

Report to the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel Complaints Sub-Committee

Title: Complaint 1

Date: 10 June 2013

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Thames Valley Police & Crime
Panel



Details of Complaint

Below are:

- The initial complaint, dated 12/5/13, received from OPCC on 15/5/13 (Item 1A)
- The complainant's supporting statement, received 24/5/13 (Item 1B)
- The OPCC's response to the complainant's supporting statement, received 29/5/13 (Item 1C)

- The OPCC's supporting statement, received 3/6/13, issued in response to the initial complaint, consisting of:
 - The Chief Executive of the OPCC's report to the Police & Crime Panel meeting of 17th May 2013 (Item 2A)
 - The Police & Commissioner's oral statement to the Police & Crime Panel meeting of 17th May 2013 (Item 2B)

Additional comments are in parenthesis [...].

Recommendation

To follow

Item 1A: The Initial Complaint

Dear Chief Executive,

I would like to register a formal complaint against the conduct of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Anthony Stansfeld.

The practices undertaken by Mr. Stansfeld regarding the use of expenses, and the apparent manipulation of the rules seem highly inappropriate when the force as a whole is looking to make savings. This is compounded by the use of a "surplus fleet car" and a "support officer". Both are taxpayer-funded and would appear to many as unnecessary perks for an official who is already paid £85,000 a year.

I refer you to the Mail on Sunday article "£85,000 crime tsar used sham office to hike expenses 6000%" (Beckford, Mail on Sunday, 12 May 2013, p.17).

I hope that you, as head responsible for the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel shall investigate fully this disturbing incident.

Item 1B: Complainant's Supporting Statement

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this email as a response to a letter I received inviting me to submit to the Complaint Sub-Committee further comments in support of my complaint against the Police and Crime Commissioner, Anthony Stansfeld. (Original letter dated 12th May)

I do not have a copy of my original letter, and so will be basing my supporting comments upon responses made by Mr. Stansfeld to the local press, including the Newbury Weekly News. (See [here](#))

The first comment that I would like to make is that this complaint is in no way "politically inspired", [see Item 1C in response to this] as claimed by Mr. Stansfeld. If it is of any interest to the panel, I had voted for Mr. Stansfeld as my first choice at the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in November 2012, broadly sharing his beliefs outlined in his campaign pledges. To suggest, therefore, that this is politically inspired; as if I intend to smear the Commissioner for political reasons, is a kneejerk reaction and entirely immature. The reason that I made the complaint in the first place was out of concern that funds allocated were being used in an unnecessary manner.

Secondly, I do not doubt Mr. Stansfeld's claims about having to make effective use of time. Kidlington is indeed a long distance from either Kintbury or Hungerford. However, I would suggest that this fact was fully known to the Commissioner before the election. If he believed that he was going to have to change the location of his main office, or going to have to hire a "supporting officer" to be a driver and administrator, he would have made such statements openly and publicly – rather than doing so in a seemingly secretive manner, leaving it to the press to investigate, and placing himself in his current situation. Citizens would have then been able to make a fully-informed decision about the election, in the knowledge that funds were going to be used in that way.

My main point is that any additional services (such as the car and driver/administrator) and expenses (for mileage) could have been justly claimed if there was a wonderful surplus of cash for Thames Valley Police. It might also have been justifiable if the Commissioner was an unpaid or lowly-paid position, raising the need for these extra services and expenses. However, neither situation is the case. As I'm sure the panel is aware, the Thames Valley Police is under financial pressure, with its budget being cut by £12m in 2011. (See here). Furthermore, the Police and Crime Commissioner is paid £85,000 with a sizeable staff. This is over three times the average UK salary. Can such actions, on top of the salary, really be justified at a time of reduced resources and rising council tax receipts for the PCC? (West Berkshire 2012/13 and 2013/14). I suggest that this should be one of the main focuses behind any investigation the Sub-Committee undertakes.

I hope this helps in the process.

Item 1C: OPCC's Response to Supporting Statement

Notwithstanding the substantive issues referred to in the Mail on Sunday article that form the basis of the complaint against the Police and Crime Commissioner, may I offer a clarification on behalf of Mr Stansfeld on the new specific point objected to by [the complainant], below, i.e. the assumption that Mr Stansfeld was denouncing [the complainant's] complaint as being in some way "politically inspired".

I can categorically state on behalf of Mr Stansfeld that this comment to the Newbury Weekly News was not directed at the complainant [...]. It was, in fact, a reference to the Mail on Sunday article itself and, more specifically, one of the commentators named in that article.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Hammond
Chief Executive
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley



**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE OFFICE OF
THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR THAMES VALLEY
TO THE
THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

17th May 2013

**COMPLAINT AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (PCC)
CONDUCT REGARDING EXPENSES – RESPONSE OF THE PCC**

Background Information

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Thames Valley took up office on the 22nd November 2012. As PCC he is responsible for the totality of policing across the Thames Valley Police force area. This is a large area, covering 2,200 square miles across the three counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire, which cannot easily or effectively be covered by public transport.
2. The PCC has an office at the Headquarters of Thames Valley Police in Kidlington, Oxfordshire at which his staff are based. In February 2013 he also took up use of a spare office that was made available to him at a local police station at Hungerford, Berkshire.
3. In April the PCC took up the use of a Force ex-fleet car and employed a part-time Support Officer whose role includes general administrative office support duties as well as driving duties for both the PCC and the Deputy PCC.
4. The administration, preparation and submission of the PCC's expense claims are tasks undertaken by his officers. The expense claims were prepared by officers using the PCC's work diary and authorised business journey records. This source documentation is used by officers to identify the eligible mileage personally incurred by the PCC whilst undertaking his functions, and to compile his expense claims. These claims are summarised below:

Month	Net Mileage Claimed	Reimbursement (@ 45p per mile)
	(Miles)	£
December 2012	34	15.30
January 2013	16	7.20
February 2013	1,005	452.25
March 2013	1,334	600.30
Total	2,389	1,075.05

5. In all aspects of the preparation and submission of his mileage expense claims the PCC has acted in good faith, in accordance with the advice and administrative support he has received from his officers, who are responsible for their preparation on his behalf and for ensuring they were compliant with relevant rules and regulations.

Hungerford Office

6. The Hungerford office was made available to the PCC in February 2013 to increase his productivity by having a local base to work from in the south of the force area, near his home. The availability of this local office reduces the amount of avoidable non-productive time the PCC would otherwise spend travelling to his other office at Thames Valley Police Headquarters in Kidlington. The availability of this local office was intended to enable an efficient use of his time.
7. The room the PCC uses at Hungerford Police Station was a spare, unused, office. A small amount of work was undertaken to prepare the office for his use as part of the recent scheduled maintenance and refurbishment at the station. Accordingly, limited additional works and costs were incurred and the total cost of all the building works carried out at Hungerford Police Station was funded from the Force's routine planned maintenance budgets. Furthermore, the allocation of the spare room to the PCC has no operational impact on policing in Hungerford.
8. The PCC's use of the office at Hungerford over the short-term to date has not been as regular or extensive as originally anticipated. The Kidlington office will, therefore, continue to be the PCC's main office. Nevertheless, the use of the Hungerford office will be retained as it is critical to enabling the PCC to have local access to Force systems, equipment and facilities in a secure environment without having to make a 70 mile round trip to Kidlington to undertake office-based business. The availability of this local facility is particularly cost-effective on days when the PCC undertakes local and national duties, away from his office at Kidlington, elsewhere in the Thames Valley and beyond, and especially at weekends.

Appointment of Support Officer and Use of Ex-Fleet Car

9. In April the PCC employed a part-time Support Officer working, on average, three days per week at an annual, pro-rata, cost of £12,000 (not £19,700 as quoted in the Mail on Sunday). The role of this post includes general administrative office support duties as well as driving duties for both the PCC and the Deputy PCC. This post has been put in place to support them both to undertake and discharge their duties efficiently.

10. Since April the PCC has also had the use of a Force ex-fleet car. This is a five-year old, high mileage, low value, vehicle that was scheduled for disposal by the Force. This vehicle, including the use of the Support Officer as driver when required, is available for use as a pool car for both the PCC and the Deputy PCC (and to staff in Office of the PCC when undertaking official business in support of the PCC).

PCC Expense Claims and Tax Position

11. The PCC is eligible to claim expenses that are in accordance with the Home Secretary's determination on police and crime commissioner expenses, which are of the kinds and amounts determined by the Secretary of State.

12. Under the heading of 'travel expenses', the amounts (or rates) of such mileage allowances determined by the Secretary of State are as follows:

"Mileage allowances: As per HMRC rates"

13. With regard to the mileage allowance claims submitted by officers on behalf of the PCC we have received specialist advice from outside specialist tax advisers that has proved contradictory from our own interpretation of the complex HMRC rules which are in themselves different from those of TVP

14. Should it transpire that I and my officer colleagues have misinterpreted relevant HMRC rules concerning expense claims this will be rectified. This will be done either by reimbursing the PCC or clawing back over payment. Initial indications are that the net adjustments would appear to be less than £100

15. The PCC has given an undertaking that he will act in accordance with the advice to be received in order to rectify the situation, as necessary and appropriate.

Paul Hammond

Chief Executive

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley

17th May 2013

1. Three issues that I was complained about. I will address the use of the Hungerford office and the use of a part time Support officer and car. The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer of the Office of the PCC will address the expenses issue.
2. Hungerford Office.
 - a. I am only now at Kidlington about 2 days a week, it varies, sometimes it is more. However In Dec and Jan I spent a great deal of time at Kidlington meeting staff, and writing the Police Plan and dealing with the budget. In Feb and after I travelled extensively around all of the TVPA area, hence much higher claims. The two to three days I am not at Kidlington I am visiting elsewhere in the Thames Valley or in London or some elsewhere on national issues. APCC, ACPO, NPAS, CT, SOC, Home Office, etc etc However I have to go to Hungerford frequently to pick up emails, write papers etc. I go to Hungerford probably more often than Kidlington, but usually for shorter periods of time.
 - b. I can be out of Kidlington for up to 5 days at a time. I have to access the Police IT system. There is a proliferation of emails that require my attention. They are usually far too long to be downloaded onto a Police Blackberry.
 - c. I could use a encrypted lap top. However as I need to download and print documents I need to do so in a secure office environment. These documents can be commercially sensitive, HR sensitive, operationally secure and so forth. I do not regard a corridor in my house as a secure office environment. There is a constant too and froing through it of friends, local Councillors, family, children and animals.
 - d. Hungerford Police Station is the nearest to where I live, it is almost within walking distance, I have walked to Hungerford and bicycled often. It had a spare office which I now use. It required no structural work and was cleaned up under scheduled maintenance. I go into the Hungerford Office as often as I do Kidlington, but usually for much shorter periods of time.
 - e. It was interesting that the reporter who wrote that scurrilous article in the Mail on Sunday appears to have camped outside the office last Thursday. When I did not appear he put in an FOI request as to where I was that day. I think he hoped I would say I had been in Hungerford. I was not, I had 4 meetings at Kidlington that day. Such is the way some national newspapers work.
 - f. After the first 3 months or so using Kidlington as my main office I hoped to use Hungerford as my main base. It would be far more convenient. Kidlington is not on the way to about 2/3rds of the Thames Valley population. I tried it for 2 months. However it was not satisfactory and I reverted to Kidlington. You must remember that this is a new job, I can put the PCC office where I wish, and I am still trying a number of things out. As the job settles down I may revisit this.

3. A Car and Support Officer.

- a. The Thames Valley is huge, it is the largest non metropolitan Police Force in the country. To drive across it and back is nearly 150 miles. Much of my time is spent in a car travelling from one end of the area to the other. I was driving over 500 miles some weeks. To do this while attending meetings, often chairing them, giving speeches, making presentations, finding my way, looking for car parking in towns I was not familiar with became downright dangerous. I was overtired, and wasting a huge amount of time driving that could be better used.
- b. I am well into my state pension, if I was 30 years younger this pace might be possible. If I have a medical issue, drop dead, or injure myself the bill for replacing me will be into the millions. Having a support officer who can drive is a wise investment and insurance policy.
- c. When I attend meetings I need someone to take notes and witness what I have said. To go alone to some meetings is unwise. Until I had the use of a support officer I was having to get someone from my office at Kidlington to join me from a completely different direction from where I live.
- d. The Support Officer is part time, I will only have used him once this week.
- e. The value of the car I use, which is an ex police fleet car with over 111k miles on the clock, is somewhat optimistically put at 8k at auction, so I am hardly pushing the boat out.
- f. When this is taken in context with the £500k that my office is underspent this year to April the money I spend on a Support officer and car is money well spent. The huge savings that my office has made I have passed on to all your CSPs.

4. The unpleasant allegations made against me appear to be political. I have behaved with total integrity throughout. I do not even do my own expenses, they are done by the office staff, and I will now hand over to the Chief Executive, who is the monitoring officer and can fill this out..