

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary

Sent via email

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Dear Home Secretary,

Holding Chief Constables to account

Last year, you brought in regulations to ensure that police officers cannot resign or retire when they are subject to an allegation that could lead to dismissal, thus avoiding being held to account for their actions and potentially evading justice. I write now to ask for your consideration to ensure that these principles can be effectively applied to Chief Officers.

You will be aware that Surrey Police has recently been subject of an extremely poor report by HMIC into its handling of public protection related issues. The Chief Constable who presided over much of the identified failings left her role to join the National Crime Agency in the very same week as the publication of the report. Whilst no misconduct proceedings had been initiated in this instance, there remain questions over the effectiveness of leadership which cannot now be asked.

You may also recall my decision, back in 2012, to terminate a failing ICT project which ultimately cost the tax payer of Surrey a staggering £15m. In this instance, the former Chief Constable of Surrey Police, Mark Rowley, committed to an ambitious and high risk project but failed to put the necessary skills and processes in place to support its delivery. By the time the project inevitably ran aground, Mr Rowley had moved on to a new role with the Metropolitan Police and I was unable to investigate his diligence in these matters on behalf of the people of Surrey.

In such cases, the public would rightly expect those responsible for failings to be held to account by the PCC for the area in which they occurred. All too often, those who hold the highest office are free to escape public scrutiny.

I would therefore suggest that the Government should consider legislating to ensure that a PCC is able to effectively hold a Chief Officer to account for failings that happened on their watch, even where they have been able to move to a new role. I would welcome your views.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Hurley", written over a horizontal line.

Kevin Hurley

Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey