



## **POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR WEST MERCIA**

### **RECORD OF DECISION**

#### **TITLE: WEST MERCIA JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Ref: PCC/D/2019/30

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As a result of the ending of the Strategic Alliance, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Chief Constable must review existing corporate governance arrangements and establish future arrangements for West Mercia.

It is now necessary to plan for alternative committee arrangements within West Mercia from October 2019. It is proposed that a Joint Audit And Standards Committee (JASC) for West Mercia be established.

The West Mercia JASC should meet four times a year, with the possibility of extra meetings being called if required. In order to ensure adequate scrutiny and resilience, a membership of five is proposed with a quorum of three. A member will be given specific responsibility for ethics and standards.

There are currently six members of the Warwickshire and West Mercia Joint Audit and Standards Committee. Given the experience of existing members, the open and transparent competitive process and the terms of their appointment, it is proposed that existing members be invited to express an interest in serving on the West Mercia JASC. Should the Chair of the Warwickshire and West Mercia JASC express an interest, it is recommended that she be appointed as Chair. If five or less express an interest, they will be appointed without interview. Should all six express an interest, the Chair be appointed and informal interviews/discussions take place to select the members. All members should be invited to express an interest in the position of Vice Chair (currently vacant) and Chair if the current Chair does not wish to continue. In the event that there are vacancies on the Committee, an open, transparent and competitive appointment process will be undertaken.



## PROPOSAL

This proposal is that a West Mercia Joint Audit and Standards Committee be appointed with five members from October 2019. All members will serve four years.

The Chair and members of the current Warwickshire and West Mercia Joint Audit and Standards Committee be invited to express an interest in serving as members of the West Mercia Joint Audit and Standards Committee.

## APPROVAL OF West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

I hereby approve the above proposal.

Signed

## West Mercia Chief Constable

I hereby approve the above proposal.

Signed

## **PART 1 – NON-CONFIDENTIAL/EXEMPT FACTS AND FIGURES**

### **SUPPORTING REPORT**

As a result of the ending of the Strategic Alliance, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Chief Constable must review existing corporate governance arrangements and establish future arrangements for West Mercia.

The Home Office Financial Management Code of Practice ('the Code') provides clarity around the financial governance arrangements within the police service in England and Wales. The Code is issued under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, and PCCs and Chief Constables must have regard to the Code when carrying out their functions.

The Code sets out the requirement for the PCC and Chief Constable to establish an independent Audit Committee.

In order to fulfil this requirement, an Alliance Joint Audit Committee (JAC) was originally established in 2012 to serve all of the Warwickshire and West Mercia Chief Constables and PCCs.

In June 2018, the decision was taken to incorporate the functions of the Warwickshire and West Mercia PCCs' Trust, Integrity and Ethics (TIE) Committee into the Alliance JAC. As such, there is a requirement that future arrangements in West Mercia continue to incorporate the work previously undertaken by the TIE Committee.

It is now necessary to plan for alternative committee arrangements within West Mercia from October 2019 to fulfil the original requirements / purpose as set out above.

The West Mercia JASC should meet four times a year, with the possibility of extra meetings being called if required. The Treasurer, the Chief Financial Officer, the Head of Internal Audit and the External Auditor should have a right of access to the JASC and in particular to the chair of the JASC in line with best practice guidance.

Attendance at the West Mercia JASC, dependent upon the agenda, should include representatives of the PCC, the Chief Constable, internal audit and external audit.



The West Mercia JASC should normally conduct its business in public, but may on occasion hold informal private sessions to deal with specific topics such as review of the draft statement of accounts prior to its publication. This will also be at the discretion of the JASC as advised by the PCC and Chief Constable on a risk basis, taking into account operational sensitivity and public reassurance.

In order to ensure adequate scrutiny and resilience, a membership of five is proposed with a quorum of three. A member will be given specific responsibility for ethics and standards.

There are currently six members of the Warwickshire and West Mercia Joint Audit and Standards Committee. Five members (including the Chair) were appointed in June 2016 for a period of four years. One member with responsibility for Ethics and Standards was appointed in January 2019 for a period of two years.

Given the experience of existing members, the open and transparent competitive process of appointment and the terms of their appointment, it is proposed that existing members be invited to express an interest in serving on the West Mercia Joint Audit and Standards Committee. Should the Chair of the Warwickshire and West Mercia Joint Audit and Standards Committee express an interest, it is recommended that she be appointed as Chair. If five or less express an interest, they will be appointed without interview. Should all six express an interest, the Chair be appointed and informal interviews/discussions take place to select the members. All members should be invited to express an interest in the position of Vice Chair (currently vacant) and Chair if the current Chair does not wish to continue. In the event that there are vacancies on the Committee, an open, transparent and competitive appointment process be undertaken.

Further information including terms of reference and administrative arrangements are included in the attached paper.

## **FINANCIAL COMMENTS**

JASC members will be paid an allowance approved by the Chief Finance Officer of the PCC. Committee members will receive an annual allowance of £2,000. The Committee Chair will receive a higher allowance of £2,500 and the Vice chair will receive £2,250. Expenses will be reimbursed at the same rates as police staff.

### LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

By virtue of schedule 11, paragraph 14 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the Police and Crime Commissioner may do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of commissioner. That includes: entering into contracts and other agreements (whether legally binding or not) and acquiring and disposing of property (including land).

### PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Information in this form is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and other legislation. Part 1 of this form will be made available on the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner's website. Any facts and advice that should not be made automatically available on request are not included in Part 1 but instead in the separate Part 2 report.

### OFFICER APPROVAL

**Chief Executive Officer**

Signature ..... *Andrew Cheevers* ..... Date 27<sup>th</sup> August 2019