

JOINT AUDIT AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

LANCASHIRE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER AND CHIEF CONSTABLE

Annual Report for the year April 2021 to March 2022

1. Introduction and Background

The Joint Audit Committee for the Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Chief Constable (CC) was established on 1 April 2014. The remit of the Committee was extended in September 2015 to include the consideration of ethical issues and revised Terms of Reference for the Committee were agreed by the Joint Management Board in January 2016. The Committee has considered both audit and ethical issues from that date.

2. Assurance

The Committee supports the effective discharge of PCC and CC business through the provision of advice and guidance in accordance with good governance principles; a focus on audit and ethical assurance; effective internal and financial controls and effective risk management processes.

3. Membership

The membership of the Committee throughout the year has been:

Karol Sanderson (Chair)
Stephen Dobson
David Jones
Russell Weaver
Paul Richardson

I would like to thank all the Committee members for their enthusiasm and commitment during the year.

4. The work of the Committee

The Committee formally met 4 times during the year: June 2021, September 2021, December 2021 and March 2022. Due to the impact of COVID-19 all meetings were held remotely by video link. Despite the challenges of working remotely, the Committee felt able to carry out its work to an acceptable standard.

Meetings were divided into separate "Audit" and "Ethics" agenda.

During the year a new Chief Constable and new PCC were appointed and the Committee is grateful to them both for taking the time to give a presentation on their vision and future plans.

a) Audit Agenda

The following standing items were considered at each meeting:

- Update/Monitoring Reports from both Internal and External audit
- Reports from Committee members

Additional agenda items were also considered as follows:

June 2021

- A presentation from the Chief Constable Chris Rowley
- Annual Report from the Committee and from Internal Audit

September 2021

- A presentation from the PCC, Andrew Snowden
- Draft Statements of Account & Annual Governance statements

December 2021

No matters other than standing items and those referred to as sensitive in this report.

March 2022

- The Audit Findings report and the External Audit Joint Annual Letter
- Internal audit plan for the coming year
- Review of Committee work programme

At each meeting additional matters including Review of Inspection Reports and Risk Registers were also dealt with but due to sensitivity issues were not discussed in public.

b) Ethics Agenda

The following Standing items were considered at each meeting:

- Update from key issues relating to the Constabulary and the PCC from Ian Cosh & Steve Freeman
- Update from Professional Standards Department
- Update from Force Tactical Ethics Committee
- Reports from Committee members

Additional agenda items were also considered as follows:

June 2021

- Annual Report from the Committee
- OPCC complaints performance report

September 2021

- Report on Positive Action
- PSD Reports on Business Interests and Gifts and Hospitality
- OPCC ethics update.

December 2021

- PSD further report on Business Interests
- OPCC update on review of Constabulary complaints.

March 2022

- Update on Constabulary framework on Violence Against Women & Girls
- Review of Committee work programme
- OPCC Ethics Update report
- Report on audit of Grievance files by members
-

Note : At each meeting additional matters were also dealt with but due to sensitivity issues were not discussed in public.

In the period up to March 2020 the Committee had had the benefit of a report from Committee members who conducted Dip Sampling of Police Complaints files. The Committee had been in the process of extending dip sampling to include grievance and misconduct files. However due to the impact of COVID-19 it was not possible for any sampling to take place. The Committee felt that it was able to gain assurance on complaints and misconduct from the report provided by PSD. The Committee felt unsighted on grievance issues but members were able to carry out some sampling of grievance files in early 2022 and the Committee saw a report at its March meeting. It is anticipated that dip sampling of complaint and misconduct files will be in place again for 2022/23.

c) Work of the Committee outside the formal meetings:

During the year, a training session was held for all Committee members on the financial governance system.

A member of the Committee attended the NPCC Professional Standards and Ethics Conference and reported back to the Committee.

Other work carried out by Committee members was limited due to the impact of COVID-19 but included observing meetings of the Force Tactical Ethics Committee

d) Summary Conclusions

The Committee is satisfied that the PCC and CC can take substantial assurance in respect of maintaining effective internal control, reporting on financial and other performance and in respect of risk management arrangements.

The Committee is also able to provide assurance on the way in which the Force is applying the principles of the Code of Ethics in its systems and processes and on its response to the challenges of embedding the Code of Ethics within the workforce.

This year, COVID-19 has impacted upon the wider engagement of Committee Members with the Constabulary and the OPCC but the Committee has been able to satisfy itself that there is a positive commitment by both the Chief Constable and the PCC to the principles of ethical behaviour.