**OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE**

**JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE**

27th July 2023

Present: Mrs D Turner (Chair),

Mr A Blackmore, Mr G Watts, Mr J Sheppard and Mr A Johns

Together with: Ms E Thomas– Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC)

Mrs S Curley – Chief Executive (CEx)

Mrs J Regan – Head of Assurance and Compliance (HoAC)

Ms R Williams - Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

Mr N Stephens – Assistant Chief Officer – Resources (ACOR)

Mr M Thomas – Superintendent - Head of Criminal Justice (HoCJ)

Mr S O’Brien - Ch/Inspector, Governance and Assurance (CIGA)

Mr M Coe – Head of Finance (HoF)

Mr S Gourlay– TIAA (TIAA)

Mrs T Veale – Audit Wales (AW1)

Mrs H Williams – Audit Wales (AW2)

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| The meeting was held in Yew Room 1 and on Teams and commenced at 10:00am. | **Action** |
| 1. **APOLOGIES** |  |
| Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Cuthbert, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent, Ms P Kelly, Chief Constable, Mr M Hobrough, Assistant Chief Constable, Ms V Townsend, Chief Superintendent, Head of Continuous Improvement, Ms L Bartley, Ch/Inspector, Chair of the Ethics Committee, Mr D Garwood-Pask Chief Finance Officer (CFO), Mr R Harries Audit Wales, Dr J Wademan, Vice Chair, Mrs H Cargill, TIAA, Mrs N Warren, Governance Officer, Mr G Gray, His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Force Liaison Lead and Mr M Corcoran, Internal Audit, Torfaen County Borough Council. |  |
| 1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** |  |
| There were no advance declarations made in relation to the business to be transacted. |  |
| 1. **MINUTES** |  |
| The minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2023 were received and confirmed.  We noted the Joint Audit Committee (JAC) meeting date on page 2 should read 8th March and not the 2nd March. GO to amend. | **GO**  **Action** |
| TIAA advised us all planned reviews for 2022/23 had been drafted and a few reports were awaiting finalisation. The TIAA annual report had been drafted and received by the force for review. Many of the audits had commenced in relation to the 2023/24 audit plan, TIAA were in discussion with the force regarding the remaining audits. |  |
| 1. **EXTERNAL AUDIT** |  |
| AW1 advised us the detailed audit plan had been revised to an easy read format. Key significant financial risks were summarised in the report, including the use of external consultancies to review pension actuaries, prior to review by their internal technical team. There was also focus on the accuracy of manual debtors and classification of transactions and balances, as these issues were raised in previous audits, although they had not resulted in material misstatements in the previous year.  JAC members had raised an additional risk in the audit pre-meet with AW1 regarding the extension of the audit timeframe due to unexpected events. AW1 confirmed it was not a risk that had been identified in any of the detailed audit plans to date and that it would now be considered.  The audit planning process was ongoing and further areas of audit focus or financial risk could be identified and some may also be removed if they were no longer deemed to be a risk. This would be communicated to JAC via the ISA260 or in an update report based on the timing of the changes.  The audit of the accounts was expected to take place in September 2023. AW1 thanked the finance team for sending working papers as this provided the opportunity for Audit Wales (AW) to review audit areas in August 2023, should they have spare capacity at that time. JAC requested a more detailed audit plan when the audit timetable had been confirmed.  The was an estimated increase of 15% in audit fees to £98,186 compared to the previous year due to inflationary pressures and the impact of the revised audit ISA315 standards.  AW1 confirmed that the audit team members were all independent of the Commissioner, the Chief Constable, and officers.  The JAC finance and audit lead welcomed the focus on audit quality and sought assurances that safeguards were in place to ensure audit quality would not be compromised due to time pressures, as there had been clear planning, interim and final phases in previous years which had been amalgamated into one this year.  AW1 assured us the new audit approach required further involvement of the audit manager and engagement lead with the audit team to address any areas of concern and to ensure set goals were being met. AW2 confirmed there was a requirement for audit teams to undertake a ‘stand back assessment’ and a ‘what could go wrong assessment’ to scrutinise their work to ensure best practice. Although this was conducted previously, there was now a requirement to document it.  Peer reviews were also conducted. There was a mechanism for technical queries to be submitted and responses recorded to ensure audit compliance. The quality audit department continued to conduct checks on their audit work and file reviews were undertaken to address key issues before final completion.  The changes to audit requirements had resulted in longer audit times for health organisations. A more detailed review would be undertaken of the recent health sector audits to ensure the new audit approach was working and any learning gleaned from the process incorporated within audit plans for relevant sectors. We were assured as audit resources became more familiarised with the new audit requirements; the dates would move backwards a couple of months nearer to previous years' timetable.  With the increased focus on IT within the new audit standards, JAC asked if South Wales Police (SWP) would be in a position to cope with the extra audit work as the IT host and in addition would the Shared Resource Service (SRS) have the capacity to action audit recommendations relating to the force accounts audit as well as audit recommendations from Torfaen County Borough Council Internal Auditors.  The ACOR advised us that SRS had already prioritised the issue, the joint Digital Services Division (DSD) were focussed on the security and accuracy of the finance system, so there would not be an issue. | **AW**  **AW1**  **Action** |
| 1. **DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS** |  |
| The ACOR advised us the delivery of the Statement of Accounts was a statutory function that presented a financial picture of the organisation at a point in time, demonstrating the force and consolidated position. Discipline had increased further this year in relation to the quarterly account closedowns which had facilitated improved management of year end closedown.  The HoF advised us that all the key actions had been completed against the 2021/22 accounts closure action plan including a review of the supporting documentation for income accruals and journals to ensure accuracy. Donated personal protective equipment stock from the National Health Service had been counted as part of the year end process and had reduced significantly from £64,000 to £24,000. Intangible fixed asset additions had been included as part of cash flow calculations for investing activities and the same classification of accounts payable balances were used as in 2021/22.  The management accounts closedown 2022/23 was completed on the 15th May 2023, ten days later than planned due to awaiting collaboration information from SWP. The draft accounts were provided to the CFO and the ACOR earlier than planned so the accounts were reviewed in time for publication on the 30th June 2023. AW were due to undertake their checks in September but would commence them earlier if resourcing allowed.    The HoF outlined major events during the year:   * Operation Uplift – Officer establishment had increased to 1506 by 31st March 2023, meeting the UK Government target. Planned growth for Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) numbers had also been achieved, increasing to 172. * A revaluation of Ystrad Mynach and Newport Central custody units and the accompanying land was conducted and the subsequent increase in value had been reflected in the accounts. * Most departments had relocated from the old Headquarters to the new Headquarters. The small number of units who remained would be relocated prior to demolition in November 2023.   The outturn for the year had recorded a breakeven position against a revenue budget requirement of £156.4million after transfers to usable reserves. Usable reserves had decreased by from £55.3m in 2018/19 to £29.8million in 2022/23, which was due to funding the comprehensive Capital Programme.  The unusable reserves had decreased by £601.7million due to changes in actuarial pension assumptions of police/local government pension schemes.  The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) would be presented at the following meeting. JAC acknowledged this would need to be updated to reflect the situation at the time of the signing of the accounts.  The call of audit day had been confirmed as 11th September 2023.  The Chief Constable (CC) and Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) were due to sign the audited Statement of Accounts by 30th November 2023, for publication.  A discussion ensued in relation to cross referencing errors in the account notes as it was noted in the CCs accounts that member allowance was at note 28, which should read 27. The HoF agreed to review the cross referencing.  Following their review of the draft accounts, the JAC accounts lead, and finance and audit lead commended the HoF and his team for their hard work in producing accurate and timely accounts, acknowledging that the number of adjustments was lower than the previous year and were mostly very minor presentational issues.  The DPCC thanked the JAC members for their scrutiny and the HoF and his team for their hard work. | **Action**  **HoF**  **Action** |
| 1. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN** |  |
| We received the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).  The ACOR informed us the MTFP was reviewed throughout the course of the year and on an annual basis, to allow consideration of any movement in funding relating to previous assumptions or other unexpected changes to ensure operational budgetary requirements were being met.  The MTFP 2023/24 – 2027/28 was presented by the PCC to the Police & Crime Panel (PCP) meeting on 27th January 2023. For the 2023/24 financial year the MTFP showed a projected budgetary requirement of £166.2million against approved funding of £161.6million, resulting in a £4.6million deficit. Savings of £1.1million had already been identified, leaving £3.5million still to be found from either further savings or reserves utilisation. The net projected deficit at 2027/28 was £20.9million.  Following the presentation to the PCP, work was undertaken to identify further efficiencies resulting in a £600,000 saving. However, there was a growth in net deficit to £5.5million due to additional recurring cost pressures such as budget impacts and funding adjustments from the Welsh Government relating to the PCSO grant.  Inflation had not fallen as quickly as expected which had resulted in increased investment income for the force due to the higher interest rates. The initial return on investment was expected to be £400,000, however it was now nearer to £1.2million.  Borrowing rates had increased significantly and as the force would need to borrow to fund the capital programme in the future, this would need to be taken into consideration. However, the borrowing requirement had been deferred for the time being resulting in £120,000 less expenditure a month, which could equate to £1.2million if this position was maintained through the course of the year.  Several employees had reduced their hours to part time having initially been full time. However, their roles had been budgeted for as full-time equivalent employees because of the information from the Human Resources department. This had been amended and the relevant adjustments have been made in the budget, resulting in a £160,000 reduction.  Although the above-mentioned savings had reduced the £5.5 million deficit by £2.2million, this was based on non-recurrent expenditure. There was more work to do to close the gap, particularly in relation to identifying recurring savings that can be made on a sustainable basis over the course of the next four years.  An Efficiency Group had been established to consider many other aspects including overtime, vacancies and recruiting at times of the year to save on salary costs.  Many reviews were taking place including the benefits of the fleet telematics system, procurement contracts and estate maintenance.  The ACOR explained the planned recurrent deficit appeared as though it would increase, however, many changes had subsequently occurred, one being the pay increase of 7% for officers. Although this was to be funded by the UK Government, there was an expectation that further efficiencies were to be made. There was no flexibility to reduce the number of police officers or PSCOs due to government guidelines, so further focus had been placed on managing overtime and police staff expenditure.  There were numerous detailed business cases being reviewed by the Service Improvement Board (SIB) to improve efficiency within the force support services. The ACOR assured us a high level of scrutiny was being undertaken to identify efficiencies where possible, whilst ensuring any changes were not detrimental to service delivery.  The DCC explained that it was a risk operationally to make too many changes at once. The force was considering piloting new ways of working and we were assured the safety of officers and members of the public would not be put at risk.  The JAC chair acknowledged the tough decisions having to be made and welcomed the cautious approach in implementing the changes.  The ACOR assured us the changes had made a positive impact in quarter one and a further update would be provided to JAC in September 2023 on any further solutions that had been identified.  The JAC accounts lead expressed concern regarding the financial position. Although he had concerns about the financial position in previous years, there had always been a reasonable level of reserves available, even if earmarked for the capital programme. In the past, the force had to identify efficiencies for the other initiatives such as the staying ahead programme and it was clear that it was becoming increasing difficult to make further efficiencies. It was suggested that this could not continue as it would eventually have a detrimental outcome on service delivery and a significant re-assessment of the police funding should be undertaken by the Treasury and the Home Office.  The DPCC welcomed the JAC accounts lead’s comments and assured us that dialogue was being undertaken between the Chief Finance Officers across England and Wales in relation to police funding from the Home Office and the Treasury.  We were advised the PCC and CEx had received an update last week from the national Productivity and Efficiency Review that was being prepared for the Home Office and Treasury to review funding. The CEx advised us there was clearly more work to be done in terms of collating the information and clarifying what should be incorporated, prior to sharing it. The CFO was providing support to the force to ensure the information was comprehensive and accurate. | **Action**  **Action** |
| 1. **VERBAL UPDATE ON FORCE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT** |  |
| We received a verbal update on the Force Management Statement (FMS).  The CIGA informed us the FMS was produced on an annual basis as a requirement of His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS). It was used as a tool for the force in terms of strategic decision making taking into consideration risks, recommendations from the Police, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspections, Management of Risk in Law Enforcement (MORILE) scoring results and current areas of focus within the force. This then provided an opportunity to review demand, planning and assists in the identification of gaps in service.  The CHGA highlighted the key areas within the report.  The CC had tasked the force to focus on clear succession planning due to the national shortage of detectives, to improve the response to the public and to produce a clear strategy for delivery and focus in relation to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).  The force acknowledged there had been an increase in crime and was focussing on investigations and crime solved rates specifically in relation to repeat victims. Crime Data Integrity (CDI) was also a risk for the Force. There was more to be done to ensure the 95% compliance target could be met.  It was acknowledged that there were inexperienced officers in the force, and it was key to ensure the right structures were put in place with supervisory capacity to monitor their work and provide support and guidance.  Work had commenced on the FMS timeline in preparation for the following year. The force would be focussing on known areas requiring improvement such as vulnerability. Strategic leads would be asked to provide an assessment of risk in their areas, these areas would be audited, and themes fed back to the FMS, document and business change timelines.  The Chair asked whether these were short term risks or whether they should be on the risk register. The DCC explained some were risks, some issues and some were emerging. The FMS was published on the HMICFRS website, it gave a point in time and benchmarked the force against a set of HMICFRS questions which enabled them to identify risks and issues and feed them into the relevant governance boards and if required, they would feed into the risk register or remain as a locally managed risk. | **Action** |
| 1. **DRAFT ESTATE STRATEGY REPORT** |  |
| We received the Draft Estate Strategy.  The ACOR informed us the strategy had been reviewed over the course of the last six to nine months to incorporate the development of the estate, reflecting the financial considerations and comments received from the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) Finance and Estate subgroup as well as comments from the public. This ensured the public were engaged in the process and enabled public confidence to be maintained in this area.  There were still some areas requiring completion as highlighted in the report. The challenge going forward was the feasibility of the financial plan and the potential for timelines to be missed given funding uncertainty, therefore the timelines would be reviewed accordingly.  All premises were being reviewed to ascertain if best value for money was being achieved. If not, opportunities to rationalise would be taken provided the changes were not detrimental to service delivery.  The intention was to ensure the strategy was finalised by the end of the year, prior to the PCC elections. The final version would be presented to JAC for review following consideration by the PCP and other parties.  The DPCC explained this level of public engagement had not occurred previously and it was highlighting key areas of focus that required attention to alleviate public concerns. It was highlighted that the language used within the strategy could be confusing for the public and should be clarified, an example being the Abergavenny police station build which was to be a hub and not a police station.  It was noted the rationale behind the hubs was clear within the strategy, however, JAC asked if the joint hubs related to policing hubs or joint with partner organisations. The ACOR confirmed the original plan in 2017/18 was for the Abergavenny hub to be joint with the fire service but unfortunately, they withdrew from the agreement due to concerns regarding size of the building footprint and parking facilities. Dialogue had resumed with partners in relation to the Monmouth site, but this was still at an early stage, we were made aware that security requirements for a police station were quite different to those required for ambulance and fire. The ACOR assured us this would be clarified in the final report.  The DPCC explained if there were any partnership opportunities that would be advantageous for the public and the services, they would be considered.  JAC referred to the phased plan within the strategy and suggested public opinion would be based on how people were affected in the area in which they lived. If there were more police premises in one area than another this would be reflected. The ACOR assured us the premises were a base for officers at the beginning and end of the day, as the processes and technology in place enabled tasks to be completed outside of the office.  The DPCC explained if there was not a station in their area, it did not mean they were not receiving the same service as other areas, and this was the message that needed to be made clear within the strategy.  The JAC Chair suggested the value of the estate should be incorporated within the strategy and asked if there was potential to sell the estate and lease the buildings. The DCC informed us there was national advice in relation to what the policing estate should consist of, such as the custody units. These buildings potentially changed annually to make them safer in accordance with government guidelines which made leasing difficult. The ACOR agreed the narrative needed to provide further context in relation to the role of each building within the strategy. | **ACOR/**  **CFO**  **Action**  **ACOR/**  **CFO** |
| 1. **OPCC GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY POLICY** |  |
| We received the draft OPCC Gifts and Hospitality Policy.  JAC noted that appendix 1 referred to a person having received a gift or hospitality as opposed to the narrative used in the force policy, as being offered a gift or hospitality. The ACOR clarified that police officers or staff may be offered a gift or hospitality on the spot, whereas it was likely that the OPCC staff would be made aware in advance of any hospitality. It was agreed the narrative would be considered in both the force and OPCC policies. | **HoAC/**  **ACOR** |
| 1. **FORCE GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY POLICY** |  |
| We received the draft Force Gifts and Hospitality Policy.  We noted the policy and the minor adjustments since the last iteration. |  |
| 1. **VERBAL UPDATE ON ETHICS COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS** |  |
| The verbal update on Ethics Committee Governance and Ethical Dilemmas was deferred due to the presenter having to deal with an urgent operational matter. |  |
| 1. **PRESENTATION ON CHILDREN IN CUSTODY** |  |
| We received a presentation on Children in Custody.  We were advised when a child was kept in custody on remand the custody officer should secure removal of that child to Local Authority (LA) accommodation unless it was impracticable to do so at that time. Reasons for not doing so were that it may be quicker for the child to attend court straight away rather than arranging the accommodation prior to attending court. Or if a child was 12 years old or over and secure accommodation could not be found and other LA accommodation would not be adequate, the child would remain in custody.  It was the absolute responsibility of LAs to receive the child and provide accommodation under section 38(6) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.  One of the recommendations within the HMICFRS PEEL inspection related to children being detained in custody overnight. It was suggested forces should strengthen their relationship with LAs to improve this area.  Overall, 545 children came into custody between January and December 2022. 28 of these children were remanded, of which 10 were conveyed to court as opposed to trying to secure accommodation as it was the most efficient option, 16 children were detained overnight, 2 of whom were detained on 2 occasions. Of the 8 requests made for secure or non-secure accommodation, no accommodation was available on any occasion. On the remaining 10 occasions, children were conveyed the following day to court. Most of the children were in the 16 to 17 year age range. It was confirmed that children were only detained in the most serious cases.  A monthly meeting took place between partner agencies to review any obstacles that had arisen, one area of focus was children remanded in custody. There was an escalation process in place should the authority not be able to provide the required accommodation. However, there was a shortage of secure accommodation in England and Wales.  In terms of next steps, the force was focussing on ensuing custody sergeants record the request for accommodation and the outcome. The appropriate environment for children in custody has been incorporated within the design of the new Gwent Police Operational Facility, however, this would not remove the requirement from LA provision.  The ACOR advised us the force had not breached any statutory requirements in relation to obtaining accommodation for children in custody and the force were mitigating the issue as much as possible. The Welsh Government (WG) had been aware of the risk since 2017 and although the force was liaising with agencies to address the issue, there was modest improvement and the risk register needed to reflect this.log.  We are assured measures to ease the custody experience were in place some of which included a child specific assessment, stress balls and distraction toys, colouring books or reading material, a permitted visit from parents or guardians and a female custody detention officer appointed to female children.  Between May 2022 and June 2023, 58 children were strip searched in Gwent, however, the terminology required explanation. We were advised that even when officers seized an item of clothing for evidential purposes, this was classed as a strip search. Of the 51 males in custody 35 had their clothing seized, this did not mean a full body search was conducted. Full body strip searches were conducted only if they had markers against them for concealing items which could cause harm, if intelligence was received or they had disclosed that they concealed items. Appropriate adults would be present prior to any search and children were not left without clothing to preserve their dignity.  The DPCC emphasised the accommodation issue was a problem in England and Wales. The number of children detained was small in terms of demand, however, the relevant safeguards were in place. In addition, the OPCC runs an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme whereby volunteers conduct unannounced visits to custody prioritising children, vulnerable adults and women to check on their welfare and ensure they have been made aware of their rights and entitlements. The issue had been escalated to the National Policing Partnership Board for Wales and WG. The DPCC assured JAC the four Welsh forces also submit monthly figures on the number of children held in custody through the Police Liaison Unit.  The DPCC and previous DCC had undertaken a significant amount of work in this area, including a joint pilot between WG and the force, utilising a unit in Newport. The accommodation was available for a six-month period, but uptake was low, so it wasn’t deemed to be effective. The DPCC advised that it was an issue that continued to be raised with partners and the WG.  JAC reiterated the importance of recording the request for accommodation and why it was not available as there was a risk to the force in not doing so. This would provide evidence of where the process was failing. The DPCC advised us the issue was raised by HMICFRS in a previous thematic inspection and it became apparent that officers were not requesting accommodation because it was very rarely available. Officers have now made aware that they must request it and record the outcome.  The joint guidelines in relation to detaining children in custody had been amended for 2023/24 and this would be conveyed to custody staff including the escalation process. JAC acknowledged the joint guidelines were part of the mitigation of the risk, including better recording and suggested the risk register narrative was updated to reflect that and any work that had been undertaken.  It was suggested that the risk should potentially be tolerated as there was not much more that could be done from a force perspective. The ACOR assured us there was ongoing activity in the area to push through change. The DPCC explained there were many other children LAs were trying to provide accommodation for in general and this cohort was small in comparison. The HoCJ stated the bed would also need to be local to ensure the child could be conveyed to court in a timely manner.  The JAC risk lead suggested that this was not a singular issue as other issues in other public sector organisations were impacting on policing such as the provision of mental health professionals and crown prosecution service backlogs.  The JAC audit lead asked if gender identification was also having an impact on policing, and it was confirmed the issue the was being addressed at a national policing level.  We thanked the HoCJ for his presentation. | **Action**  **ACOR/**  **DCC**  **Action**  **DCC**  **Action** |
| 1. The information contained in the report(s) below has been subjected to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 2018 and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent’s public interest test and was deemed to be exempt from publication under section 7. |  |
| 1. **LOCAL POLICING ACTION PLAN – EVIDENTIAL STORAGE** |  |
| We received the Local Policing Action Plan – Evidential Storage.  The HoCJ advised us there were two specific categories to address; the risks from the TIAA audit in March 2023 and the strategic risks.  TIAA had audited the evidential property stores and identified that some items could not be located, had not been processed or had not been returned to the owner.  There was an issue with the volume of property within the stores which stood at 73,000 in 2021 but had now decreased to 65,000.  The ACC monitored progress made with the property stores through his Operational Performance Board. It was acknowledged that local commanders should be held accountable for ensuring the evidential storage processes were conducted correctly.    The interim stores had been cleared and many of the items identified as missing during the TIAA audit had been located. There were several reasons why they could not be located such as property being stored in the wrong location within the store, property sent for forensic examination, property returned to the owner or with the investigative officer. However, the system had not been updated to reflect this. These issues highlighted to Chief Officers that front line officers needed to be managing property storage better.  The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) storage area would be cleared and audited by 18th August 2023.  All cash seizures held in the safe had been audited and officers in charge of the cases had been contacted requesting that forensic submission forms were completed by 28th July 2023 for any cash needing examination. Any remaining cash would be banked.  The HoF informed us that the finance team were in the process of reviewing the cash seizures against the relevant policing system prior to banking them. The cash seizures policy had also recently been updated.  A daily sweep of all interim property stores would take place Monday to Friday to ensure items were located and correctly recorded on the property management system. This would include all cash seizures.  To reduce the volume going forward, a single point of contact (SPOC) had been deployed to each of the local policing areas to address the property issues with officers. It was anticipated there would be 4% month on month reduction to reach a total of 20% by September 2023.  The main challenge for the force was ensuring the improved working practices were in place prior to an upgrade to a storage unit taking place, therefore a decision had been made to delay the update until Autumn. This would enable the force to audit the storage area prior to the move.  A new property management system was to be implemented in each storage property area with the use of the Niche Policing System. This should result in an improved process, as it would be quicker for officers to submit the information and it would link to the case it related to in a more efficient way than the current process. A Niche training package was in the process of being developed and was expected to be completed by October 2023.  JAC referred to the vulnerability of cases should evidence chains be compromised and the vulnerability of staff, should spurious claims be made if evidence was not managed appropriately. The JAC risk lead asked if these risks were recorded on a different register as they weren’t reflected within the Strategic Risk Register. The ACOR explained they were not, as the strategic risk was highlighted as a risk because of these issues. The ACOR agreed to review the evidential property risk narrative.  The JAC audit lead requested an update on the action where items of risk were identified requiring a review by a panel of police staff and officers. The HoCJ explained these related to items that had not yet been located, such as high value or high-risk items, as opposed to something of low value. The ACOR advised there was a process in place via the Professional Standards Department whereby officers could be disciplined should there be issues with locating items.  The Chair asked if items of no or low value had been retained for prolonged periods of time or lost, was there a decision-making process in place when they could be disposed of or written off. The ACOR confirmed the owner of the items was contacted and advised of a timeframe in which they could collect their item, or it would be destroyed. However, should an item of value be lost, the owner may receive re-imbursement, which was authorised by the DCC, fortunately this did not happen frequently. If high value items were lost, it was highly likely that the number of claims would be higher.  The Chair advised us that JAC members were disappointed with the situation as voiced at the previous meeting. This had been a long-term issue that the JAC had received assurance was being addressed. JAC welcomed that it was now being treated as a priority and requested that they continued to receive updates on the action plan at forthcoming JAC meetings until they were assured the appropriate processes were in place and the risk had been mitigated.  The JAC accounts lead was reassured by the action plan and asked if the temporary HoCJ was to remain on the project to ensure continuity in terms of its progress. The DCC explained that the ACC had oversight of the issue and it was expected that he would retain oversight of the project. The temporary HoCJ would continue in his role for as long as possible, however, this was dependent on other matters. The DCC thanked the HoCJ for his work and the ACC for his oversight and advised us they would continue to report to her on the progress and any risk that may arise. | **Action**  **ACOR/**  **DCC**  **Action**  **ACOR** |
| 1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** |  |
| The September risk deep dive to be discussed with the GO and HoAC prior to the following meeting. | **GO/DT/**  **HoAC** |
| 1. **TO IDENTIFY ANY RISKS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING** |  |
| No new risks were identified apart from the update to the narrative at item 14. |  |
| **The meeting concluded at 12.45pm.** |  |