

JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

19 March 2021

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF

ETHICS COMMITTEE FOLLOWING DEVOLUTION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide members with an update on proposals for the Ethics Committee following devolution in West Yorkshire.

KEY INFORMATION

2. On 11 March 2020 West Yorkshire Leaders and the Government signed a devolution deal for West Yorkshire which was considered by Parliament and approved on 29 January 2021. Part of the deal will see the election of a Mayor on 6 May 2021 and transfer of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) duties to the Mayor with effect from 10 May 2021.
3. Following a review of the operation of the Joint Independent Committee in April 2016, the PCC approved the establishment of the Joint Independent Audit and Ethics Committee. The Ethics element of the Committee was put in place to assist the Monitoring Officer to discharge their statutory responsibilities under s5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Statement of Purpose of this element of the Committee is, "to provide independent assurance to the PCC and Chief Constable that ethics and integrity are embedded within West Yorkshire Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and to scrutinise the ethical governance and complaints arrangements in order to ensure that issues are being handled expeditiously and following due process".
4. A review of the Ethics Committee began in 2020 but was suspended by the PCC so that OPCC resources could be directed to supporting the transition to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority as part of the West Yorkshire Devolution Deal and, also, so that the incoming Mayor can determine and agree ethics oversight arrangements with the Chief Constable and with members.
5. The Governance transition workstream, one of a number of workstreams focussed on preparing for the transfer of PCC duties to the Mayor, has proposed that the Joint Independent Audit and Ethics Committee continues to operate in its present form with adjustments to

the terms of reference to allow for an annual report to be made to the Governance and Audit Committee in the Combined Authority which will be responsible for approving the consolidated group accounts in the Mayoral Combined Authority.

6. The Governance transition workstream also proposes that consideration is given to the annual report to the Governance and Audit Committee including any ethical issues of relevance.
7. It is further proposed that a joint review is undertaken to assess the most efficient and effective arrangements for the statutory performance of each Committee going forward, once the operational implications of the Devolution Order are fully understood.
8. Draft revised terms of reference for the Ethics Committee are attached as Appendix A, to reflect the annual report to the Combined Authority's Governance and Audit Committee.
9. It is further proposed that recruitment to the vacant membership position on the Joint Independent Audit and Ethics Committee commences to enable resilience and quoracy in the Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That members note the content of the report and approve the revised terms of reference.

Julie Reid
Governance Manager
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner