

NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Report of the Complaints Sub-Committee: N

The North Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel is responsible for dealing with complaints about the conduct of the Police and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire (PCC).

Complaints are handled by Informal resolution which is a way of dealing with a complaint by solving, explaining, clearing up or settling the matter directly with the complainant, without investigation or formal proceedings. The Panel has appointed a sub-committee of three members of the Panel to carry out this responsibility.

The Complaints Sub-Committee met on Friday, 27 June 2014 to consider the complaint lodged by N regarding: the North Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner's conduct in office; remarks she is reported as passing at a special 'Question Time' meeting of the Scarborough Urban Area Forum on Thursday 24th April 2014, especially the question of whether the PCC had not upheld her word to meet with the complainant.

Present: Cllr Fiona Fitzpatrick, Cllr Mick Griffiths (Chair), Santokh Sidhu, Community Co-opted Member.

In attendance Ray Busby, Officer

The Panel **CONSIDERED:** the evidence submitted by N, comprising various supporting information and items of correspondence in relation to each of the themes highlighted below; and response of the PCC to the complaint.

Correspondence and Communication between the Complainant and the PCC

The Panel firmly believes that correspondence should always be properly responded to. The Panel looked for evidence that the PCC responded to the complainant on every occasion in a manner commensurate to the nature of the correspondence received.

The Panel accepts the Commissioner's explanation regarding how correspondence from N has been handled in the past. The Panel was mindful of the PCC's comments

about the approach she inherited from the former police authority to handling correspondence. The Panel is supportive of the PCC's commitment to improve this process, acknowledges the development and implementation of the new policy and that all correspondence will now be responded to according to the policy.

The Panel noted the PCC's confidence that all correspondence was now being responded to according to the recently adopted policy as a matter of course. The Panel considered the PCC had satisfactorily answered the question raised by N regarding how N's correspondence had been processed by her office. **The panel therefore CONCLUDED that no further consideration need be given to N's complaint that the PCC has ignored his correspondence.**

Comments made at a Public Meeting: The PCC has failed to uphold her word, stated in public, that she would meet with N to address the issues raised in his emails. The PCC has impugned the character and actions of an easily identified member of the public acting in the public interest.

The Panel accepts the PCC's reason that it would be inappropriate for her to share information about another complaint.

The Panel notes the complainant's and the PCC's account of the comments that the PCC made at a public meeting. Given that these claims are partly based on individual perceptions, and the absence of any other further information on which the panel could make a judgement, it does not believe it is in a position to comment. The Panel recognised that N felt aggrieved by these remarks but accepts the explanation offered by the PCC that the remarks made – especially those described as "disgraceful" – referred to another individual and were not, as the complainant claims, directed at him personally.

the panel noted that the meeting between N and the PCC had taken place and that the agreed and minuted outcome, in essence, replicated any conclusion the panel would have reached; therefore, the process of informal resolution had in fact been achieved by that meeting. The panel welcomed the fact that the meeting had taken place, albeit somewhat belatedly.

The panel noted that the Commissioner confirms that she did publicly commit to meeting N, and that the meeting has now taken place, albeit – as the Commissioner remarks - not as soon as either party would like. For this reason the Panel CONCLUDED that no further consideration should be given to this element of N's complaint.

In the light of all the above the Panel **CONCLUDED that there has been no breach of office nor has the Commissioner transgressed the Nolan principles of public office.**

Bearing in mind the Panel's limited powers of investigation, the panel **RESOLVED** that the options for informal resolution of this case have been exhausted and to take no further action in relation to this matter.

COUNCILLOR MICK GRIFFITHS

16 July 2014