



By email to: Andrei.Czolak@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Cllr Andrei Czolak
Chairman - Sussex Police and Crime Panel
West Sussex County Council
Room 202 County Hall
Chichester
West Sussex PO19 1RQ

27 April 2026

Dear Cllr Czolak

I am writing further to the ultra vires decision of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel to pass a motion of censure against me at their meeting held on 30th January 2026.

You will be aware that I subsequently issued a letter before claim to the Clerk to the Panel, challenging the legitimacy of the Panel to take such action. In reply, I received a letter from the Panel's solicitor dated 17 March, which I found to be egregious in both content and tone.

The Panel's response fundamentally fails to deal with the question of why the Panel considered it appropriate to express such disapproval of me attending a march and making public comments when the Panel's own Clerk had determined, only moments before and under the very same agenda item in which the censure motion was launched, that there was 'no basis' for the complaints it had received about those very same matters?

The Clerk had expressly informed Panel members in writing that:

"The PCC role is political, and that politicians are entitled to express political views, for which they will ultimately be judged by the electorate, at the ballot box. Part of the PCC's role is to provide the local link between the police and communities, working to translate the legitimate desires and aspirations of the public into action. PCCs are elected to provide a voice for local people on policing and crime matters and are expected to listen to and represent the interests and concerns of residents in their area. The Commissioner's attendance at a protest is in keeping with this duty."

This case raises important questions regarding:

1. the legal requirement for a Panel to follow the correct process for handling complaints against a Police and Crime Commissioner, which are clearly set out in statute.



2. the imperative for the Panel to follow due process rather than ambush me with a censure motion
3. for the Panel to understand that there is no requirement for a PCC to be 'impartial' about matters of public policy and politics as validated by your own Clerk's determination.

Against such incontrovertible evidence of the Panel acting ultra vires, I am saddened and disappointed at the unmeritorious stance it has taken in its response - in particular, the fact that the Panel's solicitor states the Panel is unwilling to pursue any form of alternative dispute resolution.

Over the last 13 years I have been scrutinised in my role by Panel members from all political parties. I have always welcomed the constructive way in which that scrutiny has been offered and I have consistently sought to ensure that the Panel is fully informed on all that I do in my role and duties as a Police and Crime Commissioner. I have worked tirelessly to maintain a professional relationship built on mutual respect and trust. Until 30 January 2026, no Panel had ever censured me. It is most regrettable that this Panel has abused its statutory powers simply because some members disagreed with my viewpoint and sought to weaponize a platform for political gain.

I maintain that the actions of the Panel were unjustified, unfair and unlawful and my claim is legally sustainable. Your letter stated that the Panel will not engage in dispute resolution so my alternative is to seek justice via the court process. However, with my responsibility to ensure that £7 million savings are found within Sussex Police budgets this year, I must take into consideration the cost to public funds in bringing a claim for a judicial review, as well as the fact that a claim would most likely not be heard for many months. For these reasons alone, I have decided not to issue a claim on this occasion.

Should the Panel propose to censure me for similar matters in the future, proper notice of which is required, it is important you are in no doubt that I will make a claim for judicial review, supported by a claim for urgent injunctive relief.

I sincerely hope that, for the remainder of my term in office and the existence of the Panel, you will act within the law at all times and will return to a constructive relationship with me and my office for the benefit of the people of Sussex.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Bourne'.

Katy Bourne OBE
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner