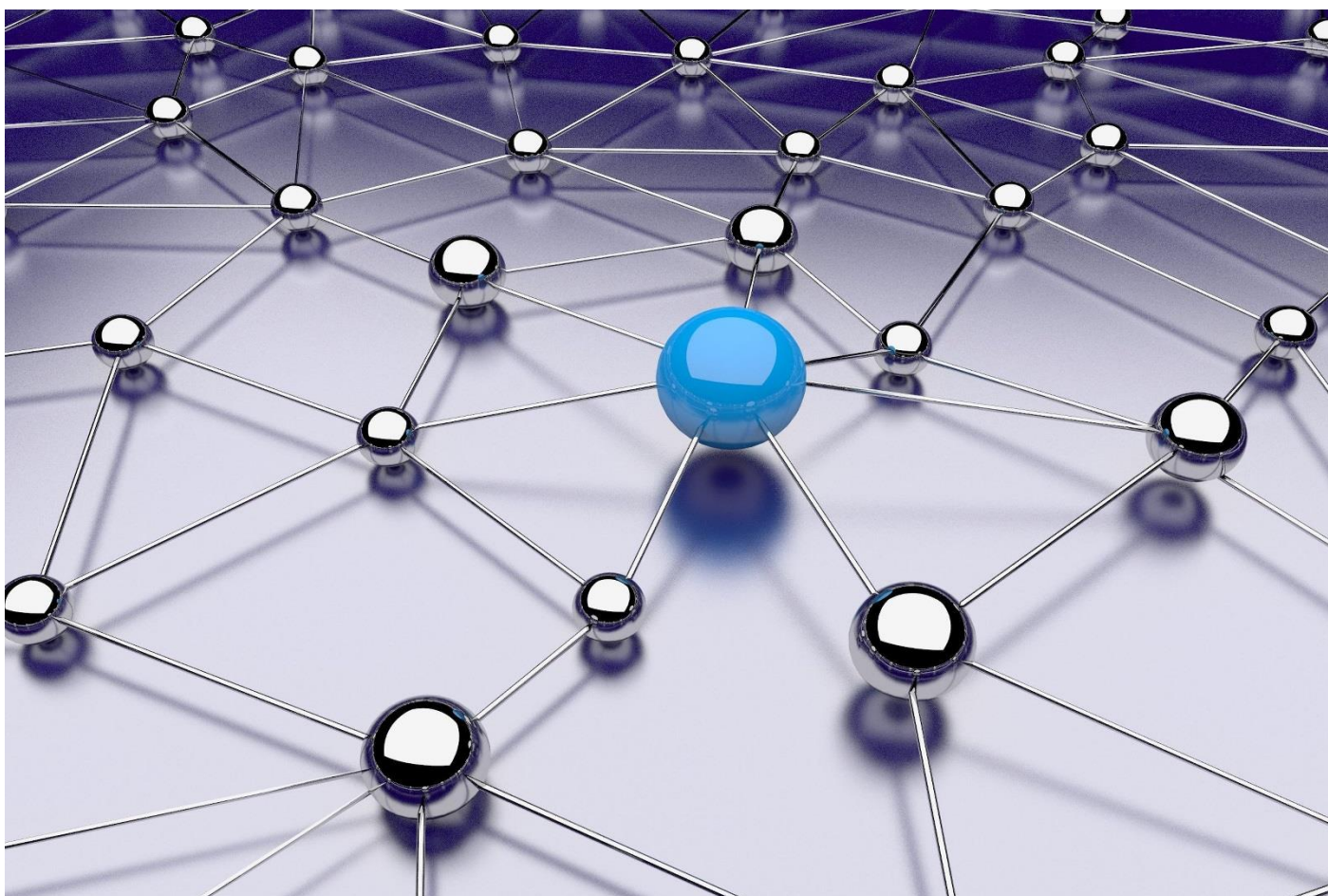


Chief Constable of Cleveland

Annual Audit Letter 2015/16

October 2016



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19 October 2016

Mr Iain Spittal
Chief Constable for Cleveland
Police Headquarters
Ladgate Lane
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Dear Mr Spittal

Annual Audit Letter 2015/16

I am pleased to present our Annual Audit Letter for the 2015/16 audit year. The purpose of this document is to summarise the outcome of the external audit of the Chief Constable of Cleveland Police's 2015/16 financial statements and our review of your arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money).

We carried out our audit in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice prepared by the Comptroller and Auditor General as required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

I would like to express my thanks for the assistance of all the finance team as well as management and the Joint Audit Committee.

If you would like to discuss any matters in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0191 383 6314.

Yours sincerely

Cameron Waddell
Partner
Mazars LLP

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01

Key messages

This Annual Audit Letter summarises the findings from our 2015/16 audit of the Chief Constable of Cleveland Police.



01 Key messages

In 2015/16, our audit of the Chief Constable of Cleveland Police was made up of two elements:

- auditing your financial statements, including a review of the Governance Statement; and
- assessing your arrangements for achieving value for money (VfM) in your use of resources.

We reported the detailed findings from our audit work to the Chief Constable (as those charged with governance) in our Audit Completion Report and follow-up letter, and to the Joint Audit Committee.

The key conclusions for each element are summarised below.

Audit of the financial statements

We issued an audit report including an unqualified opinion on the Chief Constable's financial statements on 23 September 2016. The audit progressed smoothly and we did not encounter any significant issues whilst undertaking our work. Any errors identified were not significant in nature and were corrected by management. Further details are set out in section 02.

We would like to highlight the support we received from staff in undertaking our work.

Value for money

We carried out our work in line with updated National Audit Office guidance and concluded that the Chief Constable had proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We therefore issued an unqualified value for money conclusion on 23 September 2016.

Our other responsibilities

As the Chief Constable's appointed external auditor, we have other powers and responsibilities as set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. These include responding to questions on the accounts raised by local electors as well as a number of reporting powers such as reporting in the public interest. We did not receive any questions about the accounts or objections in relation to your 2015/16 accounts from local electors, nor did we exercise our wider reporting powers.

Certificate

We issued our certificate, closing this year's audit, on 23 September 2016.

02

Financial statements

The Chief Constable's draft financial statements required only a small number of amendments.



02 Financial statements

Audit of the financial statements

We audited the Chief Constable's financial statements in line with auditing standards and we reported the detailed findings of the audit to the Chief Constable and the 22 September 2016 Joint Audit Committee in our Audit Completion Report and follow-up letter. We issued an audit report including an unqualified opinion on the Chief Constable's financial statements on 23 September 2016.

The audit progressed smoothly; the draft financial statements presented to us for audit were of good quality, as were the working papers. The matters identified were not significant in nature, relating to disclosures or minor typographical errors, and were all amended by management.

Our work on the Chief Constable's accounts is designed to provide reasonable assurance that they are free from material misstatement. The assessment of materiality is a key part of our work and we specify an overall materiality threshold, based upon 1 per cent of the Chief Constable's gross revenue expenditure, together with lower materiality values for accounting entries we consider to be more sensitive, such as the senior manager remunerations. We consider materiality when planning and performing our work and in assessing audit results.

At the planning stage, we made a judgement about the size of misstatements which we would consider to be material and which gave a basis for determining the nature, timing and extent of risk assessment procedures, identifying and assessing the risk of material misstatement and determining the nature, timing and extent of further audit procedures. We updated our materiality calculation when we received the draft accounts and set the overall level at £1.368 million. Appendix A provides more information on our approach.

Having considered the risks of material misstatement, we identified two areas of significant risk, the first of which is present in most audits. Our findings are summarised below.

Management override of controls

Description of the risk

In all entities, management at various levels within an organisation are in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur, we consider there to be a risk of material misstatement due to fraud and thus a significant risk on all audits.

How we addressed this risk

We addressed this risk through performing audit work over:

- accounting estimates affecting amounts included in the financial statements;
- consideration of identified significant transactions outside the normal course of business; and
- journals recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in preparation of the financial statements.

Audit conclusion

Our work on accounting estimates, significant transactions outside the normal course of business and journals provided the assurance we sought and did not highlight any material issues to bring to your attention.

Risk: pensions entries

Description of the risk

The financial statements contain material entries in a number of primary statements as well as material disclosure notes in relation to the Chief Constable's participation in the Local Government and Police Pension Schemes. These entries arise from complex estimates used by the Chief Constable's Actuary as well as information provided to the Actuary by the Chief Constable.

How we addressed this risk

We addressed this risk by considering the Chief Constable's arrangements (including any relevant controls) for making estimates in relation to pension entries within the financial statements. We also considered the reasonableness of the Actuary's assumptions used in providing the Chief Constable with relevant entries in the financial statements through the use of our expert commissioned by the Audit Commission.

Audit conclusion

Our audit provided the assurance we sought, and did not highlight any material issues in this area to report.

Annual Governance Statement

The aim of the Annual Governance Statement is to give an overview of the governance arrangements in place during the year as well as any potential significant governance issues arising.

We reviewed the Annual Governance Statement to see whether it complied with relevant guidance and whether it was misleading or inconsistent with what we know about the Chief Constable. We found no areas of concern to report in this context.

Weaknesses in internal control

We did not identify any significant deficiencies in the accounting and internal control systems during the course of the audit.

Certificate

We issued our certificate, closing this year's audit, on 23 September 2016.

03

Value for money

The Chief Constable has proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.



03 Economy, efficiency and effectiveness

We are required to conclude whether the Chief Constable has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources by considering one overall criterion which is made up of three sub-criteria.

The overall criterion set out by the National Audit Office is:

'In all significant respects, the audited body had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.'

The three sub-criteria are set out below.

Sub-criteria
Informed decision making
Sustainable resource deployment
Working with partners and other third parties

We identified one significant risk relevant to the value for money (VFM) conclusion. We detail below how we addressed the risk and our conclusion.

VFM risk - sustainable resource deployment
<p>Description of the risk</p> <p>The PCC and Chief Constable have agreed a balanced financial plan for the next four years. This is built on a service model that can effectively respond to threat, harm and risk and bring about safer and stronger communities.</p> <p>Budgets have been set based on assumptions in respect of officers and staff leaving and additional recruits being brought in. There is a risk that should the number of leavers outstrip planning assumptions, this could result in capacity gaps if the recruitment plan cannot be flexed sufficiently to respond.</p>
<p>How we addressed this risk</p> <p>We carried out the following work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• review of the demand modelling carried out, including challenging the robustness of assumptions;• review of the arrangements for targeting available resources at areas of highest threat, harm and risk; and• review of the adequacy of the arrangements in place for the recruitment and training of new officers. <p>A review of the workforce has been undertaken in 2015/16 to ensure resources are deployed in areas of greatest demand. The workforce review has been undertaken to ensure resources are placed most effectively in the organisation.</p>

VFM risk - sustainable resource deployment

A review of local policing has identified better ways of working and resources have been redeployed to areas of highest demand. Reviews have also been undertaken in relation to shift patterns and demand modelling for services is now used which is linked to the strategic priorities in the Police and Crime Plan.

Demand modelling is invariably a resource-intensive exercise however it is important it is regularly updated so as to ensure resources are targeted in those areas most needed, given the on-going financial pressures.

Conclusion

Our work provided us with assurance to mitigate the identified risk. The recruitment and training of new officers remains a risk for the Chief Constable to monitor on an on-going basis, being central, along with on-going refinement of the demand modelling, to the resilience of the policing service.

As part of our work, we also:

- reviewed the Chief Constable's annual governance statement;
- reviewed the work of other relevant regulatory bodies or inspectorates to the extent the results of the work have an impact on our responsibilities; and
- carried out risk-based work we determined appropriate.

Our review of these areas did not identify any further risks, or matters that impact on our value for money conclusion.

A brief summary of our findings against each of the sub-criteria and our overall assessment is set out below.

Sub-criteria	Aspect	Commentary
Informed decision-making	Acting in the public interest and applying the principles and values of sound governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance framework in place. • Working towards the Police and Crime Plan in place for the period 2015 to 2017. • Police and Crime Panel in place. • Joint Audit Committee in place.
	Understanding and using appropriate and reliable financial and performance information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance monitored and reviewed, and regular reporting of financial and performance information. • Medium term planning (MTFP) undertaken and plans in place, and updated routinely.
	Reliable and timely financial reporting that supports the delivery of strategic priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance is reported against the PCC's Police and Crime Plan which is in place for the period 2015 to 2017. • MTFP updated routinely, as above.
	Managing risks effectively and maintaining a sound system of internal control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk register and risk management arrangements in place. Risks reported to Audit Committee and regular reporting by Internal Audit. • Annual governance statement prepared, reviewed and approved.

Sub-criteria	Aspect	Commentary
Sustainable resource deployment	Planning finances effectively to support the sustainable delivery of strategic priorities and maintain statutory functions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial and performance reports demonstrate a history of achieving financial targets. MFTP updated for latest funding settlement, and programme in place to make efficiencies.
	Managing and utilising assets effectively to support the delivery of strategic priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asset replacement needs/programme informs the Capital Strategy.
	Planning, organising and developing the workforce effectively to deliver strategic priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR policies and procedures in place and recruitment planning in place.
Working with partners and other third parties	Working with third parties effectively to deliver strategic priorities. Commissioning services effectively to support the delivery of strategic priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of partnership working in place to reduce costs and improve service delivery such as Project Evolve with Durham and North Yorkshire.
	Procuring supplies and services effectively to support the delivery of strategic priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written procurement procedures and policies in place.

Reality check

Having gathered evidence of the Chief Constable's arrangements for each criterion we conducted a 'reality check', building upon our existing knowledge of the Chief Constable and considering the robustness of our assessment by referring to:

- reports by statutory inspectorates or other regulators;
- achievement of performance and other targets; and
- performance against budgets and other financial targets.

Having completed our assessment we concluded our initial risk assessment remained appropriate.

Conclusion

We concluded that the Chief Constable has proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and issued an unqualified value for money conclusion on 23 September 2016.

04

Future challenges

The Chief Constable faces continued challenges over the next few years.



04 Future challenges

At a time of increasing pressure on public sector funding, the next few years will be a period of business change and innovation for the Commissioner as, together with the Chief Constable, they strive to continue to deliver improvements in services with increased value for money.

The Medium Term Financial Plan includes planned savings in order to deliver a sustainable financial plan; continued robust budget management remains critical. The Commissioner and Chief Constable continue to explore and implement increased partnership working as a method to achieve better service provision and as an efficiency measure. In addition, there is also still some uncertainty as to how devolution will affect the region and of course the longer-term implications of Brexit.

The Chief Constable's annual governance statement highlighted the following as areas of focus in future years:

- Force performance;
- the continued rollout of the programme of organisational development 'Everyone Matters';
- improving data integrity;
- property management; and
- funding settlement risks.

Our 2016/17 audit will focus on the risks that these and other challenges present to the Commissioner's financial statements, and ability to maintain proper arrangements for securing value for money.

In terms of the technical challenges that officers face around changes in the production and format of the statement of accounts, we will continue to work with them to share our knowledge of new accounting developments and we will be on hand to discuss any issues as and when they arise.

05

Fees and closing remarks

The 2015/16 audit was delivered within the scale fee set by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.



05 Fees and closing remarks

We can confirm the final audit fee for 2015/16 was £20,000 plus VAT. We did not undertake any non-audit work in 2015/16.

We have discussed and agreed this letter with officers and will issue it to the Chief Constable (as those charged with governance), and present it to the Joint Audit Committee on 16 December 2016.

During the audit year we have continued to support the Chief Constable in other ways, including attendance at Joint Audit Committees where we inform the Committee about progress on the audit, report our key findings and update it about developments in the sector and the wider environment, and hosting events for staff, such as our Accounts workshops.

Further detailed findings, conclusions and recommendations in the areas covered by the audit are included in the reports issued to the Chief Constable during the year, which are summarised below.

Report	Date issued
2015/16 Audit Fee Letter	April 2015
Audit Strategy Memorandum	March 2016
Progress reports to Audit Committee	To each Audit Committee meeting
Audit Completion report, and follow-up letter	September 2016
Auditor's Report (opinion, VfM conclusion and certificate)	September 2016
Annual Audit Letter	October 2016

The Chief Constable has continued to take a positive and constructive approach to our audit and I wish to thank him and the Joint Audit Committee for their continued support and co-operation throughout the year. We would also like to record our appreciation for the assistance and co-operation provided to us during our audit by finance staff.

We are committed to supporting the Chief Constable to move forward with clarity of purpose and strong governance and accountability arrangements. We will meet with the officers to identify learning from the 2015/16 audit and will continue to share our insights from other client and relevant knowledge from the wider public and private sector.

Cameron Waddell

Partner

October 2016

Appendix A – Materiality

Materiality is an expression of the relative significance or importance of a particular matter in the context of financial statements as a whole. Misstatements in financial statements are considered to be material if they, individually or in aggregate, could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

Judgements on materiality are made in light of surrounding circumstances and are affected by the size and nature of a misstatement, or a combination of both. Judgements about materiality are based on consideration of the common financial information needs of users as a group and not on specific individual users.

The assessment of what is material is a matter of professional judgement and is affected by our perception of the financial information needs of the users of the financial statements. In making our assessment we assumed that users:

- have a reasonable knowledge of business, economic activities and accounts
- have a willingness to study the information in the financial statements with reasonable diligence;
- understand that financial statements are prepared, presented and audited to levels of materiality;
- recognise the uncertainties inherent in the measurement of amounts based on the use of estimates, judgement and the consideration of future events; and
- will make reasonable economic decisions on the basis of the information in the financial statements.

We considered materiality whilst planning and performing our audit.

Whilst planning, we made judgements about the size of misstatements which we considered to be material and which provided a basis for determining the nature, timing and extent of risk assessment procedures, identifying and assessing the risk of material misstatement and determining the nature, timing and extent of further audit procedures.

In 2015/16 we set materiality at the planning stage at £1.387 million (1% of gross revenue expenditure) with a clearly trivial threshold of £42,000 below which identified errors will not usually be reported. We set lower materiality levels for the accounting entries we consider to be more sensitive, for example, senior officer's remuneration, as we considered these items to be of specific interest to users of the accounts sufficient to warrant audit procedures which would not otherwise be applied based on the materiality level for the audit as a whole. The materiality determined at the planning stage did not necessarily establish an amount below which uncorrected misstatements, either individually or in aggregate, would be considered as immaterial.

We revised materiality for the financial statements as our audit progressed. Our closing assessment of materiality in 2015/16, based upon the final version of the financial statements, was £1.368 million with a clearly trivial threshold of £41,000 below which identified errors were not reported.

We discussed with management any significant misstatements or anomalies that we identified during the course of the audit and we reported in our Audit Completion Report all unadjusted misstatements we identified other than those which were clearly trivial.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact:

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This Annual Audit Letter is prepared in the context of the ‘Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies 2015-16’ issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd. It is addressed to the Chief Constable for Cleveland Police as ‘those charged with governance’. We, as appointed auditor, take no responsibility to any third party.

Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Mazars, an international advisory and accountancy organisation, and is a limited liability partnership registered in England with registered number OC308299. A list of partners’ names is available for inspection at the firm’s registered office, Tower Bridge House, St Katharine’s Way, London E1W 1DD.

We are registered to carry on audit work in the UK by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Details about our audit registration can be viewed at www.auditregister.org.uk under reference number C001139861.