

Joint Audit Committee

28th January 2021

Responsible Officer:	Impact on Business:		Risk Register Reference & RAG
James Haylett A/Chief Executive for the OPCC	High		
	Medium	X	
	Low		
Lead Manager:	Report Type:		
James Haylett A/Chief Executive for the OPCC	Governance	X	
	Strategic		
	Operational		
Previous papers to Committee:			
December 2015 and March 2016 on previous election transition.			

Report summary	To update the Committee on the transition plans in place for the election of a new Police and Crime Commissioner in May 2021.			
Related Police and Crime Plan objective				
Action (tick one box only)	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Assurance <input type="checkbox"/>	Approval <input type="checkbox"/>	Decision <input type="checkbox"/>
Recommendation	To note the report.			

PCC Election Transition Planning Update

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report updates the Joint Audit Committee (“the Committee”) on the management of risks associated with the transition between Police and Crime Commissioners following the election in May 2021.

2. Background

- 2.1 The incumbent A/Police and Crime Commissioner (A/PCC) term of office expires in May 2021, upon which there will be an election held for a new Commissioner. Subject to confirmation by the Cabinet Office, the election is due to take place on the 6th May 2021. The PCC’s office (OPCC) is well-versed in managing transition, with many of the existing Senior Management Team (SMT) having led the transition following the previous election in 2016.
- 2.2 The Government are currently undertaking a review of the role of PCCs, due to report in early 2021. The remit focussed on changes required to strengthen the accountability, resilience, legitimacy and scrutiny mechanisms of the existing model to drive up standards, identify and share best practice and examine the effectiveness of the relationship between PCCs and Chief Constables and the checks and balances in place to be delivered ahead of the May 2021 election.
- 2.3 The Joint Audit Committee is appointed by the Chief Constable and Commissioner and remains in existence until disbanded. The incoming Commissioner may have views on the future terms of reference and composition of the Committee and these will be reflected in due course.

3. Timescales

- 3.1 The current timescales for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections are:
- Monday 29 March 2021 – Publication of notice of election (pre-election period starts)
 - Tuesday 30 March to Wednesday 7 April 2021 – Nomination period for candidates
 - Thursday 8 April 2021 – Publication of statement of persons nominated for election
 - Thursday 6 May 2021 – Election day
 - Saturday 8 May 2021 – Count and declaration of result
 - Wednesday 12 May 2021 – Term of incumbent A/PCC ceases
 - Thursday 13 May 2021 – New Commissioner takes office.

4. Governance

- 4.1 The OPCC have established an Election Project Team with an Election Project Plan to oversee the transition. The Project Team consists of the OPCC’s Acting Chief

Executive, and members of the OPCC and the Constabulary, and aims to meet every week to trace progress through the action log, and to update on any matters or emerging risks arising both internally and externally, and any policy decisions that need to be taken. This provides an opportunity for the Acting Chief Executive to take into account and consider any matters that require him to action in his Monitoring Officer capacity.

- 4.2 An external Election Board has also been established to oversee effective working arrangements for the transition from the current A/PCC through to the election. The Membership of this Board includes the Acting Chief Executive, members of the OPCC and the Constabulary, and the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO). The Board meets monthly and has an agreed term of reference that include the consideration of risks and emerging issues and the monitoring of progress against actions. Again, it provides an opportunity for any matters that require consideration in respect of the Monitoring Officer capacity.
- 4.3 The OPCC Senior Management Team and the wider OPCC Team are kept updated on a regular basis regarding progress on election planning and any emerging risks and issues.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 Risk management is embedded into both the work of the Constabulary and that of the OPCC on an ongoing and continuous basis. Risks are captured and reviewed in the Joint Strategic Risk Register.
- 5.2 As mentioned above, an Election Project Plan has been developed, which manages risks and issues, amongst other matters relating to the transition between the A/PCC and the new Commissioner. This aims to manage 'the manageable' in terms of what is required including workstreams relating to statutory requirements, communications, engagement with potential and declared candidates, organisational readiness, and governance.
- 5.3 This Plan and the staff responsible for delivery of the workstreams can put the groundwork in place to facilitate and enable the key relationship between the new Commissioner and the Chief Constable to be as effective as possible. Nonetheless, it was thought appropriate to identify a new potential risk on the Joint Strategic Risk Register regarding this change in personnel in case of a lack of understanding of respective roles and responsibilities. This should be seen as good strategic risk management at a time of transition, and not a reflection on the actual people potentially involved at that point of transition or thereafter. The risk is identified on the Risk Register at SR3.6 as follows:

There is a risk that the Commissioner and Chief Constable fail to work together effectively.

- 5.4 Robust Controls and Controls Assurance are captured in SR3.6, one of which includes the Election Plan.
- 5.5 One key principle of election planning, which runs through and is embedded into the Election Plan itself, is the need for transparency, accessibility, and parity to all candidates regardless of their status at any one time (i.e. prospective, nominated, or

declared) throughout. Therefore, the OPCC has created a dedicated web page for potential candidates which provides a vast amount of information regarding the election, guidance for candidates, signposting to useful websites for further information, and an Election Protocol.

- 5.6 As the OPCC and Cambridgeshire Constabulary remain politically independent at all times, the Election Protocol is a key document for both bodies, and for candidates. The aim of this document is to provide some overarching guidelines and principles along with sources of advice in order to maintain transparency and equality throughout. This document, and the principles within, enables the management of risk, in particular by putting safeguards in place to avoid allegations of bias.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 The Election Planning transition work will continue through the governance structures described above and delivered through the day-to-day workstreams.