

---

# **JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE (JAC)**

---

**Minutes from public  
meeting held on 30 March  
2023**

---



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

Notes of the meeting held on 30 March 2023 at 9:30am.

**Present:**

Sue Davis	:	Chair
Richard Hollands	:	Vice Chair
Bhupinder Gakhal	:	Board Member
Dr Cath Hannon	:	Board Member
Charmaine Burton	:	Board Member
Lynn Joyce	:	Head of Internal Audit – PCC
Mark Kenyon	:	Chief Finance Officer - PCC
Jonathan Jardine	:	Chief Executive - PCC
Pete Gillett	:	Director of Commercial Services – WMP
Zoe Thomas	:	External Audit – Grant Thornton
Gemma Brookes	:	Principal Auditor - PCC
Parmila Dadra	:	Principal Auditor - PCC
Dean Gordon	:	Detective Superintendent Public Protection – WMP
Ian Parnell	:	Head of Force Contact - WMP
Davinder Jagpal	:	Assistant Director - Finance, Contracts and Procurement – WMP
Fiona Pook	:	Head of Performance and Assurance - WMP
Rachel Jones-Burns	:	Assurance and HMICFRS Liaison - WMP
Michelle Painter	:	Assistant Director - Forensic Services
Caroline Marsh	:	Assistant Chief Constable - WMP

**Plus, one observer.**

	<p><b>Item 1 - Apologies</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Acting Deputy Chief Constable Jayne Meir and Grant Thornton External Auditor Andrew Smith.</p>
	<p><b>Item 2 - Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest raised.</p>
	<p><b>Item 3 – Minutes of the last meeting</b></p> <p>The considerations and questions of the previous meeting held on 15 December 2022 were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.</p>
	<p><b>Item 4 - Matters Arising</b></p> <p>There are no matters arising.</p>

## **Item 5 – Internal Audit Update**

*Presented by Gemma Brookes*

### **Gemma Brookes highlighted the key points from this report:**

- 5 audits have been finalised, with 3 in draft awaiting management comments.
- 33 audits have been followed up, with the implementation rate increased from 74% to 80%.
- The significant recommendations that have been issued to date have remained at around the same level of 33.
- Over 2000 matches have been received in relation to the NFI exercise and the Team are working through these. Deceased pensioners and duplicated creditor payments as high priority matches have been prioritised.
- The completion of the plan is slightly below where reported in previous years. This is partly due to resourcing issues.
- KPI's remain at 100% with good feedback received from clients.
- The report details the minimal and limited audits issued during this period concerning child abuse and RASSO.
- RASSO was originally reported to the Committee in September 2021 and the follow up concluded in December 2022. Recommendations are ongoing, although progress has been made with actions been captured as part of Op Soteria. The Committee will be updated on the progress of the recommendations as they are addressed.
- The Child Abuse report was given minimal assurance largely due to the significant risks identified within Force Contact in respect of the THRIVE assessments, lack of compliance with escalation processes and downgrading of logs. The report also highlights a lack of trained officers and high workloads, impacting on the threat and harm to children.

### **Dean Gordon highlighted the key points from the report:**

- In respect of vulnerability and risk training and officer awareness, since the audit WMP have adopted the 'Aware' principles. This provides a structured format for officers to understand vulnerability, recorded in a way that partners can understand the risk and vulnerability recognised by officers. WMP are aiming to develop and embed the principles locally onto mobility devices to ensure the principles are always accessible.
- The Connect system has been upgraded to include additional vulnerability questions. This requires officers to record information in an Aware format of the voice of the child and observations.
- Guidance around the use of body worn video is also being shared.
- To work within child abuse, officers must be a detective or working towards being a detective; the majority of officers within child abuse are within the latter category which presents a barrier for completing Specialist Child Abuse Investigator Development (SCAIDP) training as this training cannot be completed until officers complete their detective portfolio. WMP are raising requests nationally to consider if an exemption could be applied to this rule to bring SCAIDP training in earlier.
- WMP are seeing an uplift of 32 officers into child abuse establishment.

### **Ian Parnell highlighted the key points from the report:**

- The voice of the child is paramount. The direction given from ACC Caroline Marsh was to improve our response to vulnerability, with a particular emphasis on child abuse.
- WMP have invested significantly in the Service Improvement Team within Force Contact, which is the central governance function. Researchers and an Analyst have also been invested in to support this function.
- The overarching improvement plan is being finalised, considering actions and recommendations from all audits, Coroners inquests and inspections that have taken place.
- Resourcing in Force Contact is a key issue. Recruitment is ongoing to increase the number of call handlers to 309, allowing WMP to answer calls for service in a timely manner and undertake THRIVE reviews in a considered way.

- Through the Service Improvement Team, training days have been booked throughout the year followed by self-learning. This training will provide a greater ability to identify vulnerability and risk.
  - THRIVE assessments and the escalation process are regularly monitored at both departmental and Force levels.
  - WMP are presently dip sampling 250 incident logs per month in terms of THRIVE assessments. In February, there were 21 logs where no THRIVE was recorded and 22 where there was a poor THRIVE assessment. Findings are fed back to individuals as reflective practice.
  - Escalation processes are in place, particularly relating to P2 logs. The escalation process should be instigated when WMP are struggling to find a resource to send to an incident.
  - A new operating model will be introduced within WMP on 3<sup>rd</sup> April which should see an increase in the number of logs being resourced and escalations completed, with greater accountability locally.
- The Chair commented that it is reassuring resources within Force Contact are increasing and all audit and inspections considered. Could an update be provided in relation to the changes for a single point of contact in each area for escalation, and if there will there be a monitoring system in place to check how escalations will be responded to?

Ian Parnell assured that the grading profile of incidents are considered every month, at both a force and local level. Re-grades are also considered, if they have upgraded or downgraded. THRIVE is not a one-time risk assessment, but a continual process as risk can often change. As a result, we expect to see a healthy increase or decrease in risk assessments and subsequent gradings. The report highlights that often logs are downgraded on the basis of demand rather than threat and risk. The dip sample process has been introduced to address these issues. Training is a key factor, alongside embedding culture across the teams.

ACC Caroline Marsh supported Ian's response. The additional resource within the Contact Centre will have a significant impact how WMP deal with vulnerability on the calls for service taken.

- Cath Hannon referred to the Child Protection Delivery Group's focus on outstanding HMICFRS child protection recommendations from 2014. Could an update be provided on the distance between achieving these recommendations, in addition to the recommendations concerning serious case reviews and if these remain outstanding? Secondly, could an explanation be shared regarding the meaning of the 'voice of the child' in terms of policing and how will capturing the voice of the child translate into action?

Dean Gordon responded that the Child Protection Delivery Group has always considered learning from CSPR's, JTAI's, HMICFRS or any other reports that are relevant to child protection. At the time of the audit, we had 6 outstanding HMICFRS recommendations from 2014. There was a clear and present need to focus on these recommendations and three of these recommendations have now been closed with adequate responses. Two of the remaining three are now been considered for submission for sign off.

In terms of the 'voice of the child', the manner of which we record the voice is through the 'Aware' principles. Prior to the implementation of Aware, when officers were asked to record to the voice of child, officers were unsure of what to record and instead recorded a brief update. The Aware principles provide a structured narrative around the definition including appearance, words, activity, relationship and environment. Requires officers to assess how children are reacting the officers and if there are signs of normalised behaviour. Examples include:

- Do they appear coached?
- Is the home environment safe?
- Are there signs of neglect?
- Are they used to your presence?

This provides a more meaningful narrative as investigations progress, supported by body worn video for incidents. This also allows us to consider and make better informed decisions regarding what safeguarding looks like for this child, particularly with discussions with partners.

- Cath Hannon referred to the development of a question set to capture the voice of the child, and questioned if partners will assist with this in order to ensure language is used that the child understands. What is the outstanding HMICFRS recommendation that hasn't been addressed and why? Can assurance be given that all recommendations in relation to serious case reviews for children will be delivered?

Dean Gordon responded that the Aware principles were developed by Kent Police with partners. Partner response to these principles has been positive, with expressed desire to use these principles within their own work.

In terms of the HMICFRS outstanding recommendations, one is in relation to Force Contact and therefore will not be in a position to be closed until work has been completed. The two other open recommendations relate to children in detention, which is been prepared for submission and force systems, which is in relation to Connect. The upgrade to Connect requires officers to record details of the child in a searchable format. When Connect was introduced, details of the child were recorded in a free-text format meaning systems couldn't identify history to addresses. Duplication of entries in Connect was also another issue. Following system update this recommendation can also be considered for closure.

Further, all learning from CSPR's are tracked through the Force Review Team and are delivered locally through LSCP's. There is an appetite to bring these into the People Progression Board.

- Bhupinder Gakhal questioned how many logs are coming in to WMP per month, and how many logs WMP have downgraded.

Ian Parnell advised that the current dip sample is at 20% regarding child abuse incident logs, meaning approximately 5000 logs are received per month. 43 of these logs are non-compliant, meaning the compliance rating is 83%. Information regarding the number of logs downgraded will be shared with the Committee in due course.

Ian Parnell has provided an update after the meeting on the logs downgraded for the period 01 January to 30 March 2023. For 107 logs initially classed as child abuse non-crime, 38 (36%) were regraded and for 919 logs with a final classification of child abuse non-crime, 267 (29%) were regraded.

- Richard Hollands expressed that the positive news is welcome regarding increased resources. Does the attrition rate settle at any point or is it expected to keep increasing?

Ian Parnell responded that with any specialised area within policing, there is often a lag between recruitment and staff being fully competent and capable in the role. Force Contact are increasing the establishment to 309 call handlers, alongside being able to recruit at plus 10% which allows Force Contact to account for joiners and leavers. WMP continue to review these numbers and the level of demand. Approximately 5000 calls are received through different channels from the public each day; demand is significant at present. In terms of strategic workforce planning, Force Contact plan on a 6-person attrition rate across the department per month.

- Richard Hollands asked if the scope of the review considered the work with other agencies?

Gemma Brookes advised that there was a limitation within the audit that multi-agency safeguarding hubs were not considered as they have their own audit arrangements. The audit did consider the

contribution of the information shared with partners and the strategy discussions that are held with the Local Authority child protection teams. There were no significant issues arising.

Jonathan Jardine added that on the back of the case studies in Solihull, the Commissioner is now part of a triumvirate of the governing bodies including the local authorities, NHS and WMP. This is a bespoke process to review and act on the findings from the various investigations.

The Chair thanked Dean Gordon and Ian Parnell for their contribution. The Committee will follow up on RASSO and Child Abuse in 6 months' time.

- Cath Hannon referred to the addition of 100 new officers being SOLO trained, and questioned how many other officers can fill this role and if this is 24/7 availability. How many civil order officers are there, and would it be better to have an all-encompassing hub rather than specialists?

ACC Caroline Marsh advised that the Teams establishment has increased from 96 detective constables to 120. WMP are currently undertaking a restructure moving to a local delivery model for our response officers and will require a SOLO capability on all response teams to be able to deal with all initial calls of services for RASSO 24/7. The training has been rolled out through the PPU Prepare Hub, with a dedicated trainer.

In relation to the civil order officers, there is a small team within PPU dedicated to applying for these orders. WMP recognise that they were not applying for as many orders as other Forces. A new supervisor has been allocated to this team to increase enforcement of orders. Additional government funding has been obtained and performance has improved within this area; data can be shared with the Committee in due course.

- Richard Hollands referred to the recommendations displayed in Table 4 and asked if there are any areas where risks are stuck with implementation and little movement. The Chair noted the recommendations appear clustered and suggest a lack of willingness to implement recommendations.

Gemma Brookes highlighted accounts payable as an area with little movement, the NFI exercise is a compensating control involving reporting on the duplicate payments as the data matches are worked through. The team hope that by the next meeting Committee meeting this will be resolved.

- Richard Hollands followed up if this is capacity, resources, capability, skills and knowledge or other factors?

Gemma Brookes suggested this may be a capacity issue. The operating model may also be having an impact on addressing this issue.

## **Item 6 – Risk Management Update, including Force Risk Register and OPCC Risk Register**

*Presented by Mark Kenyon and Fiona Pook*

### **OPCC Risk Register Update:**

#### **Mark Kenyon highlighted the key points from the OPCC Risk Register update:**

- 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.
- There are six functions of the PCC, ranging from the efficiency and effectiveness of WMP and bringing community partnerships together.
- The scores have remained the same as those reported in the previous Committee meeting.
- 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 budget has been set for the upcoming financial year.
- Cath Hannon referred to the red categorisation for case management.

Mark Kenyon responded that case management is monitored in terms of correspondence into the PCC's office. Trends are considered through casework which is particularly important in regards to holding the force to account. Lynn Joyce commented that the red categorisation refers to the recommendations haven't been progressed by the time they are due.

- Richard Hollands questioned where the operating model is in terms of risk.

Fiona Pook replied that the risks arising from the operating model are initially been managed through the project risks and project structure. Any outstanding risks will then be transferred through the Force risk register.

- Richard Hollands questioned the visibility of projects and change activity and asked if there is any separate assurance around this. A dashboard of risks would be extremely helpful for this forum.

Mark Kenyon advised that there is a project management structure and governance arrangements in place across the force, and therefore this could be provided for the next meeting. The PCC is holding the force to account against the delivery of the change programme through weekly meetings and performance updates.

Pete Gillett advised that the change programme goes live on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, and the Force will be translating risks into the Force risk register.

Michelle Painter added that an additional Gold has been set up to run for this duration, run by ACC Claire Bell every morning. This is a big risk mitigation as immediate risks will be shared. Every week WMP hold an Operational Design and Delivery Board, where detail of the transition is discussed. Phase one will be live on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, which will see a change in line management. In terms of service offer, there are no fundamental changes besides a realignment of resources. Phase 2 involves difficult changes with the implementation of the operating model.

The Chair commented that it would be of assistance to be made aware of any additions to the Force risk register as a result of the change programme. Jonathan Jardine has requested a report to the public board in May in relation to the Risk Register associated with the change programme.

**Force Risk Register Update:**

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

- The Team are progressing against the internal audit report.
- The policy, strategy and procedural guidance in terms of risk has been signed off by the previous Deputy Chief Constable, and the Force are currently drafting risk appetite statements.
- WMP now operate from a single Force risk register which allows for identification of cross-cutting risks and issues. Risks are also linked with HMICFRS recommendations and organisational learning points.
- Progress has been made against the critical risk, with the mitigations in place in terms of recruitment of officers.
- The corporate risk scores have remained stagnant. The core skills training risk has reduced.
- The major incident readiness risk is categorised as amber.
- There is a plan to address the wider issues regarding the overtime app. Resources have been prioritised between the overtime and Connect briefing app.

- Section 9 of the report details the corporate risks that will be shared with the appropriate governance boards for de-escalation or closing.
- Cath Hannon highlighted that the Connect System has not delivered as expected with the briefing delivered outside of the system. Would there be an opportunity to go back to the originating company about why the briefing isn't working?

Pete Gillett assured that discussions are being held with directors in terms of performance and a solution. Contractual arrangements behind the system are also being considered, alongside what the future of the system will look like. Further information can be shared with the Committee when available.

- Cath Hannon mentioned the non-recent RASSO Team that will have an additional 21 officers. Are these officers extra to the other officers and if these officers are included within the new SOLO group? What is been defined as a non-recent RASSO offence and how much of a backlog is there?

Caroline Marsh advised that the uplift of 21 officers was agreed by the previous Chief Constable as part of the Major Crimes Team under PBB. The remit of this team was to take some RASSO cases, such as stranger rape. When Caroline Marsh returned to the PPU, the remit was reviewed and demand assessed. In collaboration with ACC Bell, we overturned the decision to build the Major Crime Team, with a Team instead being taken into PPU. However, there is still a volume of demand going to the Major Crime Team, relating to modern day slavery. Secondly, a non-recent RASSO is when it is not forensically live, when there isn't an immediate need to react, meaning time Teams can take time to consider how to approach the investigation. Victims report offences for a different number of reasons, and a better assessment can be made of what the victim is asking for and the support that they need. Caroline Marsh was not aware of a backlog at present, with an understanding all current RASSO investigations are allocated due to the uplift of officers within the teams. There are a number of vacancies that need to be filled due to officers applying for other roles into and out of the teams and the new workforce strategy must be embedded.

- Cath Hannon asked that the specialist services would be grateful to know that there is a dedicated team for these cases. Is there a dedicated pathway to contact the team rather than communicating through the switchboard?

Caroline Marsh advised this information can be shared at the next Committee meeting. Most of the calls of service that require immediate attention go through the contact centre; it is important everything goes through one channel to understand demand. Staff are now within contact centres that have the appropriate training, to be accessible 24/7. VAWG online reporting has now gone live.

- Cath Hannon referred to a complaint from specialist services, and advised that there is a team within the OPCC that can facilitate this,

Caroline Marsh responded that there is a DA Support Desk, with dedicated domestic abuse investigators, located in the Contact Centre and owned by PPU where there are a number of historic sexual offences identified through the risk assessments for domestic abuse victims. In addition, there is a Vulnerability Hub which Ian is building within Force Contact, where a victim is dealt with solely by this department instead of repeating traumatic experiences multiple times.

- Richard Hollands referred to the risk maturity module, and advised it would be useful for the features of each level of maturity to be identified when the appetite statement is received. The Chair asked if this could be included next time, as a rationale for the assessment of where we are.

Fiona Pook assured this would be incorporated moving forwards.



- Bhupinder Gakhal referred to recruitment and retention. There is a risk that there are a number of student of officers due to be dismissed due to failings of university modules, are there figures relating to this?

Fiona Pook advised she can share numbers with the Committee outside of the meeting. The number of officers due for dismissal are been closely managed, with measures in place to mitigate the risk. The additional uplift will assist with the natural attrition. Pete Gillett added that the figures are not high in relation to this.

Caroline Marsh highlighted that for a period of time the only entry into West Midlands Police was through the degree entry scheme. Degree programmes are difficult to manage as a full-time student alongside a full-time policing job. There is a rigorous recruitment programme into West Midlands Police. The L&D Team are working to ensure we are recruiting the appropriate people. There is a small minority of people struggling to manage the balance between work, studying and personal life. WMP is moving away from a sole degree-entry programme, and therefore will become less of a risk moving forwards.

### **Item 7 – HMICFRS Update**

*Presented by Rachel Jones Burns*

#### **Rachel Jones Burns highlighted the key points from this report:**

- WMP are entering a period of activity in relation to HMICFRS.
- WMP have received confirmation of the next PEEL inspection. HMICFRS will be commencing PEEL activities in March and the fieldwork will take place in September 2023.
- The Strategy, Delivery and Assurance department has communicated the framework to the force and disseminated a self-assessment framework to create a baseline readiness profile.
- HMICFRS are trying to promote a culture of continued improvement and are in the Force every two weeks to share progress on recommendations.
- A new PEEL assessment framework has been issued with a different question set; armed policing is now a separate thematic inspection, serious and organised crime is inspected as part of ROCU, strategic policing requirement that looks across vetting will be a separate inspection.
- HMICFRS have identified seven areas of importance, including understanding the outcomes of bringing offenders to justice, reducing repeat offences, preventing harm, performance management, crime prevention, community support and workforce capability.
- There is an emphasis on leadership, performance management, recruitment and retention.
- All departments are to complete a self-assessment process.
- Over the last two years, WMP have reduced the number of recommendations from 500 to the low 70's.
- The areas for improvement highlighted two concerns, including crimes against older people relating to victim needs assessments and stalking and harassment, how we record breaches and whether patterns are considered for wider offending Both areas have been assigned a dedicated Superintendent.
- In August 2020 HMICFRS received a super-complaint from the Tees Valley Inclusion Project, relating to the police response to victims of sexual abuse from ethnic minority backgrounds who may be at risk of honour-based abuse. The Chief Constable has accepted these recommendations.
- Features of policing that may have caused harm to victims include overuse of suspect voluntary interviews and failure to consider honour-based abuse as a safeguarding concern.
- Recommendations include cultural awareness, data and victim support.
- HMICFRS, the College of Policing and IOPC collaborated on the investigation of a super complaint made in March 2020 under s.29A of the Police Reform Act 2002 by the Centre for Women's Justice relating to police perpetrated domestic abuse. 11 concerns were raised during the investigation. The Chief Constable accepted these recommendations.
- The inspection of Serious Organised Crime will be undertaken in July 2023.

- The Committee were made aware that the super-complaint on the police response to stalking that has been assessed as being eligible to be investigated.
- The Chair referred to the new inspection system making use of other information and reports and questioned if this would systematically include internal audit reports?

Rachel Jones-Burns advised that yes, internal audit reports will be considered.

- Cath Hannon referred to the overuse of voluntary suspect interviews standing out as a concern. Within this force now, do we have an overuse of voluntary interviews? Is there an assessment that an individual case will have that much of a negative impact in the community that it will not be progressed, and can we seek reassurance this does not happen in the West Midlands? In relation to the stalking and harassment breaches, is there an indication that the breaches are not been policed sufficiently?

Caroline Marsh responded that in terms of the abuse of voluntary interviews for suspects, this relates to the PACE code G where the criteria and conditions are met to bring a person into police custody. This includes factor such as additional safeguarding, bail, proportionality and necessities. WMP have moved to a position to overuse of voluntary interviews, where there are very few circumstances the PACE code G cannot be met. However, there are occasions where it is not appropriate to bring a person into police custody including health concerns or mobility, where it would be more reasonable and proportionate to conduct a police interview under a voluntary setting. The number of arrests from WMP have been increasing over the past three months, and are anticipated to increase further. The impact of the Covid pandemic should not be overlooked.

Stalking falls into two different parts of policing. If stalking is domestic related it falls under Public Protection, however a large proportion of stalking also falls under FCID.

- Bhupinder Gakhal referred to the nine features that cause harm to victims that were identified within the report.

Caroline Marsh advised that WMP have been given a direction to change the way we approach certain areas of policing. The new operating model is community focused, and is localised. The Chief Constable is clear that WMP are big enough to cope, small enough to care and is focused on engaging with communities, treating each community differently depending on the area of the West Midlands we are policing.

Bhupinder Gakhal shared his disappointment that this hasn't been progressed.

## **Item 8 – Treasury Management Strategy**

*Presented by Davinder Jagpal*

### **Davinder Jagpal highlighted the key points from this report:**

- The PCC is legally required to produce the annual investment strategy, which is governed by the code of practice for treasury management and the prudential code.
- The Treasury Management code was last updated in 2021, with the introduction of new requirements.
- The average borrowing rate is approximately 3.2%, with the current borrowing rate is around 4.7%.
- Section 4 details the investment activities for 2022/23, followed by the security of our investments. Entities are also considered.
- The statement is largely governed by the code in terms of what is included and the principles in which we operate.
- Interest rates have recently increased and rates are expected to peak in June through to September 2023.
- Borrowing is expensive at present compared to previous years.

- The Committee asked to note the activity for 2022/23, to approve the Treasury Management Statement and approve the criteria for selecting counter parties which have the highest rating and ensure the lowest level of risk.
- Richard Hollands asked for clarity in relation to the overborrowing chart.

Davinder Jagpal advised that the chart details the requirements for borrowing against the actual borrowing. However, the chart does not explain that the actual capital borrowing is the net position which deducts receipts and repayments made against the loans. Borrowing is less than the authorised limit.

- Bhupinder Gakhal thanked Davinder Jagpal for the report. At present, inflation is at 10.4% whilst interest rates are at an all time high. At what rate do we think this will stabilise?

Davinder Jagpal advised that with regards to PCC and Force borrowing, post December rates would be an appropriate time and rate to consider borrowing decisions.

- What will the interest rate be by the end of the year?

Davinder Jagpal assured advice is taken from provider, and can predict between 4% and 4.3% interest rate although this cannot be said with any degree of certainty.

The Chair commented that in the health service, there was a calculation for the NHS interest rate considering specifics, items the organisation had to be purchase.

Pete Gillett responded that we try and use as much intelligence and guidance as we can in relation to purchasing goods, and WMP consider the items required for purchase collectively, such as IT contractors and fuel.

- Cath Hanon questioned how WMP identify equality and diversity implications and how WMP respond to this.

Davinder Jagpal advised treasury management is either regarding borrowing or investments. Investments are managed by fund managers. Diversity and equality fall into the investment piece of who we chose to invest with. CCL have principles that commit to considering equality and diversity before they engage with certain financial institutions. Reassurance that majority of activity is through investments through them, and they would act on this for us. Internally, this is not an issue.

- Jonathan Jardine advised that there are no foreign investments in the current treasury management approach. Noting the public instability in the banking sector at present, have these issues had any impact on the force's ability to carry out treasury management?

Davinder Jagpal assured that there has been no impact on the force's ability to carry out treasury management.

## **Item 9 – Accounting Policies**

*Presented by Davinder Jagpal*

### **Davinder Jagpal highlighted the key points from this report:**

- This report sets out the accounting policies that will be used in the group accounting statements for 2022/23.
- There are no changes to the accounting policies from last year.
- As part of the preparation for the accounts, we are required to set out our accounting policies, including critical judgments.

## **Item 10 – Internal Audit Strategy and Work Programme (2023/24)**

*Presented by Parmila Dadra*

### **Parmila Dadra highlighted the key points from this report:**

- This report sets out the Internal Audit Strategy and provides context on the service that Internal Audit provide, alongside a summary of available resource.
- The workplan is detailed within Appendix B and sets out the audits we propose to complete throughout the year.
- We have considered the risk registers for both organisations, undertaken consultations with senior management and with professional judgment increased awareness of national issues.
- There is a suggested number of audits that could be covered, that exceeded the number of available days for the year. The team undertook a prioritised exercise taking into account the Police and Crime Plan.
- This exercise enabled the Team to score and rank each area, and map them against available resources.
- We are mindful of new risks around the operating model and have enabled a flexible workplan for next year.
- Inevitably the risk profile will change for both the PCC and WMP.
- The Audit Charter which provides details around roles and responsibilities has not seen any significant changes since last reviewed by the Committee.

The Chair commented flexibility will be key during a time of significant change. We need to be able to react and have experience of prioritisation which will be of assistance. We are comfortable knowing it is likely we will be looking at re-visitations throughout the year.

- Cath Hannon referred to the cultural assessment in relation to firearms. How are cultural assessments different to any other assessments? Is work progressing against civil orders?

Lynn Joyce responded that the progression against civil orders would have been identified as a quarter 3 quarter 4 audit if it did feature within the plan, however we did not have capacity to action this. The cultural assessment is an internal review undertaken by the force. The Internal Audit team will assess the outcomes and how the force is progressing against the review.

Caroline Marsh advised that this falls under ACC O'Hara's portfolio. The Chair suggested this as an area of consideration for a Strategic Policing and Crime Board Meeting.

- Richard Hollands advised that the Head of Internal Audit is now covering another role. Has this been factored into the number of available working days and will this reduce capacity to complete work? Can the Committee be reassured of the steps taken to maintain the independence of internal audit?

In relation to the 800 days, Lynn Joyce advised that these were based on her being in the Team full-time. There is uncertainty around how long this arrangement will last, and therefore the impact on the number of days and independence is unknown. Discussions may be needed on how to maintain independence if the arrangement continues for longer than anticipated.

The Chair advised to keep this under consideration.

- Richard Hollands referred to the new operating model and the contingency plans in place, are there any early thoughts on what this activity may look like?

Parmila Dadra responded that within audit planning meetings with the force executive team, changes are discussed and how plans can be fed into the audit plan. We anticipate that although internal processes and controls may not change, change will be evident through governance of roles and responsibilities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jonathan Jardine explained that the internal audit decision to undertake a review on the firearms licensing agreement is welcome. This is a collaboration, and we would need assurance that the audit process sits well with Staffordshire Police, and that the reporting of outcomes should come to the Joint Collaboration Board to ensure West Midlands and Staffordshire oversight.</li> </ul> <p>Lynn Joyce suggested that in relation to the Section 22 agreement on firearms, we ask for assurance from Staffordshire’s joint audit team.</p>
	<p><b>Item 11 – External Audit: Annual Plan (2022/23)</b>  <i>Presented by Andrew Smith/Zoe Thomas</i></p> <p><b><u>Zoe Thomas highlighted the key points from this report:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan reflects our assessment of where the risks are in relation to the financial statement and how we plan to address these risks.</li> <li>• The plan is similar to last year and reflects that the external audit is low in terms of significant issues arising.</li> <li>• The plan was shared with the Chief Financial Officers formerly to the Committee Meeting. Minor changes were made to the plan as a result of this consultation.</li> <li>• The significant risks are unchanged from last year. These are the areas of the account we place the most effort; they are regarded as a significant risk due to the large numbers and judgements associated with these numbers.</li> <li>• The risk concerning management override controls is not a particular concern for West Midlands Police and is included within all external audit plans.</li> <li>• Materiality is assessed for the Chief Constable, PCC and the Group applying a lower level of materiality for testing. Expenditure is used as a benchmark, and therefore materiality is not anticipated to change significantly.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Richard Hollands questioned what risks are seen around journals?</li> </ul> <p>Zoe Thomas explained that journals are where there is manual intervention within the accounts. Elements of the financial statement are fed by subsidiary systems. In other areas of the accounts, things are moved around via journal which we consider as risk. We consider the profile and assessment of the journals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As a follow up, Cath Hannon questioned the expectation for WMP to manage this themselves.</li> </ul> <p>Zoe Thomas assured that auditors are often sceptical, and expect that if things are to be moved it would be done so via journal.</p>
	<p><b>Item 12 – External Audit: Audit Progress Report and Sector Update</b>  <i>Presented by Andrew Smith/Zoe Thomas</i></p> <p><b><u>Zoe Thomas highlighted the key points from this report:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The value for money conclusion report is to be finalised soon, highlighting what actions external audit plan to undertake and when.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Item 13 – JAC Work Programme</b></p> <p>The Chair recognised Mark Kenyon for his hard work, and the value of his attendance at the Committee. We wish Mark all the best in his new role.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the attendees for their reports and discussion.</p> <p><b>Date of next meeting: 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023.</b></p>

