

## **AUDIT COMMITTEE - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Composition of the Committee**

The Audit Committee comprises 5 members who are independent of the Office of the PCC and Cleveland Police. The executive of the Office of the PCC and the Command Team of the Police Force are required to be represented at each meeting of the Committee.

### **Quorum of the Committee**

No business shall be transacted at the meeting of the Audit Committee unless at least 3 Members of the Committee are present.

### **Press and Public**

The Public shall be admitted to all meetings of the Audit Committee unless excluded by resolution in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 (Schedule 12a), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

A member of the public will not be permitted to speak or ask questions at the meeting except with the consent of the meeting chair.

### **Exclusion of Public Access**

The public must be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that confidential information would be disclosed.

Confidential information means information given to the PCC or CC by a Government Department on terms which forbid its public disclosure or information which cannot be publicly disclosed by Court Order.

Items will be considered '**Below the Line**' or 'not for publication' when they contain exempt information as defined by schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **Purpose**

The Audit Committee is responsible for enhancing public trust and confidence in the governance of the Office of the PCC and Cleveland Police. It also assists the PCC in discharging statutory responsibilities in holding the Police Force to account. This is achieved by;

- Advising the OPCC and Chief Constable of Cleveland Police according to good governance principles
- Providing independent assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the OPCC and Cleveland Police internal control environment and risk management framework.
- Overseeing the effectiveness of the framework in place for ensuring compliance with statutory requirements (and in particular those in respect of health and safety and equalities and diversity.)
- Independently scrutinising financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affect the OPCC and Cleveland Police exposure to risks and weakens the internal control environment
- Overseeing governance and monitoring of governance within the organisation.
- Overseeing the financial reporting process

To aid the Committee in delivering its purpose and objectives the PCC will make available funds for the Committee to take independent legal and financial advice where the Committee deems it is reasonably necessary to do so. Where the Committee deems this

advice is necessary it should be discussed and coordinated with the PCCs Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer's of the PCC and CC.

### **Objectives**

The Audit Committee meets at least four times a year (and in effectively discharging its function is responsible for:

#### **Internal Control Environment**

- Satisfying itself as to the effectiveness of the internal control framework in operation within the Office of the PCC and Cleveland Police and advising the PCC and Chief Constable of Cleveland Police as appropriate.
- Considering the Annual Governance Statement for publication with the annual accounts, together with associated action plans for addressing areas of improvement and advising the PCC as appropriate.

#### **Corporate Risk Management**

- Approving the Office of the PCC and Cleveland Police corporate risk management strategy and framework; ensuring that an appropriate framework is in place for assessing and managing key risks to the Office of the PCC and Cleveland Police.
- Considering the financial risks to which the Office of the PCC and Cleveland Police are exposed and approving measures to reduce or eliminate them or to insure against them.
- Providing assurance to the PCC and Chief Constable of Cleveland Police as appropriate on the effectiveness of the risk management framework in operation.
- Provide oversight and scrutiny of the risk registers of both the PCC and Chief Constable

#### **Regulatory Framework**

- Maintain an overview of the governance framework in respect of contract procedure rules, financial regulations and codes of conduct and behaviour and to review and approve on an annual basis any changes to the Code of Corporate Governance.
- Maintain an overview of the work of the Force's Professional Standards Department in relation to an overview of the number and types of complaints.
- To review any issue referred to it by the Statutory Officers of the PCC and Chief Constable and make recommendations as appropriate.
- To monitor the policies of both the PCC and Chief Constable on 'Raising Concerns at Work', anti-fraud and corruption strategy and complaints process.

#### **Internal Audit**

- Advising the PCC and Chief Constable of Cleveland Police on the appropriate arrangements for internal audit, the appointment of the Internal Auditors and approving the Internal Audit Strategy.
- Approving the internal audit annual programme.
- Overseeing and giving assurance to the PCC and Chief Constable of Cleveland Police on the provision of an adequate and effective internal audit service; receiving

progress reports on the internal audit work plan and ensuring appropriate action is taken in response to audit findings, particularly in areas of high risk.

- Considering the Head of Internal Audit Annual Report and annual opinion on the internal control environment for the Office of the PCC and Cleveland Police; ensuring appropriate action is taken to address any areas for improvement.
- Reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of Office of the PCC and Cleveland Police on fraud, irregularity and corruption.

### **External Audit**

- Advising the PCC and Chief Constable of Cleveland Police on the appointment of external auditors.
- Approving on behalf of the PCC and Chief Constable of Cleveland Police the external audit programme and associated fees
- Reviewing the external auditor's Annual Completion Report and any other reports; reporting on these to the PCC and Chief Constable of Cleveland Police as appropriate and including progress on the implementation of agreed recommendations.
- Reviewing District/External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter and making recommendations as appropriate to the PCC and Chief Constable of Cleveland Police.

### **Financial Reporting**

- Reviewing the Annual Statement of Accounts and make recommendations, or bring to the attention of the PCC or CC, any concerns or issues.
- To consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and any changes to them.

### **Inspection and Review**

- Considering HMIC, external review agencies and any internal inspection reports that provide assurance on the internal control environment and/or may highlight governance issues for the Office of the PCC and/or Cleveland Police.
- Overseeing and giving assurance to the PCC and Chief Constable of Cleveland Police that appropriate action is taken in response to HMICFRS findings, including that all actions are implemented, delivered and embedded, particularly in areas of high risk.

### **Complaints**

- Maintain an overview of Force complaints including dip sampling.
- Maintain an overview of complaints against the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and its staff and act as the appeals body when required.

### **Freedom of Information**

- Act as the review body for Freedom of Information appeals

### **Civil Claims**

- Maintain an overview of Civil Claims

### **Information Governance**

- Review Corporate Strategy, policies and procedures in relation to Information Governance for both the PCC and CC.
- Review reports from the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), of both the PCC and CC, relating to the implementation of the corporate strategy, compliance with Data Protection Act and other information Governance related legislation.
- Consider any implications for governance and the annual governance statements of both the PCC and CC from issues in this area.