

Sussex Police and Crime Panel

27 June 2014

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 24 January to 18 June 2014

- 2.1 Six people contacted the Panel. All six raised issues that were recorded. The Clerk to the Panel, considered these and decided that none constituted a complaint which fell within the remit of the Panel.
- 2.2 The decision was notified to the correspondent in writing, via email where no postal address was provided.

Complaints

- 2.3 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 to be a Complaint

- 2.4 Of the letters/emails received and determined by the Clerk to the Panel not to be (within the terms of the Regulations) appropriate complaints:

- An individual contacted the Panel via telephone, to complain about difficulties he had encountered in making a verbal complaint to the OSPCC. Subsequent enquiries revealed that the correspondent's complaint had been verbally received by the Office of Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (OSPCC).
- An individual contacted the Panel via email on several occasions, but raised no substantive issue concerning the conduct of the Commissioner on any specific matter. Allegations were made about corruption within Sussex Police which, while not within the remit of the Panel, which were of concern to the Panel. The Chairman wrote to the Commissioner, who confirmed that the matters had been investigated, and found to be without foundation.
- A former employee of Sussex Police raised an issue concerning personnel issues. Operational matters are the responsibility of the Chief Constable, not the Commissioner.
- An individual contacted the Panel via a referral from the Independent Police Complaints Commission, concerning dealings with Sussex Police, the Commissioner's office, and the office of the Coroner for East Sussex. No complaint relating to the conduct of Sussex Police and Crime and Commissioner could be discerned.
- An individual contacted the Panel via email on several occasions to allege corruption within Sussex Police, but raised no substantive issue concerning the conduct of the Commissioner.
- An individual contacted the Panel via email regarding the status of complaints made to Sussex Police Professional Standards Department, and to the OSPCC. No substantive issue concerning the conduct of the Commissioner was raised.

2.5 These were recorded. However, the Clerk to the Panel determined that none constituted a complaint which fell within the remit of the Panel, and no further action was taken.

2.6 In some cases correspondents have emailed all Panel members directly. It is proposed that members receiving such correspondence in future do not respond directly, but instead forward the message to the Clerk, who will consult with the Chairman and respond on behalf of the Panel.

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.

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