



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

**Joint Audit Committee**

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015  
11.00 a.m.**



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**Police HQ – Holmes and Lestrade Rm**

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**Attendees**

**Mrs Elsie Davies - Chair**

**Members**

Cllr E Bell, Mrs J Flynn, Mr R Humphries

**Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner**

Mr A Reiss, Mrs J Connor, Mr R Bridgett

**Durham Constabulary**

Mr G Ridley, Insp N. Bickford

**Auditors**

Mr M Barnes

**Internal Auditors**

Mr S Carter

**Apologies:** Mr R Hogg, Mrs M Raine, Mr C Oakley

**1. Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> October were agreed as a correct record. Mrs Davies thanked Mr Ridley for the extensive tour of the Peterlee warehouse.

**2. Operation of the Joint Audit Committee**

Mrs Davies explained the need to address the operation of the Joint Audit Committee (JAC) meeting.

Mr Reiss presented a comprehensive report and produced terms of reference for the committee.

Mrs Davies does not want to duplicate work complete by the Police and Crime Panel.

Mr Humphries wants to know if what the JAC does add value.

Mr Reiss said the committee has an essential role to plan. It would be wrong not to have a JAC. The role of the committee needs to be focused and clear and to provide assurance to the CC and PCC.

Mr Ridley added the committee look at things that the PCC does not see and it adds another level of scrutiny. The JAC ask the obvious questions and are the voice of reason and common sense. This challenge is necessary.

Mr Reiss was worried about the quality of work as timings between meetings were too tight and no sooner than one meeting was over preparation for the next one commenced.

Mrs Davies agreed.

Cllr Bell raised concerns that the focus of the JAC has slipped from time to time and referring to the terms of reference he agreed that was a helpful tool to shape the direction of the group.

Mr Reiss agreed there is a key role for the JAC to hold himself and Mr Ridley to account.

The Committee looked at the refreshed terms of reference and agreed appropriate changes including holding meetings bi-monthly on a trial basis.

Mr Reiss to prepare another draft paper for January for the Committee to address.

Mrs Davies will attend Executive board meetings commencing Jan 2016.

### **3. Overview of Collaboration**

Mr Ridley spoke about the **collaboration** that Durham Police have ongoing at the moment. This included saving money with the dog unit by sharing facilities with Cleveland – this offer has been extended to Northumbria to come on board.

Personal safety training at Durham's Meadowfield site has been agreed with Northumbria – income generation.

Mr Ridley highlighted the national position of level of Collaboration with Durham sitting half way down the table at 13%.

Mr Ridley agreed still a long way to go we have to change the way we do things due to austerity.

Cllr Bell questioned if devolution will work.

Mr Reiss talked about potential changes for the future and the PCCs position on this. He also highlighted that Durham are in talks with other emergency services and a report will be produced by March 2016.

#### **4. Joint Chief Finance Officer (CFO) Role Update**

JAC had requested this role be reviewed after a year.

The Committee were asked to endorse the position for another year.

This was agreed unanimously.

The role of deputy PCC CFO has been formally incorporated into Mr Oakley's job description to the approval of the committee.

#### **5. ODPCC Office Restructure**

Mrs Davies commended Mr Reiss on the documents produced showing the dynamics of the ODPCC office.

Cllr Bell requested details of who paid Inspector Sahani and was informed by Mr Reiss that the constabulary paid her.

#### **6. Audit Progress Report**

Mr Barnes delivered a comprehensive report to the JAC.

Mr Barnes spoke about national developments on cyber-crime which is a priority for the PCC for the future.

Mrs Davies thanked Mr Barnes for this comprehensive report.

#### **7. Durham Annual Audit Letter**

This is a public document and shows that everything that has to get done does get done.

Issues highlighted during the audit included the pension's ombudsman which affects retired police officers – JAC had been briefed on this previously.

Locally the commissioning of the new Police HQ and the surplus of the old building had caused complex accounting problems.

Financial planning – details of how that fits in with the force operating model and the police and crime plan.

Mrs Davies agreed it was a very positive report.

## **8. Firearms licencing**

Inspector Neal Bickford presented to the Committee an update of firearms licencing.

Public safety is paramount. Reviewed performance and agreed areas to improve.

Governance arrangements – dip sampling processing were not in place this has now been addressed. New systems, IT and processes now in place.

Mrs Davies concerned that GPs are not obliged to share data but this is a national issue.

Inspector Neal Bickford attends the Home Office as voice to lobby for changes to legislation.

Cllr Bell wanted to know how robust the systems are as mistakes are made.

Inspector Bickford is convinced that the systems Durham have are the best and invited the JAC to visit the unit.

Mrs Flynn requested a copy of an Action Plan (copy attached).

Mrs Davies thanked Inspector Bickford for the excellent report and the JAC agreed that sharing this information was invaluable.

## **9. Staff Survey**

Mr Ridley produced a report on the staff survey and highlighted issues that came out of the survey.

## **10. Emerging Issues**

Austerity – still uncertain of what is to come

Consultation document – Challenged why Durham had no money for alcohol

Funding Formula - Incorrect data was used – Durham potentially £10,000,000 down

This is now going to be reviewed April 2017

Paris attacks may impact funding reduction

Cllr Bell congratulated the force on being the best in the country.

## **11. Any other business**

Mrs Davies thanked everyone for their updates.

Mrs Davies, on behalf of the Committee, requested to pass on her good wishes to Mr Darren Ellis for his forthcoming retirement and thanked him for his valuable support and commitment over the years – he will be greatly missed.