



**Lincolnshire
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

SAFER TOGETHER



**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
ELECTIONS 6 MAY 2021**

**PRE-ELECTION PERIOD ('PURDAH')
BRIEFING NOTE**

1. Purdah is the pre-election period, specifically the time between an announced election and the final election results. This is a period of particular sensitivity during which careful thought must be given to what decisions can be made or public statements issued in case it can be perceived that they might influence the outcome of the forthcoming election.
2. The election of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in England and Wales is due to take place on 6 May 2021. The Purdah period will commence from Monday 22 March 2021 when the Notice of Election is published.
3. Staff employed within the PCC should be made aware of the limitations placed on them under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, in terms of political restrictions and supporting candidates. Schedule 16, part 3, para. 200 of the Act, confirms that all PCC employees are politically restricted, except Deputy PCCs. Restrictions placed upon police officers are enshrined in Schedule 1 of Police Regulations 2003, including abstaining from any activity that could interfere with discharging their duties and in particular that they should not take any active part in politics.
4. During the period of purdah, it is important that any perception that the PCC and/or Office of the PCC (OPCC) might be acting to support a political position is avoided. This means that the publication of any publicity that might be identified with any individual or group must be avoided, though it is permissible to publish factual information. No statements should be made, documentation published, initiatives launched, or any activity undertaken that could possibly be perceived as influencing voters. It is good practice to forward plan decisions of significant public interest so that they can be signed-off by the incumbent PCC in advance of purdah. However, the PCC will continue to take decisions on a 'business as usual' basis throughout this period.

5. Whilst the business of the PCC will continue as usual, including participation in public engagements, it is good practice not to make any significant public announcements about new policies, campaigns, plans or other matters during purdah, in order not to act in a way that could give the impression that the OPCC or Lincolnshire Police are seeking to influence the outcome of the election

General points about the use of public resources include:

- Even where members of staff are not politically restricted the PCC cannot use their services to support his re-election campaign while they are at work – this includes the Deputy PCC while he is also in the office or is using office equipment.
 - Facilities that cannot be used for election purposes by the PCC include the use of rooms, buildings, IT equipment, telephones, etc, which belong to the OPCC or Lincolnshire Police.
 - The PCC will want to be particularly careful in his use of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter accounts which are held in the name of the OPCC or Police Force, to avoid inappropriate use, such as tweeting or 'liking/favouriting' political material.
 - The PCC should not use events or other forums, which he has organised in his official capacity for election campaigning. It is acknowledged that, if a local politician decides to attend an official PCC event and act in a political way, this might be beyond the control of the PCC, but where this is the case, the PCC should try to mitigate the problem to prevent the use of public resources for political gain.
 - PCCs cannot claim travel or other expenses for the purpose of electioneering.
 - All public information about policing should be made available equally to all candidates. It will be primarily the duty of OPCC staff to make this available. The incumbent PCC should not hinder staff in discharging this duty.
6. The purdah period will only end when the newly elected PCC takes office – and the existing law on PCC elections states that the term of office starts on the 7th day after the election. The serving PCC's term of office does not finish until the end of the 6th day after the election, to enable a short transition period to take place, and enable the incoming PCC (if applicable) to complete a number of things they must do before they can take up office – including making a declaration of acceptance of office.
 7. The Chief Executive will be able to provide further detailed guidance in his capacity as Monitoring Officer.