



**Lancashire
Constabulary**

police and communities together

JOINT AUDIT AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

**MONDAY, 7 MARCH, 2016 COMMENCING AT 1.30 PM
COUNTY HALL PRESTON**

MINUTES

PRESENT

Mr Clive Portman (Chair)

Mr Stephen Dobson
Mr David Jones
Ms Karol Sanderson
Mr Russell Weaver

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs A Harrison	Director, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr I Cosh	Director of Resources, Lancashire Constabulary
Mr S Freeman	Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Ms J Taylor	Audit Manager
DCI J Halliwell	Lancashire Constabulary
DCI I Whitehead	Lancashire Constabulary
Mrs W Kearns	Preston City Council (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Mr P Buckley	Grant Thornton
Mr I Miles	Grant Thornton

SECRETARIAT

Mr A Robertson	Business Support Officer, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr Robin Baker, Grant Thornton.

DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTEREST

The Chair disclosed that he is also currently Chair of the North West Regional Police Pensions Board.

CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Members were asked to note that the proposed Terms of Reference discussed at the previous Joint Audit and Ethics Committee were subsequently agreed at Joint Management Board on 3rd March 2016.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2015

Approved as a correct record of the meeting.

EXTERNAL AUDIT – UPDATE REPORT

The External Auditor, Grant Thornton, presented an update report for the Committee's consideration.

It provided information on the progress made with audit work for the delivery of the 2015/16 statement of accounts and briefing notes on a number of key issues faced by the policing service.

Local Criminal Justice Partnerships have been subject to a HMIC review and committee were assured that arrangements in Lancashire are being reviewed in view of the HMIC report. It was identified that the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) have already made changes that has resulted in ACC Tim Jacques becoming the chair of the board with the Commissioner becoming vice-chair. Ongoing work is being undertaken to implement recommendation made in the HMIC report.

The report from Grant Thornton also recognised the impact that the government's policy to deliver closer working between the Police and the Fire Service. It was noted that this is not a mandatory requirement. It was reported to committee that there are a number of areas of collaboration in place.

The report also identified that a recent review by HMIC had raised concerns in relation to the issuing of firearm licences. Constabulary reported that they are well placed in respect of this issue and commented that a proportion of Constabulary revenue is spent contesting appeals made in relation to the issue of firearm licenses and that the Constabulary have a very good success rate with winning such appeals. It was also reported that the Constabulary had signed up to proposals for a national firearms licences management system to be implemented but this had not advanced due to issues surrounding the cost of a firearms licence. Nonetheless, there is a strong governance regime in place in Lancashire.

It was agreed that Mr Cosh would arrange for a report providing an update on the firearms licencing position to be provided to Committee.

The impact of the 2015 Spending Review was discussed and Committee asked if there was an updated position in respect of the Formula Funding review. It was reported that the Minister for Policing had recently addressed the House of Commons and stated that the review of the funding formula would take place after the Police Service had completed its own review of service capabilities. This indicates that the formula funding review may not take place for some considerable time.

EXTERNAL AUDIT – AUDIT PLAN 2015/16

The External Auditor, Grant Thornton, presented their audit plan for 2015/16 for the Committee's consideration.

Committee noted the external audit plan for the 2015/16 statement of accounts.

The Committee also noted that the Joint Audit and Ethics meeting originally scheduled in September has been brought forward to 22nd August. This reflects an agreement between the Commissioner's Chief Finance Officer, the Constabulary's Director of Resources and Grant Thornton to bring forward the sign off of the 2015/16 statement accounts by a month. This is to prepare for compliance with the requirement for the Audit sign-off to be completed by 31 July for the 2016/17 statement of accounts.

EXTERNAL AUDIT – PROCUREMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDIT

The Committee received an oral update in relation to an external audit and the procurement of an external audit.

It was noted by the Committee that the procurement of external auditors for the 2018/19 financial year must be completed by December 2017.

INTERNAL AUDIT PLANS 2016/17

The Committee was presented with the combined Internal Audit Plan for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Constabulary for 2016/17 for their consideration.

The plan has allocated 200 audit days for the Constabulary and the office of the Commissioner.

Committee approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2016/17.

INTERNAL AUDIT MONITORING REPORT

The Committee was presented with an Internal Audit Monitoring Report for their consideration.

Committee noted the report.

FUTURE TRAINING PLAN AND WORK PROGRAMME

Committee was presented with a Future Training Plan and Work Programme for their consideration.

Committee agreed the work plan and identified a further item for inclusion that being 'feedback from misconduct cases', it was agreed to add this to the Committee workplan.

Committee noted that three committee members would provide representation as an independent person on Promotion Boards in order to provide transparency for the process.

Changes to the treatment of misconduct cases was discussed and it was agreed that the constabulary would provide a separate training session for the Committee on the subject.

DIP SAMPLING OF COMPLAINTS REPORT

Committee was presented with a Dip Sampling of Complaints report for their consideration.

Committee noted an improvement in performance and the nature of the language used in dealing with complaints. It was also noted that whilst there remained some delays in dealing with complaints it was accepted that these were due to the size of caseload faced by the team and resources available to them. These issues are being resolved and improvement is set to continue.

Committee also discussed whether "upheld" or "not upheld" was the right language to adopt in certain instances of complaints. Following clarification of the precise nature of complaints handling by DCI Whitehead the Committee proposed the addition of classification "no issues of breaching process/proper process followed' to enable a differentiation in complaint resolution where appropriate.

INSPECTION REPORTS

Committee was provided with a briefing identifying upcoming HMIC inspections.

Committee noted the report.

Committee discussed the recent HMIC report on force legitimacy noting that Lancashire has been suspended from the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme. Mr Cosh reported that this was a result of a small number of minor technical issues

which have or are being resolved and that we expect to be reinstated once HMIC re-inspect.

ETHICS UPDATE

The Committee received an Ethics report and action plan that detailed the approach being taken in the Constabulary to deliver the ethics policy.

Committee agreed that the report was good piece of work and that it provided considerable assurance that the ethics policy is being communicated to staff and implemented effectively.

Constabulary also confirmed the establishment of an internal ethics board and it was agreed that minutes of this board would be provided to the joint Audit and Ethics committee at future meetings as a part 2 item.

GATEWAY POLICY

The Committee was presented with Constabulary's 'Gateway Policy' for their consideration. This policy identifies the behaviours expected from the constabulary's senior officers in respect of ethical considerations and decisions.

Committee noted the report and agreed it provided assurance that senior officers were fully aware of the ethical expectations placed upon them,

Committee suggested that the principles contained within the Gateway policy should apply to all staff and not just senior leaders. Constabulary confirmed that the principles included in the gateway policy were in place for all staff but it was the difference in the level of scrutiny senior officers receive and the need for leadership in ethical matters that had generated the need for this separate specific policy.

Committee accepted that all staff were aware of the ethical expectations placed upon them in the performance of their duties.

URGENT BUSINESS

No matters of urgent business were reported.

OUTWARD COMMUNICATION

The Committee was asked to consider if:-

- a) There were any key messages arising from the meeting which should be sent to:-
 - i) The press / public
 - ii) Local / regional / national bodies

- b) The Police and Crime Commissioner's / Constabulary's press / public relations teams should be asked to consider whether any consultation /

research on any particular matters arising from the meeting should be undertaken.

No items were identified for outward communication

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee is to be held at 1.30pm on Monday 13 June 2016.

PRIVATE ITEMS

COMPLAINTS – PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received a Complaints Performance Report for their consideration.

The Committee noted a decrease in the number of cases reported but an increase in the number of allegations. Constabulary explained that this has resulted from a change in process within the department that has also provided greater consistency in treatment across the department.

**A Harrison
Director**

Signed:

Date:

C Portman, Chairman Joint Audit and Ethics Committee