



**November 2021**

**Chief Constable  
Avon and Somerset Constabulary  
Appointment Process**

**Independent Member Report**  
Carolyn Dhanraj MBE JP

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report provides information on the appointment process for the role of Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Constabulary and in particular, it will comment on:
  - how the process met the principles of merit, fairness and openness and
  - the extent to which the Interview Panel were able to fulfil their purpose, to challenge and test the candidate against the stated criteria.
- 1.2 Home Office Circular 20/2012 outlines that it is for the Police and Crime Commissioner to decide how they wish to run their appointment process and which candidate they wish to appoint. However, they should involve an Independent Member as soon as practicable in the process: job specification, shortlisting and interviewing of candidates.
- 1.3 This report is the Independent Member's Report (Carolyn Dhanraj), relating to the appointment process for the role of Chief Constable for Avon and Somerset Constabulary, which was the responsibility of Mark Shelford the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset.

## **2. Aim**

- 2.1 The aim of this report is to provide an assessment of the extent to which the appointment process has been conducted fairly, openly and based on merit. It will also comment on the extent to which the Appointment Panel fulfilled their responsibility to challenge and test the candidates' suitability against the requirements of the Chief Constable role.

## **3. Independent Member Role**

- 3.1 The role of the Independent Member is laid out in Home Office Circular 20/2012 and HO 013/18. It is described more fully within the College of Policing's 'Guidance for the Appointment of Chief Officers'. This Guidance was first issued in November 2012 and after a review, a more practical guide was produced in April 2018. The guidance is maintained by the College of Policing in consultation with a wide range of stakeholder groups within policing including Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, Association of Policing and Crime Chief Executives, Senior Police Officers Association, Police Superintendents Association and the Home Office. This was produced under the direction of the Police Advisory Board England and Wales Sub-group on Chief Officer Appointments.
- 3.2 I am an Independent Member and a qualified Assessor appointed by the College of Policing, the former role of Independent Member was created to support the Guidance in 2012 and was managed by the College until 2018. To be on the original list of six Independent Members I was required to undergo a fair, open and merit-based selection process. This process focussed on my suitability as someone skilled in assessment and capable of quality assuring assessment processes; I had an induction to this role from the College of Policing and I was continually quality assured in my delivery of services as an Independent Member of Chief Officer Appointments Processes. Further details of my background are set out in the role profile in Appendix A.

#### **4. Independent Member initial involvement in the Chief Constable Appointment Process for Avon and Somerset Constabulary**

- 4.1 I was initially approached by Kate Watson (Head of Office and HR, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner - Avon and Somerset) on the 20th July 2021 to arrange a telephone call with Mark Shelford (PCC), to discuss my participation on this key appointment. On the subsequent telephone conversation, Mr Shelford informed me that he had appointed an external consultant (Andrew White) to 'run the process and to advise him', following an open tendering process. Mr Shelford was keen to seek my advice at this early stage, he welcomed by suggestions to ensure the process was open, transparent and was in line with the College of Policing guidance. I advised on the steps that should be taken and recommended an early engagement and consultation with a range of statutory, community and stakeholders, the use of a presentation, media scenario, interview and officer/staff/community forums as parts of the selection process. He welcomed these suggestions, especially as they had been used successfully in the past with other OPCCs in selecting a new Chief Constable.
- 4.2 We discussed that due to the limited number of eligible potential applicants, and the PCC's desire that the process be seen and indeed be open to all that were eligible to apply, it was confirmed at the outset that all eligible candidates would be encouraged to apply in a fair and transparent manner, through a wide-ranging recruitment campaign.
- 4.3 Mr Shelford demonstrated a very thorough understanding of the College of Policing guidance, and I was satisfied at this early stage that the process was fair and transparent and similarly he was very open to a range of ways he and his Appointments Panel could fairly test the attributes, competencies and values, that the new Chief Constable would need to possess to meet the challenges within Avon and Somerset.
- 4.4 On the 27th July 2021, I met with Andrew White (consultant) via a TEAMS call and we discussed our roles and I confirmed that my report would be to confirm (or not) whether the process was fair, transparent and merit based. I emphasised strongly that the College of Policing guidance was to be followed very closely, as I would be referring to the document in my report to the Police and Crime Panel. I raised at this early stage, due to a comment made by Mr White that it was inappropriate to be talking to targeted individuals about the role prior to the role being advertised. I emphasised the need to ensure that all potential applicants had the same access to information and contact. I suggested that once the post had been advertised and the candidate pack had been made readily available to all eligible candidates, that his contact details could be specified for further details. I was very clear that any 'head hunting' could be perceived as a 'tap on the shoulder' or favouritism which went against the guidance and principles of openness, transparency and fairness. Mr. White confirmed that he was also in conversation with the College of Policing and seeking their advice and input.
- 4.5 On the 3rd August 2021, Mr White sent me the draft application form and questions to be answered, plus the rating score for shortlisting. I immediately sent an email stating that I was concerned as the questions were not related to the CVF and felt that these could not be used for shortlisting as the criteria for doing so was unclear. I also strongly recommended that the College of Policing rating scale of 1 -5 be used and not a 1-4 that he had suggested. I asked him to ensure that a copy of the College of Policing guidance be sent to all Appointment Panel members so that they were fully aware of their responsibilities, the process and associated paperwork.

## **5. Appointments Panel**

- 5.1 The Appointments Panel role is set out in the Guidance on Chief Officer Appointments (4.2.2 of the aforementioned Home Office Guidance and 1.3.1 of the 2018 College of Policing guidelines). This outlines that the Appointments Panel should be convened by the Police and Crime Commissioner, before any stage of the appointment process takes place and that consideration may be given to having Appointments Panel members involved in helping to define the requirements of the role.
- 5.2 In addition, it states the purpose of the Appointments Panel is to challenge and test that the candidate meets the necessary requirements to perform the role and that the Police and Crime Commissioner should select an Appointments' Panel capable of discharging this responsibility.
- 5.3 The Police and Crime Commissioner should ensure that Appointments Panel members are diverse and suitably experienced and competent in selection practices and that they adhere to the principles of merit, fairness and openness (Principles of Appointment Section 3). It is also the Police and Crime Commissioner's responsibility to ensure that appropriate briefing/assessor training is undertaken by all Appointments Panel members. It is suggested that an Appointments Panel of between three-five members is convened but this is at the discretion of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 5.4 The Appointments Panel appointed by the Police and Crime Commissioner were selected to provide an expertise and experience to test potential candidates at a policing executive level, and each had previously been involved in senior recruitment and panel participation.
- 5.5 There were five Appointments Panel members comprising of two male and three female members; two white men, one white female and two minority ethnic women, one being myself as the Independent Member.
- 5.6 APPOINTMENT PANEL:  
Mark Shelford, Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset;  
Katy Bourne, Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex;  
Sandra Meadows, Chief Executive, Voscur;  
James Vaughan, former Chief Constable Dorset Police and  
Carolyn Dhanraj, Independent Member approved by the College of Policing.
- 5.7 There were two Police and Crime Panel members who observed the whole process:  
Julie Knight and Asher Craig

## **6. Role profile and attraction strategy**

- 6.1 The role profile was based on the College of Policing's national profile for Chief Constable and it further reflected Avon and Somerset PCC's vision; the Candidate pack was comprehensive and fully acknowledged the challenges that would face the new Chief Constable in relation to the PCC's Police and Crime Plan.
- 6.2 The advertisement was placed on the Police and Crime Commissioner's website, Avon and Somerset Constabulary website and promoted via twitter and, Facebook. It was also advertised on the APCC Chief Officers vacancies webpage and the College of Policing's website. It was also marketed to eligible candidates via NPCC. The OPCC also directly emailed a letter from the PCC via the College of Policing to over 220 Chief Officers (Assistant Chief Constables, Deputy Chief Constables, and Chief Constables and equivalents). This approach demonstrated

an openness and created further opportunity for those suitable, to apply for the post.

- 6.3 The Chief Constable post and candidate pack was advertised from Wednesday 1 September to Monday 27 September 2021 inclusive; the Home Office Circular and the College of Policing guidance point 5.3.3 states that 'the vacancy must be advertised for at least three weeks and must be advertised through a public website or some other form of publication that deals with policing matters'. The thoroughness of advertising was to enable an inclusive and openness to attract the most eligible candidate pool of Chief Officers to apply.
- 6.4 I am fully satisfied that the Police and Crime Commissioner advertised the vacancy openly (Guidance 3.4.1) to attract the best possible eligible candidate pool.
- 6.5 Please note to ensure absolute fairness, I checked that no direct approaches were made to eligible potential candidates by the Appointment Panel members, to encourage them to apply for the Chief Constable vacancy.

## **7. Shortlisting and Panel briefing**

- 7.1 By the closing date, three application forms had been received for the role of Chief Constable; there had been two additional requests for information throughout the process which did not result in an application. I am confident that the Chief Constable role had been advertised to enable the best possible pool of candidates to apply, and due process had been followed. It is worth noting, that this role attracted a similar number of candidates that other Chief Constable roles that have been advertised.
- 7.2 The shortlisting meeting was scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021, the application forms were securely emailed, (names redacted) by the OPCC to all Appointment Panel members along with the shortlisting criteria template.
- 7.3 At the shortlisting morning (via TEAMS), it was noted that there was not, nor had it been planned for a thorough briefing session to all the Appointment Panel members; this is clear in the CoP guidance and I also advised previously, that this should take place. This would have been very useful as the meeting was via TEAMS and with some members of the Appointment Panel not having been on a Chief Constable appointment process and there were Observers from the Police and Crime Panel on the meeting. A structure to the meeting, time to ask key questions regarding the role each panel members played, the understanding of the rating scale and whether as benchmark would be set would have been invaluable. The two observers would have been advised of their role and that they were there to observe and not engage in discussing the candidates or the comments being made by Panel members. I was able to intervene on a number of occasions, due to my experience in such appointments to guide and advise the PCC on the process to ensure that the shortlisting meeting was fair, open and transparent. It was emphasised that the shortlisting process and any further assessment should be based on the evidence provided in the application forms and not on previous knowledge.
- 7.4 The Appointments Panel members had individually assessed the application forms against the College of Policing's set Competency and Values Framework (CVF) criteria using the agreed rating scale. The Panel disclosed their score and the Panel discussed the evidence to enable an agreed an overall score per competency area for each of the candidates. To ensure a fair, merit based and transparent assessment of the candidates, the scores and the discussion were recorded by the OPCC staff.

- 7.5 The three candidates each demonstrated in their application form evidence to enable them both to be selected for assessment on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at Portishead, Police Headquarters. An Avon and Somerset Police Briefing Day was held on the 19 October at police HQ, Portishead and all 3 candidates participated. Candidates were also offered a one-to-one interview with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Interim Chief Executive Sally Fox.; they were consistent in their messages about what the PCC was looking for and the challenges for the new Chief Constable for Avon and Somerset Constabulary.
- 7.6 I am confident at this stage, with the intervention, that the shortlisting process was fair, transparent and without bias. (Guidance 3.3.1).

## 8. Assessment design

8.1 I had previously discussed with the OPCC and the consultant at the start of the process in July, the merits of assessment through methods such as interview, presentation, media scenario, stakeholder panels. I had previously provided guidance on the use of stakeholder panels with an internal and external focus and the different assessment methods that could be deployed after the formal shortlisting meeting. I further advised on the questions, composition of the Stakeholder Panel and the following was agreed to ensure a fair and challenging process:

- one internal Stakeholder Panel with staff and officers;  
one external Stakeholder Panel;
- media scenario with a professional journalist based on a legitimacy issue;
- a presentation to the Assessment Panel where the topic was provided in advance and
- a competency based interview.

8.2 It was confirmed that the competencies and the values pertaining to a Chief Officer could be measured fairly and with face and content validity through this assessment process.

8.3 The Stakeholder Panels (see Appendix B) included a 5 minute statement and five set questions with additional questions and time to probe further. The Panels and questions were designed to explore the competency area of:

- We are Collaborative

The Media Scenario, for which candidates were given 60 minutes to prepare for, was designed to provide evidence for CVF values of:

- We Take Ownership

The Presentation (the title was provided in advance) delivered to the Appointments Panel was designed to provide evidence for the competency area of:

- Deliver, Support and Inspire and
- Values of Integrity and Transparency

The Interview measured the following areas:

Competencies:

- We take ownership
- We are innovative and open-minded

- We are emotionally aware

Values:

- Transparency
- Public Service

8.4 The remaining Competencies and Values had already been tested at the application form stage, and the PCC wished to test further the above areas, this was endorsed by the Appointments Panel.

## 9 Assessment delivery and Appointments Panel briefing

9.1 The candidates followed the process of:

### Day One

#### Stakeholder Assessment Panel x 2

55 minutes External and Internal Stakeholder Panels

#### Media Exercise

60 minutes Candidate preparation  
15 minutes Media interview

### Day Two

#### Interview

10 minutes Candidate presentation to Appointments Panel  
10 minutes Questions on the presentation

50 minutes Competency and values based Interview

9.2 The Stakeholder Panel and Media exercise activity took place on 3rd November 2021. The Panels were chaired by OPCC staff and they briefed the Stakeholder Panel members on their role, the process and to emphasise that they were not the decision makers, but to provide valuable assistance to the PCC. I advised the Internal Stakeholder Panel members that their views and any areas of concern would be used to probe the candidates through the rest of the process. I observed both Stakeholder Panels to ensure that it was fair and unbiased, especially as one candidate was better known to some of the stakeholders. At the end of the Stakeholders Panels, I recommended and the Police and Crime Commissioner thanked them for their time and their vital contribution to the process.

9.3 The chairs of the Stakeholder Panels briefed the whole Appointments panel on the key themes arising from the external and Internal Stakeholders Panels. I invited Mr Shelford to remind the Appointments Panel what he was looking for in the new Chief Constable and the challenges facing Avon and Somerset Constabulary; this ensured the Stakeholder Panel feedback which enabled the Appointments Panel to shape some of their interview questions.

9.4 On 4th November the Appointments Panel convened 90 minutes before the presentation and the interview - we were advised that the Katy Bourne (Sussex PCC) was unable to attend the Assessment day to due to personal reasons. As no formal assessment by the Appointments Panel had taken place, I am satisfied that there was no impact on the open, merit based and transparent process as no interaction

had taken place between the candidates and the Appointments Panel. The Appointments Panel reviewed the Media exercises and individually assessed the performance of each candidate; the scores were not discussed or shared with other Panel members at this time to ensure that no unconscious bias could be introduced at this stage.

- 9.5 The Appointments Panel were briefed by the consultant Andrew White on the documentation contained in each Appointments member's folder, which clearly outlined the CVF competencies being tested. Each Assessment Panel member's folder contained the documentation to enable them to record, assess and mark the presentation, interview and media exercise independently.
- 9.6 The Appointments Panel was chaired by the PCC and the questions were evenly asked by the Panel members. The ORCE (observe, record, classify, evaluate) approach to assessing was reinforced to ensure the Panel gathered evidence and a further confirmation of what each scale descriptor represented in terms of evidence observed and the resultant score between 1-5, once again this was beneficial as it ensured that we assessed the candidate in a fair, merit based and transparent manner.

## **10.0 Assessment Decision Making**

- 10.1 To demonstrate a fair and transparent process, based on merit, the Appointments Panel agreed to set a benchmark of a mean score of 3.5 with no scores of 5 for any competency area, for which a candidate would be considered for appointment.
- 10.2 To reinforce openness and transparency, I asked Sally Fox Acting Chief Executive of the OPCC to draw up a large grid with the candidate names and score grid for the Appointments Panel to view together, as we verbally gave our individual scores. The Chief Executive of the OPCC completed the score grid and the Consultant Andrew White noted down our individual scores. The Appointments Panel discussed their grades and we openly challenged and confirmed from each Panel member the evidence they had gathered to justify the grades for both the Presentation, Interview and Media exercise. Collectively, we ensured the consistency and justification of each score given and agreed an overall score per competency and value being assessed, this was noted on the score grid.
- 10.3 The total scores for all three candidates were calculated and one candidate scored higher in more questions than the other candidates.
- 10.4 The Appointments Panel unanimously supported Mark Shelford (PCC) in his recommendation to the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) scheduled for Thursday 25th November 2021 that Sarah Crew Temporary Chief Constable for Avon and Somerset Police, be the preferred Chief Constable for Avon and Somerset Constabulary.
- 10.5 I am wholly satisfied that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset, Mark Shelford fulfilled his responsibility to ensure the assessment process put in place was in accordance with the responsibilities listed in the College of Policing Guidance.
- 10.6 I am confident that the Appointments Panel appointed by the PCC, performed their duty to challenge and assess the candidate in manner that was fair, transparent and merit based, following the College of Policing Guidance in a satisfactory manner.



**APPENDIX A  
INDEPENDENT MEMBER**

**CAROLYN DHANRAJ MBE JP**

Carolyn has over twelve years experience as a **College of Policing** Non Service Member, assessing for a range of appointments from Senior Police National Assessment Centre (SPNAC) to Direct Entry. She has acted as a College of Policing Independent Member for over fourteen Chief Constables, Deputy Chief Constables and collaboration ACC appointments including Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Sussex, Surrey, Lincolnshire, Lancashire, West Yorkshire, Avon and Somerset, Dyfed Powys, Leicestershire, Warwickshire and Wiltshire. On the recommendation of current Chief Constables, Carolyn was appointed as the Independent Member on the **NPCC** Performance Sub-Committee, the first task was to appointment the new Chairperson for the NPCC. Carolyn was appointed as a College of Policing **Coach** to support Chief Officers attending SCC (Strategic Command Course), Aspire and Leadership Development courses; she acts as Coach and critical friend to many Chief Officers and other senior leaders in the public, private and voluntary sector.

She is **British Psychological Society** (BPS) qualified (Hogan, NEO, P3, OPQ, Elements and Dimensions) and has worked in the private sector, specialising as a **Client Partner for Government and Public Services** (headhunter), designing and running Assessment Centres and personality testing for senior civil servants. Key clients have included the Home Office, Parole Board, ECHR Commission for Equality and Human Rights, Cabinet Office, Ministry of Justice.

Carolyn started her career within Local Government as a senior local government officer, focusing on establishing and embedding a range of effective **Multi Agency Partnerships (Community Safety, Voluntary Sector & Diversity portfolio)**, with an expertise and skill in engaging with a range of stakeholders and community groups. She has a notable and substantial history of volunteering, including being the first Chair of Metropolitan Police Service Independent Advisory Group (IAG) on Rape and Sexual Assault – leading to the establishment of **Project Sapphire** and The Havens (SARCs); member of the Stephen Lawrence Sub Group – Stop and Search, as Trustee of a National Domestic Violence charity – Standing Together and as a Presiding Justice (Magistrate), where she also facilitates training.

Carolyn will offer you credible advice and guidance and she will support you in a practical way; her firm, fun but fair style of engagement is built on an ethos of openness, transparency and most importantly integrity and accountability between stakeholders.