

**DRAFT MINUTES – PART A**  
**JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE**

17 December 2021, 10.00am to 12.30pm, via Microsoft Teams

**Attendees:**

Jonathan Swan	Chair
Julie Parker	Audit Committee Member
Simon Faraway	Audit Committee Member
Kashyap Pandya	Audit Committee Member
Sonya Edwards	Audit Committee Member
Roger Hirst	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Jane Gardner	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Darren Horsman	Deputy Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office
Janet Perry	Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, PFCC's office
Julia Berry	Head of Finance, PFCC's office
Ben-Julian Harrington	Chief Constable, Essex Police
Thomas Richards	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Debbie Martin	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police
Mark Gilmartin	Director of Shared Support Services, Essex Police
David Levy	7F Head of Strategic Procurement
Morgan Cronin	Chief Superintendent, Strategic Change, Essex Police
Wendy Palmer	Head of Forensics, Essex Police
Dan Harris	Internal Auditor, RSM
Anna O'Keeffe	Internal Auditor, RSM
Carla Bailey	Scrutiny Officer, PFCC's office (minute taker)

**Apologies:**

Dr Vicki Harrington	Director of Strategic Change and Performance, Essex Police
Pippa Brent-Isherwood	Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office
Paul Grady	Grant Thornton
Parris Williams	Grant Thornton

1 Introduction and Apologies

- 1.1 JS welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions took place. SE was welcomed to her first meeting as a new Audit Committee Member.
- 1.2 Apologies were provided for Dr Vicki Harrington, Pippa Brent-Isherwood, Paul Grady and Parris Williams.
- 1.3 JS requested that the representatives from RSM join the meeting after Agenda Items 3 and 9. Agenda Item 9 was moved up to take place directly after Agenda Item 9.

2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were none.

3 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

3.1 20210326 – Part A Minutes

3.1.1 *Dealt with under Part B*

3.2 20210326 – Part B Minutes

3.2.1 *Dealt with under Part B*

4 Internal Audit Pre Procurement Report

4.1 *Dealt with under Part B*

5 Action Log

**03/21 Recruitment of Independent Committee Member**

SE was present at today's meeting. Close.

**04/21 Estates Visit**

New dates still to be arranged. Remains open.

**05/21 Any Other Business**

The PFCC adopted a 12 month contract with RSM under the NHS East of England Framework. Close.

**07/21 Previous Minutes**

These have been circulated at this meeting. Close.

**08/21 Action Log**

Completed. Close

**09/21 Review of Work Plan**

Completed. Close

**10/21 Review of Work Plan**

Background Briefing added to the March 2022 agenda. Close.

**11/21 Oversight of the Scheme of Governance**

Due in September 2022, ongoing work. Remain open.

**12/21 Annual Review of Effectiveness and Review of the Audit Committee Terms of Reference**

Terms of Reference were revised and draft circulated for review. Close.

**13/21 Single Tender Actions**

Responses provided on the Action Log. Close.

**14/21 Dates of Meetings**

Date of 2022 meetings on the agenda for discussion. Close.

6 Review of the 2022 Draft Joint Audit Committee Work Plan

6.1 Discussions took place and it was agreed that Fleet Electrification, Media and Social Media Policies and Cyber Security would be the Background Briefings for 2022.

**ACTION: 15/21**

**Agreed Background Briefings to be added to the 2022 Work Plan.**

6.2 JS confirmed that at Item 12 the Annual Report from the Chair should be included. JS would liaise with the author of the previous report for some of the wording.

**ACTION: 16/21**

**Annual Report from the Chair to be added to the 2022 Work Plan.**

6.3 DH requested that Item 1 should be moved to June rather than March on the 2022 Work Plan. This was agreed.

**ACTION: 17/21**

**Approval of Internal Audit Plan and Internal Audit Charter to be moved to June 2022.**

7 Terms of Reference

7.1 JS remarked that it was a surprise that the term was increased to three however was very happy to continue alongside his colleagues.

7.2 SF confirmed that there was a typographical error on Page 7 of the document under Item 11, and it should read PFCC not PCC.

**ACTION: 18/21**

**Wording to be amended on Page 7 to PFCC.**

7.3 RH and BJH commented that they were fully supportive of the three terms.

7.4 JS added that these Terms of Reference needed to align with those of the Essex County Fire & Rescue Service and therefore this would be discussed at the meeting taking place later in the day.

8 Review of Internal Audit Progress Reports

- 8.1 DH provided an overview of the report and added that normally work would be further ahead and they were aware of the heavy second half of the year, however continued to work with DM and JB to ensure flexibility to assist with operational matters. He further commented that there had not been any negative audit opinions as yet and the three timing changes requested by management were accommodated.

The Key Messages were:

- Since the last meeting four final reports had been issued from the 2021/22 internal audit plan.
- A further two reports had been issued in draft.
- The fieldwork for a further four audits is in progress with fieldwork nearing completion.

- 8.2 An e-questionnaire had been provided to DM and JB, the results of which went to Grant Thornton as independent reviewers for assessment.

- 8.3 AOK outlined the three reports as follows:

#### Communications (Essex Police)

This focused on Essex Police only, not the PFCC. It had been noted that some of the policies had not been updated for a number of years, however some constraints were due to the College of Policing.

In response to a question raised BJH confirmed that Robin Punt was the owner of the policies.

#### Debt Collection and Recovery

This was a substantial assurance with a medium action. As part of the dip sample, it had shown that a case had not been passed to the legal team for write-off.

#### Estates Strategy - Disposals

This was also a substantial assurance.

### 9 Audit Recommendations Tracker

- 9.1 DM outlined the report provided. There were eight past the recommended date and 17 part of business as usual.
- 9.2 DM added that the action around GDPR would be signed off soon.
- 9.3 In respect of a question raised JB confirmed that due to there being a vacancy for a Criminal Justice Manger in the PFCC's office for over 9 months this action had not been updated for a while but was planned to take place soon.

### 10 Progress Against External Audit Recommendations

- 10.1 JS confirmed that there were no representatives from Grant Thornton present at the meeting and therefore the report was for noting.

- 10.2 JP raised that a report on Value for Money should be forthcoming and RH confirmed that he would make sure it did.

**ACTION: 19/21**

**Grant Thornton to provide a report on Value for Money as detailed in the document submitted.**

11 Single Tender Actions

- 11.1 DL confirmed that there was only one Single Tender Action (STA) for Essex during the reporting period and was outlined for transparency as Suffolk were the lead Force on it, Essex were only a participating body. The cost to Essex Police was less than £2,000.
- 11.2 In response to a question raised DL clarified that all STAs were reviewed by his team prior to approval by the Force or PFCC. MG further added that in the past he had presented STAs to this committee and these had been submitted to him by DL's team.
- 11.3 In response to a question raised DL confirmed that there are not waivers in the Region, but they would follow the same process as an STA. DL further confirmed that he was not aware of any STAs taken further without his knowledge.

12 Risk Register

PFCC Strategic Risk Register

*Dealt with under Part B*

Essex Police Strategic Risk Register

*Dealt with under Part B*

13 Background Briefing – Reduced Forensic Capacity

- 13.1 WP provided members with narrative around the PowerPoint presentation previously circulated with the Agenda.
- 13.2 In response to questions raised WP confirmed that moving forward there would not be any working with sub-contractors as had happened in the past. The dynamic purchasing system would assist with this vulnerability.
- 13.3 JS thanked WP for the presentation and was pleased that after a number of years this risk was being dealt with.
- 13.4 A discussion took place in respect of the shortage of scientists equipped in this area of work. WP confirmed that suppliers had worked really hard on recruitment, training and progression and toxicology was the main area which saw a lack of scientists. Commercial providers were beginning to work smarter which would also assist and the implementation of automation gave them greater capacity to bring people on board.

14 Any Other Business

14.1 There was none.

15 Proposed dates of meetings in 2021

15.1 JS outlined the suggested dates on the Agenda and confirmed that there would be discussions offline in terms of the July meeting date.

15.2 DM commented that the date of the proposed September 2022 was too early in relation to the signing of accounts and therefore this would need to be revised.

**ACTION: 20/21**

**The date of the September 2022 to be moved.**

16 Independent Members and Auditors Discussion

16.1 This was to take place outside of the formal meeting.

There being no further items of business the meeting closed at 12.11pm.