

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

23 January 2015

Complaints about the Police and Crime Commissioner

Report by The Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Recommendations

That the Panel considers the complaints against the Commissioner since the last meeting, and any action that the Panel might take in respect of these.

1. Background

- 1.1 In accordance with the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012, the Sussex Police & Crime Panel (PCP) is responsible for the initial handling of complaints against Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC).
- 1.2 At its meeting of 26 November 2012 the Panel decided to delegate its initial handling duties to the Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel, and to consider a report of the complaints received, quarterly.
- 1.3 Serious complaints (those alleging criminal conduct) are referred automatically to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC). A sub-committee meets to consider complaints against the PCC requiring informal resolution (those considered "non-serious").

2. Correspondence Received from 3 October 2015 to 12 January 2015

Three people contacted Panel to raise issues, and all three instances were recorded. The Clerk to the Panel considered these and decided that two constituted a complaint which did not fall within the remit of the Panel, and one concerned decisions of the PCC that were not considered unreasonable.

- 2.1 In each case the decision was notified to the correspondent in writing, via email where no postal address was provided.

Complaints

- 2.2 During the subject period no correspondents raised issues which constituted a serious complaint, as defined by the Regulations (see 1.3).

Correspondence Recorded, but not Considered by the Clerk to be a Complaint within the Panel's Remit:

- 2.3 Concerning correspondence received and determined by the Clerk to the Panel not to be (within the terms of the Regulations) a complaint within the Panel's remit:
- Two individuals contacted the Panel raising issues about operational policing matters, which are the responsibility of the Chief Constable, and not the Commissioner.

Correspondence Recorded, but not Considered by the Clerk to Constitute Unreasonable Behaviour by the Commissioner

- 2.4 Concerning correspondence relating to the actions and decisions of the Commissioner, but not considered (within the terms of the Regulations) to be a qualifying complaint.
- An individual contacted the Panel regarding the Commissioner's decision to appoint the Chief Constable and her Chief Executive, them being at the time of their appointment, respectively, a serving Sussex Police officer, and a former officer of Sussex Police, and alleging this undermined the independence and integrity of Sussex Police. The Clerk considered that this was not a legal preclusion to either role, and that the decisions did not raise issues about the Commissioner's conduct.
- 2.5 Although recorded, no further action was taken.

3. Resource Implications and Value for Money

- 3.1 The cost of handling complaints is met from the funds provided by the Home Office for the operation and administration of Sussex Police and Crime Panel.

4. Risk Management Implications

- 4.1 It is important that residents can have confidence in the integrity of the system for handling complaints against Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner and her Deputy (where one has been appointed).

5. Other Considerations – Equality – Crime Reduction – Human Rights

- 5.1 Not applicable

Tony Kershaw

Clerk to Sussex Police and Crime Panel

Contact:

Ninesh Edwards

(T) 0330 222 2542

(E) ninesh.edwards@westsussex.gov.uk