

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR WILTSHIRE AND
CHIEF CONSTABLE OF WILTSHIRE POLICE
JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL STATEMENT 2019-20**

1. The Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) was established by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Chief Constable in 2012, implementing a recommendation in the Home Office's Financial Management Code of Practice for Police Forces.
2. The JIAC is totally independent of both the PCC and the Chief Constable and its role is to provide independent assurance to the PCC and Chief Constable on the adequacy of the governance and control processes within their organisations.
3. Each year the JIAC produces an annual statement. The last statement was issued in July 2019, covering the work of the meetings held during the period June 2018 to June 2019. This statement covers the period July 2019 to July 2020.
4. The purpose of the annual statement is to summarise the work undertaken by the Committee and to identify any significant concerns or issues.

Membership and Meetings

5. Committee Membership since June 2019 has been as follows:

Mr Keith Bellamy (Chairman)
Ms Kathryn Amey
Mr Alex Blair
Mr David Line
Mr Rohan McMillan

6. Only three meetings were held in this period due to Covid-19 (please see section below for more information). The meetings took place in June, July and November 2019. The March 2020 meeting was postponed and although the June 2020 meeting did not proceed, an agenda and papers were circulated to Members for their comment and to raise any questions for consideration by officials.
7. Attendance at the three meetings covered by this annual statement was Keith Bellamy 100%, Kathryn Amey 100%, Alex Blair 100%, David Line 66%, and Rohan McMillan 100%.
8. The Committee re-elected Keith Bellamy as JIAC Chairman at its meeting in November 2019.
9. The JIAC appreciate the attendance and contribution of both the Commissioner and the Chief Constable at its meetings. Feedback from audit committees elsewhere in the country indicates that the committee effectiveness is enhanced if both individuals play an active part in the work of the JIAC.
10. The JIAC performs its work through meetings which are open to members of the public. Agendas, reports and minutes are published on the PCC's website (www.wiltshire-pcc.gov.uk).

11. At the start of the calendar year (2020), Members requested, through the Chairman, that the JIAC amend its meeting structure and meet every quarter with an additional meeting in July to receive the final statement of accounts (previously the Committee met four times a year and structured its meetings around key dates for producing and publishing the statement of accounts). The change had been requested as Members felt that the existing meeting structure did not allow sufficient opportunity, in a timely way, to process its work in order to provide independent assurance to the Commissioner and Chief Constable. This request was well received and it was agreed that the JIAC would in future meet in March, June, July, September and December of each year.
12. In October 2019, the Committee Chairman attended a SWAP Audit workshop although it was not felt particularly useful to police Audit Committees and this was acknowledged by the workshop leader who advised that SWAP were looking to hold a specific event in the future for police audit committees.
13. The external auditors, Grant Thornton, had anticipated hosting a Members' event at the start of 2020 and one of the subject areas to be covered would be a comparison of Medium Term Financial Strategies. This did not happen as a result of Covid-19, but the piece of work is still recorded as an outstanding action and will be followed up by the Committee.
14. In January 2020, the Committee Chairman attended the OPCC and Force Strategic Change Board to observe how change management with its related risks were dealt with and managed as part of day to day business.

Covid-19

15. Early in 2020, a new coronavirus was detected (Covid-19) which in March 2020 led to the World Health Organisation declaring a worldwide pandemic and the UK entering a national lockdown. This has had a major impact on the work of the JIAC and whilst the national lockdown was gradually eased from June 2020 onwards, the effects of Covid-19 are still being strongly felt some six months on at the time of writing this report. The below provides more detail on how the work of the Committee has been impacted.

Meetings

16. As mentioned above, and as a result of Covid-19, the March meeting was postponed. Although the June meeting did not take place, an agenda and papers were produced as though the meeting were to proceed. These were distributed to all Members and the Chairman sought Members' views / comments / observations on reports so as to produce a report which would challenge the Commissioner, Chief Constable, Chief Finance Officer and both internal and external auditors as they would have done had the meeting taken place. The questions / observations made by Members and the responses to these have been documented so as to form an audit trail and demonstrate the work of the Committee.

Members Briefing Session – Annual Self-Assessment and Workplan

17. The Members Briefing Session scheduled for April 2020 was postponed and is currently due to take place in November 2020. The JIAC use this Briefing Session to undertake an annual self-assessment and develop a workplan for the calendar year

ahead. It has not been possible to do that for this year due to the postponement of the Briefing Session.

Statement of Accounts

18. The deadline for publishing the statement of accounts was impacted on by Covid-19 and legislation was published detailing revised dates by which time draft and final accounts should be published.
19. The JIAC met virtually in July 2020 primarily to receive the draft statement of accounts but the committee also took the opportunity to consider the full range of agenda items, including the noting of the detailed answers to the questions raised as part of the offline June meeting. The Chief Finance Officer and Senior Accounting Technician provided a briefing and took Members through the accounts in detail prior to the Committee meeting proper a process which has been conducted with every set of accounts since the JIAC has formed.
20. The final statement of accounts will be presented to JIAC at the September meeting which will also take place virtually. The outcome of these will be reported in the JIAC annual report for 2020-21.

Key Findings, Developments and Issues from 2019-20

Engagement with the Commissioner and the Chief Constable

21. The Commissioner and the Chief Constable both have regular slots on the Committee agenda which provides them with the opportunity to update Members on latest developments and operational matters. The Members welcome this and will appropriately question and challenge the Commissioner and Chief Constable.

PCC and Force Risk Registers

22. The PCC risk register is reviewed monthly on an informal basis and on a formal basis at quarterly meetings of the OPCC Executive Leadership Team and the Commissioner's Monitoring Board. The Commissioner presents and reports the risk register to JIAC providing additional information on an exception basis with regard to all high and moderate risks.
23. The Force risk register is presented to the JIAC by the Chief Finance Officer providing additional information on an exception basis.
24. The two risk registers form a key part of Committee meetings with Members providing scrutiny and challenge. This allows for informed and insightful discussions to take place and, where appropriate, further updates or more detailed reports can be requested at future meetings.

External Audit – Grant Thornton – Statement of Accounts

25. The issuing of the Auditor's opinion on the statement of accounts for 2019-20 would be delayed this year as a result of Covid-19. A draft set of final accounts will be presented to the JIAC meeting scheduled for September and a further Joint Audit Findings report by Grant Thornton would be issued to Members prior to their deadline date of 30 November 2020 by which time they need to issue their opinion.

Internal Audit – South West Audit Partnership (SWAP)

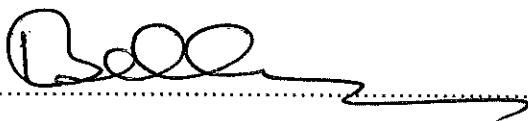
- 26. During the reporting year, the Committee had raised concerns with regard to the lack of continuity in the -attendance of an auditor. The individual attending differed too frequently and Members felt this was not conducive to reports presented by SWAP and when Members wished to challenge those reports, findings or recommendations. Discussions have been held with a senior SWAP official and assurances have been obtained about delivering better continuity going forward.
- 27. There was also some concern relating to the issuing of final audit reports. In November 2019 (eight months into the financial year) very few final audit reports had been issued.
- 28. The Committee Chairman met with the new SWAP Chief Executive at the end of July and provided feedback on how SWAP were engaging with the Committee and issues which were causing concern. It was agreed that the SWAP Chief Executive would be invited to a future meeting of the Committee which is currently scheduled for June 2021.
- 29. At the July 2020 meeting and in their Annual Opinion report, SWAP gave a 'reasonable annual opinion' to both the Commissioner and the Chief Constable. There were no significant issues identified by internal audit that required inclusion in the Annual Governance Statement.
- 30. Eleven audits had been conducted in the 2019-20 financial year, one of which was a follow-up audit.
- 31. Of the ten audits remaining, four received 'reasonable' opinion, one was given a 'substantial' opinion, four were considered 'advisory', and one opinion was still to be issued. No high risks were identified.
- 32. Due to an administration error at SWAP, the Commissioner had not been charged for the increase in budgeted days for audit delivery in 2019-20. However, SWAP had not been able to deliver the increased days either so this arrangement would now commence from the 2020-21 financial year.

Specific Areas of Note

33. JIAC Performance

The Committee had invited, as part of the annual review and briefing session, the Commissioner, Chief Constable, Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Executive, external and internal auditors to assess how well the JIAC was performing against CIPFA guidelines. The intention is that this would be done in advance of the Members Briefing Session so Members could identify potential development areas for inclusion in their annual workplan. This work had been impacted upon as a result of Covid-19 but the aim is to complete this work in time for the re-arranged Briefing Session in November.

Chairman Signature:



Keith Bellamy

Date:

2/10/20