

Warwickshire Joint Audit and Standards Committee Report Summary

Meeting Date: 28th July 2020

Subject: 2019/20 Draft Annual Governance Statement – PCC

Contact details: Sara Ansell (WOPCC)

Purpose of the Report:

The attached PCC Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is attached as a draft document for consideration by the Committee. The original draft was included on the papers for the cancelled March Committee meeting, and the document has been updated following feedback from Committee members and also in the light of the latest guidance from CIPFA to incorporate the coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent lockdown in late March 2020. Members are again asked to comment and feedback on the document which will be finalised in the next few days and be included within the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts for audit.

For reference, the AGS is a statutory document which explains the processes and procedures in place to enable the PCC to carry out its functions effectively. The statement is produced following a review of the PCC's governance arrangements and includes an action plan to address any significant governance issues that have been identified.

CIPFA have outlined that the AGS is intended to be a public report on the extent to which the PCC complies with their own code of governance which is consistent with the good governance principles in the CIPFA framework. This includes:

- how the effectiveness of governance arrangements has been monitored and evaluated in the year
- any planned changes in the coming period.

The AGS should:

- reflect an individual PCC's particular features and challenges.
- provide a meaningful but brief communication regarding the review of governance that has taken place including the role of the governance structures involved (such as the PCC, the force, the Joint Audit and Standards Committee and any other Committees or Panels)
- be high level, strategic and written in an open and readable style

- focus on outcomes and value for money and relate to the authority's vision for the area.

The AGS should specifically include:

- an acknowledgement of responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of governance (including the system of internal control) and refer to the authority's code of governance
- a reference to and assessment of the effectiveness of key elements of the governance framework in supporting planned outcomes and the role of those responsible for its development and maintenance
- an opinion on the level of assurance that the governance arrangements can provide
- an agreed action plan dealing with significant governance issues and also indicating how previous actions have been resolved
- a conclusion
- the signature of the PCC and Chief Executive

It is hoped that this summary of requirements, provides some guidance to Committee members to enable them to feedback informatively on the draft document. Given the coronavirus outbreak and the necessary changes to governance arrangements, CIPFA have issued some further guidance on how this should be incorporated and reported in the 2019/20 AGS. This revised draft is based on the recommendations in that additional guidance, with specific references to the governance arrangements that were introduced in mid March 2020.

Recommendation:

The Audit Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the contents of the draft AGS prior to their inclusion in the 2019/20 PCC Statement of Accounts.