



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

Joint Audit Committee

**Tuesday 21st July 2015
11.00 a.m.**



**The Watson Room
Police HQ**

Attendees

Mrs Elsie Davies - Chair

Members

Cllr E Bell, Ms J Flynn, Mr R J Humphries and Cllr D Regan

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Mr A Reiss, Mrs K Bambridge and Mrs J Connor

Durham Constabulary

Mrs J Diamond, Mr S Layton and Mrs J Nicholson (Inspection of Files)

Auditors

Mr S Carter, Mr P Bradley

Internal Auditors

Ms K Eddowes

Apologies: Ms M Raine, Mr G Ridley

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

Cllr Bell requested an update on Parental controls for IT. Mr Ridley to feedback - force researchers to look into this an update will be provided at a future meeting.

2. Red Sigma/Blue Delta – Presentation

Inspector Mick Button delivered a presentation on Red Sigma. He showed different elements of the product and how smoother processes enabled a clearer picture of offenders. Red Sigma saves on duplication and time with the use of a mobile data device.

Councillor Bell questioned whether Red Sigma was only linked to Durham Constabulary and asked if this caused any problems. He highlighted that if this was the case it should be linked to other forces.

Inspector Button said this was a good point and is still an issue nationally. Mrs Flynn asked if it was accessible with mobile working. Inspector Button confirmed that all PC/PCSOs have access to Red Sigma through mobile data devices.

Mr Humphries added that this was an impressive system and enquired about the back-up arrangements if something went wrong. Inspector Button assured the group that all security measures were in place and the system was fool proof.

3. Annual Fraud Report and Corruption

The committee received a report on Annual Fraud and Corruption.

Mr Carter advised and provided assurances to the group of the results of work being undertaken within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in seeking to identify, control and prevent fraud corruption.

4. Annual Review of the System of Internal Audit 2014/15

The committee received a report on the Annual Review of the System of Internal Audit 2014/15.

Mr Carter informed the group of the current arrangements for Internal Audit. During the year two auditors have progressed their Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) studies and one has progressed with their Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA) studies.

In response to a question from Councillor Bell regarding benchmarking, Mr Carter informed the group of the internal benchmarking process and outlined areas that needed to be looked at further.

5. Annual Internal Audit Report 2014/15

The committee received a report on the Annual Internal Audit.

Mr Carter informed the group of findings over the last financial year, based on the work undertaken a moderate overall assurance opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control operating across the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Constabulary. This moderate opinion provides assurance that there are sound systems of control in place however there are some weaknesses and the evidence of ineffective controls. With the reduction in resources and the ever increasing diverse nature of the Internal Audit Plan this assurance opinion should be regarded as positive.

Mr Humphries questioned the moderate verdict and asked if this was a valid judgement to make given that the assurance opinion was regarded as positive.

Mr Carter informed the group the scope of audit work increases year on year it could be doing something different, “good moderate.”

Mr Bell congratulated the fraud team for their positive action toward the plans.

6. Final Statement of Accounts

The committee received the draft statement of accounts.

Mrs Diamond stated that three sets of accounts had been prepared, one for the PCC, one for the Constabulary and one for the group.

The accounts have been produced in line with the Service Reporting Code of Practice by Constabulary staff.

Mrs Diamond informed the group that shortly after the year end the group made a payment of £7 million, from earmarked reserves, to substantially reduce the staff pension deficit.

The group commended Mrs Diamond and her team for the work that had gone into the preparation of the accounts.

7. External Audit Progress Report

The committee received the external audit progress report.

New developments and technical issues with key staff ensured compliance with regulations governing the rights of electors.

Findings of the audit of the 2014/15 financial statements will be presented to the group at the next meeting.

8. Workforce Plan

The committee received the latest constabulary workforce plan.

Mr Reiss highlighted the key drivers of change and the potential of workforce modernisation.

In terms of business continuity, Mr Reiss explained that the force needs to identify those things that can be done differently and also what can be done via mobile communications data – this could lead to an increase in productivity.

Councillor Bell enquired about the impact to members of the police service in light of the Winsor report and the idea to recruit Superintendents who have no police background, (direct entry).

Mr Reiss agreed that the PCC was not in favour of direct entry.

In response to a question from Mrs Flynn regarding an increase in staff turnover; Mrs Diamond advised that the force was running a voluntary severance and voluntary redundancy programme.

Mr Humphries highlighted the increase in sickness absence with police staff and wondered if this was causing concern.

Mr Reiss agreed stress levels are going up and he advised that Mr Ridley is working with HR and he would report back on this at a future meeting.

9. Draft Annual Governance Statements 2014/15 for PCC & Chief Constable

The committee received the draft Annual Governance Statements 2014/15.

Officers and staff working groups from the OPCC and Constabulary working with Internal Audit reviewed governance and internal control arrangements to control arrangements to form the basis of the preparation of an Annual Governance Statement for each body.

Mr Humphries wanted to see documentation on decision making. Mrs Bambridge advised there is a link to the decision log on the website.

10. PCC Risk Register

The committee received the latest PCC review of the risk register.

Mr Reiss informed the group that there are still some actions that need to be carried out.

Mr Humphries is interested in seeing the development of protocol.

11. Any other business

Mrs Davies thanked Mrs Bambridge for her continued support in the planning and organisation of the Joint Audit Committee meetings and wished her well on her maternity leave.