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Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner to the Chair and Members of the Cleveland Police and Crime Panel

10th June 2013

PCC Governance – Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Members of the Cleveland Police and Crime Panel (PCP) with an update in relation to the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee report on PCC Register of Interests.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 On 23rd May 2013 the Home Affairs Committee published a report on PCCs, including information on their interests, pay, costs, second jobs and offices. A copy of this report is available at appendix 1. Given that the work began only 2 months after the election of PCCs, this report could only be of questionable value.
- 2.2 The report suggests that Cleveland has not been particularly forthcoming in the provision of information. This is disappointing given my commitment to openness, honesty and integrity as demonstrated by the amount of information on <http://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk>. It is also critical of Police and Crime Panels.
- 2.3 Whilst PCCs generally, through the newly formed Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) have welcomed the scrutiny of the report, the following comments made available to the press indicate the shortcomings in its conclusions -
- 2.4 'We will look closely at the proposal for a national register of PCCs' interests. PCCs want to ensure the public are confident that all decisions made are as transparent as possible and made in their best interests.

- 2.5 Although there are some constructive recommendations for PCCs to take on board, sadly the report is undermined by inconsistency, as well as some inaccuracies.
- 2.6 For example, the report states that one of the PCC's has 14 members of staff, which is true, but it has not made clear only three are full time. The information presented is not comparable.
- 2.7 In Humberside, the report states the PCCs office costs are 2.6% higher than the previous police authority yet Humberside's OPCC office cost are the same as the Police Authority and have not increased.
- 2.8 Nottinghamshire also report that there is an error reporting its office costs. The Nottinghamshire budget for 2013-14 is currently estimated at £1.1m. This is a reduction of over 10% not the reported increase of 17%. These are just a sample of the errors identified in the report.
- 2.9 Given that PCCs are responsible for a combined budget of £8 billion, it is disappointing that the Home Affairs Committee has not recognised the greater responsibilities PCCs discharge in office compared to Police Authorities. The Committee also fails to recognise the variance in size of force areas. PCCs representing metropolitan areas will have a bigger office budget because they deal with a larger force and population compared to rural areas."
- 2.10 I became Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland in November 2012, which I would stress is my only work commitment. I gave up my seat on Middlesbrough Council once I had completed various on going commitments. The PCC role takes all of my time as can be seen from my comprehensive engagement programme and diary commitments.
- 2.11 On 30th November 2012, my website was launched. We have continued to develop and add to this, and it now provides a very wide range of financial and other information, more than is required in law.

3.0 Governance Arrangements

- 3.1 My commitment to transparency and scrutiny is shown by publication of my diary, my decisions and how I hold the Force to account. I undertake live webchats. I have attended over 50 community meetings since November, where members of the public have the opportunity to ask any question or raise their concerns. I am committed to visiting every Neighbourhood Policing area. In addition I have met with all Service Units at Cleveland Police as well as the Police Federation, Unison as well as the various staff equality support groups.
- 3.2 I have appointed a wholly independent and very skilled audit panel charged with scrutiny of the PCC and the force. External auditors have already looked at my first few months and reported on 'Good Governance and Financial Management' that 'the Police and Crime Panel can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this area are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective'. A copy of this report is available at Appendix 2.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 Whilst welcoming the interest of the Select Committee I would wish to counter any suggestion that I have not been willing to provide information to them. The website <http://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk> has all this and more available for anyone to see. It has taken some time to populate all of the information on the site but financial information has been on the site since 28 February.
- 4.2 It does seem that the Home Affairs Committee is concerned that there is little scope for national control or scrutiny of PCCs, and uses a very limited number of examples to be critical of PCPs. I am committed to supporting the scrutiny activities of this Police and Crime Panel. I welcome members comments on the Home Affairs Committee Report and will be very happy to receive any suggestions from members of the Police and Crime Panel as to what further information should be provided.

5.0 Background Papers

Home Affairs Select Committee Report – Declaration of PCC Interests

Internal Audit Report – Good Governance and Financial Management