

Minutes of the Joint Audit Committee 21st October 2020 at 1pm held via remote video link

Attendees:

Paul Rees (Chairman) – Chair of Meeting
Paul Brown (PBr)
Andrew Gascoyne (AG)
Graham Lancaster (GL)
Paul Roberts (PRo)
Chris Johnson (CJ)

David Munro (PCC) – Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner
Alison Bolton (AB) – Chief Executive – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Kelvin Menon (KM) – Treasurer – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Sarah Gordon (SG) – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (Minute taker)

Gavin Stephens (CC) - Chief Constable - Surrey Police (PART)
Peter Gillett (PG) – Commercial Finance Director – Surrey & Sussex Police
Joe Langford (JL) – Chief Information Officer – Surrey & Sussex Police (PART)
Paul Bundy (PBu) – Finance Services Director – Surrey Police
Miranda Kadwell (MK) – Corporate Finance Manager – Surrey & Sussex Police
Mark Hodgson (MH) – Ernst and Young (PART)
Karen Shaw (KS) – Chief Internal Auditor - Southern Internal Audit Partnership

PART ONE - IN PUBLIC

49/2020 APOLOGIES (Item 1) and WELCOME

Apologies had been received from DCC Nev Kemp.

The meeting was taking place remotely due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

50/2020 URGENT MATTERS (Item 2)

None

51/2020 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Item 3)

No declarations were made.

52/2020 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27th JULY 2020 AND ACTIONTRACKER (Item 4)

4a) The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

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4b) Actions:

1. PG confirmed that CIPFA's report was now published and that he would circulate to the Committee.
2. CTC Checks - PG said that he would provide an update outside the meeting
3. Force Recommendations - To be updated outside the meeting
4. The JAC member and chairman vacancies were out to advert. The closing date was 6th November.
5. Concordat - Discharged
6. Terms of Reference - Discharged
7. MK confirmed that the accounts would be circulated to Members in early November
8. Contract Waivers – John Moyles was reorganising the format of the paper in time for the January meeting
9. PG said that Contract Waivers was now a standing item at the CFO Board and any issues were being resolved there. Issues would be escalated to the Committee if appropriate.
10. Positive Outcomes – on agenda.
11. Work Programme – updated.
12. ICT Internal Audit Actions – Summary document in process of being composed.

53/2020 INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE REPORT 2020/21 (Item 5)

5a) Progress Report - Karen Shaw (KS) presented the report. She explained that the team were continuing to work remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic and that liaison meetings were still taking place on a regular basis. The audit programme was behind where it would usually be at this time of the year but the focus was to get enough work done to be able to ensure annual opinions can be given at the end of the year. The current analysis was that work was on track to be able to give these opinions. This was with the caveat that all staff remained well both within SIAP and within the Force/OPCC. The plan couldn't accommodate too many more changes and it was anticipated that all reviews would be completed by the end of May 2021. The plan had been updated and showed a delay to the Equip audit. The two ongoing 2019/20 ICT reviews were close to being completed. Monthly meetings were being held with the Head of Strategic Systems (ICT) so that all recommendations were being picked up. The Chairman asked whether Equip would form part of the end of year opinion. KS said that if two specific pieces of work were completed - controls mapping and testing of governance regime – before the 'go live' date then this would feed into the opinion. The Chairman asked how SIAP would be able to eliminate the ICT issues from the 2021 opinion when they were already aware of the issues. KS said that she would want to gain assurance that actions were completed and mitigation put in place. Follow up work would be carried out in the IT area.

Seven of the 14 reports had received limited assurance. CJ asked whether this was a usual occurrence. KS said that the table on page 6 showed audits that had outstanding actions – some dated back to September 2019 – and would remain on the list until all actions were completed. Reports would be discussed in more detail in Part Two.

5b) Results of SIAP External Quality Assessment – this was an important document for SIAP. The assessment was carried out every five years and was

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benchmarked against other providers. SIAP were deemed to be conformant across all aspects. It was a robust audit where all policies and procedures were reviewed. No formal recommendations had been made; one weakness had been identified and an action plan put in place.

AG offered his congratulations to SIAP on the outcome of the review. He asked whether it was an improvement on the last assessment. KS said that SIAP had also be assessed as fully conformant following the last assessment in 2015.

PG explained that a more rigorous process was now in place to track and progress audit recommendations through a Sharepoint system. This area of work was now overseen by the DCC through his Organisational Assurance Board and was a standing item on that agenda. PG felt that this was the correct level of oversight and scrutiny. He suggested that it may be of benefit to invite KS to these meetings.

MK agreed that the new central action tracker was working well as it meant that the correct owners of the actions could access the tracker in one central place.

54/2020 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2019/20 - UPDATE (Item 6)

KM presented the report which gave an update on the progress of putting together the Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts for 2019/20 which would be completed and signed off in November 2020.

MH emphasised that EY would base their opinion on information available up until 31st March 2020. Any further information would be of interest but information up until the end of March was key.

55/2020 EXPENSES (Item 7)

The Committee had been provided information on expenses for the PCC and Chief Constable from August 2019 to date.

7a) Members were interested in the security cost claimed by the PCC. The PCC confirmed that when he became PCC Surrey Police had carried out a security check at his home address and a number of measures were put in place as a result of their assessment.

7b) Members questioned whether the Chief Constable's claims really were zero. The PCC explained that the CC owned an electric car so there would be no claims for fuel. Also it was worth noting that most meetings had taken place virtually since March 2020 so there would be no claims for travel and accommodation.

56/2020 WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21 (Item 10)

It was noted that Contract Waivers used to be presented at every meeting rather than every other meeting. PG and KM agreed that they were happy for this item to be presented at each meeting and the work programme would be amended to reflect this.

57/2020 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 25TH NOVEMBER 2021 (Item 11)

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A specific meeting to discuss the Statement of Accounts 2019/20 had been arranged for 25th November.

58/2020 URGENT EXEMPT ITEMS (Item 12)

None.

59/2020 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING 29TH JULY 2020 (Item 13)

Nothing further to add.

60/2020 UPDATE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE & MONITORING OFFICER AND THE CHIEF CONSTABLE (Item 14)

No updates.

61/2020 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS (Item 15)

Part two discussion.

62/2020 FORCE PERFORMANCE REPORT (Item 8)

The Committee noted the circulated report.

The Chief Constable gave a presentation which gave an insight into how policing had changed following the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. There had been a huge impact on the criminal justice system. The infrastructure of most courts didn't lend themselves well to social distancing. As a result some trials had expected delays of three years. The Ministry of Justice was looking into this matter. Some crime types had seen a decrease due to more people working from home and of the community having a greater presence in local areas.

There had been an increase in anti-social behaviour relating to Covid-19 regulations and also an increase in mental health issues. The Force was also preparing for winter pressures, Covid-19, EU exit and new austerity measures.

The Force had seen its biggest increase in recruitment in many years. This had resulted in an increased local presence. Confidence levels for policing in Surrey had increased.

The Force was working to a one year funding settlement so there was an expectation to make savings.

A digital 101 service had been introduced during the pandemic which was proving to be a good and convenient service. It had had an immediate impact on demand.

The Force was resisting adopting a 'heavy stick' approach with regard to enforcement relating to Covid-19 restrictions. The Force's relationship with communities needed to endure past Covid-19 and a heavy approach would cause lasting damage. Instead officers were continuing with high level engagement and were supporting communities through this difficult time.

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The PCC expressed his appreciation to the Force and was completely behind the CC on his approach around enforcement.

The Chairman asked where the CC had gotten the maps that were included in his presentation. The CC said that they were produced by Surrey County Council as part of the Strategic Coordination Group which had been established in response to the pandemic. He offered to share them with the Committee but suggested that they may be available on the Council website.

63/2020 POSITIVE OUTCOMES (Item 9)

GL referenced the positive outcomes data and suggested that in a majority of cases the Force had done as much as they could have. A lot of the outcomes appeared to be dependent on how incidents were classified.

The CC said that this was one area where national comparisons were no longer available as all forces did things differently. However, he was under no illusion that things needed to improve. A pilot relating to the investigation structure review had had a change of area and would commence on East Surrey from January 2021.

The PCC reinforced the fact that this area needed improvement. A number of improvements had been made over the last few years such as increased recruitment which would continue, improvement in neighbourhood policing, and an improvement in crime solving although more work needed to be done in this area.

GL asked why the Home Office didn't standardise crime recording. The CC said that it was a matter of local control which was introduced when PCCs came into office in 2012. The rules around how to record crime was still centralised. The CC suggested that we might see some central control coming back following the pandemic. The PCC agreed that there was a lack of leadership by the Home Office in this area.

64/2020 AUDIT AND INSPECTION RECOMMENDATIONS (Item 16)

Part two discussion.

65/2020 EQUIP ERP PROGRAMME UPDATE (Item 17)

Part two discussion.

66/2020 BUILDING THE FUTURE PROGRAMME AND WIDER ESTATES STRATEGY UPDATE (Item 18)

Part two discussion.

67/2020 COLLABORATION UPDATE (Item 19)

Part two discussion.

68/2020 BUSINESS CONTINUITY UPDATE (Item 20a and 20b)

Part two discussion.

The meeting ended at 4.10pm