

Dear Keane

I refer to your telephone call to me on 24 September 2023.

As you will know, when you first intimated that you wished to speak to me I initially declined to return your call and when you insisted, and we did speak, I began by discouraging you from doing so and explained (in line with the content of this letter) that it would not be appropriate for us to have a discussion about this topic. Since you chose nonetheless to insist on conversing with me, I extended you the courtesy of listening to you.

I would like to reiterate for the avoidance of doubt, my stance on this topic. It is as follows:

1. As the published statement dated 22 September 2023 makes clear, the Chief has announced that she'll retire on 31 March 2024, well in advance of that date. No vacancy arises for the time being, so no decision about succession arrangements is necessary or appropriate immediately.
2. My responsibilities are governed by detailed legal provisions. As you ought to understand, as I am the holder of the public office of PFCC I can only take into account professional advice about the topic of succession arrangements, from those who are appropriately appointed to advise. This includes my statutory officers but also national police inspection, oversight and governance bodies.
3. I struggle to understand why you felt it appropriate to contact me about this subject. The invidious situation you created was that if I was to discuss the topic in fine detail with one prospective candidate for Mayor I would have to discuss it with all such candidates. I am sure you would agree that this would be neither practicable nor appropriate. As it turned out, whilst I was courteous in my responses to you, I made clear that the decision was mine and that discussing detailed matters with you was not appropriate.
4. As the published statement on 22 September 2023 makes clear, the decision on appointment arrangements for a successor Chief Constable is for me as the holder of the office of Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. My decision will be made shortly, and a transparent public announcement of that decision will be made in due course.

On a separate note, which I do not propose to amplify in this letter (because it is written by me in my role as office holder, not as a politician) I propose to raise the appropriateness of your decision to approach me (and specifically, the oppressive content and tenor of your remarks, which compounded the inappropriateness of the call) via Conservative Party channels under separate cover.