



Audit Committee Terms of Reference – 10 October 2023

Originator: Chief Finance Officer, Jill Penn on behalf of the Audit Committee

Summary

The Terms of Reference should be reviewed annually, and the first draft of the new Terms of Reference were presented to the Audit Committee in July 2023. A further revision is now available for the Audit Committee to review and approve as an Appendix to this report. In addition, a Members Protocol has been drawn up at the request of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable and is also attached to this report. This Protocol is for observation not approval.

Introduction

The purpose of the Audit Committee is to provide independent advice and recommendations to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable for Norfolk on the adequacy of governance and risk management frameworks, the internal control environment and financial reporting.

The Committee has an independent role to review the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control arrangements in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk (OPCCN) and in Norfolk Constabulary. It also reviews financial reporting and annual governance processes as well as the work of the internal and external auditors.

This report highlights revisions in the Terms of Reference to ensure that good governance is in place.

Membership

The Committee is looking to increase from 5 independently appointed members who have a range of backgrounds and experience to 6 and a recruitment process will be undertaken in the autumn. The terms have been proposed as no more than 2 terms and a term shall not be more than 4 years.

The membership rule includes a qualification for members to have their service extended due to exceptional circumstances. Please Note: - this applies to the 3 members in post at 20th August 2023.

Reports are available 5 working days before the Committee meeting and this has now been embedded in the Terms of Reference.

There is an action around timing of minutes and in the Terms of Reference is described as draft minutes being provided promptly.

The Chartered Institute of Governance mentions that audit committees should have access to sufficient resources to carry out its duties. The administration of the audit committee is undertaken by the Chief Finance Officer with support from Business Support officers. This is a finite resource, however, has functioned effectively to date.

It also points out that it should be able to seek information from any employee. However, the Audit Committee is set up so that the information flow is through the Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Constable's Assistant Chief Officer as delegated by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable. This clause has not been added into the Terms of Reference.

Conclusion

The terms of reference for the Committee need to be reviewed and any necessary changes agreed by the committee and then will be published on the OPCCN website.