

Draft V04

**MINUTES OF THE ETHICS, TRANSPARENCY AND AUDIT PANEL (ETAP) POLICE
& CRIME MEETING held on Tuesday 26 July 2022
Conference Room 1, Block 7, Police HQ**

Present:

ETAP members	Officers
Bob Simpson (BS) Chair	Emma Barnett - Deputy Chief Constable (EB)
Ben Thompson (BT)	John Bloomer - Force Chief Finance Officer (JBL)
Jane Barr (JB)	Deb Wilne - Force Governance, Planning & Policy Manager (DW)
Jane King (JK)	Jasraj Purewal - Force Chief Accountant
Terry Stock (TS)	David Greensmith - SCO Director of Finance (DG)
Martyn Rochelle (MR)	Louise Clayton - SCO Chief Executive (LC)
Sue Westacott (SW)	Jean Cass - SCO Governance Lead (JC)
John Wheatley (JW)	Victoria Farrar - SCO Head of Governance & Assurance (VF)
	Also, in attendance
	Neil Harris - EY Associate Partner (NH) Item 8 only on Teams
	Angela Ward - RSM Audit Manager (AW)

SCO - Staffordshire Commissioner's Office
Force - Staffordshire Police Force

BS welcomed Louise Clayton (LC), SCO Chief Executive, to her first ETAP Public meeting.

1. Chief Constable update

EB attended the meeting on behalf of CN.

The first phase of the Police Operating Model (POM) went live on the 28 June. The model includes a Chief Inspector leading each of the 10 local policing teams and 2 area CID Teams; one in the North and one in the South. This model has been implemented following concerns around the Force's overall performance and service challenges. The Force wanted to make the organisation feel a lot more engaged with local communities and to give officers more time to better deal with incidents and become more responsive to the calls for service.

Indicators show that things are going in the right direction, further monitoring is in place and post implementation review is in place. There has already been lots of positive feedback from staff, the Staffordshire Commissioner, elected members and communities.

The Force continues to face challenges over the summer with the Commonwealth Games starting shortly. The Contact Centre remains busy and is on occasion between 750-850 calls a day; this is busier than on New Year's Eve.

Staffordshire Force, together with 5 other forces nationally are part of the 'Engaged' process with HMICFRS. Reports will be published in the mid-August and these show areas for improvement. Governance and improvement plans are in place to address the two accelerated areas of concern. These areas are 'effective investigations' and 'identification of vulnerability' when the Force's receives calls for service.

Q: TS, what indicators are in place to monitor performance?

A: EB, there are a whole range of measures in place including for example response times, this includes the time from dispatch to attendance, this measure has seen some improvement. Measures for the overall levels of outcomes and qualitative feedback are also in place, the Force may not see any shift in these areas for a few months.

Q: TS, are you able to measure public perception?

A: EB, the Force is putting a place public survey from October 2022.

Q: SW, looking at the ONS stats., crimes appears to be reducing, but crimes against people are increasing, what is the background to these stats?

A: EB, looking at the last 12 months most crimes are increasing compared to the period of Covid when most areas significantly decreased. If you compare the figures to 2018/19 most areas are actually reducing across the board with some slight increases in Domestic Violence Crimes.

Q: BT, looking at POM is there anything in place for efficiencies that are being shared?

A: EB, the design POM is based upon feedback staff on the front line and there are opportunities for staff to share any immediate issues and weekly feedback session into the model.

Q: JK, does the rating you mention on the uplift, refer to the retention of police officers? Can you also the diversity rates on retention?

A: JBL, the uplift doesn't look at retention specifically, but Staffordshire is only one of three forces with the 'green' rating. Staffordshire retention rating is 'good' under the new entry scheme. There is a mixed bag on intake rates, ranging between a split of male/female 50/50 and 80/20. Force is recruiting in line with the 2011 Census.

Q: JK, is there a pattern for the 101 & 999 calls?

A: EB figures can be so volatile which hugely significantly mask the peaks and troughs in demand, this is a real challenge matching resources to calls. The Force is currently working on a developing a 'casual work force' to take calls as and when needed.

Q: JB, is there capacity in the Force to deal with 999 calls?

A: EB, yes, staff are on shift pattern to deal with demand.

Q: MR, is there geographically a higher demand for calls?

A: EB, there is a particularly high demand in the city and centre, the force does track the calls in these areas.

Q: SW, how do you deal rural crime?

A: EB, there are dedicated Rural Crime Officers, who are part of the Local Policing Team.

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), Craig Brown CB), Emma Christmas (EC), Sue Finney (SF). Chris Noble - Chief Constable (CN) Daniel Harris – RSM Internal Auditors (DH)

Minutes & actions of the meeting held on the 25 May 2022

AGREED - That the minutes of the meeting held on the 25 May 2022, was confirmed as an accurate and true record.
--

Updates to actions from previous meetings

Item 1 – BS advised that he will be picking up this action at during his meeting with CN on the 6 September 2022.

Item 2 - meeting to be arranged with EC & DW in August.

Item 3 - on the agenda today item 10

Item 4 - on the agenda today item 10

Item 5 - on the agenda today item 10

3. Deputy Chair's feedback

i. **Chair of the Finance Panel**

BS, on behalf of EC, advised that there is no feedback today as the May's meeting of the Finance Panel was cancelled.

EC will be chairing the next Finance Panel meeting in September. In preparation for the meeting BS asked if he and EC could meet with the Section 151 Officers (JB and DG).

ACTION: JC to set up pre-meeting with Section 151 Officers with EC and BS prior to September Finance Meeting.

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

Complaints Review Follow Up

JK, advised to that JB has carried out a follow up to the ETAP's original Complaints Review.

JB advised she found that the substantial improvements had been made during the past 9 months.

These improvements included: -

Staff have increased confidence in the use of IT systems;

There have been improvements in the dissemination of information to staff;

The Force are now able to contact more easily hard to reach groups

and Neighbourhood Officers are now trained in the dealing of complaints.

JB concluded that there will be a further follow up visit to the Complaints Team in July 2023.

Expenses, Gift and Hospitality Report

JK this report has now been finalised and covers the Expenses, Gifts and Hospitality, for SCO, Force and FARS. JK advised that the review looked to see if the reporting locally aligned to the national statutory regulations.

JB added that she is aware that there is now a revised policy for Force Gifts and Hospitality and she would like to see a copy of this.

ACTION: JC to supply to JB a copy of the Force's Expenses, Gifts and Hospitality policy

VF advised that both the Complaints and Gifts and Hospitality Report have been to the Police Strategic Governance Board meeting for final sign off and will be published shortly on the SCO website.

BS thanked JK and JB for their updates and reports.

.

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

BS advised that he had watched the recording of the PFCP meeting on the 27 June as EC could not attend the meeting today.

The main item on the agenda was the Commissioner's Annual Report. Members at the meeting asked about performance details. It was agreed for copies of performance reports

covered in the Commissioner's Annual Report will be supplied to all members of the Police Fire and Crime Panel.

5. SCO Expenses, Gift and Hospitality Report.

DG presented this report for SCO Expenses, Gifts and Hospitality Report for the period ending 31 March 2022.

MR commented on the number of gifts on the register and asked if all of these needed to be on the register; were some items for the Commissioner for just carrying out his 'business as normal'? MR also asked if there was a minimum amount of entries in the register?

VF advised that for transparency all these items have to be declared regardless of their cost but she would check the CoPACC guidance on any monetary values.

ACTION: VF to advised if there is a monetary value in the CoPACC guidance for Gifts and Hospitality items.

MR also asked for more details on the register for example on the Rotary Club item.

ACTION: JC to provide more details on the Rotary club item.

Q: SW, why was the credit card used for marketing expenses?

A: JB, the Force credit card was needed to be used for payment to media and marketing expenses as on some companies only accept this method of payment.

BS thanked DG for his update and report

6.

- i. Summary of Accounts 2021.22
- ii. Unaudited Chief Constable Statement of Accounts 2021.22
- iii. Unaudited OPCC Statement of Accounts 2021.22
- iv. Going Concern 2021.22

DG introduced the accounts and confirmed that the accounts are due to be published by the end of July 2022.

One item concerning the publication of the 2021.22 draft accounts was the delay in the final clearance of the 2020.21 accounts by the external auditors. DG, confirmed that the Force does have the letters of representation for the 20.21 accounts and therefore are hopeful that these accounts will be signed off this week. NH is joining the meeting later to give an update.

JB presented the highlights of the accounts as follows: -

Our financial performance in 2021/22 was positive. The Groups core funding grew to £222m and operating surplus of £1.294m (0.87%) against the annual budget. This underspend will be added to our general reserves, providing additional support in future years in an increasingly uncertain external

Achievements during the year:

- The Group delivered 94% of its planned savings for the year. This is set against the context of the year's budget and savings requirement being set in the MTFS.
- External debt, used to fund the capital programme, has reduced year on year as maturing loans were not refinanced but were paid off using internal cash balances, reducing the interest payable on loans thus providing better value for the taxpayer.
- Cashable savings from better, smarter and more efficient procurement totalling £634k for the year.
- During the year £4.724m was invested in Capital projects. The Capital programme spend was funded by Revenue Contribution to Capital.

JB added the numbers in the 21.22 accounts remain subject to the final sign off of the 20.21 accounts.

Q: BS, are you expecting any changes to the numbers in the 21.22 accounts?

A: JB, subject to EY signing off the 20.21 accounts there will be no changes to the numbers in the accounts.

BS thanked JP for the summary of accounts which the ETAP members had found very helpful.

DG confirmed that the 'Going Concern Paper' is primarily written for the auditors to give them the reassurance, that Police and SCO, as a public bodies, have prepared the accounts on a going concern basis.

The papers also runs through the cash balances over the next two years and the capital financing requirements. It also includes the details of the reserves and the has these are going to be utilised.

Q; BS, can you comment on the pay rise?

A: JB, the pay rise was budgeted for at 4%, this has now been agreed at 5% for police officers.

BS thanked JB, DG and their teams for the work on the accounts.

7. SCO Draft Annual Governance Statement

VF advised that the Panel have previously an opportunity to comment on the statement presentation today.

Q: JB, is there a SCO Safeguarding policy?

A: VF, the SCO has signed up to all of the Force's policies, she confirmed that she will be address this by adding a note to the AGS.

Q: SW, is there an awareness training for the new Monitoring Officer role.

A: VF, I am the Deputy Monitoring Officer and I will be working closing with LC in her role as Monitoring Officer. Legal support is provided by West Midlands Force.

LC added that she has met with her counter parts from across forces in the West Midlands and they will be providing peer support. There is a Chief Executive's Group who will be meeting with this week.

Q: TS, code of Ethics 2014, update one recently published?

A: VF, the wording will be checked in the SCO document.

ACTION: VF to make an adjustment to the SCO AGS, covering the ethics codes and Safeguarding Policy

BS thanked VF for this AGS.

8. Force Draft Annual Governance Statement

DW advised that the Force's AGS is produced in line with the Force's Management Statement (FMS)

DW presented the document and confirmed that this includes an overall partial level of assurance. This has been accepted by the Chief Constable and reflects the level of work currently being undertaken.

Q: TS, is the Crime recording review available for members to see?

A: JB, it has previously been agreed that this will be shared with ETAP members, together with the HMICFRS report when this is available.

Q: TS, I note that the public sector equality duty is not mentioned in the Force statement submission.

A: DW, I accept that this is implied only in the statement, but I will look again at this area.

Q: SW, on page 5 secondary employment, does an application need to be made for secondary employment?

A: EB, yes and this process is managed through Professional Standards, if not there is disciplinary procedure in place.

SW commented that she thought the Force were being honest pointing out a partial assurance on their statement.

ACTION: DW to add a note on the Public Sector Equality Duty in the Force's AGS

9. Internal Auditors

AW presented the Internal Auditors Progress Report, the highlights of the reports included:

No final reports for 2022/23 have been issued;

The next reviews will be Fleet Management, the scoping meeting was held in July 2022 and is due to be finalised in October 2022;

Final reports will be presented to ETAP members at their next meeting in September;

BS thanked AW for the update.

10. External Auditors

NH joined the meeting on Teams

NH advised that for EY are now reviewing the final letters of representation and there are no new material matters.

Q: BS, the accounts for 21.22 are due for published this Friday.

A: NH, there are no matters now that will have any bearing on the accounts for 21.22

Q: BS, when is the audit due to start for the 21.22 accounts?

A: NH, I'm having handover discussions with my colleagues in the office this week and will advise DG of a defined position. My partner is taking over my role, who has experience of Police workings.

Looking at the announcement of the HMICFRS, matters of concern on Force performance, they were some additional work carried out for the 20.21 on the Value for Work commentary. During EY's 21.22 audit, the HMICFRS work will feature as a significant weakness in EY's Risk work on Value for Money.

NH, advised that he starts he new role in September and he thanked ETAP members for their valued approached setting out concerns on the timetable and challengers in the correct way.

BS thanked NH for his work and wished him well in his new role.

{Note the 2020.21 annual accounts were subsequently cleared by EY on the 27th July 2022}

11. Force Gifts and Hospitality Report

JBL presented this report for SCO Expenses, Gifts and Hospitality Report for the period ending 31 March 2022.

JBL advised that during the period of Covid there was a large reduction in travel and associated costs.

Members queried why there were no items declined in the Force' Gifts and Hospitality Register for in period covered?

ACTION: JBL to advise on the number of Gifts and Hospitality items declined by the Force

12. AOB

Bob added that ETAP members have recently completed their annual self- assessment following the CIPFA regulations.

Q: BS, a review of the Capital Process was delayed whilst the accounts were being prepared, are you in a position now to start this review?

A: JB, yes, this can now start as the Force is now reviewing the Qtr. 1 Capital Programme.

Date and time of next meeting is Wednesday 28 September 2022