

Lincolnshire Police chief inquiry: 'Damaging morale'

Secrecy around the suspension of a chief constable is damaging morale and could hurt a force's reputation, the Police Federation said.

Lincolnshire's police chief Neil Rhodes was suspended for conduct reasons, but no other information has been revealed.

The county's head of the union Jon Hassell said keeping the reason quiet could damage the force's reputation.

PCC Alan Hardwick is now searching for a suitable person, probably a chief constable, to investigate the matter.

Mr Rhodes was suspended more than two weeks ago but no details were released other than to say it was for conduct reasons.

'Keep informed'

Mr Hassell said he believes Mr Rhodes does not know what allegations he faces, a situation he described as "astonishing".

But he said he was encouraged when the Independent Police Complaints Commission decided not to investigate the allegations.

"I want to try and keep the public informed, not just about this, but about the good work that Lincolnshire Police do on a day to day basis," he said.

"I don't want this to overshadow what I think is a very good reputation we have in the community."

He added that, for the most part, it was business as usual, but that officers felt being kept in the dark was damaging morale.

'Say nothing'

Temporary chief constable Mr Rhodes was appointed in March 2012 but suspended in February.

Mr Hardwick, who said he wanted the post to be open and transparent when he sought election, is now looking for a suitable person to carry out a "full and thorough inquiry".

That person is likely to be a chief constable from another force.

He added that it was "incumbent on him to say nothing that may prejudice the inquiry".

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