

## MINUTES – PART A

### JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE

16 June 2023 10.00am to 12.30pm

GF01, Kelvedon Park and via Microsoft Teams

#### Attendees:

Simon Faraway (SF)	Independent Audit Committee Member (Chair)
Julie Parker (JP)	Independent Audit Committee Member
Sonya Edwards (SE)	Independent Audit Committee member
Esther Beaumont (EB)	7F Head of Category Management (standing in for DL)
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office
Annette Chan (AC)	Chief Accountant, Essex Police
Ben-Julian Harrington (BJH)	Chief Constable, Essex Police
Dan Harris (DH)	RSM
Fiona Henderson (FH)	Director of Continuous Improvement Analytics, Essex Police
Zoe Hibbert (ZH)	RSM
Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Janet Perry (JPe)	Chief Financial Officer/ Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, PFCC's office
Jeremy White (JW)	Finance Manager, PFCC's office
Parris Williams (PW)	Grant Thornton
Camilla Brandal (CB)	Minutes, PFCC's office
A/D/Supt Greg Wood (GW)	Professional Standards Dept DCI, Essex Police (Guest)

#### Apologies:

Kashyap Pandya (KP)	Audit Committee Member
Joanne Brown (JB)	Grant Thornton
Natasha Carslaw (NC)	Grant Thornton
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Jules Lawson (JL)	Director of Support Services, Essex Police & Kent Police
Dave Levy (DL)	Director of Commercial Services, Essex Police
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police
Andy Prophet (AP)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police

#### 1 Welcome and apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies were noted as above. A brief introduction was made for all present.
- 1.2 SF confirmed that item 7 on the agenda was to be deferred from this meeting and item 9 is to be discussed under Part B. A separate discussion between the Independent Committee members and RSM would take place between the Part A and Part B items.

## 2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 JP confirmed her association with the LGA and PSAA.

## 3 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

### 3.1 24 March 2023 (Part A)

3.1.1 There were no amendments to the minutes of the last meeting and there were no matters arising.

### 3.2 24 March 2023 (Part B)

3.2.1 There were no amendments to the minutes of the last meeting and there were no matters arising.

### 3.3 24 March 2023 (Audit Panel)

3.3.1 SF asked for a separate call with SF, KP, SE and JPe to discuss and/ or approve these minutes as the current makeup of the meeting was not quorate due to JP being exempt.

**Action: 12/23**

**A separate call to be made with SF, KP, SE and JPe to discuss and/or approve the Audit Panel minutes.**

### 3.4 25 May 2023 (Extraordinary Board)

3.4.1 There were no amendments to the minutes of this meeting and there were no matters arising.

## 4 Action Log

22/22 Internal Audit Progress Report  
Draft report provided for this meeting.  
**Close.**

25/22 Statement of Accounts 2021/22  
PFCC's office to draft joint letter to send regarding delay to requested LGPS pensions letter.  
**Remains open.**

31/22 External Audit Tender  
**Close.**

**Action: 13/23**

**External Audit Tender to be discussed at Audit Panel meeting after Part A of this meeting.**

04/23 Terms of Reference  
Amendments made.  
**Close.**

05/23 Annual Review and Annual Statement  
Amended as agreed.

**Close.**

- 06/23 Internal Audit Report – Progress Report  
No outstanding queries or information requested.  
**Close.**
- 07/23 Approval of Internal Audit Plan and Internal Audit Charter  
To be put on the Forward Plan for September.  
**Remains open.**
- 08/23 External Audit Progress Report and Sector Update  
Now included in the tracker report (both internal and external audit items).  
**Close.**
- 09/23 Any Other Business  
Reappointment letters issued.  
**Close.**
- 10/23 Any Other Business  
Duplicate of 04/23.  
**Close.**
- 11/23 External Auditor contract update  
This item will be discussed under item 9 of this Agenda.  
**Close.**

## 5 Joint Audit Committee Work Plan for 2023

- 5.1 Item 6 (Annual Internal Audit Report) will now be moved to September 2023.
- 5.2 It was agreed to remove item 19 as progress against External and Internal Recommendations is dealt with under the Force's tracker in item 3.

## 6 Internal Audit Report – Progress Report

- 6.1 DH confirmed that 3 final reports from the 2022/23 audit had been issued, 4 draft reports have been issued from the 2022/23 plan with one further review on the IT audit where the fieldwork has now been completed. DH wanted to thank the Force for their assistance in completing this work within a tight timeline.
- 6.2 DH confirmed that the draft report and draft opinions form part of the Annual Governance Statement but noted that this report has been deferred from this meeting to the September meeting.
- 6.3 A brief discussion took place around the turnaround times, the outcome of the Cara Review, victims of crime and police cadet safeguarding.
- 6.4 ZH updated on the Cara review medium action and the IT Service Delivery audit.
- 6.5 SF made reference to the Emergency Services briefing papers for reading (attached at pages 38 to 98 of the report) on page 42 where the question was asked 'Is your Audit Committee receiving regularly assurance on Mental Health and policing, PUP and vetting?' The answer was confirmed as yes.

- 6.6 DH commented on the Risk Register analysis document (page 51) which may prove helpful when comparing with internal risk registers.

## 8 Internal Audit Recommendations Tracker

- 8.1 AC updated on the progress of the internal recommendations. A brief discussion took place around the length of time that some of the recommendations have been taking to complete but it was not felt that this length of time provides a risk as it is the engagement on the policies that is causing the time delay. It was agreed that the Force would provide more details on this medium action issue at the next meeting.
- 8.2 A discussion took place around the internal recommendations on the tracker which included creditor payments, PFCC Commissioning grants recipients, reporting on PFCC Commissioning grants over £50k and the PFCC's Commissioning Strategy.
- 8.3 AC went through the 7 external recommendations from Grant Thornton and a brief discussion took place around POCA monies (now to be taken off the tracker), legal claims estimation process, contingent liability assurance, control procedures performance over the PPE valuation rolling programme, threshold for asset valuation reviews, fully depreciated assets derecognition and unreconciled creditor accounts.

## 9 Update on External Audit contract commencing Statement of Accounts Year Ending 31/03/24

- 9.1 JPe confirmed that the draft Statement of Accounts have been published. After a brief discussion, it was confirmed that a revised set of draft Statement of Accounts with the significant variation difference relating to the Local Government Scheme on Pensions could be published on the websites and that the version published on 31 May will remain for transparency.
- 9.2 The external audit contract item is addressed under Part B of this meeting.

## 10 External Audit Progress Report and Sector update

- 10.1 None for this meeting.

## 11 External Audit Plan

- 11.1 PW went through the Audit Plan and a brief discussion took place around management controls, valuations of PPE, pensions, value for money work, a new auditing standard ISA315 (which deals purely with finance), IT general controls, the audit start date (letter to be written to Grant Thornton expressing concern that the proposed audit start date of October is too late) and the variations to the audit fee.

### **Action 14/23:**

**Letter to be written to Grant Thornton expressing concern that the proposed audit start date of October is too late.**

## 12 Risk Register

## 12.1 PFCC Risk Register

- 12.1.1 JPe went through the current risks on the PFCC's Risk Register and highlighted the two new ones (external auditors and Specified Information Order publishing of contracts).
- 12.1.2 A discussion took place around the public confidence risks (72, 73, 74) where the score is red on the PFCC's Risk Register (which measures against the Police and Crime Plan) but not on the Force's Risk Register and it was understood and agreed that it would remain as a different risk score on each Register.

## 12.2 Essex Police Risk Register

- 12.2.1 FH went through the current risks on the Force's Risk Register and highlighted the changes (1 increase, 2 decreases, 1 new risk and 1 closed risk).
- 12.2.2 A discussion took place around the risks associated with the Op Hazel monies, the delays in the Criminal Justice system, electrification of the fleet, ICO work and victims confidence.

## 13 Unaudited Accounts 2022/23

- 13.1 AC confirmed the minor changes to the Accounts had been updated and formed part of the published draft Accounts following the Extraordinary Board meeting.

## 14 Fraud and Debtor Write-Offs

- 14.1 There were no fraud and debtor write-offs to note.

## 15 Single Tender Actions

- 15.1 There were no Single Tender Actions to note.

## 16 Discussion on legal, regulatory and policy matters

- 16.1 None.

## 17 Papers presented to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel

- 17.1 None to report. It was agreed that this item would not need to be a standing item on the Agenda.

## 20 Any Other Business

- 20.1 PBI updated on the recruitment of the Audit Committee chair.

**GW joined the meeting at 1136**

## 18 Background Briefing – Vetting and Counter Corruption

- 18.1 GW introduced himself and presented the background briefing on counter corruption and vetting.
- 18.2 A discussion took place around the recent HMICFRS national inspections and areas of improvement and recommendations and the work that has been carried out by the Force on the recommendations (27 for each Force where Essex meet 25). The remaining 2 recommendations will be complied with by the end of the year. The HMICFRS report was published this morning and out of the 8 Forces that had been inspected, Essex is one of two Forces graded as 'Good'.

### **BJH left the meeting at 1154**

- 18.3 RH updated on the PFCC's monitoring processes that are in place and dealt with by quarterly meetings with the Force's Professional Standards Department.

### **GW left the meeting at 1200**

## 19 Approval of papers for publication

- 19.1 The papers for publication were confirmed as 8, 11, 12ai and 13. DH would provide a redacted copy of 6 and 7 for publication. FH would confirm whether paper 18 could be published.

## 20 Any other business

- 20.1 No additional items for Part B.
- 20.2 Next meeting date 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12:09.