



**Lancashire
Constabulary**

police and communities together

ITEM 9

REPORT TO: JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE

DATE: 1 DECEMBER 2014

REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF INSPECTOR KAREN EDWARDS

SUBJECT: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMBINED ETHICS COMMITTEE

Appendix A refers

1 Issue for Consideration

The establishment of a Combined Ethics Committee and Tactical Group (internal).

2 Information

Members will be aware that police integrity has been the subject of media coverage in recent months based on a small number of high profile cases amongst police officers. When police officers and staff fall short of the standards expected, it can have a damaging effect on public confidence in policing.

In response to this, a new Code of Ethics across the police service, introduced by the College of Policing, and approved by Parliament came into force on 15 June 2014. The Code applies to all police officers and staff; Special Constables in Lancashire Constabulary; staff in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC); contractors and volunteers. Its objective is to support each individual to deliver the highest professional standards in serving the public.

In Lancashire, to help build trust and public confidence, the Police and Crime Commissioner have agreed to establish a Combined Ethics Committee, to support the embedding of the Code, provide assurance on the handling of complaints and disciplinary matters, provide strategic and expert support and guidance to senior leadership teams and facilitate public scrutiny and encourage public debate in the complex area of police ethics.

By establishing an Ethics Committee, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable are also making an explicit and public commitment to transparent, ethical policing in Lancashire that is subjected to rigorous independent scrutiny.

Furthermore, as part of the process of embedding the Code of Ethics within the Constabulary and its on-going influence on service delivery an internal ethics panel (tactical group) will be established comprising of police officers and staff at all ranks and grades to

influence ethical decision making at each and every opportunity. They will support and educate their colleagues in relation to ethical decision making thus providing the confidence to address ethical dilemmas in the right manner.

The Committee will comprise of an independent Chair (who will have extensive knowledge of dealing with ethical dilemmas along with the experience of implementing ethical programmes), and five members who are independent of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable, have a good understanding of the communities of Lancashire (so must either live or work in the area), can work together and who have significant key skills and attributes. Their focus would be to support the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable in ensuring that correct procedures and practices are adhered to in the police decision-making process, so that outcomes produced are both legally correct and in the public interest.

Draft Terms of Reference have been prepared to reflect the full range of responsibilities (copy attached at Annex A).

Arrangements are now underway to appoint a Chair and seek expressions of interest from interested persons. The Committee will meet four times a year and the first meeting is likely to be in early March 2015, but members may be required to be available outside the times of the formal meetings.

The Head of Professional Standards (Constabulary) and the PCC's legal adviser / monitoring officer will be required to attend each meeting of the Committee.

The administration of the Ethics Committee should be independent of the Constabulary. Therefore, in the short term this function would be undertaken by the OPCC and will be considered as part the review of the OPCC.

The Chair of the Combined Audit Committee was consulted prior to the decision of the Commissioner and Chief Constable and supports the proposal.

Decision Required

The Interim Combined Audit Committee is asked to note the report

Background Papers

None

Report Author

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COMBINED ETHICS COMMITTEE –PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The Combined Ethics Committee is responsible for enhancing trust and confidence in the ethical governance and actions of Lancashire Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

It will discharge responsibilities by;

- Promoting the highest standards of ethical conduct.
- Provide a focus for education into ethical issues.
- Providing a source of support to others.
- Support compliance with organisational values.
- Promote confidence in the community.

Responsibilities

- 1) To advise the Commissioner and the Chief Constable on the effectiveness of the embedding of the Code of Ethics and its on-going influence on service delivery.
- 2) To support compliance with organisational values and promote confidence in the community.
- 3) To specifically examine behaviours and attitudes of all staff within Lancashire Constabulary and the OPCC, to make recommendations and offer advice accordingly.
- 4) To advise the Commissioner and the Chief Constable on the progression of a transparent ethical framework.
- 5) To have an oversight of the following;
 - The OPCC's regular and structured reviews of the handling of public complaints, misconduct and grievances to commend best practice, to identify necessary organisational learning and to report any irregularities to the Commissioner and the Chief Constable so they may take appropriate action;
 - anti-fraud and corruption arrangements, including whistleblowing policies and their operation in the OPCC and the Constabulary;
 - registers of interests, gifts and hospitality, expenses and scheduled information as required by Government under the transparency agenda.
- 6) To receive reports **directly** from the tactical group, take appropriate action if necessary and to offer advice accordingly.

- 7) To receive reports and complaints on PCC and Chief Officer standards of integrity. The Committee will specifically examine behaviours and attitudes and offer advice accordingly.
- 8) To consider any ethical matters referred by the Commissioner or by the Chief Constable, to provide a focus for education, offer support and guidance and influence change to policy.
- 9) To receive reports from and make recommendations in response to the Commissioner's Monitoring Officer in the event of the Commissioner or his staff committing or proposing to act unlawfully or wherever their standards fall below what is expected.
- 10) To receive reviews from Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC), the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) and any other relevant review body, which include ethical issues relevant to the Constabulary or the OPCC, to ensure full consideration has been given to appropriate action arising from the recommendations and monitor implementation.
- 11) To publish an annual report on the work and findings of the Committee that the communities of Lancashire can have confidence in.