

## Warwickshire Joint Audit and Standards Committee Report Summary

**Meeting Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**Subject:** Vetting Update

**Contact details:** Supt Ross Campbell

### Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to advise the joint audit and standards committee as to the position of Warwickshire Police in relation to Police Vetting, from both an internal perspective. This is following a presentation that was delivered to the committee in March 2023, and subsequent action for there to be an update provided to the board at the July Meeting. The previous presentation to the board is attached for ease of reference.



JASC Vetting  
overview .pptx

### Recommendation

It is recommended that this update be noted and continue to be subject of audit as appropriate.

### Background

At the March committee meeting, Superintendent Ross Campbell, Interim Head of Vetting presented an overview of the current position of the force vetting unit and the Police National Vetting Scheme (PVNS) to the board. This overview explained the recovery plan that had effectively been delivered to return the commercial element of the department to a period of stability, and outlined the future plans.

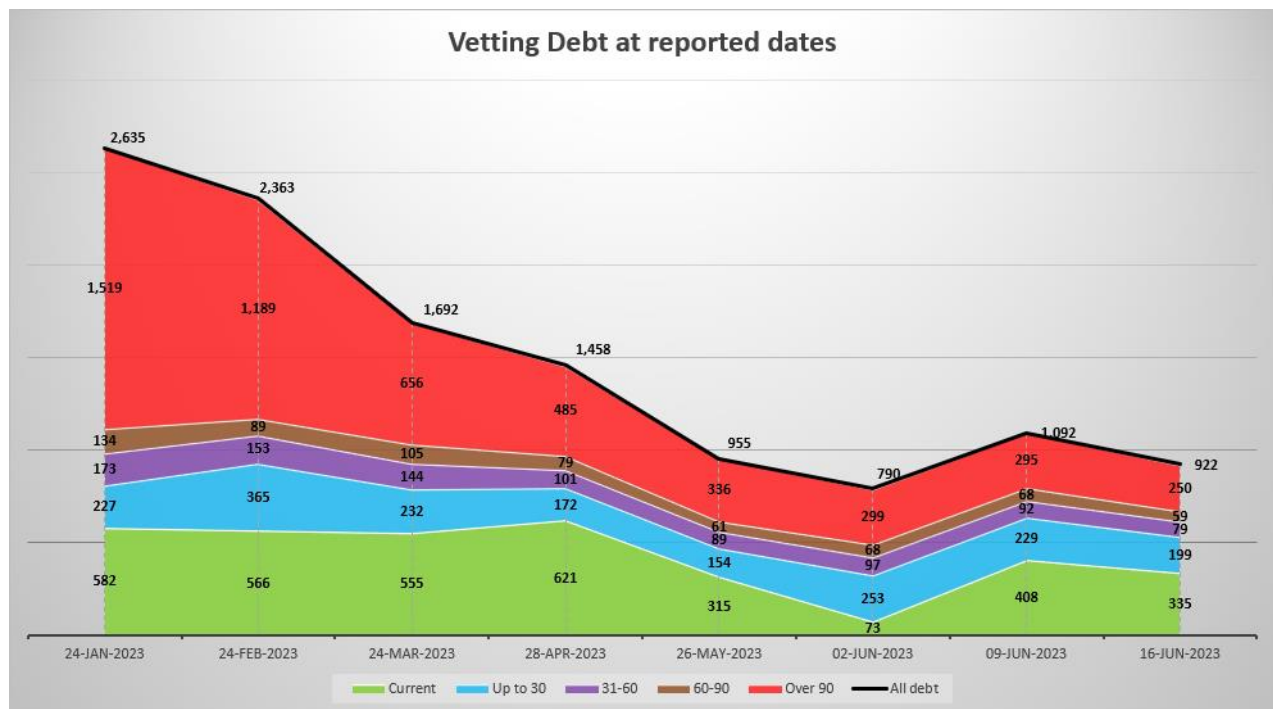
Since that meeting, Superintendent Campbell has met with Andy Heath, who is the JASC lead for vetting, and a number of areas have been discussed. An offer has also been made and accepted for a visit to the Vetting Department by Mr. Heath in order to get a more detailed understanding of structure and function of the department, to assist in answering any questions that the committee may have.

## Update for the Committee

As a result of the dialogue, it was agreed that a number of areas of clarity and update would be given to this meeting, which are detailed below within this report:

### Progress on reducing 90-day debt

Significant progress has been made on the reduction of the vetting debt. And this has been a collaborative effort between the finance and vetting departments. Weekly reports are run, but in preparation for this report, the following figures are representative of the position as on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023. An up to date position will be presented at the board meeting.



### Key points at time of report:

- overdue debt over 90 days continues to decrease and is £249,864
- overdue debt 30-60 days and 60-90 days has been consistently going down and is now £78,774 and £59,319 respectively
- overdue debt under 30 days remains at a raised level of ca. £200k – currently £198,636
- £292,967 is overdue debt from 17 customers (over £5k each)
- £210,405 is overdue debt from 101 customers (under £5k but over £1k each)
- £85,535 is overdue debt from 227 customers (under £1k each)

Significant progress is being made in order to develop a technical solution to ensure we have effective process in place for the receipt of payment, and that vetting clearance wont be released until payment has been received. This requires automations being build

within the finance and vetting systems, which then needs to integrate with the Government Payment System (Gov.pay). This is being working through as a priority and is being progressed at pace in order to get the solution developed and in place, following integration and testing, as soon as possible. In the meantime, both the finance and vetting teams have manual processes to ensure that invoices and being raised, and payment received in a timely and prudent manner.

#### Business plan development, demand scenarios & investment in systems

A full business plan is in the process of being developed. This will include a strategy which will define the direction of the business in a more focussed approach, which will factor in fully: requirements, target markets, market analysis, customer acquisition and retention plans, demand analysis, financial projections, opportunities and risk analysis; particularly around market volatility.

Warwickshire Police, on behalf of National Police Chiefs Council operate the Police National Vetting Service. As such, there is no other route in which contractors can go for national vetting clearance. The risk to Warwickshire as a service currently lies around the effective delivery of our services and reputation of the force if we are not delivering within our SLA's. No financial penalties exist if we do not meet our performance targets, but this clearly has other implications as identified above.

There are threats and risks of other police forces making a bid to take the service, but we feel that's not a realistic prospect in the short or medium term due to the scale of operation that is run. We are the largest total vetting unit in the country, with significant staff and resource that could not readily be replicated. However, we strive to provide the highest level of customer service and we are making huge strides to continue to improve the way in which we operate and deliver.

We understand our demand and data better than we ever have before, we are aware of the demands and requirements of our current customers for new business over the next 12 – 18 months, and the ongoing vetting requirements of these customers for up to the next 10 years or the lifetime of their clearance. We cap monthly demand to ensure we do not have more business coming in that we can manage whilst ensuring we meet the revenue targets that have been set for us.

Due to the national arena in which we operate, we know where future business is coming from, we effectively horizon scan and have organisations waiting to onboard with us. We are in control of our market at present and envisage that will be the case for some time to come and we do not currently need to advertise for business due to the strong position we are in. As part of the control we have on the management and prediction of our demand, it allows us to plan ahead so when required we can effectively plan for when we need to change our market strategy.

With all of the focus on National Police Vetting that there currently is; it will only mean that more organisations who work with, or on behalf of policing will require vetting, so part of our future planning will be that, as the Police National Vetting Service, we can service the requirement of UK policing in the vetting space.

Technological advances are key to this, and we are actively pursuing opportunities to maximise service delivery through technology. Warwickshire are leading work on this to identify national solutions to efficiency in vetting, which will also ensure we can maximise revenue opportunities in line with our business plan, when developed.

In summary, in the absence of a well formed and mature business plan, we are taking all of the relevant steps that you would expect to take as a commercial entity, and we are in a period of stabilisation post a state of recovery and are continuously monitoring demand, performance, capability and opportunities.

#### Options for resourcing peaks in demand

As referenced above, the way in which we track and predict demand allows us to effectively identify and identify peaks in demand. For example, we are able to predict where we may have a large number of renewals all be due at the same time. We begin to plan up to 90 days ahead, so we can flatten the curve and spread the renewals over three months rather than them all being due at once.

When we onboard new customers, we ask for demand predictions for the next 12-18 months where possible, in order for us to bring that into our capacity modelling.

With a large unit in order to service our demand, it allows us to flex staff according to the needs of our customers, but the model we now operate will prevent us from again in the position where our demand outstrips our resource through robust, strategic oversight at the top of the department and through the relevant governance boards, as described in the previous presentation to the committee.

#### Commercial acumen of management team

Whilst a degree of commercial acumen is important for the role, and is built into the job description, it is important to have to most suitable individual in the role who has the requisite skills around effective business and change management, an understanding of policing and the risks around vetting and effective people management skills.

Superintendent Campbell, who has significant experience in the management and delivery of change in complex and challenging areas of business, and also 9 years of experience in vetting and previously headed up the unit, was appointed as an interim Head of Vetting on a short-term basis in order to deliver a recovery and stabilisation plan. The full time role is one as a senior police staff member.

The market is a challenging one, and the role a unique one, and this is why we have taken our time to recruit into the vacancy and have gone through a rigorous selection process and did not appoint the last time around. If there are any gaps in an individual's knowledge or experience, these will be supported in addressed in line with the values and commitment that Warwickshire Police has in relation to the support and development of its workforce.

We plan to run a recruitment process again in the next few months.

#### External audit highlights

As reported in the previous presentation, Warwickshire Police have a requirement from the HMICFRS thematic inspection to meet the required recommendations from that report as do all forces in England and Wales. Warwickshire was not a force specifically inspected in that inspection. At the time of the last report, there was one 'Amber' status in relation to the analysing of data in relation to vetting disproportionality, due 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023, which has now turned 'green' and we are compliant across all of the recommendations.

Our Vetting Unit and Counter Corruption Units were jointly subject to a individual force inspection in May this year, which will have a grading. This will not report until the autumn.

#### Vetting of Warwickshire Force staff

As reported in the last report to the committee, Warwickshire Police are fully compliant with the national guidance around police vetting (The Approved Professional Practice). We also operate similar prediction and forecasting around demand for all of our internal staff and we do for the PVNS.

All officers and staff who are subject to vetting under the APP are vetted, in date and we have no backlogs or individuals whose vetting has expired. This is a very strong position, one which was examined in depth by HMICFRS as part of our May Inspection and we are hopeful that this will be positively reflected within our inspection report when it is published.

This report is presented for inspection by the committee.