

To: Joint Audit Committee

Date: 31st January 2019

By: Alison Bolton, Chief Executive

Title: Whistle Blowing – Policy Statement and Procedures - OPCC

Purpose of Report/Issue:

The Audit Committee has a role to review and monitor the effectiveness of the Police & Crime Commissioner’s policy on whistle-blowing. This report sets out the PCC’s whistle-blowing policy statement and also describes the procedures in place that allow staff within the Office of the PCC to whistle-blow. Arrangements for Surrey Police are reported separately.

Recommendations

That the Committee note the report.

Risk – None arising.

Equalities / Human Rights Implications – no specific implications are raised by this report.

Background

The law protects an employee from dismissal or other adverse treatment if they disclose criminal behaviour, a breach of a legal obligation or other specific forms of misconduct to their employer or to the appropriate body.

The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner has in place a whistle-blowing policy statement, as follows:

“The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) in Surrey is committed to the highest possible standards of honesty and openness, probity and accountability. The OPCC seeks to conduct its business in a responsible manner, ensuring that all its activities are open and effectively managed and that its integrity is sustained. It expects the same standards from the Force it oversees. In line with that commitment, the OPCC encourages any of its staff - and indeed the Force’s personnel – who have concerns about any aspect of the Force or OPCC’s work to come forward and voice those concerns. The OPCC ensures that policies are in place to enable people to expose wrong-doing or misconduct and support and protect those who do so.”

Surrey Police's recently updated Whistleblowing and Financial Irregularities Procedure (available on the Force intranet) applies to all employees within the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner. If someone from another organisation (Third Party) seeks to make a disclosure, as they are not an OPCC employee, the PCC cannot offer protection and it is suggested that they follow their own organisation's policy. The OPCC will, however, be willing to listen if for whatever reason a third party feels unable to raise a relevant issue through an external source. Please contact the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer for the OPCC."

This policy is published on the PCC's website. Staff are aware of the procedures for whistle-blowing. The OPCC's team is a small one and to date of writing this paper, the procedures have not needed to be used.

Procedures for Whistle-blowing in the Office of the PCC

There is a duty on all officers and staff of the PCC and CC to inform the PCC's CFO if they receive information which may result in them knowing or having reasonable grounds for knowing or suspecting money laundering, fraud or use of the proceeds of crime. If a disclosure concerns the personal conduct of the PCC, staff would need to report this to the Police and Crime Panel and the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

Oversight of Police Arrangements

The PCC, as part of his oversight role, needs to ensure that the Force has proper whistle-blowing arrangements in place and determine whether these are being used appropriately and whether the policies are effective in identifying malpractice. The PCC will look to the Audit Committee to provide this assurance as it has a specific responsibility to review and monitor the effectiveness of the Chief Constable's policies on whistle-blowing.

Independent Review of Whistle-blowing

The previous Police & Crime Commissioner asked Grant Thornton UK LLP to undertake a review of whistle-blowing arrangements across Surrey Police. This report was published in 2015. Whilst identifying good practice and a favourable performance compared to other forces, the report made over 30 recommendations. These have all been actioned and implementation of the recommendations was kept under review by the Audit Committee.

Contact details:

Name:	Alison Bolton
Job Title:	Chief Executive
Telephone number:	01483 630 200
Email address:	Alison.bolton@surrey.pnn.police.uk
