1. **Objective**

**Title of the Board:** Joint Audit Committee **Item**

**Meeting date:** 21 May 2024

**Subject:** Annual Governance Statement

**Author of report:** Richard Croucher, Chief Finance Officer

* 1. The purpose of this report is to receive comments from the Committee on the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The draft AGS for the OPCC has already been reviewed by the PCC and the draft AGS for the Constabulary has already been reviewed by the Chief Constable and Chief Officer Group.

1. **Background**
   1. The AGS is a statutory document that must be published each year within the statement of accounts. The AGS is intended to set out the governance arrangements in place for the OPCC and Constabulary and assess its robustness and any potential weaknesses. An action plan needs to be included for the forthcoming year to deal with any weaknesses or issues that could significantly impact on continuous improvement.
   2. The document style and headings are formulated in the same way as other partner organisations. Much of the text follows the statutory guidance. The attached draft AGS has tracked changes left on to simply show amendments to the previous version from last year.
   3. The key changes are in respect of the action plan at section 6. These have been amended to take account of significant issues. The statutory guidance seeks to limit the size of the document as it would be too large to consume if the document contained a comprehensive assessment of all governance and policies. The focus should be on changes that have a significant impact on the ability to deliver service.
   4. The AGS will be published alongside the Statement of Accounts. For the 2023/24 accounts draft unaudited accounts must be published by 31 May. The AGS is subject to external audit comment but is not subject to formal external audit sign-off.
2. **Recommendations**
   1. The report is submitted for comment.