



west midlands
police and crime
commissioner



AGENDA ITEM 08

**JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE
15 December 2022**

Corporate Governance Framework

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Joint Audit Committee of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) and the Chief Constable's (CC's) joint Corporate Governance Framework before it is submitted to the Commissioner for approval. In addition, the report comments on actions highlighted in the 2021/22 Annual Governance Statements (AGS).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This Committee's terms of reference includes reviewing the Corporate Governance Framework of the PCC and CC. The Framework sets out how the Commissioner and the Chief Constable conduct their organisation's business both jointly and separately, in accordance with policy contained within the Statement of Corporate Governance. To do this, the Framework highlights key enablers for ensuring good governance.
- 2.2 The purpose of the Statement of Corporate Governance, is to give clarity to the way the two corporation's sole, the PCC and the CC, will govern both jointly and separately, to do business in the right way, for the right reason and at the right time.
- 2.3 The Framework includes the following sections:-
- Joint Statement of Corporate Governance
 - Joint Code of Corporate Governance
 - Core Principles of Effective Governance (Annex to Joint Code of Corporate Governance)
 - Joint Scheme of Corporate Governance
 - Annex A: PCC Contract Standing Orders
 - Annex B: Financial Regulations

3. PROCESS

Review of the Corporate Governance Framework

- 3.1 The joint Corporate Governance Working Group between the PCC's office and West Midlands Police has reviewed the Corporate Governance Framework over recent months to amend the Framework. The Appendix to this report includes the amended version of the Framework. The changes to the previous version include:-
- A requirement following a Central Government Procurement Policy Note (PPN) that contract and purchasing values should include Value Added Tax (VAT) for the purpose of applying thresholds. This is now reflected in Annex A of the Corporate Governance Framework within the PCC's Contract Standing Orders.
 - A clause in the delegations section of the framework that provides arrangements in relation to succession of a Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 3.2 The above changes are of a minor nature and do not fundamentally change the Framework.
- 3.3 Following feedback from this Committee the Framework will be submitted to the Commissioner for approval.

Annual Governance Statements as at 31 March 2022 and Plans for 2022/23 - Actions

- 3.4 Progress has been made on addressing the significant governance issues highlighted in the AGS referred to above. This includes: -
- During 2021/22 Internal Audit completed a review of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) investigations. The review identified that officers were not appropriately trained based on the College of Policing's guidance. This included gaps in the training undertaken. Also, delivery plans covering the core work of the team were not monitored effectively. In addition, there were findings of the review that related to the completion of documentation when police officers consult victims. The review also highlighted the high caseload for officers working with RASSO which impacts on the quality and timeliness of investigations. This finding relates to the overall numbers of investigators across the Force to undertake complex investigations which means the Force has insufficient resources to meet demand. Internal Audit have recently undertaken a follow up audit in relation to RASSO and their report is currently being finalised.
 - Internal Audit completed in 2021/22 of the arrangements in place to manage Domestic Abuse investigations had similar findings to the RASSO audit. This included insufficient trained and experienced investigators, lack of supervision, gaps in victims contact and scarce management information. High volume workloads were also of concern, impacting not only on officer welfare but also potentially on victim attrition. Again, Internal Audit have recently completed a follow up review in relation to Domestic Abuse investigations. Progress has been made in this area and 5 of the 11 audit recommendations have been implemented. Out of the 6 recommendations to be implemented, 3 of them are significant.
 - An audit of Detained Property was also completed in 2021/22 which identified several areas for improvement. These included procedures not being followed by officers and staff for handling detained property, no performance reporting to senior management in relation to the property store and there are a large number of

missing items from the store. Internal Audit are due to complete a follow up audit of detained property in December 2022.

- Management actions have been implemented in relation to other Internal Audit recommendations including follow ups by the Internal Audit service.
- The Commissioner has continued to hold the Chief Constable to account where reductions in funding have had potential impact on business as usual activities of the Force.

4 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 The Framework will be kept under regular review through the Corporate Governance Working Group to ensure it remains fit for purpose. This is to ensure it reflects the role of the PCC and WMP from a statutory and organisational perspective.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Committee are asked to comment on the attached draft Corporate Governance Framework.

Mark Kenyon
Chief Finance Officer