

Audit Committee Minutes

Meeting Date: Friday 24 July 2026 09:30-10:49

Meeting Location: Police Headquarters, Martlesham

Present:

Audit Committee Members

Rachel Ashley-Caunt
Karen Chapman
Tim Greenace
Lindsey Hoy (Chair)
Hugh May

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Tim Passmore (Police and Crime Commissioner)
Darren Horsman (Chief Executive Officer)
Colette Batson (Chief Finance Officer)
Kate Boswell (Executive Assistant to the PCC and Chief Executive)

Suffolk Constabulary

Kenneth Kilpatrick (Assistant Chief Officer)

Present by Invitation

Alison Riglar (Manager, Ernst and Young – External Auditor, via teams)
Max Armstrong (Manager, BDO - Internal Auditor, via teams)
Nathaniel Hall (Assistant Manager, BDO – Internal Auditor)

Apologies

Rachel Kearton (Chief Constable)
Debbie Hanson (Partner, Ernst and Young – External Auditor)
Gurpreet Dulay (Partner, BDO – Internal Auditor)

Public Agenda

The Chair welcomed attendees, thanked the outgoing Chair for his contribution over the previous two years, and noted apologies from Rachel Kearton, Debbie Hanson and Gurpreet Dulay. The Chair then invited introductions from those in attendance, including representatives from BDO, the new internal audit provider.

1. Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chair declared that she had completed her tenure at Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust and has started as a non-executive director at Orwell Housing Association, and a voluntary trustee at the Triratna Buddhist Community (Ipswich). She advised that she did not believe these roles presented any conflicts of interest.

2. Actions of the Audit Committee meeting held on 1 May 2026 (Paper AC26/18)

- 2.1. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed and approved.

2.2 Summary of actions

Item	Action	Owner / Update
3.1 Minutes	Business Admin to reword point 4.2 of the minutes.	Action complete.
3.3 Minutes	Internal Auditor to ensure outstanding audit committee meeting actions are completed by the end of next week.	The CFO advised that TIAA had submitted an update on their outstanding actions, but not in time to circulate ahead of the meeting. There are queries to follow up, relating to the procurement audit. An update would be shared once resolved. <i>Action to remain open.</i>
4.2.1 Auditor's Annual Report 2024/25	External Auditor to update the "going concern" wording on page 6.	The External Auditor advised this was outstanding. The PCC noted that this is quite urgent and needed to be resolved. <i>Action to remain open.</i>
4.2.2 Auditor's Annual Report 2024/25	OPCC to provide a progress update on the unsigned leases.	The CEO advised a table has been circulated showing the current status, and updates will continue to be provided when there is a change of status in the leases. <i>Action to remain open.</i>
4.2.3 Auditor's Annual Report 2024/25	CFO to confirm if PCCs are exempt from the updated fraud legislation.	CFO requested this action remains open, whilst external support is sought from the technical team at the Police and Crime Commissioners' Treasurers society (PACCTs). <i>Action to remain open.</i>
5.3 Auditor's Audit Plan 2025/26	External Auditor to seek information from partners on other organisations'	The External Auditor advised this was outstanding. <i>Action to remain open.</i>

	experiences / follow-up with the ICO & update the committee.	
6.5 SICA	The Internal Auditor to update the documentation and provide clarification outside the committee cycle for the Change Management Audit.	The CFO advised that the email from TIAA would be circulated after the meeting.
6.6 SICA	The Internal Auditor to report back on the recommendations for the Risk Management audit.	The CFO advised she would follow up with TIAA.
6.8 SICA	The ACO to provide clarity on the sample size in the summary and justification for the exceptions.	Action complete.
6.11 SICA	The Internal Auditor to provide a summary update on the outstanding recommendations to the committee, via the Business Admin.	Action complete.
7.1 Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26	The Internal Auditor to update the report numbering.	Action complete.
9.1 PCC AGS	CFO to remove the duplication in the AGS.	Action complete.
10.1 & 10.2 Internal Audit Plan 2026/27	The Internal Auditor to update the 2026/27 plan as discussed in 10.1 and 10.2.	Agreement that this action is no longer valid due to the change in Internal Audit provider.

3. Internal Audit Annual Report 2025/26 by the Internal Auditor TIAA (Paper AC26/19)

3.1 The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) advised that the report had previously been presented to the Audit Committee and, following a request for an updated version, had been brought back for noting. Several draft audits from TIAA remain outstanding.

An Audit Committee Member noted that the statement on page 1 indicating there had been no changes to the audit plan was factually inaccurate. A further query was raised regarding the reference to 15 completed reviews, although only 14 were listed. The CFO clarified that the OPCC and Constabulary Risk Management audits had been counted as a single entry in the table. The PCC highlighted a grammatical error relating to "Suffolk Constabulary's".

The Chair asked when the final Head of Internal Audit Opinion would be available and the CFO advised that it is expected to be presented at the October meeting. An Audit Committee Member also queried discrepancies in the assurance totals shown in the page 1 table. **ACTION:** CFO to provide feedback to TIAA on the issues identified within the report.

4. Summary of the Internal Controls Report by the Internal Auditors TIAA (verbal update)

- 4.1 The CFO advised that six audits remained outstanding, four of which have now been finalised and will be circulated outside of the meeting. The remaining two audits are in the process of being finalised, facilitated by the PMO. It was proposed that all outstanding reports be circulated to Audit Committee Members as soon as possible.
- 4.2 An Audit Committee Member asked how any recommendations requiring follow-up would be managed by BDO. BDO confirmed that discussions with TIAA had been productive and that, once the outstanding reports are finalised, TIAA will provide an updated recommendations tracker. BDO will assume responsibility for monitoring these recommendations, continue the follow-up of legacy actions, and provide an update on progress at the next meeting. BDO added that historic recommendations will be reviewed to determine appropriate assurance activity before reporting back to the Committee.
- 4.3 **ACTION:** The CFO circulate the outstanding audit reports to Audit Committee Members once received.

5. From Reset to Recovery Report by the External Auditor (Paper AC26/22)

- 5.1 The External Auditor presented its *Reset and Recovery* report, drawing on experience from auditing over 100 local government bodies. While significant progress has been made in clearing audit backlogs and improving timeliness, they emphasised that the next stage of recovery is rebuilding audit assurance. The report highlights that audit committees should focus not only on whether opinions are issued, but also on the level of assurance supporting those opinions and how that assurance improves over time. The report noted that audit readiness, including the quality of financial reporting, supporting evidence, governance oversight and engagement throughout the year, is the strongest indicator of successful recovery. The Suffolk PCC and Chief Constable were assessed positively against all eight audit readiness indicators, placing them among the strongest performers both within the police and fire sector and across local government more broadly. Assurance has improved since 2023/24, with remaining assurance gaps limited to

areas such as reserves and property-related balances, which is consistent with expectations.

- 5.2 **Reset and Recovery Report Discussion:** Members welcomed the positive report, with EY confirming Suffolk remains in a strong position for audit readiness, although it was too early in the audit process to identify any emerging issues.

Audit Committee Members discussed how the audit readiness framework aligns with existing CIPFA guidance and the Committee's Terms of Reference, with EY agreeing to consider this further. The CFO and ACO noted that the framework provides a useful measure of progress towards achieving an unqualified audit opinion, and an audit readiness assessment will be shared with the Committee.

Members also discussed the importance of retaining key finance staff and maintaining succession plans to support audit readiness. It was noted that these risks are monitored through existing arrangements.

The Committee recognised that audit is increasingly focused on organisational improvement and governance rather than solely compliance. The Chair welcomed Suffolk's strong audit readiness position while noting the need to remain mindful of future challenges, including devolution.

ACTION: The External Auditor to review the framework's alignment with governance requirements of police audit committee members and provide opinion to the committee members. The External Auditor, CFO and ACO to share the audit readiness assessment with the Committee Members.

6. Review of committee Activities 2025/26 Report by the Business Administration Officer (Paper AC26/23)

- 6.1. The Audit Committee Members suggested several amendments to the Annual Report, including recognising the Committee's sustained scrutiny of Internal Audit performance throughout the year and reflecting this within the section on key activities undertaken. BDO advised that a Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme is being implemented to demonstrate compliance with Global Internal Audit Standards and should complement future reports.
- 6.2. Members also identified several date errors within the report and appendix, which will be corrected on the website. In addition, it was noted that the Committee had received the 2025/26 Internal Audit Strategy and this should be reflected within the report.

- 6.3. **ACTION:** CFO / Business Admin to correct date errors and update the report to reference receipt of the 2025/26 Internal Audit Strategy.

7. Treasury Outturn 2025/26 Report by the Chief Finance Officer (Paper AC26/24)

- 7.1. The CFO presented the Treasury Outturn Report, confirming that external debt remained within the approved limits and that all investments complied with the Treasury Management Strategy and investment limits. Capital expenditure was significantly below forecast due to slippage in the Estates budget, including the delayed purchase of the second half of Landmark House.
- 7.2. The PCC queried the £250k investment held with Santander at a lower interest rate, and the CFO explained that the account is retained for operational flexibility, with confirmation of any minimum balance requirement to be provided. **ACTION:** CFO to confirm the minimum balance requirement for the Santander.
- 7.3. Members also asked about the maximum term for investments and the relatively stable ratio of capital financing costs. The CFO advised that investment periods are typically around six to nine months albeit the Treasury Management Strategy Statement allows for up to two years, subject to confirmation, and explained that the financing ratio is largely driven by predictable interest costs, with variances arising from lease-related costs that are more difficult to forecast. **ACTION:** CFO to confirm the maximum term for investment deposits.

8. Devolution (Verbal update)

- 8.1. The PCC provided a verbal update on devolution and local government reform, noting ongoing uncertainty and legal challenges to Local Government reorganisation proposals. Concerns were expressed regarding proposals for larger police forces, with the PCC highlighting Suffolk's strong performance and questioning whether structural change would deliver improved outcomes. Work continues to prepare for potential pathfinder arrangements, while opportunities for national standardisation, such as IT platforms, vetting and emergency services communications, were acknowledged.
- 8.2. The PCC also raised concerns regarding the Police Leadership Review, noting that it did not adequately address workforce challenges and that a government response is awaited later in the year.
- 8.3. An update was provided on RAF Barnham, where the Government has proposed using the site for asylum accommodation. The PCC expressed concern given its current use for Public Order training and advised that a response from the Home

Secretary is awaited. The Audit Committee Chair asked how the impact of protests at RAF Barnham would be monitored and reported. The ACO advised that the issue is being monitored weekly and will be reported through the Accountability and Performance Panel (APP). The CEO added that regular updates on related activity are also being provided through weekly confidential reporting arrangements.

- 8.4. Finally, the PCC highlighted concerns regarding the review of the police funding formula, particularly the potential impact on Suffolk if funding is top-sliced and noted that significant uncertainty remains around future funding and devolution arrangements.
- 8.5. The CEO advised that the devolution legislation received Royal Assent during the summer and requires any proposed arrangements to be locally agreed. Both Norfolk and Suffolk councils will be required to vote on the proposals, which is expected to provide greater certainty on the future direction. Decisions are anticipated in the autumn, including whether to establish a Mayoral Strategic Authority and the framework for transferring PCC powers to the new authority ahead of the 2028 mayoral election.
- 8.6. The Audit Committee Chair raised concerns about the potential impact of devolution, structural changes and possible force mergers on staff retention, business continuity and operational delivery, including access to training facilities. The PCC acknowledged the challenges created by ongoing uncertainty and advised that regular updates are being provided internally and in collaboration with Norfolk colleagues. The CEO noted that these risks are reflected within the OPCC risk register and will be discussed further in the private session. While some risks cannot be directly controlled, work is ongoing to mitigate and influence outcomes where possible, including engagement with Home Office performance framework developments while maintaining delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.

9. Any Other Business

- 9.1. No other business.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

Item	Action	Owner
3.1 Internal Audit Annual Report 2025/26 by TIAA	CFO to feedback to TIAA on the issues raised by the Audit Committee within this report	CFO

4.3 Summary of Internal Controls by TIAA	The CFO circulate the outstanding audit reports to Audit Committee Members once received.	CFO
5.2 Reset to Recovery Report	External Auditor to review the framework's alignment with governance requirements of police audit committees and provide opinion to the committee members. External Auditor, CFO and ACO to share the audit readiness assessment with the Committee Members.	External Auditor, CFO, ACO
6.3 Review of Committee Activity	CFO / Business Admin to correct date errors and update the report to reference receipt of the 2025/26 Internal Audit Strategy.	CFO / Business Admin
7.2 Treasury Outturn Report	CFO to confirm the minimum balance requirement for the Santander account and the maximum term for investment deposits.	CFO

Meeting closed at: 10:49