

Audit, Standards and Risk Committee

Meeting Date:

17 July 2024

Joint Independent Audit Committee Update

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
<i>Reason why exempt:</i>	Not applicable
Purpose of this report:	Monitoring/Assurance
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Has it been included on the Forward Plan?	Not a Key Decision

Director Approving Submission of the Report:

Gareth Sutton, Chief Finance Officer/s73 Officer

Report Author(s):

Sophie Abbott, Director of Finance – Police and Crime

Executive Summary

This paper provides information on the assurance received at the Joint Independent Audit Committee on 19 June 2024.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

The Joint Independent Audit Committee is responsible for enhancing public trust and confidence in the governance of the Policing and Reform within SYMCA, and South Yorkshire Police (SYP). It also assists the Mayor in discharging statutory responsibilities in holding the Force to account.

Recommendations

The Audit, Standards and Risk Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and to comment upon any matters arising.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) is responsible for enhancing public trust and confidence in the governance of the Policing and Reform within SYMCA, and South Yorkshire Police (SYP). It also assists the Mayor in discharging statutory responsibilities in holding the Force to account.
- 1.2 The committee has recently transferred from the former PCC's office and deals specifically with items relating to police and reform. There is a large and varied work programme in place. Recently discussions have been undertaken jointly with the Chairs of the ARSC and JIAC to ensure that matters are reported to ASRC appropriately and efficiently, and the Chair of JIAC has recently joined the ASRC. Another member also sits on both committees. These members should be able to provide information and ensure consistency and continuity in this area.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The last JIAC meeting was held on 19 June 2024.
- 2.2 Reports were discussed resulting in the Committee feeling assured in the following areas.
 - South Yorkshire Police's Workforce Planning and the current position in response of the government's police uplift programme.
The Force is currently ahead of the government target for police officer numbers (3,049), with retention being significantly above the numbers originally forecast. There has been progress in terms of the recruitment of female officers, however some other disproportionality remains. Members were assured that plans are in place to address this through specific community work.
 - South Yorkshire Police's Savings and Priority Based Budgeting Programme (PBB).
There is a need to save over £30m in the next five years, with an annual savings requirement of £16.3m by 2028/29, based on current estimates. The PBB programme has been put in place to look at efficiency and effectiveness within the Force and to realise savings to address the budget gap. The PBB process also aligns with the Home Office's productivity focus.
 - The 2023/24 Treasury Management out-turn position.
It was reported that there had been two breaches of the treasury management strategy (at the same time). The breaches related to two investments with Local Authorities which were over the limits specified in the treasury management strategy. Members were satisfied that these had been recognised and reported, and that processes had been reviewed appropriately. Members were content with the rest of the report.
 - The Internal Audit plan, annual audit report and summary of findings and progress update.
The internal audit report provided a 'reasonable assurance' opinion for both the Force and South Yorkshire Police. Given that it has been the first year of the contract, Members asked questions about the depth and volume of work that had been undertaken in the year. Members were satisfied that

sufficient work had been undertaken to provide an informed year end audit opinion.

- The External Audit progress update, although members questioned the additional fees being charged for the period from 31st March and the 7th May transfer date.
- South Yorkshire Police's Organisational Infrastructure and Strategic Concerns Register.

Each meeting the committee examines two different areas contained within the Force's Organisational Infrastructure report. At this meeting the Heads of Estates and Fleet presented information about risk management within their departments, opening up discussion and answering questions from members (the Asset Management Fleet Assurance Plan and Asset Management Estates Assurance Plans).

- Police and Reform Directorate Risk Management Update
- South Yorkshire Police's Annual Governance Action Plan. Members noted that two new actions had been added and were content with the plan.

2.3 The Committee remained concerned about South Yorkshire Police's IT governance. This is a standing agenda it is subject to monitoring at each meeting.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 It is recommended that members note the content of this report.

Background Papers

Joint independent Audit Committee papers.