



## Chief Finance Officer – Panel Observer Report

### Purpose

The Police and Crime Panel (PCP) were invited to observe the appointment process for the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). This is to ensure that the process adheres to the standards of the Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles). Councillor Jonathan Hucker and Independent member Julie Knight volunteered and this report updates the PCP of its outcome.

### Application and Shortlisting

The role was advertised externally. Applicants were required to evidence their qualities, qualifications and experience in respect of the 10 elements set out in the Role Profile. The closing date for applications was 12pm on the 28 February 2022 and 3 people applied.

A Shortlisting Panel was convened. These were:

- Avon and Somerset PCC and Panel Chair - Mark Shelford
- OPCC Chief of Staff - Alice Ripley
- Devon & Cornwall CFO and South West regional lead - Nicola Allen

We understand that the Shortlisting Panel received anonymised soft copies of the application forms along with the role profile and shortlisting guidance.

The competencies were to be scored from 0-3, with 3 being highest with a maximum of 33 marks available. Panel members made their assessments individually, ahead of the Shortlisting Panel meeting that was held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March.

PCP panel members received the Role Profile and Terms of Appointment but not the application forms.

### Shortlisting Meeting

In addition to the Shortlisting Panel, Kate Watson (OPCC Office and HR Manager), Jonathan and I were present online. Supported by Kate, the PCC briefed the Panel on their roles and the process. Panel members confirmed that they knew one or more of the applicants given the detail in their application forms. It was confirmed that formal declarations of interest would be recorded at the interview stage.

A benchmark was set at 20 with clarification that candidate's would not be invited to interview if they received a score of one or zero in any competency.

The panel disclosed their scores for each applicant in turn. Where scores differed, the rationale was discussed and a panel score was collectively agreed and noted by Kate.

We were invited to raise matters or points during the process. The only query was in respect of what constitutes experience of undertaking the role of section 151 officer for clarification.

All three candidates exceeded the benchmark and the Panel unanimously agreed to invite them all to the final stage, being a presentation and interview on the 25<sup>th</sup> March. The presentation and interview questions was discussed and agreed.

### **Presentation and Interview**

The interviews were held in-person on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March at Avon and Somerset Police and Fire Headquarters, Portishead. The Panel remained the same with the PCC as Chair. Jonathan and I observed. Although all three applicants were offered an interview. One candidate withdrew for personal reasons so two interviews took place.

The Chair briefed the Panel and checked to ensure that everyone had understood the process and what was required of them. He confirmed that candidates were being assessed using the 1 – 7 Bramshill Rating Scale, with 7 being the highest. A maximum of 49 marks were available and 28 or more would be required from a candidate to be eligible for the appointment. Formal declarations of interest were then recorded.

Candidates were interviewed for up to an hour, starting with their presentation. They were given 10 minutes to present their response to a pre-disclosed question that led to the Panel following up with questions. Panel members then asked six questions and probed the responses as time allowed. Candidates were informed that they would be advised of the outcome that evening.

Panel members individually completed their scores for each candidate at the end of their interview. After both had been interviewed, the Panel disclosed, discussed and agreed the scores. The interim Chief Finance Officer Paul Butler was the strongest candidate and the Panel unanimously agreed that he should be offered the position.

We considered that the appointment process was fair and transparent and thank the PCC for the opportunity to observe.

Julie Knight (Independent Member)

Councillor Jonathan Hucker

25<sup>th</sup> March 2022