

Meeting	Police and Crime Panel – Confirmation of Chief Constable
Date	12 January 2023
Report Title	Proposed Appointment of Chief Constable of Wiltshire Police APPENDIX E: Independent Panel Member report
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This is the Independent Member’s report relating to the appointment process for the next Chief Constable for Wiltshire Police. It provides my assessment of the appointment process used by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Wiltshire which I consider has been conducted fairly, openly and based on merit. It also details the extent to which the interview panel fulfilled their responsibility to challenge and test the candidates’ suitability against the requirements of the role.
- 1.2. Home Office Circular 13/2018 outlines that it is for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to decide how they wish to run their appointment process for a Chief Constable. It is for them to decide at the end of the process which candidate they wish to appoint, subject to confirmation by the Police and Crime Panel. However, they should involve an Independent Member in the assessment, shortlisting and interviewing of candidates.

## 2. Independent Member’s role

- 2.1. The role of the Independent Member is laid out in Home Office Circular 13/2018. It is described more fully in the Guidance for Chief Officer Appointments produced by the College of Policing.
- 2.2. The Independent Panel Member should not be a PCC, a member of the PCC’s staff, a member of the P&CP, a Member of Parliament, a Member of the European Parliament, a local councillor, a serving or retired police officer or member of police staff, a civil servant, a member of the National Assembly for Wales, a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, a member of the Scottish Government, an employee of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, an employee of the Independent Police Complaints Commission, or an employee of the College of Policing.
- 2.3. The types of people suitable for the role of Independent Panel Member might include, but is not limited to, Magistrates, Chief Executives of local authorities, and representatives of community organisations.
- 2.4. As a representative of community organisations, namely chair of Swindon Women’s Aid and non-executive Director of Business West, I meet the specified criteria as an Independent Member and was selected by the PCC for this purpose.
- 2.5. It is important that the Independent Member is suitably experienced in selection and assessment practices, so they can determine the extent to which the appointment process is conducted in line with the principles of merit, fairness and openness. The role as set out in College of Policing Guidance for Appointing Chief Officers requires the Independent Member to:
  - Be suitably experienced and competent in assessment and selection practices
  - Undertake appropriate briefing/assessor training
  - Be aware and have an understanding of the needs and interests of the recruiting force and local community
  - In collaboration with the PCC, and other panel members, shortlist and assess applicants against the agreed appointment criteria and consider which candidate most closely meets the appointment criteria

- Produce a written report on the appointment process, to be submitted to the Police and Crime Panel at the same time as the name of the preferred appointee, expressly and explicitly addressing the appointment principles of merit, fairness and openness and the extent to which the panel was able to fulfil its purpose (e.g. to challenge and test that the candidate meets the necessary requirements to perform the role).

2.6. I was invited by the PCC to become involved in this appointment prior to advertising. The application pack with the role requirements and person specification was assembled by the OPCC. It adhered closely to the Guidance for Chief Officer Appointments and was reviewed in draft by the College of Policing to ensure it met current requirements.

### **3. Appointment panel**

3.1. The role of the appointment panel is set out in the Guidance for Chief Officer Appointments. This outlines that the panel should be convened by the PCC before any stage of the appointment process takes place. There should be no conflicts of interest between panel members and the applicant pool.

3.2. The purpose of the appointment panel is to challenge and test if the candidates meet the necessary requirements to perform the role. The panel members should be suitably experienced, diverse, and competent in selection practices. They must adhere to the principles of merit, fairness, and openness.

3.3. The PCC's responsibility to ensure that appropriate briefing/assessor training is undertaken by all panel members. Written briefings were provided by CEO of the OPCC and College of Policing and OPCC.

3.4. It is suggested that a panel of approximately five members is convened, but this is at the discretion of the PCC.

3.5. Philip Wilkinson OBE, PCC for Wiltshire and Swindon, actively followed this advice. Within this appointment process the panel had been agreed at the outset as consisting of the following members:

- Philip Wilkinson OBE, Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire (Appointing Officer)
- Chief Constable Andy Marsh QPM, CEO of the College of Policing (Policing Adviser)
- Matt Parr CB, HM Inspector of Constabulary and HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services
- Lucy Townsend, Corporate Director – People, Wiltshire Council
- Nicky Alberry, retired CEO, non-executive director and voluntary organisation chair (Independent Member)

3.6. The panel included an appropriate range of stakeholders from elements of the policing sector, public sector and voluntary sector. Andy Marsh provided policing advice and Matt Parr with policing improvement and governance expertise. Lucy Townsend provided experience from local government and the wider public sector, whilst I brought expertise from voluntary and business sectors. Its composition and role mirrored the importance placed by the PCC on partnership and working with stakeholders.

3.7. All panel members were identified for their strategic leadership experience and relationship with Wiltshire Police, to allow them to challenge and test others at executive level. All were given a briefing and access to a copy of the Guidance for Chief Officer Appointments, ensuring they were well informed on their duties in this appointments process. I consider the panel to have met the needs outlined in the guidance on experience and diversity. I particularly note the strong policing engagement from national policing representatives supporting Wiltshire during this vital appointment.

3.8. The College of Policing Senior Leaders Hub was also appointed as a Professional Recruitment Advisor by the PCC, and the support and advice of the College of Policing was used extensively throughout the design of the process, including at the interview stage. They did not however have a role in the decision-making process.

- 3.9. The role of the Chief Executive (as defined in College of Policing guidance) is to support the PCC by ensuring the appointment procedure is properly conducted in line with the requirements set out in legislation, meeting the principles of fairness, openness and selection on merit. In addition, the Chief Executive is required to ensure appropriate monitoring of the procedures.
- 3.10. The Chief Executive of the OPCC worked consistently with the College of Policing to maintain standards, collaborating openly with all of the panel members on the main panel and stakeholder panels members throughout the planning and administration of the appointment process.

#### **4. Recruitment Advert**

- 4.1. The recruitment pack was drawn up by the Chief Executive of the OPCC in line with the national guidance. The post was advertised on 2 November 2022 with applications closing at 12:00, 25 November 2022 via the websites for the Wiltshire PCC, the College of Policing Senior Leadership Hub and National Police Chief's Council website with an email alert to all eligible candidates. In this way all eligible applicants in the UK pool were made aware of the opportunity.
- 4.2. The PCC and OPCC staff actively demonstrated from the outset that in the interests of public accountability, they were committed to adhering to the principles of openness, fairness and merit.
- 4.3. Every effort was made to be transparent about the availability of the post and to encourage all potential applicants to consider it. The aim was to attract the strongest possible field of applicants, demonstrating openness. The published recruitment information pack was comprehensive, with links offering more detail. The pack included terms of appointment, role profile and met legal requirements. The PCC provided a video introduction to the role and what he was looking for in the next Chief Constable.
- 4.4. Applicants were asked to submit a two-page CV and two-page supporting statement focusing on evidencing two values (area 2. transparency and 4. public service) and one competency (6. Deliver, support and inspire) from the policing competencies framework. The CV and supporting statement were restricted to two pages per document with a required font size. This provided fairness to candidates in giving them clear expectations of the length of response required.
- 4.5. This enabled an initial review of core eligibility criteria, recent experience and skills against the role profile and competencies identified by the PCC, informed by the staff survey, as essential for the role of Wiltshire's Chief Constable. In being based on evidence of previous achievements, it was an appropriate tool to support merit-based judgements.

#### **5. Response to Advert and applications**

- 5.1. All applicants expressing an interest in the role were given an opportunity to for an informal discussion with the Chief Executive and the PCC. Six potential applicants took this opportunity prior to the formal process being initiated.
- 5.2. The process subsequently translated into three completed applications from both male and female candidates. Whilst a low number, the pool of eligible candidates for Chief Constable, nationally, is small and the size of the response was in line with national averages for applications for Chief Constable.
- 5.3. Of the three submitted applications, one application was rejected as it was significantly over the closing deadline for applications. As the applicant had ample time to apply during the three-week window, the rejection of the application was fair to the process and other candidates. This evidenced that appropriate efforts had been made to keep the process as open as possible and being fair to all applicants.

#### **6. Wiltshire Police Officers and Staff Engagement**

- 6.1. During the advertisement period, the PCC conducted a survey run alongside the advertisement to seek the views of police officers and staff on the qualities and focus of a new Chief Constable. This questionnaire generated almost 800 responses. The PCC also held drop-in sessions cross policing

locations to discuss views of officers and staff. The results of this survey were used by the PCC to inform focus and helped shape interview question areas.

## **7. Shortlisting**

- 7.1. Shortlisting was undertaken via Teams. This session was opened by the OPCC Chief Executive and then a briefing on principles of fairness, openness, and transparency. Followed by a detailed explanation of the assessment criteria was provided by the College of Policing
- 7.2. Upon invitation to join the panel and in briefings, members were asked whether they had a conflict of interest with any of the candidates and none were identified. The PCC and some panel members had met some of the candidates previously in a professional capacity, there were no conflicts of interest disclosed.
- 7.3. To ensure fairness of the process, it was noted that judgements would be based only on the evidence available in front of the panel, not on prior knowledge. This was to ensure impartiality, consistency, and fairness.
- 7.4. Panel members received applications shortly prior to the shortlisting session and independently reviewed and assessed each application against the criteria specified in the assessment framework provided. Panel members then reconvened to share scores and deliberate the merits of each application individually.
- 7.5. Two candidates were selected for next stage of assessment and interview.

## **8. Psychometric Testing**

- 8.1. On the day the shortlisted candidates were confirmed, the candidates' details were provided to the College of Policing to commence the psychometric testing process. The results of this process were discussed with the candidates by the College of Policing and a written report on each was provided to the Chief Executive of the OPCC and made available to the main interview panel as part of their document pack.
- 8.2. Information gained from a personality assessment of each candidate was used to inform bespoke interview questioning. It did not rank or assess candidates, in order to avoid bias.

## **9. Familiarisation**

- 9.1. The two candidates selected were offered access to a range of Force and OPCC senior staff with the opportunity to visit policing sites. This was not requirement and utilising this access was for the discretion of candidates.
- 9.2. This was for candidates to inform themselves about the local context. It was not used to gain additional information about them. This was once again to ensure transparency and fairness. Both candidates were provided with identical information throughout the recruitment process.

## **10. Stakeholder Q&A Sessions**

- 10.1. Two stakeholder panels were convened to provide internal and external stakeholder and input into the appointment process These took the form of stakeholder Q&A sessions where members had the opportunity to ask questions of candidates, policing views and leadership approach.

- **Internal Stakeholder Q&A Session**

The composition of the internal stakeholder forum included a mix of representatives from UNISON, the Police Federation, the Chief Superintendents' Association, LGBT+, Christian Police Association, Disabled Police Association, CONNECT – Women's network and Wiltshire Ethnic Police Association. Those attending were invited to suggest questions for the Q&A. These were collated and refined by the Chief Executive with the support of the College of Policing.

- **External Stakeholder Q&A Session**

The composition of the external stakeholder forum included a mix of representatives from local authorities (officers and elected members), public sector agencies drawn from across Wiltshire and Youth Commissioners. Those attending were invited to suggest questions for the external Q&A. These responses were collated and refined by the Chief Executive with the support of the College of Policing.

- 10.2. Each group had a common set of questions which were put to each candidate. This ensured consistency and fairness. The two stakeholder Q&As were supported by staff from the College of Policing and OPCC. Each group was facilitated by a member of the group to support the flow of the session. Each stakeholder session lasted one hour, with timing spread equally between the question areas. Feedback was provided to the selection panel the following day and was used to inform which areas might need further exploration by the selection panel.
- 10.3. Questions asked by stakeholders were well considered, appropriately challenging and probing. The feedback comments collated afterwards were balanced and insightful. The sessions were well chaired and managed, with good time management, again to ensure consistency and fairness.
- 10.4. The OPCC had made significant effort to ensure there was as wide a representation of stakeholders, whilst ensuring the sessions were balanced and productive.
- 10.5. It was agreed in advance that the opinions of the two stakeholder forums would not be scored or totalled numerically in such a way as to rank candidates. This was because members participating had not been trained in this and were not making measurable judgements linked to the competency areas. The sessions were advisory only, to ensure that all final assessments and decisions were merit based. This was explained clearly to stakeholders, who welcomed the opportunity to participate in the process.

## **11. Interview and Assessment**

- 11.1. All panel members were provided with detailed documentation prior to interviews. This included the candidate information pack, applications, CEO process briefing, National College of Policing Competencies.
- 11.2. Candidates were given a presentation topic two days prior to interview. Interview questions and psychometric assessments were provided to the panel the morning of the interviews. This was done to minimise candidates accessing questions beforehand. Areas of focus for interview questions were discussed at shortlisting and were informed by stakeholders' feedback, staff survey feedback and psychometric assessments.
- 11.3. Panel members were provided with a briefing on scoring methodology and the need for evidence. Both candidates were asked six questions with the same number of bespoke questions. Each candidate had the opportunity to demonstrate evidence and experience of meeting the competencies. Panel members were asked to rate candidates on a five-point scale against each competency. All evidence candidates produced during the interview was used to assess against all competencies. This provided evidence of a fair and equal process for all candidates.
- 11.4. College of Policing guidance was followed in offering all members of the selection panel a briefing prior to the shortlisting and interview. This set out the College of Policing guidance, helping to ensure the process would be transparent, objective and based on merit. This illustrated a willingness to make sure that the selection would be made on a clear evidence base, again demonstrating openness and transparency in the process.
- 11.5. Prior to the interviews commencing the main panel received feedback on each candidate's psychometric assessment and stakeholders' feedback. The feedback from the stakeholder sessions included the strengths that the panel observed as well as suggested areas that the main panel may wish to probe further at interview.
- 11.6. There was discussion in advance on scoring processes for both shortlisting and interviews, to gain a shared understanding of assessment. This was supported by briefings from the CEO and College of

policing. This shows the determination by the PCC to establish agreed standards and expectations to ensure decisions would be based on evidence and merit, avoiding bias.

- 11.7. Consensus decision making by the panel was the preferred approach, but in the event of inability to achieve this, it was explained that the PCC was the statutory decision maker and a first among equals on the panel. The PCC would make the final recommendation on the preferred candidate, subject to confirmation by the Police and Crime Panel.
- 11.8. The PCC and some panel members had met both of the candidates previously in a professional capacity. In order to ensure fairness of the process, it was noted that judgements would be based only on the evidence available in front of the panel, not on prior knowledge. This was to ensure impartiality, consistency and fairness.
- 11.9. Briefing of the panel prior to the interview was well planned. This helped the panel equip themselves for their role in being able to challenge and test candidates fairly.
- 11.10. The timetable for the stakeholder Q&A and final interview allowed adequate time for each element. The carefully planned timetable helped to ensure that the process would be objective, fair to all shortlisted candidates, and clearly based on merit.

## **12. Decision making**

- 12.1. Each panel member first scored separately at the interview stage. Scores were collated and any differences of opinion were discussed, in order to agree a moderated consensus view. Each candidate was assessed individually on merit, with reference to evidence throughout.
- 12.2. Collectively agreed scores were recorded by the Chief Executive and were endorsed by the PCC. Consensus was reached throughout after objective, evidence-based discussion, leading to a recommendation regarding the preferred candidate. The successful candidate achieved high scores on all the selected areas of the Competency and Value Framework and was the best fit for local requirements.
- 12.3. The panel made a unanimous recommendation that Catherine Roper be appointed.

## **13. Conclusion**

- 13.1. Through the steps outlined above, the PCC fulfilled his responsibility to ensure the selection process was properly put in place in accordance with the responsibilities set out in the national guidance. Well planned use of the National Competency and Values Framework throughout the process allowed clear evidence to be recorded and evaluated to make objective decisions.
- 13.2. The panel rigorously challenged and tested the candidates against the necessary requirements for the role, giving assurance that the recommended appointment was appropriate. There was also careful deliberation between panel members in assessing each candidate individually before coming to a decision on appointment.
- 13.3. As the Independent Member I found that the decision-making process was demonstrably open and fair, with good efforts applied to seek the best available field of candidates. It was clearly based on merit, with decisions taken on careful analysis of evidence. Adherence to the highest standards throughout was taken seriously.
- 13.4. I can confirm that the representative from stakeholders panels believed the stakeholder sessions were based on merit, fairness, and openness. The College of Policing has been complimentary on the recruitment process, they confirmed with my that everything was delivered in line with the key tenets of merit, fairness, and openness
- 13.5. Therefore, as the Independent Member I can confirm that the selection of the preferred candidate to be Chief Constable of Wiltshire Police met the principles of fairness, openness and merit.