



**Durham Police Crime & Victims'
Commissioner/ Chief Constable**



Joint Independent Audit Committee

Tuesday 17th October 2017

11.00 a.m. – 12.50 p.m.

Watson Room, Police HQ, DH1 5TT

Minutes

1. Attendance/Apologies

Chair

Mrs Elsie Davies

Members

Mr R Humphries, Mr D Shingleton

Office of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner

Mr C Oakley, Mrs S Sahani, Mrs J Connor

Durham Constabulary

Mr G Ridley, Mr S Winship

Internal Audit

Miss T Henderson, Mr S Carter,

External Audit

Mrs C Eddowes

Observers

Mrs S J Hunter, Sgt M Sammut,

Apologies

Cllr E Bell, Mrs J Flynn, Mr M Kirkham

Mrs Davies welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

To remind members of the Committee of the need to record any personal interest in items on the agenda. If a member has a personal interest that is a prejudicial interest, he/she must withdraw from the room during consideration of that item of business. Mrs Davies asked the Committee if they had any Declarations of Interest – Mr Ridley declared he had an interest in item 14 on the Agenda, the review of the Chief Finance Officer Role. (Mr Ridley left before this item was discussed).

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 5th September 2017

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5th September 2017 were recorded as a true record.

4. Audit Completion Report

Mrs Eddowes summarised the Audit Completion Report which set out the findings of the audit of the Office of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner (PCVC) for Durham and the Chief Constable (CC) of Durham Constabulary for the year ending 31st March 2017. Mrs Eddowes confirmed that no matters remained outstanding.

Mrs Eddowes highlighted that the on-site audit had progressed smoothly and officers had been very responsive to queries however there had been a delay in receiving the final updated accounts. The Committee agreed this needs to be addressed as a priority for the 2017/18 accounts due to the significantly reduced timeframe for completion of the audit.

Mrs Eddowes is to circulate, by email, the Annual Audit Letter to the Committee members.

The Committee were assured that in all significant respects, both the PCVC and the Chief Constable has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources for the year ended 31st March 2017.

5. Internal Audit Progress Report

Miss Henderson advised the Committee on the work undertaken by Internal Audit between 1st April 2017 and 30th September 2017.

Miss Henderson gave a summary of the agreed plan showing the status of each audit as at 30th September.

Mr Humphries enquired about the IT issues highlighted in the plan. Mr Ridley agreed that all systems are more complex but are under the threat of cyber-attack, and this is an issue for all forces. Mr Ridley advised that challenges are not going away and as the force recruit new IT staff the concern is they move on as private sector pays more in salaries.

Mr Ridley mentioned the emergency services network (ESN) which will be a mobile communications network with extensive coverage, high resilience, appropriate security and public safety functionality. This will allow users to communicate even under the most challenging circumstances.

The Committee commended the broad programme of work undertaken by Internal Audit in maintaining safe and efficient arrangements for the proper administration of the financial affairs of both the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner.

6. Internal Audit Review of Evidence Related Property (ERP)

The Committee was advised of the outcome of an Internal Audit review at its meeting on 18 April 2017 of Evidence Related Property (property seized as evidence in support

of the prevention and detection of crime), which had resulted in a Limited Assurance Opinion being provided. Mr Carter provided detail on the findings of the review and updated the Committee on the further work which had been undertaken by Internal Audit at the request of the Force in that area.

Mr Carter reported that the focus was on the procedures followed by Officers prior to the booking in of items to property to determine whether there are any key difficulties preventing compliance with current procedures.

The Committee considered the assurance provided as a result of progress made by the force in relation to its ERP arrangements including the development of a new ERP recording system and intention for Internal Audit to review those arrangements after a period of operation in April 2018. Mrs Davies looks forward to receiving a progress report on this and was satisfied that the force had received full feedback on the outcomes of work Internal Audit had undertaken.

7. Final Internal Audit Report for work undertaken in relation to the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) 2016/17 Exercise

Mr Carter advised the Committee on work undertaken by Internal Audit and the force in relation to the NFI 2016/17 exercise. This exercise is overseen by the Cabinet Office and matches electronic data within and between public and private sector bodies with the intention of preventing and detecting fraud. Mr Carter reported that the exercise had not identified any instances of fraudulent or irregular activity, being perpetrated by OPCVC or force employees.

The Committee considered the outcome of the NFI exercise and were assured with the reassurance from Internal Audit.

8. Complaints Process – Future arrangements

Sweety Sahani delivered a presentation on the proposed reforms to the Police Complaints System as laid out in the Policing and Crime Act 2017. This included the enhanced role of PCCs and the local options available. The policy intentions are to have a complaints system that is:

- More customer focused and that resolves complaints in a timely fashion.
- Less bureaucratic and gives forces greater discretion
- More transparent and independent with effective oversight.
- Allows for identification of patterns and trends of dissatisfaction being raised
- Less adversarial for officers.

Main changes in summary are:

1. Definition of a complaint will be 'any expression of dissatisfaction with a police force. This covers general customer service and police practice issues, not only misconduct of an individual officer.

2. Non-recording decision will be removed
3. Issues will be resolved outside formal system
4. Simplification-removing categories for handling a complaint such as Local Resolution, Disapplication and Discontinuance which terms and concepts are meaningless to the public.
5. PCC will become appellate body for appeals/reviews currently handled by the Chief Officer.
6. PCCs will be able to choose between 3 models-Model A being the minimum and each subsequent model building on the last. Models B and C will be opt-in for PCCs.

Sweety Sahani is the OPCVC project lead and will provide regular updates to the Committee in the future. Implementation date is currently summer 2018 but may be subject to a delay due to this being secondary legislation.

The Committee commended Mrs Sahani on the work carried on so far and look forward to receiving regular updates.

9. Quarterly Professional Standards Report

Mr Winship delivered a presentation to the Committee on Complaints received in Professional Standards.

Mr Winship gave a general view of cases and allegations from Jan 2016 to September 2017. He explained that the police complaints system is already undergoing reform as Inspector Sahani had highlighted in the last item, and that the PCC will have more governance around the complaints arena in the future.

Mrs Davies asked for a clearer breakdown of data and Mr Winship agreed to bring this to the next meeting looking for patterns and trends throughout the force area.

Mrs Davies asked that quarterly reports be aligned with Committee dates. A copy of the forward plan will be sent to Mr Winship to facilitate this.

The Committee commended the presentation.

10. Transfer of Grants from Durham Constabulary to Office of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner

Mr Oakley presented to members an update on formal discussions about budget allocations between the OPCVC and the Constabulary.

Mr Oakley informed the members that a review of specific grant payments and contributions was undertaken, (November 2016) with the aim to identify specific payments made that fall outside the delegated responsibility of the Chief Constable and transfer the budget to the Office of the PCVC.

Mr Oakley said that this exercise had enabled the OPCVC to have a better understanding of spend on strategic areas. The budgets are now aligned with those strategic priorities.

The Committee were reassured that the grants awarded have the appropriate performance management and monitoring arrangements in place.

11. HMIC Feedback

Mr Ridley presented to the Committee feedback from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) regarding the PEEL efficiency recent review

The feedback was very positive and particular areas of note was how well the force cope with current and future demand. HMIC noted improvements since last year especially around the force control room and the appointments of mental health experts who triage the calls. Also the use of the Threat, Harm Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) model was commended.

The Committee commended the force on their foresight in appointing mental health experts to the Control Room.

12. General Update

Mr Ridley gave the Committee an update on external income generation in respect of forensics and Red Sigma developments.

Mrs Davies thanked Mr Ridley for this update.

13. Annual Review of Joint Chief Finance Officer Role

Mr Reiss gave the Annual update to the Committee on the current position of the PCVC and the Chief Constables Joint Chief Finance Officer (JCFO), (protocol was approved in October 2014).

Mr Reiss asked the Joint Audit Committee to note that it is possible that future legislation could remove the opportunity to have a Joint Chief Finance Officer. If this happens, the Chief of Staff and Chief Constable will need to consider how to proceed, in consultation with the existing JCFO.

The Committee felt arrangements in place are robust with the protocol and current personnel in place and they are comfortable with this arrangement. They agreed that the Joint Chief Finance Officer Role should continue to be reviewed annually

Any other business

No other business discussed. Meeting closed at 14.00 p. m.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 28th November 2017

Time: 10.30 Place: Barnard Castle Quad Station, Wilson Street, DL12 8JU

Alan Reiss
Chief of Staff

G Ridley
Chief Finance Officer