

Proposed Appointment of the Chief Constable for Avon and Somerset Police

Summary

The purpose of this report is to enable members of the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) to consider my proposed appointment of the Chief Constable and to report back to me.

The report provides an overview of the appointment process that concluded on 4th November 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. The statutory requirement for this is set out in Schedule 8.

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

The Act states that the PCC must provide the following information:

- the name of the person whom the commissioner is proposing to appoint (“the candidate”);
- the criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate for the appointment;
- why the candidate satisfies those criteria; and
- the terms and conditions on which the candidate is to be appointed.

Background

Chief Constable Andy Marsh retired from the Force in June and I appointed the Deputy Chief Constable Sarah Crew as the Acting Chief Constable whilst the recruitment process was undertaken.

I decided to appoint a consultant to assist with supporting the selection process. Andrew White was appointed following a competitive tender process for recruitment support for this role and the recent Chief of Staff process. Andrew has a wide range of HR experience 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 OPCC and Force’s website. Details were also distributed via the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) network and the National Association of Police Chief Constables (NPCC). In addition, the College of Policing distributed a letter from me to all eligible candidates in UK Forces. An eligible candidate is someone who attended the Senior Command Course and achieved the rank of Assistant Chief Constable or

equivalent. The OPCC also made several social media postings to promote the vacancy.

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

Role Profile

The role profile defines what experience, skills and behavioural qualities or competencies are required to meet the demands of the role and for effective performance.

Appointment Panel

The panel members were:

- PCC Mark Shelford
- Katy Bourne, PCC for Sussex
- Sandra Meadows, CEO of VOSCUR
- Carolyn Dhanraj, Independent Member
- James Vaughan, recently retired Chief Constable for Dorset

Unfortunately, Katy Bourne, the PCC for Sussex suffered a broken wrist on the evening before the final selection and had to withdraw. She took a full part in the shortlisting process.

The panel had two specialists.

1. The independent member. Carolyn Dhanraj, was specifically appointed to ensure that the processes undertaken for the recruitment was fair and open. Her report is attached as an annex to this paper.
2. The policing advisor. James Vaughan advised the panel on matters of operational policing to ensure correct interpretation of the candidates statements in that area.

The panel process, both shortlisting and final selection were also observed by two Police and Crime Panel members – Asher Craig and Julie Knight.

Applicants

The campaign attracted three applicants. To place this number in context, Chief Constable recruitments rarely attract large fields of candidates as the selection pool is very small. Recent campaigns elsewhere in the country have attracted as few as one candidate. Although the field is open to international applicants and some interest was received from overseas the selection pool is small being limited to the 43 Deputy Chief Constables and a small number of exceptional Assistant Chief Constables.

Shortlisting

The applicants were assessed against competency based application form. Beyond the general details the form required candidates to answer four questions and complete a statement of suitability. Each of the four questions were then assessed using one of the competencies from the College of Policing's Competency and Values framework (CVF).

Panel members agreed a set of scores for each candidate and agreed that all three candidates should progress to the final stage of the process. A blank copy of the

application form is attached to this paper.

Briefing for shortlisted candidates

All candidates were then invited to a briefing session run by the Force which covered all the key aspects of Police operations and performance. In addition, candidates were also offered the opportunity to have 1-2-1 discussions with any member of the Force along with discussions with myself and the interim Chief Executive. Candidates were also able to visit any aspect of Force operations.

Final Selection

The final selection process took place over 3rd and 4th November and comprised four stages.

Stakeholder panels.

Each candidate met two stakeholder panels. One comprised officers and staff from the Force and the other comprised local partners and stakeholders from outside of the Force and OPCC. All candidates were asked a set of questions that the stakeholders had provided in advance. Feedback from the sessions was then provided to the selection panel. This element of the process was not formally scored but the feedback was used by the selection panel to shape their questioning of candidates in the remainder of the process.

Media exercise.

Each candidate undertook a mock TV interview. Candidates were given a brief an hour in advance of the interview. The interviews were carried out by Dave Mason of Mentor Training. Dave is an experienced local and national TV journalist with a lot of experience of undertaking interviews of this type. The selection panel viewed each of these interviews in their entirety and marked candidates accordingly.

Presentation.

Each candidate was required to provide a 10 minute presentation to the panel on the following topic. The presentation topic had been provided to candidates in their letter inviting them to interview.

“Policing by consent has never been more under threat. How will you as Chief Constable improve the legitimacy of policing within Avon and Somerset?”

Interview.

The panel then conducted a formal interview using a set of agreed questions. Each question was assessed using a relevant competency from the College of Policing Competency and Values framework.

Proposed Candidate

More than one applicant was assessed as appointable but each individual member of the panel assessed Sarah Crew as the most suitable. The Appointment Panel unanimously agreed that Sarah Crew be appointed as Chief Constable. They agreed that she would make an excellent Chief and would be able to take the Force forward over the next five years.

Therefore, I propose that the Police and Crime Panel endorse the appointment of Sarah Crew.

Acknowledgement

I wish to place on record my thanks for the support provided by Katy Bourne, Sandra Meadows, Carolyn Dhanraj and James Vaughan. Their insight and expertise was invaluable in ensuring that we chose the best candidate for this very important role. I also wish to thank the members of the Police and Crime Panel that observed the process.

Mark Shelford
Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset
5th November 2021

Attachments

Independent Member report
Role profile for Chief Constable
Terms of Appointment of Chief Constable
Panel assessment of selected candidate (part 2 paper)