This record has now been split into 3 separate issues to help better focus and mitigation. (2 are currently pending approval).

13.11 Amendments to the risk description made since last reporting to better reflect focus and closed flags element.

13.12 A long-term solution is being explored with support from the Connect Lead to understand any further mitigation/system amendments which can be provided by the Connect product to help mitigate the system generated risks outlined further.

13.13 Significant work has taken place over the summer period to commence review of all flagged intelligence logs within the ROCU and Intelligence departments to review whether a protective flag is required.

13.14 Currently the user can only view approx. 15 characters as displayed in the supplementary tab which is not sufficient to provide adequate instructions

13.15 Further exploration with Connect is needed to understand if this character limit can be expanded and if the padlock limitations detailed can be developed further and mandatory fields created.

13.16 Direction has been given to allow full flag content to be viewed on newly created flags.

13.17 Where a user requires access to the flag content contact should be made with dedicated team or out of hours on-call to reduce future risks.

13.18 This does not mitigate risk against those created prior to this direction. In relation to legacy flags a full review of user access teams of each flag is required, this has commenced and Is time consuming, with no dedicated FTE to support

14 INCREASED DEPARTMENTAL RISKS

14.1 In the last quarter, one new risk was scored as high.

PENSIONS CAPABILITY, CAPACITY AND DEMAND	HIGH
Pensions Team tasks, functions and performance are being negatively impacted by competing demand, impacted areas include: • *Altair system changes* • *Manual intervention and amendments to ITrent Reporting* • *2006 refunds 1987 additional payment request* • *Mortality screening & overpayments* • *Data Quality investigation and improvements* • *Ill-health underpin Calculations for legacy Scheme* • *Information provision to other forces* • *Transfers In*	

14.2   The Pensions team manages multiple pressures at the same time, including RSS-related rework, ill health cases, and a backlog of transfers.

14.3   Additional resources and training are being implemented to manage demand and maintain service delivery. With a transition plan being developed to address capacity and resilience.

14.4   Additionally, a change case regarding resourcing and potential outsourcing has been submitted for review, with recommendations aligned to national direction.

15   REDUCED DEPARTMENTAL RISKS

15.1   In the last quarter, no risk scoring was reduced.

16   DEPARTMENTAL RISKS AWAITING MOVEMENT

16.1   There are currently no departmental risks awaiting movement.

17   CLOSED DEPARTMENTAL RISKS

18   RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1   The Committee to note the contents of the report and any associated appendices.

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