



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER,  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY and  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE**

**JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**TO THE POLICE FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
(AS PFCC AND NCFRA) AND THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE**

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 OF  
THE JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**1. Introduction**

The Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) provides independent assurance that adequate corporate and strategic risk management arrangements are in place for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire (PFCC – acting as PFCC and NCFRA) and the Chief Constable (CC). It jointly advises the PFCC and the CC on governance matters as well as good practices.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) guidance, recommends that the JIAC report annually on how they have discharged their duties and responsibilities.

This report provides the PFCC and CC with a summary of the Committee's activities in the financial year 2022/23. It also seeks to provide assurance that the Committee has fulfilled its terms of reference, and added value to the overall governance arrangements that were in place for both the PFCC and the CC.

The Committee wishes to record its gratitude to the Chief Officers from Police and Fire for their constant support and to the staff of all three organisations who have attended JIAC meetings and who ensure that it has been able to carry out its business efficiently. To this list I would like to add Internal Audit and External Audit who have assisted the Committee to fulfil its role.

I would like to record my thanks to them and my fellow JIAC members for their wise advice and invaluable efforts throughout this year. Steps are being taken to appoint a new member to bring the JIAC to full compliment.

## **2. Role of the Committee**

The current purpose of the Committee is:

*‘To support the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable to discharge their responsibilities by providing independent assurance on the adequacy of their corporate governance, risk management arrangements and the associated control environments and the integrity of financial statements and reporting.’*

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in his role as corporation sole for both PFCC and NCFRA.

This is the tenth Annual Report of the JIAC and it sets out how the Committee fulfilled its purpose and responsibilities in 2022/23

The JIAC seeks to provide independent assurance to the three organisations through a review of:

- Corporate Governance
- Internal Control Environment
- Corporate Risk Management
- Regulatory Framework
- Internal Audit
- External Audit
- External Financial Reporting
- Updates on Inspections and Reviews (HMICFRS)
- Counter Fraud

It will seek assurance on the effective and timely implementation of recommendations and action plans.

The JIAC provides the independent assurance function to the PFCC and should discharge the responsibilities of the PFCC (acting as PFCC and NCFRA) and the CC in independent assurance. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) provides guidance on the function and operation of Police Audit Committees and sets criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the JIAC, which forms an integral part of this report.

Additionally, this report provides the PFCC and CC with a summary of the areas of work considered by the JIAC during the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. This is in line with the CIPFA guidance that recommends that Audit Committees should report annually on how they have discharged their responsibilities.

The full responsibilities of the JIAC are contained in its Terms of Reference in Appendix 1.

### 3. Committee Membership

Membership of the Committee during the financial year was:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Appointment</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>
Ann Battom (Chair)	Appointed December 2018	CIPFA, MSc
John Holman	Appointed 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2019	TD MA MRICS
Edith Watson	Appointed 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2019	MBA
Alicia Bruce	Appointed 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2022	FCCA FCMI CMgr

### 4. Meetings

The Committee met on 4 occasions during the financial year. Meetings are open to the public with minutes being published on the PFCC website.

During the year we had hybrid meetings, ie in person and online, with the PFCC and CC, and both the Internal and External Auditors. These meetings have worked very well, enabling our full programme of work to be concluded safely.

From July 2023 meetings will be predominantly in person although allowing for online attendance where necessary.

### 5. Terms of Reference

The JIAC Terms of Reference follow CIPFA guidance and the formal annual review forms part of this report. Details of the current Terms of Reference can be found on the PFCC website and in Appendix 1. This report also constitutes the annual review of the Terms of Reference.

The JIAC covers three organisations: the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC), the Force and the Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (NCFRA). The Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) is part of NCFRA.

The Committee believes it met the requirements of the Terms of Reference, both in terms of relevant agenda items and the effectiveness of its review.

The committee's work and scope is now well established, the Terms of Reference were reviewed as part of the recruitment process for both the new JIAC chair, and additional JIAC members in 2021. The updated terms of reference are attached and reflect the annual review for 2021/22. The 2022/23 review has identified no further changes.

## 6. How the Committee discharges its responsibilities

The JIAC meets at least 4 times a year and has a schedule of matters to be considered at each meeting. Internal and external audit activity is reviewed at every meeting.

The attendance of JIAC Committee members at meetings was as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Attendance / Possible attendance</b>
Ann Battom	4/4
John Holman	4/4
Edith Watson	4/4
Alicia Bruce	4/4

The Committee's meetings have been well supported by officers from the Force, OPFCC and the FRS. The excellent quality and timeliness of reports facilitates good, well informed discussions. In addition, the Committee has appreciated the open and transparent approach of officers.

In addition, representatives of the Internal Auditors and the External Auditor attended the meetings and the Committee took the opportunity as it felt necessary to discuss topics in private with the auditors without officers being present.

The JIAC has received regular reports on:

- the Statement of Accounts (2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22);
- risk management and risk registers;
- treasury management;
- internal and external audit plans, recommendations and updates on progress; and
- updates on the inspectorate (HMICFRS) reports and recommendations.

It has also received updates or sought extra assurance on areas of specific risk or concern, including:

- Transition from Multi Force Shared Services (MFSS) and Local Government Shared Services (LGSS) to the new in-house Police (and in April 2023 Fire) financial systems;
- Enabling Services and Future Systems Update
- Future Internal and External Audit Arrangements;
- Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan update and timetable;

- Corruption and fraud controls and processes;
- JIAC Recruitment.

The following workshops were held:

- July 2022 – Induction / JIAC member briefing.
- November 2022 - Fire Accounts; and
- November 2022 - Police Accounts.
- February 2023 – Risk Management Workshop

The two internal audit teams have successfully delivered almost a full program of reviews.

The Committee continues to gain significant assurance from both the reports and officers. Key topics and issues are set out below. However the members of the Committee appreciate the openness of the officers to discuss all areas of the business and willingness to respond to questions.

## **7. Assessment of the Audit Committee's performance against its plan and terms of reference**

The Committee is keen to be effective and in particular make a positive and constructive contribution to the work of the PFCC, CC and NFRA and the achievement of their strategic priorities.

The Committee's aims and objectives for 2022/23 are set out in Appendix 2. Four of the five objectives have been completed. The first objective – a review of organisational effectiveness across the three organisations will continue into 2023 due to the embedding of new procedures and processes from the future system changes.

Appendix 3 sets out the objectives for 2023/24. There are some key areas which the Committee will keep under review including keeping updated on the embedded enabling services support services and statutory accounts. The agreed work programme covers all core areas and increasingly reports now cover all three organisations in a single document. This has reduced pressure on the Agenda for meetings, which gives the Committee space to explore assurance in other areas ; these will be discussed with officers.

## **8. Identification of key topics and issues**

During 2022/23 the Committee considered a range of topics and issues including:

**Annual Accounts 2020/21 and 2021/22**– frustratingly the delays, resourcing issues and missed deadlines from external auditors Ernst Young as experienced last year continued throughout 2022 and are still a problem at the time of writing this report.

Just when we hoped that audit work was complete, changes to our EY senior audit management resulted in further reviews which once again impacted negatively on the sign off timeline.

All Finance staff worked extremely hard to ensure that audit queries and additional requests were answered promptly, despite the on-going disruption to finance business as usual.

JAC have made their concerns known in local and national forums and are aware that this issue is not ours alone – unbelievably we are in a slightly better position than some of our counterparts across the country. In order to fulfil its obligations around scrutiny and assurance the JAC reviewed draft Annual Accounts 2021/22 for both Police and Fire in November 2022, on the understanding that the external audit work was substantially, if not fully, complete for Fire for 2021/22, and that the audit work for Police for 2020/21 was well underway and any potential outstanding issues were known.

NCFRA Accounts 2021/22 were finally signed off in June 2023 and PFCC and CC accounts for 2021/22 are anticipated to follow in the near future.

The committee recognises the hard work of officers in maintaining a good working relationship with the external audit team members throughout this challenging situation.

During the year a contract procurement process by PSAA for future external audit provision was undertaken, the result of which is a change in our providers. With effect from the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts, Grant Thornton will undertake external audit work for all three organisations. The committee are hopeful that deadlines will return to more acceptable timeframes, however we are mindful that the backlog for Police and auditor changes and handovers may increase risk and we will continue to monitor the situation closely.

**Future Systems** – Embedding the future systems arrangements implemented for policing, in place of those delivered by the Multi Force Shared Service (MFSS), as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 continued, together with assurance on the implementation which has been a critical work stream during this financial year.

The JAC have required and received, regular updates on progress and associated risks during the year. Enabling Services are now embedded and a review 2020-2023 will be considered by the Committee in July 2023.

In terms of future systems, Police future systems were successfully implemented by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and the financial system transition to include Fire from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 was implemented as planned. HR and payroll services for Fire will transition by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

Progress during the year has been steady. The JIAC have received an update on the assurance in terms of the implementation of the future systems arrangements and have focused on the outcomes of a benefits realisation exercise.

The JIAC will continue seek assurance in respect of the future systems implementation and embedding for Fire in 2023/24.

**Risk management** – the Committee had an in depth workshop on risk which covered all areas of risk, including the appetite for risk, risk evaluation and importantly the mechanisms for the escalation of risks.

Risk management processes are well established and the joint risk register is regularly monitored (including by the JIAC). The transitioning of Fire to the current risk system is planned for April 2023.

The fluctuating political and local landscape continues to create new risks and/ or increase existing risks. Officers have provided in depth information on how such risks are managed and mitigated if possible, from which the JIAC has gained assurance.

**Capital programme** – there is a comprehensive capital programme for both Police and Fire. This is supported by the Digital and Estates strategies. It also provides an important input to the Treasury Management Strategy and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

**Medium term financial plan (MTFP)** – during the year the JIAC received a report on the MTFP and the detailed timescale and strategy, which supported the plan.

**Governance framework** – The JIAC considered and supported the Internal Audit plans for the year in June 2022 and progress in delivering that plan so far, has been good. Progress reports on the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations are reviewed at JIAC meetings to ensure that actions are completed in a timely fashion.

The JIAC consider and place reliance on the annual Internal audit assessments of the Chief Internal Auditors for all three organisations. Taking their assessments into account and the additional areas considered by them. Taking all the above into account the JIAC is of the view that there is a broadly effective governance and control regime in place within the OPFCC, NCFRA and the Force.

Specifically, the JIAC believe that the current arrangements for internal audit remain constructive and effective and expect that the consistency of provider for all three organisations going forward will be positive.

Significant improvements are still required in the delivery of the external audit service by Ernst Young in 2022-23 and a timely handover to Grant Thornton in 2023 will bring the external audit of the financial statements back to a more acceptable timeframe. The JIAC continues to give this matter close attention.

## **9. Assessment of Internal Audit**

### **PFCC and CC**

Mazars were appointed as the internal auditor for four years with effect from 1 April 2017 following a successful submission.

The internal audit plan for 2022/23 was approved by the JIAC and the Committee recommended the Commissioner and the Chief Constable to sign off the plan. Progress against the audit plan has been good.

Where Internal Audit recommendations have been made the Force and OPFCC have accepted the recommendation unless good justifiable reasons exist for not acceptance, such instances are the exception. In the majority of instances managers have progressed the agreed actions to the agreed timescale.

The Committee receives regular update reports on the progress of agreed actions, taking specific interest in actions where implementation dates are moved out or exceeded.

The internal audit service was re-tendered in 2022/23 by Derbyshire on behalf of the region. Northamptonshire Chief Finance Officers were an integral part of the process and our JIAC Chair was included in the local assessment of candidates' submissions.

Mazars were re-appointed as the internal auditor for four years with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 for both OPFCC and CC following a successful submission.

### **NCFRA**

The internal audit of NCFRA was undertaken by Milton Keynes Internal Audit Service for 2022/23.

The internal audit plan for NCFRA was approved at the March 2022 JIAC meeting and the Committee recommended the Commissioner to sign off the plan. Progress against the Audit Plan has been good. The Committee has monitored progress on the audit report recommendations for the Service and has taken assurance from the progress made to date.

Due to the planned expiry of the existing NCFRA internal audit contract the organization was included in the tendering process detailed above. Following a successful bid Mazars were appointed as the internal auditor for four years with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. This will provide continuity of internal audit service across all three organisations.

## **10. Assessment of External Audit**

Paragraph seven above comments on the late conclusion of the external audit of the statutory accounts.



The Committee has received updates where the PFCC, NCFRA and CC have explored the possibility of tendering independently or with a group of similar organisations for future external audit provision. There has been no appetite from others to adopt this approach and the cons of making an individual tender are significant. With reluctance, given the recent history of performance, the PFCC, NCFRA and CC once again joined the national consortium for the next tender process.

Locally, whilst subject to a number of staffing changes, the external audit team has been thorough and engagement has remained positive and constructive, however the timing and fees associated with the delivery of the audit work have continued to be below expectations which remains a significant cause of concern to the Committee.

## **11. Looking forward**

Appendix 3 sets out the draft Aims and Priorities for the Committee for 2023/24

These reflect:

- Any outstanding recommendations from 2022/23
- Known areas of concern / high risk; and
- Emerging areas or change programmes likely to be related to the control framework.

## **12. Conclusion**

The Committee has an effective work programme based on robust governance frameworks across the three organisations.

The Committee is grateful to officers who have provided honest and objective assurance about the arrangements which exist, and especially to the Finance teams including the statutory officers all of whom have been put under additional pressure throughout the last year because of the protracted audit timetable.

The JIAC will continue to undertake the responsibilities assigned to it in the agreed terms of reference and seek to ensure that it makes a constructive contribution to achieving the agreed priorities. It is important that the JIAC adds value to the organisations in discharging its responsibilities and so will continue to assess its own effectiveness.

A Battom  
Chair of Joint  
Independent Audit Committee

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER,  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHIEF CONSTABLE AND  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COMMISSIONER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**1 Purpose**

To support the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable to discharge their responsibilities by providing independent assurance on the adequacy of their corporate governance, risk management arrangements and the associated control environments and the integrity of financial statements and reporting.

**2 Membership**

- a) The Commissioner, Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer (acting on behalf of NCFRA) jointly will appoint the Committee.
- b) The Committee shall consist of no fewer than five members.
- c) A quorum shall be two members.
- d) At least one member shall be a CCAB qualified accountant with recent and relevant financial experience
- e) The Commissioner, Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer jointly will appoint the Chair of the Committee, following discussion with the members of the Committee.
- f) The Chair shall normally be a CCAB qualified accountant, with recent and relevant financial experience.
- g) Members shall normally be appointed for a period of up to four years, extendable by no more than one additional three-year period, so long as members continue to be independent.
- h) In the absence of the Chair at any meeting of the Committee, the members attending the meeting will elect a Chair for the meeting.

**3 Secretary of the Committee**

The Monitoring Officer of the Commission will nominate an officer from the Commissioner's Office to act as Secretary to the Committee.

**4 Frequency of Meetings**

- a) Meetings shall be held at least four times each year, timed to align with the financial reporting cycle.
- b) Extra-ordinary meetings can be held for specific purposes at the discretion of the Chair.
- c) External or internal auditors may request the Chair to call a meeting if they consider one is necessary.

**5 Protocols for Meetings**

- a) Agenda and supporting papers will be circulated to members at least five working days prior to any meeting.

- b) Where possible, minutes/actions shall be prepared and distributed to members of the Committee, regular attendees and the Commissioner, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer in draft, unapproved format within 10 working days of the meeting.
- c) All papers/minutes should be read prior to the meeting and the meeting will be conducted on this basis with papers being introduced concisely
- d) It is expected that all actions are reviewed prior to the meeting and updates provided even if individuals cannot attend the meeting.
- e) The Chair of the Committee shall draw to the attention of the Commissioner, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer any issues that require disclosure or require executive action

**f) QUESTIONS AND ADDRESSES BY THE PUBLIC**

**i. General**

Members of the public, with the permission of the Chair of the Committee, may ask questions of members of the Committee, or may address the Committee, on an item on the public part of the agenda.

**ii. Order of questions and address**

(a) Questions will be asked and addresses given in the order notice of them was received, except that the Chair of the Committee may group together similar questions or addresses.

(b) A list of questions and addresses of which notice has been given shall be circulated to members of the Committee at or before the meeting.

**iii. Notice of questions and addresses**

A question may only be asked or an address given if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Monitoring Officer no later than noon two working days before the meeting. Each notice of a question must give the name and address of the questioner and must name the person to whom it is to be put, and the nature of the question to be asked. Each notice of an address must give the name and address of the persons who will address the meeting and the purpose of the address.

**iv. Scope of questions and addresses**

The Chair of the Committee may reject a question or address if it:

- Is not about a matter for which the Committee has a responsibility or which affects Northamptonshire;
- is defamatory, frivolous, offensive or vexatious;
- is substantially the same as a question which has been put or an address made by some other person at the same meeting of the Committee or at another meeting of the Committee in the past six months; or
- requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

**v. Asking the question or making the address at the meeting**

The Chair of the Committee will invite the questioner to put the question to the person named in the notice. Alternatively, the Chair of the Committee will invite an address to the Committee for a period not exceeding three minutes. Every question must be put and answered without discussion but the person to whom the question has been put may decline to answer it or deal with it by a written answer. Every address must be made without discussion.

## **6 Attendance at Meetings**

- a) The Committee may invite any person to attend its meetings.
- b) The Commissioner, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer shall be represented at each meeting of the Committee.
- c) The Commissioner's representation will normally comprise the statutory officers and/or appropriate deputies;
- d) The Chief Constable shall normally be represented by the Deputy Chief Constable of the Force, and / or deputies;
- e) The Chief Fire Officer shall normally be represented by an Assistant Chief Fire Officer;
- f) Internal and External auditors will normally attend each meeting of the Committee.
- g) There should be at least one meeting each year where the Committee meets the external and internal auditors without the Commissioner's, Chief Fire Officer's and Chief Constable's officers being present. This need not be the same meeting; and such meetings would usually take place before or after the normal Committee meeting has concluded.

## **7 Authority**

- a) The Committee is authorised by the Commissioner, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer to:
  - investigate any activity within its Terms of Reference;
  - seek any information it requires from any employee;
  - obtain outside legal or other independent professional advice;
  - secure the attendance of outsiders with relevant experience and expertise if it considers this necessary;
  - undertake training of its new members as required.
- b) All employees are directed to co-operate with any request made by the Committee.
- c) The Committee may only make decisions within the remit set out in these Terms of Reference. The Committee has no authority to reverse decisions made by the Commissioner, NCFRA or Chief Constable. It has no authority to incur expenditure.

## **8 Duties**

The Committee's scope encompasses:

- the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (including the Fire and Rescue Authority after the transfer of governance on 1 January 2019);
- the interface between the OPFCC and associated bodies and directly controlled / associated companies but not the bodies themselves;
- the Northamptonshire Police Force;
- the Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) and
- Any collaborative / partnership arrangements involving the OPFCC, Force or NFRS.

The duties of the Committee shall be:

## **A Corporate Governance, Risk Management, Internal Control and the Regulatory Framework**

To support the PFCC, Chief Constable, Chief Fire Officer and statutory officers in ensuring effective governance arrangements are in place and are functioning efficiently and effectively, across the whole of the Commission's, Force's and Service's activities, making any recommendations for improvement, to support the achievement of the organisations' objectives.

Specific annual activities of the Committee will include:

- a) Review of corporate governance arrangements against the 'Good Governance framework';
- b) Consideration of the framework of assurances to assess if it adequately reflects the Commission's, Force's and Service's priorities and risks;
- c) Consideration of the processes for assurances in relation to collaborations, partnerships and outsourced activities.
- d) Consideration of the processes for assurances that support the Annual Governance Statement;
- e) Consideration of VFM arrangements and review of assurances;
- f) To review any issue referred to it by the statutory officers of the Commission, the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer and to make recommendations as appropriate;
- g) To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management and to make recommendations as appropriate;
- h) To be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management Strategy and policies
- i) Consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.

## **B External Financial Reporting**

To scrutinise the draft statements of accounts and annual governance statements prior to approval by the Commissioner, Chief Constable and NCFRA and publication. The Committee will challenge where necessary the actions and judgments of management, and make any recommendations as appropriate, to ensure the integrity of the statements.

Particular attention should be paid to the following:

- Critical accounting policies and practices, and any changes in them;
- Decisions requiring a significant element of judgment;
- The extent to which the financial statements are affected by unusual transactions in the year and how they are disclosed;
- The clarity of disclosures;
- Significant adjustments resulting from the audit;
- Compliance with accounting standards;
- Compliance with other legal requirements

## **C Internal Audit**

The Committee shall monitor and review the internal audit function to ensure that it meets mandatory Internal Audit Standards and Public Sector Internal Standards and provides appropriate independent assurance to the JIAC, Monitoring Officer of the Commission, the Commissioner, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable.

This will be achieved by:

- a) Overseeing the appointment of the internal auditors and making recommendations to the Commissioner and Chief Constable, who will make the respective appointments;
- b) Consideration of the internal audit strategy and annual plan, and making recommendations as appropriate;
- c) Consideration of the head of internal audit's annual report and opinion, and a summary of internal audit activity (actual and proposed) and the level of assurance it can give over corporate governance arrangements, and make recommendations as appropriate;
- d) Consideration of summaries of internal audit reports, and managers' responses, and make recommendations as appropriate;
- e) Consideration of the management and performance of internal audit, and its cost, capacity and capability, in the context of the overall governance and risk management arrangements, and to make recommendations as appropriate;
- f) Consideration of a report from internal audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale and make recommendations as appropriate;
- g) Consideration of the effectiveness of the co-ordination between Internal and External Audit, to optimise the use of audit resources;
- h) Consideration of any issues of resignation or dismissal from the Internal Audit function.

## **D External Audit**

The Committee shall review and monitor External Audit's independence and objectivity and the effectiveness of the audit process.

This will be achieved by consideration of:

- a) the Commission's, Force's and Service's relationships with the external auditor;
- b) proposals made by officers and Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) regarding the appointment, re-appointment and removal of the external auditor;
- c) the qualifications, expertise and resources, effectiveness and independence of the external auditor annually;
- d) the external auditor's annual plan, annual audit letter and relevant specific reports as agreed with the external auditor, and make recommendations as appropriate;
- e) the draft Management Representation letters before authorisation by the Commissioner, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable, giving particular consideration to non-standard issues;
- f) the effectiveness of the audit process;
- g) the effectiveness of relationships between internal and external audit other inspection agencies or relevant bodies;
- h) the Commissioner's and Chief Constable's policies on the engagement of the External Auditors to supply non-audit services, taking into account relevant guidance.

## **E Other Assurance Functions**

The Committee shall review the findings of other significant assurance functions, both internal and external to the organisation.

## **F Counter Fraud**

The Committee shall satisfy itself:

- a) that the Commission, Force and Service have adequate arrangements in place for detecting fraud and preventing bribery and corruption;
- b) that effective complaints and whistle blowing arrangements exist and proportionate and independent investigation arrangements are in place.

## **9 Reporting**

- a) The Chairman shall be entitled to meet with the Commissioner, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer ideally prior to their approving the accounts each year;
- b) The Committee shall annually review its Terms of Reference and its own effectiveness and recommend any necessary changes to the Commissioner and Chief Constable;
- c) The Committee shall prepare a report on its role and responsibilities and the actions it has taken to discharge those responsibilities for inclusion in the annual accounts;
- d) Such a report shall specifically include:
  - o A summary of the role of the Committee
  - o The names and qualifications of all members of the Committee during the period
  - o The number of Committee meetings and attendance by each member; and
  - o The way the Committee has discharged its responsibilities
  - o An assessment of the Committee's performance against its plan and terms of reference;
  - o Identification of the key issues considered by the Committee and those highlighted to the Commissioner, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer
  - o An assessment of Internal and external Audit
- e) If the Commissioner and / or the Chief Constable do not accept the Committee's recommendations regarding the appointment, re-appointment or removal of the external auditor the Committee shall include a statement explaining its recommendation and the reasons why the Commissioner / Chief Constable has taken a different stance in its annual report.

## **10 Standing Agenda Items**

The agenda for each meeting of the Committee shall normally include the following:

### **Procedural items:**

Apologies for absence  
Declaration of Interests  
Minutes of the last meeting  
Matters Arising Action Log  
Date, time and venue of next meeting

**Business items:**

Progress Reports

- Internal Audit
- External Audit

Update on implementation of Audit Recommendations

Items for escalation to the Commissioner and / or Chief Constable

Agenda Plan for the next four meetings

**11 Accountability**

The Committee is accountable to the Commissioner and Chief Constable.



## Appendix 2

### The Joint Independent Audit Committee's – Aims and Objectives 2022/23

<b>Aims and Objectives</b>
Review Organisational effectiveness across the three organisations - ie the extent to which the current management structures are fit for purpose and seeking assurance that strategic aims filter through the organisations effectively.
Continue to place importance on the prompt production and audit of the organisations' statutory account
Review action plans and recommendations that come from Governmental reviews,( eg Peel and HMICFRS) are implemented in a timely manner, having regard to organisational resources and strategic direction.
Initiate up to 3 reviews in areas of strategic importance in the governance of the organisations. [Note: possible areas – in-house procurement services, Fire Standards and the implications for Fire reform as a result of Government White paper, joint delivery services for police and fire, Digital technology, equality and diversity.
Conclude the JIAC review of effectiveness.

**The Joint Independent Audit Committee's – Draft Aims and Objectives  
2023/24**

<b>Aims and Objectives</b>
Review Organisational effectiveness across the three organisations - ie the extent to which the current management structures are fit for purpose and seeking assurance that strategic aims filter through the organisations effectively.
Review the effectiveness of enabling services across the three organisations, seeking assurance that expected outcomes and benefits are being realised, especially in terms of organisational culture.
Continue to place importance on the prompt production and audit of the organisations' statutory accounts
Review action plans and recommendations that come from HMICFRS eg Peel and HMICFRS are implemented inline with agreed timescales and standards,
Initiate up to 3 assurance reviews in areas of strategic importance in the governance of the organisations. [Note: possible areas – the implications for Fire cultural reform as a result of government inspection, Joint delivery services for police and fire, Benefits Realisation, Equality and Diversity.
JAC member recruitment.