

JOINT OPCC AND FORCE PROTOCOL IN PREPARATION FOR THE ELECTION OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER IN MAY 2021

Introduction

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) election will take place on Thursday 6 May 2021. This protocol sets out the arrangements to ensure that candidates and prospective candidates are dealt with in a transparent and equal manner. The protocol also provides guidance and safeguards to all OPCC and police staff in order to avoid allegations of bias.
2. The Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) is the Chief Executive of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Ms Sarah Norman. The PARO is accountable for the conduct of the election. The Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and/or the Chief Constable will seek guidance from the PARO regarding any activity, which they believe may interfere with the election.
3. PCC candidates must declare their intent to stand for election by 1600hrs on Thursday 8 April 2021. This declaration must be registered by the PARO.

Aim

4. Not every circumstance or eventuality that could potentially impact on the election, approach to candidates or the reputation of the OPCC, Force and staff can be captured in one document. Therefore, the aim of this document is to provide some overarching guidelines and principles along with sources of advice in order to maintain transparency and equality throughout. In effect to main neutrality neither providing advantage or disadvantage to any candidate.

Principles

5. The following are outline principles, within which all staff are to adhere to. Any areas of uncertainty or questions are to be directed through individual chains of command, ultimately for the Chief Executive of the Commissioner's Office to make a decision and where appropriate to the Chief Constable.
 - a. Organisational.
 - i. Particular care should be taken over official support, use of resources (including buildings and publicity) for official announcements, which could have a bearing on matters relevant to the elections.
 - ii. Special care should be taken in respect of publicity campaigns so that they are not open to criticism that they have been undertaken for party political purpose or in support of a particular candidate.

- iii. The OPCC and the Force must not publish material that refers to or could, in any way, be construed as being designed to affect support for a party or a candidate.
 - iv. The OPCC will maintain details of information provided to prospective candidates or candidates and this will be anonymised then published on the OPCC website so that it is available to everyone.
- b. Engagement with Candidates.
- i. An essential test regarding the appropriateness of any engagement with a candidate is, *“does it appear to favour one candidate against another, whether in terms of information or public profile?”*
 - ii. Care should be taken in relation to visits by candidates to Force or OPCC premises. Any request to visit official premises are to be directed in advance to the CEO OPCC for consultation with the Chief Constable and a decision.
 - iii. Support should not be undertaken for one candidate that would not or could not be undertaken for another.
 - iv. Prospective candidates, candidates and parties must be treated even-handedly and have equal access to information.
 - v. Prospective candidates and candidates remain members of the public and are not entitled to confidential information.
- c. Incumbent PCC
- i. An essential test regarding the appropriateness of any engagement with a candidate, including the incumbent PCC, is, *“does it appear to favour one candidate against another, whether in terms of information or public profile?”*
 - ii. The incumbent PCC, if they are seeking re-election are to be treated the same as any other candidate with all requests for information being recorded and shared on the OPCC website.
 - iii. Unlike many other elected positions, the incumbent PCC maintains the position through the declaration and election period. Therefore, the incumbent PCC maintains his statutory responsibilities. However, care must be taken to ensure that activities, especially during the pre-election period, are restricted to statutory roles that could not be perceived as influencing the election.
- d. OPCC staff, Police officers and police staff.
- i. An essential test regarding the appropriateness of any activity by an individual in the OPCC or the Force is, *“it likely to affect or influence the outcome of the election?”*
 - ii. OPCC staff are politically restricted and cannot actively support PCC candidates. Additionally, OPCC staff are disqualified from being elected as PCC and therefore, must resign a minimum of 19 days prior to their declaration of candidacy if they intend to stand.

- iii. No serving police officer or member of OPCC / police staff are allowed to stand as a candidate for PCC.
- iv. Any police officer or member of OPCC / police staff must resign from their role with a minimum of 19 days prior to the submission of any nomination to stand as a candidate.
- v. Police officers or police staff must avoid any action, which is or might reasonably be perceived as being supportive of any party, candidate or opinion. Including encouraging anyone to vote for a certain candidate, treating candidates differently, supporting or attacking the views of candidates.
- vi. Police officers or police staff must avoid putting themselves in a position or situation, which could be used by a party or candidate in support of their campaign.
- vii. OPCC staff, police officers or police staff who use any form of social media should take care over any content relating to the election.

Conduct

6. The above principles provide information to support decision making. They are underpinned by the requirements placed upon OPCC staff, police officers and police staff regarding their overall conduct and behaviour; specifically:
- a) **Police Officers:** Police Regulations 2003 set out the conditions of service of officers including the need to abstain from any activity likely to interfere with the impartial discharge of duties or give rise to impressions of taking part in politics. Furthermore the Police Conduct Regulations 2004 also highlight expected standards of behaviour such as honesty and integrity; fairness and impartiality; and politeness and tolerance.
 - b) **Police Staff:** Police Staff Council Joint Circular 54, 2008 Standards of Professional Behaviour for police staff highlights the need to adhere to relevant standards such as acting with impartiality and only disclosing information in the proper course of work. In addition certain posts are politically restricted within the meaning of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
 - c) **OPCC Staff:** The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 place certain political restrictions on members of OPCC staff.
7. Should anyone seek to become, or support, a candidate in the election, Chief Executive and Solicitor of the OPCC or the Chief Constable will provide suitable work related advice and guidance, assessing each case on its merit. Providing continuance in role is not conflicted by the activity, the individual must be clear when they are undertaking activities or making information requests as a prospective candidate or supporter.

Engagement with candidates and prospective candidates

8. Political parties have undertaken their own selection process to nominate their candidates during the latter half of 2020 and the early part of 2021. During the same period independent members are also likely to inform the public of their intention to stand. Some prospective

candidates will announce their interest to stand well in advance of the election whereas others may keep their intentions to themselves until the period for formal declarations.

9. Throughout these different stages, media interest is likely to build as will contact between prospective candidates and the OPCC and Force. However, there is no duty on the OPCC or Force to treat candidates or prospective candidates as elected representatives. Nevertheless, discretion should be used in response to any reasonable requests for information.

Requests for information

10. Where a request for information from a prospective candidate or candidate is received the following process will be adopted:
- a) It will be treated as from any member of the public.
 - b) It should be directed to the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) email account¹ within the OPCC or telephoned through to the OPCC (0114 296 4142) where a single contact log will be maintained², as detailed at Annex C. All requests that are directed to the Force will be re-directed to this single location to ensure full transparency and equality.
 - c) In formulating a response, it should be recognised that the information provided maybe exploited for political and campaigning purposes.
 - d) Where it is a Freedom of Information Act request, the standard operating practice will apply. Both the OPCC and force will respond according to current procedures. In addition the response will be posted on the OPCC web site.
 - e) Every response will be from the OPCC Chief Executive and Solicitor and will be posted on the OPCC website.

Media

11. When handling media communications, National Police Chief's Council guidance³ recommends the following:
- a) When dealing with statements and press releases from parties or candidates, the service should adopt following principles.
 - b) A response may be appropriate when claims are based upon factually incorrect information or where it is necessary to correct misunderstandings that would undermine confidence in the police service. Care should be taken not to be seen to be 'attacking' a candidate or a position, merely correcting inaccuracies.
 - c) A response may not be appropriate when a claim is based on that individual's interpretation of facts or circumstances.

¹ ljordan@southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk

² The master electronic register will contain all contact, requests for information and other pertinent information along with decisions and risk mitigations as appropriate

³ [Pre-Election Guidance for Interaction with Police and Crime Commissioner Candidates – Conduct during Pre-Election Period](#). This guidance may be updated ahead of the May 2021 elections.

- d) The above guidance should apply when both the OPCC and SYP use social media to respond to queries or comments.
- e) Pre-election guidance will also apply to media communications.

Organised meetings

- 12. The OPCC Chief Executive and Solicitor has arranged for a factual briefing to be given to candidates on the 18 March 2021, virtually via MS Teams due to current Covid restrictions. The briefing by the Chief Executive and Solicitor and Deputy Chief Constable will only contain factual information. Questions will be taken and candidates will be requested to submit advance notice of specific questions in order to provide factually correct and accurate answers.
- 13. In addition and upon request to the Chief Executive and Solicitor of the OPCC, individual meetings may be held with the Chief Executive and Solicitor of the OPCC and/or the Chief Constable. Due to current Covid restrictions these meetings may be offered in person if they can be done in a Covid secure environment, alternatively they will be offered virtually. These meetings will only be provided following formal declaration of intent to stand for election and where their request for information is not covered in existing documentation in places such as the OPCC website⁴. Advance notification of any questions will be required and notes will be taken of the discussion and posted onto the OPCC web site.
- 14. The above briefings will not cover the running of the election, which will be the subject of separate briefings organised by the PARO.

Visits to premises

- 15. Requests for visits to OPCC or Force premises for the purpose of fact finding and receiving briefings will be considered by the Chief Executive and Solicitor of the OPCC on a case by case basis and will need to be cognisant of the current Covid restrictions. However, the principal methods of fact finding will be through the OPCC website, post-declaration briefings and specific requests for information through the OPCC SPOC. Every request will be notified to the OPCC and recorded on the electronic register.

Photographs

- 16. Until the 'pre-election period' period begins (circa Thursday 25 March 2021) it is acceptable for candidates to be filmed or photographed with OPCC staff, police officers or staff for newspapers or television news bulletins, provided the individual is content to be filmed/photographed. However, once within the 'purdah' period, OPCC staff, police officers and staff must not be filmed or photographed. Additionally, before and throughout purdah all staff must maintain their independence and not be seen to be bias and/or supporting one candidate or party over another.

Police Imagery

- 17. The OPCC and Force will seek to ensure their imagery and livery is not used in any campaigning or publicity material and this restriction will be included in the candidate briefing material on the OPCC website. Where it is so used, the Chief Executive and Solicitor or the Chief Constable will consider the need to request the candidate to remove or withdraw the material. Each case will be judged on its merits but include consideration of the profile of the

⁴ Details of likely information to be held on OPCC webpage is at Annex B

image, the message given, the degree of publication already achieved and the likely reputational damage and confidence in policing.

Pre-Election Period

18. This is a particularly sensitive period in the lead up to the election and requires special care. Guidance is available from the Cabinet Office and will be supplemented by Home Office guidance. In any event, during the pre-election period the following additional restrictions will apply:

- a) Where practicable the OPCC and Force should avoid making and publicising major policy decisions that may be deemed to be politically sensitive.
- b) The OPCC and Force websites must contain only factual information.
- c) Documents which promote the OPCC should not be published.
- d) OPCC staff, police officers and police staff must ensure that they do not contribute to or support the activities of a candidate.
- e) Clear records of all dealings with candidates throughout the pre-election period must be maintained to ensure transparency and accountability, unless the incumbent PCC is conducting their statutory responsibilities.
- f) OPCC staff, police officers and police staff must not agree to be photographed or used as part of any campaign.

19. OPCC staff, police officers and police staff that have personal websites, blogs or use social networking sites should:

- a) Not post any comments that could be seen to be, or give the impression to be made in their professional role.
- b) Be aware that the higher their public profile is, the more likely it is they will be perceived as acting in their official capacity when using social networking sites.
- c) Be careful if making political points or making specific or personal comments about an individual.

Post Election

20. The requirements for the OPCC and Force will be dependent upon who is elected; their previous knowledge, experience and requirements. The Chief Executive and Solicitor will discuss the requirements with the newly elected PCC and establish an induction programme. The likely topics to be included are detailed at Annex D.

Summary

21. The OPCC and South Yorkshire Police remain politically independent. Therefore the aim of this joint protocol and underlying procedures is to ensure that transparency and equality for all prospective candidates in the lead up to and through the election is maintained.

Michelle Buttery
Chief Executive & Solicitor
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Stephen Watson
Chief Constable
South Yorkshire Police

Annexes:

- A. Action Schedule
- B. Information likely to be posted on OPCC election web page
- C. Example Register
- D. Information likely to be included in induction briefing schedule
- E. References

Action Schedule

Ser (a)	Lead (b)	Action (c)	Completed (d)	Remarks (e)
1	MB	Seek further guidance from external organisations	Y	NPCC, APCC, APACE, Home Office
2	MB	Establish link with PARO	Y	PARO meetings are attended, date of Candidate Briefing provided
3	MB	Confirm list of candidates	N	Link in with PARO on Thursday 8 Apr 21
4	MB	Establish candidate contact log for all election issues	Y	Ensure all relevant information is published on the OPCC webpage
5	MB	Identify potential pre-election implications for decision making (OPCC)		Guidance has been obtained from APACCE
6	MR	Identify potential pre-election implications for decision making (SYP)		Guidance has been obtained from APACCE and shared with the Force
7	FT	Identify potential pre-election implications for staff (OPCC/VRU)		Letter and guidance to be sent out to all OPCC and VRU staff
8	CG	Identify potential pre-election implications for police staff and officers (SYP)		
9	FT/LJ	Letter and guidance produced for partners, fire and commissioned providers		To be sent out via Linda, Marie and Michelle
10	FT	Establish an OPCC election web page as part of the OPCC website and maintain	Y	
12	LJ	Organise a candidate familiarisation event	Y	Event scheduled for 18 March 21
13	LJ/JT	Capture notes from the candidate familiarisation event		Event scheduled for 18 March 21
14	LJ	Maintain transparent links between force and OPCC, ensuring that all information is recorded on master contact log in OPCC	N	Ongoing
15	AF	Maintain transparent links between force and OPCC, ensuring that all information is communicated to the OPCC through LJ	N	Ongoing
16	LJ	Organise admission passes for the election Count on 10 May for the Chief Executive, OPCC Comms and Engagement Manager and the Chief Constable	N	
17	FT	Media management post-election. Draft press releases and media schedule.	N	

18	MB/MR	Arrange new PCC induction if required	N	
19	LJ	Arrange date with PARO for the signing of the Oath of impartiality. To be completed within 2 months of the election date	N	

Information likely to be posted on OPCC election web page

1. The following is a list of documents and types of information that is likely to be posted on or linked to on the OPCC election web page:
 - The police and crime landscape – national, regional and local focus
 - The role of the PCC (summary of key functions: Plan, Budget, Commissioning)
 - The role of the Chief Executive and OPCC (monitoring officer functions and role of Chief Finance Officer)
 - The role of the Chief Constable
 - The role of the Police & Crime Panel (summary of key functions)
 - Partnership working (statutory partner and their responsibilities, PCC's responsibility to ensure an effective and efficient criminal justice system)
 - Governance Framework (operational independence and the PCC's working relationship with the Chief Constable)
 - 2021 budgets, finances and commissioning snapshot
 - Link to Police Force - key challenges, useful information.
 - Links / signposting to further useful information and organisations e.g National Bodies

Contact with PCC Candidates and or their Representatives

Date of Contact	Potential Candidate / Agent / Representative	Officer	Method of Contact	Information Sought Description of information requested verbally or in writing (if in writing include document reference number and a link to the document)	Information Provided Description of information provided verbally or in writing (if in writing include document reference number and a link to the document)	Date Added to Register	Requires publishing on the Website (Y/N)	Date Added to Website

Information likely to be included in induction briefing schedule

1. The following is a list of documents and types of information that is likely to be included on an induction schedule:
 - PCC statutory responsibilities
 - Chief Executive / monitoring officer responsibilities
 - Chief Constable responsibilities
 - PCP responsibilities
 - Information on the PCP and members (many areas will have local government elections at the same time and many Local Authorities will need to re-appoint their PCP representatives following their AGMs. Consequently PCPs may also be in a state of transition) along with introduction and initial meeting
 - 100 days forward look (including swearing the oath and upcoming key meetings)
 - The Police and Crime Plan
 - OPCC structure and staff introductions
 - Police Force structure and officer/staff introductions
 - Force strategy(s) and assessment of policing demand
 - Recent significant HMICFRS recommendations
 - Governance arrangements
 - A snapshot of PCC and Police Force finances
 - South Yorkshire Legacy Issues
 - Existing procurement programmes, significant tenders, contract's expiry/renewal dates
 - A snapshot of PCC and Police Force estates and any property disposal programmes
 - A snapshot of the current political landscape in the local elected policing area
 - Information on key partners
 - Collaboration arrangements
 - Meeting Union representatives
 - Inherited / on-going complaints and role of IOPC
 - Introduction meeting with the Police and Crime Panel
 - Deputy PCCs⁵ (possible recruitment exercises and the statutory requirements linked to this appointment)
 - Branding (website and social media)
 - Training Needs (media/social media training)
 - Diary arrangements for Meet and Greets (media, key partners)
 - Community engagement
 - Funding and budgets
 - Engaging with public, partners and partnerships (Voluntary, Independent Custody Visitors and Criminal Justice Boards)
 - Administrative preferences (briefing format, personal organisation, etc)
 - Governance frameworks
 - Code of practice between PCC and Force
 - Policing Protocol

⁵ The appointment process of Deputy PCCs can be found in Schedule 1, 8 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

- Decision making
- Performance Monitoring Arrangements
- Joint Independent Audit Committee
- Independent Ethics Panel
- Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and sub groups

References

1. The following are key reference documents that should be consulted for specific guidance, regulations and legislation:
 - Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
 - Election Regulations (yet to be issued)
 - Electoral Commission guidance to candidates and returning officers (when issued)
 - Cabinet Office Guidance – Election guidance (yet to be issued)
 - Home Office draft guidance ‘Police Officers and Public Officials and Police and Crime Commissioner Elections’ Dame Helen Ghosh, Permanent Secretary. February 2012,
 - Home Office draft further guidance for Police Officers, Elections’ Dame Helen Ghosh, Permanent Secretary April 2012
 - Police Staff Council Joint Circular 54/ 08 - Standards of Professional Behaviour
 - Local Government and Housing Act 1989 for ‘politically restricted posts
 - Police Regulations 2003 and Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020

Useful Guidance Documents

- Policing and Crime Act 2017 (DPCCs term of Office)
- Police, Crime and Social Responsibility Act 2011
- Policing and Crime Act 2017 (DPCCs term of Office)
- Election Timetable (Electoral Commission)
- Local Government Act 1986
- Policing Protocol 2011
- About the APCC
- The Role of the PCC
- Key Functions of the PCC
- Purdah: A short guide to publicity during the pre-election period
- The 7 Principles of Public Life (May 1995) by Committee on Standards in Public Life/Striking the Balance Report 2016, Committee on Standards for Public Life.
- www.electoralcommission.org.uk
- (NPCC December 2017, Pre-Election Guidance for interaction with Police and Crime Commissioner Candidates – Conduct During Pre-Election Period
- Code of Ethics – College of Policing – July 2014. A Code of Practice for the Principles and Standards of Professional Behaviour for the Policing Profession of England & Wales
- Oath of Office for PCCs – www.gov.uk July 2012

TEMPLATE LETTER AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR STAFF

Dear All Staff

Re: Police and Crime Commissioner Elections – 6 May 2021

As you are aware, Police and Crime Commissioner elections are to be held on 6 May 2021.

This email reminds you of the standards of conduct expected of you as a staff member of the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner.

As an employee of the OPCC you hold a politically restricted post. You are debarred from standing as:

- A local councillor
- An MP
- A Member of the Welsh Assembly
- A Member of the Scottish Parliament

For the avoidance of doubt, you may have membership of a political party but active participation is not permitted.

In addition, you are also restricted from:

- Canvassing on behalf of a political party or a person who is or seeks to be a candidate. This is not limited to only the area of the Police and Crime Commissioner employing the politically restricted postholder.
- Speaking to the public at large or publishing any written or artistic work that could give the impression they are advocating support for a political party. This includes writing or 'speaking' on social media for example on blogs, online fora, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (not exhaustive) where the work appears to be intended to affect public support for a political party.
- We are also asking you not to take part in the administration of the PCC elections – the election or the count - on either a paid or voluntary basis.

Attached is an Election Briefing for OPCC Staff which I would encourage you to read. This contains key information and guidance about the pre-election period and the election itself.

If you wish to discuss your own personal circumstances, please do not hesitate to discuss them with me.

Regards

Michelle

Election Guidance & Briefing for Staff

Background on the Election Process

This guidance is written to provide information for staff in relation to the PCC elections, due to take place on 6 May 2021. The considerations under the 'Important Information for Staff' (pages 2 & 3) should be noted.

Pre-Election Period

This describes the period from when the election is called to when it ends. It usually starts six weeks before the election date and a Notice of Poll is issued by the Government. This would mean that the Pre-Election Period will be invoked on or around Thursday 25 March 2021.

This period is a 'period of sensitivity' before the poll takes place. It has previously been referred to as 'Purdah'.

Police Area Returning Officer (PARO)

The dedicated PARO for South Yorkshire is Sarah Norman (Chief Executive at Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council). Her role is to give notice of the election, manage the nominations process and oversee the conduct of the poll as well as the calculation and declaration of the result.

Initial discussions with the PARO representative at Barnsley MBC have taken place to discuss the election planning process. Further discussions will take place with Barnsley Council officers as the elections approach. A meeting is scheduled to take place mid-January.

Nomination Period

The PARO will offer all candidates and their election agents a briefing session on the election arrangements. All potential candidates will be invited to a briefing session ahead of the start of the nomination period. An additional briefing may be offered after the list of candidates has been confirmed.

The PARO will publish a timetable which sets out the nomination period. Those who wish to put themselves forward will need to complete and return the nomination forms. They must also have the signatures of 8 registered electors from within the policing area (this has been reduced for this election due to Covid restrictions) and pay a £5,000 deposit by 4pm on the 19 working day before the poll – this date has been set for Monday 8 April 2021. The list of nominations will then be published by the PARO.

Voting at PCC Elections

If only two or less candidates – a simple majority vote needed to elect a candidate.

If three or more candidates a PCC will be elected under a supplementary vote system – this indicates first and second preferences. If there is no simple majority under the first preference vote then the second preference votes are counted. This means that if no candidate obtains more than 50% of the vote the candidate with the least number of votes is discounted and the second preference votes on his/her ballot paper are counted and added to the other candidates totals.

Important Information for Staff

The following points of information should answer most queries about the effect that the PCC elections may have on your day-to-day roles and the key points that you need to bear in mind.

Key Dates

The following are key dates in relation to the PCC Elections:

- 18 March - OPCC and Police brief to candidates (details to be confirmed)
- 9 March - PARO pre-nomination brief to candidates
- 8 April - Formal candidate declaration to PARO
- 25 March - Purdah commences

26 Apr - PARO candidate briefing
6 May - PCC Elections
12 May – the term for incumbent PCC ceases
13 May – New or re-elected PCC commences in office
TBC May – Official Swearing in Ceremony (to be organised by Barnsley MBC)

Interaction with Candidates

When engaging with candidates and potential candidates they should be treated as a member of the public.

We are organising a familiarisation event for candidates jointly with the Force. This will take place on 18 March, High level briefing packs are being prepared by the APCC and we will be preparing a local briefing pack to accompany this. Discussions have already started to take place between the office and the PARO.

Where candidates wish to visit OPCC/police/fire premises it will be done with no disruption to service and will be offered to all candidates

Staff within the office must not support the PCC in his election campaign.

Force Interaction with Candidates

Candidates may approach both the OPCC and Force with requests for meetings, information or media opportunities.

A local protocol on candidate interaction with the Force is being finalised, which will establish how requests for information requests will be dealt with. This will be circulated when available.

Information disclosed to one candidate must be shared with all candidates.

Use of Public Resources

The PCC cannot:

- Ask any member of staff to support the PCC in any party political business.
- Ask any member of staff to accompany the PCC when they are canvassing.
- Ask any member of staff to prepare election material for the PCC (they can however be asked to review material for factual accuracy).
- Use the Office or Force/Fire premises (where PCC owns the premises) for party political gain including holding party political meetings or meetings with constituents for the purposes of establishing political support.
- Canvass for votes on behalf of the party in the course of normal business.
- Use the OPCC's systems to distribute material supporting a candidate or party – including via social platforms.
- Claim expenses to travel for party political business.

Announcement & Publicity

During the pre-election period PCCs are reminded to be careful about what they say on policy matters concerning the Force when speaking in an official capacity. Officer views on policy or public funding should not be used for party political gain. This is to ensure political impartiality of the force and its officers.

Routine Business

The pre-election period must not frustrate the routine business of the Office. The PCC should continue to represent the public; hold the Chief Constable to account; publicise activity and take routine decisions. However, similar to the way that the Government will avoid major public announcements during pre-election periods, so should the PCC, unless there is a real and pressing need. Equally, however, decisions should not be deliberately delayed if doing so could also be construed as potentially influencing the outcome of the election.

Policies

New policies should not be announced by the Office during the pre-election period. PCC's should ensure all policy positions are announced as business as usual before the pre-election period.

Police and Crime Panel

Police and Crime Panel meetings may be scheduled during the pre-election period. The agenda should be limited to non-controversial items.

PCC Diary

The PCCs diary should be kept accurate and up to date with a clear distinction between meetings/events which are attended in the capacity as the PCC and those in a private capacity.

FOI & Data Subject Access Requests

The pre-election period does not over rule any statutory duties and requirements. Enquiries such as freedom of information requests and data subject access requests will continue in the usual way.

Commissioned Services and Partners

Commissioned services must be made aware of the need to limit any publicity that they may be planning during the pre-election period.

We have written separately to all commissioned services and partners to advise them that they may be contacted and that they should keep a written record of all candidate contacts.

Use of Photographs

Any existing photos of an incumbent PCC that have been published (through any means) can be used by others in a campaigning capacity. This is not using the resources of the Office as they are already out in the public domain.

However, the caveat to that is, if campaign material which uses existing police images or livery, would to the electorate appear to show police support for a candidate then this is not allowed.

This means that there is no permission to use pre-existing photographs or publicity involving staff or officers in publicity campaigns if the officer can be identified.

If a picture is of the PCC and others at an event and the police officers are just part of the group may be acceptable in campaign material but a photograph of the PCC shaking hands with the Chief or a senior officer should not be used as it could be construed as that officer giving support to the candidate.

Election Communications

Prior to the commencement of the Pre-Election Period the office the OPCC is creating an election section on the website which will set out key information for candidates. It will include a number of documents and information as recommended by the Association of Policing and Crime Chief Executives (APACE).

This is being devised by the Communications and Engagement Team in line with the guidance and the link will be shared with you in the next couple of days

The link will be circulated once the page/site has been established.

Further Information

For any clarification around any of the points raised in this document, or any other relevant queries please contact are either Michelle Buttery or Fiona Topliss.