

Former Essex chief constable paid £60k not to leave

Bonuses of £60,000 paid to a top police officer not to leave his force fell "outside" national policing agreements, it is claimed.

The sums - described as retention payments - were made to former Essex Chief Constable Roger Baker.

They were revealed by Essex Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Nick Alston who called for a bonuses review.

Robert Chambers, chairman of the police authority which made the payments, said the sums were above board.

The two retention payments were made to Mr Baker - who now serves as one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary - in 2008-9 and 2009-10.

Mr Baker has declined to comment on the payments.

But Mr Chambers said: "I, and the police authority at the time, felt very strongly that if we've got a chief constable that was going to achieve over and above what was being asked of him, then it was only fair that we come up, or try and come up with a package that reimbursed him for all the hard work and success that he had.

"Chief constables' pay is very restricted in what you can and you can't do."

'Trust and respect'

Mr Chambers said he asked the authority whether he could look into paying Mr Baker a "performance bonus".

He said he spoke to the HM Inspector of Constabulary and took legal advice from two separate barristers before the payments were made.

"If you want the best then you mustn't take no for an answer. It was a different way of doing it, but I made sure I was within the law."

But Mr Alston said the payments were "outside the national Police Negotiating Board agreements".

"Much of the rationale for their decision-making," said Mr Alston, "is not in the public domain.

"In the interests of transparency and openness my judgement is that, in future, it should be.

"It is a vital part of ensuring the continuation of trust and respect on which our policing tradition is based."

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