



**Draft V02**

**Item 2 (i)**

**MINUTES OF THE ETHICS, TRANSPARENCY AND AUDIT PANEL (ETAP) POLICE  
& CRIME MEETING held on Tuesday 29 March 2022  
Conference Room 1, Block 7, Police HQ**

**Present:**

<b>ETAP members</b>	<b>Officers</b>
Alan Edwards (AE)	Emma Barnett - Deputy Chief Constable (EB)
Ben Thompson (BT)	John Bloomer - Force Chief Finance Officer (JBL)
Craig Brown (CB)	David Greensmith - SCO Director of Finance (DG)
Emma Christmas (EC)	Jean Cass - SCO Governance Lead (JC)
Jane Barr (JB)	
Jane King (JK)	<b>Also, in attendance</b>
John Wheatley (JW)	Neil Harris - EY Associate Partner (NH) Item 6 only (NH)
Sue Finney (SF)	Angela Ward - RSM Audit Manager (AW)
Sue Westacott (SW)	
Terry Stock (TS)	

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

BS advised that ETAP members, prior to the main meeting, had a private meeting with NH from External Auditors.

Following the meeting, members had a meeting with the Chief Constable Chris Noble (CN). During the meeting, CN, covered an introduction to his role and an overview of the new Local Policing Model.

**1. Declaration of interests, apologies, minutes and actions.**

i. Declarations of Interest: None

Apologies: ETAP member Martyn Rochelle (MR), Ralph Butler SCO Temporary Chief Executive (RB), Victoria Farrar - SCO Head of Governance and Assurance (VF), Deb Wilne - Force Governance, Planning & Policy Manager (DW).

Minutes & actions of the meeting held on the 16 February 2022

**AGREED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on the 16 February 2022, were confirmed as an accurate and true record.

Updates to actions from previous meetings

Item 1 - Force 'Know the Line' campaign to be discussed at future meeting of the Ethics and Review Panel (ERP) meeting - complete briefing carried out at the ERP meeting on the 23 March 2022

Item 2 - To supply a background update report on how the Force handles complaints including referrals to the IOPC - carried forward to the 25 May meeting

Item 3 -To share a copy of the Business Case for the new firing range - carried forward to the 25 May meeting

Item 4 - To present the follow up work from the Expenses Audit report to the Finance Panel - completed discussed at the Finance Panel on the 22 March 2022

## **2. Chief Constable update**

EB advised that the Force's Governance arrangements have been streamlined and the Force are now in their 3<sup>rd</sup> monthly cycle of these new arrangements. EB confirmed that she will be able to present the Force's governance arrangements to the ETAP meeting on the 26th July.

Q: SF, are minutes taken at all meetings?

A: EB, yes, minutes are taken at all meetings.

SW advised that members concern was around the audit trail for meetings.

BS thanked EB for her update and confirmed the panel would welcome a presentation of the Force's governance arrangements at the July meeting.

## **3. Deputy Chair's feedback**

### **i. Chair of the Finance Panel**

AE advised that the Finance Panel meet last week.

The highlights of the meeting included: -

Confirmation that the finances are heading for an underspend of just above approximately. £1m. Over the year, the Panel have been pleased to see that there has been a positive shift in the reserves level and a regular consist pattern of reporting.

The Panel have some concerns over the levels of vacancies in police staff but were pleased to see the uplift numbers would be above the expected level by year end.

The Panel discussed the Internal Audit Report on IT Governance which contained slightly worrying actions. However, the Panel received a verbal update that following the report actions are being progressed.

The Panel had an update on the new IT system and assurance of a clear plan for the implemented of a new IT system by August 2023.

External Audit – during the meeting, it was confirmed that the Audit Opinion for 20.21 Accounts was due by the middle of April 2022.

Q: CB, could you advise what is supplementary payment?

A: JBL, the policy is to pay at the bottom of the grade. The Force is seeing candidates negotiating in some specialist role to starting salary above the bottom grade level and hence a supplementary payment is made.

Q: JK, what is meant by Social Value?

A: AE, advised that Social Value includes investment in the local area and includes jobs for local people.

Q: SW, what value is given in the tendering process?

A: JBL, Social Value does have up to 10% in the scoring matrix?

Q: SF, is the weighting going to change?

A: JBL, yes, the finance regs allow the Force to change weighting this in the tendering process.

BS reminded the meeting that this would be AE's last report from the Finance Panel. BS added his personal thanks to AE for support on the Finance Panel and his contribution ETAP during the past 6 years on the Panel.

BS thanked AE for his update report.

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

**Gifts and Hospitality Review update** - currently in progress with JC, JK and JB, a report is due to be produced by Easter.

**Vetting Presentation** - The panel received a presentation from Jonathan Gupta, Head of Vetting Team. The panel were concerned that whilst it was good to see additional resources in the Team, it was noted that some of the staff were on temporary contracts. It was also noted that due to national changes, demand of the services of the Team may soon be ramped at time a time when temporary contracts may be coming to an end.

EB acknowledged that the Force is aware of this fixed term contracts due to a degree of uncertainties in the market.

**Professional Standards 'Know the Line' Campaign** as already mentioned Tracy Foster has briefed the panel at the last meeting on this campaign.

BS thanked JK for her update report.

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

EC had not attended any meetings the last ETAP Public meetings

#### **5. Internal Auditors**

AW, presented 5 reports during the meeting today.

##### **i. Progress Report**

AW confirmed that the Progress Report is the update report against the 2021/22 plan.

ICT report has now been finalised today

Appendix A – contains the progress of the work completed to date and the status of work.

Fleet management will be completed as part of the 21.22 plan

Governance report – Force and FARS will be issued to the ETAP meeting in May.

##### **ii. Management Action (follow-up report)**

*Taking account of the issues identified in the remainder of the report, the Organisations have demonstrated good progress in implementing agreed management actions. We have confirmed that all 11 management actions reviewed have been implemented (nine) or superseded (two) and therefore validate that their completed status is accurate.*

BS commented that this report shows the value of internal audit and this is a very positive report

##### **iii. SCO Risk Management**

*Internal audit opinion: Taking account of the issues identified, the Commissioner can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage the identified area are suitably designed, consistently applied and operating effectively.*

##### **iv. Estates Management**

*Internal audit opinion: Taking account of the issues identified, the Board can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage the identified area are suitably designed, consistently applied and operating effectively*

Q: BS, EB, did you take over the collaboration project feed?

A: EB, the collaboration project on the estates was an ongoing piece of work from my predecessors. This project has worked very well with good locations and a good shared space.

Q: CB, are there any specific examples of good collaborative working?

A: EB, there are good examples of collaborative working on many different levels as for example colleagues now know who they are working with across the both services.

Q: CB, are any other stations earmarked for combined working with Fire and Police?

A: JBL, it has been agreed to look at Uttoxeter, Kidsgrove and Stone Police stations; these are all old Victorian buildings.

DG added that the public purse will be better off with additional collaborations.

#### v. Action plan 2022/23

AW advised that the plan is a high-level scope and includes: -

Asset Management - following on from the earlier advisory review.

Follow up on Fire Arms

Property Stores

IT equipment with a focus on the new equipment, laptops, phones etc.

Corporate Resourcing unit - response management and paid overtime

Fleet Management

HR training and development

Custody Management

Risk Management

Finances - data migration

AW confirmed that the Force Executive Team have seen this plan in February 2022.

SF commented that with the Finance System upgrade was the audit either too early or too late with the implementation going to plan in 2023 August.

SF asked for assurance that the audit is off use and is of benefit to the organisation.

JBL and DG advised that they have considered the timing of this audit. JB commented that this may need to be brought forward and may need to be pushed back depending upon the new systems. DG also added that the scope may also need to be changed nearer the date.

AW advised that they will be looking at the timing of the audit.

BS thanked AW for the reports and the update.

## 6. External Auditors

NH gave a verbal update today.

NH confirmed that good progress has been made to conclude the audit and this have been a relatively smooth process with a couple of sample testing still to undertake. Unfortunately, EY have not been able to complete this work prior to the meeting today.

NH wished to flag the following areas during the meeting today:

Reaching a final position on corrected and uncorrected misstatements – these are not of a material nature.

- Following the revaluation of buildings there was no deprecation made in the accounts. A corrective adjustment was needed in the accounts
- Valuation of the HQ site - Block 8 & Block 9 queries on the valuations.

Concluding management review of files

Going-concern disclosure assessment – updated position needed.

NH confirmed that EY have been delayed starting the Value for Money arrangements. EY have now undertaken the majority of work and there are two final pieces to conclude the review; reviewing the Force's new Governance arrangements and decision-making arrangements following these changes and addressing the prior year's audits.

EY have found no significant weaknesses that will be reflected in the audit report

Q: BS, the valuation of the buildings is significant, what is the impact, what does this mean on the accounts?

A: JB, this is quite significant on the face of the accounts but it does not materially impact on the revenue outturn.

Q: AE, can you confirm the arrangements for the Value for Money.

A: NH, EY are required to complete the final audit within 3 months of giving an opinion, commentary.

BS commented that the audit only started in January and concluding in March, how are the teams coping?

A: NH, acknowledged that this has not been ideal and he wanted to pay credit to the teams involved, this is a reflection on the Finance Team and a credit to the control environment. Not every Police and Fire audit has gone smoothly elsewhere.

AE, added elsewhere in other forces, EY have seen qualified value for money and accounts and has seen poor financial management practice and poor financial resilience.

NH, one, organisation who had four prior period adjustments and poor turnover of staff which lead to a qualification of the value for money statement.

Q: SF, Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) standing item on Finance Panel going forward, how will this effect Value for Money statements

A: NH, this will feature in some work going forward on future work with regard to ESG.

Q: SF, will this change the narrative that EY will be especially looking for sustainability?

A: NH yes, this will include climate change risks from a financial reporting and financial viability in the public sector.

A: BS, ETAP have arrangement to meeting again on the 14 April, will you be able to meet this date?

Q: NH, it will be a big push to get to that date. He advised that it could be all complete by this date or audit results report could be available with some to final adjustments

**AGREED:** ETAP agreed to delegate their authority to BS to sign off any final adjustments outside the panel meeting on the 14 April 2022.

BS, on behalf of the Panel, added his congratulations to NH on his new role on Financial Regulations Council (FRC)

## **7. AOB**

### **i. Date and time of the next meetings**

A Special meeting of ETAP will be held on Thursday 14 April. This meeting is for the presentation of the CC and OPCC statement of accounts, the draft findings (ISA260) results report and also the draft Value for Money Commentary.

ETAP Public meeting Wednesday 25 May 2022