

# **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

## **1. Introduction**

The Chief Constable is accountable to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for the delivery of efficient and effective policing and management of resources and expenditure by the police.

This Annual Governance Statement (AGS) explains this position and how the Chief Constable governs West Mercia Police (the 'Force') through a system of internal control and the plans for improvement during the financial year 2016/17. Compliance with the Governance framework is evidenced through the Police and Crime plan (via the Police and Crime Panel), the Performance Management Framework and the Corporate Governance Framework.

## **2. Scope of Responsibility**

The Chief Constable is responsible for ensuring that the Force conducts its business in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Chief Constable also has a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility the Chief Constable is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the Force's affairs and facilitating the exercise of its functions. This includes ensuring that a sound system of internal control is maintained through the year and that arrangements are in place for the management of risk.

The Chief Constable is responsible for maintaining the Queen's peace and the direction and control of the Force's police officers, police staff and police community support officers (PCSOs). In discharging their functions the Chief Constable has regard to the Police and Crime Plan which sets the overarching objectives for the Force. The Police and Crime Plan is issued by the OPCC and developed in consultation with the Chief Constable and other stakeholders. The OPCC has also made specific delegations to the Chief Constable and his officers and put in place, on election, overarching policies that govern the operation of the Chief Constable. These include:

- Scheme of delegation
- Financial Regulations
- Contract Standing Orders

Copies of the above documents are available on the [OPCC website](#) or can be obtained from the Office of the PCC at PO Box 487, Shrewsbury, SY2 6WB.

The arrangements described in this AGS are consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) / Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Framework: *'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (Guidance Note for Police).'*

### **3. The Purpose of the Governance Framework**

The Governance Framework comprises the systems and processes, the culture and values by which the Chief Constable directs and controls the activities for which they are accountable including engagement with communities. It enables the Chief Constable to monitor the achievement of their strategic objectives and to consider whether these objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services including achieving value for money.

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 on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks that may hinder or prevent the achievement of the Chief Constable's aims, objectives and policies, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised, the impact should they be realised and to manage them effectively, efficiently and economically.

### **4. The Governance Framework**

The role of the OPCC was described in the introduction to the AGS. The following describes the framework of internal control that has been in place in the Force during 2015/16 to ensure the Chief Constable meets their statutory duties and the objectives of the OPCC.

At a high level the OPCC has stated that West Mercia Police has the primary role in the county for the reduction of crime and disorder, the protection of communities from harm and the delivery of an effective and efficient policing service. Consequently it will be against these three principles that the performance of West Mercia Police and the Chief Constable will be primarily measured. For 2016/17 the current OPCC has agreed with the Chief Constable that there will continue to be no specific performance objectives other than to reduce total recorded crime.

Further to this Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police entered into an alliance where the majority of the two Forces' activity is undertaken jointly to deliver policing across Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, Worcestershire and Warwickshire. The framework which governs the alliance is underpinned by the 'Section 23' and 'Section 24' agreements (Police Act 1996).

- The 'Section 23' agreement sets out how joint Force finances will be managed on day-to-day basis including the financial arrangements for cost sharing.
- The 'Section 24' agreement allows either Force to conduct policing on the other's geographical area.

The governance framework of the Chief Constable includes arrangements for ensuring that day-to-day policing, undertaken within the alliance, is properly managed, risks identified and, where possible, mitigated.

The Good Governance standard for public services set out the six good governance core principles. The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the governance arrangements that have been put in place for the Force and how they adhere to these six principles are set out below:

**i. Focusing upon the purpose of the Chief Constable, on the outcomes for local people and creating a vision for the local area**

The OPCC sets the strategic direction for the Chief Constable and the Force through the objectives contained in the Police and Crime Plan. For 2016/17 the current OPCC has agreed that there will be no specific objectives other than to reduce overall crime. This has been developed in consultation with the Chief Constable and other stakeholders and is scrutinised by the Police and Crime Panel.

In order to focus policing activity the Force prepares the Strategic Assessment which gives an overview of the current and medium term issues that affect, or are likely to affect, Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police during 2016/17. The Strategic Assessment identifies the key risks and threats to the communities across Warwickshire and West Mercia. This informs where strategic focus and resource commitment can be targeted to reduce harm. The Strategic Assessment is commissioned and agreed by the Executive Board and is refreshed annually.

In response to the findings of the Strategic Assessment a Control Strategy is produced which provides senior managers within the forces with a decision-making framework for focusing activity and resource allocation when faced with competing demands. The Control Strategy is communicated to senior managers and available to them on the Force intranet.

To underpin the objectives contained in the Police and Crime Plan the OPCC has set an objective of reducing overall crime. The OPCC holds the Chief Constable to account for delivery against this objective. To ensure this objective is achieved ongoing performance is monitored and published through the Force performance framework which provides daily information to all members of the Force via the 'performance dashboard' on the Force intranet. The measurement of performance continues to go through transition as it moves away from performance against specific targets.

The OPCC and Chief Constable meet on a weekly basis to monitor and scrutinise performance. The OPCC is also invited to attend the quarterly Forces' Performance Management Group. This meeting is informed by a monthly performance report relating to the key performance measure set out in the Police and Crime Plan and also identifies major themes that contribute to providing a quality of service to victims of crime and the wider 'health' of the alliance.

The OPCC is invited to the bi-monthly Design Authority Group (as an 'influencer') and the monthly Change Management Board meetings. These meetings inform the governance and assurance role of the OPCC and keep them updated with change activity.

The OPCC holds bi-monthly public meetings that include a discussion of performance. This meeting is informed by a performance report relating to the key performance measures set out in the Police & Crime Plan.

## **ii. Working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and role**

The OPCC sets out the objectives for the Force in the Police and Crime Plan, which is developed in consultation with the Chief Constable and other stakeholders, as described earlier in the AGS.

To enable effective accountability the day-to-day relationship between the OPCC and the Chief Constable is governed by the Scheme of Delegation, Financial Regulations and Contract Regulations which have been developed in accordance with the Financial Management Code of Practice.

The OPCC meets with the Chief Constable informally on a regular basis. Every two months the OPCC and Chief Constable will have a formal meeting in public. The agenda will be published on the OPCC website seven days in advance of the meeting and the minutes of the meeting within ten working days.

Members of the public may attend and may submit questions in advance in writing for the OPCC and Chief Constable. A response will, if possible, be given at the meeting. In some circumstances a reply will be given in writing.

## **iii. Promoting the values of the Chief Constable and demonstrating the values of good governance by upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour**

The framework of governance established through the Scheme of Delegation, Financial Standing Order etc act seeks to establish high standards of conduct in specific areas of business and also seeks to reduce the likelihood of errors and prevent fraud. Specific officers will have responsibility for policing the implementation of these policies and reporting irregularities.

The Force sets policies and standards for gifts, hospitality and sponsorship issues and maintains an electronic register to ensure proper governance and transparency. Police officers are required to seek the express permission of the Chief Constable before taking up a second job or pursuing separate business interests, details of which are held on a register of business interests.

In addition the Force participates in the National Fraud Initiative which attempts to identify fraud by sharing and comparing employee data across the public sector.

Within the Force there are two formal codes of conduct, one for police officers and one for police staff. Both codes define the standards of personal behaviour expected. The codes stress the importance of honesty, integrity, fairness, impartiality, politeness and tolerance. The officer code also sets out requirements in terms of use of force, performance, execution of duties and other general conduct expectations. Certain staff, e.g. qualified accountants or solicitors, will have professional codes of conduct to which they are held to account. In addition all staff are security vetted, the level of vetting depending on the role undertaken. In addition the alliance stresses the national Code of Ethics as the foundation for the two forces' vision and values.

The Force subscribes to the police service's Statement of Common Purpose and Values which includes the requirement to act fairly with integrity, common sense and sound judgment. The Force operates a whistle-blowing policy. Where the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior have not been met officers are encouraged to report these through the Anonymous Integrity Reporting Line.

The Professional Standards Department (PSD) is responsible for the investigation and resolution of complaints and alleged breaches of the Standards of Professional Behaviour. Part of this process is to identify any learning, both organisational and individual, which can improve the service provided by both Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police.

#### **iv. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to scrutiny and managing risk**

Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police now share the same formal meeting structure that delivers the core decisions of the Forces and comprises the following elements:

##### **Strategic Decision Making:**

- Executive Board (monthly)
- Alliance Governance Group (monthly)
- Workforce Management (monthly)
- Change Management Board (monthly)
- Design Authority Group (bi-monthly)
- Joint Negotiating and Consultation Committee (generally bi-monthly)
- Strategic Diversity Group (quarterly)

**Operational Decision Making:**

- Chief Officer Meeting (weekly)
- Daily Management Meeting
- Directorate Management Meeting (monthly)
- Tactical Tasking & Co-ordinating (monthly)
- Performance Management Group (quarterly)
- Strategic Tasking & Co-ordinating (annual with six monthly review)
- Directorate Sub-Groups and Business Area meetings
- Programme/project board meetings (as necessary)

**v. Assurance Unit**

Under the alliance programme Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police introduced a single Assurance Team. A combined audit and inspections programme is proposed based upon sound risk management principles. The programme of work is agreed annually with the Deputy Chief Constables (DCCs).

The main purpose of the Assurance Team is to carry out independent assurance audits based upon the principles defined in the NPCC manual of guidance (section 33 audit functions). This activity is separate from the County Council internal audits which reports to the OPCC (see below). Following the completion of the assurance audits, key recommendations and corrective actions will be agreed with the business lead for the area audited. The business lead is then required to produce a management response for each audit recommendation with an agreed owner and a target completion date. Progress on the Assurance, Internal Audits and HMIC inspections are reported to the Strategic Service Improvement head of department through a monthly report.

The Assurance Team is responsible for liaising with the County Council auditors who conduct a separate programme of internal audits. The recommendations arising from the County Council internal audits are managed in the same way as the assurance audit recommendations.

The Assurance Team also helps to facilitate the inspections conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) under the direction of the Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police combined HMIC Liaison Officer.

The Assurance Team track the progress of all recommendations by requesting quarterly updates from the business owners. A quarterly report is then prepared detailing progress on the implementation of all the combined audit and inspection recommendations for the independent Joint Audit Committee.

**vi. Risk Management**

Risk in the Alliance is managed in accordance with national guidance and best practice to maintain and improve service delivery. The financial and political environment the Alliance operates within adds to the complexity.

A Risk Workshop was completed in November 2015. The output was the introduction of a new Risk framework, set within a Strategic Heat map, for the workforce that will enable the organisation to become more adaptable and 'less risk averse.' To achieve this the Force will set clear boundaries within which to operate. Consequently justifiable risks/decisions can be made without seeking unnecessary permission.

Chief Officers have agreed the following definitions:

**Risk Appetite** - what the Force is 'willing' to risk corporately and where the Force encourage individuals to take justifiable risks using their own initiative and rationale.

**Risk Tolerance** - what the Force is able to risk corporately (with reassurances) and where the Force would encourage individuals to seek verification first (time permitting).

**Risk Capacity** - the level of corporate risk exposure that the Force cannot and will not tolerate exceeding.

The Alliance Risk Officer has a dual role of Risk and of leading the co-ordination of Organisational Learning. Reducing risk by effective and verified improvement will form a large part of the Alliance's Learning & Risk Strategy that will determine where the Alliance wants to be in terms of the benefits of being a learning organisation as well as one that understands how it uses risk management to make decisions.

#### **vii. Developing the capacity and capability of all to be effective in their roles**

The Force is committed to reviewing individual performance and development in a structured way. The two Forces are currently reviewing the most effective way to achieve these aims.

#### **viii. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability**

The Force consults with the aim of involving all communities across the county. The approach involves public meetings including community forums as well as telephone surveys. There is also active involvement with the full range of media such as press, TV, social media and the Force website to ensure the communication of a wide range of topics. During 2015 a wholly redesigned Force website was launched and this has significantly eased public contact with the Force. The website includes a live chat facility.

The Safer Neighbourhood approach is central to policing in West Mercia. There are 82 Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) in the force area. Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers, Special Constables and other volunteers work with partners to keep communities safe and improve the quality of life for local people while tackling Force and local priorities. Each

SNT holds meetings at which problems and issues identified by the local community are discussed. Each SNT has a website where updates on action to tackle local priorities are posted together with details of local events, surgeries and other useful information. Members of the local community can access local crime information and provide feedback to teams or contact them directly.

## **5. Review of effectiveness**

The Chief Constable has responsibility for an annual review of the effectiveness of the Governance Framework. The Governance Framework has been reviewed, and continues to be reviewed, for its effectiveness by the Chief Constable, the Deputy Chief Constable and the joint Chief Officer Team. The work of the internal and external auditors, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC), the Force Risk Officer and Assurance Lead Officer (who both have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment) inform the review of effectiveness. A significant input is taken from priorities identified in the annual planning cycle.

The HMIC (through the annual value for money inspection) and the external auditors (through the annual audit of the statement of accounts) assess whether the Force is on target to achieve savings targets that have been set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The work of the internal and external audit and inspection agencies will continue to inform the development of the governance framework as the Alliance arrangements develop during the coming year.

## **6. Significant governance issues**

The Chief Officers of Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police have identified that the six greatest risks to the two Forces at this time are:

1. The health and well being of the workforce.
2. Partnership collaboration and funding uncertainty due to budget cuts and devolution arrangements which may affect our own ability to deliver.
3. In line with Control Strategy priorities and Vision 2020 the ability to be 'great' at protecting the most vulnerable.
4. The requirement to have an overarching Organisational Learning platform in order to develop a Learning culture across the Alliance.
5. The risk of failing to achieve financial savings within set time limits.
6. Athena – the risk that the Athena project may not realise the organisational benefits in the project time frames.

All of these risks have the potential to impinge on our ability to deliver effective policing. I am satisfied that focus on these areas will ensure that the savings required are delivered and police officers and police staff will remain effective in the new policing model.

The key actions for mitigation of the six risks are as follows:

1. The health and well being of the workforce
  - a. A Health and Well Being board has been implemented and is chaired by the Chief Constables.
  - b. TOIL/RDIL levels are being closely monitored.
  - c. A series of free health checks for staff has been implemented.
  - d. Several leadership and development training sessions have been run in the first couple of months of 2016.
  - e. Additional courses looking at 'shaping the future,' 'organisational culture and leading change,' will take place during the year.
  - f. Surgeries are planned covering managing attendance.
  - g. The first of a proposed annual staff survey has been implemented and analysed. Further surveys will track employee views.
2. As part of the annual Police and Crime plan review, sessions have held with partners to understand each other's context and the potential impacts that could arise. The information gained through these sessions will form part of the strategic assessment against which the Police and Crime plan will be developed.
3. A proposal to introduce an annual business planning cycle which comprises a formal, structured business planning cycle (developed by StraDA, Finance and SSI) comprising key milestones and decision points for the year, will be presented to Chief Officers in Spring 2016. A formal business plan would then be developed by each directorate consistent with the V2020 plan. Each business head will then develop their area's business plan consistent with the directorates.
4. A proposal for an Organisational Learning platform will be presented to the Chief Officers in Spring 2016 – this will form an umbrella function for the work being developed by Learning and Development, the Service Improvement Board and the 'Learning the lessons' group managed by Legal Services.
5. Medium Term Financial Plan  
Monthly reports are provided by the Director of Finance to the Executive Board. The report outlines the current financial position and will provide an early warning should any substantive risks be identified.

6. There is a substantial project plan covering the implementation of Athena into the Alliance. The implications of the introduction are well understood and there is regular management scrutiny of progress and issues.

**Signed:**

**Anthony Bangham Chief Constable of West Mercia Police**