Dear Mr Trummel,

Thank you for your email of 22 January to the Home Secretary regarding your dissatisfaction with the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire. The Home Secretary receives a large amount of correspondence and unfortunately is unable to respond to each email individually. Your email has been forwarded to the Direct Communications Unit and I have been asked to reply.

As you are aware, the Coalition Government introduced Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) as part of a wider package of police reform. These reforms are working and crime is falling. The independent Crime Survey for England and Wales shows that crime has fallen by more than a quarter since June 2010, with almost 2.5 million fewer crimes a year.

This part of our reform package devolved power and responsibility to PCCs in order to decentralise government in those areas where we believed the professionals and the public should be in the driving seat.

PCCs have brought real local accountability to how chief constables and their forces perform. They are working hard to ensure that their local communities have a stronger voice in policing and many have produced innovative ideas to improve policing.

Everyone now has a direct say in policing in their area, through their locally-elected and accountable PCC. They provide a key link between the police and communities, and are under a duty to consult with the public when setting their priorities. PCCs are under a legislative requirement to publish a Police and Crime Plan which clearly sets out their priorities for local policing and crime reduction.

The role of the PCC is to be the voice of the people. They are responsible for the totality of policing in their area; ensuring the needs of their communities are met as effectively as possible, whilst holding the police to account.
PCCs carry out their duties in the full gaze and scrutiny of the public and the media. They must account for their decisions to the public that elected them. As a democratically elected official, the electorate will - through the ballot box – be the ultimate judge on whether PCCs are performing adequately.

Under the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012, the duty to investigate complaints made regarding a PCC falls to the local Police and Crime Panel (PCP). PCC decisions are subject to a high level of scrutiny by PCPs. The range and strength of the powers in legislation means there is good reason to be reassured that PCPs have the appropriate powers, agreed by Parliament, to effectively scrutinise the actions and decisions of PCCs and enable the public to hold them to account.

Therefore, the appropriate authority for complaints made against a PCC is the local PCP. The PCP is responsible for the initial recording of complaints and conduct matters and for referring any complaints which allege criminality to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC). Where complaints do not allege criminality, the panel is responsible for handling and informally resolving these complaints.

Therefore, should you wish to make a formal complaint about your local PCC, you should contact:

The Head of Democratic and Member Services
Warrington Borough Council
Town Hall
Sankey Street
Warrington
WA1 1UH
Email: cheshirepcp@warrington.gov.uk.

I am sorry that I am unable to be more helpful on this occasion but I hopes this explains the independence of PCCs.

Yours sincerely,

Mr B Foley
Email: Public.Enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk