

JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE

MARCH 2026

**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024/2025
PROGRESS REPORT ON AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This paper provides the Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) with a brief summary of the progress made with the areas for development captured in the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2024/2025. This report pertains to the “Internal Control Environment” aspect of the JIAC terms of reference.

2. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 There were three areas for development identified during the review of governance arrangements undertaken in the AGS for 2024/2025. A summary of the progress made with each of those is set out in the table below:

2.2 Areas for Development for 2025/26 identified in the 2024/25 AGS

The Action Plan below identifies the Areas for Development identified in the 2024/25 review, to be completed during 2025/26.

| Areas for Development | Action | Owner | Target Implementation Date | Remarks |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| Force Financial Governance Documents | Carried forward from the AGS 2023/24 Ensure that the Force financial governance documents reflect current practice and that regular review arrangements are introduced. | Head of Finance & s151 Officer to the Chief Constable | March 2026 | A thorough review of the Devolved Resource Manual (DRM), including financial regulations is ongoing. JIAC approved the amended DRM implementation date will be March 2026 at the JIAC meeting on 19.6.25. However, the report on JIAC's agenda, 24/03/2026, explains a delay and actions put in place to update the DRM; proposed date of 30/09/2026. |
| Statement of Accounts 2023/24 External Auditor's opinion | Principle F - Ensure sufficient evidence is provided to the External Auditor for the correction of the 2023/24 balance sheet creditors/debtors and cash entries during the Audit process for 2024/25 Statement of Accounts so that an unqualified opinion can be provided for the Statement of Accounts for 2024/25. | Head of Finance & s151 Officer to the Chief Constable | Completion of the External Audit for the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts | External Audit were provided with corrected 2023/24 balance sheet for creditors /debtors / cash entries in June 2025 and have considered the revised brought forward balances whilst auditing the 2024/25 accounts. External Audit have completed the audit of the Chief Constable Accounts and provided an unmodified opinion. |

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| Internal Audit Opinion | Principle F - Agree and implement the 3-part plan (agreed with the Internal Auditors) to improve the governance around the internal audit actions to ensure timely completion. | Deputy Chief Constable | June 2025 | The revised approach was reported to JIAC in June 2025 and noted positively by Internal Audit, External Audit and JIAC. The Internal Audit Update Report, in accordance with the revised approach, was provided to JIAC in June 2025 and is presented at every quarterly meeting going forward. |
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3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Committee are invited to consider the report and:
- Express any views on the progress of the Areas for Improvement during the year 2025/26

Risk Manager (Inspection and Strategic Planning, Corporate Development)

Date: MARCH 2026