



Annual Governance Statement

Position as at 31st March 2025 including plans for the financial year 2025/26.

1. Scope of Responsibility

- 1.1 The PCC is responsible for ensuring its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The PCC also has a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the PCC is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the exercise of its functions, which includes ensuring a sound system of internal control is maintained through the year and that arrangements are in place for the management of risk. In exercising this responsibility, the PCC places reliance on the Chief Constable of Cleveland Police to support the governance and risk management processes.
- 1.3 The PCC has an overarching code of corporate governance in place to ensure the governance arrangements are easily accessible with all of the key documents captured in one place. The code is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government and while under constant review to ensure it meets the needs of the organisation is it the subject of formal review and publication annually.
- 1.4 Copies of the Code of Corporate Governance are available on our website at <https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/publications/joint-corporate-governance-framework/>.
- 1.5 This statement explains how the PCC has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations in relation to the publication of a statement on internal control.
- 1.6 In drafting the PCC Annual Governance Statement reliance has been placed on the governance processes within Cleveland Police, as reflected in the Force's Annual Governance Statement which is published alongside the accounts of the PCC.
- 1.7 The two AGS's complement each other by:
 - outlining the key methods of assurance which operate in each body to ensure that, overall effective control is exercised
 - showing which key documents/reports of Cleveland Police are scrutinised by the PCC as part of wider accountability
 - demonstrating how the Police and Crime Plan is delivered by Cleveland Police and is underpinned by public consultation on the part of the PCC as part of wider accountability.
- 1.8 Both the PCC and Cleveland Police must produce separate accounts which are then consolidated into group accounts. This ensures that both individual and collective financial stewardship of public money is effective and is underpinned by annual external audit.

2. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

- 2.1 The governance framework comprises both the culture and value, and systems and processes, by which the PCC is directed and controlled and their activity through which it accounts to and engages with the community. It enables the PCC to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether these objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services, including achieving value for money.
- 2.2 2024/25 was a year of transition with the election of a new PCC, Matt Storey, in May 2024. As a result, there were 2 Police and Crime Plans in place during 2024/25.
- 2.3 The former PCC's [Police and Crime Plan](#), which set the blueprint for policing and community safety in Cleveland was in place in the early part of 2024/25. The Plan aims were to:
- Put the pride back into Cleveland Police
 - Make Cleveland a safe place for those who live and work here.
- 2.4 The former PCC worked closely with criminal justice agencies, local partners and victim organisations in developing his three-year plan. He also consulted widely with Cleveland's communities, to ensure the Plan best met the needs of our communities.
- 2.5 The Plan had ten key objectives to help reduce crime and support victims in Cleveland.
- 2.6 Whilst all ten objectives are of equal importance, following consultation with Cleveland's communities, they have been listed in order of importance to them.
- 2.7 They were:
- Bringing offenders to justice.
 - Getting tough on drugs and gangs.
 - Tackling anti-social behaviour head-on.
 - Helping to provide an effective police and criminal justice system.
 - Preventing, reducing and tackling serious violence.
 - Putting more police on the streets.
 - Tackling violence against women and girls.
 - Building confidence in Cleveland's communities.
 - Providing effective, quality support for victims and witnesses.
 - Using technology to combat crime.
- 2.8 The new PCC's [Police and Crime Plan](#) was launched in December 2024 after wide consultation, which started in July 2024, with criminal justice agencies, local partners and victims of crime.
- 2.9 He also consulted widely with Cleveland's communities. That was to ensure the Plan best meets the needs of everyone who lives, works or visits the area.
- 2.10 It will shape Matt's vision of working together to build safe, strong and confident communities.
- 2.11 Matt's Plan has six strategic priorities to:
- Reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and harm
 - Deliver more visible and effective policing
 - Improve safety for women and girls
 - Ensure the right support for victims and vulnerable people
 - Build trust and confidence in policing and the justice system
 - Prevent offending and reoffending
- 2.12 The six priorities are listed in order of importance from the public.

- 2.13 Both Plans acted as a strategic direction for Cleveland Police, who would be measured on their performance against the plan on a regular basis.
- 2.14 These objectives help shape the governance framework of the OPCC.
- 2.15 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable and foreseeable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the PCC's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them effectively, efficiently and economically.
- 2.16 The overall governance framework has been in place at the PCC for Cleveland for the year ended 31 March 2025, and up to the date of the approval of the financial statements.

3. The Governance Framework

- 3.1 In April 2016 CIPFA published an updated version of their "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework" which was followed by specific guidance notes for Policing Bodies. The 2016 Framework sets out seven principles of good governance which are taken from the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC, 2014) ('the International Framework') and interprets them for local government.
- 3.2 The seven principles (A to G) are considered below and have been utilised in our review of governance and in developing this AGS.
- Behaving with Integrity, Demonstrating Strong Commitment to Ethical Values, and respecting the rule of law.
 - Ensuring Openness and Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement
 - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
 - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
 - Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
 - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
 - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

4 PRINCIPLE A: BEHAVING WITH INTEGRITY, DEMONSTRATING STRONG COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL VALUES, AND RESPECTING THE RULE OF LAW

The PCC is accountable not only for how much they spend, but also for how they use the resources under their stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes they have achieved. In addition, they have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that, as a whole, they can demonstrate the appropriateness of all their actions and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

THE CORPORATE PROCESSES WHICH UNDERPIN THIS COMMITMENT

- The Policing Protocol 2023 requires all parties to abide by the 7 Nolan Principles, these will be central to the behaviour of everyone in the organisation. It also highlights the expectation that the relationship between all parties will be based on the principles of goodwill, professionalism, openness and trust.
- The Financial Management Code of Practice requires the PCC to ensure that the good governance principles are embedded within the way that the organisations operate.
- The PCC has set out their values in the respective corporate and strategic plans.
- The 2024 Code of Ethics for Policing

BEHAVIOURS AND OUTCOMES THAT DEMONSTRATE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PRACTICE

- Behaving with integrity
- Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values
- Respecting the rule of law

Further to the Resolution Team being the first OPCC-led complaints team in the country to gain the prestigious Customer Service Excellence Award. The review was pleased to see the outcome of the Internal Audit of Complaints that was referred to during the 2023/24 report.

The PCC was provided with reasonable assurance in this area. This assurance continues to be supplemented by excellent performance outcomes as reported by the IOPC.

An area for continued focus in 2025/26 is the development of the reporting by the OPCC complaints team, along with lessons learned information to both inform further scrutiny of the Force by the PCC and also to enhance feedback into the Force to continue to improve interactions with the public.

PRINCIPLE B: ENSURING OPENNESS AND COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Public Services, including the Police, are run for the public good. Organisations therefore should ensure openness in their activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.

THE CORPORATE PROCESSES WHICH UNDERPIN THIS COMMITMENT

- The PCC is accountable to local people and draws on this mandate to set and shape the strategic objectives for the force area in consultation with the Chief Constable, taking into account the Strategic Policing Requirement.
- The Police and Crime Plan clearly sets out what the strategic direction and objectives are to be and how they will be delivered.
- To complement this, the PCC's communication and engagement strategies set out how local people will be involved with the PCC to ensure they are part of decision making, accountability and future direction. This will be a mixture of being part of the yearly planning arrangements and becoming involved in issues of interest to local people as they emerge.
- The PCC has developed arrangements for effective engagement with key stakeholders, ensuring that where appropriate they remain closely involved in decision making, accountability and future direction
- The strength of the PCC's working relationship with the Police and Crime Panel, constituent local authorities and other relevant partners

BEHAVIOURS AND OUTCOMES THAT DEMONSTRATE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PRACTICE

- Openness
- Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders
- Engaging stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users

This review recognises this area is a key priority for the new PCC, as it was for the former PCC.

The review noted that alongside the former PCC's Police and Crime Plan sat a [Consultation and Engagement](#) Strategy covering the same period. The review recognises that the current Police and Crime Plan has only recently been launched and recommends that as an area for continued focus in 2025/26 is the need to review and update the consultation and engagement strategy in line with the current Police and Crime Plan.

The review was pleased to see that in addition to the consultation around the new Police and Crime Plan, and the precept proposal for 2025/26, there were also consultations in relation to the rehabilitation of offenders and safety on public transport.

The review also noted the significant engagement with the communities that were impacted by the riots that took place during July and August 2024. Following the disorder, Matt engaged with affected communities in both Hartlepool and Middlesbrough, including knocking on doors to inform residents about the Riot Compensation scheme.

He also met with organisations supporting asylum seekers and refugees, faith groups and other community groups impacted by the disorder.

In addition to this drop-in were organised for the communities by the OPCC to help them access the process and funds for compensation as a result of the damage done during the riots.

Finally, the review also welcomed evidence showing that the PCC had also engage with people involved in the summer's violent disorder to understand how future bouts of unrest can be avoided.

This year's review was pleased to see that, as recommended last year, the Strategic Policing Requirement is fully considered and referenced in development of the new Police and Crime Plan, that this has also been an area for scrutiny during 2024/25 and the review looks forward to seeing the inclusion of an assurance statement within the PCC's Annual Report around the Strategic Policing Requirement.

PRINCIPLE C: DEFINING OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

The long-term nature and impact of many of the PCC's responsibilities mean that they should seek to define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should contribute to intended benefits and outcomes and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users, and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.

THE CORPORATE PROCESSES WHICH UNDERPIN THIS COMMITMENT

- The Act requires the PCC to issue a Police and Crime plan, which defines the police and crime objectives (outcomes) and the strategic direction for Policing. Each corporation sole must have regard to the plan, and the PCC must have regard to the priorities of the responsible authorities during its development.
- Each organisation will have a corporate/strategic plan which sets out how it will operate to support achievement of these outcomes
- Collaboration agreements will set out those areas of business to be undertaken jointly with other forces, local policing bodies and other emergency services, in order to reduce cost, increase capability, and/or increase resilience to protect local people.
- A medium-term financial strategy will be jointly developed and thereafter reviewed regularly to support delivery of these plans. Joint protocols will ensure proper arrangements for financial management
- A commissioning and award of grants framework will be developed by PCCs, incorporating commissioning intentions and priorities.
- A complaints protocol will be jointly agreed to provide clarity over the arrangements to respond to the breadth of concerns raised by local people, whether they be organisational or individual failures. This will complement other statutory arrangements.

BEHAVIOURS AND OUTCOMES THAT DEMONSTRATE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PRACTICE

- Defining outcomes
- Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

The review recognises the continued challenge of managing demand with financial resources and notes that during both 2023/24 and 2024/25 there have been challenges around the financial aspects of legal and insurance costs and claims, that have resulted in overspends for both financial years.

The review was pleased to see that the PCC has approved a 4-year medium-term financial plan in February 2025 that was balanced across all 4 years but notes the recommendation to put additional funding and resources into the insurance budgets, in line with an actuarial review, to ensure this area is appropriately funded to meeting costs that have increased significantly over the last 5 years.

Following on from an Internal Audit review during 2022/23 of Commissioning processes within the OPCC, that concluded with minimal assurance, the review was please to see the hard work that had been reference in last year's Annual Governance Statement was reflect in an Internal Audit of the same area during 2024/25 that provided reasonable assurance for this area.

The review recommends that to align with the newly agreed Police and Crime Plan that the Commissioning Strategy is also updated.

PRINCIPLE D: DETERMINING THE INTERVENTIONS NECESSARY TO OPTIMISE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INTENDED OUTCOMES

Local Government, including the Police, achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory and practical interventions. Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to ensure intended outcomes are achieved. They need robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource inputs while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed continually to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.

THE CORPORATE PROCESSES WHICH UNDERPIN THIS COMMITMENT

- The PCC and the Chief Constable will maintain a medium-term financial strategy which will form the basis of the annual budgets, and provide a framework for evaluating future proposals
- There will be a comprehensive process of analysis and evaluation of plans, which will normally include option appraisal, techniques for assessing the impact of alternative approaches on the service's outcomes, and benefits realisation
- Processes will be in place to monitor efficiency and value for money, including benchmarking of performance and costs
- The PCC and the Force should maintain effective workforce development and asset management plans (e.g. Estate, ICT)

BEHAVIOURS AND OUTCOMES THAT DEMONSTRATE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PRACTICE

- Determining interventions
- Planning interventions
- Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

The review reflected on the opinions provided by the External Auditors on the 2023/24 accounts for both the PCC and CC which were 'qualified' as a result of the external auditors being unable to determine whether any adjustments were necessary in our financial statements as a result of not being able to obtain sufficient appropriate evidence over a number of material elements of the Teesside Pension Fund financial statements.

Had the 'qualification' been as a result of any internal processes, procedures or related to something that was within the control of the organisation then this would have been highlighted as a significant governance issue, the review is however content that the reason for the qualification was not something that the organisation could have mitigated and therefore it has not resulted in any recommendation as part of this review.

PRINCIPLE E: DEVELOPING THE ENTITY'S CAPACITY, INCLUDING THE CAPABILITY OF ITS LEADERSHIP AND THE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN IT

The PCC and the Police Force need appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mindset, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve their intended outcomes within the specified periods. A public organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Both the individuals involved and the environment in which the Police operates will change over time, and there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership and individual staff members. Leadership in the Police service is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of background, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.

THE CORPORATE PROCESSES WHICH UNDERPIN THIS COMMITMENT

- The 'People' and personal development strategies of the Office of the PCC and the Force set the climate for continued development of individuals. The respective performance development review processes will ensure that these strategies are turned into reality for members of staff.

BEHAVIOURS AND OUTCOMES THAT DEMONSTRATE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PRACTICE

- Developing the entity's capacity
- Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals

The review reflects positively on the almost seamless induction of a new PCC into the organisation, it is clear that the planning and approach worked very well and that all areas of governance continued to operate without any issues. This is a considerable achievement.

Last year's review noted that the importance of the stability that the Force has had from a continued substantive and complete Chief Officer Team being in place, however, it noted that this might change. While it did not change during 2024/25, changes are taking place early in 2025/26.

The review was pleased to see that the planned retirement of the current Chief Constable was considered well in advance and that a comprehensive recruitment and interview took place to appoint a new Chief Constable without any acting arrangement required.

The PCC will need to support and hold to account the new Chief Constable in ensuring a similar robust team is in place to continue to build on the improvements that have clearly been delivered by the Force and recognised by the HMICFRS in their recent PEEL inspection report.

The review was pleased to see that the OPCC continues to develop itself as an organisation, with bespoke values, PDR processes and team away days all contributing to this. The review is interested to see how this work is embedded during 2025/26.

PRINCIPLE F: MANAGING RISKS AND PERFORMANCE THROUGH ROBUST INTERNAL CONTROL AND STRONG PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Public bodies need to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that they oversee have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management, business continuity and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and crucial to the achievement of outcomes. They consist of an ongoing process designed to identify and address significant risks involved in achieving outcomes. A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery, and accountability.

THE CORPORATE PROCESSES WHICH UNDERPIN THIS COMMITMENT

- The decision-making protocol sets out principles for how decisions will be taken by the PCC and the standards to be adopted
- It requires a combined forward plan of decisions, which brings together the business planning cycles for the Police and Crime plan, the Office of the PCC, and the Force integrated business management process. This will ensure proper governance by bringing together the right information at the right time
- The scheme of governance highlights the parameters for decision making, including consents, financial limits for specific matters, and standing orders for contracts
- The risk management strategy establishes how risk is embedded throughout the various elements of corporate governance of the organisation
- The Communications and Engagement strategies demonstrate how the PCC and Chief Constable will ensure that local people are involved in decision making
- The information publication scheme ensures that information relating to decisions will be made readily available to local people, with those of greater public interest receiving the highest level of transparency, except where operational or legal constraints exist
- The forward plan of decisions combined with open and transparent information schemes enables the Police and Crime Panel to be properly sighted on the decisions of the PCC

BEHAVIOURS AND OUTCOMES THAT DEMONSTRATE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PRACTICE

- Managing risk
- Managing performance
- Robust internal control
- Managing data
- Strong public financial management

The review is satisfied that most of the areas covered by this principle continue to be well covered by the OPCC and well embedded.

The review does however note that the implementation of a new Risk Management package during 2024/25 needs to be better understood, used and managed within the OPCC so that Risk Management becomes a key part of the organisation and can help inform decision making and areas of key development.

PRINCIPLE G: IMPLEMENTING GOOD PRACTICES IN TRANSPARENCY, REPORTING, AND AUDIT TO DELIVER EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.

THE CORPORATE PROCESSES WHICH UNDERPIN THIS COMMITMENT

- Legislation sets out the functions of the PCC and the Chief Constable. The Policing Protocol describes how these functions will be undertaken to achieve the outcomes of the Police and Crime Plan.
- The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act requires the PCC to appoint a Chief Executive and a Chief Financial Officer. It prescribes that the Chief Executive will act as head of paid service and undertake the responsibilities of monitoring officer.
- The Act requires the Chief Constable to appoint a Chief Financial Officer
- The Financial Management Code of Practice sets out the responsibilities of the CFOs for both the PCC and the Chief Constable
- Internal audit, reflecting published guidance on standards
- The Scheme of corporate governance highlights the parameters for key roles in the organisation including consents from the PCC or Chief Constable, financial regulations and standing orders
- Officers, Police support staff and staff of the OPCC will operate within
 - OPCC or Force policies and procedures
 - The corporate governance framework
 - Disciplinary regulations
 - Codes of conduct
 - Code of Ethics
- A joint assurance protocol ensures effective monitoring of the organisations to ensure they are achieving their priorities
- A joint independent Audit Committee operates within the CIPFA guidance and in accordance with the Financial Management Code of Practice

BEHAVIOURS AND OUTCOMES THAT DEMONSTRATE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PRACTICE

- Implementing good practice in transparency
- Implementing good practices in reporting
- Assurance and effective accountability

The review is pleased to see that 3 additional appointments were made to the Audit Committee during 2024/25, and that the Committee has a current Membership of 6, which will ensure that Committee operate at the expected level of Membership even when a member leaves during 2025/26 at the end of their term.

5 Review of effectiveness

5.1 The PCC has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of the governance framework, including: -

- The system of internal audit
- The system of internal control

5.2 The governance framework within the PCC has been reviewed and continues to be reviewed for its effectiveness by both the PCCs Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer.

5.3 The roles and processes applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework are outlined below: -

PCC

5.4 The PCC has overall responsibility for the discharge of all the powers and duties placed on it and has a statutory duty to 'maintain an efficient and effective police force'. The review and maintenance of the governance framework is the responsibility of the joint audit committee which will discuss most governance issues, referring reports to the PCC when it is felt necessary. Given that the ultimate responsibility for Governance rests with the PCC and CC the Audit Committee requires a member of the management team of each organisation to attend each Audit Committee meeting. This provides the Committee with a direct opportunity to engage at the right level in the organisation but also develop strong working relationships. In addition to this and to further strengthen their role the Audit Committee has direct access to both the PCC and CC when required.

Cleveland Police

5.5 The Chief Constable has responsibility for conducting a review of the effectiveness of the governance framework within the Force at least annually. This review is informed by the work of the Chief Constable's Chief Finance Officer, Head of Internal Audit and the Risk and Assurance managers within the Force who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment. In preparing the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 the officers of the PCC have placed reliance on this review and the Force's resulting Annual Governance Statement.

Joint Audit Committee

5.6 Chaired independently, the PCC and Chief Constable operate a Joint Independent Audit Committee. The role of the Committee, in part, is to provide independent assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment and risk management framework, advising the PCC and CC according to good governance principles and overseeing governance and monitoring of governance within the organisation.

5.7 The Joint Audit Committee receives regular reports on governance issues. This includes the review of the Annual Governance Statement and update reports on progress made in addressing significant governance issues included in it.

Head of Internal Audit

5.8 In maintaining and reviewing the governance framework, the PCC's Chief Finance Officer places reliance on the work undertaken by Internal Audit and in particular, the Head of Internal Audits independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control. For the 12 months ended 31 March 2025, the Head of Internal Audit opinion for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland is as follows:

The organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. However, our work has identified further enhancements to the framework of risk management, governance and internal control to ensure that it remains adequate and effective.

External Audit

5.9 External Audit are an essential element in ensuring public accountability and stewardship of public resources and the corporate governance of the PCC's services, with their Auditor's Annual report providing comment on financial sustainability, governance and economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Audit Opinion – 2024/25

5.11 The External Auditors have set out within the Audit Completion Report that 'At the time of issuing this report and subject to the satisfactory conclusion of our remaining audit work, we anticipate issuing an unqualified opinion, without modification'

5.12 The External Auditors expect to conclude that in relation to the 2024/25 Accounts 'In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the PCC and Group as at 31st March 2025 and of the PCC and Group's expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2024/25.

Value for money arrangements – 2024/25

5.14 The External Audits have also set out with their Audit Completion Report that 'We anticipate having **no significant weaknesses in arrangements to report** in relation to the arrangements that the PCC and CC have in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.'

6 Evaluation

6.1 Following this review, governance and decision-making arrangements within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) continue to be regarded as fit for purpose, in accordance with the governance framework. This conclusion is broadly mirrored by the reviews, conclusions and opinions provided by Internal Audit.

6.2 The significant areas of concern within the Force, as highlighted previously by HMICFRS, have now been addressed and the recent inspection by HMICFRS show that the Force have no areas now graded as inadequate, this provides a validation of the revised scrutiny framework that was put in place by the OPCC which has continued to be improved and embedded.

6.3 The key roles and work of the PCC and the Office of the PCC has continued throughout the year and delivery on all aspects of the former PCCs work, including oversight, scrutiny and governance has been developed and embedded throughout the year.

6.4 Alongside this the OPCC has made significant progress, working closely with the Force, to set out a balanced financial plan for the next 4 years.

6.5 2024/25 has been a year of transition with a newly elected PCC, this process was managed exceptionally well and has allowed progress on all areas of work to continue without interruption

6.6 While there continues to be much work to do and many areas that can be improved upon and some that require continued focus, this review has not found any Significant Governance issues that the OPCC/PCC currently needs to address.

6.7 To continue the improvement of the last couple of years the review has highlighted some areas for continued focus/further action, and these have been set out in the section below.

7 Governance Issues:

Action Plan for 2025/26 to set out below.

- 7.1 We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to enhance our governance arrangements further. We are satisfied that these steps will continue to address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Areas which require further/continued focus	Action	Owner	Target Date
Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	<p>Following on from an Internal Audit review during 2022/23 of Commissioning processes within the OPCC, that concluded with minimal assurance, the review was please to see the hard work that had been reference in last year's Annual Governance Statement was reflect in an Internal Audit of the same area during 2024/25 that provided reasonable assurance for this area.</p> <p>ACTION: Review, update and publish a new Commissioning Strategy to align with the newly agreed Police and Crime Plan.</p>	Head of Policy, Partnerships and Delivery	30th Sept 2025
Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	<p>The review noted the implementation of a new Risk Management package during 2024/25 needs to be better understood, used and managed within the OPCC so that Risk Management becomes a key part of the organisation and can help inform decision making and areas of key development.</p> <p>ACTION: A full review of the Risk Register is to be undertaken across the Senior Management Team, aligned to the new Police and Crime Plan, ensuring that access to the system, ownerships of each risk and regular updates are provided to ensure that risk management is an active part of the OPCC.</p>	Chief Finance Officer	28th February 2026

Areas which require further/continued focus	Action	Owner	Target Date
Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	<p>The review noted that alongside the former PCC's Police and Crime Plan sat a Consultation and Engagement Strategy covering the same period. The review recognises that the current Police and Crime Plan has only recently been launched and recommends that as an area for continued focus in 2025/26 is the need to review and update the consultation and engagement strategy in line with the current Police and Crime Plan.</p> <p>ACTION: Review, update and publish a new consultation and engagement strategy in line with the current Police and Crime Plan.</p>	Head of Communications , Digital Media and Engagement	28th February 2026
Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	<p>Further to the Resolution Team being the first OPCC-led complaints team in the country to gain the prestigious Customer Service Excellence Award. The review was pleased to see the outcome of the Internal Audit of Complaints that was referred to during the 2023/24 report.</p> <p>The PCC was provided with reasonable assurance in this area. This assurance continues to be supplemented by excellent performance outcomes as reported by the IOPC.</p> <p>ACTION: Develop the reporting by the OPCC complaints team, along with lessons learned information to both inform further scrutiny of the Force by the PCC and also to enhance feedback into the Force to continue to improve interactions with the public.</p>	Head of Standards, Scrutiny and Accountability	<p>First draft of proposals July 2025</p> <p>Dashboard and framework by January 2026</p>

Signed:

Matt Storey
Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland

Lisa Oldroyd
Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer

Michael Porter
PCC Chief Finance Officer

Date: