



## **JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE OF THE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER AND CHIEF CONSTABLE FOR ESSEX**

**AND**

## **AUDIT COMMITTEE OF THE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX AND THE ESSEX FIRE COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

### **JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEES**

#### **About the Audit Committees**

The PFCC for Essex is at the cutting edge of national developments in collaboration across police and fire and rescue services. In October 2017, having made the first successful business case to the Home Secretary to take on joint governance of police and fire and rescue services under the Policing and Crime Act 2017, Roger Hirst – then the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex – became the country's first Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. Since then, in March 2019, he has launched the country's first Fire and Rescue Plan, setting out the strategic objectives for the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. Essex is also part of a ground-breaking collaboration across seven police forces in the eastern region to secure resilience and best value for money across a range of functions and initiatives.

The two Audit Committees have been established to provide independent assurance to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC), the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer. The role of the Audit Committees is to advise the PFCC, the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer according to good governance principles, to adopt appropriate risk management arrangements in accordance with proper practices and the associated control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting processes. It is intended that both Audit Committees will consist of the same five independent members.

#### **Roles and responsibilities of the Audit Committee Members**

You will be required to provide both challenge and assurance on the control environment, focusing on risk, governance and financial issues. This will be achieved by:

- Advising the PFCC, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer according to good governance principles;

- Ensuring that appropriate risk management and control arrangements are in place;
- Considering and commenting on internal and external audit reports, the annual internal audit strategies and annual audit plans;
- Considering any significant issues arising from internal or external audit work;
- Monitoring and commenting on the effective development and operation of risk management policies;
- Overseeing the effectiveness of the framework in place for ensuring compliance with statutory requirements, and
- Overseeing the financial reporting processes, including review of the Annual Governance Statements for publication in the Statements of Accounts.

### **Additional roles and responsibilities of the Independent Chair**

In leading the work of the Committees, the Independent Chair will have particular responsibility for:

- Ensuring that each Committee discharges the full range of its responsibilities each year through a planned programme of work;
- Planning and conducting Audit Committee meetings effectively, with input and support from the officers and staff of the PFCC, Essex Police and the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service;
- Drawing the best contribution from each Independent Member and from the Committees as a whole so that their collective expertise are most effectively applied;
- Promoting the highest standards of governance in the work of the Committees;
- Working closely and effectively with the Commissioner and Chief Officers to ensure that communication is open and actions are well coordinated, and to ensure the sound financial health of the PFCC, Essex Police and the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, and
- Engaging Independent Members in assessing and improving the performance of the Audit Committees, including an annual performance appraisal process.

### **Independent Members of the Audit Committees will**

1. Be required to attend meetings of the Audit Committees as and when required. There will be a minimum of four ordinary meetings per committee each year, usually in March, June, September and December. One extraordinary meeting per committee per year shall be dedicated to the scrutiny and pre-approval of the statement of accounts before submission to the external auditor. Meetings for both committees will (as far as possible) be scheduled to take place on the same day. Members of the Committee are expected to attend all meetings. Regular non-attendance of Committee members will lead to their removal as a member of the Committee.

2. Take responsibility for independently assisting the Committees to discharge their duties by providing advice and scrutiny on all matters within the remit of the Committees including:

- Internal control arrangements

- Risk management strategy and framework
- Internal and external audit
- Value for money arrangements
- Effectiveness of governance arrangements

3. Be committed to the general principles governing conduct probity and integrity.

### **Selection Process**

Recruitment into the role will be based upon the principles set out in the Code of Practice published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments which relate to ministerial appointments to public bodies. The basic principles are that appointments will be made on merit by an objective, fair and open selection process.

### **Person Specification**

You will be a person with an understanding of the audit landscape, and previous experience of working in a medium / large organisation at a senior level (or other experience which would have provided similar grounding).

Financial management experience (accountancy, audit or management of a large budget) would be advantageous.

You will previously have held roles within management, finance, risk management, business, law, public administration or other another appropriate discipline.

### **Skills**

You will:

- Be able to understand, analyse, interpret and absorb complex written, numerical and verbal information;
- Think strategically and be able to understand materiality;
- Have excellent all-round communication skills as well as the ability to contribute actively to discussion and debate;
- Be able to frame questions in a way that draws out relevant facts and explanations;
- Have confidence to challenge and hold officers to account;
- Be able to establish and maintain good working relationships with a wide range of people, work effectively as part of a team and demonstrate understanding of the importance of people issues in decision making;
- Evaluate information on the basis of the evidence presented and demonstrate independence, objectivity and impartiality;
- Be able to demonstrate integrity and discretion, and
- Be able to maintain strictest confidentiality of sensitive information.

As the Independent Chair of the Committees, you will also:

- Be able to plan the work of the Committees over the course of a year and beyond, with a clear focus on ensuring that all the required business is covered and that there is a clear plan of action and allocation of responsibilities;
- Be able to lead the Committees in line with good governance principles, and
- Be skilled in managing meetings, with an ability to encourage a candid approach from all participants and to ensure that the work of the Committees remains focused and reaches clear conclusions.

## **Knowledge**

All members of the Audit Committee must have, or should acquire as soon as possible after appointment, a broad knowledge and understanding of:

- The objectives and key activities of the organisations and current major initiatives and significant issues for the PFCC, Essex Police and the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service;
- The culture, structures and responsibilities of the PFCC, Essex Police and the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service;
- The relevant legislation and rules of governing the PFCC, Essex Police and the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service;
- The Committees' roles and place within broader governance structures;
- The Seven Principles of Public Life;
- The financial statements the PFCC must produce in respect of both policing and fire and rescue and the principles they must follow to produce them;
- Financial risk, control and governance issues facing public bodies;
- The roles of internal and external audit;
- Public sector financial management principles and procurement regulations, and
- Policing, crime and fire and rescue issues nationally and locally.

## **Other Requirements**

To ensure the independence of the Committee, it is expected that prospective candidates shall not be:

- A standing or ex-PCC / PFCC, a standing or ex-Deputy PCC / PFCC, Chief Fire Officer or Chief Constable;
- A member or ex-member of a Police and Crime Panel or Police, Fire and Crime Panel;
- A serving police officer;
- A serving fire fighter;
- Currently serving staff of Essex Police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service or of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner;
- Individuals who have significant business or personal dealings with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service or Essex Police;
- Individuals who have close relationships with any of the above, including immediate family members, and as such may not have the requisite level of independence required for membership of the Committee;

- Individuals removed from a trusteeship of a charity;
- Individuals under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act;
- A person who has been adjudged a bankrupt or made a composition or arrangement with their creditors;
- Convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or the Isle of Man of any offence and has had passed on a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months without the option of a fine, within the last five years prior to their appointment;
- Subject to any relevant notification requirements under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 or Schedule 1 to the Criminal Justice Act 2001, or
- Subject to any of the following:
  - A sexual harm prevention order under section 345 of the Sentencing Code or section 103A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003
  - A sexual offences prevention order under section 104 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 or section 1 of the Sex Offenders Act 2006
  - A sexual risk order under section 122A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003
  - A risk of sexual harm order under section 123 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 or section 5 of the Sex Offenders Act 2006

Members should not behave or have behaved in a way in the past that is not in keeping with the standards and values of the PFCC (including the Nolan Principles), the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and Essex Police (as set out in the College of Policing's Code of Ethics), either in real life or on social media, that could risk undermining trust and confidence in the PFCC, the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service or Essex Police.

## **Remuneration**

Members of the Audit Committees will be remunerated at the Home Office tribunal rate of £211.50 per day, with part-days paid at an hourly rate for attendance at meetings, allowing for reasonable preparation time. In addition, reasonable travel and other expenses in connection with your role will be reimbursed.

The Chair of the Committees will be recruited by the Commissioner, the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer and will serve for one term (of four years) in the role as Chair whereupon they can be re-appointed, if appropriate and subject to agreement by the Commissioner, the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer, subject to serving a maximum of three terms.