

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### **KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL - COMPLAINTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel - Complaints Sub- Committee held in the Wantsum Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 14 July 2014.

PRESENT: Cllr Campbell, Cllr P Clokie, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Cllr T Martin, Mr Dan McDonald and Cllr P Todd

ALSO PRESENT:

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Campbell (Policy Officer), Mr J Cook (Scrutiny Research Officer) and Ms D Fitch (Democratic Services Manager (Council))

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

##### **1. Election of Chairman** *(Item 1)*

1. Councillor P Clokie proposed and Councillor P Campbell seconded that Councillor P Todd be elected Chairman. There were no other nominations.  
Agreed without a vote.

Councillor P Todd was duly elected.

##### **2. Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel Complaints Policy** *(Item 2)*

1. Mr Campbell referred the Panel to the Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel Complaints policy (as per the formal approval of the updated Policy by the whole Police and Crime Panel in May 2014). The relevant policies had been included as a reminder and resource for this inaugural Complaints Sub-panel.
2. Mr Campbell explained that the purpose of the meeting was for the members to review each complaint and consider whether further action was required. It was explained that the Sub-Panel had the following options:
  - Find merit in the complaint and recommend a suitable action plan the Police and Crime Commissioner for addressing the matter.
  - Find that the complaint does not warrant further action and to resolve that the matter be closed.

**RESOLVED** that the Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel Complaints policy be noted.

### **3. Motion to Exclude the Press and Public**

*(Item 3)*

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 & 2 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

### **4. Complaint - PCC Ref 06/14**

*(Item 4)*

1. Mr Campbell outlined the two issues raised by the complainant as follows:
  - That offense had been caused by the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) use of the phrase 'woman in the street' in the documentary 'Meet the Commissioner' when asking that an issue to be explained in a simple manner.
  - That the PCC's initial response of providing an apology if offense had been unintentionally caused was insufficient and inappropriate.
2. The terminology used by the PCC was discussed by the Sub-Panel members, several commenting that they had personally reviewed the documentary footage in order to consider this complaint. All confirmed that their understanding was that the PCC was using the phrase to refer to herself and people in general, with no gender bias implied and that the comment could be considered normal phrasing with the more common male equivalent 'man in the street' being a widely understood term referring to the general public.
3. The Sub -Panel concluded that there had been no intent to cause offense, that the language could not be consider derogatory by a reasonable person and that the PCC's initial response of an apology was more than sufficient.

**RESOLVED** that no further action should be taken on the complaint and that the complainant and PCC be advised of the Sub-Panel's decision.

### **5. Complaint PCC Ref - 07/14**

*(Item 5)*

1. Mr Campbell outlined the two issues raised by the complainant which were as follows:
  - There had been a failure to respond to the initial letter sent to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
  - There had been a failure to respond to the subsequent complaint about none response
2. The Sub-Panel discussed the key issues notably that the complaint was historic as it originated from the end of 2012 when the Police and Crime Commissioners had just been elected. Mr Campbell explained that the Monitoring Officer had decided to record the complaints despite the length of time as they could be considered to be a series of complaints about the same issue.

3. Some members explained that they had experience of dealing with the OPCC's correspondence and complaints practices and they had been satisfied with its effectiveness.
4. Mr Campbell gave an assurance that the OPCC's correspondence and complaints system appeared to be robust, the Sub-Panel agreed that the initial complaint letter was most likely not received and nor was the subsequent email. Since the Police and Crime Commissioner had not received the correspondence she could not be criticised for failing to reply.

**RESOLVED** that the Sub-Panel take no further action on this complaint, the complainant and the Police and Crime Commissioner be advised of the Panel's decision and that the complainant's initial letter be passed to the Police and Crime Commissioner and that she be requested to respond.