



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

Joint Audit Committee

**Tuesday 22nd September 2015
11.00 a.m.**



**The Hobson Room
Police HQ**

Attendees

Mrs Elsie Davies - Chair

Members

Cllr E Bell, Mr R J Humphries

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Mrs J Connor

Durham Constabulary

Mr G Ridley, Miss K Radford

Auditors

Internal Auditors

Apologies: Mr R. Hogg, Mr A. Reiss, Mr C. Oakley, Mrs J Flynn, Mrs J Diamond, Ms M Raine and Cllr. D. Regan

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 015 were agreed as a correct record.

Miss Radford from the Constabularies' partnership team gave some feedback to the Committee on parental controls. Miss Radford provided a copy of a power point presentation which is delivered in schools. Miss Radford also advised that she wants to get at least another 55 schools on board next year.

Cllr. Bell questioned how schools were selected and was informed that currently PCSOs approach the schools however some decline. He asked for detail on which schools had declined. Miss Radford to supply information.

Mr Ridley agreed to take the topic of internet safety to the Police and Crime Panel. Mr Humphries questioned if leaflets were in circulation showing information on internet safety and Miss Radford informed the Committee that her team are working with New College Durham designing one now.

Cllr. Bell noted that the information would be useful for parish and town councils.

Mr Ridley suggested showing a video he had seen at a POP conference in relation to the above.

Mrs Davies questioned if there is a gap or is the issue being addressed by another group.

2. Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Action Plan

Internal Audit prepared an action plan for the five issues raised and will monitor progress made by management to address the issues through the year - to be brought to the next meeting.

3. Internal Audit Quarterly Progress Report

Mr Carter provided an update on the performance indicators comparing actual performance against planned where measurable at this stage.

He informed the Committee of details of Operation Spoke which is a bicycle marking scheme and is to supply an assurance review as there is only one officer looking after this.

Mr Carter mentioned the payment of overtime and the upgrade of the payroll system as requested by Mrs Diamond.

Mr Carter summarised outstanding audit recommendations and those not implemented within original agreed or revised target dates. Cllr Bell requested specific dates which Mr Carter agreed to supply.

4. External Audit Progress Report

Mr Barnes presented the external audit progress report to the Committee.

5. Quarterly Risk Management Report

Cllr Bell enquired about the implementation of combined authorities and would like Ron Hogg to attend a meeting letting the Committee know his views and give assurance.

6. Quarterly Performance Management Report

Committee requested sight of Staff survey.

The year to date reductions in all main crime types except violence and sexual offences, due to Medomsley, were discussed.

Committee were concerned that immediate responses have started to dip below 90% and priority have seen month on month decreases all financial year (76% - 69%).

Mr Ridley advised that Colin Williamson is going to look at the new shift pattern that has been in place a few months now as this may have something to do with the dip.

7. Quarterly Treasury Management Report

Mr Ridley reported interest of £3,876 had been earned up to 31st August 2015. This compared with the phased budget of £10,582 and an annual budget of £25,400. The difference is mainly due to the payment of the additional voluntary pension contribution to the Local Government Pension Scheme of £7million. This payment reduced the funds available to be put on deposit and consequently not earning interest as originally budgeted.

Mr Ridley also advised the Committee of developments to the old HQ site and also the removal of the listed radio mast.

8. Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report

Mr Ridley reported that 2015/16 is the fifth year of the government's austerity programme and it is widely expected that austerity will now last until 2020. This has significant implications for the forces' financial position in terms of:

- Risk: Austerity brings with it risks such as rising service demand. Rising demand can mean rising or unexpected costs which requires a prudent financial planning process so as to offer a degree of flexibility should cost pressures emerge during the year. Clearly, too much flexibility can be seen as poor planning, but equally, too little flexibility can result in the need to use reserves in year or overspending budgets.

- Reserves: Given the on-going imposition of grant cuts, council tax capping and nationally imposed cost increases, the need to maintain reserve balances within the current year and over the short term is important. Reserves can only be used once and ideally should only be used for investment as opposed to support day to day expenditure.

Mr Ridley also advised that there is an underspend for the year mainly due to officers leaving sooner than anticipated and although replacements have been recruited they are at a lower point of the salary scale and there has been delays while the post have been unfilled.

There have also been a higher number of medical retirements.

Mr Humphries wanted some clarity over a report in the Northern Echo about the prices paid for standard items. Mr Ridley said it was a disproportionate report “not comparing eggs with eggs.”

9. Audit Completion Report of External Auditor

Mrs Davies requested a copy of the above report.

Mr Barnes reported what was to be delivered to the Executive Team on 23rd September 2015.

Mr Barnes reported on the pension ombudsman decision to pay police pensioners who retired between 2002 and 2006 additional contributions.

Mrs Davies enquired as to why the Committee had not been told of this sooner.

Mr Ridley agreed the Committee should be aware of emerging issues but assured the Committee there would be no impact on accounts as the Home Office are funding the additional payments.

Any other business

Mrs Davies requested to see the recent HMIC report on Firearms.

Mr Ridley to bring Inspector Neal Bickford to a future meeting.

Mr Ridley to bring Consultation documents re: changing funding for police forces from 2016/17.

Further discussion PCC taking on Fire Services.

Committee were pleased that the latest HMIC inspection has shown Durham to be best in the country.

The committee also raised their concerns over the migrant situation and questioned if anything was already in place with partners etc.