

JOINT AUDIT AND ETHICS COMMITTEE
LANCASHIRE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER AND CHIEF
CONSTABLE

ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR April 2022 to March 2023

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

The last meeting of this current committee was held in March 2023. New Committees will be constituted for April 2023 onwards.

I would like to thank all the Committee members for their enthusiasm and commitment and to thank the Constabulary and the OPPC for their support throughout my 4 years as Committee chair.

4. The work of the Committee

The Committee formally met 4 times during the year : June 2022, October 2022, December 2022 and March 2023. A meeting scheduled for September 2022 could not be held due to the observation of a period of mourning following the death of Queen Elizabeth II. In place of the September meeting, a special meeting dealing with audit issues was held in October 2022.

The meetings in June and October 2022 were held remotely by video link but the Committee resumed face to face meetings in December 2022. 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.

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 2022

- Committee Annual Report
- Review of Committee terms of reference
- Review of Governance Framework

October 2022

- Draft Statements of Account & Annual Governance statements
- Review of Proposed Terms of Reference for new Audit Committee

December 2022

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March 2023

- Internal Audit Monitoring Report
- Internal audit plan for the coming year with Charter

NOTE : 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 2022

- Annual Report from the Committee
- Review of Dip Sampling of Grievance Files by Committee members
- Review of Case Sampling Protocol
- Work plan for 2022/23

December 2022

- OPCC Ethics Update report
- Review of Dip Sampling of Grievance Files by Committee members

March 2023

- OPCC joint ethics report

NOTES :

1. At each meeting additional matters from PSD were also dealt with but due to sensitivity issues these were not discussed in public.
2. Sampling of grievance files by members took place during the year but unfortunately, due to ongoing technical difficulties, it was not possible for members to carry out dip sampling of Complaint Files. However, the Committee felt that it was able to gain assurance on complaints and misconduct from the report provided by PSD.

c) **Work of the Committee outside the formal meetings:**

During the year, a committee member observed the meetings of the Force Tactical Ethics Committee and of the Committee considering tattoos.

4. Summary and 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. The Committee has been able to satisfy itself that there is a positive commitment from both the Chief Constable and the PCC to the principles of ethical behaviour.

Karol Sanderson

Chair of Joint Audit and Ethics Committee

March 2023