



**CLEVELAND
POLICE**

**Cleveland Police Headquarters
Ladgate Lane
Middlesbrough
TS8 9EH**

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland, Barry Coppinger, made the following statement at a press conference at 2.30pm on January 5th 2017 at Police HQ.

Good afternoon and thank you for attending.

I would like to make some announcements about how I propose to deliver on the commitments I made, following my re-election, to reform the approach that Cleveland Police takes to ethics, standards and the handling of public complaints.

As the public will know, Chief Constable Iain Spittal and I are committed to ensuring that the Force becomes an open, transparent organisation that learns from mistakes when they occur - and that Cleveland Police becomes and remains an employer of choice for all who wish to flourish in a policing career whether as a police officer, member of police staff, or volunteer.

Recently the findings of various hearings, including employment tribunals, court cases and disciplinary cases have raised some concerns and questions about the Professional Standards Department of Cleveland Police.

This has coincided with a planned formal review of the Professional Standards Department as part of the Chief Constable's Towards 2020 programme and my determination, as outlined in the Police and Crime Plan¹ developed during 2016, to establish Cleveland Police as a national lead in terms of professional standards.

We have called this press conference today to outline some of the immediate changes that have taken place in order to ensure the public can have confidence in the way the force investigates complaints, misconduct allegations and wrongdoing by those who work for Cleveland Police.

Today I can confirm that, as soon as is practicable, the Chief Constable will replace the Professional Standards Department of Cleveland Police with a new body. The operating structure and model of delivery of this new body will be shaped through review activity and research into current best practice in policing and other, public and private sector organisations.

The review has been jointly commissioned by myself and the Chief Constable. The Deputy Chief Constable and my Chief Executive will oversee the review which will be led by John Armstrong QPM, an experienced practitioner from outside the force with a proven track record in improving professional standards. Mr Armstrong will report back on how Cleveland Police can learn from the mistakes of the past and also from the best practice of other organisations within and outside of the police service.

The Chief Constable and I are of the view that, when this new body is established, there will be externally advertised recruitment to the position of Directorate Head. This will be the first time in the force history that such a post will be open to applicants from outside the police service.

If I can now address the recent Investigatory Powers Tribunal hearing in London.

The final judgment of the hearing is expected later this month and clearly we must await that before finalising what actions should be taken.

However, the Tribunal has indicated it will find that the force acted unlawfully with regard to the authorisation of several acquisitions of communications data over a period of months up to August 2012.

As a first step I have therefore agreed the following with the Chief Constable.

Independent specialists will be commissioned to address key questions that have arisen as a result of this case, specifically, the decision making process that lay behind the monitoring of telephone records by Professional Standards in this case and in cases over the past six years.

I have also asked the Chief Constable to provide assurances that the systems and practices currently in place for surveillance authorisation are lawful and appropriate and have asked that the Force provide a full and detailed presentation to me on the current systems and processes at a scrutiny meeting I have organised for later this month. All of this work will be done with the involvement of my office, who are independent of the force.

Before handing over to the Chief Constable I wish to address other issues that have been raised in recent weeks during discussion of this and other cases.

I was disappointed to hear, before Christmas, calls for Cleveland Police to be abolished and merged with other Forces. I know that the people of Cleveland would not support this.

Whilst I am Commissioner there will be no question of this force merging with another. Command and control of local policing will remain within the force area and under the direction of a Chief Constable accountable, through me, to the public. Those calling for the abolition of Cleveland Police are advocating a change that would see police officers co-ordinated from Durham, or Northumbria or North Yorkshire and I do not believe that benefits the neighbourhood policing model that enjoys the overwhelming support of local people.

Since becoming Commissioner I have attended over 400 community meetings across the force area and I know from these that the overwhelming majority of the public have nothing but the highest respect and admiration for the work carried out by our police officers and I share that view.

Regulations and Statutory guidance define how a Chief Constable or a Crime Commissioner should deal with alleged wrongdoing by staff or officers, past or present. Should any evidence concerning conduct matters or criminality emerge it will be dealt with in this way.

This organisation will not shy away from taking action against any officer who abuses their power and position of trust. It is important that we take steps to ensure that the whole force lives up to the high standards of professionalism and dedication displayed on a daily basis by the vast majority of Cleveland Police officers and staff.

I also wish to make it clear that the Chief Constable and his leadership team have my full support. The issues we are discussing today pre-date my time as PCC and Iain Spittal's time as Chief Constable. We share a determination to bring about the changes necessary to ensure the public can have confidence in the way Cleveland Police investigates complaints and internal allegations of misconduct.

My office and the force are in constant dialogue with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and we will continue to be so in regard to the measures I have outlined today. The most recent HMIC report recognises Cleveland as an improving force and I am confident that improvement will continue under the leadership of Iain Spittal.

Thank you for listening, I will now hand over to Chief Constable Iain Spittal.

¹ Police and Crime Plan, 2016-2021, Page 6. <http://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/Your-PCC/Police-and-Crime-Plan.aspx>