**OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE**

**JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE**

21st March 2024

Present: Mrs D Turner (Chair) - Business Assurance Framework and Sustainability Lead

Dr J Wademan (Vice Chair) - ICT and Change/Project Management Lead

Mr A Blackmore – Risk Management and Treasury Management Lead

Mr G Watts Finance and External Audit Lead

Mr A Johns – Internal Audit, Governance and Estates Lead

Together with: Mr J Cuthbert – Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)

Ms E Thomas – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)

Mrs S Curley – Chief Executive (CEx)

Mrs J Regan – Head of Assurance and Compliance (HoAC)

Mr N Stephens – Assistant Chief Officer – Resources (ACOR)

Mr M Hobrough – Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)

Ms V Townsend, Chief Superintendent, Head of Continuous Improvement (HoCI)

Mr M Thomas, Superintendent - Head of Criminal Justice (HoCJ)

Ms Karen Thomas – Change Management Manager (CMM)

Mr M Coe – Head of Finance and interim Section 151 Officer for the OPCC – (HoF)

Ms A Quartermaine – Head of Human Resources (HoHR)

Ms S Jones-Hughes – Strategic Welsh Language Policy Manager – (SWLPM)

Mr S Gourlay – TIAA (TIAA1)

Ms F Roe – TIAA (TIAA2)

Ms Nia Brennan - Assistant Director – Head of Joint Legal Services

(HoLS)

Mr D Williams– Audit Wales (AW)

Mrs N Warren – Governance Officer (GO)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The meeting was held in Yew Room and on Teams and commenced at 10:00am. | **Action** |
| 1. **FAREWELL MESSAGE** |  |
| As it was the ACOR and PCC’s final meeting, Joint Audit Committee (JAC) members thanked them for the experience and value they were able to bring to the meeting and wished them well in their future endeavours.  The JAC ICT Lead reiterated her thanks to the ACOR given the high level of assurance he had been able to provide in relation to ICT and for facilitating their ICT meetings with the Shared Resource Services (SRS) to reinforce that.  The ACOR thanked the JAC for their support and challenge during his time on the Committee. | **Action** |
| We agreed to take item 25 next, Review of Terms of Reference |  |
| 1. **REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE** |  |
| We received an update on the Terms of Reference (ToR).  The HoAC informed us that the ToR had been reviewed and the amended report had been shared with JAC members prior to the meeting. There were two subsequent amendments to be made as follows:   * The Chair would undertake the Annual Performance Reviews for JAC members, the CFO and ACC would undertake the review for the Chair. * The ‘Chair and Vice Chair will be elected’ would be amended to ‘Chair and Vice Chair will be confirmed’ – This was because the opportunity to appoint an external Chair outside of existing membership had been added to the terms as part of the review.   JAC queried if JAC membership numbers would be reduced should an external Chair be appointed and the HoAC confirmed the Chair would be in addition to existing members, unless they were recruiting new members due to their tenure concluding or a member decided to leave, as the new member could be recruited as Chair.  It was agreed the final ToR would be presented at the June JAC meeting, when the newly elected PCC was expected to be in attendance. | **HoAC**  **Go/HoAC** |
| 1. **APPOINT CHAIR** |  |
| The ACOR informed us as per the Joint Audit Committee ToR, the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair needed to be undertaken annually.  In accordance with the revised ToR the JAC members agreed to nominate the current Chair, Mrs D Turner to the role for the coming financial year; she accepted the nomination and subsequent appointment to the role of Chair. We thanked the Chair for her work in guiding the Committee over the previous four years. |  |
| 1. **APPOINT VICE CHAIR** |  |
| Mr G Watts was nominated and accepted the appointment as Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.  The Chair thanked Dr Janet Wademan for her work as Vice-Chair. |  |
| 1. **CHIEF OFFICER CHANGES** | **Action** |
| We received a paper illustrating the changes to Chief Officer roles over the next six months to undertake the ACOR’s portfolio following his retirement. Acting ACC McLain had recently completed a Senior Leadership course and was due to return to undertake the ACOR role. Other Chief Officer changes were also taking place from September 2024, as the Chief Constable had also announced her intention to retire.  Succession planning was being reviewed and support was being put in place to assist Acting ACC McLain for the interim period. However, the role was primarily a staff role and not that of a Chief Officer and therefore the plan was to appoint a member of staff in the long term. Acting ACC McLain would attend future JAC meetings as ACC (Organisational) but not in the capacity of the Section 151 Officer element of the role. Therefore, the HoF would be commencing the Section 151 Officer responsibilities from the 1st May 2024 as well as managing the Estate and Facilities department.  The Force were considering a joint Head of ICT with South Wales Police (SWP) given the level of shared services.  JAC acknowledged these changes were significant and the expertise and scrutiny of the JAC Lead roles would be vitally important in ensuring support and challenge. |  |
| 1. **APOLOGIES** |  |
| Apologies for absence were received from Ms P Kelly, Chief Constable, Ms R Williams, Deputy Chief Constable, Mr R Harries, Audit Wales, Ms H Williams, Audit Wales, Mr G Gray, His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Force Liaison Lead and Mr M Corcoran, Internal Audit, Torfaen County Borough Council. |  |
| 1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** |  |
| There were no advance declarations made in relation to the business to be transacted. |  |
| 1. **MINUTES** |  |
| The minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2023 and the 7th December 2023 were received and confirmed. |  |
| 1. **ACTIONS** |  |
| We received and noted the actions from the meeting held on 27th November and 7th December 2023 and actions outstanding from earlier meetings.  **Action 8, 8th December 2022, Annual Code of Ethics Compliance Report.** Having reviewed the new Code of Ethics (CoE) the Chair stated it appeared to contain some inconsistent narrative. The DPCC informed the Committee that elements of the CoE had been challenged by the previous Home Secretary and adjustments made accordingly. The DPCC welcomed observations from the Chair to support its implementation within the Force.  **Action 3, 8th March 2024, Headquarters Update.** Having reviewed the Headquarters Post Occupancy Evaluation Report the following amendments were noted:   * Page 12, Security, 4th paragraph, ‘Reasonability lies with’ should read ‘Responsibility lies with’ * 3. Building performance, 3rd row, 1st paragraph - ‘through the automated vents which will entrail fresh air’ should read ‘through the automated vents which will circulate fresh air’   The JAC Estates Lead requested clarification on the use of the acronym JLS within the Desk Utilisation of Over 2 weeks chart, Page 17, and noted JLS lack of desk usage. The ACOR confirmed the acronym was in reference to Joint Legal Services and the original estimated desk usage was less than planned due to JLS being a joint service with SWP and their working from home. Many of the original estimations also differed, therefore desk usage was being monitored and procedures amended accordingly to ensure they were being used efficiently.  JAC asked if the Force were disappointed by the responses in the staff survey. The ACOR explained the survey was conducted at the early stages when employees were returning to work following covid restrictions to a new open plan office environment and having to adapt to agile working, so it was a cultural change for them. There were some areas where the open plan areas were not deemed suitable due to the sensitive nature of the work and subsequent changes were made as a result to ensure such departments were situated in confidential zones. Although, the survey responses were not as positive as they could have been, it was expected the responses would improve by the next annual survey due to the changes made and employees having had more time to familiarise themselves with the building.  The JAC Chair asked if the survey responses and subsequent actions taken had been communicated to employees, the ACOR confirmed they had.  The JAC Estates Lead queried if the survey response rates were representative of officers and staff. The ACOR confirmed the responses were not disproportionate.  A query was raised regarding the expiry of the retainer period of the Headquarters build contract and the ACOR confirmed the Force had retained £388k of the project funding as the building contractor had not responded to their request to address the remaining snagging schedule within the agreed 12 month contractual requirement. Discussions with the contractor were ongoing regarding the outstanding snagging schedule and how this could be addressed.  The JAC ICT Lead asked what had been done within the organisation to address parking issues to ensure employees were using the multi-storey carpark and were not disrupting businesses nearby. The ACOR assured us the multi-storey carpark was well used, although some members of staff were parking on the streets as there were no double yellow lines to prohibit this and it was causing an issue for some local businesses. A request had been communicated to employees to be more considerate, it was to be escalated further and individuals would be spoken to directly. JAC asked if this lack of consideration was applicable to the building usage itself and fellow employees. The ACOR confirmed the building was treated respectfully. However, there were still a few teething issues that needed to be addressed such as the use of airlock doors as opposed to staff using the accessible access door, which was quicker.  The JAC External Audit Lead sought assurance the Committee would have sight of the actions taken in relation to the recommendations in section 7 and 8 of theHeadquarters Post Occupancy Evaluation Report. The ACOR agreed to provide a record of what action had been taken and when it was completed. It was acknowledged this would assist when the next survey was undertaken. | **Action**  **ACOR**  **Action**  **ACOR** |
| 1. The information contained in the report(s) below has been subjected to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 2018 and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent’s public interest test and was deemed to be exempt from publication under section 7. |  |
| 1. **TO DISCUSS NEW RISKS AND CHANGES TO RISK RATINGS** |  |
| We received the Risk Register.  The HoCI informed us the CMM would present the register at future JAC meetings while she was on maternity leave.  The subsequent proposal to separate the risks and issues had been agreed as illustrated in the report.  The key issues and risks were highlighted including a change of timeframe for the Crime Data Integrity issue as the Force had reached a 91% compliance rate by January as opposed to the 92% target. A further review was to be conducted in April 2024.  It was anticipated that the recruitment target for Detective Constables would be met by the end of March 2024 and the high level issue would be reduced to a medium rating. The Welsh Language Standards issue was also expected to be reduced to a medium rating subject to approval of the Chief Officer Team (COT).  There were 4 new issues including Data Compliance Phone Migration receiving a medium rating, which was expected to be reduced to low this week. Firearms licencing had received a medium rating due to a backlog and this was being monitored by the Force. Go Safe income received a high rating and consideration was being given to the issue. The Learning Management System risk was to be reviewed jointly with SWP in order to improve reporting on skills and capacity.  The CCTV ICO Accreditation risk was expected to be closed subject to approval of the COT.  A new risk regarding Collision and investigation ISO Accreditation had been added to the register, it was initially rated as a high risk, however, following recruitment of two new posts, it had been rated as medium and it was expected that the required standards and compliance in relation to accreditations would be met.  The JAC Risk Lead thanked the HoCI for her comprehensive update and acknowledged the improved report format, given the ease at which the relevant information could be obtained, particularly the desired outcome and the milestones and was assured by the risks and issues being authorised by the DCC on specific dates. | **GO**  **Action** |
| 1. **WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS RISK DEEP DIVE – PRESENTATION** |  |
| We received a presentation on the Welsh Language Standards risk.  We were advised the Strategic Welsh Language Policy Manager (SWLPM) was a collaborative role with South Wales Police (SWP). Following the appointment of the SWLPM significant progress had been made to address the Welsh Language Compliance risk. Working collaboratively ensured that Forces could share good practice.  The Chief Constable (CC) is keen to offer a bilingual service and there are opportunities for employees to learn Welsh. The Force have committed to improving the range of Welsh Language services offered, increasing the number of Welsh speakers employed and to work to identify other areas for improvement.  Gwent Police received their compliance notice in September 2016 which includes 171 Welsh Language standards. By December 2023, there were 9 high risk areas outstanding. Following a substantial amount of work by the SWLPM with the relevant department leads, these issues had been addressed and risk ratings were reduced from medium or low, so it had been recommended that the risk be removed from the risk register.  The SWLPM met with the Welsh Language Commissioner recently and areas of exemplary practice were identified which could be shared with other public bodies.  Further work was planned to increase awareness of the Welsh Language and productivity, some of which included the development of Teaching and Learning packages, attendance at National Networks and external engagements and events.  The CEx assured us the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) were also supported by the SWLPM in relation to complying with their Welsh Language Standards.  The JAC Internal Audit Lead referred to the joint role with SWP and asked if Gwent were an outlier or similar to SWP in terms of their compliance with the standards. It was explained that although Gwent were similar, there were some differences such as the number of Welsh speakers in SWP compared to Gwent. Although, the Section 22 collaboration agreement provided the opportunity to share exemplary practice between both Forces to further improve standards.  The JAC internal Audit Lead asked if there were sufficient Welsh Speakers in the Force Control Room (FCR) to answer 101 and 999 calls as it was likely that calls would be made to check. The HoHR confirmed the Welsh Language Commissioner had conducted that element of work and their findings were discussed in February 2024. There were areas to develop further, one being the need to increase the number of Welsh speakers in the FCR but overall, the Force were providing an adequate service. Welsh speakers are in high demand and work was being undertaken to increase the number of Welsh Speakers via as many avenues as possible.  The JAC External Audit Lead acknowledged that a significant amount of work had taken place over a short space of time and suggested the report on exemplary practice should be highlighted as a good news story and shared with JAC.  The JAC External Audit Lead welcomed the intention to join the National Networks as they could learn from other organisations such as North Wales Police. The SWLPM explained that one of the areas identified as exemplary practice was the establishment of a National Area Network with the police and Welsh Language Leads and another for translators.  The ‘Cymraeg i Bawb’ ‘Welsh for All’ concept was also welcomed as it could be an emotive topic for members of the public and by ensuring employees were able to respond in Welsh to state they would pass the call on to a Welsh speaker would demonstrate good will.  The JAC External Audit Lead referred to the increase in Welsh Medium schools in South East Wales and suggested it would be beneficial to engage with schools in terms of raising awareness of roles in the Force for recruiting in the future. The SWLPM assured the Committee that she was working with a Force School Liaison Officer, a fluent Welsh speaker, to ensure appropriate awareness raising messaging was being conveyed.  The JAC ICT Lead referred to the practical challenges of learning Welsh to assist the force with current training arrangements.  The ACOR agreed to provide details of the courses.  JAC thanked the SWLPM for the presentation and were pleased with progress made to manage the risk. | **Action**  **HoHR/**  **SWLPM**  **Action** |
| 1. **EVIDENTIAL STORAGE ACTION PLAN UPDATE** |  |
| We received the Evidential Storage Action Plan Update.  Regular sweeps of the main evidential property stores were taking place to ensure storage levels did not rise again.  There had been a significant reduction in the number of items with expired review dates which stood at 11% as opposed to 48% in the last quarter. It was explained that there would always be a small percentage of items outside of the expiry dates due to sickness absences or annual leave.  The Force had reviewed 380 cases in relation to monies seized and as a result £135,000 had been transferred to the Home Office (HO) and £3,500 had been returned to the owners.  The new property element of the Niche policing system was on target for implementation on the 2nd April 2024. Training had been arranged and undertaken. Users would not be able to populate the existing evidential property software system after the 1st April and would use the new one from the 2nd April 2024.  A review of the old property system would take place to ensure any relevant items were transferred to the new Niche system.  The overall volume of evidential property had reduced to under 51,000 items compared to 64,000 items in the previous quarter. The review of these items had resulted in an increase in the number of owners of property that needed to be contacted to return items.  JAC requested the expected timeframe for the risks to be removed from the risk register. The HoCJD explained there would be element of time required for the new Niche property element to be embedded so the management of evidential property element risk could potentially be removed in June 2024 following evaluation of the transition. The volume of evidential property risk could also be removed June 2024. The estate for evidential property risk was likely to be resolved by September 2024.  JAC asked what percentage was deemed as acceptable in terms of evidential property items being outside of their expiry date. The HoCJD explained that he was not yet in a position to confirm a specific percentage until the new Niche evidential property system had been embedded which would ascertain if the automated notification reminder process was working as planned.  JAC asked how long owners had to request their items and the HoCJD confirmed owners had 14 days to collect the item following the police contacting them about it. JAC asked if any of the items were sold if not collected by the owners or were they all disposed of securely. It confirmed that some of the items were auctioned via a national process used by Forces.  JAC were assured the plan was progressing well. Therefore, it was agreed this agenda item would be presented to JAC in July as opposed to June 2024. | **Action**  **GO** |
| 1. **INTERNAL AUDIT (TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL) – DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN AND IT SYSTEMS REPORT** |  |
| We received the Disaster Recovery (DR) Plan and IT systems report.  All audits were on plan and were discussed with the JAC ICT Lead on the 20th March 2024.  The ACOR acknowledged resilience arrangements for potential component and systems failure had been a concern for JAC and referred to the chart demonstrating where resilience had been built in.  There were multiple points of resilience built in for headquarters and officers had sim cards within their laptops and staff could work from home should there be a system failure in other stations enabling business continuity.  The collaborative network shared with SWP was to be replaced going forward.  Work on resilience and DR was focused on platinum level services and systems defined by Gwent Police requiring platinum availability as indicated within the report.  The JAC ICT Lead referred to the recent ICT meeting with the ACOR and SRS and was assured by progress made overall and by their response to her questions regarding the testing of the DR system in that the Force had planned a phased approach. However, it was noted resourcing the planned action could be a risk if other issues were considered a higher priority, delaying the testing. |  |
| 1. **INTERNAL AUDIT (TIAA)- INFORMATION DISCLOSURE REPORT** |  |
| We received the TIAA Review of Information Disclosure report.  The JAC External Audit Lead raised concerns regarding potential reputational damage to the force by not fully complying with this highly legislated area. The root causes mainly appeared to relate to the lack of resources and retention of staff, so JAC members suggested this area needed to be addressed.  JAC asked what level of risk this posed to the Force and sought assurance that mitigation had been put in place since the review in November 2023.  The ACOR assured JAC members that he monitored this area of work as Chair of the Information Assurance Board (IAB), the main issue related to Freedom and Information Requests (FOI) and Subject Access request (SAR) compliance. Disclosure Reports were presented at these meetings for scrutiny and also escalated to Chief Officers. This topic was also tabled for discussion at a recent Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) Scrutiny Board.  The ACOR assured JAC the risk had been recognised by the Force. Although the process of relaying the request to the relevant department for information was straightforward, the information was not always forthcoming. A schedule of outstanding requests by department had recently been sent to Chief Officers to address the lack of response within their area. There were only 1 or 2 areas with a large backlog that were overdue, however, there were over 20 departments with 1 or 2 outstanding requests for information.  There were monthly reports provided on this information so the Information Commissioners Office could issue a fine if action was not taken. It was explained that some employees had recently returned from sick leave. In addition to FOI and SAR, the Disclosure Team also responded to a broad number of requests including disclosure requests to Courts. This often took priority due to safeguarding requirements.  Following receipt of the TIAA report, a project was commenced by the Business Change department to review the processes undertaken by the Disclosure Team to support resource modelling to determine if the capacity levels needed to change within the team.  The ACOR referred to the TIAA review recommending the Force establish a Centre of Excellence which would enable the use of tools within Office365. One of the tools would provide a redaction facility to scan through redacted information to check for accuracy of a large report within a minimal timeframe. Another tool that could potentially be utilised was the Co-pilot tool to review documentation on a Sharepoint site to assist with obtaining the requested information more efficiently. The Force would look to implement this functionality prior to employing further resources.  The JAC ICT Lead suggested this could be test case to share innovation in public service and asked if there was a potential funding opportunity to fast track the technology. The ACOR explained that a bid had been made for Science Technology Analysis and Research (STAR) funding and it was declined as the changes may be innovative for the Force but may not be innovative for other organisations.  The CMM informed JAC that data mapping processes were nearing completion and there were other efficiencies that could be implemented such as automated request reminders. As the Office365 system was still very new to the Force, new processes were being identified to further improve efficiency that needed to be tested prior to the final structure of the disclosure department being confirmed.  The JAC Internal Audit Lead requested information on the Data Barring Service (DBS) in order to provide assurance that there were no issues of concern in this area as the outcomes were excluded from the audit. The ACOR agreed to provide the Disclosure and Compliance Highlight report which included detail of DBS data illustrating the main issue related to FOIs and SARs and not DBS.  The JAC Internal Audit Lead referred to issues raised in the media regarding robustness of the recruitment process in that issues were missed during vetting processes and asked if this was an issue in Gwent. The ACOR assured JAC members all officers and staff were vetted prior to being appointed and His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) also reviewed vetting processes, the Force have to a duty to provide them with monthly returns and receive site visits. So should the Force miss a target, HMICFRS would be aware and raise the issue.  The HoCI confirmed there was also a National Vetting and Corruption report containing national thematic expectations to all forces and localised expectations. All of localised force expectations had been approved in Gwent, 3 of the national expectations localised to Gwent had been approved by the HMICFRS and 3 more were expected to be approved this week, the remaining 2 issues related to national system issues that Gwent had no control over. However, the HMICFRS have acknowledged that vetting systems in Gwent were fit for purpose and were higher than the national standard.  The JAC ICT Lead asked if the Management response to the audit could have been more comprehensive as it appeared to be modest given the responses to their questions. The ACOR confirmed the response was submitted prior to the additional scrutiny being introduced, more work was being undertaken to respond to the recommendations.  JAC members suggested that Information Disclosure Compliance should be added to the risk register and the ACOR agreed.  It was agreed this Information Disclosure report item should be tabled for the following JAC meeting in June. | **Action**  **Action**  **ACOR**  **HoCI**  **ACOR** |
| 1. The information contained in the report(s) below has been deemed not to be subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent’s public interest test and is deemed not to be exempt from publication under Section 7 | **Action** |
| 1. **INTERNAL AUDIT (TIAA)** |  |
| We received the Update Report and the Draft Internal Audit Strategy 2024/25.  The JAC Chair referred to the Review of Collaborative Risk Management and asked if the paper could be presented to JAC to discuss how the reasonable assurance rating could be raised to substantial. We agreed it would be tabled for the following JAC meeting.  TIAA1 informed us the main concern was being able to complete the audits on time. There were couple of audits outstanding that were to be carried over into early April 2024. The fieldwork would have commenced prior to that.  The JAC Chair informed us that the JAC members were aware that the procurement process for Internal Audit for the 4 Welsh forces had started. The ACOR explained the planned audit programme had been submitted to TIAA subject to them being awarded the tender. The 8th April 2024 was the closing date for tender submission.  JAC members requested information on who would be receiving the presentations on the 15th April 2024. The ACOR agreed to provide details of the composition of the panel.  The Chair informed the Committee that she had attended a discussion with Chairs from the other Audit Committees to discuss Internal Audit provision and also requested feedback from her fellow JAC members on the matter. It was agreed the responses from our JAC members would be shared with the CFO.  The JAC Finance Lead acknowledged there were slightly fewer finance audits in the plan for the following year and suggested this could be reduced further given that the plan should be risk based and the finance audits had consistently received substantial assurance ratings and when other areas were reviewed issues were being identified. The ACOR explained the finance audits remained in the plan on a cyclical basis to ensure any risks could be flagged and addressed as soon as possible. This provided the ACOR with assurance there would be no issues as the financial year end was approaching. This may change in the future when the new Section 151 Officer takes on the role, depending on their judgement. | **ACOR**  **ACOR**  **GO** |
| 1. **INTERNAL AUDIT (TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNTY COUNCIL)** |  |
| We received the Torfaen County Borough County Council (TCBC) Shared Resource Service Quarterly Update Report on Progress.  The Committee noted that the SRS IT Governance review, SRS Firewall Follow up and SRS Identity and Access Management Follow up Management Letter had received a full assurance rating.  As this agenda item had been discussed during item 12, Disaster Recovery Plan and IT Systems, it was acknowledged that progress had been made and there were no major issues of concern. | **Action** |
| 1. **EXTERNAL AUDIT** |  |
| We received the External Audit Annual Audit Letter, Audit of Accounts Addendum Report 2023 and the Update Report.  AW informed JAC the Annual Audit summarised the work undertaken for the financial year 2022/23 and the responsibilities of all parties involved. The Financial Statements prepared by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Chief Constable (CC) both received unqualified opinions from the Auditor General.  The Auditor General was satisfied that the PCC and CC had appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in their use of resources.  The Audit of Accounts Report Addendum was a follow up report to the Accounts report presented in November 2023. The report set out the recommendations arising from the audit and the update on the progress made against previous years’ recommendations. There was 1 recommendation that arose from the 2022/23 regarding Fleet Assets and the management response was noted in the report.  A number of recommendations had been closed since the previous years’ audit.  The JAC ICT Lead referred to page 5 of the Addendum report and asked when the Office365 password reset tool was to be implemented. The ACOR agreed to confirm with the Force Information Security Officer if this had been implemented and to update JAC accordingly.  AW informed us the certification dates would remain the same for 2023/24 as in the previous year; draft Financial Statements to prepared by the middle of June in readiness for auditing and certification by the 30th November 2024.  Audit Wales held an internal Post Project Learning (PPL) following the closure of the accounts. In January 2024 a further PPL took place between AW and the Finance Team, followed by an all Wales PPL in February 2024. This enabled all participants to discuss the lessons learned during the process to further improve the process this year.  The auditing timeframe was extended in 2022/23 for various reasons included staffing issues in AW. A decision had been made to reduce the timeframe for the audit to take place this year in Gwent.  As it was the first year for the ISA315 accounting standards to be implemented AW had to respond to many more questions, deal with more documentation and needed to have a greater understanding of risk assessment and systems. The knowledge gained should assist in improving the closure of accounts process this year.  The JAC Chair noted there had been changes in the AW team due to resourcing issues and asked if there were implications in terms of business continuity.  AW assured JAC it was easier for AW if resources mainly remained in their post. Any changes should be minimal and AW would work with the HoF and his team to ensure the transition would be seamless. | **ACOR**  **Action** |
| We agreed to take item 19, Verbal Budget Setting Update next followed by item 20, Update on Accounts Lessons Learned Action Plan |  |
| 1. **VERBAL BUDGET SETTING UPDATE** |  |
| We received a verbal update on Budget Setting.  The Budget was presented to the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) 26th January 2024 and the proposed 7.7% precept increase was agreed.  The gap in funding for 2024-2025 stood at £2.8m. Confirmation from the UK Government on when to expect receipt of cashflow funding would also assist as this would clarify if the Force would need to borrow funding this year and to gauge interest repayment costs. Further work was to be undertaken to consider new funding streams and costs incurred since January 2024 and a revised Medium Term Financial Plan would be presented in June.  The ACOR informed us in order to balance the budget they would need to borrow from the reserves budget although it was estimated that it would be less than £1m. We were assured the Force were focussed on efficiency saving and innovation such as the use of Office365 tools which could assist with this.  The PCC thanked the DPCC for acting as PCC and the HoF as Section 151 Officer in his and the CFO’s absence. |  |
| 1. **UPDATE ON ACCOUNTS LESSONS LEARNED ACTION PLAN** |  |
| We received the Update on Accounts Lessons Learned Action Plan.  The HoF informed us of the 5 actions listed, 2 had been completed, 1 related to timing issues which would be addressed during the accounts closure process and the remaining actions related to improving the flow of documents through the Inflo system and ensuring new AW staff members communicated more with the Finance Team.  JAC acknowledged the number of actions had reduced significantly over the years. | **Action** |
| 1. **OUTSTANDING AUDIT INSPECTION RECOMMENDATIONS** |  |
| We received the Outstanding Audit Inspection Recommendations report.  The ACOR confirmed that TIAA audits recommendations were progressing well, 8 recommendations had been brought forward since the last quarter and there were 21 new recommendations. There was a priority 1 recommendation which had been discussed at length during item 13, Information Disclosure. 14 of the recommendations had been completed.  Extension requests were requested up to June 2024 as referenced in the appendix and agreed.  There were 2 outstanding SRS recommendations relating to Gwent Police which were expected to be closed in April 2024.  JAC acknowledged progress made in this area. |  |
| We took a short working lunch |  |
| 1. **DATA PROTECTION ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23** |  |
| We received the Data Protection Annual Report 2022/23  The report had been circulated outside of the meeting for comment. The HoAC apologised for the delay and welcomed any further comment.  The JAC External Audit Lead sought assurance that there were sufficient resources in place to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the role of the Data Protection Officer.  The HoAC confirmed it had been agreed by the CEx and the PCC that she was able to obtain additional support if needed.  The HoAC and GO were working through the actions in the Data Protection action plan, the GO was attending a Data Mapping course 26th March 2024.  Should there be any outstanding actions they were not able to resolve themselves, support would be obtained.  JAC asked if this could change when the new PCC was elected. The HoAC explained that it was unlikely. However, progress could be delayed due to the changes to the misconduct regulations which were due to commence at the end of April 2024. | **Action** |
| 1. **OPCC ANTI FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY** |  |
| We received the OPCC Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy.  The HoAC advised JAC that she had reviewed the policy and made some minor amendments. The policy was reviewed at the recent OPCC Planning meeting and there were no external factors affecting the policy.  Following a discussion, it was agreed a link to the 7 principles in the document of public life would be embedded under point 4.1. | **HoAC** |
| 1. **MANUAL OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ANNUAL REVIEW** |  |
| We received the Manual of Corporate Governance (MoCG) Annual Review.  The CEx explained that the report would normally have been presented to JAC prior to the Strategy and Performance Board (SPB) however, due to the pre-election period commencing 25th March 2024 it was presented to SPB on the 7th March 2024 and agreed in principle by the CC and the PCC subject to any recommendations by JAC.  The key changes were contained in the appendix 1 of the report including an increase to the level 2 procurement threshold limit from £50k to £100k under certain circumstances i.e. ensuring 3 tender quotes could be obtained.  The MoCG would be revised and presented to JAC in September due to forthcoming changes to procurement legislation in the UK.  JAC requested a brief report of the advantages and disadvantages due to the changes of procurement legislation. The CEx agreed to share the report following its completion by the Procurement team.  The DPCC asked JLS to confirm if there was any specific Welsh procurement legislation or guidance that had been developed in Wales in terms of social value. The HoJLS confirmed there was guidance in Wales to which they had already committed including combatting modern slavery and anti-trafficking even though they were not a devolved body. The Force had adopted much of the guidance which was developed following the recent Social Value legislation. Although it was not a legal requirement it was reflected within tendering guidelines. | **GO**  **CEx** |
| 1. **JAC SELF ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN** |  |
| We received the JAC Self-Assessment Action Plan.  The Chair referred to the actions relating to the Board Assurance Framework and informed us that following her meeting with the HoAC it had been agreed that the HoAC would complete a Red, Amber and Green (RAG) status on the front page of the BAF as opposed to completing the whole document. The HoAC agreed to complete the task in readiness for the September JAC meeting.  The HoAC advised the JAC Chair the Self-Assessment questionnaire would be circulated following the meeting.  The Chair clarified that respondents should indicate what actions they wished to be added to the JAC Self-Assessment Action Plan when completing the questionnaire. | **Action**  **HoAC/**  **GO** |
| 1. **ANY FEEDBACK OF RELEVANCE TO JAC FOR INCLUSION UNDER RELEVANT REPORTS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS** |  |
| The ACOR agreed to provide on update on the Draft Culture Strategy to JAC members. | **ACOR** |
| 1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** |  |
| It was agreed that the deep dive on the Missing Children’s Team should be combined with the Public Protection Unit item and Culture added to the Ethics and PSD on the deep dive topic list.  Ethics and Culture was agreed as a preferred deep dive topic, date to be confirmed upon receipt of response to Self Assessment Questionnaire and other Deep Dive Topic suggestions.  Following a discussion, it was agreed the Deep Dives Topics list would be circulated with the Self- Assessment Questionnaire for consideration and suggestions.  The CEx informed JAC the OPCC had established a new Scrutiny Assurance Forum focussed on scrutiny and accountability on specific areas of the Force and asked if JAC would like to have sight of their forward work plan to gain an insight of the work being undertaken. The JAC Chair agreed it would be beneficial and would assist with the Self-Assessment process.  We discussed JAC meeting dates and noted the 28th November 2024 had changed to 26th November 2024.  The Chair agree to notify us if she could attend the March 13th 2025 meeting.  The JAC External Audit Lead asked if the accounts closure deadline would revert back to the 30th September in 2025 rather than the 30th November 2025. The HoF explained that it was likely to be earlier so the proposed 18th September 2025 date would need to be considered nearer the time.  The JAC Chair requested the date of the Annual JAC Training Day and the GO agreed to contact the CFO in SWP to ascertain the date. | **GO**  **GO**  **HoAC**  **CHAIR**  **Action** |
| 1. **TO IDENTIFY ANY RISKS, TRAINING REQUIREMENTS OR ETHICAL MATTERS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING** |  |
| Information Disclosure was identified as an area of risk. |  |
| **The meeting concluded at 13.33pm** |  |