

Joint Audit Committee of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire and Bedfordshire Police

Minutes are restricted

Meeting of 22 December 2023

Held between 10:30 – 12:30

Minutes

Present:

Jagtar Singh – Chair (JS)	Chair, Independent Committee Member
Wayne Brads (IM WB)	Independent Committee Member
Judit Seymour (IM JSM)	Independent Committee Member
Laura Bell (IM LB)	Independent Committee Member
Gita Raja (IM GR)	Independent Committee Member
Phil Wells (CFO PW)	Chief Finance Officer – Bedfordshire Police
Mark Jones (RSM MJ)	RSM Internal Auditor
Dan Vajzovic (DCC DV)	Deputy Chief Constable – Bedfordshire Police
Katie Beaumont (HGT KB)	Head of Governance and Transparency - OPCC
Anna Villette (CE AV)	Chief Executive - OPCC
Anesu Banda (CO AB)	Compliance Officer – OPCC (Minute Taker)

	Part One – Not Restricted	
22/JAC/30	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The chair welcomed the committee, OPCC and Force representatives to the meeting.</p>	Chair
22/JAC/31	<p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPMG • BDO 	Chair
22/JAC/32	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 29.09.2023 (Restricted in part).</p> <p>The committee noted following:</p> <p>22/JAC/30: WB said it is not clear who 'TH' is within the minutes. AB informed</p>	Chair

	<p>the WB, and the committee 'TH' is a typo, and this should be TR and will be amended and sent to PW and JS for sign off once completed.</p> <p>22/JAC/38: GR questioned whether this action should refer to the meeting held in October and not September. AB checked the minutes, and the JAC meeting was held in September, and the JAC development day was held in October, therefore it is accurate.</p> <p>GR said MB was referenced instead of LB – AB checked the recording, and the typo was amended to WB.</p> <p>WB noted the first paragraph on page 14 needs to be clarified – AB checked this and found the minutes only have 10 pages; however, the amendments have been made according to the pages present.</p> <p>JS said the lateness of papers needs to be addressed for the next meeting and papers should be received 7 days prior to the meeting to allow members sufficient time to review all papers. PW informed the panel there was a Senior Leadership Meeting (SLT) and Performance and Governance board which the papers had to be reviewed in hence the lateness.</p> <p>KB informed the panel she will review the minutes with AB in the new year and send the amended version to the committee for review.</p>	
22/JAC/33	<p>Actions log</p> <p>22/JAC/30:</p> <p>KB informed the committee she has not received anything further; however certain aspects were looked at on the development day. KB also asked for JAC members to contact her regarding additional information.</p> <p>This is to be recirculated and addressed at the next meeting (22.03.2024).</p> <p>22/JAC/38:</p> <p>This action has been completed and can now be closed.</p> <p>Training:</p> <p>This action remains outstanding, and a presentation needs to be given to the committee.</p> <p>This is to be included on the agenda for the next meeting (22.03.2024).</p> <p>JS requested for a skills audit to be completed in the new year and to assess the paid and unpaid roles as part of the declaration of interest.</p>	Chair

22/JAC/34	Matters Arising There were no matters arising.	Chair
22/JAC/35	Declarations of Interest (verbal) All declaration of interests has been recorded.	Chair
Part One – Not Restricted		
22/JAC/37	External Audit – Verbal Update given by PW. There have been no changes since the previous meeting. BDO are waiting for a national change in legislation that allows an auditor to say they have not been able to audit the accounts and have done as much as they can before coming to an opinion. PW informed the committee the 21/22 and 22/23 accounts will most likely not receive an opinion, however this will not be clear until the new year. PW informed the committee KPMG are currently completing their background work in the meantime in preparation for 23/24 however they cannot move forward fully until BDO and the PSAA have come to an agreement around the previous year accounts. Also, there are roughly 998 accounts nationally that have not yet been signed off. In addition, the risk for Bedfordshire Police is very low as we have drafted our accounts and published them on the website. PW is hoping to provide a more comprehensive report in March 2024 and KPMG will also be present at all future meetings. PW informed the committee KPMG will not be able to do anything with the 23/24 accounts until the 21/22 and 22/23 accounts have been signed off or not signed off. JS asked whether the commissioner is concerned about the BDO issue that is currently being faced. PW answered no, as this is a national issue and there is no risk to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).	BDO/ACO
22/JAC/38	Internal Audit a) Internal Audit Progress Report MJ informed the committee the cybersecurity work has been carried over to the 23/24 plan and another piece of work on BCH governance has now been finalised. MJ added, for the BCH report 22/23, collaborative governance and business planning area, the summary shows this is an advisory piece of work, and good progress has been made in developing and	RSM

	<p>implementing the system to establish medium term business planning and operational plans for BCH. During the audit, 1 high and 4 medium priority actions we confirmed.</p> <p>The actions have been agreed.</p> <p>Action: KB to link in with other OPCC's to find out if they have similar papers e.g., Herts have 4 committee meetings therefore they should have a similar paper to Bedfordshire which can be circulated before the next meeting.</p> <p>There are 4 audit reports (Bedfordshire) on risk management, demand management, custody management and cash backing and treasury management.</p> <p>All reports have substantial assurance and low priority actions on the first two and one medium priority action on cash backing and treasury management.</p> <p>Cybersecurity:</p> <p>There is negative opinion. There are 6 high, 7 medium and 1 low priority which cover a range of issues e.g., identity and access management, authentication, management, and administration of accounts etc.</p> <p>The report shows a series of agreed actions with management and this audit has been ongoing however it has generated immediate action.</p> <p>JS asked PW if these risks emerged due to capital and financial issues or there are other reasons?</p> <p>PW said the audit is against an ISO national accreditation for suppliers, and policing has its own level of accreditation which is less than the industry standard. Moreover, in terms of our performance against the police standard we are in a good position.</p> <p>Action (PW): Following the review, PW to reconsider the cyber risk which appears now.</p> <p>Action (PW): To provide an update on cybersecurity at the next meeting for the committee's assurance.</p>	
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	<p>b) Progress of recommendations</p> <p>PW has taken the report as read and has noted the actions.</p>	
<p>22/JAC/39</p>	<p>Force Overview</p> <p>The DCC informed the committee there has been a lot of change and the Chief Constable is now well established in the Force.</p> <p>He added, an advert will soon be advertised to recruit 3 ACC's and there is a lot of interest in these roles, based on what we currently see, there is a lot of interest which speaks to the reputation Bedfordshire currently has.</p> <p>Also, several thematic inspections have come through and we are expecting the HMICFRS PEEL inspection to come in September 2024. The ROCU inspection was published this year, and the Eastern Region inspection was one of the best.</p> <p>The organisation is the biggest it has ever been in terms of number of police officers, and we now need to get some substance to the recruitment.</p> <p>The DCC said, The Home Secretary came to Luton police station to thank UK policing for the effort they are putting into policing. He added, the Home Secretary chooses Forces based on the work they are doing. He met with different teams in the Force and e.g., CID teams.</p> <p><u>Force control room (FCR)</u></p> <p>At the beginning of the year, the ability of Bedfordshire Police to answer phones was insufficient and required improvement. There were abandoned calls into the 999 system as 3000+, and some of the calls were repeat calls where the caller was not answered, and individuals called back due to being concerned about the lack of response.</p> <p>This has now decreased to 48 in November.</p> <p>The DCC added, in June 2023 total 101 abandoned numbers reduced from 9215 to 2729 each month, which was achieved by adding more resources e.g., taking 16 police officers from the patrol function into the Force Control Room (FCR). The DCC said, new staff members were being recruited, however they were going into a system that was under pressure.</p> <p>Due to this change, the staff recruited to work in the FCR are not leaving their role due to having the extra support.</p> <p><u>Response</u></p> <p>The DCC informed the committee, there is a target for aspiration to</p>	<p>ACO</p> <p>DCC</p>

get a resource to members of the public within 15 minutes from the point of the call being received.

There are many factors behind this e.g., availability of fleet, turnaround of fleet maintenance etc. therefore difficulties have been faced in our specialist teams to have the right level of vehicles available for the job, however there are now more individuals trained as response drivers than previous.

Operationally, our current investigations are good, however an assessment needs to be done regarding the areas policing isn't doing as well. In addition, Operation Teria, is a national operation to reduce the attrition rate for rape investigations. From report to conviction the percentage of offenders that are convicted at court is small.

ERSOU has been leading with an operation called 'Op Hantile' and there is a regional organised crime unit that deals with all serious and organised crime, and Bedfordshire is the only organisation in the UK who has been going into the dark web to disrupt a marketplace that was organising organised hits (murders) internationally.

Bedfordshire Police have also been focusing on improving the major incident response capability which links to mandatory training e.g., if there was a Manchester Area incident in Bedfordshire, would we be able to respond to it?

PSD:

There was a risk identified regarding the capacity of PSD to complete their work at an appropriate timescale. The DCC informed the committee additional resources have been utilised and a Superintendent has been recruited from Thames Valley Police to join the team.

In the last year, there has been more than 1 officer/staff member dismissed from the organisation every month and in 2024 the DCC expects to see an increase of dismissals. All cases are related to conduct or withdrawal of vetting. This ranges from sexualised behaviour, excessive use of force and criminal conviction outside of the case.

JS asked how the DCC expects to replace the numbers being lost.

The DCC said there is a work force plan in place and therefore they have an idea of the number of officers/staff members that will be leaving the organisation, and plans are in place to replace those individuals.

The DCC informed the committee about an operation called Operation Protect that seeks to ensure that all officers and staff have appropriated professional conduct histories and adhere to the values of the organisation. This will entail reviewing previous misconduct findings at any point, for anything that's relating to honesty and

	<p>integrity and any officer with a trace on the police national database. The DCC expects all case work to be completed within two years.</p> <p><u>Training</u></p> <p>There is operational learning chaired by an ACC in Cambridgeshire which sets out which training is mandatory and collects data on completion of that mandatory training.</p> <p>The DCC added this includes the key areas where there is a risk that could result in death, firearms training, driving and other operational business areas, Bedfordshire Police is 100% compliant.</p>	
Part Two – Restricted		
22/JAC/40	<p>HMICFRS Update</p> <p>There are 4 areas the DCC is concerned with, regarding how prepared the Force is.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Force control room – HMICFRS will inspect and expect the force to be answering and responding to people efficiently. 2. Community policing team – Is Bedfordshire Police effectively serving their community and is the community aware of their community officers and understand how to contact them. The DCC said there is a plan in place that sees the number of officers working community policing roles at its full establishment and reengagement of PCSO and special constables. 3. Leadership and training – Frontline leadership training has been rolled out across the organisation for every supervisor and will also run throughout 2024. There is a programme of work to strengthen the middle managers understanding of where the organisation is going and what is expected of them operationally. 	DCC
22/JAC/41	<p>a) Strategic Risk Register of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire</p> <p>JS said there is a good assurance from the committee and there are no questions for KB.</p> <p>The CE informed the committee that the OPCC are in the process of embarking on another internal audit focusing on an area of activity within the county. There will be more arrangements whereby the commissioner is the convener and recipient of grant funding on the behalf of a partnership arrangement.</p> <p>The CE added, we are working through an internal audit of the violence and exploitation unit (VERU) which the OPCC hosts and includes Bedfordshire police the local authority and other statutory agencies. Concerns have also been raised regarding the back-office support in the VERU and action has been taken to deal with this.</p>	OPCC

	<p>Also, RSM are coming to the OPCC in the first week of the new year to receive the findings of this piece of work.</p> <p>WB asked if there are any changes regarding SR1. PW said this will be included in the Force risk register.</p>	
<p>22/JAC/42</p>	<p>Strategic Risk Register of Bedfordshire Police</p> <p>There are no major changes regarding the risks between the previous meeting and today.</p> <p>Two risks have been added at SR29 and SR30 which are professional standards and conducting investigations and another around legal.</p> <p>WB asked if Freedom of Information (FOI) requests are included in the legal legislative data protections and if there is a risk in responding to FOI requests as Manchester Police have received a warning from the ICO regarding warnings and fines which can affect the operational capability.</p> <p>PW informed the committee, it's not about our ability to respond to FOI's, its more about when there is an FOI request, it is difficult to redact spreadsheet data and there are companies going through FOI requests on websites to understand whether there is a data breach.</p> <p>PW added, there is no risk as we are currently good at responding on time.</p> <p>Settlement (SR03 Force, SR1, OPCC)</p> <p>Settlement was received last week Thursday (14.12.2023), and the drive of the policing minister was to push out as much resources as possible to the local PCC's and Chief Constables by reducing some of the central provisions that are in policing. Moreover, The average increase if every PCC went with £13 preset would result in the average police force receiving a 6% increase in its funding.</p> <p>PW informed the committee this may sound like a big increase however the majority is covering pay costs and the pension contribution for police officers has increased from 31.8% to 35.3% and the additional amount is included in the increase as well.</p> <p>The uplift of 20,000, there have been some sustainability clauses and some of the police grant has been ring fenced to ensure nobody reduces police officer numbers.</p> <p>The local forces were offered the ability to recruit more than what their set targets were.</p> <p>Also, Bedfordshire had a baseline of 1436 which was the standard baseline, and this was increased to 1457. The benefit for Bedfordshire is that we are given the extra funding for the extra 21 officers which was already in our budget. Therefore, our settlement</p>	<p>ACO</p>

	<p>with the average of 6% is 7% which is a benefit. This has taken our 2.6 million deficits to 1.7 million and we are still waiting for data on tax base which may bring this down or up.</p> <p>PW informed the committee about the current PBB process, and he is working to produce a budget paper for the PCC by the 15th of January and this will go to the Police and Crime Panel for their meeting in February.</p> <p>Regarding recruitment last year, a lot of people wanted to join using the traditional route and not through the degree entry route. The college have released a new accredited route and our workforce plan in terms of recruitment in 24/25 will be based on the new accredited route into policing.</p> <p>JS asked if this includes apprenticeship level. PW informed the committee the apprenticeship level will be diverted into other areas, but we will still run a degree detective route and take away the uniformed route.</p> <p>WB said with the savings that will still need to be made, will there be any more challenge panels? PW responded, not from a local perspective, the only panels remaining are the collaborative ones and some will happen early in the new year.</p>	
<p>22/JAC/43</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>JSM informed the panel of the cultural intelligence training she attended. JSM said the syllabus is broad however the reaction to the course is not what she experienced in other organisations.</p> <p>JSM has passed her comments onto the team and is happy to share.</p> <p>Action summary was completed with the committee members to confirm the actions have been recorded accurately.</p>	<p>Chair</p>
	<p>Feedback to be raised with the CC/PCC</p> <p>a) Reflections of meeting by JAC members</p> <p>The CE said this will be a good opportunity to clarify points that have not been explained fully within the papers. She added, a learning point for the OPCC is to ensure the minutes are of a good standard and if there is anything that requires updating from previous minutes, this will also be completed.</p> <p>JS said it is important for the minutes to be completed as early as possible after the meeting, to allow reflections to completed accurately.</p> <p>KB agreed and informed the committee she will ensure the minutes will be accurate and on time.</p>	

	<p>WB found the clarity on Cyber, HMICFRS, the Force Overview and the ongoing concerns with PSD resource helpful.</p> <p>MJ found the Force Overview useful and said it is essential to be able to put the information into context and will be useful for the internal audit.</p> <p>GR said it is good to be able to ask questions and get clarity regarding the papers. The minutes need to be robust and accurate in future. GR also added the force overview references a table however there is no table on the previous page, therefore accuracy is required.</p> <p>JSM said it is good to say thank you that the committee receives the force overview as other forces do not do this and without understanding what is happening there is no context to what the committee is doing.</p> <p>The DCC said he is happy to discuss anything and will be available for the next meetings. The DCC asked the committee to inform him of their concerns/ areas of interest ahead of time so he can prepare something to present to address this.</p> <p>JS said the pre meeting was successful and helped find focus for the meeting. The force overview was good as the DCC had made notes on what to address and the openness and transparency of questions was well received.</p> <p>JS thanked KB for writing the questions quickly which has assured him that learning from previous meetings is addressed and will continue to improve.</p> <p>b) Evaluation of JAC members</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>c) Escalations to PCC/CC</p> <p>None.</p>	
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