

From: Ann Barnes, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Commissioner's Ethics Committee
Item & Date: Item B2 14 April 2015

Executive summary: The Code of Ethics was introduced by the College of Policing in June 2014 and aims to professionalise the police service. Consisting of nine policing principles and ten standards of professional behaviour, the Code is intended to help officers and staff make ethical decisions.

The Code requires forces to establish an internal Ethics Committee, but to maintain public trust and confidence the Commissioner has also established an external Ethics Committee. The Committee will meet twice a year and act as a forum to debate complex issues and support the Commissioner and Chief Constable in fostering a culture of ethical decision making.

The Committee consists of five Independent Members, the Commissioner, the Chief Constable and the Commissioner's Chief of Staff and the first formal meeting is scheduled for 26 May 2015.

Introduction:

1. In June 2014, the Code of Ethics was introduced by the College of Policing and was subsequently approved by Parliament. The code of practice was created to professionalise the police service and introduced using new powers under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
2. The Code applies to all police officers and staff; Special Constables; staff in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC); contractors and volunteers.
3. The Code provides a framework to support individuals in making the complex judgements they are faced with every day, often in highly challenging situations. It emphasises what good policing looks like and encourages self-awareness, ensuring that everyone feels able to do the right thing and are confident to challenge colleagues, irrespective of their rank, role or position.
4. In policing, as in society, there are occasions when there is no clear cut 'right or wrong' solution. The intention is that living by the Code, individuals can be confident that they tackle ethical dilemmas in the best way and are able to account for their decisions with pride.
5. The code sets out nine policing principles based on the 'The Seven Principles of Public Life' (or Nolan Principles), and additionally includes fairness and respect. Alongside the Code, sit the ten standards of professional behaviour:

Policing principles	
Selflessness	Honesty
Integrity	Leadership
Objectivity	Fairness
Accountability	Respect
Openness	

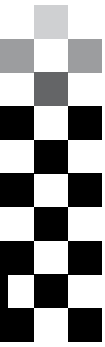
Standards of professional behaviour	
Honesty & Integrity	Duties & responsibilities
Authority, respect & courtesy	Confidentiality
Equality & diversity	Fitness for work
Use of force	Conduct
Orders & instructions	Challenging & reporting improper behaviour



6. The Code of Ethics requires forces to establish an internal Ethics Committee. In Kent, this Committee is chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable and is comprised of police officers and staff from across the organisation. The Committee is responsible for enhancing trust and confidence in the ethical governance and actions of the Force and discharges its responsibilities by:
- promoting the highest standards of ethical behaviour;
 - providing a focus for education into ethical issues;
 - acting as a source of support to others; and
 - ensuring compliance with organisational values.

The Commissioner's Ethics Committee:

7. The Commissioner and Chief Constable recognise that officers and staff are the organisation's greatest asset, and they need to act with integrity at all times to retain public confidence. They also recognise that public trust and confidence in policing is paramount, and to maintain this, policing in Kent needs to be transparent and open to scrutiny.
8. In order to support and sustain this, the Commissioner has established an external Ethics Committee. The Committee will introduce independent, external expertise to the consideration of ethical issues and also serve to advise and support decision making by the Chief Constable.
9. The Committee will act as a forum to debate complex issues and perform an oversight function by examining current decisions, advising on future decisions and providing objective assurance in relation to decision making. The Committee will also support the Commissioner and Chief Constable in fostering a culture where ethical decision making drives Kent Police actions, and ensures a quality service is consistently delivered.
10. The Committee is scheduled to have two formal and two informal meetings per year and its scope is divided into a number of areas including (but not limited to):
- leadership;
 - debating complex operational or personnel issues
 - proactively challenging Kent Police on themes of national significance, especially the use of resources in austere times;
 - ensuring senior leaders' decision making is in keeping with the Force's Mission, Vision, Values and Priorities;
 - influencing police culture; and
 - fostering attitudes and practices which are ethical.
11. In addition, it will examine issues arising from:
- the Force's internal Ethics Committee;
 - the Commissioner's People Board;
 - individuals within the Force (at any rank) or the OPCC directly; and
 - suggestions by Committee members concerning matters of national or local importance.



12. Membership of the Committee consists of five Independent Members, the Commissioner, the Chief Constable, the Commissioner's Chief of Staff and other people by invite (if deemed appropriate). The Independent Members are as follows:
- Elizabeth Bilton - a qualified accountant, and Director of Internal Audit at MUFG. Elizabeth is also a Non-Executive Trustee and Honorary Treasurer of Plantlife International Conservation Charity.
 - John Clarke - following an extensive career in the medical profession, John retired in 2013. While working for the NHS, John sat on the Local Medical Committee and the Professional Executive Committee of a NHS Primary Care Trust.
 - Teresa Murray – a local elected Labour councillor and deputy leader of the Medway Labour Group. Teresa is also the spokesperson for Health and Community Affairs.
 - Vyramuthu Navaratnam - a retired Senior Civil Servant with an extensive clinical career in the NHS before joining the Home Office. Vyramuthu has also been a Justice of the Peace since 2006.
 - Chrys Short - has held a range of high level nursing, teaching and management roles in the healthcare profession. Chris was previously a Member of the Dartford and Gravesham Ethics Committee and also a Justice of the Peace.
13. Due to unforeseen delays in the recruitment of the Independent Members, the first informal meeting of the external Ethics Committee only took place on 10 December 2014. As an introductory meeting, this had a limited agenda, including agreeing the Terms of Reference and discussing induction training opportunities.
14. Therefore, the first formal meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 26 May 2015. At this meeting, amongst other matters, the Committee will consider:
- outcomes from the Force's internal Ethics Committee;
 - their role in the complaints process;
 - issues arising from the recently published HMIC and HMI Prisons joint inspection of Kent custody suites; and
 - stop and search.
- The Committee will also have the opportunity to raise issues of concern they would like to discuss, and the Independent Members will be asked to consider their own personal development.
15. Whilst still subject to agreement, it is proposed that Elizabeth Bilton will Chair the Committee in 2015/16 and that Chairmanship will rotate on an annual basis. In addition to a number of standing items, there will be an agenda setting meeting between the Committee Chair and the OPCC prior to each meeting.
16. The Committee's second formal meeting is scheduled for 8 December 2015.

