

Cleveland Police Authority Position Statement

20th October 2011

“As we have made clear on numerous occasions, we do fully understand and share the concerns over the ongoing investigations—and those are concerns which are felt by every member of the Police Authority.

However, the reality is that, whilst the Force and Authority is required to meet the costs of the investigations, their conduct and control are in the hands of other agencies—Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, the Chief Constable of Warwickshire, appointed by the HMIC to oversee the criminal investigation, and the Independent Police Complaints Commission which is overseeing the investigation into potential conduct issues.

Authority representatives do receive regular briefings on the investigations and we are maintaining the closest possible scrutiny on the costs being incurred.

I have written to the Home Secretary on behalf of the Authority setting out the very unusual and difficult circumstances we are facing. I have explained that, whilst the investigations are being undertaken by—and are under the control of—other agencies, the costs are falling on our budget which is already facing major financial pressures.

I have indicated to her that the costs of the investigations are already in the region of half a million pounds and we have no control over how long they will continue or what will be the final costs.

I have underlined the difficulty of planning our finances—and maintaining the service to the public—against such a background. There is provision for the Government to assist authorities when faced with this kind of situation and I have asked for an assurance from the Home Secretary that she will look favourably on considering assistance to help us deal with these exceptional circumstances if and when it becomes necessary.

As I have made clear on numerous occasions, we do fully understand the concerns over the ongoing investigations—and those are concerns which are felt by every member of the Police Authority.

However, the reality is that, whilst the Force and Authority is required to meet the costs of the investigations, their conduct and control are in the hands of other agencies—Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, the Chief Constable of Warwickshire, appointed by the HMIC to oversee the criminal investigation, and the Independent Police Complaints Commission which is overseeing the investigation into potential conduct issues.

Authority representatives do receive regular briefings on the investigations and we are maintaining the closest possible scrutiny on the costs being incurred.

The Police Authority has no remit insofar as the way in which this investigation is handled however we have been greatly impressed by the manner in which Mr Bristow is ensuring that it remains tightly focussed, his understanding of the concerns of the authority and the local community and his commitment to keep the authority aware of the progress within the obvious limits of ongoing investigations.

It has been suggested in some media that the suspended officers do not know what issues are being investigated. This is not the case as it is a legal requirement under police conduct regulations for the matters being investigated to be set out in a document (a regulation 14A notice) and served on the officer. This was done in August 2011”