

CLEVELAND POLICE

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Position as at 31st March 2026

1. Evaluation

Following this review, governance and decision-making arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework.

Having considered all the principles, we are satisfied that the organisation has adopted a response that is appropriate for its fraud and corruption risks and commits to maintain its vigilance to tackle fraud.

Victoria Fuller	Ian Wright
Chief Constable	Assistant Chief Officer
Cleveland Police	Cleveland Police

Date xxxxxxx

2. Scope of responsibility

2.1 Following the introduction of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act (2011) the position of Chief Constable has been established as a Corporation Sole. For the purposes of this document the terms Chief Constable, the Force and Cleveland Police should be read as one and the same.

2.2 The Chief Constable is responsible for ensuring Force business is conducted in accordance with the financial governance arrangements outlined in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Financial Management Code for the Police Service of England and Wales (2019). The Chief Constable also has a statutory duty to secure value for money in the use of public funds.

2.3 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Chief Constable is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the Force, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2.4 Cleveland Police has an established Corporate Governance Framework through which the Chief Constable can be assured that the Force's systems, policies, and people are focused in a way that is driving the delivery of agreed priorities. Along with focus on key risks to the delivery of those priorities the governance framework also provides assurance that the Force operates in an efficient and effective manner.

2.5 This statement meets the requirements of Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, regulation 6(1)b, which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

3. The purpose of the governance framework

3.1 The governance framework comprises the culture, values systems, processes, and assurance framework by which the Force is directed and controlled and the activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its community. It enables the Force to monitor the achievement of its priorities and to consider whether they have led to the delivery of efficient and effective services.

3.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Cleveland Police's priorities, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively, and economically.

3.3 This governance framework has been in place at Cleveland Police for the year ended 31st March 2026, and up to the date of the approval of the accounts.

4. The governance framework

4.1 The Force has a joint corporate governance framework with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Cleveland. The framework sets out the way that the two organisations, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable, govern, both jointly and separately. The framework also details the delegations and consents from the PCC to the Force and outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of officers. The framework is reviewed and amended as necessary on an annual basis.

4.2 The Chief Constable is responsible for the delivery of operational policing, the direction and control of police personnel, and for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the Force. The Chief Constable also has a statutory duty under section 35 of Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act (2011) to secure that they and the persons under their direction and control secure value for money in exercising their functions.

4.3 The PCC for Cleveland is responsible for ensuring that the Chief Constable delivers an efficient and effective police force and holds the Chief Constable to account for the operational delivery of policing.

4.4 In addition to the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for Cleveland Police, the PCC is also required to produce an AGS. The two AGS's complement each other by:

- outlining the key methods of assurance which operate in each body to ensure that, overall effective control is exercised;
- showing which key documents/reports of Cleveland Police are scrutinised by the PCC as part of wider accountability;
- demonstrating how the policing elements of the Police & Crime Plan are delivered by Cleveland Police and are underpinned by public consultation on the part of the PCC as part of wider accountability.

4.5 Both the PCC and Cleveland Police must produce separate accounts which are then consolidated into group accounts. This ensures that both individual and collective

financial stewardship of public money is effective and is underpinned by annual external audit. In addition, the PCC is required to approve the Force's budget each year in consultation with the Chief Constable.

4.6 This Annual Governance Statement provides a summary of the extent to which the Force meets the seven principles of good governance as identified in the *Delivering Good Governance: Guidance Notes for Policing Bodies in England and Wales (2016)* and the revised *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: framework* (2025).

4.7 While the concepts of good governance are acknowledged and understood, the appropriate day-to-day processes must be in place to allow this to happen. These are detailed in the following sections structured around the seven principles.

5. Overview of HMICFRS PEEL inspection findings and our response

5.1 In 2024 the Force underwent their 2023-25 round of the PEEL inspection. This assessed the Force's performance against nine areas of policing with graded judgements provided for eight of these areas as follows (the service that Cleveland Police gives to victims of crime was also inspected but not graded):

- Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect (Good)
- Preventing crime and antisocial behaviour (Good)
- Responding to the public (Adequate)
- Investigating crime (Requires improvement)
- Protecting vulnerable people (Requires improvement)
- Managing offenders and suspects (Good)
- Building, supporting and protecting the workforce (Good)
- Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money (Adequate)

5.2 This was a significant improvement from the 2021-22 Inspection with grades increasing in five of the areas inspected. The force was given 8 areas for improvement (AFIs) as a result of this inspection. In 2026 a review of these AFIs was conducted with the HMIC with progress being shown in all areas, but more sustained outcomes being required for closure to be agreed. These AFIs will now be reviewed as part of the 2026-27 PEEL Inspection which is underway. Also during this review, the final remaining AFI issued to the force as part of the inspection into the NE regional response to serious and organised crime was reviewed and closed.

5.3 Also in 2024, and immediately prior to the PEEL inspection commencing, the Force was one of the first in the country to be inspected on the new National Child Protection Inspection (NCPI) regime. The NCPI looked specifically at how the Force responds to incidents and investigations involving children and included partnership working, missing persons, child abuse and exploitation investigations. The new regime now awards grades in five areas and the Force was graded as follows.

- Working with safeguarding partners (Adequate)
- Leadership (Requires Improvement)
- Assessing risk and making referrals (Requires Improvement)
- Responding to children at risk (Inadequate)
- Investigating reports of neglect abuse and exploitation (Inadequate)

This resulted in two causes of concern and five AFIs. The Force commenced an action plan to resolve these immediately. In September 2025 the two causes of concern and four of the AFIs were reviewed and closed with the remaining AFI being completed in February 2026.

5.4 Governance and scrutiny arrangements associated with HMICFRS activity are the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Constable led Governance of Audit and Inspection (GAIN) Board. This board meets monthly and has responsibility for ensuring that the Force meets the standards of 'good' outlined in the HMICFRS PAF and responds effectively to areas for improvement arising from previous inspection activity. All areas of the PAF have a designated owner at Chief Officer team level and a nominated delivery lead.



Structure of the AGS

The following sections of the Annual Governance Statement are structured around the seven principles outline in the CIPFA guide and provides evidence that the behaviours described within the seven Nolan principles are met by the Force. Each section contains a summary of the expected behaviours (shown within a box) followed by the supporting evidence.

6. Principle A – behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

6.1 The Force adopts the Competency and Values Framework (CVF) defined by the College of Policing. The updated CVF released in May 2024 has been adopted by the Force and includes values of courage, respect and empathy and public service. The CVF aligns with the Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics includes ethical policing principles to support decision making, as well as guidance on ethical and professional behaviour. The CVF and Code of Ethics continue to form part of all selection, promotion and performance review processes. The Code, the CVF and the associated behaviours are underpinned by the statutory Code of Practice for ethical policing, which sets out actions that the Chief Constable carries out to ensure that Cleveland Police has an ethical culture, where staff are supported and directed to use the ethical policing principles in decision making and to demonstrate professional behaviour.

Behaving with integrity **Expected behaviours and outcomes**
• Ensuring that chief officers and staff behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby promoting and upholding the reputation of the Force among its stakeholders. • Ensuring chief officers lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for their forces and staff and that they are communicated and understood. The values should build on the Nolan Principles and the *Code of Ethics*. • Leading by example and using above standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions. • Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively.

6.2 Police officers and police staff are subject to a Code of Conduct and the Code of Ethics and are required to abide by the seven principles of public life (Nolan principles).

6.3 The Code of Ethics produced by the College of Policing sets out the values and standards of professional behaviour for the police service of England and Wales. The Code of Practice for Ethical Policing, Ethical Policing Principles, and the Guidance for Ethical and Professional Behaviour in Policing, work together to ensure that we do the right things, in the right way, for the right reasons. The Force Strategic Plan is underpinned by the Code of Ethics, with its principles embedded throughout. The Force has been provided with seven training modules by the College of Policing, focused on

introducing ethical scenarios to encourage all officers and staff to consider how, and why, they would act. The modules include an in-classroom session with a facilitator who will guide participants through several scenarios, exploring the ethics in how they would navigate and act in these situations. This training is mandatory for all within the Force and a delivery plan is underway to achieve this. The Code of Ethics is at the heart of all we do and is a golden thread throughout our policing strategy and decision making. A comprehensive approach to service improvement seeks to understand organisational behaviour and embed the Code of Ethics in the Force through training, Performance Development Review (PDR) and day to day business. In May 2025, the College of Policing issued a ten-point self-assessment tool to support forces in embedding the Code of Ethics across all areas; this was completed and submitted by Cleveland in April 2026 with the report identifying six Green areas, and four Amber. Activity continues to maintain and improve this. The report remains a live document and will continue to support the ongoing integration of the Code and its principles.

6.4 Following an inspection in November 2022 into the effectiveness of the Force's Counter Corruption Unit (CCU) and Vetting Unit, HMICFRS published a report of their findings in June 2023, rating the department as adequate. The report highlighted the Vetting Unit required improvements in understanding which roles within the Force required enhanced levels of vetting including levels of vetting for non-police personal, understanding disproportionality, having sufficient levels of staffing to meet demand and effective use of mitigation strategies where vetting holders are subject of adverse information. During a review of 40 case files, HMICFRS overall agreed with the decision making conducted. The report highlighted several areas of good practice by the CCU, praising its approach to managing the risk of corruption, sexual misconduct, financial risk and ability to audit police systems. Following the consolidation of the CCU and Vetting Unit, several streams of work and initiatives have been introduced to improve effectiveness and performance with additional training and the use of robotic process automation as part of the research function in gathering information from various systems to enable staff to focus on decision making, reducing processing time to ensure the Force is competitive. Non-Police vetting applications are now contracted to Warwickshire Police vetting service. A pilot using ACRO vetting research service has led to adoption as business as usual. The Vetting Unit now has a Power Bi dashboard, so performance can be effectively monitored and is governed through the Silver Vetting Group that is chaired by the Head of Professional Standards. HMICFRS have been invited to inspect the latest updates to the Force Vetting Unit, in order to complete the AFI. The Force Vetting Unit have improved governance and are now compliant with the 2025 Vetting Regulations, which came into effect in May 2025, the changes within the 2024 Vetting Authorised Professional Practice, introduced following the Di Maria judgement and the 2025 Regulations and additionally, the recommendations from the Angiolini Enquiry.

6.5 The Discipline Peer Support officers provide an extra level of independent support to every member of staff who are under investigation for gross misconduct. The role complements the support offered by welfare and staff associations and is managed by the Professional Standards Department. There are currently 14 trained members of staff on the DPS cohort and 4 members of staff who are currently receiving support. The support is proving popular and there will be further advertising and training for

more volunteers with a view to offering support to staff under investigation for misconduct on a case by case basis.

6.6 The Force has an Ethic and Standards Group which provides strategic oversight, monitoring and scrutiny of the standards of ethical and professional behaviour. In addition, the internal and external ethics committees provide both inclusivity and scrutiny for ethical behaviour within Cleveland Police. Ethical dilemmas are discussed regularly to calibrate ethical behaviours, and to assist in navigating areas of ethical uncertainty. Ethical dilemmas can be referred from various sources including PSD, digital forums, Human Resources (HR), and from all officers and staff. They are sent to the operational ethics lead through a bespoke referral mechanism and assessed. All internal Tier 1, 2 and 3 meeting board agendas have an ethical reminder to promote ethical matters to be raised through such mechanisms. The reporting period saw a total of 16 ethical dilemmas items brought to the attention of the operational ethics lead, of which six were discussed at the Ethics and Standards Board, and 11 discussed in the Independent Ethics Committee meetings co-ordinated by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC); these are reported in greater detail in the November Ethics Audit Reports. The ethical items raised and discussed have contributed to organisational learning and development of force policies, including the force's approach to how officers utilise social media and BWV. The group and PSD continue to drive organisational learning and in the 12 months of March 2025 to March 2026, 45 lessons learned were published both on the PSD SharePoint, raised into the Tactical Organisational learning Group and Organisational Learning Board and documented on the OL Portal. The PSD Prevent Team also take these lessons learned to Command SLT meetings.

6.7 The National Decision Model (NDM) is used across the Force to support the use of greater discretion and encourages decision makers to follow an easy to use, consistent and robust process which has the vision and values of the Force, and the Code of Ethics, at its heart. The Model can be used to support both operational and non-operational decisions, no matter how complex and it can be used by both police officers and staff alike in their professional roles. Training for all officers and staff on the NDM incorporates the Code of Ethics central to the decision-making process.

6.8 The Force has a Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy which provides a standardised approach to minimising fraud and corruption. This policy was last updated in July 2022 in line with identified best practice in other forces and is currently under review.

6.9 The Force cooperates with the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) and submits the required data every two years. The NFI is an exercise that matches electronic data within and between public and private sector bodies to prevent and detect fraud.

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values **Expected behaviours and outcomes**
• Seeking to understand, monitor and maintain the Force's ethical performance. • Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the Force's culture and operation. • Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values.

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- Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the Force are required to act with integrity and in compliance with ethical standards expected by the Force.

6.10 The Ethics and Standards Group is chaired by the Superintendent of the Professional Standards Department and facilitated by the Operational Ethics lead Sergeant. The Board reports directly to the Strategic Workforce Planning Board (SWPB), chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC). The Board consists of representations from HR, Legal, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), OPCC, representative bodies (Federation, UNISON and Superintendents Association), internal ethics committee chair, independent scrutiny (Independent Ethics Committee chair and Audit Committee), Corporate Services and Learning and Development. The Board has agreed to expand its membership to include appropriate persons from operational and investigatory departments to widen the impact of the Board, as well provide greater opportunity for matters to feed into the Board for review.

6.11 The Force also has internal ethics members (Ethics Advocates) who compliment the Ethics and Standards Group, and the OPCC facilitated Independent Ethics Committee. The internal ethics committee members have a voluntary lead, and members support the ethical discussion generated by the Ethics and Standards Group. The committee has a dedicated intranet site which promotes the work of the group and identifies the members so that officers and staff can easily access advice and guidance on ethical issues. This site and the associated Code of Ethics site are regularly updated so as to be relevant and contemporary. The Force's internal Code of Ethics site has all the College of Policing products and signposting, as well as the various resources, initiatives and complimentary work related to ethics produced internally. The Ethics Advocates membership remains healthy and varied, with over 43 members representing nearly various departments and teams across the Force. The internal members have discussed a wide range of issues, both in person at meetings, online in digital meetings, or electronically to respond to ethical dilemmas and discussions. The Ethics Advocates are provided training and support to assist in their development and effectiveness.

6.12 The external Independent Ethics Committee increases the transparency and accountability of decision makers and enriches the decision-making process. The committee is made up of members from ever increasing and diverse backgrounds across the communities the force serves; this is facilitated in partnership with the OPCC. The committee discusses specific questions that have been sent for their consideration, as well as identifying their own discussion points which the force welcomes. The committee has been facilitated through the use of a digital meeting platform combined with face-to-face meetings, and a hybrid of both. The group has met four times from March 2025 to March 2026 and discussed 11 ethical dilemmas, as well as other topics such as the Code of Ethics and the review of force policy and guidance (for example how officers should utilise social media and a review of the BWV policy). The OPCC are seeking to initiate a Young Peoples Scrutiny panel in September 2026 to enhance independence, decision making in relation to processes and ethical issues.

6.13 The three forums utilise a referral mechanism between one another facilitated by the Operational Ethics Lead. Items which are discussed are posted onto the internal Code of Ethics site and minutes of the Independent Ethics Committee meetings are listed on the OPCC website for public consumption.

6.14 The People Intelligence Meeting (PIM) operates as a strategic and organisational forum which was established to monitor individual cases of concern with the aim of holistically managing and mitigating the risk of individuals, whilst offering supportive interventions. The Board is now chaired and owned by the Head of PSD. On a monthly basis the PIB looks at organisational trends and risks relating to a range of people issues that would otherwise be dealt with in isolation; combining subject matter expertise from HR, Wellbeing, Legal Services, PSD and heads of command. The aim is to identify lessons learned leading to organisational change to ensure high standards of conduct and professional behaviour across the Force. This covers a range of information including sickness, grievances, serious conduct matters and public complaints, Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) referrals, business interests, notifiable associations, civil claims, high risk welfare and capability issues. The PIM aims to draw upon subject matter expertise to minimise risk and provide a co-ordinated and timely problem-solving approach to items brought to the Group.

6.15 The PIM has led to several preventative interventions with officers and staff subject of intelligence of alleged unethical behaviour or diversion into the various problem-solving processes within the CCU, such as Operation Beacon. Where monitoring and interventions do not lead to improvements from the individuals, the interventions can be used as evidence to exit officers and staff from the organisation through Misconduct proceedings or vetting processes.

6.16 In May 2023, the Force conducted an initial historical data wash (HDW) as part of policing's largest integrity screening project. The process retrieved the associated records from the Police National database (PND), assessing and developing any previously unknown intelligence. It generated over 1,400 lines of data to review; and the assessments did not lead to any criminal or conduct proceedings. The force has now gone a step further, in instigating OPERATION FIDES. The FIDES team are examining all cases, where a serving Cleveland Officer or staff member has adverse information relating to behaviour, specifically any information around sexual misconduct. Where cases are of concern, they are transferred to the Force Vetting Authority for assessment. Additionally, as a result of the Home Office and Angiolini Enquiry requesting data in relation to police officers and staff against 'listed offences' Cleveland Police again researched every individual on both PND and PNC to identify any historic positive outcomes in relation to those offences – nothing of significance was identified. The longer-term solution in relation to Continuous Integrity Screening (CIS) is ongoing, with the Home Office working on the technical solution for HR systems to feed data into the national system. This will identify future risks being flagged to forces and will likely be introduced in 2027.

6.17 Initial induction training for police officers and staff covers professional conduct, the Code of Ethics, the NDM, and the Force values and the CVF. The Code of Ethics and the NDM are revisited regularly over the course of Student Officer training. There are currently two routes open to new Student Officers; the two year Police Constable Entry

Programme (PCEP) which is the traditional entry route (with optional detective pathway), and the three year Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA).

Respecting the rule of law Expected behaviours and outcomes
• Ensuring the PCC, chief officers and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations. • Creating the conditions to ensure that statutory chief officers, other key post holders and (where appropriate) statutory committees are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with best practice. • Striving to use full powers for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders. • Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively. • Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively.

6.18 The Force has a Reporting Professional Standards Concerns and Protected Disclosure Policy (published in April 2026 following review) that provides a mechanism that complies with legislative requirements and enables staff to raise issues of concern regarding wrongdoing and inappropriate conduct and behaviour within the workplace ("whistle blowing"). The policy is considered integral to creating a safe environment in which staff at all levels feel a genuine obligation to maintain the integrity of the police service and have the confidence to support the Force in maintaining the Standards of Professional Behaviour and the Code of Ethics.

6.19 As public sector organisations Cleveland Police and the OPCC are subject to the Equality Act 2010 and public sector equality duties. This means the organisation is required to actively consider opportunities to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations when making decisions. To demonstrate commitment to the duties the Force has adopted the national Culture and Inclusion Strategy (2025-2030) and continue to deliver its objectives set in 2022. These objectives have two aims: serving the public and putting our communities at the heart of all we do. Cleveland Police's Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives are to:

- Embed best practice tools to understand and demonstrate due regard. This will be measured through increasing victim satisfaction, public confidence and employee engagement aligned to the protected characteristics. We will measure this through our victim and staff surveys and public confidence measures.
- Promote and build an ethical and inclusive culture at all levels across the organisation and to provide a quality service to our diverse communities by treating all fairly, appropriately, and respectfully. We have clear actions in place to ensure that all our policies and practices are refreshed, and our activity supports our DEI programme.

The Force embeds equality duty compliance and delivery of the strategy through several organisational mechanisms. These mechanisms are in place to ensure positive outcomes for both the workforce and members of the public accessing services.

The Force has complied with statutory reporting requirements, completing and publishing Gender Pay Gap and Annual Equality Monitoring Reports, alongside ensuring up to date Public Sector Equality Duty objectives are in place for the three years ahead. The Force has also completed an Ethnicity Pay Gap Report and a Disability Pay Gap Report. This information is available for the public on the Force website and can be supplied in alternative and accessible formats if requested.

The Force achieved Disability Confident Leader status (Level 3) in 2024 and are continuing work to maintain our accreditation. We will be reassessed in 2027 and will provide evidence of continuous improvement in this area.

The equality impact assessment model established in 2020 has continued to be embedded into Force decision making processes for policies, strategies and services. The DEI team have continued to update the model and are iteratively improving the tools, guidance and resources available for the workforce to impact assess their work. 48 impact assessments were completed in the 2025-26 period, leading the Force having a total of 267 EIAs deployed to date to assure outcomes for the workforce and community.

6.20 There are nine Cleveland Police Staff Networks, including the HeForShe Movement:

- Armed Forces Network
- Parent/Carers Network
- Christian Police Association
- Cleveland Police Women's Network
- Disability and Neurodiversity Support Network
- HeForShe Movement
- LGBT+ Network
- Race Equality Network
- Vegan Network

The networks and HeForShe Movement bring together individuals who share common experiences, interests, or backgrounds, creating spaces where diverse perspectives are celebrated and respected. The networks have delivered a range of activities for their members and the wider workforce to improve inclusion, wellbeing and organisational decision making in the 2025-26 period. In recognition of this impact, the Armed Forces Network was honoured at the 2025 National Soldiering On Awards as national winner in the “Working Together” category, celebrating their outstanding commitment to the armed forces community.

6.21 The Force continues to performance manage powers and services that are critical to legitimacy, with a bi-monthly performance meeting for both Stop and Search and Use of Force monitoring data quality, compliance, and disproportionality. This is supported by a bi-monthly external scrutiny panel and a bi-monthly internal review. The quarterly external scrutiny panel for Rape and Serious Sexual Assault Offences (RASSO) provides review of three cases per panel. The panel comprises of statutory and non-statutory partners in addition to police panel members with operational and strategic actions fed back through agreed governance routes. The external scrutiny panel for both Stop and Search and Use of Force comprises of independent members of the public reviewing stop search reports and use of force reports and viewing associated body worn video footage. The internal review comprises of an audit of stop search

compliance against grounds and powers. Feedback is given to individuals (and line managers) for every incident reviewed and back into the Force through an organisational learning document and input into the IMPACT (Improving and Managing Performance Across Cleveland Together) Board. Activity continues ensure our treatment of and outcomes for detained people are improved. A robust performance management framework has been created and internal review work has been undertaken to assure this is driving the required progress. Strategic oversight of this is maintained through Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) led governance.

6.22 The Force continues to drive improvements in the recording of ethnicity data to enable us to fully understand the communities' we police, provide the best service to our victims, treat all we interact with fairness and respect and deal with any disparity we identify. Both the Police Race Action Plan and the Baroness Casey Review emphasise the importance of victim-centred approaches in areas such as Rape, Serious Sexual Assault and Exploitation, for black and ethnic minority people. Our improvements are part of a long-term programme to improve data integrity and the understanding of our communities so together we can continue to protect people. These improvements are monitored by both the IMPACT Board and the Culture and Inclusion Board.

6.23 The Force and the OPCC have a number of platforms where the Force can explore community feedback. These groups are integral to creating feedback that enables the Force, OPCC and HMICFRS to be assured that the community are being treated fairly, appropriately and respectfully. Transparently engaging diverse communities in scrutiny of powers and processes that are critical to legitimacy is an essential part of the Force demonstrating commitment to our public sector equality duties. The groups who have provided feedback and scrutiny in this reporting period include:

- Cleveland Youth Advisory Group (YAG)
- Complaints Scrutiny Panel
- Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs)
- Independent Ethics Committee (IEC)
- Joint Audit Committee
- Local Independent Advisory Groups (one for each local policing area) (IAGs)
- Out of Court Disposals (OoCD) Panel
- Stop and Search Panels
- Strategic Independent Advisory Group (SIAG)

6.24 The Force continues to improve its approach to learning and training needs assessments to inform workforce learning and development. EDI and inclusive leadership learning experiences remain embedded within the Force's Leadership Development, with core EDI and cultural competencies integrated throughout. This is further supported by a wider programme of learning and key awareness events (e.g. the Force-wide programme celebrating Black History Month, International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), and International Women's Day (IWD)).

6.25 The Force has an Assistant Chief Officer in post who is the statutory 'Section 151' Officer for the Force. The Force's Assistant Chief Officer works closely with the Chief Finance Officer of the PCC ensuring an effective, cooperative and constructive

relationship, and complies with the CIPFA statement on The Role of the CFO in Policing (2021).

6.26 In 2023 the Force joined the CIPFA Achieving Excellence in Finance in Policing (AFEP) network. This national network promotes the sharing of best practice between Forces and provides training opportunities with the aim of improving financial management in the sector.

6.27 The progress and performance of standards and ethics continue to be monitored through the embedded governance and performance structures. The first tranche of the Police (Conduct)(Amendment) Regulations 2024 has been implemented with chairs now trained and hearings have taken place under the new process. Implementation of the tranche 2 amendments is currently on hold, awaiting direction from Government.

6.28 The Joint Audit Committee receives reports on complaints against police on a six-monthly basis, along with examples of 'lessons learnt' that have been circulated across the Force.

6.29 Cleveland Police contributes to and supports a robust legal services provision which has depth and breadth of expertise in regulatory, corporate and operational law. The service operates across for specialist teams and is able to provide expert legal advice and representation. The legal service is regularly audited and provides strong financial and risk management across legal liabilities and duties.

7. Principle B – Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Openness **Expected behaviours and outcomes**
• Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the Force's commitment to openness. The presumption is for openness. If this is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential should be provided. • Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. • Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. In due course, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions is clear. • Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/courses of action.

7.1 Public confidence is measured via the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), a national survey commissioned by the Home Office, conducted via face to face interviews. Force level information is our primary source of data which allows us to track and monitor levels of public confidence amongst local communities; although the force level sample size is very small and therefore these results need to be treated with some caution.

7.2 In December 2020, the Force introduced a public engagement survey. Known as the 'Communities Survey' the aim of this survey is to reach out to our local communities and ask them to provide structured feedback in relation to what it is like to live in their local area, what they feel our priorities should be and whether they have trust and confidence in the services we currently provide. Many of the questions replicate those used in our previous Local Public Confidence Survey, and the CSEW. Despite offering residents the opportunity to complete the survey online, via a postal questionnaire and in seven different languages, we have been unable to generate the number of responses required to provide us with statistically valid breakdown at a local policing level. In 2023 the Communities Survey was put on hold pending a review of our Public Engagement Strategy. At this time there are no plans to reintroduce this force-wide survey with more localised surveys being conducted by our neighbourhood policing teams instead.

7.3 The Force aims to place victims at the centre of everything that we do, achieving a high level of victim satisfaction is therefore a key performance outcome. Victim satisfaction is measured via a telephone based 'Victim Experience Survey' which has been in operation since May 2021. Over the past year around 1,300 victims were interviewed, and we have achieved a response rate of around 16%. The results obtained via this survey are generally positive indicating an overall satisfaction level of around 72%, which is a marginal reduction, compared to last year (down 0.5% point). Further improvements are still required particularly in relation to follow up and feedback. With another marginal improvement on the previous year, this continues to be the service aspect with the lowest level of satisfaction.

7.4 All public authorities are required to provide a publication scheme. The Cleveland Police Publication Scheme, which is available through the Force website, is our way of making sure that information relating to specified 'information classes', is routinely published. In addition to the information that falls into these categories, the scheme also includes information that we have disclosed in response to freedom of information (FOI) requests.

Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders **Expected behaviours and outcomes**
• Effectively engaging with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably. • Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively. • Ensuring that partnerships, including collaborations, are based on trust, a shared commitment to change, and a culture which promotes and accepts challenge among partners and that the added value of partnership working is explicit.

7.5 The Force has an Engagement Strategy (published September 2024) informed by best practice and a local community engagement survey. To support the delivery of the strategy a framework has been developed under the five pillars of Informing, Involving, Consulting, Collaborating and Empowering. A refined process is in place to identify

and communicate local priorities and provide updates on progress and outcomes, with technological solutions being developed to support that process.

7.6 Within Cleveland there are four geographic Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) covering each local authority area, and a Strategic IAG (SIAG) bringing together representatives from the geographic IAGs, including senior police officers and staff, and the PCC, to discuss strategic issues that affect the whole of the Cleveland policing area. Work has been undertaken to increase the diversity of SIAG members and this is continuing with a review of the terms of reference for SIAG and IAG and the recruitment process.

7.7 The Force is party to 25 collaborative agreements; 10 national; 5 regional, 3 with North East Regional Organised Crime Unit (NEROCU) and 7 with other police forces to increase resilience and effectiveness and reduce costs, with Section 22A agreements in place defining the governance arrangements and funding formulas.

7.8 The Forensic Collision Investigation Unit, and firearms and ARVO taser training (provided through the shared Tactical Training Centre) continue to be part of a S22 collaboration with Durham Constabulary overseen through the strategic Joint Operating Group. The TTC governance and S22 agreement will be updated as part of the PFI transition process; with the JOG no longer holding responsibility.

7.9 Considerable progress has been made on the Evolve collaboration programme between Cleveland Police, Durham Constabulary and North Yorkshire Police; looking at where working together can improve services to communities and reduce operating costs. As part of the Evolve programme, the police and crime commissioners and forces have a fully collaborated Legal Service which has resulted in restructuring of teams across all three forces. The Service was launched in February 2020 within the three forces and work continues to drive forwards its effectiveness and realise further efficiencies. The service has delivered legal services across all three forces but continues to focus on local delivery to Chief Constables and has provided depth and breadth of expertise in core service areas having built resilience in respect of increasing and complex demand under the current structure and model. Evolve Legal Services is continuing its alignment phase to embed the structure and practices following recent review of the operating model at the end of 2023 and anticipates further efficiencies from this. The service supports the National Association of Police Lawyers, NEROCU, and other regional collaborations. The service is working towards LEXCEL accreditation.

7.10 The NEROCU provides specialist capabilities to tackle Serious & Organised Crime (SOC), in support of Northumbria, Durham and Cleveland Police forces. The delivery of capabilities is in line with the national strategy for Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCUs) and offers additional or specialist capabilities to that which exists in forces. The unit operates within a regional tasking model which prioritises these capabilities based on threat, harm and risk, using nationally recognised models for the assessment of such.

7.11 The Force is also part of a national collaboration for the provision of air support, the National Police Air Service (NPAS).

Engaging with individual citizens and service users Expected behaviours and outcomes
• Establishing a clear policy about the type of issues on which the Force will meaningfully consult with, or involve, individual communities, citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that a service provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes. • Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that the PCC and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement. • Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs. • Implementing effective feedback mechanisms for those consultees in order to demonstrate how their views have been taken into account. • Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity. • Taking account of the interests of future generations of taxpayers and service users.

7.12 There is regular communication between the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Cleveland Police, with the Chief Constable meeting the PCC on a weekly basis to update on current issues. In addition, the PCC Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Constable's Assistant Chief Officer also meet on a weekly basis.

7.13 The Chief Constable attends the Tees Valley Chief Execs meeting on a bi-monthly basis, which is attended by all four Local Authority Chief Executives. The Chief Constable meets with the Chief Crown Prosecutor on a quarterly basis. The Chief Officer team quarterly meetings with the Cleveland Fire Brigade Chief Officer team are in the process of being reinstated. In addition, the Force works in partnership with the local authorities, and other stakeholders, e.g. health, education and social care on a range of issues, for example: multi-agency children's hub, community safety partnerships, local safeguarding boards, health and wellbeing boards, youth offending boards and the strategic contest delivery group. This is not an exhaustive list.

8. Principle C – Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

Defining outcomes Expected behaviours and outcomes
• Having a clear vision – an agreed formal statement of the Force's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators which provides the basis for the Force's overall strategy, planning and other decisions. • Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including individual citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer.

- Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available, while recognising that changing and unforeseen demands will place additional pressure on financial resources.
- Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes as part of delivering goods and services.
- Managing expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available.

8.1 The Force has a clear vision to deliver outstanding policing for our communities. The mission of the Force is:

- Protect People
- Protect Communities
- Tackle Criminals
- Be The Best We Can Be

8.2 The vision and values are supported by a performance management strategy and performance measurement framework that has been developed in line with National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) guidelines. The performance framework is outcome driven and has been built around Chief's mission and four strategic priorities. Within the framework we have identified a number of key performance outcomes which we are able to track and monitor using a wide range of quantifiable performance indicators alongside additional qualitative evidence and insight. Through our analysis of this data, we will be able to evidence the progress we have made and identify where further improvements are still required. During the past year, our performance framework and associated governance structure has been subject to further development and refinement to ensure alignment with the Chief Constable's mission and revised Force operating model. The IMPACT performance framework continues to inform our performance conversations at both the strategic and tactical level. This can be seen through our bi-monthly Force IMPACT Board meeting (see section 9.5) and associated thematic governance groups. To support the IMPACT framework, we have continued to develop a range of new and revised performance products and automated tools. Our IMPACT performance dashboard is now fully operational, providing the quarterly Executive Management Board with a high-level organisational health check across key victim services.

8.3 A key enabler for delivery of the Force vision has been the development of a sustainable local policing model that can effectively respond to threat, harm and risk. This model has been refined to respond to the areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS, the threats identified in our Strategic Threat & Risk Assessment (STRA), risk areas identified through the Force Management Statement (FMS); and a programme of refreshed demand modelling, improving our ability to understand demand, by the demand analysis team. An annual plan is developed which includes the ongoing maintenance of those demand models already created and the development of further models for business areas which have been highlighted as a risk through the Force Management Statement process. The prioritisation and delivery of the annual plan is overseen by the SWPB. The STRA is published every two years, following approval through the Executive Management Board. The next STRA is due for completion in 2026-27.

8.4 The Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) 2026-27 to 2029-30 and Capital Plan 2026-27 to 2029-30 were agreed with the PCC in February 2026. The Force produces monthly reports on progress against the plan which are reviewed by the Executive Management Board and discussed with the PCC's Chief Finance Officer.

8.5 A significant effort has been put into ensuring the completeness of both revenue and capital rolling equipment replacement programmes to: ensure funding is available when necessary; avoid spikes in expenditure by smoothing the replacement profile; inform the procurement plan to ensure timely ordering and receipt of equipment, and inform prioritisation and decision making.

Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits **Expected behaviours and outcomes**
• Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions when taking decisions about services. • Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the PCC and the chief officer's intended outcomes and short term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints • Ensuring fair access to services.

8.6 The Force has continued to improve processes around capital planning and change management to ensure clarity and understanding of change requests and the timeliness of decision making. The Business Case Triage Group continues to operate and improve the collective discussions prior to any formal decision making on the approval of requests for change that may impact on service delivery and helping to manage expectations around delivery of such change. Recent changes have seen the introduction of a review by Information Management and Professional Standards colleagues at an earlier stage, to streamline the process and identify Information Security risks and highlight any ethical and technological considerations that should be considered at the outset of the approval process. The change requests have also been expanded to include all vehicle and estates moves to ensure all changes to are tracked, approved and documented to ensure full transparency.

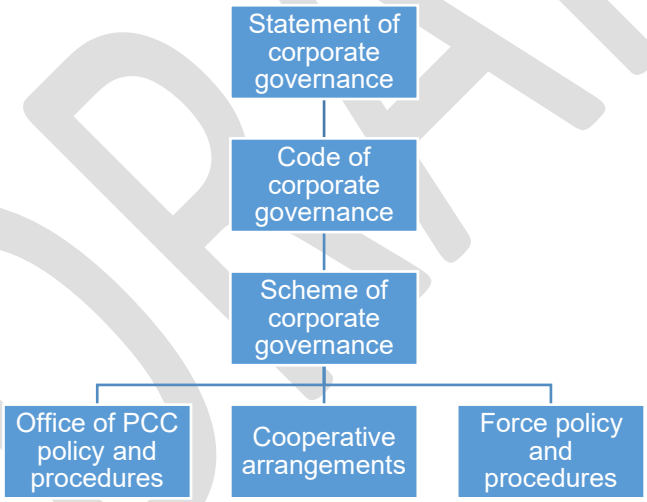
8.7 The Digital, Data and Change Board, chaired by the Assistant Chief Officer, meets on a monthly basis to drive delivery of the Force change and innovation programme ensuring that projects are prioritised, resourced and delivered in order to achieve the best outcomes in line with overall Force objectives.

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9. Principle D – Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

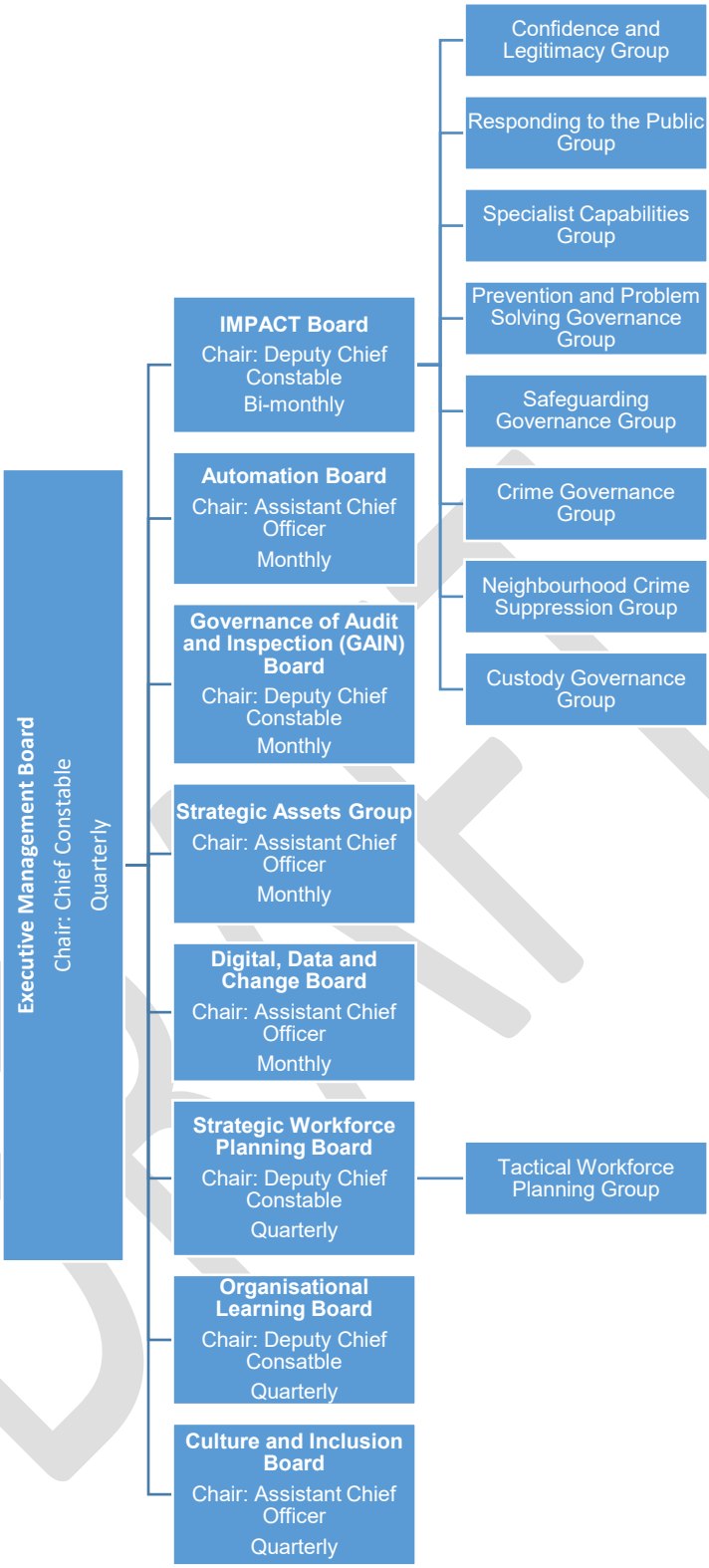
Determining interventions Expected behaviours and outcomes
• Ensuring that decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and including the risks associated with those options. Therefore, ensuring that best value is achieved however services are provided. • Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements, or where services are no longer required, in order to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets, and bearing in mind future impacts

9.1 The Force has a joint corporate governance framework with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Cleveland. The framework sets out the way that the two organisations, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable, govern, both jointly and separately. The framework also details the delegations and consents from the PCC to the Force and outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of officers. The framework, outlined below, is reviewed and amended as necessary on an annual basis.



9.2 The Force has a structured meeting framework to ensure accountability and provide clarity over levels of decision making and responsibility. The framework, headed by the Executive Management Board as the key driver of the Force, is supported by a number of key strategic and tactical delivery and assurance forums. In summary the framework is as shown below.

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9.3 The framework has continued to be embedded during 2025-26 with the further development of the two further subgroups below IMPACT Board. The IMPACT Board continues to provide holistic review and management of performance with the SWPB, and Digital, Data and Change Board and newly introduced Strategic Assets Group ensuring that governance of Force decisions is monitored. The Automation Board will ensure that there is a focus on digital development and governance, and the Organisational Learning Board and Culture and Inclusion Board will ensure strategic

oversight of these areas. The effectiveness of the framework will continue to be monitored and enhanced during 2026-27.

Planning interventions Expected behaviours and outcomes
• Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets. • Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered. • Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively, including shared risks. • Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering outputs can be adapted to changing circumstances. • Establishing appropriate performance measures as part of the planning process in order to assess and inform how the performance of the services and projects is to be measured. • Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly. • Preparing budgets in accordance with government funding announcements, Force objectives, strategies and the medium term financial plan. • Informing medium and long term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure, together with estimates of grant, precept, and other income streams, aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy.

9.4 The Force has developed a strategic planning cycle that links with the production of the FMS demanded by HMICFRS. The cycle for FMS8 has been completed and forms the basis for the corporate plan identifying the change to be delivered during the coming year to achieve the priorities outlined above.

9.5 The Force undertakes a detailed bi-monthly performance assessment which reviews current performance against our strategic policing priorities. The reporting mechanisms associated with this work have been designed to facilitate a conversation which examines and challenges performance and supports the decision-making process. The results of the performance assessment are presented at the bi-monthly performance 'IMPACT' day, where senior leaders from across the organisation will discuss, debate and problem solve any current or emerging 'performance threats'.

9.6 The Force has a current Digital Strategy which provides four strategic priorities which then translate into delivery plans and are synchronised with the Force's change workstreams. A review of the National Digital Policing Strategy has been completed by the Police Digital Service (PDS) and was released in April 2025. The Force Digital Strategy has been reviewed and refreshed by a new Head of Digital Data and Technology (DDaT) and has been published to ensure alignment with a new Force DDaT structure, the revised national strategy, the Cleveland Police mission, and the PCC's police and crime plan.

9.7 The Force takes an integrated approach to medium- to long-term strategic workforce planning. The strategic workforce planning process is aligned with financial planning

and business planning (the FMS) to ensure there is an integrated approach to delivering the Force strategic objectives. The strategic workforce plan informs tactical resource planning and operational resource deployment, to match skills and resources to requirements. Workforce planning continues to increase in complexity, given the increased number of police officer entry routes and ongoing national changes to optimise the entry routes and continually raise standards. The plan also sets out promotional programme timelines for officers, which informs tactical and operational resource planning, matching resources and skills to operational requirements.

9.8 The plan focuses on the next three years to ensure the Force has sufficient resources with the required skills to deliver day to day and strategic priorities. The number of staff employed by the Force continued to grow in line with our workforce plans; with increased numbers of police officers through delivery of the final year three of the national Uplift programme and additional officer 'uplift' due to the Force being successful in all available bids for additional Home Office funding. In addition ongoing recruitment into police staff vacancies has continued.

9.9 Based on Force and national evidence based trend data, additional focus is on retention of existing staff and officers, with particular focus on student officers, and positive action to attract a more diverse range of recruits, and talent into identified hard to fill roles.

9.10 The Force has a five year detailed capital programme which is linked to the Estates, Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Fleet detailed plans. Each capital scheme requires a detailed business case to be produced and which is scrutinised by the Business Case Triage Group, the Digital Data and Change Board and the Chief Officer team. Each business case is linked to the priorities of the Force and is risk (RAG) rated. This is then scrutinised by the PCC Chief Finance Officer and an annual budget allocation is made.

Optimising achievement of intended outcomes **Expected behaviours and outcomes**
• Ensuring the medium term financial strategy integrates and trades off service priorities, affordability, and other resource constraints. • Ensuring that the budgeting process is all inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term. • Ensuring the medium term financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for the outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage. • Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' through service planning and commissioning

9.12 The LTFP 2026-27 to 2029-30 and Capital Plan 2026-27 to 2029-30 was agreed with the PCC in February 2026, and regular updates are provided to the Chief Officer Team and the Executive Management Board (see 8.4).

9.13 The financial planning cycle commences at the beginning of each financial year linked with the FMS and planning cycles to ensure that incoming demand, changes in

anticipated funding and potential gaps are considered and plans developed to fill the gaps or mitigate the risk of not being able to do this.

9.14 The PSD continues to ensure consistent and appropriate outcomes, as evidenced by robust processes and procedures, to resolve complaints, conduct, and death and serious injury (DSI) following police contact matters; with clear accountability, responsibility and authority for decision-making within a defined scheme of delegation and governance. The department meets quarterly with the IOPC to discuss performance and referrals. Where any discrepancies are raised, action is taken to understand the issue, review any relevant processes and take necessary steps. This is supported by robust performance scrutiny and internal challenge that ensures high quality investigations and casework leading to the ability to operate in a timely and consistent fashion across all aspects of assessments and casework. The scheme of delegation has been subject of review and signed off at the Executive Management Board.

10. Principle E – Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Developing the entity's capacity Expected behaviours and outcomes
• Reviewing operations, performance and asset management on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness. • Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how policing resources are allocated so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently. • Recognising and promoting the benefits of collaborative working where added value can be achieved through partnerships. • Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources.

10.1 The Force offer two main entry routes for officers into policing: PCDA and PCEP with the option for Detective specialism. Transferees are also promoted as this route helps to balance the levels of experience within Force. The Force also encourages applications from those who have already completed a policing qualification elsewhere. Our partnership with Teesside University is integral to the success of the PCDA route. Offering a range of routes allows the Force to work with individuals to progress via the best fit route. Early indications from launching the Detective Pathway, now in PCEP and previously in Degree Holder Entry Route (DHEP), is positive impacts on our gender positive action programme to continually improve our workforce representation.

10.2 The Force positions employee wellbeing as the core workforce priority and takes a strategic approach to optimising wellbeing in a way which promotes our values. The strategic approach to wellbeing has been informed by the Blue Light Wellbeing Framework (BLWF) which is now transitioning into the Workforce Prioritisation Guidance (WPG), relevant evidenced based trend data; e.g. sickness absence levels,

management and self-referrals for services, staff survey outcomes, the Force strategic objectives, identified risks, challenges and horizon scanning trends.

Recruitment and securing third party and in house clinical specialists is a regional and national challenge. The challenges to recruit into the specialist occupational health nurse roles has been addressed through innovative practice to recruit Registered General Nurses and support the individuals to become qualified Occupational Health Nurses. A range of internal and external services are in situ to support employee wellbeing including an employee assistance programme.

10.3 The Force recognises the importance of understanding the workforce wellbeing needs and along with the national wellbeing survey the Force also undertakes an annual staff survey. The outcomes from previous surveys were built into Organisational and command action plans to support and improve wellbeing. These outcomes inform the people strategy, policy, resource utilisation, skills and training requirements. Through the utilisation of BLWF and WPG this enables us to determine prioritised actions to further develop the Force wellbeing provision. Demand for wellbeing services has continued to increase year on year primarily due to increased police officer recruitment to deliver the Uplift programme recruitment and increasing trends in wellbeing concerns related to mental health. Work continues to ensure wellbeing service provision aligns with ongoing changes to the demand mix and identified trends and ensuring that a wide range of accessible services and support are available.

Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals **Expected behaviours and outcomes**
• Ensuring the PCC and chief officers have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the chief officers lead by implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by the PCC and/or chief constable, and each provides a check and balance for each other's responsibility. • Ensuring the PCC, chief officers and staff receive appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged. • Ensuring that the PCC, chief officers and staff have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis. • Ensuring personal, Force and system-wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance failures both internal and external. • Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections. • Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs. • Ensuring arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing.

10.4 We continue to embed clear and consistent leadership expectations in Cleveland Police for everyone at all levels, supported by the Leadership Prospectus and Career Development Policy with defined career pathways supporting progression for police officers, police staff, special constables, and volunteers. We have maintained alignment with the College of Policing Police Leadership Programme and associated national talent schemes, while strengthening our local offer to ensure it meets organisational need. Our structured leadership pathway continues across five stages:

Stage 1 - Foundation level (Frontline officers and staff)

- Police Constable Entry Routes

Stage 2 - First line leaders

- The First Line Leader Programme was successfully developed and Phase 1 rollout commenced in 2025/26 for all First Line Leaders.
- Comprehensive evaluation of Phase 1 began, informing improvements ahead of phase 2 wider rollout in 2026/27.
- Programme remains available to both existing and aspiring first line leaders.

Stage 3 - Mid-level leaders

- Design and development of the Mid-Level Leader Programme has progressed, aligned to organisational priorities, and informed by learning from the First Line Leader Programme
- Cleveland Police 'high potential' development events have continued to identify and support emerging talent.

Stage 4 - Senior leaders

- Continued engagement with national programmes including:
  - Aspire Leadership Development Programme (supporting underrepresented groups)
  - Police Leadership Programme
  - Executive Leadership Programme (Superintendent to Chief Officer)
- Local leadership development, including "Being the Best You Can Be," has continued alongside targeted talent interventions.

Stage 5 - Chief officers / Executive leaders

- Ongoing participation in executive-level development, including bespoke internal and national provision.
- Continued delivery and refinement of "Being the Best You Can Be" to support senior leadership capability.

10.5 All leadership development is aligned to the Values and Behaviours Framework and is structured around three core pillars:

1. Supporting individuals new to Cleveland Police or new to role
2. Developing capability in role
3. Preparing individuals for progression into future roles

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A new, comprehensive Leadership Development Strategy brings together our local and national provision into a more coherent, evidence-based framework. It focuses on:

- Strengthening leadership capability at all levels
- Improving consistency and accessibility of development
- Embedding inclusive leadership and supporting workforce representation
- Creating clearer pathways for progression and talent management

This strategy will guide the next phase of delivery, ensuring leadership development is sustainable, aligned to organisational priorities, and responsive to evaluation and workforce feedback.

10.6 We continue to embed the annual performance excellence cycle: line manager and team members agree whether achievement of objectives and demonstration of values and behaviours have not been met, partially met, met or exceeded. Providing an organisation, team and individual picture of our people performance. We have further developed performance excellence to include measuring potential, as part of the annual performance excellence cycle. This supports having the right people in the right roles at the right time, succession planning and organisation and individual development plans. Aligned to the 2025 College of Policing National Talent Development Strategy, this includes:

- A performance and potential grid
- A performance and potential peer calibration framework
- Early identification of candidates for succession planning, fast track programmes, retention risks and develop the quality of performance and potential conversations
- Talent Boards aligned to stages of leadership
- Development planning and activity
- Utilise positive action for optimal impact in talent development

The PDR system requirements have been reviewed and a business case submitted for a user-friendly system that captures performance, potential, development planning and tracking. This system will be implemented in April 2026 and is aligned to the College of Policing PDR Strategy July 2025; the National Talent Development Strategy; and Force feedback.

10.7 The Force has committed to deliver the Operation Soteria National Operating Model (NOM) alongside all 43 forces in England & Wales. The Force is managing this as a Tier 1 project over 18-24 months until the principles are embedded in as business as usual (BAU) for RASSO investigations. The aims of the project are to transform the end-to-end response and investigation of rape, leading to increased service to victims and improved criminal justice outcomes. The project has full Tier 1 governance with a Chief Officer as the Senior Responsible Officer; held to account through the Safeguarding Governance group and IMPACT Board where requested. There is also an accountability structure nationally via the Regional Practice Leads from the National Operation Soteria team.

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11. Principle F – Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Managing risk Expected behaviours and outcomes
• Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be regarded as a continuous process. • Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively. • Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated. • Ensuring that the Force is risk aware and that its risk appetite is defined and communicated clearly to those responsible for making decisions.

11.1 The Governance of Audit and Inspection Board is well established and continues to meet on a regular basis. This Board provides assurance that strategic and operational risks are being effectively managed and that action to respond to audit findings and recommendations is being taken. The board is chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. Updates are presented to the Joint Audit Committee on a six-monthly basis and are reported to the Executive Management Board quarterly.

11.2 The process of further integrating risk management into the strategic planning processes of the Force continues. The programme of reviewing and updating business continuity plans is progressing well with an assurance schedule in place and a programme of testing and exercising against those plans continues. The Force continues to ensure that robust service continuity plans are in place and that a risk management culture is embedded, with updates reported to the Executive Management Board quarterly.

11.3 The Force maintains a strategic risk register along with operational risk registers for each business area. The risk management process is overseen by the Head of Corporate Services with strategic risks being reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Executive Management Board and further scrutiny by the Joint Audit Committee on a six-monthly basis.

11.4 Each business area within the Force has a risk 'champion' who has received additional risk management training and meets with the Risk and Insurance Manager on a regular basis to review the area's risk register. All new and emerging risks that are identified during these meetings, that may be considered to be a strategic risk, are progressed through the risk escalation process for moderation and remitted to the Executive Management Board for agreement before being included on the strategic risk register.

Managing performance Expected behaviours and outcomes
• Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review.

- Making decisions based on relevant, clear, objective analysis and advice, pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the Force's financial, social and environmental position and outlook.
- Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which encourages constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the Force's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible.
- Providing the PCC and chief officers with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement.
- Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements).

11.5 The Force has an agreed Performance & Accountability Framework with the PCC which includes a timetable of monthly Scrutiny Meetings chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner including details of the subject(s) to be discussed. The reports and minutes from these meetings are available on the PCC's website. Terms of reference and a programme of work have been agreed for these meetings to minimise bureaucracy and duplication. Questions (with context and rationale) are provided two weeks in advance with Corporate Services facilitating the collation of the Force response, in collaboration with relevant business leads/subject matter experts.

11.6 In addition, a representative from the OPCC attends the Force IMPACT day and this helps them develop their lines of enquiry for future scrutiny meetings.

11.7 There is a governance schedule for all of the strategic contracts, which include regular contract and performance meetings. with both the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) board, and their appointed facilities management providers Tascor FM (for PFI Action Stations), Equans for the PFI Tactical Training Centre at Urlay Nook. Partnering Health Ltd are the new strategic service providers for the delivery of Custody Medical Services elements (as of October 2025) after the previous contract with Mitie Care and Custody expired at the end of September 2025. All strategic suppliers are also held to account during regular contract and performance meetings with any poor performance rectified through both informal and formal performance improvement processes built into the contract terms and conditions.

11.8 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland and Cleveland Police Joint Corporate Governance Framework include the Contract Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation, along with the roles and responsibilities of chief officers. The Framework is reviewed on an annual basis, and the outcome of the review is reported to the Joint Audit Committee.

11.9 In line with the Contract Standing Orders, the Force reports to the Joint Audit Committee all instances of exemptions to these standing orders, on a six-monthly basis.

11.10 Regular budget monitoring reports, including an analytical review, are produced for all budget holders and are underpinned by monthly 'budget clinics' between the budget holder and Finance Business Partner.

11.11 The Force has recently developed a structured approach to commissioning work which will provide greater oversight, projects and programmes of work are managed using

project and programme management principles. This ensures that projects and programmes provide measurable benefits to the Force: are aligned to strategic objectives and are governed appropriately. Regular monitoring of all change activity through the Digital, Data and Change Board will minimise the risk of projects being over budget or being delivered outside of timescales, and it will help ensure that resources are appropriately allocated to minimise project failure. Strategic oversight of all change activity will be provided at Chief Officer level.

Robust internal control **Expected behaviours and outcomes**
• Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving the Force's objectives. • Evaluating and monitoring the Force's risk management and internal control on a regular basis. • Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place. • Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor. • Ensuring an independent audit committee or equivalent group or function, which is independent of the executive and accountable to the PCC and chief constable, provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risks and maintaining an effective control environment and that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon.

11.12 The Force and the OPCC for Cleveland have a shared internal audit service and agree a programme of internal audit work at the start of each financial year. During the financial year 2025-26, as well as follow up audits for previous internal audit management actions; visit 1 and 2, Internal Audit have completed audits in the following areas:

- Vulnerability;
- Key Financial Controls;
- HMICFRS: Tracking and Monitoring;
- Management of Assets/Licensing;
- Financial Planning;
- Firearms Licensing;
- Equality and Diversity;
- Vetting;
- Legal Litigation;
- Human Resources: Recruitment and Selection;
- Risk Management;
- Police and Crime Plan (OPCC).

Audits of Out of Court Resolutions/Prevention Orders and Fraud Arrangements (OPCC) are yet to be finalised.

These reports were presented to, and scrutinised by, the Joint Audit Committee. The reports are made available on the Police & Crime Commissioner's website, except those with the protection marking 'Official Sensitive'.

Four actions remain outstanding from audits prior to 2025-26. All have been identified for closure and are expected to be reviewed by Internal Audit in their August 2026 Follow-up Audit. These relate to Data Protection (2 Medium rated actions) and the Seized Exhibits Revisit (2 Medium rated actions). The updated position of all live actions is reported to the Joint Audit Committee twice a year.

Managing data **Expected behaviours and outcomes**
• Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data. • Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies. • Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring.

11.13 Cleveland Police adopted the Government Security Classification (GSC) in April 2016, which describes the required technical, physical, personnel and procedural security control measures that are commensurate with different classifications of data. The baseline training for all officers and staff currently comprises two e-learning packages: "Managing Information" (in two variants for operational and non-operational staff), and "Government Security Classification Scheme", both mandated for completion every two years. Information Asset Owners are expected to also complete "Protecting Information Level 2".

11.14 Police forces are expected to implement the baseline security controls as described in the Police Digital Services' SyAP framework, which is managed by the Information Security, Assurance and Compliance Manager working closely with the ICT Department. In addition, the Information Security, Assurance and Compliance Manager conducts security reviews both internally and externally to ensure that police data is appropriately secured. These reviews culminate in the issue of recommendations for improvement where needed.

11.15 The Force has designated the Deputy Chief Constable as the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), with responsibility for information assurance governance and risk ownership in the Force; including shared risks with other organisations, partnerships and third-party suppliers. The function of the SIRO is to also understand how the strategic business goals of the Force may be affected by failures in the secure use of the Force's information systems, to ensure that information risks are managed and to accept or decline to accept any residual risk.

11.16 The Data Protection Officer and the Force Information Security, Assurance and Compliance Manager meets with the SIRO on a regular basis and has direct access to discuss urgent issues outside of these meetings when necessary.

11.17 The completion of Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) is mandated when new systems are being developed and when we intend to process personal data that attracts high risks to individuals.

11.18 Information security requirements are designed into documentation where Cleveland Police share information with partners. This is intended to provide the Force with an adequate level of assurance that information provided will be appropriately handled, stored, disseminated and disposed of when no longer needed.

11.19 Six monthly reports on information management, incorporating data protection matters, information rights, information security, records management and the Disclosure Barring Service are presented to the Joint Audit Committee to provide assurances that Cleveland Police has implemented the necessary technical, physical, personnel and procedural security controls to protect its information and satisfy national information assurance requirements that are pertinent to the government and policing. These reports are available on the PCCs website.

11.20 Cleveland Police has adopted the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice (APP) for data protection (October 2023) and information sharing (February 2020). APP is the official source of professional practice on policing. Cleveland Police are committed to achieving compliance with the Information Commissioner's Governance and Accountability Self Assessment Toolkit detailing the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) expectations of Data Controllers, progress towards compliance is reported to the Digital, Data and Change Board on a quarterly basis. This Board manages the governance and oversight of information risk.

Strong public financial management **Expected behaviours and outcomes**
• Ensuring financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short term financial and operational performance. • Ensuring well developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls.

11.21 (Internal audit opinion will be added once available)

11.22 (External audit opinion will be added once audit report is received).

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12. Principle G – Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

Implementing good practice in transparency Expected behaviours and outcomes
• Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in an understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring they are easy to access and interrogate. • Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand.

12.1 The NDM uses the Code of Ethics and Force's values as the core of the decision-making process, ensuring they are at the heart of every decision made.

12.2 All decision making is carried out in accordance with the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland and Cleveland Police Corporate Governance Framework including Contract Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Schemes of Delegation.

12.3 The governance arrangements ensure that when making key decisions, the Force considers the appropriate legal, financial, human resources and other professional advice as part of the decision-making process.

12.4 The Force Chief Officer team meets on a weekly basis and the Executive Management Board meets on a quarterly basis. These meetings provide a delivery focussed, cohesive, holistic and supportive approach to developing and delivering services. For each meeting the decisions made, including rationale, and actions allocated are recorded.

12.5 The OPCC maintains appropriate oversight and scrutiny of the Force decision making through weekly meetings with the Chief Constable, the receipt of update reports to the scrutiny meetings and by attending the IMPACT Board.

Implementing good practice in reporting Expected behaviours and outcomes
• Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money, and the stewardship of resources to stakeholders in a timely and understandable way. • Ensuring the PCC and chief officers own the results. • Assessing the extent to which the Force is applying the principles contained in the Framework and publishing the results of this assessment including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance in action (the AGS). • Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other similar entities. • Ensuring that the Framework is applied to jointly managed functions as appropriate.

12.6 The AGS is prepared in consultation with the PCCs Chief Finance Officer to ensure any areas of overlap are consistent. The AGS is published on the Force website along with the Statement of Accounts. Updates on the action taken to address the significant governance issues identified in the AGS are reported to the Joint Audit Committee. This report is publicly available on the PCCs website.

12.7 There is an established Joint Audit Committee for Cleveland Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner, with agreed Terms of Reference and a programme of work for the year. During 2025-26 the Committee met formally on five occasions to conduct its business; one as an extraordinary meeting, and four were regular meetings. The meetings are held in public, and the agenda, papers and minutes of meetings are available on the PCC's website.

12.8 The Audit Committee members have scheduled meetings with the Internal and External Auditors in private at the start of each Joint Audit Committee meeting, in line with good practice.

12.9 Internal Audit report to the Chief Finance Officers for the Force and the PCC, and the Audit Committee. Internal audit work is planned using a risk-based approach that aims to ensure that the Chief Finance Officers' responsibilities under Section 151 are fulfilled and that an effective internal audit service is provided.

12.10 The Force is subject to an extensive inspection regime by HMICFRS and the results of these are published on their website to ensure appropriate scrutiny of decision making. The Force has a process for reviewing and assessing the recommendations arising from HMICFRS reports, coordinated within the Performance, Quality & Review team. Information captured via this process is reviewed in consultation with ACC led governance groups and the GAIN Board to determine whether there is evidence of sustained improvement and closure should be requested or if further work is required.

Assurance and effective accountability **Expected behaviours and outcomes**
• Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon. • Ensuring an effective internal audit service, with direct access to the PCC, chief constable and audit committee, provides assurance with regard to the Force's governance arrangements, and produces recommendations which are acted upon. • Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations as appropriate. Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third party suppliers and that this is evidenced in the AGS. • Ensuring that when working in partnerships, arrangements for accountability are clear and that the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met.

12.11 The Force presents six monthly updates to the Joint Audit Committee on the progress of implementing recommendations arising from internal audit reports and an annual

update on progress to address issues raised through HMICFRS inspections. This is supplemented by the, twice yearly, follow up audits that form part of the agreed Internal Audit Plan. These reports are available on the PCC's website as part of the papers for the Audit Committee.

12.12 The Joint Audit Committee prepare an Annual Report to provide assurance to the PCC and Chief Constable that the Committee is satisfactorily undertaking its role and responsibilities. The report provides the PCC and Chief Constable with assurance that the Committee has fulfilled its terms of reference and demonstrates the added value that has been delivered by the committee to both the PCC and Chief Constable.

12.13 The outcomes from misconduct hearings are published on the Force website, including occasions where officers have resigned prior to a hearing. Misconduct meetings are held in public, published in advance, and details of how to apply to attend hearing are displayed on the website. A debrief is held after all hearings and any departmental or organisational learning is highlighted.

13. Review of Effectiveness

13.1 Public sector organisations have a responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of the governance framework, including the system of internal control. This review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the Chief Officers of the Force who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Internal Audit's Annual Report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

13.2 In line with the CIPFA Financial Management Code 2019, the Force and the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland have agreed to a shared internal audit service. This service was provided by RSM LLP during 2025-26.

13.3 Internal auditors in the public sector are required to work to the *Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS)*, which are based on the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* published by the Institute of Internal Auditors, and which also adopt the institute's definition of internal auditing and code of ethics.

13.4 The Head of Internal Audit is required to include in the annual internal audit report an opinion on the internal control environment; providing any details of weaknesses that qualify this opinion and bringing to the attention of the Joint Audit Committee any issues particularly relevant to the preparation of this Annual Governance Statement. The Audit Committee will receive the draft Internal Audit Annual Report for 2025-26 at the meeting in June 2026.

13.5 (Internal audit opinion will be added once available)

13.6 In line with the Joint Audit Committee's Terms of Reference, the draft Annual Governance Statement is shared with Members for consideration. The draft is published alongside the draft Statement of Accounts by the end of June 2026.

13.7 The final Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31st March 2026 is shared with Members of the Joint Audit Committee (and published) in September 2026.

14. Governance Issues

14.1 The following governance issue has been noted classified as significant:

Significant governance issue 1
Adverse Opinions from Audits One of the Force Internal Audit reports published in 2025-26; for an audit included in the 2024-25 schedule, was awarded 'Minimal Assurance', this related to the Evidence Led Prosecution Audit (Official Sensitive). Nine actions were identified (2 High priority and 7 Medium). The Force is progressing these actions, with a number already closed or identified for closure.

14.2 The following governance issue which is considered as non-significant has also been identified:

Governance issue 1
Adverse External Audit opinion on accounts The Force external auditors Mazars have this year been able to meet the timescales for providing assurance of the Force accounts in line with the backstop arrangements including the audit of the Teesside Pension Scheme delivered by XPS which was not completed in a timely manner and within the timescales for closure of accounts by Ernst and Young (EY) in the previous year. However, the timescales for completion have been moved forward in the coming year and we will need to closely monitor the work of Mazars to ensure that they will be able to meet these adjusted timescales. This will be overseen by the Governance of Audit and inspection Board to ensure work is completed and the external audit opinion is received on time. An adverse opinion, even though without the control of the Force would pose a risk to trust and confidence.

14.3 In addition to the significant governance issue there are also a specific issue from previous reviews which require further/continued focus:

Issue for continued focus 1
Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee The Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee has resulted in the Force being able to claim additional grant for around £2.4m to deliver neighbourhood policing in the Force area. The funding commenced in April 2025 for a period of four years and from 1st April 2026 is being delivered on the uplift model of funding. Following a period of recruitment to additional posts, additional officers and staff are now being redeployed from other teams and carrying out neighbourhoods' functions. The grant can be claimed for officers and staff completing appropriate 'eligible work' and a group chaired by the Chief Superintendent Local Policing has been established to ensure that those staff counted are carrying out tasks suitable for inclusion.

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