



Proposed Appointment of Police & Crime Commissioner's Chief of Staff (Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer)

Summary

The purpose of this report is to enable members of the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) to consider the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCCs) proposed appointment of a Chief of Staff (Chief Executive Officer) and to report back to the Commissioner.

The report provides an overview of the appointment process that concluded on 1st September 2021 to select a preferred candidate.

Confirmation Hearing

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires Police & Crime Panels to scrutinise senior appointments proposed by the PCC. Schedule 1 paragraph 9 defines senior appointments as the PCCs Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer, Chief Finance Officer and the Deputy PCC (if appointed). These are referred to as Schedule 1 appointments.

Under the Act, the PCC must notify the Police & Crime Panel of their preferred candidate for appointment as Interim Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer. The Police & Crime Panel must hold a confirmation hearing and provide a report to the PCC regarding the proposed appointment.

Schedule 8 of the Act states that the PCC must provide the following information:

- a) The name of the person whom the PCC is proposing to appoint;
- b) The criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate and how the candidate satisfies these criteria; and
- c) The terms and conditions under which the candidate is to be appointed.

Background

The last permanent OPCC Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer John Smith resigned in October 2019. The previous PCC, Sue Mountstevens then appointed Mark Simmonds, as an interim Chief Executive in January 2020. The appointment was made on an interim basis because of the impending PCC elections that were due to take place in May 2020 and Ms Mountstevens had announced that she was not going to run for election. She therefore felt it inappropriate to appoint a permanent post holder so close to a new PCC being elected.

The PCC election in May 2020 was postponed for one year because of the COVID pandemic. Mark Simmonds remained in post until 30th April 2021, Sally Fox was then appointed, and she remains the current interim post holder. Both of these interim appointments were subject to Police and Crime Panel scrutiny.

Schedule 1, paragraph 6, of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (PR&SRA) states that "the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) must appoint a person to be the head of the commissioner's staff (referred to in this Part as the commissioner's chief executive)".

In addition, Schedule 1, paragraph 7 of the Act states that the PCC must appoint a person to act as Chief Executive, if and for as long as “that post is vacant”.

Following his election in May 2021, Mark Shelford commenced the process of making a permanent appointment. The PCC decided, following advice, to adapt the job title for the role to Chief of Staff (Chief Executive Officer) to reflect the reality of the role. A number of PCCs across the country, have made this change to emphasise the distinction between the executive and administrative functions of the role. The requirements of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act are still met as the post holder holds all of the statutory and Monitoring Officer responsibilities set out in the Act.

The appointment term proposed is a permanent full-time post.

The PCC decided to appoint a consultant to ensure the independence of the appointment process which was likely to attract candidates from within the OPCC and Avon and Somerset Constabulary. The PCC appointed Andrew White to assist him with the recruitment process. Andrew was appointed following a competitive tender process for recruitment support for this role and the Chief Constable process. Andrew has a wide range of experience of HR best practice as well as a strong background within the policing sector. His previous roles include Director of HR and Corporate Services for Ofsted, Chief Executive for Devon and Cornwall OPCC and Assistant Chief Officer (Resources) for Lincolnshire Police.

The Appointment process

The role was advertised on the Guardian website, the OPCC website and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioner’s (APCC) website. The OPCC also made several social media postings to promote the vacancy. The vacancy was also promoted via the PCP and SIAG networks and a range of diverse community contacts and stakeholders.

Candidates were required to submit applications via a role profile based Self-Assessment application form.

Role Profile

The role profile defines what experience activities, skills and behavioral qualities or competencies are required to meet the demands of the role and for effective performance. The role profile reflects the PCC’s priorities and local requirements.

The seven Principles of Standards in Public life and the OPCC mission, vision and values were included in the role profile.

Appointment Panel

The Appointment Panel was convened by the PCC before any stage of the selection process took place. The panel members were as detailed:

- PCC Mark Shelford
- Ashley Ayre, Previously Chief Executive for Bath and Northeast Somerset Council
- Alison Hernandez, PCC for Devon and Cornwall

The panel process, both shortlisting and interviews were also observed by two Police and Crime Panel members – Councilor Chris Booth and Councilor Nicola Clark

Applicants

The campaign attracted a high-quality field of 25 applications.

Shortlisting

The applicants were assessed against an agreed appointment criteria and scored against a rating scale.

Unfortunately, Alison Hernandez was unable to attend the shortlisting process as she was required at an urgent meeting at Downing Street, so the shortlisting was undertaken by Mr. Shelford and Mr. Ayre. The panel undertook a paper-sift, via Teams, of all candidates and a short list was agreed.

Selection

Five candidates were shortlisted for the final selection stage. Unfortunately, two candidates dropped out before final selection. One withdrew having been successful in being appointed to another role and the other because of a change in their personal circumstances.

The final selection process was run on a virtual basis due to continuing pandemic restrictions. The selection process comprised a presentation followed by a panel interview. Each element of the process related to a key element within the role profile.

Candidates were marked on a scale from 1-4 (excellent to unsatisfactory). Panel members discussed each candidate and then agreed a score for each element of the process.

Proposed Candidate

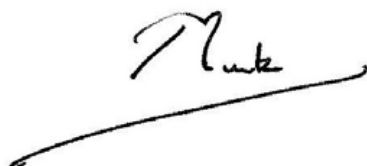
The Appointment Panel unanimously agreed that Alice Ripley be appointed as Chief of Staff.

Therefore, I propose that the Police and Crime Panel endorse the appointment of Alice Ripley.

Acknowledgement

I would wish to place on record my thanks for the support provided by Ashley Ayre and Alison Hernandez during this process. In addition, I would wish to thank Cllr Chris Booth and Cllr Nicola Clark for reviewing all of the application forms and observing the shortlisting and selection processes. I believe that it is very important I was able to undertake this selection process in the presence of representatives of the Police and Crime Panel. I intend to repeat this for the forthcoming Chief Constable's appointment process.

Fare Thee Well



Mark Shelford
Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset
2nd September 2021