

Independent auditor's report to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire

In our auditor's report issued on 31 March 2023, we explained that we could not formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate for the Police and Crime Commissioner for the year ended 31 March 2022, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice, until we had completed our work on the Police and Crime Commissioner's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We have now completed this work, and the results of our work are set out below.

Opinion on the financial statements

In our auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2022 issued on 31 March 2023 we reported that, in our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the group and the Police and Crime Commissioner as at 31 March 2022 and of the group's expenditure and income and the Police and Crime Commissioner's expenditure and income for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

No matters have come to our attention since that date that would have a material impact on the financial statements on which we gave this opinion.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements - the Police and Crime Commissioner's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

Matter on which we are required to report by exception – the Police and Crime Commissioner's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if, in our opinion, we have not been able to satisfy ourselves that the Police and Crime Commissioner has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2022.

We have nothing to report in respect of the above matter except:

On 11 April 2022 we identified a significant weakness in the governance arrangements in relation to transparency and accountability. We recommended that a review should be undertaken to ensure the correct information is available to the public on the Force and the Police and Crime Commissioner websites to ensure this is consistent with what is required by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act.

As reported on 6 December 2023, the position has not improved, and a further key recommendation has been made to review this area and implement improvements. Therefore, the significant weakness remains in place.

On 6 December 2023, we identified further significant weaknesses in the Police and Crime Commissioner's arrangements for improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This was in relation to:

- deficiencies in effectively delivering domestic abuse services to the public, and;
- deficiencies in delivering an effective call handling service to victims of crime and vulnerable people.

We recommended that the Police and Crime Commissioner should:

- complete a full review of its arrangements in relation to the management of domestic abuse to ensure that it is delivering an effective service to the public.
- consider the outcomes of the PEEL report in relation to call handling continue to be considered in detail and the action plan continually monitored to track improvements against the recommended areas, formally reporting progress through the governance structure.

Responsibilities of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Police and Crime Commissioner is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

Auditor's responsibilities for the review of the Police and Crime Commissioner's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to be satisfied that the Police and Crime Commissioner has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Police and Crime Commissioner's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in December 2021. This guidance sets out the arrangements that fall within the scope of 'proper arrangements'. When reporting on these arrangements, the Code of Audit Practice requires auditors to structure their commentary on arrangements under three specified reporting criteria:

- Financial sustainability: how the Police and Crime Commissioner plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;
- Governance: how the Police and Crime Commissioner ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks; and
- Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the Police and Crime Commissioner uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

We documented our understanding of the arrangements the Police and Crime Commissioner has in place for each of these three specified reporting criteria, gathering sufficient evidence to support our risk assessment and commentary in our Auditor's Annual Report. In undertaking our work, we have considered whether there is evidence to suggest that there are significant weaknesses in arrangements.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – Audit certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of the Police and Crime Commissioner of Gloucestershire for the year ended 31 March 2022 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Police and Crime Commissioner, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 43 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Police and Crime Commissioner those matters we are required to state to the Police and Crime Commissioner in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Police and Crime Commissioner as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Grace Hawkins

Grace Hawkins, Key Audit Partner

for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor

Bristol

22 March 2024