

**Draft V02**

**MINUTES OF THE ETHICS, TRANSPARENCY AND AUDIT PANEL (ETAP) POLICE  
& CRIME MEETING held on Wednesday 28 September 2022  
Conference Room 1, Block 7, Police HQ**

**Present:**

<b>ETAP members</b>	<b>Officers</b>
Bob Simpson (BS) Ch2air	Emma Barnett - Deputy Chief Constable (EB) joining on Teams (Item 1 only)
Ben Thompson (BT)	John Bloomer - Force Chief Finance Officer (JBL)
Craig Brown (CB)	Deb Wilne - Force Governance, Planning & Policy Manager (DW)
Emma Christmas (EC)	Ralph Butler - SCO Head of Strategy & Change
John Wheatley (JW)	David Greensmith - SCO Director of Finance (DG)
Martyn Rochelle (MR)	Louise Clayton - SCO Chief Executive (LC)
Sue Finney (SF)	Jean Cass - SCO Governance Lead (JC)
Sue Westacott (SW)	
Terry Stock (TS)	<b>Also in attendance</b>
	Hassan Rohimun - EY Executive Director (HR)
	Angela Ward - RSM Audit Manager (AW)

<b>SCO - Staffordshire Commissioner's Office</b>
<b>Force - Staffordshire Police Force</b>

**1. Chief Constable update**

EB, on behalf of CN, joined the meeting on Teams and updated members on the Force's HMICFRS Peel report released last week.

EB offered members reassurance that the HMICFRS Peel report was as expected. This report follows on from two areas of accelerated causes of concern, already mentioned to the Panel at previous meetings, these are now subsumed into the latest report.

Staffordshire Police, the Force, are now in an 'Engaged' position. The Force were graded as 'inadequate' in their ability to respond to public, investigating crime and managing offenders and suspects. The Force were found to be 'adequate' in its ability to prevent crimes and antisocial behaviour. The report also assessed a number of other areas of further improvements, known as 'AFIs', each of these areas have an owner and an action plan attached to them which are regularly monitored by the Executive Team.

The report highlighted number of good practice areas including;

How well the Force works with partners and academics to look at the root cause of crimes and to prevent crimes;

A good partnership working towards the rehabilitation of offenders;

A really clear understanding around the expected standards of behaviour and a high confidence to report unacceptable behaviour.

Also noted in there was a positive practice of the Force's ability to provide safeguarding. EB also reported on audit work undertaken by the Force to review case files.

Q: CB, can you give details of the audit work you carried out?

A: DW, a mass of audit case files was conducted over the summer months as part of a back to basics and root cause analysis work.

EB, added that the mass case file audit was led by an ex- Superintendent who works at the Police College, he reviewed over 1000 case files to understand how officers approached cases.

Q; TS, has the Peel report prompted any areas of further remote independent scrutiny including from members of the public?

A: DW, the Force have put in place the mass audit as mentioned and this week, a report has been sent to the EB which mentions the longevity of long-term audit plans.

JBL commented that there is now in place a Policing Performance Oversight Group, (PPOG). This is the HMICFRS led panel which consists of officers including Staffordshire Chief Constable, Staffordshire Commissioner, College of Policing Officer, to help oversee and support the improvement work.

LC, added there are a number of measures in place as part of the SCO Governance arrangements. The Peel Report was also discussed at the Police, Fire and Crime Panel (PFCP), a panel that holds the Staffordshire Commissioner to account. Regular meetings of the Public Performance Panel also take place when the Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account.

DW confirmed that she has enhanced the tracking log to ensure all issues raised from the HMICFRS report are progressed and will continue to meet regularly the ETAP representative JK to give updates against the AFIS. There will also be reports on a six-monthly update will be presented to members at ETAP public meetings.

EB advised members of the appointment as JBL at level of Force's Assistant Chief Officer and confirmed that he is now a member of Chief Officer Team.

BS on behalf of the team, added his congratulations to JBL on his new role.

BS, added that JK will be given an oversight of the AFIs before these are released and is currently in the process of agreeing a scope for this work.

ACTION JK to scope terms of review BS to allocate an additional ETAP member to share this task

BS thanked EB for her update.

## 2. Declaration of interests, apologies, minutes and actions.

### i. Declarations of Interest: None

Apologies: ETAP members Chris Gill (CG), Jane Barr (JB), Jane King (JK), Victoria Farrar - SCO Head of Governance & Assurance (VF), Chris Noble - Chief Constable (CN)

### Minutes & actions of the meeting held on the 26 July 2022

**AGREED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on the 26 July 2022, was confirmed as an accurate and true record.

Updates to actions from previous meetings updated as per action log

Meeting date 25 May 2022

Action number 1, agenda item 1, On going

Meeting date 26 July 2022

Action number 2, agenda item 2, Forces, Gifts and Hospitality Policy is under view and draft copy will be passed to the Ethics and Review panel for the panel's comments.

**ACTION:** ERP to review the Force's new draft Gifts and Hospitality policy

Action number 6, agenda item 8, Public Sector to Force AGS

DW advised that she will be adding a note on Public Sector Equality to the final AGS prior to its publication with the finalised audited accounts for 2021/22.

MR ask for a note to add to Action 5, the panel requested more details on all future items on the Hospitality register, not just the example given on the action plan.

Follow-up point on Crime Recording report, TS, asked if members will see a copy of the internal audit report now that the HMICFRS report has been released.

BS, the panel has been advised that this will be forwarded to the Finance Panel.

**ACTION:** Finance Panel to review the Internal Audit Report on Crime Recording.

## 3. Deputy Chair's feedback

### i. **Chair of the Finance Panel – Emma Christmas (EC)**

EC advised that at the last Finance Panel meeting on the 21 September, reports focused on pay, pensions and energy increase in costs. A presentation on the proposed Firing range was given and the ETAP review of the business case was also discussed. The business case is now going to be market tested and further reports will now come to future Finance Panel meetings in early 2023. A paper on the planned timetable of the finance reporting for the next six months was presented. The only change was a request for the Finance Panel to receive the precept reports in early 2023.

Q: CB, in ECs report it mentions that pay is underspent and non-pay is underspent? Is pay expected in the near future expected to rise in the near future?

A: JBL, the pay underspent is specifically for Police staff, recruiting staff is currently difficult, however vacancies have now stabilised.

EC added that the Finance Panel have asked for a breakdown of where the vacancies sit within the structure.

Q: SW, are you needing to recruit more temporary staff?

A: JBL, there is a shortage of staff which does extend to the temporary market as well and in it's been difficult to recruit agency staff particularly at a high level.

BS, a number of Police officers where seconded to London last week to cover the funeral, were their costs covered?

Q, yes, these costs were covered by mutually aid. Any additional costs including late notice of working on the Bank holiday were met by the Staffordshire Force.

BS thanked EC for her update.

## **ii. Chair of the Ethics & Review Panel - Jane King (JK)**

BS covered the report on behalf of JK who has sent her apologies to the meeting today. The meeting noted the ongoing work of the ERP which had now been in place for just over a year

Bs added as mentioned earlier that JK is currently working on a review of AFIS following the Force's Peel report.

BS thanked JK for her report today.

## **4. Police, Fire and Crime Panel - (PFCP)**

EC advised that she attended the latest PFCP meeting yesterday on the 25 September.

The main items on the agenda were: -

Police and Crime plan update  
Fires and Rescue Service Safety Plan 2020-24 Update  
Staffordshire Safety Roads Partnership

EC advised that this was a very positive meeting with members.

LC added that during the meeting she invited all ETAP members to observe the next Public performance meeting.

EC advised that ETAP member Chris Gill will be observing future PFCP meetings on behalf of members.

BS thanked EC for her update.

## **5. Internal Auditors - RSM**

### **(i) Progress Report of internal**

AW advised that a number of audits are in progress, but due to delays in the timing of audits process formal reports have been delayed. AW confirmed final reports, including the Freedom of Information report will be ready for the next ETAP meeting planned for November.

Scoping meetings for audits on the plan that all fall into Quarters 3 & 4 of the year have been arranged.

AW, confirmed the audit plan had been reviewed by the Force and the SCO following the Peel report to ensure that the plan is still reasonable and covered the most relevant topics.

Q: SF, what are the main reasons for the delays?

A: AW, a number of audits were planned for the back end of the end of year. A couple were scheduled for this meeting in October, one had a deferred start in Sept, so the final reports would have missed this meeting and the other is still ongoing.

JBL added the Force did ask for the fleet audit to be delayed by couple of months due to a new fleet management arrangement needing time to bed down

Q: SF, will RSM still be using the same number of audit days in the plan?

A: AW, RSM is not expecting to go over the amount of day, the days in the plan will be used to meet changing priorities.

### **(ii) Benchmarking report**

AW asked members to note RSM's Annual benchmarking report.

JBL, added the Force find this report a very useful report.

BS thanked AW for her reports.

## **6. External Auditors – EY**

BS welcomed HR back to ETAP

HR advised that he has recently taken over the audit work from Neil Harris.

HR confirmed that there is a delay in the start of the 2021.22 external audit. The planning of the audit will now start towards the end November 2022 and the audit work will start in January with a view to completing this by the end of February 2023. This timetable is outside

of the ideal timeframes for reporting, but EY has a backlog of external audits, as faced by other external auditors and as well as the capacity issues in the public market.

HR, advised that at the next ETAP meeting, he will bring a plan of EY's the 21.22 audit work.

Q: Do the capacity issues pose any risks to the work that you carry out for Staffordshire Police?

A: HR, not in respect to the quality work that is carried out, but it does pose a risk on the timings in work carried out due to the backlog of work. As a firm, EY have been making significant investment in terms of the number of new starters in the team.

Q: JW, will these be experienced staff or taking on new qualified staff?

A: HR, EY have taken on both, a number of experienced senior managers, a number of qualified members of staff and also a number of trainees.

Q: SF, is EY's strategy still to prioritise their high-risk clients and therefore Staffordshire Police are victims of their own success.

A: HR, EY have been looking at this again and therefore this is not necessary still the case. Staffordshire Police audit is going to be ahead of number of other local major audits.

Q: BS, Can the pension assurances from EY for the audit 21.22 go out earlier this audit?

A: HR, yes, the pension assurances are going out this week.

Q: SF, a lot of the delay in the finalisation of the last set of accounts, was in the valuation of properties on the estate, has there been an agreement reached on the property valuations?

A: HR, EY are going to look at this issue earlier on in the audit process.

BS thanked HR for this update

## **7. AOB**

Date and time of next meetings is

ETAP Fire meeting on the Monday 31 October 2022.

ETAP Police and Fire meeting is on Wednesday 23 November 2022.