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# **JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE (JAC)**

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**Minutes from public  
meeting held on 15  
December**

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

Notes of the meeting held on at 9:30am.

**Present:**

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| Sue Davis        | : | Chair                                   |
| Richard Hollands | : | Vice Chair                              |
| Bhupinder Gakhal | : | Board Member                            |
| Cath Hannon      | : | Board Member                            |
| Charmaine Burton | : | Board Member                            |
| Pete Gillett     | : | Director of Commercial Services - WMP   |
| Vanessa Jardine  | : | Deputy Chief Constable - WMP            |
| Mark Kenyon      | : | Chief Finance Officer – PCC             |
| Lynn Joyce       | : | Head of Internal Audit - PCC            |
| Fiona Pook       | : | Head of Performance and Assurance - WMP |
| Sam Ridding      | : | Head of Professional Standards - WMP    |
| Andrew Smith     | : | External Audit – Grant Thornton         |

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| <b>554</b> | <p><b>Item 1 - Apologies</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Organisational Learning and Risk Manager Rachel Jones-Burns, Chief Executive Jonathan Jardine and Grant Thornton External Auditor Zoe Thomas.</p>   |
| <b>555</b> | <p><b>Item 2 - Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest raised.</p>   |
| <b>556</b> | <p><b>Item 3 – Minutes of the last meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.</p>   |
| <b>557</b> | <p><b>Item 4 - Matters Arising</b></p> <p>There are no matters arising.</p>   |
| <b>558</b> | <p><b>Item 5 – Risk Management Update, Including Force Risk Register and OPCC Risk Register</b><br/><i>Presented by Mark Kenyon and Fiona Pook</i></p> <p><b><u>OPCC Risk Register Update:</u></b><br/><b>Mark Kenyon highlighted the key points from the OPCC Risk Register update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report comments on the overall arrangements of the PCC’s functions in terms of delivering the Police and Crime Plan and holding WMP to account.</li> <li>• There are six functions of the PCC, ranging from the efficiency and effectiveness of WMP and bringing community partnerships together.</li> <li>• Appendix 2 scores these functions, and provides an insight into the topical risks around the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.</li> </ul> |

- There has been movement in the scoring of risks and the direction of travel around efficiency and effectiveness and holding WMP to account has worsened from a risk perspective.
  - There is an increased concern regarding resources and the level of funding received for the PCC and WMP.
  - Topical risks overlay the functions of the PCC and they largely relate to the performance of the Force in terms of areas such as RASSO, theft of vehicles, stop and search, accessing police services and disproportionality within the workforce. These have been discussed at Strategic Policing and Crime Board Meetings and PCC and Chief Constable meetings.
  - The funding settlement for the next financial year is as expected, with a slight increase in flexibility around the police precept level from £10 to £15 allowing for additional resources.
- The Chair questioned the difference if the new precept level agreement was taken up in terms of resources?

Mark Kenyon responded that this is between £3 and £4 million-pounds. There is currently a £30 million-pound gap and therefore there are still areas of consideration when setting the budget for next year. The PCC has launched a public consultation in relation to the budget for the next financial year, which will go through the statutory process with the Police and Crime Panel.

- Cath Hannon questioned the financial management around airwave and ESMCP. What are the financial challenges and the timescales of changing the system?

Mark Kenyon advised that ESMCP is a replacement to the current airwave system, that is a national programme ran by the Home Office. There have been significant delays in its implementation. The business case has been rewritten multiple times, and a roll out programme has now been agreed which WMP are part of. We would have to finance the system to some extent. The legacy system is very analogue and is reaching the end of life. We are also replacing devices to maintain stability.

- Cath Hannon asked if we are still paying the contracts held with our current providers.

Mark Kenyon confirmed that we are still paying current providers as part of our existing commercial arrangement.

#### **Force Risk Register Update:**

##### **Fiona Pook highlighted the key points from the Force Risk Register update:**

- The Senior Risk and Assurance Manager has started her role.
- The Team have reviewed the internal audit, and a gap analysis has been completed and an action plan is in place to work through recommendations.
- A risk strategy is in draft and will be shared in the new year, alongside a new draft of the risk appetite and risk policy.
- The Risk and Organisational Learning Board has been held, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. It has been decided that senior managers are now to be involved in the assurance processes around risk and to become increasingly proactive in terms of risks being managed.
- There is a new critical risk concerning the Operations Resilience Unit, focusing on staffing and pay against industry rates. The Team are working with departments to see what mitigations can be implemented.
- The operational training and embedded learning risks have been separated.
- The other two new risks concern the officer briefing functionality in Connect and issues relating to the overtime app. This has a gross score at present - the app is no different to how it was previously running in terms of supervisor scrutiny and approval.
- Section 7 contains updates to the corporate risks that have remained static over the last quarter. The core skills risk is in a much-improved position.

- Section 8 details the closed corporate risks that have moved over the last quarter.
  - The critical risk in relation to Probation Data Sharing has reduced to amber, and has been transferred to the portfolio risk register.
- The Chair highlighted that when the committee reviewed their own effectiveness one question posed was the committee's thinking in terms of the Force's appetite to risk. It would be useful for any updated risk appetite statement to be shared with the Committee, as good practice suggests the Committee requires an understanding and the opportunity to challenge the thinking on it. Is there also a process to ensure an effective transition in relation to the Deputy's role to ensure the risk processes transition to the new DCC?

DCC Vanessa Jardine assured the Committee that there will be a replacement for her role. WMP have relaunched the Risk and Organisational Learning Board where the Deputy can provide greater scrutiny. The risk appetite can be included within the report moving forward. Secondly, continuity will be ensured; Pete Gillett will be able to continue work within this area and a full handover will be provided to the Deputy's replacement.

Pete Gillett added that as a further mitigation against the overtime coding issue, the Finance Business Partnering Team have been asked to manually intervene in terms of reviewing the overtime codes to ensure they are coded to the correct location.

- The Chair commented that the design of the app appears problematic and therefore we should question how we brought in an app that is not fit for purpose as opposed to fixing the issue once it's in place.

Pete Gillett agreed that the testing of the functionality should have been picked up. Learning can be taken from this, especially within the IT and Digital Department.

- Bhupinder Gakhal referred to a number of risks within the report, including WMP's ability to meet statutory obligations categorised as critical, and requested an update be provided to the next Committee meeting. These are basic police skills and reassurance should be provided to the Committee that improvements will be implemented.
- The Chair referred to the risk relating to resources and advised this is a national problem. The Commissioner is making what waves he can but central government are trying to rein back on public spending. There may come a point where funding isn't enough to meet demand. It may result in cutting back on things that are core policing.

DCC Vanessa Jardine advised that these concerns are shared. WMP have had to pause police staff recruitment and are attempting to take a pragmatic and risk informed approach as to where vacancies are held. This is critical for WMP, particularly in light of the Manchester Arena inquiry. Industry standard wages, alongside the job market, is causing some departments to struggle to recruit. We rely heavily on public service value. Police officers may be placed into roles where we would normally place police staff. WMP have a commitment to the Uplift Programme to increase police officer numbers. It is critical that we are in a prepared state should anything occur.

In relation to the overtime app, WMP are trying to minimise paperwork. The app is not functioning to the best of its ability; however, we believe WMP have the best IT department in policing and we will continue to work on the app to ensure it is right.

The core skills and resilience risk is personally tracked by the Deputy Chief Constable within the Performance Panel. There are a number of reasons why officers do not attend training, with a mix of both valid and invalid reasons. If an officer is not attending a training session, this has to be approved by a Chief Superintendent. This is a much improved position and WMP will maintain oversight.

- Cath Hannon referred to the Connect System risks, in particular officer briefings. There is a gap in the information shared with officers, which also impacts on the PCC's targets and performance. Can we be reassured that despite the gap created by the Connect System the information is still available for officers?

DCC Vanessa Jardine advised that officers will be briefed via Teams Briefings in the short term. In the short to medium term, there is an app being produced for officers where they can brief more effectively themselves. WMP recognise the concerns around briefings and they will aim to move to these positions immediately.

- Richard Hollands added that the appetite for risk may be contextual. Overall, the direction of travel is positive.
- Cath Hannon referred to JESIP command training, and asked for reassurance that the level of this command training is still available within the Force and is the Force satisfied that there are enough trained commanders available to meet demand.

DCC Vanessa Jardine confirmed that this is continual training due to turnover within the organisation. Command training is linked to the Operation Resilience Unit risk, which is critical. This is also highlighted as an issue within the Manchester Arena report.

The Chair thanked Mark and Fiona for their updates.

## 559 Item 6 – HMICFRS Update

*Presented by Fiona Pook*

### **Fiona Pook highlighted the key points from this report:**

- The HMICFRS have shared their inspection calendar for next year. It is anticipated that WMP are in the calendar for September 2023.
  - A new framework has been introduced. There is emphasis on recruitment, retention and performance management.
  - Since the previous Committee meeting, 14 recommendations have been signed off.
  - With the release of a national thematic report, there is an increased number of recommendations detailed on the tracker that are being actively worked through.
  - Section 3 details updates in relation to the JTAI inspection within Walsall. Positive feedback has been received in terms of multi-agency work but still awaiting publication of report.
  - Section 4 describes the details of the Thematic report concerning misogyny. This report raised 43 recommendations, 26 of which are for police forces to action.
- The Chair praised the impressive number of signed off recommendations which is a much improved position to a number of years ago.
  - Richard Hollands asked if a summary table of recommendations could be added to the report in the future, which would be beneficial to members. Richard also referred to the word "should" in relation to the target dates for recommendations, and questioned whether this was set or malleable and what challenges does this place.

Fiona Pook advised that the relationship with the Force HMICFRS liaison officer allows the tracking of progress against recommendations. The regular updates allow flexibility if there are reasons for not being able to meet the deadlines.

DCC Vanessa Jardine added that "should" means this will be done. WMP's Liaison Officer understands the context of the Force and is kept involved throughout the entire process.

- Richard Hollands enquired if the deadlines are jointly agreed?

DCC Vanessa Jardine confirmed there is no involvement in setting the deadlines, however the Force works closely with HMICRS to advise on the likely progress.

- Cath Hannon raised awareness that the vetting processes are slow at present. Could we be given reassurance that the vetting requirement and robustness around processes are still in place, particularly around the recruitment of new officers.

Sam Ridding advised that vetting is now in a strong position. There was previously a backlog in aftercare vetting, that was cleared by January 2022. New recruits are vetted within the timescales required in order for individuals to join the organisation. Additional staffing was received earlier this year, to remain ahead and to complete checks over and above those required for the APP.

- Cath Hannon referred to the recommendations concerning counter corruption and relationships with external providers. The OPCC run a Victims Commission, which may be an opportunity for PSD to attend and re-establish relationships.

Sam Ridding said this invitation was welcome.

Pete Gillett commented that part of the PEEL assessment is around how the Force plans and manages effectively making sure it achieves value for money and as part of his national work in achieving financial excellence in policing programme he is working with HMICFRS to make that part of the assessment more consistent across Forces. This should assist WMP when the PEEL inspection takes place.

The Chair thanked Fiona for presenting this report.

## 560 **Item 7 – Anti-Fraud Bribery and Corruption Annual Effectiveness Review**

*Presented by Sam Ridding and Mark Kenyon*

### **Mark Kenyon highlighted the key points from this report:**

- Internal audit provides a function around the assurance framework.
- The report mentions the areas that Internal Audit have considered over the past year, including cash office functions, procurement and pension administration.
- Internal Audit have also undertaken work on the National Fraud Initiative.
- Two specific areas were focused on as a result of the data matching exercise, including pension payments to deceased members and accounts payable.
- Recovery of pension overpayments is difficult, and arrangements within the accounts payable process need to be considered to ensure this does not happen again.

- Richard Hollands referred to 4.7 on Page 3 in relation to overpayments to suppliers – is this a control weakness or a staff training issue?

Mark Kenyon advised that this is a systems issue concerning the way the accounts payable function reports on duplicate payments. This process is not working 100% correctly, with errors highlighted through the reporting mechanism. The overpayments identified relate to this problem.

- The Chair highlighted that there were issues with this during the pandemic, and questioned if this is a separate issue.

Lynn Joyce responded that this is a separate issue, where the system is replacing some of the data with the word “no.” and the cause cannot be identified. The number of creditors is a small amount, and therefore is not having a huge impact on the duplicate payments. However, there is a small amount affected by the data issue during reporting.

- Richard Hollands asked if this system issue is fixable?



Lynn Joyce reassured the Committee that this is being worked on at the moment to locate the cause and to see if it can be fixed. Duplicate payments are being checked where able.

**Sam Ridding highlighted the key points from the PSD report:**

- Last year 9 cases were reported and 6 failures to declare business interests. So far this year, 28 cases have been reported that are allegations including matters relating to the business interest.
  - There are a number of reasons for the increases, including the consequences of the pandemic restrictions, internal PSD training regarding maximising the use of systems and significant events taking place such as the Commonwealth Games.
  - The online integrity health check has been introduced under the Deputy Chief Constable's drive to raise the standards of officer behaviour as a result of Operation Santos.
  - A PSD roadshow has taken place across locations across the force, including drop in sessions for people to ask questions.
  - A business interest hub has been introduced. This includes a guide for supervisors to support their staff.
  - The work completed to raise awareness has contributed to increased reporting.
  - The negative findings concerning overtime are not down to mistakes. These are anonymous reports.
- Richard Hollands referred to the 15 cases reported last year, and the 28 reported this year, questioning if this was due to underreporting during the pandemic.

Sam Ridding advised that she does not feel the previous year was an accurate reflection. The figures for this year appear to be more accurate.

The Chair commented that a higher reporting of concerns should be welcomed. If they are investigated and found not to be a problem, that is a better position to be in than having very low numbers reported leading to suspicion that people are not spotting things or culture for reporting is being subdued.

- Richard Hollands asked if there is a target figure for the completion of annual integrity health checks. Have any trends or concerns been highlighted from this data?

Sam Ridding confirmed the target figure for completion is 100%, although some members of staff may not be able to attend the workplace due to sickness or maternity leave for example. 90% is a realistic target. The Force Leadership Conference is being held in due course, where completion and understanding of data will be encouraged.

In relation to the trends or concerns rising from the data, there has been a noticeable increase in the change of circumstance forms and business interest applications.

- Cath Hannon enquired if WMP are satisfied that the appropriate measures are in place should a systematic fraud occur?

Sam Ridding replied that profiles are created for each NPU and department and highlight the key areas of concern. On a daily basis, every complaint is talked through alongside every conduct matter raised to PSD's attention. Patterns of behaviour would therefore be recognised. PSD's senior leadership team is small which ensures knowledge is shared of everything that is occurring.

The Chair thanked Sam for her report.

**561 Item 8 – Corporate Governance Framework**

*Presented by Mark Kenyon*

**Mark Kenyon highlighted the key points from this report:**

- The Corporate Governance Framework annual review between the PCC and Chief Constable covers the minor changes in the scheme proposed and a review of the items raised in the annual governance statement from the previous financial year.
- The scheme proposes two amendments concerning the requirement to show a net value in terms of procurement and also a cause around succession planning.
- There has been a review in terms of the role of the PCC, with the second stage of the review still ongoing and this may prompt a review of governance arrangements in the future.
- The annual governance statement listed three audits and the report provides an updated position on those.

The Chair commented that inclusion of succession planning within the governance framework is welcome and positive.

- Richard Hollands referred to the appendix supporting the report, in particular the introduced social and environmental factors in procurement decisions. What is the balance of this, and do financial factors take priority?

Mark Kenyon responded that this is evolving in terms of the green agenda. In terms of the social value, WMP have introduced social value in terms of scoring contracts. Around 10% is based on social value, including areas such as local employment and crime reduction activities etc. From an environmental perspective, WMP have an environmental strategy that was approved in the summer including clauses around procurement in terms of the environmental factor's assessment. A report is being shared with the Strategic Policing and Crime Board in December, which reviews the procurement strategy of the Force. We have moved well within this area.

- Cath Hannon recalled that detained property has been an ongoing challenge and asked if an update is available on the property believed to be missing?

Pete Gillett confirmed he has taken Chief Officer ownership in relation to detained property, and this is progressing well. Firstly, the centralisation of the stores that WMP have is still ongoing and therefore the plan is to complete all of the local stores and have them brought centrally by September 2023. The Force are currently 81% through the centralisation process.

The issue around missing items is primarily around the local records that are being held, and what we move into the central store. Andy Kelly has been leading the centralisation project, and Sharon Dyer in terms of the missing items. WMP are collaborating with our Crime Team in developing the policy that will be considered in reviewing each of the missing items. Each item is also undertaking a categorisation process; data can be provided on a regular basis to the Committee if needed.

Pete Gillett ensured that there have been no examples of missing items impacting on cases.

- Cath Hannon questioned progress of the 21 officers due to transfer into PPU/RASSO.

DCC Vanessa Jardine responded that these are in the process and all are due to be appointed by February 2023.

**562 Item 9 – Internal Audit Update**

*Presented by Lynn Joyce*

**Lynn Joyce highlighted the key points from the report:**

- 4 audit reports have been finalised, with 5 in draft awaiting management comments.
- 25 audits have been followed up, with the implementation rate of recommendations at 74%.
- There is a slight increase in the number of medium and high recommendations that have not been implemented within 6 months. This currently stands at 32, whereas last quarter this was 24. This will be monitored.



- The completion of the plan is currently around 50%. The Team are working hard to achieve their target of 90%.
  - A mid-year review of the audit plan has been completed to take stock of the new risks. There was a vacancy within the internal audit team that impacted the plan, resulting in a shortfall of 70 days. 4 audits have been postponed into the new year as a result.
  - The report includes the improvement plan for the internal audit team, which includes the 3 additional recommendations that were added as a result of the external quality assessment.
  - Pension administration was categorised as limited opinion due to the backlogs around calculations and membership certificates not been received or processed.
  - Strip searches was also given limited opinion. Main concerns were around the high proportion of searches undertaken within cells in custody rather than the suites available. It wasn't always transparent if an Appropriate Adult was present when the search was undertaken, and if a safeguarding referral has been made. Work is being introduced following the Child Q case and the direction of travel within this area is largely positive.
- Richard Hollands questioned the development in terms of the internal audit vacancy being filled.

Lynn Joyce advised that a replacement has been appointed, and vetting has been cleared. We are hoping to have the individual in post by the end of January 2023.

- Cath Hannon referred to the PACE inspector workshops not taking place since 2018, is there an alternative to this training to offer support to inspectors?

Lynn Joyce confirmed that there is specific training for sergeants and detention escort officers but was not aware of what was in place for inspectors. Precise information regarding the training and support for PACE inspectors can be gathered outside of the meeting.

- Richard Hollands enquired if results from internal audit undermines any of the NFI work in relation to the data matching exercise?

Lynn Joyce responded that these are two separate issues. The NFI focuses on deceased pensioners and also produces matches around those retired who have ill-health benefits alongside a pension. In relation to pension administration, the findings tend to be focused on current employees rather than pensioners.

- Bhupinder Gakhal questioned if we are monitoring those who have retired on ill-health and then seek alternative employment.

Lynn Joyce stated that a declaration is needed from officers in relation to what benefits they may be in receipt of. The NFI is run every two years and therefore acts as a failsafe for us, and this will help us to identify what benefits people are in receipt of that may impact their pension.

- The Chair suggested that a number of the issues in the audit do not concern systems, rather that there are not enough people within the Team to complete the work. Market rate issues could impact recruitment in this team. Anxieties or concerns within internal audit that result from not having enough people to do the work as opposed to systems issues should be captured or flagged.

Lynn Joyce advised that within the pensions team, a lot of work will be coming in the future due to the McCloud ruling. Preparations have fallen onto existing staff, hence why pressures are shown within this area.

Richard Hollands agreed that sharing this information would be useful.

The Chair thanked Lynn for her update.

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| 563 | <p><b>Item 10 – External Audit: Audit Findings Report (Final)</b><br/> <i>Presented by Andrew Smith</i></p> <p><b>Andrew Smith highlighted the key points from this report:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ian Murray has commenced his new role, and has signed off the accounts audit.</li> <li>• It was acknowledged that a matter was outstanding in relation to the WMP pension fund. Subsequent assurance has been received and the share of these assets was of significance. This has been reflected on page 10 of the report.</li> <li>• Movements around pension fund assets is common within external markets.</li> </ul> <p>- Richard Hollands questioned how we compare against other forces.</p> <p>Andrew Smith reflected that the Team are content with the resource, governance and financial management arrangements in response to the value for needs assessment. WMP compare favourably against other forces, with the only major key issue for WMP being the level of funding.</p>  |
| 564 | <p><b>Item 11 – External Audit: Audit Progress Report and Sector Update</b><br/> <i>Presented by Andrew Smith</i></p> <p><b>Andrew Smith highlighted the key points from this report:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report is for information.</li> <li>• The accounts audit was signed off in November.</li> <li>• The value for money work is still ongoing; the Team are approximately 80% of the way through this.</li> <li>• Work is expected to be completed and ready for review in January 2023, with a finalised report in March 2023.</li> </ul> <p>- Cath Hannon referred to the challenges listed on Page 16, including the adaptation to the changing landscape, concerning climate change, digital development, financial pressures and cyber security. Are we prepared for these challenges?</p> <p>Lynn Joyce responded that these elements are reflected within the risk register. We aim to increase development of staff within the Team, with an auditor now IT qualified. We aim to be as prepared as able, and will continue to work closely and buy in resources if required.</p> |
| 565 | <p><b>Item 12 – JAC Work Programme</b></p> <p>The Chair recognised DCC Vanessa Jardine for her hard work, and the value of her attendance at the Committee. We wish Vanessa all the best in her new role, and hope the new Chief Constable sees the value in having a Deputy attend the Committee Meetings.</p> <p>The Chair wished everyone a Merry Christmas and thanked the attendees for their reports and discussion.</p> <p><b>Date of next meeting: 30 March 2023.</b></p>   |