

Audit Advisory Committee for
Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable
Annual Report 2016

Chairman's Foreword

This is the 2016 annual report of the Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioner's and Chief Constable's Audit Advisory Committee ['the Committee'].

The Committee provides independent assurance to the Police & Crime Commissioner ['the Commissioner'] and the Chief Constable on the effectiveness of governance, risk and audit arrangements and controls in place, within the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Constabulary.

The forerunner of the Committee was the Joint Audit and Ethics Committee which had 6 members. The audit and ethics aspects were separated on 1 April 2016 at which point members were allocated to either the Audit Advisory Committee or the Ethics Advisory Panel.

Membership

Membership of the Committee is as follows:

Chairman

Helen Waller is a non-practising barrister whose current roles include Examiner of the Court and law tutor. In 2008 she joined as a member, and later the chairman, of the Standards Committee for Cheshire Police Authority. Following on from this, Helen was on the Interim Joint Audit Committee from November 2012, becoming Chairman of the Joint Audit Committee in December 2013.

Members

Michael Darby is a chartered accountant. He has been a Vice Chairman of the Cheshire Police Authority and a chairman of the Authority's Audit Committee. He has served as a Cheshire Magistrate and as a member of Cheshire Probation Trust. He is a Deputy Lieutenant for Cheshire.

Bob Hodson is a chartered electrical engineer whose current roles include membership of the Joint Audit Committee, non executive director and chairman of the audit committee for Medicash and associate hospital manager mental health for the Five Boroughs NHS Foundation Trust. Bob was an independent member of Cheshire Police Authority for ten years and served as Chairman of their Audit Committee for five years.

Members of the Committee bring with them a range of experience and skills which cover the various aspects of the Committee's work. In order to ensure that we are up-to-date with knowledge and skills Committee members undertake various activities. For example, we meet with different members of staff and go into various police departments to learn more about the Constabulary and the different aspects of its work which are relevant to our core role. Additionally, we have all attended at internal and external training events which have been informative as well as broadening our understanding of our role.

2015/2016

The Committee has supported the Commissioner and the Chief Constable, in particular through monitoring the strategic risk management framework to ensure that risks were adequately recorded and managed; and by considering the Commissioner's and the Chief Constable's Annual Governance Statement and Statements of Accounts to provide assurance that they complied with the relevant requirements.

We have also reviewed issues referred to us by relevant officers, analysing, questioning and making recommendations as appropriate. In addition, we received plans and reports from both the Internal and External Auditors which we have scrutinised to ensure that the Commissioner and the Chief Constable maintain the high standards of governance, finance and audit that the people of Cheshire would expect.

Additionally, up to 1 April 2016, we advised the Commissioner and the Chief Constable on aspects of the Code of Ethics and the progression of their ethical framework. Further to this we have scrutinised reviews of the handling of public complaints, misconduct and grievances, as well as the registers of interests, expenses, gifts and hospitality. As part of this we have dip-sampled public complaints and asked pertinent questions, seeking further information when necessary.

From time to time were also asked to provide a view on the ethical considerations of any matters referred by the Commissioner or by the Chief Constable. Also, we have received some reviews from Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary to ensure that full consideration has been given to the appropriate action arising from the recommendations which includes monitoring implementation.

The future

The Committee (along with the Chief Constable and Commissioner) will take some time over the coming months to assess how we are going to be able to fulfil the new Terms of Reference to the best of our ability and how we are going to work well together. The essence of being an audit committee remains the same as ever, although with reduced membership and new Terms of Reference there will, no doubt, be an altered dynamic within the Committee which we need to ensure works positively for the benefit of policing in Cheshire.

Further information

For further information on the work of the Committee, its Terms of Reference, Minutes and Agendas, please refer to the website of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire.

Helen Waller

Chairman of the Audit Advisory Committee of the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable

22 April 2016