

Annual Audit Letter

Chief Constable of North Yorkshire Police



For the year ended 31 March 2017



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Our reports are prepared in the context of the 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies' issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd. Reports and letters prepared by appointed auditors and addressed to the Chief Constable of North Yorkshire Police are prepared for the sole use of the Chief Constable and we take no responsibility to any member or officer in their individual capacity or to any third party.

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Executive summary

Purpose of this report

Our Annual Audit Letter summarises the work we have undertaken as the auditor for the Chief Constable of North Yorkshire Police ('the Chief Constable') for the year ended 31 March 2017. Although this letter is addressed to the Chief Constable, it is designed to be read by a wider audience including members of the public and other external stakeholders.

Our responsibilities are defined by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ('the 2014 Act') and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office ('the NAO'). The detailed sections of this letter provide details on those responsibilities, the work we have done to discharge them, and the key findings arising from our work. These are summarised below.

Area of work	Summary
Financial statements opinion	On 26 September 2017 we issued our opinion that the financial statements gave a true and fair view of the Chief Constable's financial position as at 31 March 2017 and of its financial performance for the year then ended.
Opinions on other matters	On 26 September 2017 we issued our opinion that the Narrative Report published with the financial statements, was consistent with those financial statements.
Value for Money conclusion	On 26 September 2017 we issued our conclusion that the Chief Constable had proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
Matters that we report by exception	We did not identify any matters to report in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• whether the Annual Governance Statement was in line with our understanding of the Chief Constable and the requirements of the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016;• reports in the public interest or written recommendations made under s24 of the 2014 Act;• exercise of other powers under the 2014 Act.

As we have discharged all of our responsibilities under the 2014 Act for the 2016/17 audit, we certified the closure of the audit on 26 September 2017.

Audit of the financial statements

Financial statements opinion

Unqualified

The scope of our audit and the results of our work

The purpose of our audit is to provide reasonable assurance to users that the financial statements are free from material error. We do this by expressing an opinion on whether the statements are prepared, in all material respects, in line with the financial reporting framework applicable to the Chief Constable and whether they give a true and fair view of the Chief Constable's financial position as at 31 March 2017 and of its financial performance for the year then ended.

Our audit was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Audit Practice issued by the NAO, and International Standards on Auditing for the UK and Ireland (ISAs). These require us to consider whether:

- the accounting policies are appropriate to the Chief Constable's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed;
- the significant accounting estimates made by management in the preparation of the financial statements are reasonable; and
- the overall presentation of the financial statements provides a true and fair view.

Our approach to materiality

We apply the concept of materiality when planning and performing our audit, and when evaluating the effect of misstatements identified as part of our work. We consider the concept of materiality at numerous stages throughout the audit process, in particular when determining the nature, timing and extent of our audit procedures, and when evaluating the effect of uncorrected misstatements. An item is considered material if its misstatement or omission could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users of the financial statements.

Judgements about materiality are made in the light of surrounding circumstances and are affected by both qualitative and quantitative factors. As a result we have set materiality for the financial statements as a whole (financial statement materiality) and a lower level of materiality for specific items of account (specific materiality) due to the nature of these items or because they attract public interest. We also set a threshold for reporting identified misstatements to the Chief Constable and Joint Independent Audit Committee. We call this our trivial threshold.

The table below provides details of the materiality levels applied in the audit of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017:

Financial statement materiality	£3.186 million.
Specific materiality	We have applied a lower level of materiality to the following items of account: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior officer remuneration.• Exit packages.
Trivial threshold	£96,000.

Our response to significant risks

As part of our continuous planning procedures we considered whether there were risks of material misstatement in the Chief Constable's financial statements that required special audit consideration. We reported significant risks identified at the planning stage to the Chief Constable and Joint Independent Audit Committee within our Audit Strategy Memorandum and provided details of how we responded to those risks in our Audit Completion Report. The table below outlines the identified significant risks, the work we carried out on those risks and our conclusions.

Significant risk	How we addressed the risk	Audit conclusion
<p>Management override of control</p> <p>In all entities, management at various levels within an organisation are in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Due to the unpredictable way in which such overrides could occur, we consider there to be a risk of material misstatement due to fraud and thus a significant risk on all audits.</p>	<p>We addressed this risk through performing audit work over:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accounting estimates affecting amounts included in the financial statements; • consideration of identified significant transactions outside the normal course of business; and • journals recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in preparation of the financial statements. 	<p>Our work provided the assurance we sought.</p>
<p>Revenue recognition</p> <p>There is a risk of fraud in the financial reporting relating to revenue recognition due to the potential to inappropriately record revenue in the wrong period. Due to there being a risk of fraud in revenue recognition we consider it to be a significant risk.</p>	<p>We performed procedures to establish that income is included in the correct year.</p>	<p>Our work provided the assurance we sought.</p>
<p>Pensions entries (IAS 19)</p> <p>The financial statements are likely to contain material pensions entries in respect of retirement benefits. The calculation of these pensions figures, both assets and liabilities, can be subject to significant volatility and includes estimates based upon a complex interaction of actuarial assumptions. This results in an increased risk of material misstatement.</p>	<p>We discussed with key contacts any significant changes to the pensions estimates prior to the preparation of the final accounts. In addition to our standard programme of work in this area, we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluated the management controls you have in place to assess the reasonableness of the figures provided by the actuaries; • requested assurance from the auditor of the Local Government Pension Fund; and • considered the reasonableness of the actuaries outputs, referring to an expert's report on all actuaries nationally which is commissioned annually by the National Audit Office. 	<p>Our work provided the assurance we sought.</p>

Internal control recommendations

As part of our audit we considered the internal controls in place that are relevant to the preparation of the financial statements. We did this to design audit procedures that allow us to express our opinion on the financial statements, but this did not extend to us expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal controls. Our 2016/17 audit did not identify any significant deficiencies to report.

Value for Money conclusion

Value for Money conclusion

Unqualified

Summary of our work

We are required to form a conclusion as to whether the Chief Constable made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The NAO issues guidance to auditors that underpins the work we are required to carry out in order to form our conclusion, and sets out the criterion and sub-criteria that we are required to consider.

The overall criterion is that, 'in all significant respects, the Chief Constable had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.' To assist auditors in reaching a conclusion on this overall criterion, the following sub-criteria are set out by the NAO:

- Informed decision making.
- Sustainable resource deployment.
- Working with partners and other third parties.

The following table provides commentary of our findings in respect of each of the sub-criteria and an indication as to whether proper arrangements are in place.

Sub-criteria	Commentary	Arrangements in place?
Informed decision making	<p><i>Acting in the public interest, through demonstrating and applying the principles and values of sound governance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance framework in place. • Working towards the Police and Crime Plan in place. • Police and Crime Panel in place. • Joint Independent Audit Committee in place <p><i>Understanding and using appropriate and reliable financial and performance information (including, where relevant, information from regulatory/monitoring bodies) to support informed decision making and performance management</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance monitored and reviewed, and regular reporting of financial and performance information. • Medium term planning (MTFP) undertaken and plans in place, and updated routinely. <p><i>Reliable and timely financial reporting that supports the delivery of strategic priorities</i></p>	Yes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance is reported against the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Police and Crime Plan which is in place. MTFP updated routinely, as above. <p><i>Managing risks effectively and maintaining a sound system of internal control</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk register and risk management arrangements in place. Risks reported to Audit Committee and regular reporting by Internal Audit. Annual governance statement prepared, reviewed and approved. 	
Sustainable resource deployment	<p><i>Planning finances effectively to support the sustainable delivery of strategic priorities and maintain statutory functions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial and performance reports demonstrate a history of achieving financial targets. MTFP updated for latest funding settlement, and programme in place to make efficiencies in order to reinvest in services. <p><i>Managing and utilising assets effectively to support the delivery of strategic priorities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asset replacement needs/programme informs the PCC's Capital Strategy. <p><i>Planning, organising and developing the workforce effectively to deliver strategic priorities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR policies and procedures in place and recruitment planning in place. 	Yes
Working with partners and other third parties	<p><i>Working with third parties effectively to deliver strategic priorities and commissioning services effectively to support the delivery of strategic priorities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of partnership working in place to reduce costs and improve service delivery such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional collaboration in Yorkshire and Humber, Project Evolve with Durham and Cleveland; Estates collaboration with North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Selby District Council; and Back office services shared with the PCC, where appropriate. <p><i>Procuring supplies and services effectively to support the delivery of strategic priorities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written procurement procedures and policies in place. 	Yes

Significant Value for Money risks

As part of our continuous planning processes, we carry out work to identify whether or not a risk to our VFM conclusion exists. We did not identify any significant audit risks at the planning stage of our audit, and as such did not report any in our Audit Strategy Memorandum. We kept this under review throughout our audit and were satisfied that there were no significant audit risks apparent in respect of VFM.

Other reporting responsibilities

Exercise of statutory reporting powers	No matters to report
Annual Governance Statement	No matters to report
Other information published alongside the financial statements	Consistent

The NAO's Code of Audit Practice and the 2014 Act place wider reporting responsibilities on us, as the Chief Constable's external auditor. We set out below, the context of these reporting responsibilities and our findings for each.

Matters which we report by exception

The 2014 Act provides us with specific reporting powers where matters come to our attention that require reporting to parties other than the Chief Constable. We have the power to:

- report in the public interest; and
- make statutory recommendations to the Chief Constable, which must be responded to publicly.

In addition we must respond to any objections or questions on items contained within the accounts raised by a local government elector. We did not receive any such objections or questions.

We are also required to report if, in our opinion, the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with the guidance issued by CIPFA in 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government; Framework 2016' or is inconsistent with our knowledge and understanding of the Chief Constable.

We did not exercise any of our reporting powers during our 2016/17 audit and had no matters to report to the Chief Constable in relation to the Annual Governance Statement.

Other information published alongside the financial statements

The Code of Audit Practice requires us to consider whether information published alongside the financial statements is consistent with those statements and our knowledge and understanding of the Chief Constable. In our opinion, the information in the Narrative Report was consistent with the audited financial statements.

Our fees

Fees for work as the Chief Constable's appointed auditor

We reported our proposed fees for the delivery of our work in the Audit Strategy Memorandum, presented to Joint Independent Audit Committee in March 2017.

Having completed our work for the 2016/17 financial year, we can confirm that our final fees are as follows:

Area of work	2016/17 proposed fee	2016/17 final fee
Code audit work	£15,000	£15,000
Other non-Code work	~	~

We confirm that these fees are in line with the scale fee set by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd.

We also confirm that we have not undertaken any non-audit services for the Chief Constable in the year.

Future challenges

Financial and operational outlook

The financial challenge for the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire (the Commissioner), along with others in the wider public sector, is ongoing. There is continued pressure on finances as a result of changes in the funding available from central government, and the desire to invest in front line and new services. The financial challenge is likely to remain for the foreseeable future. The Chief Constable and Commissioner manage their finances carefully to balance service needs and available resources in the short and medium term. The most recent Medium Term Financial Plan recognises the need to continue to review services to identify cost efficiencies, the recent move to a new Police headquarters being an example.

North Yorkshire has one of the lowest crime rates per 1000 population in England. The Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan sets out the vision and priorities for policing and community safety, as well as the objectives and ambitions that the Chief Constable will be held to account against. Delivery requires organisational capacity, and strong governance, risk and project management arrangements.

How we will work with the Chief Constable

We will focus our 2017/18 audit on the risks that these challenges present to the Chief Constable's financial statements and ability to maintain proper arrangements for securing value for money. We will also share with the Chief Constable and appropriate staff relevant insights that we have as a national and international accounting and advisory firm with experience of working with other public sector and commercial service providers.

In terms of the technical challenges that the finance team face around the production of the statement of accounts, we will continue to work with them to share our knowledge of new accounting developments and we will be on hand to discuss any issues as and when they arise. A key focus in the coming year will be working with officers to ensure a smooth process to an earlier accounts and audit timetable that will take effect in the 2017/18 financial year.