



Joint Audit Advisory Committee

Annual Report 2022

Chairman's Foreword

Welcome to the 2022 annual report of the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable's Joint Audit Advisory Committee ['the Committee'].

The Committee is an independent body that provides advice and assurance functions to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable on the effectiveness of governance, risk and audit arrangements and controls in place within the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Constabulary. The Committee achieves this by undertaking a wide range of reviews against an annual work programme. Through providing support and challenge the Committee aims to improve and add value to those areas of governance within its remit.

Due to the continued presence of COVID 19, all meetings this year have been conducted by a combination of Committee members, Auditors and staff at the Constabulary and the PCC joining in person or via video conference. As the year has progressed the number of attendees in person has increased. Hopefully next year we will see a return to full attendance in person.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) provides guidance on the role of the Committee. New guidance is expected to be issued before the end of the year. The Terms of Reference for the Committee will be updated as required, to meet the new guidance from CIPFA.

Membership of the Committee is as follows:

Chairman

Phil Bearpark is a Chartered Mechanical Engineer and has held a number of senior roles within the UK Rail Industry over the last 30 years. He still works part time in Rail and is now a Director of his own business and a Non-Executive Director of Heathrow Express. Phil is very experienced in audit, governance and risk management.

Vice-Chairman

David Gilbert is a qualified accountant who has held senior finance positions including Director of Finance and Chief Finance Officer roles in a variety of NHS Organisations. He is currently a Non-Executive Director of the Dudley Integrated Health & Care NHS Trust where he is Chair of the Audit Committee. He also an independent member of the Governance Audit and Risk Committee of the Muir Group Housing Association.

Members

Tony Snape is a Chartered Surveyor (Quantity Surveyor) who, following many years running the family building and civil engineering company, has held a variety of positions including: a consultant to Gleeds (Construction Consultants); a Non- Executive Director of the Manchester Building Society; Board Member of Great Places Housing Association. His voluntary roles have included: a Trustee of MOSI (Manchester Museum of Science and Industry) and Chair of the Seashell Trust (a charity for very disabled children) where he is still involved.

Jean Gleave is a fully qualified member of the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors. She has over 35 years of internal audit, governance, control and risk experience in both the public and private sector with roles as Head of Internal Audit at Warrington Borough Council and Salford City Council and as Chief Internal Auditor in the NHS; she has also held audit positions in private sector (insurance), and with the civil service. She is also an independent member of Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Audit & Governance Committee.

Members of the Committee bring with them a range of experience and skills which cover the various aspects of the Committee's work. Training has been available for members over the last 12 months which has ensured all members are able to contribute fully to the work of the Committee and fulfil their roles professionally.

A recruitment process will commence shortly to recruit at least one new member to the committee, as Tony Snape will be retiring in March 2023.

2021/2022

Meetings during the year have covered a wide range of topics with particular focus on monitoring the strategic risk management framework to ensure that risks were adequately assessed, recorded and mitigated where possible.

The Committee has noted the Commissioner's budget proposals and have received a detailed presentation on the Priority Based Budgeting process that is used to arrive at the final budget.

We have received copies of all finalised Internal Audit Reports prepared by the Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) and have monitored the implementation of the agreed management actions arising from these reports. Topics covered include Financial Systems, Estates Strategy and Local Policing Unit (LPU) Performance Management. The Committee has also noted the progress of work on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI). We were very pleased to receive a substantial assurance from MIAA that there is a good system of internal control designed to meet system objectives and that the controls are generally being applied consistently.

The Committee also considered the Commissioner's and the Chief Constable's Statements of Accounts and Annual Governance Statements to provide assurance that they complied with the relevant requirements. During the year members have made a number of contributions to the narrative and content of the Annual Governance Statement.

We agreed the plans of both internal and external auditors and received their reports which we have examined to ensure that Cheshire Constabulary maintains the high standards of governance, finance and audit that the people of Cheshire would expect. The Committee also monitored the implementation of recommendations agreed by management following audit progress reviews.

The Chair and Vice Chair have had meetings with Senior Staff of the PCC and Constabulary. The Chair has also met with the Commissioner and Chief Constable. The Committee is grateful to all who have given their valuable time to assist its work which has been well supported by senior staff from both the Constabulary and the Office of the PCC.

As the Committee developed, members have been asked to focus on areas

where they have a particular interest. These are areas where either the Chief Constable or the Commissioner would like some additional input or where the Committee considers that there is an issue pertinent to the Committee's work which may require further detailed attention. The members undertaking these roles are termed the 'single point of contact' for that area. Single point of contact roles have been agreed with the Commissioner and Chief Constable and are as follows:

- David Gilbert – Collaborations and budgeting
- Phil Bearpark – Business Services Future
- Tony Snape - Crime Recording and Estates
- Jean Gleave – Risk Management, Governance and Annual Governance Statement.

The future

The Committee will continue our consideration of a number of areas including developing the risk management arrangements, updates on the Medium Term Financial Strategy, reviewing recommendations from Auditors including monitoring the implementation of recommendations.

Further information

For further information on the work of the Joint Audit Advisory Committee, its Terms of Reference, Minutes and Agendas, please refer to the website of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire. <https://www.cheshire-pcc.gov.uk/search?q=audit>

Phil Bearpark – CEng MIMechE

Chairman of the Joint Audit Advisory Committee of the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable