



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

**Report title:** Annual Assurance Report 2022 from the Joint Independent Audit Committee to the PCC for Thames Valley and the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police

**Date:** 3 November 2023

**Author and contact:** Martin Thornley, OPCC Chief Finance Office

**Purpose of the report:** As requested by the Panel

**Recommendations:** Information only

---

### **Executive Summary**

This Annual Assurance Report 2022 explains how the Committee has complied with each of its specific responsibilities, referred to in Appendix 1 (page 15), during the last twelve months covering the period December 2021 to December 2022.

### **Scope of the Annual Assurance Report**

The Committee's last annual report, presented to the PCC and Chief Constable at the Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021, provided an assurance opinion that the risk management and internal control environment in Thames Valley Police (TVP) and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) was operating efficiently and effectively.

The report considered the following areas:

- Financial Management and Reporting
- Internal Control and Governance Environment
- Corporate Risk Management
- Business Continuity Management
- Internal Audit
- External Audit
- People Services
- Health & Safety
- Wellbeing & Environmental Protection
- Equality & Diversity
- Inspection and Review
- Accountability Arrangements
- Other issues (Professional & Ethical Standards - Force Oversight arrangements)



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

### **Findings**

Based on the necessary information, JIAC can assure the PCC and Chief Constable that the risk management and internal control environment in Thames Valley is operating efficiently and effectively.

Constructive challenges over the past twelve months on a wide range of topics have given greater access to information and meetings; the positive relationship with the PCC and the Chief Constable and their senior staff has enabled JIAC to contribute to improved audit, risk management and internal controls.

### **Conclusion**

JIAC hope that this report with the assurances it contains will enhance public trust and confidence in the governance of TVP and the OPCC.

The year ahead (2023) will be demanding due to:

- Inflation, with consequent impacts both on TVP finances, and on on the cost of living and energy costs for the TVP workforce;
- Challenges recruiting and retaining police staff;
- Onboarding new police officers recruited under the Police Uplift Programme;
- Reduced national public sector finances;
- Ongoing development of the Force's digital response; and
- Increased and changing demand profile.

JIAC will continue to seek answers on costs and business benefits. It will continue its scrutiny on Force change management, the delivery of Force financial performance and operational effectiveness. Given the significance of managing the people and culture risks for the success of TVP, it will continue to keep this area in focus in the year to come.

JIAC will remain alert to the extent to which TVP and the OPCC are exposed to risks, from whatever source that might weaken the control environment or otherwise adversely affect overall performance.



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

### **Conclusion**

JIAC hope that this report with the assurances it contains will enhance public trust and confidence in the governance of TVP and the OPCC.

The year ahead (2023) will be demanding due to:

- Inflation, with consequent impacts both on TVP finances, and on on the cost of living and energy costs for the TVP workforce;
- Challenges recruiting and retaining police staff;
- Onboarding new police officers recruited under the Police Uplift Programme;
- Reduced national public sector finances;
- Ongoing development of the Force's digital response; and
- Increased and changing demand profile.

JIAC will continue to seek answers on costs and business benefits. It will continue its scrutiny on Force change management, the delivery of Force financial performance and operational effectiveness. Given the significance of managing the people and culture risks for the success of TVP, it will continue to keep this area in focus in the year to come.

JIAC will remain alert to the extent to which TVP and the OPCC are exposed to risks, from whatever source that might weaken the control environment or otherwise adversely affect overall performance.



## Report of the Police and Crime Panel



### JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE



## Annual Assurance Report 2022 from the Joint Independent Audit Committee to the PCC for Thames Valley and the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police

### Introduction

This Annual Assurance Report 2022 explains how the Committee has complied with each of its specific responsibilities, referred to in Appendix 1, during the last twelve months covering the period December 2021 to December 2022.

The Committee's last annual report, presented to the PCC and Chief Constable at the Joint Independent Audit Committee meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021, provided an assurance opinion that the risk management and internal control environment in Thames Valley Police (TVP) and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) was operating efficiently and effectively.

For this year, meetings were able to be attended in person, where possible, but also held via MS Teams.

### Financial Management and Reporting

We received and reviewed the separate Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 for the PCC & Group and the Chief Constable at our meeting in July, together with the external auditor's 'Audit Progress Report Year-ended 31 March 2022'.

At our October meeting, progress in concluding the audit plan for 2021/22 was still ongoing. There were queries still outstanding, as well as delays in receiving appropriate assurance from Grant Thornton regarding their audit of the Buckinghamshire Pension Fund accounts.

We recognise that this has been an extremely challenging financial closedown and audit period, due to Covid-19.

We will receive and discuss the Annual Audit Report at our meeting in December, which will include the Auditor's value for money (VFM) commentary.



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

In December 2021 we received a draft copy of the Annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2022/23 which we reviewed and scrutinised robustly, before it was formally approved by the PCC in January 2022. We considered and noted the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2021/22 in June. This report explained how officers had complied with the annual treasury strategy statement. We were reminded of the established governance arrangements, and that regular progress reports during the year were presented to the PCC and Chief Constable rather than the Committee.

Having considered all the information available to us we are satisfied that both the PCC's Chief Finance Officer and the Force Director of Finance have the necessary capability and capacity to ensure the proper administration of the PCC's and Force's financial affairs.

Indeed, the experience and skills of the two individuals concerned, and the teams they lead, have been of real benefit to the PCC and the Force and we commend their efforts and achievements.

### **Internal Control and Governance Environment**

In March, we received an initial draft of the 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for consideration. Although no significant governance issues had been identified the covering report explained the key issues that had been considered by the Governance Advisory Group before reaching this conclusion. Overall, we were happy to endorse the accuracy of the AGS for inclusion in the annual Statement of Accounts.

We received an updated AGS for consideration and endorsement at our meeting in June. It was pleasing to note that following a review of the effectiveness of the present governance arrangements there were no significant governance issues that required immediate attention nor were there any potential issues that may have an adverse impact on the internal control environment during 2021/22.

In March, we received the updated Framework for Corporate Governance for 2022/23, which included the Statement of Corporate Governance, the Joint Code of Corporate Governance for the PCC and Chief Constable, and the Scheme of Corporate Governance, which included Financial and Contract Regulations. Only minor amendments were required this year to ensure that it remained relevant and fit for purpose.

In June we received an annual report from the Director of Information, as the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), which provided a summary across HC and TVP for the information assurance and information governance during 2021/22, to provide assurance that information risks were being managed effectively and highlighted some of the key



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

decisions that had been escalated to the SIRO during the year. This area remains complex and challenging for the Force; we note both progress and continued management attention, including rehearsals for potential incidents; but we remain alert that significant risks are yet to be fully addressed by programmes which will continue in 2023.

In March, we received an update report on the Information Commissioner's Officer (ICO) Hampshire Constabulary & Thames Valley Police Follow-Up Data Protection audit. The ICO is an independent regulator for data protection legislation and they are empowered by law to carry out compliance audits. The report detailed that good progress had been made, with 49 of the accepted 55 recommendations being completed.

In October, we received a verbal update on the governance arrangements for TVP collaborations, with no significant changes noted. Given that these arrangements are fairly fixed, reporting should be 'by exception' in future years.

In October, we received a verbal update on the Force's Portfolio, Programme & Project Management arrangements relating to the Force's 2025 Strategy.

As and when appropriate during the year we attended meetings of the Force Transformation Board to see, for ourselves, the action being taken to ensure that key projects and programmes are being managed effectively. We remain an observer on the joint Hampshire/TVP Collaboration Governance Board.

In October, we received an Update on Next Steps Programme (Equip). The update detailed the individual projects to upgrade the Force's system to ensure they meet the current needs of the business in the short term. We look forward to receiving further updates on the Next Steps Programme and how the post Equip Programme risks are being mitigated.

Based on the information provided to the Committee during the last twelve months we can provide assurance that, to the best of our knowledge, the corporate governance framework within Thames Valley is operating efficiently and effectively.

### **Corporate Risk Management**

We have reviewed regular quarterly updates from both the Force and the Office of the PCC (OPCC) in terms of their strategic risk management systems and processes. This is an area of business we take very seriously, and question and challenge officers on a regular basis to ensure that we are sighted on all significant corporate risks and are satisfied that these risks are being dealt with in a timely, effective and appropriate manner.



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

Based on the information provided to the Committee during the last twelve months it appears that the organisational risks in both the OPCC and Force are being managed effectively and that there is appropriate capability for their respective published goals and objectives to be achieved efficiently and effectively.

We noted with concern that the programme to replace the Force's radio systems is still a top-priority risk, for which responsibility lies outside the Force. We probed TVP's management actions around this risk, and examined a "near miss" incident; we were assured that TVP is doing everything it can. Nevertheless this remains a high-potential-harm risk and we hope that in 2023 the Home Office and other parties will make a breakthrough.

### **Business Continuity Management**

We have received regular quarterly updates from the Force on business continuity, including incidents and exercises.

We are content that business continuity is treated as a serious issue by senior officers within the Force and that previous learning has been used to good effect.

We are satisfied that the business continuity management processes are operating efficiently and effectively in identifying issues and capturing organisational learning and there are no significant issues that we need to draw to your attention. We note that the increased prevalence of ransomware can place new pressures on systems recovery and business continuity. The Force has provided assurance that these areas are adequately controlled, with further work scheduled for 2023.

### **Internal Audit**

In June we received the annual report from the Chief Internal Auditor. We were pleased to note that the 2021/22 Joint Internal Audit Plan had been completed in full. Of the 23 completed audits, no had received substantial assurance, but 17 (74%) had received reasonable assurance, and 6 (26%) had received limited assurance. No audit received minimal assurance. It was pleasing to note the results of the additional sources of assurance that had been provided by independent internal functions or external bodies. Of the 10 sources identified 5 (50%) were deemed to provide substantial assurance, 4 (40%) were deemed to provided reasonable assurance and one (10%) were deemed to provide limited assurance. No source of external assurance were deemed to provide minimal assurance. We are pleased that the audit programme continues to return a range of assurance levels, this is a reflection of both the independence of the process and its effectiveness in targeting a cross section of matters within the Force and OPCC.



## Report of the Police and Crime Panel

We received and endorsed the Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan 2022/23 at our meeting in March. We noted that that the annual plan included all relevant financial systems, as well as other business critical functional areas and activities. We were pleased to note the wide range of audit activity, looking at high-risk functions and operations across both organisations.

Although the resourced audit plan does not include a specific allocation of days for use by the Committee, there is an extant agreement with the CC and PCC that the Committee may, at its discretion, draw on up to 10 audit days for its own specific use. We did not need to use this facility during 2022.

We challenged robustly, with internal auditors and appropriate officers, the reasons for the reported shortcomings in the assurance levels for some reports and the completion of the associated action plans. Based on the reviews completed during the year, the opinion on the organisation's system of internal control was that key controls in place are adequate and effective, such that an assessment of reasonable assurance could be placed on the operation of the organisation's functions. The opinion demonstrates a good awareness and application of effective internal controls necessary to facilitate the achievement of objectives and outcomes. There was, in general, an effective system of risk management, control and governance to address the risk that objectives are not fully achieved.

In March and October, we received updates from the Chief Internal Auditor on progress with delivery of the annual internal audit plan, including a summary of key issues arising from recently completed audits. We continue to receive final audit reports which give us early sight of any key issues arising from completed audits that require management action. This is particularly useful for those few audits where limited or minimal assurance is given. We have also received details of the team's external Public Sector Internal Audit Standards assessment which took place in May. It was pleasing to note that the team fully conform to all the standards.

We have received and debated regular update reports each quarter on progress of agreed actions in internal audit reports. We are pleased that the number of outstanding audit actions is on a downward trend. We hope that management continues to take the implementation of actions arising from internal audit reports very seriously and we shall continue to monitor this situation rigorously in coming years.

We continue to have confidential access to the Chief Internal Auditor and his team to discuss both specific actions and the context of the Audit programme in TVP/PCC and gain good assurance from these conversations.





## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

We are satisfied that the system of internal audit in Thames Valley is operating efficiently and effectively and there are no specific issues or areas of concern that we would wish to highlight to the PCC and/or Chief Constable.

### **External Audit**

In March the external auditor, EY, presented its outline audit plan for the PCC and Chief Constable for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. This explained the context for the audit, as well as outlining the auditor's process and strategy. In terms of VFM risks, the main focus would be: financial sustainability; governance; and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The scale fee for 2021/22 was planned to increase to £78,552, but was yet to be determined by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA).

In June we received EY's 'Annual Planning Report for the Year-ended 31 March 2022' which detailed how they would carry out their responsibilities as the external auditors. Following receipt of the draft accounts, initially their audit work was progressing well. At the October meeting, they were still working on their final queries. They hoped to complete their work by the end of November, but they did state that this would be subject to the timely receipt of information from Grant Thornton in respect of the Local Government Pension Fund as administered by Buckinghamshire Council.

The committee has been disappointed by progress on the accounts this year, and is glad that we will be receiving a lessons-learned report at our December meeting, to ensure that neither TVP/the OPCC nor the external auditor contribute to such delays in future.

### **People Services**

In June, we received a full overview report on performance by the People Directorate. The report provided an introduction and context, details relating to governance and accountability, the Directorate's strategic ambitions and priorities, context and summary of performance for 2021/22, key areas of priority for 2022/23 and future risks and mitigation.

The Committee challenged robustly the detail to gain assurances on the Force's arrangements. We will maintain a close interest in this key area of risk for the Force. This year JIAC has noted the issues experienced by the Metropolitan Police and some other forces, and the risks these sorts of issues could pose to the Force's public 'licence to operate'. In particular we asked to what extent cultural issues reported in the Met (racism, poor treatment of women, loss of trust around stop and search, etc) might be paralleled in TVP. We were pleased both to hear strong positive assurance around TVP's culture, and to see evidence of an active programme of risk mitigation including a number of creative and forward-looking actions by TVP's leadership. We also noted,



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

through our programme of visiting other parts of TVP's governance, that these issues are being actively observed and challenged through PESP and other governance mechanisms. Nevertheless these issues will remain vital for the success of the Force and we will continue a watching brief on these reputational risks in 2023.

### **Health & Safety**

In June we received a summary report on the principal activities and outcomes relating to the promotion and management of Health & Safety (H&S) Management in TVP during 2021/22. The report built on the improvements from the previous year, providing an overview of the Force's governance and accountability for health and safety, strategic ambitions and priorities, performance for 2021/22, revised operating model, priority areas for 2021/22, and future risks and mitigations for 2022/23.

In October we received an update to TVP's Health & Safety Annual Report setting out the Force's position on 'Competence', their assessment on outstanding generic risk assessments and line of sight to the Chief Constable.

### **Wellbeing & Environmental Protection**

In June we received an annual report on organisational 'wellbeing' during 2021/22. The report was comprehensive and built on the report received the previous year. The report focussed on the five key strands of wellbeing i.e. physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, financial wellbeing, health safety and environmental wellbeing, and leadership. The report also provided updates on the existing governance framework, reassurance and confidence, performance and management of key issues and risks, identification of key areas of priority for 2022/23, future risks and mitigation for 2022/23 and the Wellbeing Dashboard and Communications Plan. The dashboard is presented to CCMT each month, which is then disseminated to LPA Commanders and Heads of Departments so that their leadership teams are fully sighted on what is going on and how they can contribute to the wellbeing of their officers and staff

In respect of environmental issues, we received the Environmental & Sustainability Annual Report in October. The report provided details on the Force's opportunities, risks and drivers, as well as the seven key objectives: staff engagement, reduce waste and increase recycling, buildings, travel and transport, procurement, water and biodiversity. Targets were listed and we were keen to ensure the Force's senior leadership ownership of the objectives.

The report also referred to the Force's ten year Environmental Sustainability strategy, which we were glad to receive.



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

### **Equality & Diversity**

In June we received the 2021/22 annual report on equality, diversity and inclusion which showcased the achievements from the past 12 months, future risks and mitigations and planned activities for 2022/23. The report covered the following areas: strategic governance, attraction recruitment and representation, gender pay gap, disability, leadership and personal development, and providing a service to diverse communities. We were also provided with an update on the work of the Positive Engagement Team.

We recognise the ambition of Force leadership on this important issue, and look forward to them building on the achievements to date and delivery of the key areas of priority.

### **Inspection and Review**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses police forces and policing across activity from neighbourhood teams to serious crime and the fight against crime – in the public interest. HMICFRS decides on the depth, frequency and areas to inspect based on their judgements about what is in the public interest.

We understand that the Chief Constable and his management team considers each report in detail, irrespective of whether it relates directly to Thames Valley Police and, where appropriate, agrees an appropriate action plan. We also understand that the PCC is required to consider and publish a response to each HMICFRS report relevant to Thames Valley Police.

The Committee continue to receive copies of HMICFRS reports and PCC responses in a timely manner. The Committee received responses to the following:

- A Joint Thematic Inspection of the Police & Crown Prosecution Service's Response to the Rape Phase 2: Post Charge.
- Thames Valley Peel Inspection 2021/22.

In terms of the 2021/22 Peel Inspection, the Force was graded as:

- 'Good' in the areas of recording data about crime; treatment of the public; and managing offenders
- 'Adequate' in the areas of preventing crime; investigating crime; protecting vulnerable people; and developing a positive workplace.
- 'Requires Improvement' in the areas of responding to the public; and good use of resources.



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

Notwithstanding the above, as far as we know, HMICFRS has not issued any report during the last twelve months that has specifically referred to assurance on the internal Thames Valley Police control environment and/or highlighted governance issues for the PCC and Chief Constable to consider.

### **Accountability Arrangements**

Our operating principles require us to:

- On a timely basis report to the PCC and the Chief Constable with its advice and recommendations in relation to any matters that it considers relevant to governance, risk management and financial management.
- Report to the PCC and the Chief Constable on its findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; financial reporting arrangements and internal and external audit functions.
- On an annual basis to review its performance against its operating principles and report the results of this review to the PCC and the Chief Constable.

We are grateful to the PCC and the Chief Constable for affording us regular discussions as well as for the attendance of the PCC and the Deputy Chief Constable at meetings of the JIAC, enabling a continuous dialogue through the year on matters of interest, which have been described in the main body of this report.

### **Other Issues**

#### *Professional & Ethical Standards - Force Oversight arrangements*

We continue to attend, as observers, meetings of the Professional & Ethical Standards Panel (PESP) that assesses whether the Chief Constable's arrangements for, and the PCC's oversight of, the proper handling of complaints made against the Force, and consideration of other integrity, ethics and professional standards issues, are operating effectively in practice. We believe that their current Terms of Reference provide the basis for the Panel to provide effective support to the PCC and Chief Constable. We welcome the contribution the new members of PESP make to the panel.

### **General**

We are pleased to report that the arrangements agreed eight years ago, as set out below, are working effectively:



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

- Be regularly briefed by the Chief Constable and PCC on the full range of activities falling within our specific responsibilities and attend other relevant internal meetings.
- Have direct access to the oversight of professional standards and ethics matters by regularly attending the Professional and Ethical Standards Panel (previously known as the Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel) as an observer.
- Attend any training and conference events that will ensure members are up to date with the policing landscape and audit requirements.
- Attend as an observer the regular Force Performance meetings.
- Attend as an observer the Hampshire and Thames Valley Policing Collaboration Governance Board.
- Attend as an observer the Force Transformation Board.

One member attended the CIPFA conference for Police Audit Committee members discussing challenges faced by audit committees and proposed legislative changes that will impact on the work of audit committees.

Over the year we had meetings with the Chief Constable, PCC and senior staff for relevant organisational and functional updates between formal JIAC meetings.

These briefings and invitations to attend internal Force meetings, coupled with the sharing of appropriate CCMT reports of interest, continue to raise our awareness and knowledge of legislative, policy or operational initiatives that are relevant to the Committee's remit, such as organisational structural changes, service delivery initiatives, and financial and service planning issues. In turn, this is improving our collective understanding of how the Force and OPCC governance arrangements and control environments are operating in practice.

### **JIAC Operating Principles**

The Committee's current operating principles are shown in Appendix 1.

One committee member, Amna Rehman, stepped down for personal reasons during the year. We are in discussion with the OPCC to recruit a skilled replacement.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of the Joint Independent Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance to the PCC and Chief Constable regarding the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment within Thames Valley Police and the Office of the PCC.

Constructive challenges over the past twelve months on a wide range of topics have given us greater access to information and meetings; the positive relationship with the



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

PCC and the Chief Constable and their senior staff has enabled us to contribute to improved audit, risk management and internal controls.

The year ahead (2023) will be demanding due to:

- Inflation, with consequent impacts both on TVP finances, and on the cost of living and energy costs for the TVP workforce;
- Challenges recruiting and retaining police staff;
- Onboarding new police officers recruited under the Police Uplift Programme;
- Reduced national public sector finances;
- Ongoing development of the Force's digital response; and
- Increased and changing demand profile.

No doubt we will continue to seek answers on costs and business benefits. We will continue our scrutiny on Force change management, the delivery of Force financial performance and operational effectiveness. Given the significance of managing the people and culture risks for the success of TVP, we will continue to keep this area in focus in the year to come.

We will remain alert to the extent to which TVP and the OPCC are exposed to risks, from whatever source that might weaken the control environment or otherwise adversely affect overall performance.

Based on the information that we have seen collectively or know about individually we can assure the PCC and Chief Constable that the risk management and internal control environment in Thames Valley is operating efficiently and effectively.

We hope that this report with the assurances it contains will enhance public trust and confidence in the governance of TVP and the OPCC.

### **Joint Independent Audit Committee**

Members:

Mr Michael Day  
Dr Stephen Page  
Mrs Melissa Strange  
Dr Gordon Woods

16 December 2022



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Joint Independent Audit Committee - Operating Principles**

##### **Statement of Purpose**

- Our Joint Independent Audit Committee is a key component of the PCC and Chief Constable's arrangements for corporate governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.
- The purpose of the Committee is to provide independent assurance to the PCC and the Chief Constable regarding the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment within Thames Valley Police and the Office of the PCC. It will consider the internal and external audit reports of both the PCC and Chief Constable and advise both parties according to good governance principles. It has oversight of general governance matters and provides comment on any new or amended PCC policies and strategies with regard to financial risk and probity.
- These operating principles will summarise the core functions of the Committee in relation to the Office of the PCC and the Force and describe the protocols in place to enable it to operate independently, robustly and effectively.

The Committee will report directly to the PCC and the Chief Constable.

##### **Committee Composition and Structure**

The Committee will consist of five members who are independent of the PCC and Thames Valley Police. They will be appointed by the Chief Constable and the PCC (or their representatives).

The Chairman will be elected by the Committee on an annual basis.

The Committee will hold four formal meetings a year – in public - although there may be a requirement to hold additional meetings at short notice.

The PCC and Chief Constable will attend or be appropriately represented at formal meetings. Committee meetings will be held at key strategic times of the year to coincide with the budget process and publication of financial management reports and accounts:



## Report of the Police and Crime Panel

1. **March** – to consider the Internal Auditor’s Internal Audit Plan and the External Audit Plan
2. **July** – to consider the End of Year Reports, the Annual Governance Statement, Annual Statement of Accounts and to receive the Audit Results report
3. **September** – to consider mid-year progress reports;
4. **December** – to receive the Annual External Audit Letter and agree the Annual Assurance Report of the Committee.

The agenda, reports and minutes of all Committee meetings will be published on the PCC and Force websites. However, members of the press and public shall be excluded from a meeting whenever it is likely that confidential information will be disclosed. Confidential information is defined as:

- a) Information furnished to the Committee by a Government department upon terms (however expressed) which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public; and
- b) Information the disclosure of which to the public is prohibited by or under any enactment or by the order of a Court.

## Methods of Working

The Committee will:

- Advise the PCC and Chief Constable on good governance principles
- Adopt appropriate risk management arrangements
- Provide robust and constructive challenge
- Take account of relevant corporate social responsibility factors when challenging and advising the PCC and Chief Constable (such as value for money, diversity, equality and health and safety)
- Be regularly briefed by the Chief Constable and PCC on the full range of activities falling within its specific responsibilities and attend other relevant internal meetings
- Have direct access to the oversight of professional standards and ethics matters by regularly attending the Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel as an observer
- Attend any training and conference events that will ensure members are kept up to date with the policing landscape and audit requirements
- Provide an annual assurance report to the PCC and Chief Constable

## Specific responsibilities

The Committee has the following specific responsibilities:

### Financial Management and Reporting





## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

- Provide assurance to the PCC and Chief Constable regarding the adequacy of the arrangements, capacity and capability available to their respective chief finance officers to ensure the proper administration of the Commissioner's and Force's financial affairs.
- Review the Annual Statement of Accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit of the financial statements that need to be brought to the attention of the PCC and/or the Chief Constable.
- Consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the financial statements, and to give advice and make such recommendations on the adequacy of the level of assurance and on improvement as it considers appropriate.

### Internal Control and Governance Environment

- Consider and endorse the local Code of Corporate Governance
- Consider and endorse the Annual Governance Statement (AGS)
- Monitor implementation and delivery of the AGS Action Plan
- Consider the arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements
- Consider and comment upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the assurance framework, and the specific governance and accountability policies, systems and controls in place, such as the Corporate Governance Framework; anti-fraud and corruption; whistle-blowing, declarations of interest and gifts and hospitality.
- Review arrangements for the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm from fraud and corruption and monitor the effectiveness of the counter fraud strategy, actions and resources
- To consider the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations

### Corporate Risk Management

- Consider and comment upon the strategic risk management processes; and
- Receive and consider assurances that organisational risks are being managed effectively and that published goals and objectives will be achieved efficiently and economically, making recommendations as necessary

### Business Continuity Management

- Consider and comment upon business continuity management processes, and
- Receive and consider assurances that business continuity is being managed effectively and that published goals and objectives will be achieved efficiently and economically, making recommendations as necessary



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

### Internal Audit

- Annually review the internal audit charter and resource
- Receive and consider the adequacy and effectiveness of the arrangements for the provision of the internal audit service
- Consider and comment on the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan
- Receive and review internal audit reports and monitor progress of implementing agreed actions
- To consider the Head of Internal Audit's statement on the level of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and Local Government Application Note (LGAN) and the results of the Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme (QAIP) that support the statement
- Consider and comment upon the annual report of the Head of Internal Audit
- Obtain assurance that an annual review of the effectiveness of the internal audit function takes place

### External Audit

- Receive and review reports from the external auditors, including the annual audit letter and audit opinion
- Review the effectiveness of external audit
- Consider and comment upon any proposals affecting the provision of the external audit service
- Consider the level of fees charged, and
- At present TVP participates in the national procurement of external audit services through the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA). However, should the PCC and Chief Constable decide that local procurement would be better the Committee would undertake the role of the Independent Audit Panel, as set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, including considering and recommending appropriate arrangements for any future appointment of External Auditors

### Health & Safety

- Satisfy itself on behalf of the PCC and the Chief Constable that an adequate and effective policy and practice framework is in place to discharge legal duties in relation to health and safety. In particular, having regard to the safety, health and welfare of police officers and police staff, people in the care and custody of Thames Valley Police and all members of the public on police premises or property



## **Report of the Police and Crime Panel**

### Equality and Diversity

- Satisfy itself on behalf of the PCC and Chief Constable that an adequate policy and practice framework is in place to discharge statutory requirements in relation to equalities and diversity

### Inspection and Review

- To consider any HMIC report that provides assurance on the internal control environment and/or highlights governance issues for the PCC and/or Chief Constable

### Accountability Arrangements

- On a timely basis report to the PCC and the Chief Constable with its advice and recommendations in relation to any matters that it considers relevant to governance, risk management and financial management.
- Report to the PCC and the Chief Constable on its findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; financial reporting arrangements and internal and external audit functions.
- On an annual basis to review its performance against its operating principles and report the results of this review to the PCC and the Chief Constable.