

Minutes of the Joint Cleveland Audit Committee – Open Session

A meeting of the Cleveland Joint Audit Committee was held on Thursday 30th September. This meeting was held at Cleveland Police Central Headquarters.

Present: Ms Ann O’Hanlon (Chair), Mr Stan Irwin (Vice-Chair), Mr Andrew Prest, Ms Gill Rollings

Officials: Office of the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr Michael Porter, Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive
Mrs Lisa Oldroyd, Acting Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer
Miss Rachelle Kipling, Temporary Assistant Chief Executive
Miss Amy Forsyth, Executive Assistant, Minute Taker

Cleveland Police

Mr John Bent, Head of Crime
Mrs Joanne Gleeson, Chief Finance Officer
Mrs Liz Byrne, Programme Manager (Part of the meeting)
Karen Lindberg, Head of HR (Part of the meeting)
Claire Wrightson, Head of Procurement and Fleet(Part of the meeting)

External Audit – Mazars

Mr Campbell Dearden, Manager

Internal Audit – RSM

Philip Church, Manager

The meeting was observed by 1 member of the public.

799 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mr Steve Turner- Police and Crime Commissioner, DCC Helen McMillan – Cleveland Police, Miss Jenni Salkeld – EDI Manager, Mr Gavin Barker – Mazars.

800 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

801 Item 3: Open Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 24 June 2021

7.8.2 – The chair raised an issue regarding the clarity of the final paragraph. The minute was amended to read “members were asked if there were other reasons why claims were so high. They were informed some law firms handling defence cases subsequently deal with claims against the force. There are also national law firms engaged by the police federation.
“

7.8.4 – The chair informed the members that the auditing of the Accounts have slipped and an extra meeting will be held in November to finally approve them.

The minutes were held and signed as a true record. All points had been actioned and there were no matters arising.

802 Item 4: Audit Committee Report

The Chair thanked the PCC Chief Finance Officer for the compilation of the report. All members of the Joint Audit Committee had oversight of the report prior to the meeting and any comments were fed back to PCC Chief Finance Officer.

Report approved.

803

Item 5: Annual Monitoring Officer Report

Acting Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer of the OPCC explained to the committee that there had been a change of personnel in terms of the role of Monitoring Officer within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented the Annual Monitoring Officer Report to the committee.

The Deputy Chief Monitor Officer explained that the purpose of the Monitoring Officer Report is to inform the audit committee of work undertaken in the past year. During COVID-19, the OPCC were able to implement the Business Continuity Plans and the team were able to move to home working and continue delivering business needs.

The Committee will be aware that during the reporting period, the former PCC relinquished his role on the 8 September 2020 which triggered a legal process to fill the vacancy. On the 15 September 2020, the Police and Crime Panel appointed Lisa Oldroyd formally as Acting Police and Crime Commissioner, which subsequently then left the vacancy of Assistant Chief Executive which Rachelle Kipling was appointed to.

The government have acknowledged this situation and are looking to put measures into place to accommodate this possibility in the future. It is also anticipated that there will be a requirement for a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner from the next election.

A member asked if the Deputy PCC will be elected. The Temporary Assistant Chief Executive explains that the office do not anticipate they will be elected as this is often seen as a political appointment. The Deputy PCC would have to be approved by the Police and Crime Panel.

The Temporary Assistant Chief Executive highlighted the Complaints and Conduct Matters part of the report. There has been 1 Complaint and Conduct Matter in relation to OPCC Staff, this was dealt with by local resolution. There has been 1 Complaint and Conduct Matter in relation to the Chief Constable. There has been 1 Complaint and Conduct Matter in relation to the Police and Crime Commissioner that was dealt with by the Police and Crime Panel in November 2020.

It is noted, that throughout the reporting period the office continued to consider all decisions of public interest and the office have made a commitment to review this process in the 21/22 period. It is also noted that the collaboration with North Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioners Office in relation to the role of Chief Executive ended on 12 May 2021 by mutual consent.

Report was noted.

804

Item 6: Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner: Annual Equality Report

This report had been brought to the June 2021 meeting in draft for comments or discussion.

The Head of HR confirmed that all comments and suggestions were considered and included, and the final draft went to the EDI board on the 17 September 2021 and was approved.

In previous years, this report has come as a single paper that covered both the OPCC and Cleveland Police. This year provided a good opportunity to split the report and enable the OPCC to include more of their work. Owing to the OPCC being a small team, they're not required to report on workforce demographics, however this is something that the Senior Management Team will develop.

The year 2020/21 report identified a number of employees within the OPCC who don't wish to disclose certain characteristics. The force has done some work on Oracle where individuals are able to update their details personally, rather than having to contact others. It was hoped that this system would encourage staff to accurately report.

Training and Development have had regular inputs from the EDI Team and have had performing equal impact training. OPCC has also provided funding to Show Racism the Red Card which allowed members of the team and frontline officers to attend training.

A member asked if the Learning and Development Team attend the training to ensure this is rolled out across the organisation. The Temporary Assistant Chief Executive confirms that there is always the train the trainer element within training packages.

A member asked what the rationale was the selection of the 3 areas within the Safer Streets Consultation. The Temporary Assistant Chief Executive confirms that this was based on crime data that was looked at and identified these areas to have the highest level of crime.

The report was noted.

805

Item 7: Report of the Chief Constable: Annual Equality Report

As explained in the previous agenda item, the Equality Reports from Cleveland Police and the OPCC are to be presented separately in this meeting. This report from Cleveland Police is based on a snapshot as of 1 March 2021. It has previously been mentioned that under the Equality Act 2010, the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner have different duties to carry out owing to the force having more than 250 employees.

The report presents statistical data and summarises key activities undertaken by Cleveland Police. Members of the Committee noted there was a significant increase in headcount due to Operation Uplift, as the Sopra Steria contract ended and 300 employees transferred to Cleveland Police.

The Equality Impact Assessment has been re-designed and simplified and now any policy that goes to the Executive Board must have an Equality Impact Assessment attached to it. The EDI Team give suggestions on it and it then must be signed off by the relevant head of service.

A member commented how much more developed the report is from previous years. The chair referred to Page 23 and asked about the Implementation of Youth Commission and whether this is something has finally been established. The Acting Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer confirms that the Youth Commission did an end of year report last year which can be shared. There has also just been a recruitment process held for the Youth Commission who regularly provide an update to the OPCC. The Acting Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer will share this report with members at the next Joint Audit Committee.

A member commented that the PCC had a message in his report outlining his vision, there is no message from the Chief Constable which can be misconstrued. As this is a public document there needs to be something similar from the Chief Constable. The Head of HR

confirmed that this was owing to the Chief Constable being out of the force area when the report was compiled but would seek to rectify this.

A member questioned why the two reports have different reporting periods. KL explained that the Cleveland Police Equality Report is usually published by 31 March 2021, however due to COVID-19 the Government took the decision to delay the publish date to October. The report has been ready for some time, but it was decided to publish both at the same time.

A further report on Gender Pay Gap was also provided which details the difference in pay structure. There are a number of activities ongoing and initiatives around attracting a more diverse workforce particularly in areas of BAME and Female Police Officers, however this was impacted by COVID-19. The force have now started to get back into communities and run these programmes and also some inhouse work directed at the current workforce.

It was agreed that:

- 1. The report be noted**
- 2. The Youth Commission End of Year Report is brought to the next meeting**

806

Item 8: Report of the Chief Constable: Contract Exemptions

The report outlined the exceptions to the normal requirement tender for February 2021 to August 2021. The second half of the report highlighted procurement activity during this period. The Head of Procurement and Fleet presented the report and gave an overview of some key contracts that have been awarded and are dually listed in the report. One key procurement activity to note is the change in contract for the printers. Cleveland Police have had the same provider for a number of years, however the decision to re-procure was taken and the contract awarded to a new supplier.

A member commented on the Victim Needs Assessment contract, and queried if it was truly proprietary or was it just an easier exercise to extend the contract. The Head of Procurement and Fleet confirmed that due to COVID and delays with the PCC election, the decision was made by the PCC Office to extend this contract to ensure the new Commissioner had an input to the procurement process. The OPCC are now going out to tender in April 2022.

Members noted the additional supplier engagement paper included with the report. The Head of Procurement and Fleet explained this Modern Slavery Supply Chain document has been produced by the 7 PCC's and Forces across the region. The 7 PCC's and Forces have purchased a system that allows suppliers to go on and produce an action plan around Modern Slavery. The additional sheet provided gives a snapshot of the supply chain we have in Cleveland, which shows that 99% of suppliers are aware of Modern Slavery and undertake work around it. The next stage for Cleveland is to roll it out into contract management procedures.

The system is free of charge to use, and suppliers aren't obliged to use it but the force is encouraging take up.

It was agreed that:

- 1. The report be noted**

807

Item 9: Report of the PCCs Finance Officer: OPCC Risk Register

PCC Chief Finance Officer presented the OPCC Risk Register for the previous 6 months. Every risk has been received and will be updated going forward. Once the Police and Crime Plan

has been agreed which will be October, PCC Chief Finance Officer will then reflect this onto the risk register.

An area that has been added is the risk for the organisation in relation to the recruitment of Chief Constable for Cleveland Police, which is the most important role for the Police and Crime Commissioner to recruit. The recruitment process for this has begun. The closing date for applications is the 13th October.

A member raised concerns that a new Chief Constable may mean a shift in priorities, which may impact upon the service improvement programme and major changes to the SMT team. Acting Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer reassured members that previously, Cleveland Police didn't have a substantive Deputy Chief Constable in place. Cleveland Police currently has DCC McMillan so there is hopefully consistency of approach.

It was agreed that:

- 1. The report be noted**

808

Item 10: Verbal Update from Mazars

Members were disappointed to learn that the Accounts are not audited and ready to approve. It is normally the September meeting when accounts would be scrutinised by members. Members understand the process is still underway to audit the accounts and asked External Audit to provide an update.

External Audit explained there have been issues accessing papers. There has been progress made on the audit which began a few weeks ago and expect this be completed in October. The Pension Fund Assurance however will not be complete in October, but it is hoped it will be completed soon after. Members are aware that Mazars have no control of this. A letter has been sent out this week confirming the situation with the certificate, it is not linked to opinions on the financial statements. The Accounts Guidance is also late and will not be released until December, the certificate cannot be issued until this has been done.

Members are concerned that the public are unable to scrutinise and comment on the Accounts. There is only a short window of opportunity for members of the public to do so. Members noted the whole planning cycle of accounts work will be delayed and next years cycle is unlikely to start until after Christmas.

Members asked PCC Chief Finance Officer his thoughts on how the Committee could accommodate the forward approval of the Accounts, the PCC Chief Finance Officer's preference is to have an additional committee meeting in November to view the Accounts and Annual Governance Statement. The vice chair will as in previous years scrutinise the accounts in detail on behalf of the audit committee, prior to the additional meeting.

It was agreed that:

- 1. The report be noted**
- 2. An additional committee meeting to be arranged to discuss the Accounts and Annual Governance Statement**

809

Item 11: Report of Internal Audit: Progress Report 30 September 2021

Internal Audit presented the report to members which provided an update in terms of progression of plans approved by the committee on 25 March 2021. Members noted the work is on schedule despite the constraints of the COVID pandemic.

It was agreed that:

- 1. The report be noted**

810

Item 12: Report of Internal Audit: Whistleblowing Arrangements

Internal Audit commented that an effective whistleblowing programme is an essential part of an organisations corporate governance. It should create a culture and environment which is transparent, honest and accountable throughout the organisations where staff can report any concerns without fear of reprisals.

Internal audit outlined the key findings from the report and covered the five medium recommendations.

The audit committee noted the report was advisory, although all 5 recommendations would be actioned by management.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

It was agreed that:

- 1. The report be noted**

811

Item 13: Report of Internal Audit: Data Quality Arrangements (Crime Recording)

Internal Audit outlined the main elements of the report and noted tat in response to the inadequate inspection result the force had implemented a Crime Data Integrity (CDI) Gold Group which is chaired by the ACC with a purpose of ensuring crime recording compliance is given sufficient priority and actions are taken as required across the force.

Internal Audit further outlined the key findings and explained the methodology of the report, of selecting 32 crimes from the three February 2021 workbooks. There were 3 low priority recommendations and 1 medium priority recommendation.

Overall Assessment – Reasonable Assurance

It was agreed that:

- 1. The report be noted**

812

Item 14: Report of Internal Audit: Emergency Services News Briefing

This briefing was provided for information purposes, for each committee RSM provide updates of what is current in the sector and to flag any key issues. Members agree it is a useful document and provides a national perspective.

It was agreed that:

- 1. The report be noted**