

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2024

Report to: the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

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1.0 **Purpose of Report**

This report sets out the details of the revised Code of Ethics for policing and provides details of the implementation plan to embed this within Essex Police.

2.0 **Recommendations**

The PFCC is asked to note this report. There are no recommendations in this paper.

3.0 **Executive Summary**

This report sets out the changes to the College of Policing Code of Ethics formally launched on 24th January 2024, providing details of the implementation plan for the new Code including:

- Briefings to key partners and stakeholders.
- Details of the Code of Practice for Chief Officers.
- Communication plans and training.

The Code of Ethics Implementation Working Group was established towards the end of 2023, led by the Head of Professionalism with representatives from every command and business required to attend. The group has delivered on several areas including communications and training plans for 2024. The group meet weekly at present, it is anticipated that this will move to quarterly as the embedding of the Code of Ethics matures, providing governance and oversight alongside measuring and reporting progress against the implementation plan.

4.0 Introduction/Background

On 24th January 2024, the College of Policing officially launched the revised Code of Ethics. This replaced the 2014 Code of Ethics with two documents:

1. Code of Ethics (Appendix A)
2. Code of Ethics Guiding Principles (Appendix B)

Prior to this, in December 2023, the statutory Code of Practice for chief officers was launched. The College of Policing has issued the Code of Practice on Ethical Policing under section 39A of the Police Act 1996 (Appendix C).

This paper sets out the details of the revised Code of Ethics and the plan for implementation.

The paper also sets out the details of the statutory requirement on chief officers under the new Code of Practice.

4.1 Code of Ethics and Ethical Policing Principles

The original Code of Ethics for policing was introduced in 2014 and was made up of the following nine principles:

- Accountability
- Fairness
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Leadership
- Objectivity
- Openness
- Respect
- Selflessness

The 2014 Code of Ethics set out the expectation of the public and the College of Policing that every person working in policing would adopt the Code of Ethics. It set out the core responsibilities for the individual, for chief officers and leaders.

The 2014 Code of Ethics also set out the Standards of Professional Behaviour and made clear that breaches of the Code of Ethics would not always involve misconduct or require disciplinary proceedings.

It is fair to say that over time, the Code of Ethics has become synonymous with conduct matters as opposed to being a positive focus on public expectation of behaviour that guides officers and staff in their everyday roles.

New Code of Ethics

The revised Code of Ethics seeks to differentiate the Code of Ethics from the Standards of Professional Behaviour. The focus of the revised Code of Ethics is a positive guide for everyone in policing in order to help to build trust and confidence. That is not to say that there is not a link between the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Professional Behaviour but the Code of Ethics should be used in a positive way setting out how everyone in policing should behave.

The new Ethical Policing Principles in the revised Code of Ethics are:

- **Courage**

- Taking responsibility for doing the right thing even when the circumstances are difficult.
- Setting an example as role models and consistently demonstrating professional behaviour.
- Challenging unprofessional behaviour, language, and attitudes that undermine our profession and challenge all forms of discrimination.
- Being honest, open and accountable by demonstrating integrity and understanding the need to be truthful in accounting for our decisions and actions.
- Encouraging feedback and scrutiny by welcoming scrutiny and challenge on our decisions including where we make mistakes.

- **Respect and Empathy**

- Acting with respect by treating everyone with dignity, respect, patience, and courtesy regardless of the circumstances.
- Listening to and understanding different perspectives so people feel valued, and they can share their views so we can take them into account.
- Understanding the impact of emotions and welfare by recognising the physical, mental, and emotional challenges people may face and listen to them to ensure they feel valued and heard.
- Responding to individual needs by providing a service that takes account of each person's unique circumstances.
- Being fair, impartial, and sensitive when we respond to people's needs and situations.

• **Public Service**

- Delivering a service to be proud of being committed to working in the public interest and taking pride in providing an excellent service.
- Acting lawfully in the use of our powers, ensuring when we use our powers they are applied lawfully, proportionately and are necessary whilst respecting the degree of discretion that we have in our use of them.
- Understanding and responding to the needs of a wide range of communities through engagement whilst taking into consideration in our decision-making the experience and history of different communities.
- Reflecting on and applying knowledge and experience when making decisions and taking action whilst recognising the limits of our knowledge and skill and seeing that as an opportunity to develop and improve.
- Improving our self, our peers and our profession by fostering a safe and open working environment where everyone can – in the public interest – share experiences, evaluate good practice and exchange feedback.

Changes from 2014 Code to the revised Code.

The policing principles from the original 2014 Code of Ethics are combined into the revised ethical policing principles so are still relevant. The following table shows where the revised version of the principles has drawn from the original and has built upon its strengths.

Courage	Accountability, honesty, integrity, leadership, objectivity, openness, fairness, respect
Respect & Empathy	Objectivity, openness, selflessness, fairness, respect
Public Service	Accountability, honesty, integrity, leadership, objectivity, openness, selflessness, respect

4.2 Code of Practice for Chief Officers

The College of Policing has developed a statutory Code of Practice to complement a non-statutory Code of Ethics. Together, they will support everyone in policing to provide ethical and professional policing services.

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to set out the actions that chief officers should carry out to ensure that they lead an ethical culture, where staff are supported and directed to use the ethical policing principles in decision making and to demonstrate professional behaviour. It also describes what needs to be done to proactively and positively identify – and respond to – misconduct and corruption when it occurs.

The key areas of the Code of Practice are:

- Ensuring ethical and professional behaviour
- Challenging unprofessional behaviour
- Staff welfare
- Ensuring openness and candour
- Continuing professional development
- Recognising and responding to misconduct

The Chief Constable is responsible for ensuring adherence to the Code of Practice.

5.0 Current Work and Performance

5.1 Code of Ethics Implementation Working Group

The Code of Ethics Implementation Working Group was established towards the end of 2023, led by the Head of Professionalism with representatives from every command and business required to attend. The group has delivered on several areas and continues to meet on a regular basis. The group will meet quarterly as the embedding of the Code of Ethics matures to provide governance and measure the progress of the implementations of the new Code.

5.1.1 Business Impact Assessments

The group developed a Business Impact Assessment template for commands and business areas to review their current usage of and activity regarding the 2014 Code of Ethics. This was to enable them to assess any risks with the proposed changes, identify key stakeholders and partners to brief on the changes, consider any policies and procedures they owned and would need to update as well as identify any other documents, SharePoint pages etc where the Code of Ethics is referenced, so they can update them.

All the Business Impact Assessments were completed prior to the official launch date in January 2024.

5.1.2 Policy and Procedure Updates

The Continuous Improvement and Analytics command identified and collated all the policies and procedures that required updating to reflect the revised Code of Ethics. The team has already updated them where a change to the link to the Code of Ethics was all that was required, and have notified policy owners where the narrative used in the documents needs to be updated to reflect the revised Code of Ethics. Where appropriate, these updates will be completed at the natural review point for the relevant policies and procedures.

5.1.3 Communications Strategy

The internal communications representative at the group developed a Communications Strategy. This includes key messages from the Chief Constable, followed up by briefings to everyone across the organisation, our external partners and stakeholders, the College of Policing training packages as well as referencing examples of adherence to the Code of Ethics in the Chief's Blog throughout the year and via the internal Viva Engage channels.

The communication plan also includes updating the Force Plan to include the role of the Code of Ethics as well as reviewing the Professionalism Strategy to ensure the key elements are already included.

5.1.4 Code of Ethics Implementation Plans

All command/business area leads are in the process of completing their Code of Ethics Implementation plans. These set out their activity in their area of business including initial communications, training, plans to embed the Code of Ethics, governance, checks and balances. The plans also include their briefings to key partners and stakeholders in their area of business. These will be owned by the command or business area and will be required to report on progress at the quarterly Implementation Working Group meetings for the next 12 months to the end of January 2025.

5.1.5 Presentation to Senior Leaders

This forms part of the wider communications strategy.

Presentations have already been given to the Senior Leadership Team upon the receipt of the revised Code of Ethics as well as a follow up to the work and progress to date. Further inputs will be given at the Force Performance Leadership Forum.

5.1.6 Presentation to Strategic IAG

This forms part of the wider communications strategy.

A Code of Ethics presentation will be delivered at the next Strategic IAG before the end of May 2024.

5.1.7 Training

The College of Policing is preparing training modules which will be circulated to all forces by the end of March 2024. This training will be mandated for everyone in Essex Police. Compliance reporting updates will be given by the Learning and Development representative at the Code of Ethics Implementation Working Group. This will ensure strong focus and governance around the training.

6.0 Implications (Issues)

No implications or issues identified.

6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities

The revised Code of Ethics is directly linked to Public Confidence, Victim Satisfaction and complaints and conduct. These are all intrinsic to building trust and confidence across our communities and within the organisation.

The key objective of the Ethical Policing Principles is that everyone in policing holds a privileged position in society that depends on the consent of the public. The policing mission to help keep the public safe, relies on public acceptance and cooperation.

Public confidence in the police is earned when the public feel listened to, when decisions that are made are fair and unbiased, and when those in policing are open and honest about their decisions. Securing public trust also means working within the limits of the law and being accountable for our actions.

The Ethical Policing Principles of courage, respect and empathy, and public service are all key to building that trust and confidence.

6.2 Demand

The work to embed the revised Code encompasses every officer, staff member, volunteer and contractor and will take time to complete initial briefings as well as the ongoing work to fully embed. It includes ensuring those individuals currently away from the workplace, for example, on maternity leave, or seconded to other roles, are also included in the briefings. It also requires briefing to external partners and stakeholders. This will be captured in the Business Implementation Plans.

6.3 Risks/Mitigation

There are no known risks identified which would require entry on the risk register. If the Code of Ethics is not embedded, then there is a potential reputational risk to the organisation. Embedding the Code of Ethics is an essential component in building and sustaining public trust and confidence.

6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications

There are no protected characteristics adversely affected by the Code of Ethics. Whilst there are no specific equality and/or human rights implications identified, any actions which take place in relation to the Code Of Ethics will take account of such matters, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and the force Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy.

6.5 Health and Safety Implications

See above.

7.0 Consultation/Engagement

The details in this paper were agreed at Chief Officer Group on 24th January 2024. Wider consultation has been carried out through the Code of Ethics Implementation Working Group with representatives from all business areas in attendance.

8.0 Actions for Improvement

There are no actions for improvement at this early stage; however, as the force goes through the implementation and embedding process there is a strong focus on gathering feedback. This will be incorporated into plans as appropriate.

9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome

With the introduction of the revised Code of Ethics and the focus on doing the right thing, in the right way for the right reason, the key measurables of the success of implementation will be seen through the public confidence figure improving, through the improvement in victim satisfaction, and the reduction in findings against officers and staff for incivility. These measures will be included as part of the communications roll-out and measured through the quarterly Implementation Working Group meetings.

In addition, updates to COG on a quarterly basis will also give these measures some areas of focus.

Appendix A



Appendix A
CoE-Ethical-policing-r

Appendix B



Appendix B
CoE-Guidance-for-eth

Appendix C



Appendix C
Code-of-practice-for-r