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Agenda Item 6

### Report to the Joint Independent Audit Committee

### 01 October 2025

**Internal Audit Recommendations Summary Report**

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is asked to note this report.

### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

* 1. This report provides the Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) with an update on the status of actions arising from recommendations made in internal audit reports.
  2. The report contains actions arising from audits of Northamptonshire Police and the Office of Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and East Midlands Collaboration Units.
  3. The attached Summary of Internal Audit Recommendations Report shows details and the current status of all open audit actions.
  4. The Force Assurance Board has oversight of all outstanding audit actions and directs the activities required to complete any actions that have passed their targeted implementation date.

1. **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AUDITS**
   1. **Overall Status**

The report shows in 2023/24 and 2024/25 a total of twenty audits have been completed, making sixty-four audit recommendations. Of those sixty-four recommendations:

* 45 recommendations have been completed and are closed.
* 5 recommendations have had their original implementation date revised and remain ongoing.
* 10 recommendations have not yet reached their implementation date and remain ongoing.
* 4 recommendations have passed their implementation dates and are overdue.

Further details regarding mitigation activity and progress updates can be found within the attached report, Summary of Internal Audit Recommendations for JIAC October 2025.

1. **OVERVIEW**
   1. **2023/24 Audits**

* Ten audits were completed making forty-one recommendations.
* Thirty-six recommendations have been completed and are closed.
* Four recommendations have had their implementation date revised and remain ongoing.

Identity Access Management – June 2024

**Recommendation 2 – Multifactor Authentication for Fire AD Accounts.**

As noted in the recommendation, we have started the process of implementing this security measure for administrative accounts and on a per project basis. The intention

would be to enable this for accounts within EntraID. Full implementation will require executive support from the organisation and of other affiliated bodies. We will commence this process, monitor the progress, and report any issues or challenges. Original implementation date September 2024. The project to provide personal devices to all fire staff is now under review. SYAP and CAF recommendations highlight the need for personal issue devices which means this recommissioning is being picked up as part of that work now. Revised date of 31 December 2025.

**Recommendation 4 – Password Management Tool Implementation.**

There is a PAM (Password Access Management) Project in progress that is being led by the Transformation and Change team with a project manager assigned. Budget has been allocated and we have collated requirements which include the ability to store all generic administration and service account passwords, and supplier demonstrations have now taken place. This will be reviewed bi- monthly to ensure progress is made. Original implementation date March 2025. The concerns regarding the Cloud viability have now been explored and a revised commercial request has been submitted for progression. The due date for this implementation will need to be revised to allow time for the procurement activity to take place. Revised date 31 October 2025

**Recommendation 5 –** **Completion of Access Changes.**

Although tickets are already created from HR data, this process will now be reviewed to identify the capability of the current HR hub, ITSM tool and automation, if that cannot be easily done within these existing platforms then this will be developed with the new ITSM tool. The associated action will be to review this and report to key stakeholders.

Original implementation date July 2024. The procurement for the tool is progressing well with contracts now signed. However, due to the extended nature of the procurement the delivery date for this action will need to be revised as well as the revised project stage gates. This will be delivered as part of the ITSM project due to go-live at the end of 2025. Revised date 31 December 2025.

IT Asset Legacy Management – June 2024

**Recommendation 1 –** **Automated scanning of hardware and software is not used to identify inaccuracies in the IT asset register.**

The procurement and implementation of the new ITSM tool is ongoing and DDaT will implement the software in three phases, starting from the first quarter of the current fiscal year and ending by the fourth quarter of the next fiscal year.

Original implementation date December 2024. This will be resolved as part of the ITSM project where each piece of hardware will be tracked and records of software deployment will be maintained as part of the Service Catalogue. Revised date 31 December 2025.

* One recommendation has not yet reached its implementation date and remains ongoing.

Identity Access Management – June 2024

**Recommendation 1 – Lack of Periodic User Access Reviews.**

The process is currently conducted in conjunction with the Information Assurance and Systems admin teams and due to resource constraints is limited to ad hoc reviews at this time. However the new structure will facilitate the coordination of the ROPA, the underlying access required and then the audits will be planned and executed by the new information audit team. The Audit Manager and Auditor roles have been filled and audit activity has commenced. The Head of Information Assurance has requested that the audit of user access should be one of the first to be undertaken. Due date 31 December 2025.

* 1. **2024/25 Audits**
* Ten audits have been completed making twenty-three recommendations.
* Nine recommendations have been completed and are closed.
* Four recommendations have passed their implementation dates and are overdue.

Asset Management – October 2024

**Recommendation 4 –** **Service – Reliance on spreadsheet for the Vehicle Maintenance and Records.**

The Department is currently undergoing a review and potential restructure. As part of this work the maintenance of the Fire Appliances is being outsourced. Linked to this will then be a full review of all Policies and Procedures to take into account the revised delivery model. And then ensure that the incumbent system is utilised to its full potential whilst work is undertaken to implement a new fleet/equipment management system. Due date 28 February 2025.

Workforce Planning – February 2025

**Recommendation 1 –** **No formal succession plans for critical roles.**

Liaison with Workforce Planning to identify critical roles. Work on going to look at skills for critical roles and how individuals can identify their current skill set and identify any development required. Looking at utilising about me section on Talent Tile of PDR and to utilise the Talent Tile to produce talent pools which indicate when individuals would be ready for role e.g. ready now/short/medium or long term. A questionnaire has been set to Heads of Departments asking them to review and score roles in their departments. Some of the questionnaire are still outstanding. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for 24 September. Due date 01 September 2025.

Police and Fire IT Governance – July 2025

**Recommendation 1 –** **Lack of an Organisational Cyber Security Policy.**

This recommendation is currently being addressed and is effectively monitored through the SyAp framework under Action A1016. The Digital Security Architect is responsible for drafting the policy, with overall accountability assigned to EA.

A draft of the Cyber Security Policy is anticipated by early August. While we appreciate the recommendation, we believe the existing framework is already managing this action appropriately. Update 01/09/25 – A draft Security Strategy has been produced and circulated for review. Once feedback has been received the strategy will be updated and published. Due date 31 August 2025.

**Recommendation 4 –** **Data Quality Assurance Procedure.**

The Head of Information Assurance and the Head of Performance and Business Insights have collaborated to develop a draft Data Strategy. This strategy integrates key elements of data quality, including input, storage, and analysis, into a cohesive framework. Scheduled for presentation at the June CDO board, the strategy will undergo wider approval before being followed by tailored implementation plans designed to address specific service requirements. Due date 01 August 2025.

* One recommendation has had its implementation date revised and remains ongoing.

Procurement and Supply Chain – June 2025

**Recommendation 3 –** **Sending timely reminders to suppliers within frameworks.**

A further contributory factor to the robustness of this process was the limited capacity within the team. The Business Development team are now back to full establishment, and we have an additional post which has now been approved to support the team. This limitation was already acknowledged, particularly, with the SMEs who are members of the E&F Framework. Processes are being reviewed and re-established to further improve practice. As part of the processes, the compliance of the suppliers to their contractual obligations shall be monitored and reported on within the monthly scorecards provided to the Chief Asset Officer and the Assistant Chief Officer, Enabling Services, to ensure performance management is in place and income secured. However, it is recognised that this is a single supplier out of a large volume. Update September 2025 - Significant activity has been undertaken with the E&F framework suppliers to engage and improve returns. A meeting is due to be held on 9th September to forward plan supplier management and income tracking for the next 12-18 months. Revised date 01 October 2025.

* Nine recommendations have not yet reached their implementation date and remain ongoing.

Asset Management – October 2024

**Recommendation 1 –** **Lack of equipment and inventory checks.**

The organisations will need to implement a new system to support the ongoing management of the equipment within operational fleet. A project mandate shall now be submitted to support the commencement of a new programme of work to implement a new system. The timeline for delivery shall then be determined by the project portfolio capacity, the data cleansing and the procurement process. Due date 30 November 2025.

**Recommendation 2 –** **Lack of updated policies and procedures.**

The Department is currently undergoing a review and potential restructure. As part of this work is also being undertaken to establish a single Asset Strategy. This shall be aligned to the revised organisational Strategies and Plans. Linked to this will then be a full review of all Policies and Procedures to take into account the revised delivery model. Due date 30 September 2025.

**Recommendation 3 –** **Lack of equipment testing.**

The organisations will need to implement a new system to support the ongoing management and testing of the equipment within operational fleet. A project mandate shall now be submitted to support the commencement of a new programme of work to implement a new system. The timeline for delivery shall then be determined by the project portfolio capacity, the data cleansing and the procurement process. Due date 30 November 2025.

Business Continuity & Emergency Planning Follow Up – May 2025

**Recommendation 1 –** **Annual Testing Programme.**

A combined Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery exercise has been approved by senior officers. This will be a force wide exercise which is being developed and will be run later in 2025 when operationally viable. Due date 30 September 2025

Joint Governance – July 2025

**Recommendation 1 –** **NCFRA – Chief Fire Officer’s expenses not published online.**

Arrangements have been put into place that will ensure that with immediate effect the CFO expenses will be published on the Fire and Rescue website on a monthly basis. This is in line with the process followed for PFCC and Chief Constable. This information will be uploaded by Finance team as processed. Due date 31 August 2025.

**Recommendation 2 –** **OPFCC and Force – Policy and procedure review.**

The Head of Office is pulling a list together of the policies and procedures that require a review and then these will be allocated for review to appropriate staff members. Due date 30 October 2025.

Police and Fire IT Governance – July 2025

**Recommendation 2 –** **Lack of Consolidated Portfolio Planning.**

We accept this recommendation but clarify that it pertains specifically to all digital projects across both organisations and for organisational change projects within Police as these fall within the DDaT remit and are intrinsically linked to Project Framework.

The adoption process is accurately aligned with requirements and monitored effectively within DDaT Transformation and Change. Training and governance are also reinforced through monthly reports submitted to the CDO board and organisational change board, offering detailed guidance on implementation of the framework and providing a clear avenue for escalation of concerns. We will commit to developing formal guidance documentation as well as formally articulating the governance framework. Due date 01 October 2025.

**Recommendation 3 –** **Unclear links between governance bodies.**

Both organisations are undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of their governance processes, with a primary focus on improving decision-making through boards, national benchmarks, standardised templates, and enhanced communication procedures.

DDaT will commit to evaluating these findings against the existing DDaT governance structure to identify areas for refinement. Identify and map existing

connections and decision-making responsibilities across governance bodies and to draft and review a formal document reflecting these connections. Due date 31 December 2025.

Joint Estates Management – August 2025

**Recommendation 1 –** **Completion of stock condition surveys.**

* 1. The Force and NCFRA shall assess the most suitable provider, subject to compliance with Procurement Act 2023, to undertake a conditions survey programme for all outstanding properties within the identified perimeters. The prioritisation of these shall be aligned to the Estates Strategy, once agreed and finalised.
  2. The Force and NCFRA shall seek to create an interim measure for this, as the delivery of a software solution is currently being aligned across the organisational priorities.
  3. As set out in 1&2 above the control to identify shall be aligned and implemented on an interim measure whilst a software solution is awaited. Due date 30 January 2026.

1. **REGIONAL COLLABORATION AUDITS**

* No regional collaboration audit reports have been received since the last report.

#### EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

None

#### HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

None

#### RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

None.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

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**Background Papers:** Summary of Internal Audit Recommendations for JIAC October 2025.