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All Police and Crime Panel Chairs

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**THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE HOME AFFAIRS SELECT
COMMITTEE REPORT, POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS: POWER TO
REMOVE CHIEF CONSTABLES**

The Government published a response to the Home Affairs Select Committee report *Police and Crime Commissioners powers: power to remove chief constables* on 3 December.

The Committee's report stated that it is right that PCCs should have the initiative in removing a chief constable, but recommended that police and crime panels (PCPs) should fully exercise their powers of scrutiny in examining and deciding whether the proposed removal of a chief constable is justified. Such decisions, once made, should be accompanied by all the reasons arrived at in the case.

The Government agrees with the Committee that PCPs should fully exercise their powers of scrutiny in such cases.

Transparency is a vital element of the reforms which brought in PCCs and it is important that information is readily available to the public to help them in holding their PCCs to account. In support of this, PCPs were introduced in every police force area to scrutinise the actions and decisions of each PCC.

In the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, Parliament gave PCPs a wide remit to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, by the PCC in connection with the discharge of the commissioner's functions. This is to ensure there are appropriate checks and balances on the PCC.

This of course applies in situations where a PCC decides to suspend a chief constable, or calls upon a chief constable to resign or retire. In such instances, the PCP has the power to summon the PCC to answer questions, and allow them to establish and challenge the reasons for the suspension or removal.

You have a vitally important role to play in making sure the work of PCCs is scrutinised and information is available for the public. Many of you will have already been involved in the appointment of chief constables and will be aware of the need to not only scrutinise the process of the appointment, but also the decisions taken. I am confident you will continue to use the full range of your powers as set out in legislation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Damian Green', written in a cursive style.

The Rt Hon Damian Green MP