



West Midlands Police

# Annual Governance Statement

Position as at 31st March 2020 including plans for the financial year 2020/21.

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## **1. Introduction**

This Annual Governance Statement (AGS) explains how the Chief Constable governs West Midlands Police Force through a system of internal controls. The Chief Constable has adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE 2016 updated framework: *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*, a copy of which is on our website at [www.west-midlands.police.uk](http://www.west-midlands.police.uk) or can be obtained by contacting us, details at [www.west-midlands.police.uk/contact-us/index.aspx](http://www.west-midlands.police.uk/contact-us/index.aspx). This statement explains how the Chief Constable has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, regulation 6(1), which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

## **2. Scope**

The Chief Constable is responsible for ensuring the force's business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Chief Constable also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Chief Constable is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the exercise of its functions, which includes ensuring a sound system of internal control is maintained through the year and that arrangements are in place for the management of risk.

## **3. The Governance Framework**

The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, culture and values by which the Chief Constable directs and controls activities through which it accounts and engages with the community. It enables the Chief Constable to monitor the achievement of strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services, including achieving value for money.

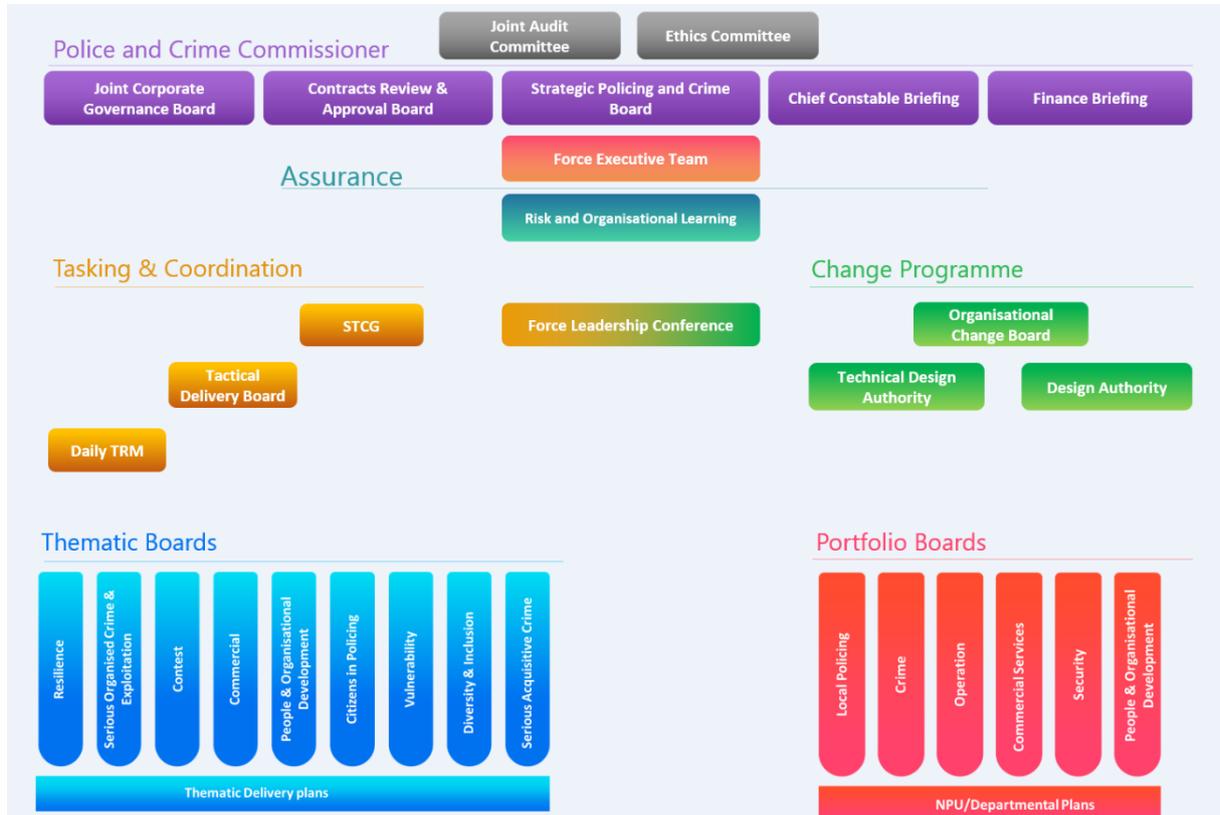
The system of internal control is a significant part of the governance framework and is designed to manage risk. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Chief Constable's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them effectively, efficiently and economically.

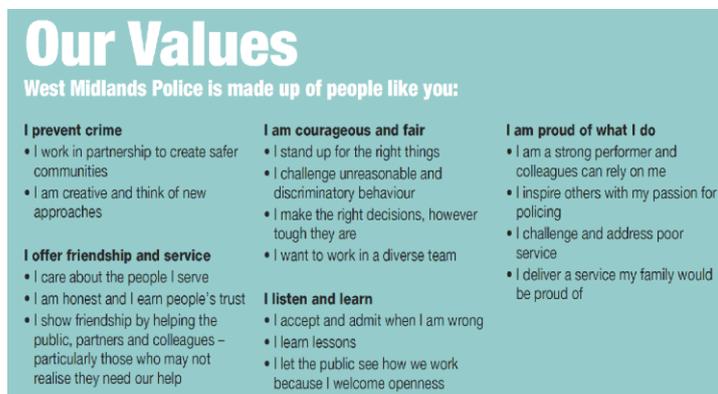
The Chief Constable is responsible for operational policing matters, the direction and control of police personnel, and for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the force. The Chief Constable is held to account for the exercise of those functions and those of the persons under his direction and control, by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

It therefore follows that the Commissioner must satisfy himself that the force has appropriate mechanisms in place for the maintenance of good governance. For these to operate in practice, the Commissioner and the Chief Constable have separate but complimentary governance structures. These facilitate the achievement of effective governance arrangements, including the monitoring and assessment of performance in line with statutory responsibilities.

*West Midlands Police Strategic Governance Structure:*



The 'Delivering Good Governance standard for public services 2016' sets out the seven good governance core principles. The key elements of the systems and processes that have been put in place for the force and how the force adheres to these seven principles is evidenced below.



#### 4. Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law

Evidence to demonstrate Principle A includes;

- ✓ The Chief Constable's Vision and Values, in conjunction with the Code of Ethics, define the standards expected of everyone working in policing and is communicated to all officers and staff.
- ✓ The Standards of Professional Behaviour reflect the expectations of the public and are governed by specific policies, procedural rules and internal management processes that cover the activities of the force:
  - Financial Management
  - Procurement
  - Health and safety
  - Gifts and Hospitality
  - Business Interests
  - 'Whistleblowing' – Confidential Reporting
  - Complaints Handling
  - Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption
  - Information Security
  - Information sharing
  - Data Protection

- General Data Protection Regulations
- ✓ At a national level, the force cooperates in the National Fraud Initiative which attempts to identify fraud by sharing and comparing employee data across the public sector.
- ✓ Within the force there are two formal codes of conduct, one for police officers and one for police staff. Both codes define the standards of personal behaviour expected. The officer code also sets out requirements in terms of use of force, performance, execution of duties and other general conduct expectations. Certain staff, e.g. qualified accountants or solicitors, will have professional codes of conduct to which they are held to account.
- ✓ An Ethics Committee has been established which is responsible for providing the Chief Constable and PCC with independent advice around ethical issues arising from the data analytics projects.

## 5. Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Evidence to demonstrate Principle B includes;

- ✓ The West Midlands Police web site includes the current Freedom of Information (FOI) publication scheme in its 'Your right to information' pages.
- ✓ The force website aids agile accessibility to the police service by providing advice, enabling a member of the public to report an incident, track their case and undertake live webchat to report all non-emergency crimes online.
- ✓ The force actively involves communities across the force geography. The approach involves public meetings including community forums, independent advisory groups, scrutiny panels and messaging via WMNOW.
- ✓ There is also active involvement with the full range of media such as press, TV, social media and public surveys.
- ✓ The force works closely with Independent Advisory Groups and independent scrutiny panels to increase levels of trust and understanding in our diverse communities, support the most vulnerable and make sure our engagement is targeted and meaningful.



- ✓ Governed by the Citizens in Policing Board, the force has a comprehensive Citizens in Policing programme which seeks to increase citizen participation in policing and community safety by developing the scale and variety of opportunities for volunteers, special constables, cadets and a number of watch schemes.
- ✓ The force engages and collaborates with a significant number of partners within the region. An example being the work of the *West Midlands* Violence Prevention Alliance (WMVPA) which is jointly chaired by an Assistant Chief Constable and Public Health Lead. The WMVPA aims to bring together partners to work together with the shared understanding that violence and its associated harms are preventable. The WMVPA is a member of the World Health Organisation Violence Prevention Alliance international network.

## **6. Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits**

Evidence to demonstrate Principle C includes;

- ✓ The new WMP three year strategy defines a number of economic, social and environmental outcomes to be delivered during the next three years.
- ✓ The Policing Vision 2025 highlighted trends most likely to impact policing by 2025, we will consider the implications of those trends on WMP.

## **7. Principle D: Determining the outcomes necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes**

Evidence to demonstrate Principle D includes;

- ✓ Strategic governance is in place to monitor and track activity against WMPs three year strategy. This includes the monthly Strategic Tasking and Co-ordination group meeting which is in place to drive the key limbs of the new strategy.
- ✓ Force performance is scrutinized via both strategic and tactical force level governance structures. Portfolio and thematic boards are in place to manage performance within the portfolio areas and provide the necessary oversight and assurance.

- ✓ The force planning cycle incorporates an annual strategic assessment, annual Force Management Statement (FMS) and financial plans.
- ✓ The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) has been updated which forms the basis of the annual budgets and provides a framework for the evaluation of future proposals.
- ✓ Decision-making at all levels of the force is undertaken within the framework of the National Decision Model, which has the Code of Ethics at its core.
- ✓ WMP continue to utilise the Threat Harm Risk Investigation Vulnerability Engagement (THRIVE+) framework across all functions. It underpins all decision making in the force and encourages flexible and adaptable risk management, while empowering staff and officers at all levels to have confidence in the decisions that they make.



## **Principle E: Developing the Force’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it**

Evidence to demonstrate Principle E includes;

- ✓ As part of WMPs three year strategy, a ‘People Strategy’ has been launched which outlines what WMP expects from its personnel and what people can expect, in return, from the organisation.
- ✓ The strategy incorporates a future facing leadership framework, with individuals aiming to be champions in the workplace; creating an environment which supports, challenges and enables WMP officers and staff to be the best they can be in order to bring the vision and values, as referenced under Principle A, to life.
- ✓ The Force Executive Team have clearly defined leadership roles and objectives; they are responsible for implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services within their respective portfolios.
- ✓ WMP Conversations continues to be delivered across the force as a way of engaging with the workforce. This has recently been re-launched with a focus on measuring and

improving our performance to meet the strategic objectives and drive personal, departmental and forcewide deliverables.

- ✓ To build on capacity, collaboration arrangements are in place with neighboring forces for significant service areas including CMPG and Legal Services and future collaboration is being planned.
- ✓ Regional and national governance arrangements are in place in relation to national and regional programmes (Single Online Home, Specialist Capabilities, and Blue Light Collaboration etc.)
- ✓ The innovative Data Driven Insight (DDI) project continues to drive the forcewide agenda in terms of data analytics. It delivers a single, cleansed and integrated data set which provides an enterprise wide search capability directly into the hands of our front line officers on their mobile devices, transforming data access, intelligence and tools. This system provides deep insight and analytics, creating the step change in how information drives our actions.
- ✓ As part of the HMICFRS Integrated PEEL Assessment (IPA), WMP's arrangement planning for future demand was graded as 'Outstanding'.
- ✓ An in-house automation capability within IT&D continues to deliver forcewide capabilities.
- ✓ To build on the force's expertise, there are knowledge transfer arrangements in place as part of WMP2020, along with numerous academic collaboration work streams.
- ✓ The Chief Constable continues to host a number of Lead2Achieve and Senior Leadership events to develop the capability of its leadership at all levels within the organisation.

## **9. Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management**

Evidence to demonstrate Principle F includes;

- ✓ The force has an Organisational Risk Management Policy and Risk Register, prepared and reviewed by the Deputy Chief Constable and managed via the Risk and Organisational Learning Board. The Risk Register is subject to internal audit on an

annual basis. The Joint Audit Committee is responsible for independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework.

- ✓ The force ensures all decision-making processes are overseen by correct governance structures. Each member of the Force Executive Team (FET) leads a specific portfolio board and chairs thematic boards, all of which incorporate sub-groups for specific functions and themes. This oversight from the highest level ensures that there is no disconnect at any level of management in the continued delivery of force performance and ambitions. Risk is discussed as a regular agenda item within these portfolio and thematic boards. These meetings ensure risks are being managed and mitigated as well as providing the gateway for forcewide risks to be escalated through the force governance structures.
- ✓ Objectives are defined within the WMP Conversations of each executive team member and cascaded throughout the organisation's approach to performance management.
- ✓ Performance management forms part of the force governance arrangements. Performance information is scrutinised by the Force Executive Team via the boards they chair and the Quarterly Performance Reviews (QPRs) they hold. Deep dives of performance take place at the most senior level of the organization.
- ✓ An increasing number of ready available performance dashboards allow for detailed performance information to be available to supervisors.
- ✓ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) independently assesses operational policing processes and reports the performance of the force at a national level. The force tracks and monitors all recommendations and areas for improvement from HMICFRS via the force governance structures.
- ✓ Strong public financial management is evidenced through the following strategies and reports:
  - Medium Term Financial Plan
  - Annual Financial Strategy
  - Budget Monitoring reports
  - Annual Statement of Accounts
  - Treasury Management Strategy
  - Treasury Management Reports

- Reserves Strategy
- Benefit Realisation plans
- HMICFRS Value for Money Profile
- CIPFA Financial Management Capability Review

## **10. Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability**

Evidence to demonstrate Principle G includes;

- ✓ A Joint Audit Committee (with the PCC) is responsible for independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, the independent scrutiny of the Chief Constable's and the PCC 's financial performance to the extent that it affects the Chief Constable and PCC's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment.
- ✓ The Joint Scheme of Corporate Governance sets out in detail the respective roles and functions of the Commissioner and Chief Constable, outlining all significant decisions which are consented or delegated and which are of a statutory, financial or management nature.
- ✓ All major change and transformation programmes and projects have their own project boards and adhere to consistent force change control processes which include addressing risk management and mitigation.
- ✓ An External Audit function reports to "those charged with governance" in respect of the Annual Accounts to ensure they are prepared in accordance with legislation, accounting standards and good practice. As well as issuing a statutory opinion on the accounts they also issue a statutory opinion on the Chief Constables arrangements for securing value for money, measured as economy, efficiency and effectiveness, which sits alongside the HMICFRS assessment work.
- ✓ This Annual Governance Statement is published alongside the Statement of Accounts.
- ✓ Regular publication (subject to confidentiality tests) of reports presented to the Strategic Policing and Crime Board.

## 11. Review of effectiveness

The Chief Constable has responsibility for an annual review of the effectiveness of the Governance Framework. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the Force Executive Team within West Midlands Police, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Internal Audit Annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates. In maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance arrangements, the following roles are undertaken:

### The Force

The Chief Constable operates a system of strongly controlled arrangements for the delivery of operational policing in its communities, together with management and monitoring arrangements for:

- Performance management and associated reporting;
- Financial management;
- Standards of data quality that underpin key reporting requirements;
- The professional standards of police officers and staff in the force;
- Programme and project management.

These functions are organised within clear reporting structures in the force, designed to provide the Chief Constable and the Executive Team with assurances as to the effective delivery of operational policing and the Commissioner's Policing and Crime plan.

To increase understanding and improve transparency around force governance, a 'Governance and Knowledge' portal has been developed where all staff and officers are able to access key governance documents such as board terms of references, actions and decisions and summaries of meetings.

There is an ongoing requirement to review the Terms of References for all governance boards on an annual basis to ensure the remit and purpose of the boards are reviewed periodically. Due to COVID, this task has been extended until September 2020 and is being monitored as an outstanding action by Internal Audit.

## **The Joint Audit Committee**

The Commissioner and Chief Constable have established a Joint Audit Committee to be responsible, on behalf of both Corporations Sole, to:

- Advise the Commissioner and the Chief Constable according to good governance principles;
- Provide independent assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Commissioner's and Chief Constable's internal control environment and risk management framework;
- Oversee the effectiveness of the framework in place for ensuring compliance with statutory requirements;
- Independently scrutinise financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Commissioner's and Chief Constable's exposure to risks and weakens the internal control environment;
- Oversee the financial reporting process.
- Ensure the Force is implementing agreed actions resulting from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspections.

## **Internal Audit**

The system of Internal Audit is a primary tenet of corporate governance and is the responsibility of the Commissioner. The provision and maintenance of an effective shared Internal Audit service for the PCC and CC has been delegated to the PCC's Chief Finance Officer. The Audit Committee oversees the provision of this service, reviewing associated plans and work outputs.

A high level review of the force Governance Framework to ensure that it is operating effectively and has been embedded into business as usual across the force.

## 12. Significant governance issues 2019/20

During the Coronavirus pandemic, key parts of force governance have run uninterrupted via virtual channels, including the monthly Strategic Tasking, Force Leadership Conference and Force Tasking and Co-ordination Group.

A small number of the forces 'business as usual' functions were paused alongside the corresponding governance structures including a number of thematic boards. As the force is returning to business as usual, these thematic boards have since been re-established.

During Covid 19, a separate but complementary governance framework was put in place to deliver against local and national objectives. This included a Strategic Co-ordination Group chaired by a Gold Commander (at Assistant Chief Constable level), which together with external partners, was responsible for delivering the regional response to the pandemic.

A Silver Commander at Assistant Chief Constable level, was also put in place to focus on the forces internal response, focusing and driving key issues such as resilience, welfare and resourcing etc.

A Covid Recovery Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, has also been established to ensure the force can continue to operate, whilst also capturing and embedding the learning from covid as the force moves back to business as usual. This board is driven by 5 key workstreams;

- Civil contingencies, learning and recovery
- People and welfare
- Organisational change
- Regional co-ordination group, local policing and community
- Secure and sustain.

During the COVID 19 crisis, full consultation with external partners has continued to take place where possible and meetings have taken place virtually, using Zoom, Skype or telephone conference. This has included Independent Advisory Groups, consultation with Children and Adult Services and Key Individual Networks and engagement with the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement process.

In respect of Internal Audit, Covid has delayed some audits which were due for completion with 84% of the plan being delivered during the year. All these audit plans are now being progressed. Whilst there have been no changes to the future audit plan for 2020/21 as a result

of Covid, the department is considering Covid related risks for each audit area when preparing the scope of the review.

Other significant structures have continued including Misconduct Hearings by WMPs Professional Standards Department.

#### **14. Conclusion and Commitment Statement**

The scale of change facing the Chief Constable remains extremely challenging, at a time when the demand and need for sustained and improved service to the public continues to increase. This will require firm leadership, careful management, innovation and robust governance.

The systems and processes the Chief Constable has in place to monitor the implementation of the Police and Crime Plan will ensure activities detailed in this statement are implemented. The governance arrangements of the PCC and the Chief Constable will remain under constant review in the forthcoming financial year.

#### **Signed**

Dave Thompson  
Chief Constable of West Midlands Police

Neil Chamberlain.  
Director of Commercial Services West Midlands