



## OPCC PRE-ELECTION PRINCIPLES (2015)

### INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the principles agreed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for managing Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) business through the 2015 pre-election period ("Purdah"). This period applies to both local council elections and the general election which will take place on the 7 May 2015.

**The pre-election period starts on the 23 March 2015.**<sup>1</sup>

The approach will be to take due account of the following principles whilst recognising the need to continue to fulfil the OPCC's functions.

### PRINCIPLES

1. Core OPCC business must continue throughout the pre-election period including anything already announced or in the public domain;
2. Any new activities during this period will be communicated or made public, *after* the pre-election period.
3. Should the PCC support any candidates (Cllr or MP) standing for election she shall not use any resources of the OPCC as a public office for this purpose (as forbidden by the relevant legislation and guidance);<sup>i</sup>
4. Throughout this period, the OPCC will not undertake any activity to give the impression that the PCC, OPCC or Constabulary supports any political party, candidate or policy or that any of these organisations seek to influence the outcome of the election(s);
5. As such, the OPCC will not make public announcements about the following during this period:
  - New policies
  - New Strategic Plans
  - Support for campaigns
  - Other new activities
6. For the purposes of this guidance, 'public announcements' include:
  - Media announcements inc. Social Media
  - Decisions (notices)
  - Public correspondence
  - Speeches at public events
  - Significant website updates
7. The OPCC shall only provide candidates with factual information already in the public domain;
8. The OPCC shall not allow candidates to use any events supported by the PCC or other OPCC forums for campaigning purposes including the photographing or quoting of the PCC in campaign literature;

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<sup>1</sup> The period ends when a government is formed. For local government it ends when polling closes.

## FINAL

9. SLT shall liaise with the Constabulary to ensure that OPCC and Force policies on this matter are complementary; and
10. OPCC staff shall take responsibility to adhere to the terms of their employment contract as politically restricted staff during this period. <sup>ii</sup> Staff should be particularly mindful of any potential conflict with regards to posts on personal social media accounts if they identify themselves as OPCC employees.

### FURTHER QUESTIONS

If any members of OPCC staff are unsure about the application of these principles as part of their role, please speak to the Chief Executive Officer.

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<sup>i</sup> The restrictions placed on Police and Crime Commissioners by virtue of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Publicity – (see *S6 Local Government Act 1986, as amended by Schedule 16, paragraph 173 of the Police Reform and Local Responsibility Act*)

The impact of the Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles), by which PCCs are bound as holders of a public office

The impact of the PCCs Oath of Office (see - the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections (Declaration of Acceptance of Office) Order 2012

<sup>ii</sup> All OPCC staff contracts are politically restricted in accordance with Local Government & Housing Act 1989. For the avoidance of doubt, holders of politically restricted posts are prevented from:

- Standing as a member of—
  - (a) the House of Commons;
  - (b) the European Parliament; or
  - (c) a local authority<sup>ii</sup>.
- Acting as an election agent or sub-agent for a candidate for Parliament, European Parliament or a local authority.
- Being an officer of a political party or of any branch of such a party or a member of any committee or sub-committee of such a party or branch if his duties as such an officer or member would be likely to require him—
  - (a) to participate in the general management of the party or the branch; or
  - (b) to act on behalf of the party or branch in dealings with persons other than members of the party or members of another political party associated with the party.
- Canvassing on behalf of a political party or on behalf of a person who is, or proposes to be, a candidate for election to Parliament, European Parliament or a local authority.

(see the *Local Government Officers (Political Restrictions) Regulations 1990 (SI 1990 No 851)*)