

**AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**  
**17<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

**Report title: Confirmation Hearing Process for the role of  
Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner**

**1. Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to outline the confirmatory hearing process following notification of the appointment of a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC) by the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner. This process will allow the Panel to fulfil its statutory obligation to review the proposed appointment and make a recommendation to the Commissioner.

The role of a DPCC differs from other senior officer appointments - it is the only post in the OPCC which is not politically restricted. It is a discretionary appointment and the Commissioner is not required to appoint on merit. The appointment is arguably less able to be tested in terms of professional judgement and expertise.

In line with the "Tone from the Top" report published by the Home Affairs Parliamentary Committee on Standards in Public Life, the Commissioner has conducted an open and transparent recruitment process. The associated shortlisting and selection processes were observed by Panel Member Richard Brown and the Chair Heather Shearer, and the relevant reports are attached as Appendix 1 and 2 to this report.

On 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022, the Commissioner formally notified the Panel that he wishes to appoint Claire Hiscott to the position of DPCC. As part of the ongoing Home Office review of PCCs, the appointment of a DPCC will be mandated in 2024 to ensure continuity in extenuating or unforeseen circumstances.

The original hearing did not go ahead on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022 due to exceptional weather conditions and it was rescheduled to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

**2. Recommendations:-**

The Panel is recommended to:-

1. Consider the information which has been submitted by the Lead Officer and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) in accordance with statutory responsibilities

2. Conduct a confirmatory hearing process as a means of confirming the candidate's suitability for the role in accordance with the Panel's statutory duty and with due regard to guidance from the Home Office and Centre for Public Scrutiny.
3. Agree a report incorporating the Panel's recommendation on the appointment to be submitted to the Commissioner as soon as possible thereafter.

### **3. Background**

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 ("the Act") requires the Police and Crime Panel to conduct confirmatory hearings for specific key appointments under Schedules 1 and 8 to the Act.

The confirmation hearing has been arranged in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Act and relates to the proposed appointment of a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset.

### **4. Notification**

Under the 2011 Act, the Commissioner must provide the Panel with the following information:-

1. The name of the person whom the Commissioner is proposing to appoint;
2. The criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate for the appointment;
3. Why the candidate satisfied those criteria; and
4. The terms and conditions on which the Candidate is to be appointed.

The Panel has been provided with the following documents:-

- Advert
- Role profile
- Terms of appointment
- Independent Consultant Statement
- Personal confidential documentation including the criteria summary (Exempt para 1- Information relating to any individual)

### **5. At the Hearing**

The first part of the meeting will be conducted in public and structured as follows:-

- a. The candidate will be welcomed to the meeting.

- b. The Chair will outline the role of the Panel.
- c. The Commissioner will be given the opportunity to summarise the rationale/business case for appointing a Deputy and comment on the selection process and the proposed appointment.
- d. The candidate will be given an opportunity to present to the Panel her understanding of the role.
- e. The Panel will be invited to question the proposed candidate in order to confirm that she has the necessary professional competence and personal independence to carry out the role of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.
- f. The candidate will be given opportunity to clarify any answers given during the hearing.

## **6. Closed Session**

Following the completion of questioning and points of clarification, the Panel will go into closed session to deliberate on the suitability of the candidate, make its decision, and prepare any recommendations to the Commissioner.

## **7. Panel Report and Recommendations**

In accordance with Schedule 1 to the Act, the Panel is obliged to submit a report to the Commissioner containing a recommendation on whether the candidate should or should not be appointed. The content of this report and the nature of the recommendation(s) will be decided during the Panel's deliberations.

If the Panel chooses not to approve, this can only be on the basis that the candidate has not reached the minimum standards required in relation to professional competence and personal independence. Otherwise, your obligation is to confirm the appointment. In doing so, you will have satisfied your statutory obligation.

In the event that the Panel determines that the candidate does not meet the requirements for the post, the Panel may provide advice and recommendations to the Commissioner in its report. However, there is no power of veto for this appointment.

In response to the Panel's report, the Commissioner must then notify the Panel whether he will accept or reject the recommendation.

The report will be published on the Panel's webpages following its submission to the Commissioner and any press releases will be issued in accordance with the agreed Communications Protocol.

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## Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Recruitment 2021 - 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021

I wanted to update Panel members that both the Chair and I sat in as observers in the paper sift for the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner interview selection via a Microsoft Teams. The Panel consisted of Mark Shelford our Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Barber the Thame Valley Police and Crime Commissioner and Councillor Tom Aditya. Kate Watson from the OPCC oversaw proceedings.

All Panel members had received redacted papers for the 6 applicants in advance of the meeting and had scored them independently. The purpose of this meeting was then to understand the scoring applied, and to check consistency of approach in scoring through application of the performance statements and evidence offered. Each Panel member delivered their score and then a discussion took place between Panel members with Mark Shelford always being the last to comment so as not to influence the others. The discussion was focused on verifying that scores were appropriate, this included sometimes both raising and lowering scores where Panel members considered they had been either too generous or too harsh in the context of evidence offered and discussed. In any event all Panel members throughout were never more than one point adrift for each of the eighteen competency areas scored.

At the conclusion of the event, Panel members scores were aggregated and there was a clear differentiation between the top four candidates achieving benchmark of 70% and those the two that did not. The decision of which candidates to bring forward to interview was uncontested.

The top four candidates will be invited to interview and the bottom two will not. Whilst neither the Chair or I had sight of the redacted applications we were satisfied that the process applied was fair and in the interest of the communities living within Avon and Somerset Constabulary area.

Richard Brown

Richard Brown

**Independent Member**



**8th October 2021**

### **Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner – recruitment 2021**

I would like to update Panel members on the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner interview selection process.

On 15th September 2021, I attended Avon and Somerset Police Headquarters and observed the interview selection process. The Panel consisted of Mark Shelford our Police and Crime Commissioner, Mathew Barber, Thame Valley Police and Crime Commissioner and Councillor Tom Aditya. Kate Watson from the OPCC again retained oversight of the arrangements for the day and its proceedings.

All Panel members had taken part in the paper sift of redacted papers which had led to 4 candidates being invited to interview.

Candidates had to present for 10 minutes on a previously identified subject ' As Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner, how will you work with both Avon and Somerset Police and The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to improve recruitment from ethnic minority backgrounds?' Having presented, the Panel members asked questions relevant to the presentations given, in order to seek further evidence and clarifications. Thereafter the Panel members took turns to ask a range of questions relevant to the role profile of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

Panel members scored presentation and answers to questions independently and then took time to compare and moderate scores based on evidence provided. This was an identical process that took place during the paper sifting and the focus was to verify that scores were appropriate and in line with the scoring matrix. This process resulted in scores occasionally both being raised and lowered where Panel members considered they had been either too generous or too harsh in the context of evidence offered and discussed. As with the paper sift, Panel members applied the scoring system correctly and were never more than one mark adrift from each other.

The individual candidate scores were then aggregated. The interview process was professionally conducted in a style that treated each candidate fairly, with dignity and respect and that provided opportunities for each candidate to excel.

Regards,

*Richard Brown*

Richard Brown,  
**Independent Member**