

POLICE AUDIT COMMITTEE CONFERENCE

Scarman House, Warwick University

12 July 2018

The Police Audit Committee Conference is an annual event organised by Grant Thornton (External Auditors).

It provides an opportunity for Police Audit Committee members to hear about practices adopted by other Police Audit Committees and to discuss differences in approach and other emerging issues with Police Audit Committee colleagues nationally.

Most of the speakers were provided by Grant Thornton with one external speaker.

The conference was attended by Clive Portman and what follows is his summary of the main issues discussed during the day.

Suzanne McCarthy – Chair of the Audit Panel for the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Metropolitan Police gave an insight into the work of the MOPAC Audit Panel:

- The Mayor of London is the Police & Crime Commissioner for London
- Suzanne was appointed in November 2016 and she selected the Members of the Audit Panel.
- They do not have an accountant on the Panel and have not found the need for an accountant member.
- The Panel reviews assurance and risk for the PCC and Met Police and has 'an oversight' of the MOPAC Police & Crime Plan.
- There are annual appraisals for members of the panel.
- The first meeting agenda had 500 pages. They now have an executive summary on a covering sheet but they still need to be more concise.
- MOPAC is small but the Met Police is huge and the Met Police transformation agenda has 10 main priorities.
- Suzanne meets with members of the Executive separately ahead of Audit Panel meetings to have individual discussions so there are lots of pre-meetings besides 4 panel meetings per year. She also meets the Deputy Mayor and Commissioner after meetings.
- There have been instances of policies being in place but not being followed.
- HMICFRS are attending their September 2018 meeting.
- Health and Safety is covered in the terms of reference for the MOPAC Audit Panel.

- A discussion took place on why the implementation of the Police & Crime Plan and Health and Safety are within the remit of the MOPAC Audit Panel.

Jackson Murray (Grant Thornton) led a discussion on successes, disappointments, challenges and local practices posing a number of questions:

- Do Police Audit Committees have any contact with the Police & Crime Panel?
- Does the Committee or the Chair meet with the PCC and Chief Constable?
- Does the Committee get updates from and have meetings with HMICFRS?
- Does the Committee consider collaboration arrangements with other forces?
- Is anybody doing effective assurance mapping?
- The conclusion was that Audit Committees/Panels seem to have quite different remits within the standard terms of reference.

Paul Grady and Iain Murray (Grant Thornton) talked about Police & Crime Plans – Risks and Assurances and the unique challenges faced by Police Audit Committees compared to other sectors which covered:

- An average of only 27% of electors voted in the last Police & Crime Commissioner elections with a range of 52% in area A to 18% in area B.
- Area B is currently regarded as a high performing force.
- Area A had the highest percentage of electors voting but also the highest percentage of voters who said they did not know what they were voting for.
- The Police & Crime Plan is the key document for the PCC in holding the CC and the force to account. A key governance consideration re the Police & Crime Plan is how do Audit Committees and Internal Audit review delivery of the plan
- The latest Police & Crime Plans average 33 pages with the shortest being 14 pages and the longest being 148 pages.
- Few Police & Crime plans refer to the delivery of governance issues and assurance risks.
- Should Audit Committee agendas be more aligned to areas within the Police & Crime Plan?
- Should Audit Committee agendas be more influenced by the strategic objectives of the Police & Crime Plan?
- How is the Police & Crime Plan measured? How effective are the measures in demonstrating the implementation and achievements of the plan?

Summary

- A recurring theme of the day seemed to be that Audit Committees, in conjunction with Executive Officers, should consider whether the Audit Committee has a role to play in reviewing the implementation of the Police and Crime Plan.
- The majority view seemed to be that reviewing the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan is not part of the Terms of Reference of Police Audit Committees and that the scrutiny of the implementation of the Police and Crime Plan is a matter for the Police and Crime Panel. That remains the case currently in Lancashire.