

**Draft West Mercia Joint Audit and Standards Committee (JASC) Meeting (via Telephone Conference Call) - Minutes.**

<b>Date:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
<b>Chair:</b>	Lynne Duffy
<b>Minute Taker:</b>	Alison Rixom

**Audit Committee Members**

	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Capacity:</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	Lynne Duffy (LD)	Chair, Committee Member
	Alan Day (AD)	Vice Chair, Committee Member
	Pierre de Carteret (PdC)	Committee Member

**Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner**

	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Capacity:</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	Liz Hall (LH)	Treasurer, West Mercia
	Tracey Onslow (TLO)	DPCC, West Mercia
	Alison Rixom (AR)	Secretary, OPCC, West Mercia

**Force**

	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Capacity:</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	Anthony Bangham (AB)	CC, West Mercia
	Richard Muirhead (RM)	Head of Commercial Services (CFO), West Mercia
	Elaine Peberdy (EP)	Head of Audit, Risk & Compliance, West Mercia

**Internal Audit**

	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Capacity:</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	Paul Clarke (PC)	Internal Auditor

**External Audit**

	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Capacity:</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	Laurelin Griffiths (LG)	External Auditor

	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Capacity:</b>
<b>Apologies:</b>	John Campion (JPC)	PCC, West Mercia
	Andy Champness (AC)	CEO, West Mercia
	Julian Moss (JM)	DCC, West Mercia

	Dawn Nichol (DN)	Committee Member
	Tim Power (TP)	Head of Strategy, Planning & Insight (SPI), West Mercia
	Alex Walling (AW)	Grant Thornton

### **Open Session**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Action</b>
01/07/04/20	<b>Attendance/Apologies.</b> See above. Introductions were made.	
02/07/04/20	<b>Committee Members' Declaration of Personal Prejudicial Interests.</b> <i>Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their personal interests at the commencement of the relevant item (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a prejudicial interest the member must withdraw from the room unless one of the exceptions applies.</i>  None declared.	
03/07/04/20	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and any matters arising</b> (paper).  It was stated that DCC Moss left the February meeting part way through due to an emergency incident meeting he needed to attend, but was given the opportunity to comment on any of the remaining items left on the agenda. This was not reflected in the minutes. Members agreed for the previous minutes to be amended.  EP requested that her job title be amended to Head of Audit, Risk and Compliance.  The minutes were recorded as accurate.	<b>AR</b>
04/07/04/20	<b>External Auditors – Progress Report</b> (Verbal Update).  LG provided a verbal update. The external auditors are currently working on 2 years' worth of audits in respect of the Statement of Accounts, one for 2018/19 and one for 2019/20.	

	<p>2018/19 is nearing completion just waiting for assessments that management are required to undertake. It is substantially complete.</p> <p>2019/20 – The planning is finalised and testing was undertaken during February and March. Since then due to COVID-19 staff have been working remotely which has prevented some work being completed.</p> <p><b>Action: LG to work closely with LH and RM to ensure that planning work is completed.</b></p> <p>It was stated that the dead line had been moved for 2019/20 to the end of August 2020 for the draft accounts and November 2020 for final accounts.</p> <p>It was stated that with regards to the end of August 2020 deadline the guidance states that for Category 1 it will be September 2020 and Category 2 will be November. LG believed that West Mercia PCC and Police would fall under Category 2.</p> <p><b>Action: LG to confirm with LH and continue to discuss during these unprecedented times.</b></p>	<p><b>LG/LH/RM</b></p> <p><b>LG</b></p>
05/07/04/20	<p><b>External Audit – 2019/20 External Audit Fee Letters</b> (Verbal Update).</p> <p>The Audit Fee Letters were circulated at the last meeting, therefore a verbal update was provided. Approval for the increase in audit fees cannot be agreed as discussions are taking place and the relevant work has yet to be completed.</p> <p>Additional information has been provided. However no information has been provided on the actual calculation of the increase in fees. Grant Thornton provide this to PSAA. <b>Action: LH to contact PSAA and discuss the new audit fee agreements and seek further guidance.</b></p> <p>It was agreed by members that pending further information from the Treasurer this would remain on hold.</p>	<p><b>LH</b></p>
06/07/04/20	<p><b>Internal Audit Report 2019/20</b> (Paper).</p> <p>The internal audit report was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The paper provides a review of the Audit Plan for 20/21. It was stated that due to COVID-19 arriving at the start of the new financial year there is uncertainty as to the impact this will have on the</p>	

	<p>20/21 plan, therefore there will be a need to further review the plan as events unfold.</p> <p>The document provides the new committee members with context as to the requirements of the audit plan. This is to provide assurance to West Mercia PCC, the Force and the new committee set out the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.</p> <p>In addition the revised Financial Management Code of Practice recommends that PCCs and Chief Constables have a shared internal audit service covering both bodies. It also outlines the role of Internal Audit.</p> <p>It was confirmed that consultations have been held with Management, the PCC and Chief Constable and a work plan will be put together.</p> <p>The work plan for 20/21 provides 3 specific audits for the PCC and then moves to the larger plan for the Force.</p> <p>The other 2 annex's provides illustrations of auditable topics not planned for 2020/21 and the role of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP).</p> <p>A question was asked as to whether the risk management for the PCC was a general risk or were the audit team looking for something more specific. It was confirmed that it would consider the risk management within the OPCC. Risk management within the Force had recently been reviewed. Management of the risks inherent in terminating the Alliance risk will form part of that audit.</p> <p>It was stated that the audit is allowing 20 days for Leadership Development with the Force, it was asked whether this will consider arrangements during and following the termination of the Alliance and the establishment of "stand alone" West Mercia services. It was confirmed that this will be looked at and will reflect the changes taking place.</p> <p>It was stated that the Audit Plan is normally presented at the West Mercia Governance meeting. This will be considered at the May meeting. This may allow the Board to consider the impact of the Lockdown due to COVID-19.</p>	
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07/07/04/20	<p><b>Internal Audit – Progress against 2019/202 internal Audit Plan</b> (Paper).</p> <p>The Internal Audit Progress against 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan was circulated prior to the meeting. The report summarises the progress against the agreed Internal Audit plan to the end of February and proposes changes to the plan to cover the period up to 31 March 2020.</p> <p>The impact of COVID-19 means that Internal Audit are unable to progress some of the work taking place and that we will be 19 days short which will mean 95% complete. Some work has been undertaken and Internal Audit are looking at how they can draw conclusions to the end of the year on work completed taking into account people working at home. An annual report will be produced.</p> <p>A question was raised regarding the abstraction rates with the Audit staff in respect of COVID-19. It was confirmed that all resources were still in place. Some of the work is proving difficult to progress as people are difficult to liaise with due to changes in working arrangements.</p> <p>A question was raised with regards to the final sentence of Item 9 of the report and whether the Committee need to be aware of the issues. This states <i>“Progress to date has been hampered by the focus of managers on the structural changes arising from the alliance termination and delivery of the audit plan is dependent on the cooperation of managers”</i>. PC stated that it has been a challenging year in terms of management resource and progressing pieces of work. This was due to three major events, the Alliance Termination, Floods and COVID-19.</p> <p>PC was asked if there will be an early warning of any slippages. He confirmed that progress is slow, some work is complete, but there will be an overhang into April 2020, but he will still be able to produce some information. It is just an unfortunate set of circumstances.</p>	
08/07/04/20	<p><b>West Mercia Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Draft</b> (Paper).</p> <p>The draft AGSs for both the Force and the PCC were circulated prior to the meeting.</p>	

	<p>Both documents are waiting for two key opinions – the external auditor’s opinion for 2018/19 and the internal auditor’s opinion for 2019/20. The documents will be amended and brought back to the Audit Committee as early as possible.</p> <p>A questions was raised as to what will happen if the two opinions are not received due to COVID-19. It was confirmed that the revised date for completion of the Statement of Accounts is 31 August 2020 so LH does not believe there will be an issue.</p> <p><b>Action: All members to email any questions or comments on the AGS to LH prior to the next meeting.</b></p>	ALL
09/07/04/20	<p><b>OPCC Strategic Risk Register</b> (Paper). The OPCC Strategic Risk Register was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>It was stated that an amendment has been made to include a specific risk for COVID-19 risk. This will be a work in progress and we will assess the impact as it happens.</p> <p>An update was provided regarding the ICT arrangements. It was confirmed that ICT will be able to support the OPCC and the Force and ICT are currently working to improve working from home capacity. IT providers have been contacted additional broadband capacity has been secured and additional Firewall licences purchased. There are currently ongoing tests with alternative routes/arrangements via Citrix.</p> <p>It was confirmed that there is a relatively low percentage of staff working from home (1%), but it is critical that it remains a Strategic Risk.</p> <p>A question was asked as to how many staff were off within the Force with COVID-19. It was confirmed that it was a low percentage, but a higher percentage of staff were isolating due to family issues. Overall it is a much lower percentage than projected, but the virus is only now spreading in Worcestershire. This county has the highest level of infections in West Mercia with Herefordshire being the lowest. These levels of infection are expected to increase within the next few weeks.</p>	

10/07/04/20	<b>(West Mercia Risk Map (open item) (Paper).</b> The West Mercia Risk Map was circulated and noted. It was stated that this had been prepared in February and the risk map has subsequently been updated to include COVID-19.	
11/07/04/20	<b>Standards Update (Paper).</b> A Standards update paper was circulated prior to the meeting.  No questions were raised.	
12/07/04/20	<b>Members Points.</b> <i>The Chair has requested that members be given the opportunity to raise queries on subjects or issues which are not necessarily agenda items.</i>  None raised.	
13/07/04/20	<b>AOB.</b>  <b>Proposed Meeting Dates - LH</b> The proposed meeting dates for 2020 formed part of the agenda and it was stated that these may change. A meeting will be arranged at the end of May/beginning of June to discuss the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts. A note from the Government has been received with changes to the deadlines for the 2019/20 Statements of Accounts. The proposed Committee dates will be reviewed in the light of these changes. <b>Action: LH to discuss the deadlines with External Auditors and update the meeting dates when confirmed.</b>	<b>LH</b>
	<b>CIPFA Review – LH/RM</b>  The Force and the PCC are leading on a CIPFA review and requested that the Chair of the JASC and another member take part in the review.  It was agreed that LD (Chair) and AD (Deputy Chair) would be the nominated members.	
14/07/04/20	<b>Date, Time and Location of the next meeting.</b> <b>TBC (end of May 2020/Beginning of June 2020)</b>	<b>RT/AR</b>

**Closed Items (not for external publication).**

Item No.	Summary	Action
01/26/02/20	<p><b>Strategic Risk</b> (Paper). The Strategic Risk Register was circulated, noted and explained.</p> <p>It was confirmed that a risk in respect of COVID-19 had been added and was highlighted as the highest risk. The Force was looking to minimise the impact on health and was working with Public Health and other Agencies. A Force Gold Group has been set up along with Gold, Silver and Bronze groups for all agencies.</p> <p>OCC go live – the Force is still working towards delivery in mid-June. Technical Architecture – there are ongoing issues. Funding Issue – a settlement is now agreed with Warwickshire. Authorised Firearms Officer – no update was given.</p> <p>A question was raised with regards to Firearms Training and whether it was continuing. It was confirmed that this training has ceased during COVID-19 and will be re-scheduled when applicable.</p>	
	<p><b>Praise and Thanks to the Force</b> The JASC members expressed their appreciation to all Force Officers. It was agreed that a letter be sent from the Chair and Committee Members to the Chief Constable asking him to pass on their appreciation to all Officers and Staff for their hard work during this unprecedented time.</p> <p><b>Action: LD to arrange the letter from members.</b></p>	LD

The meeting closed at 11:30