

News and Information



■ SURREY ■
POLICE
Authority

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Statement from Surrey Police Authority

The Chairman of Surrey Police Authority, Alan Peirce, has today announced the continued suspension of Ian Beckett, Deputy Chief Constable of Surrey Police, following a meeting of the Senior Personnel Committee. The meeting has been adjourned until Thursday 14th September when it will consider whether disciplinary offences have been committed.

Following allegations made in January 1999 by female members of staff, Surrey Police Authority appointed the Commissioner of the City of London Police, Mr Perry Nove, to investigate the allegations under the supervision of the Police Complaints Authority.

Mr Nove's report was completed in the summer of 1999. He recommended that disciplinary action be taken against Mr Beckett on allegations of sexual harassment in relation to five women. Mr Nove also reported to the Crown Prosecution Service who subsequently decided to prosecute Mr Beckett on four alleged charges of indecent assault on two of these women. Mr Beckett was acquitted on all four charges at Southwark Crown Court on 8th September.

Surrey Police Authority deferred any consideration of the discipline charges until after the criminal prosecution was complete. That has now occurred and the Senior Personnel Committee of the Police Authority has today formally considered for the first time Mr Nove's report and recommendations.

It is the duty of the Police Authority to decide whether formal disciplinary action should be taken. If in due course it decides so, a tribunal will be appointed to hear the case and to independently decide whether any disciplinary offences have been committed. The duties and actions of the Police Authority are laid down in regulations and issued by the Home Secretary.

The committee has given preliminary consideration to Mr Nove's report. It has adjourned its meeting until Thursday 14 September. The adjournment will give the individual members of the committee time to consider the detailed report and related documents and to enable legal and other advice to be obtained on a number of points. When it reconvenes the committee anticipates reaching a decision on whether to give notice to Mr Beckett that it considers disciplinary offences may have been committed. If it decides to take action Mr Beckett will then have time to make such representations as he chooses which the committee will consider carefully before deciding on any further action.

The committee recognises that the process has already taken some time and been painful for many people. It is determined to progress its work as quickly as possible and it regrets the uncertainty and upset that any delay in deciding its next steps will cause. However it is essential and in the interests of justice for all that the most careful consideration is given to all material information before further decisions are taken.

Mr Beckett and the witnesses have been notified of these decisions made at today's meeting.

Ends

Ref: SM/12/00

For further information, please contact Surrey Police Authority Press Office on 01483 534679