

Warwickshire Joint Audit and Standards Committee Report Summary

Meeting Date: 20th December 2021

Subject: 2020/21 Joint Annual Governance Statements – Chief Constable & PCC

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Purpose of the Report:

The attached Annual Governance Statement is presented as a joint document for the Chief Constable and the PCC, which has been submitted and audited as part of the 2020-21 Accounts, and is provided here for information and comment by the Joint Audit and Standards Committee, before final sign off. The draft statement was previously considered by the Committee in July 2021, where feedback was requested prior to the draft submission for audit.

Recommendation:

The Audit Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the 2020-21 Joint Annual Governance Statements for the Chief Constable and the PCC prior to formal sign off.

Background:

The AGS is a statutory document which explains the processes and procedures in place to enable the PCC and Chief Constable to carry out their functions effectively. The statement is produced following a review of the governance arrangements in place in both organisations 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 the PCC's and forces' 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 Constable and their key stakeholders.

It is hoped that this summary of requirements, provides some guidance to Committee members to enable them to feedback informatively on the draft document, and fulfil their responsibilities as outlined in the terms of reference.

The Joint Annual Governance Statements for 2020/21 has now been audited by Grant Thornton, and members of the Committee are asked to consider and comment on the Statements prior to formal sign off by the Chief Constable, PCC and their respective staff, as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.