



LEICESTERSHIRE
POLICE AUTHORITY

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DECISION NOTICE – POLICE AUTHORITY STANDARDS (ASSESSMENT)

SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING – 31 AUGUST 2011

The Standards (Assessment) Sub-Committee decided unanimously that no action should be taken on the complaint.

Case Reference No. PA/3/N/6/2

Complaint

On 31 August 2011 the Standards (Assessment) Sub-Committee of Leicestershire Police Authority convened in private and considered a complaint from Mr Steve Vickers, a member of the public, against Mr David Bill, a member of the Police Authority.

The complainant alleged that David Bill failed to comply with the Code of the Conduct by comments he made which were reported in the Hinckley Times on 28 July 2011 that he had been unlawfully prevented from attending a meeting of the Police Authority concerning contractual issues between the Authority and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. It was alleged that David Bill also stated that the Authority had missed the opportunity to move the Local Policing Unit onto the 'Fludes' site which Steve Vickers alleges is rented by the Borough Council, of which David Bill is a member and therefore David Bill's comments illustrate that he had a vested interest in the outcome of the meeting. It was also alleged that David Bill also stated that Leicestershire Constabulary still had not learnt lessons from the Fiona Pilkington case. Steve Vickers stated that proper recognition had not been given to the extensive work done by Leicestershire Constabulary to resolve issues surrounding the death of Fiona Pilkington and her daughter. Mr Vickers alleged that Mr Bill's comments were politically contrived to benefit no-one but Mr Bill and that by his comments Mr Bill had brought the Authority, and Constabulary, into disrepute.

Reason for the Decision

The Assessment Sub-Committee carefully considered all correspondence from the complainant, relevant guidance from the Standards for England and the following paragraphs of the Authority's Code of Conduct:-

Paragraph 2 – conduct alleged must be conducted in an official capacity or as a representative of the Police Authority.

Paragraph 5 – conduct which could reasonably be regarded as bringing the authority into disrepute.

It also took into account the General Principles supporting the Code of Conduct.

In respect of the first element of the allegation that Mr Bill, by his actions, brought Leicestershire Police Authority and Leicestershire Constabulary, into disrepute, the Assessment Sub-Committee decided that Mr Bill had every right to express his opinions. The Code does not inhibit free speech.

In relation to the second element of the allegation that Mr Bill had a vested interest in the outcome of the meeting, the Assessment Sub-Committee decided that Mr Bill had taken the advice of the Monitoring Officer and followed that advice at the meeting. It noted that Mr Bill declared his interest in the item at the beginning of the meeting and at the appropriate time during the proceedings, left the room while the item was considered. Whether Mr Bill had a vested interest in the item or not, the very fact that he declared his interest and removed himself from consideration of the item resulted in him not being in a position to influence the decision either way.

In respect of the third element of the allegation that Mr Bill's comments in the Hinckley Times were politically contrived to benefit himself only, the Assessment Sub-Committee decided that there was no evidence, either way, that Mr Bill had obtained a political advantage for himself by his comments, even if they were to be proved to be entirely true.


DECISION: In accordance with Section 57A(2) of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended, the Assessment Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee decide that no action should be taken on the allegation.

Right of Review

At the written request of the complainant, the Standards Committee can review and change a decision not to refer an allegation for investigation or other action. A different Sub-Committee to that involved in the original decision will undertake the review.

The request for a review from the complainant must be received in writing within 30 days from the date of this notice, explaining in detail on what grounds the decision should be reviewed.

If a request is received for a review, it will be dealt with within a maximum of three months of receipt. Both parties will be notified of the outcome of the review.

Signed  Date 16/9/11

(Chair of Assessment Sub-Committee)