

AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
26TH April 2022

Confirmation Hearing Process for the role of Chief Finance Officer

Recommendation:-

The Panel is invited 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 as a means of confirming the candidate's suitability for the role.
3. Agree a report incorporating the Panel's recommendation on the appointment to be submitted to the Commissioner as soon as possible thereafter.

1. Executive Summary

This report explains the process to be followed by the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel (hereafter referred to as 'the Panel') in respect of the proposed appointment of the preferred candidate to the role of Chief Finance Officer.

The Panel has functions conferred by Schedule 1 Part 10 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (Scrutiny of Senior Appointments). This requires the Panel to:-

- (i) Review the proposed appointment, by holding a Confirmation Hearing within three weeks of notification being given. This is a meeting of the Panel, held in public, at which the candidate is requested to appear for the purpose of answering questions relating to the appointment;
- (ii) Make a report to the Police and Crime Commissioner ((hereafter referred to as 'the Commissioner') on the proposed senior appointment;
- (iii) Include a recommendation to the Commissioner as to whether or not the candidate should be appointed;
- (iv) Publish the report that is made under (ii) above.

2. Confirmation Hearing for the role of Chief Financial Officer

Prior to the Hearing

- 2.1 The Commissioner invited 2 members of the Panel to observe the appointment process for Chief Finance Officer. This provided helpful transparency and an extra layer of assurance in ensuring that the process adhered to the Nolan Principles and recommendations published by the Home Affairs Parliamentary Committee on Standards in Public Life. Councillor Jonathan Hucker and Independent Panel Member Julie Knight, attended the process and a detailed report is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.2 The Panel received notification from the Commissioner of the proposed appointment to the role of Chief Financial Officer on 25th March 2022. This appointment is a permanent appointment, and therefore it is subject to the public scrutiny that is required as part of a proposed senior appointment within the meaning of Schedule 1 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011¹.
- 2.3 In order to assist the Panel in reviewing the suitability of the preferred candidate, the Commissioner has provided the following documentation:
- Name of the preferred candidate
 - A Report from the Commissioner providing an overview of the appointment process that was undertaken between January and March 2022
 - The criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate for the appointment
 - Independent Member report
 - Role Profile
 - Terms and conditions of appointment

At the Hearing

- 2.4 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 Commissioner will have the opportunity to make any comments on the candidate and the proposed appointment.
 - c. The candidate will have an opportunity to present to the Panel his understanding of the role.
 - d. The Panel will have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidate.
 - e. The candidate will be given opportunity to clarify any answers given during the hearing and ask questions of the Panel about the next stage of the process.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/13/schedule/1/enacted>

2.5 The Panel will ask questions of the candidate which relate to his professional competence and personal independence, the answers to which will enable the Members to evaluate their suitability for the role.

On the Close of the Hearing

2.6 The Panel will hold a closed session in order to decide on its recommendations to the Commissioner regarding the appointment of the preferred candidate to the role of Chief Financial Officer.

2.7 The Panel will discuss the following:

- Whether the candidate has the professional competence to exercise the role as set out in the role profile.
- Whether the Panel feels that the candidate has the personal independence to exercise the role.

2.8 Where a candidate meets the standards but there is still cause for concern about his suitability, it may be appropriate to outline those concerns in the Panel's response to the Commissioner.

2.9 Where a candidate does not meet the minimum standards in the areas set out in paragraph 2.7, this would suggest a significant failure in the appointments process undertaken. If the Panel believes that there has been a significant failure in the appointments process, the Panel may choose to not recommend the candidate to the role of Chief Financial Officer.

3. Panel Recommendation

3.1 The Panel's recommendation will be communicated to the Commissioner in writing as soon as possible thereafter. The report will be published on the Panel's webpages following its submission to the Commissioner and with due regard to the joint Communications Protocol.