MINUTES OF THE JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE (WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY AND WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE) HELD ON 07 May 2025

PRESENT

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS	OFFICERS PRESENT
Mike Ford **(Chair)**	**WYCA**
Jeff Colley	Marc Broadbelt, Senior Finance Business Partner - Policing
Helen Kemp	Joanne Colley, Business Manager, Policing and Crime
	Rob Forrest, Head of Policing and Crime
	Damon Lawrenson – Director of Finance and Commercial Services
	Bex Spencer, Head of Finance
	Amanda Taylor, Delivery Support Officer
	Chris Thompson – Information Governance Manager (DPA) (for agenda item 7.6)
	West Yorkshire Police
	Jo Campbell – Internal Audit Manager
	Julie Edwards, Head of Accountancy
	Sarah Fraser - Superintendent, Corporate Services
	Mark Reeves - Director of Finance and Commercial Services
	Neil Rickwood, Head of Audit, Risk and Assurance
	Claire Vickers-Pearson – Head of Data and Information (for agenda item 9.8)
	External Audit
	Alastair Newall, Forvis Mazars
	Ellie Horsley, Forvis Mazars

Item	Title	
1.	**Welcome and Apologies**	Apologies from Thilina De Zoysa and Katherine Johnson.
2.	**Declaration of Interests**	Jeff Colley confirmed the organisation which he worked for had changed their name and he would confirm this to update the declaration of interests. **ACTION: Jeff Colley to update his interests.**
3.	**Record of Attendance**	Details of Member and Officer attendance are noted on the Minutes.
4.	**Minutes of the Meeting from 29.01.25**	The minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 January 2025 were agreed as a correct record.
9.8	**FOI/DPA Governance Report**	The committee addressed item number 9.8 as the report owner, Claire Vickers-Pearson was in attendance at the start of the meeting. Claire updated members that 2023/24 had brought challenges as uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and technology analytics increased for WYP. Right Of Access (ROA) requests had increased by 28% putting WYP under further demand to collate this information due to the amount of data which was currently collected. AI was being looked at as a way of supporting this nationally. There has been a reduction in the number of data breaches, and security incidents had stayed the same. The force complied with national security maturity with West Yorkshire being one of the top forces within the country for their security compliance score and co-operation within the force

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		continues. Data quality has been positive during the year, benchmarked on the Police National Database (PND) this score has increased by 7% over the last 12 months. Members questioned where the increase in FOI requests had arrived from and if it was from the media or from individuals. Claire confirmed that it was a mixture, and that WYP have a well-established team with good relationships with media requestors. WYP engaged in proactive disclosure where a topic was of public interest. Claire also advised that the number of FOI requests received by police forces was similar in number regardless of force size. Members asked if there was a target for requests being compliant. Claire confirmed the regulator target was 95% which covered ROA and FOI. A recent audit highlighted West Yorkshire fell short of this, further resource has been allocated to this area and West Yorkshire was now on track to meet statutory timescales due to having more resource. Members asked for more information on complaints which were upheld by the ICO. Claire reassured Members that there was nothing significant other than a minor amendment to wording on when a request was received and when a legal request starts.
7.6	**FOI/DPA Governance Report**	The committee addressed item number 7.6 as the report owner, Chris Thompson was in attendance at the start of the meeting. Chris confirmed that transparency was key, and that request could then be directed to the public domain which in turn would see a reduction in requests. Accountability rather than accreditation was a focus of WYCA and mandatory training was included on PDR's for all staff members. New starters to the WYCA needed to complete training within the first 2 weeks of joining. Training compliance within the Police and Crime team was at the same level as WYCA. A dedicated resource was allocated to the Police and Crime team given the sensitive nature of data which was being handled. Members asked if a similar accreditation to SyAP for WYCA. Chris confirmed that WYCA use national benchmarking from other Combined Authorities and used information from the Information Commissioners Officer (ICO) to seek improvements. Members asked around the number of FOI requests received in comparison to WYP, Chris explained that some requests received into WYCA would be relevant for, and directed to, WYP. Members also asked if figures would be adjusted for staff on maternity leave or long-term absence, Chris confirmed that this was correct. **ACTION: Chris to send PDF report document to members separately to ensure accessibility.**
5.	**Matters Arising**	The items listed in this section were carried forward. All other actions/matters arising were closed. **Item Ref 5.2 - Neil Rickwood** to include the fraud risk register and the fraud risk assessment with the next anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategies report and remove any reference to JIEC. **Item Ref 5.4 – Katherine Johnson** to provide members with updates on the completion of actions from the HMICFRS inspection report. **Item Ref 5.5 – Katherine Johnson** to circulate the link to the Police and Crime Panel Papers which contain more information on the budget and reserves. **Item Ref 5.6 - Katherine Johnson and Rob Forrest** to provide member focus session on NPAS in October JIAC meeting. **Item Ref 5.7 - Katherine Johnson** to provide member focus session in July around WYP People to include an overview of compliance rates with mandatory training, an overview of

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		recruitment processes, training and EDI considerations. **ACTION UPDATE: Julie Edwards to arrange a meeting between Mike Ford and the WYP People Directorate for Mike to provide a briefing.** **Item Ref 5.8 - Damon Lawrenson ACTION UPDATE:** to share a further update on the review of the 2023/24 consolidated accounts with Members. **Item Ref 5.9 - Damon Lawrenson/ Marc Broadbelt ACTION UPDATE:** Arrange Treasury Management training specific to the police fund for Members. **Item Ref 5.14 - Mike Ford and Rob Forrest** to look at updating Terms of Reference to include maximum Member terms of office. **Item Ref 5.15 - Rob Forrest and Katherine Johnson** to carry out a formal review of the structure which surrounds the JIAC following devolution. **Item Ref 5.18 - Claire Vickers-Pearson** to provide an update report on the maturity assessment for high level digital data strategy/ update on the position against the SyAP (security assessment) in October 2025**.**
6.	**Chairs Update (verbal)**	Mike Ford provided a verbal update: **JIEC** – Mike had met with the Chair of the Joint independent Ethics Committee. **Terms of Reference** – Mike met with Rob Forrest to discuss. **Chief Officer Team Meeting** – Mike has observed one of these meetings. Mike invited other members to attend the session later in the day if they so wished as this had been agreed with the Chief Officer Team. **Vetting** – JIAC members were not subject to annual vetting integrity review. The vetting was completed upon joining the committee and this would be renewed on their anniversary. **CIPFA** – Spring Update Session being held in May and Jeff will attend this on behalf of JIAC and feedback to the committee. **ACTION: to also invite Helen Kemp.** **Police and Crime Plan** – Mike asked for feedback from Helen, who attended the launch of the plan. Helen will circulate slides to members from the launch and concluded that the event was very positive and well attended. A hard copy of the plan was available to members by request. **ACTION: Helen Kemp to circulate police and crime plan launch slides to committee members.** Members questioned performance against the plan as this was addressed previously in the PEG meeting. Rob confirmed that this was addressed by the Police and Crime Panel and performance manager Wendy Stevens provided updates in this forum. Members asked to learn more about this at a future meeting. **ACTION: Wendy Stevens, Performance Manager to be invited to a future JIAC meeting, Members to consider if this would be a useful Focus Session.**
7.	**West Yorkshire Combined Authority Reports**	
7.1	**Business Update (verbal)**	Rob Forrest provided a business update: **Police and Crime Plan** – This was launched since the last committee meeting. The focus was now on the delivery of the plan.

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		VAWG Round Table – This was chaired by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Police and Crime. It centred around bringing people together and working jointly to achieve national objectives at a local level. **Serious Violence Strategy** – This has been included within the Police and Crime plan following feedback from the public. There was consultation and engagement with third sector organisations was ongoing which specifically focuses on this area. **WYCA Internal Audit –** Rob confirmed this was moving forward and he had sight of reports. Rob to invite Head of Internal Audit at WYCA to attend future JIAC meeting. Members requested more information from the WYCA Internal Audit Team to have sight of the audit plan which highlighted which audits directly and indirectly impact policing and crime. Members requested a summary of audits and full sight of limited assurance reports. **ACTION: Rob Forrest/ Damon Lawrenson to invite Head of Internal Audit to future JIAC meetings to present the audit plan highlighting which audits directly and indirectly impact policing and crime. To include a summary of all audits, and full sight of limited assurance reports.** **Head of Finance –** Rob advised members that a new Director of Finance had been appointed, Kate Taylor. An introduction meeting to be arranged with Kate and JIAC Chair. **ACTION: Damon Lawrenson to arrange an introduction meeting with WYCA Director of Finance and JIAC Chair.** **Devolution** – Rob confirmed the White Paper set out plans for further devolution in West Yorkshire, which meant that WYCA was likely to take on the Fire and Rescue Authority. The Bill was still going through Parliament. Rob to provide updates at future JIAC meetings as part of the standing WYCA business update agenda item.
7.2	**WYCA Risk Management Update**	Rob Forrest shared the new format of the WYCA Risk Management Report with members. Members confirmed they were happy with the new format. Future reports would show more direction of travel for risks which were on the register. Rob explained some amber issues were showing as red issues on the report, this was due to a formatting issue which would be rectified in the next report. Members highlighted that there were two risks which related to Serious Violence and asked if they could be combined. **ACTION: Rob to review the two serious violence risks and consider if they could be combined.**
7.3	**Treasury Management Strategy Report**	Bex Spencer provided an update to the committee. The report sourced information from both Leeds and Wakefield Local Authorities and a working group would be set up to review data, which was fed into this report, making sure the data was timely and current. The WYCA Governance and Audit Committee received an update on managing the treasury management functions and looked at value for money and consolidation between both Leeds and Wakefield. A procurement process was being designed to establish if this would be a better option. A future training session for committee members would be welcomed to have a greater insight into treasury management. Members asked about external independent assurance, Bex and Julie confirmed that LINK to provided this and were heavily involved in the Treasury Management for Wakefield. **ACTION: Damon Lawrenson to share details of LINK with the committee, to look at assurance options for WYCA.**

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7.4	**Sponsorship Report**	Bex circulated the report to committee members. Members sought clarification on the increase in sponsorship over recent years. Mark confirmed that a dedicated WYP Sponsorship Team had been more proactive in securing sponsorship which was why the figure had increased. Members were assured that the Sponsorship Team undertook robust checks on sponsors and that there was no crossover with procurement arrangements.
7.5	**Business Interests, Gifts & Hospitality**	Members read through the report and sought clarification on the Mayor's attendance at recent events. Rob Forrest advised the Mayor and DMPC attended these in a work capacity.
7.6	**FOI/DPA Governance Report**	Addressed earlier in the meeting.
8.	**External Audit Reports**	
8.1	**External Audit Strategy Memorandum 2024/25**	Alastair Newell said there was no significant change on the External Audit Strategy Memorandum. Work was starting imminently on the draft accounts, and these would be available in draft for July, and sign off in October.
9.	**West Yorkshire Police Reports**	
9.1	**Business Update (verbal)**	Mark Reeves provided a business update. **Budget –** This was being finalised and was a balanced budget, with a very slight underspend. **Neighbourhood Grant –** The Neighbourhood Grant had been awarded for £8.5m. This would be used for the Neighbourhood Police Team and would look to provide around 100 Officers. The aim was to station these officers within towns and cities to reduce anti-social behaviour. **Police Reform -** Discussions had been ongoing. No timeline available for the transition of NPAS to the new entity. Meetings had taken place with Home Office officials and members of the NPAS board to cover governance in this area. **Staff –** Deputy Chief Constable Catherine Hankinson was retiring from post in August and recruitment for this position was underway. Members of the committee asked how recent headlines regarding the positive action for the officer recruitment process had been received. Mark explained the formal recruitment process covered all officers. Rob Forrest added that the headlines were inaccurate and the Casework team at WYCA had completed work around this. Members asked how the recent ruling on a person's biological sex had impacted the force and operations. Mark advised members that this was being considered by the People Directorate and Diversity and Equality teams around what implication's this would have across the polices within WYP.
9.2	**Tender Exception Report**	Mark Reeves shared the Tender Exception Report with committee members. Members were satisfied with this report and presented no questions on this.
9.3	**WYP Risk Management Update**	Sarah Fraser updated the committee on the strategic risk register. No new risks had been added and one risk had been closed, Sarah confirmed there were 22 open risks: 1 very high risk, 10 high risks. 10 medium risks and 1 low risk. Sarah said that action owners were reviewing and mitigating actions. One action was being split to reflect the different areas of impact and travelling in different directions, and 2 of the actions were being merged as they were relating to the same area. Sarah added that the risks were based on their long-term risk and not spikes in risk.

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		Members questioned some of the risks being on register if they should be reconsidered as operational risks. Sarah said a number of the risks sit on locally managed risk registers and there was ongoing work to review the risk registers. The top 10 national risks impacting policing would be brought to the next committee meeting as a comparison. **ACTION: Sarah to bring details of the top 10 national risks to the next committee meeting.** **ACTION: Sarah to invite Mike to observe NPCC risk register forum.**
9.4	**Internal Audit Progress Report**	Neil Rickwood updated the committee on the Internal Audit Progress Report. A number of reports had been sent out and any remaining ones would be included in the draft annual report. Members questioned limited assurance areas and what action was being taken around these and the review date of some of these actions. Rob Forrest confirmed limited assurance reports were highlighted to the Policing and Crime Executive Board and could be escalated to a Governance Meeting; members agreed and would like an update on this at the next committee meeting. **ACTION: Rob Forrest to update Members on the outcome of highlighting limited assurance reports to the Policing and Crime Executive Board.**
9.5	**Internal Audit Follow Up Report**	Jo Campbell advised that the 41 open actions related to five audits undertaken during the 2024/25 cycle. Two of these audits were reported in the Internal Audit Progress Report – appendices B and C. Neil confirmed that some of the follow-up dates were the end dates when all actions would have been completed, rather than reviews of each individual action being scheduled. Members expressed concern that the action dates for audits with significant findings were too far in advance and requested that a timeframe on open actions be included. **ACTION: Neil Rickwood to include a target date on follow-up actions.**
9.6	**Internal Audit Strategy, Charter & Plan**	Neil Rickwood explained the internal audit plan for the next 3 years had been subject to large consultations involving various stakeholders. Neil invited questions from the committee. Members asked about external peer review options for the Internal Audit function. Neil confirmed that he had explored options but didn't feel the options provided good value for money.
9.7	**Business Interests, Gifts & Hospitality**	Mark Reeves shared this report with the committee. Members were happy with the report and had questions around the content.
9.8	**FOI/DPA Governance Report**	Addressed earlier in the meeting.
10	**JIAC Workplan**	The Focus Session for July would cover HR and the WYP People Directorate. It was agreed NPAS be moved from this meeting to the October meeting, with the possibility of a visit to the call centre. The January meeting would host a focus session on Sustainability; and would include fleet, decarbonisation and replacement.
12	**AOB**	None

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Next Meeting – 16 July 2025, Wellington House, Wellington Street, Leeds.		