



Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland
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Police and Crime Commissioner:
Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer:

Barry Coppinger
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Tel: 01642 301861
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Mr Ben Houchen
Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP
Rt Hon Matt Vickers MP
Rt Hon Jacob Young MP
Cllr Shane Moore
Cllr Mary Lanigan
Mr Andy Preston

Via email only

2 July, 2020

Dear Ben, Simon, Matt, Jacob, Shane, Mary and Andy,

I received your letter at close of business today - which has been simultaneously released to the local media.

I am surprised two local MPs and three council leaders have been willing to add their name to a letter conceived and distributed by the Mayor's office, which will further undermine workforce morale, and I am equally surprised by your unwillingness to pick up the phone to either the Chief Constable or myself, particularly given I am scheduled to be on a conference call tomorrow morning with Ben, Simon and Andy.

I am staggered at your hypocrisy in claiming to express support for Cleveland Police employees, whilst at the same time causing what I'm certain will be even greater stress and anxiety for a now suspended member of staff, who is entitled to due process. Quite inappropriately, you have chosen to draw further public focus to her situation.

You express support for Chief Constable Richard Lewis - which is welcome - but are you really serious about helping him or Cleveland Police? I appointed Chief Constable Lewis - I set him his Strategic Direction and I recognise and support his considerable progress here. I wonder how you think your public outburst around the difficult decision he has



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had to make in respect of the suspension of a member of staff is helping him or the Force on its journey of improvement?

Through my Police & Crime Plan commitment, I brought about the replacement of the former Professional Standards department with a new Standards & Ethics service. I will hold the Force to account for continuing its programme of improvements in standards, ethics and best practice overall.

If you were to take some time to think and understand what has happened here, rather than rushing to public judgement, the decision of the Chief Constable and Force to suspend a member of Cleveland Police staff is a decision for the Chief Constable, and the reasons for such a decision are a matter for the Chief Constable. I was informed of the decision, and the Chief Constable has exercised his right to not divulge further information whilst matters are being investigated. I repeat that due process is a vital principle. As PCC for Cleveland, I will continue to seek assurance from Cleveland Police in this case, as in any matter of significance for the public – as I have already publicly committed to do.

I will be keeping in touch with the Chief Constable as you would expect, and will continue to scrutinise and hold to account both the Chief Constable and the Force for their work serving our communities. We will continue to work with those who wish to engage constructively with us in keeping the people of Cleveland safe.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry Coppinger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barry Coppinger
Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland