

**Assessment and Selection for the post of Chief Constable for Surrey
Police**

Independent Member Report

Di Newton

January 2023

Report of the Independent Member on the Selection and Appointment Process for the role of Chief Constable of Surrey Police

Introduction

1 The statutory requirements and principles relating to the appointment of Chief Police Officers are set out in Home Office Circular 13/2018. Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) are responsible for the recruitment and appointment to Chief Constable (CC) vacancies within their own areas and have the flexibility to decide on the detail of the selection processes used. They must ensure that the appointment is based on the key principles of merit, fairness and openness. It is for the PCC to decide at the end of their process who they wish to appoint, subject to confirmation by the Police and Crime Panel.

2 As part of the appointments process PCCs should involve an independent member ideally from the start of the process through to the final selection stage.

3 This is the report of the Independent Member relating to the appointments exercise to select the next Chief Constable for Surrey. The aim of the report is to provide an independent and objective assessment of the extent to which the selection and appointment process was conducted in line with the key principles of merit, fairness and openness. It also describes the extent to which the panel fulfilled its responsibility to test and challenge the candidates against the requirements of the role.

Role and Involvement of the Independent Member

4 This role is described briefly in Home Office Circular 13/2018 and in more detail in the Guidance for Chief Officer Appointments produced by the College of Policing. The PCC should appoint someone who as the title suggests has no links to the PCC, is not employed directly in policing or linked bodies such as the Police College and has no potential conflicts of interest. A key requirement is that the member should be experienced and competent in assessment and selection processes.

5 I am one of several independent members who were selected on merit and trained by the College of Policing (the College) for inclusion on a central list of independent members. The selection was done via a process which focused on the knowledge and skills of candidates in the field of selection and assessment and, competence in quality assuring selection processes at senior levels. This centrally held list was maintained until 2018. In addition to being appointed to this list I have a strong background in the areas of external assessment and quality assurance particularly in the public sector. Further information about my background is at the Appendix

6 I was invited to join the appointments panel as the independent panel member in October 2022 and therefore had the opportunity to be fully involved in the selection process at every stage. I was able to review the proposed documentation for the process. e.g., the application pack including the role requirements and person specification. Much of the process followed the broad recommendations and good practice set out in the Guidance for Chief Officer Appointments. I was in regular contact with the PCC's staff throughout the design phase and my professional input into developing the details of the system such as scoring mechanisms was welcomed and taken on board. Throughout the process the PCC and Chief Executive demonstrated a very open approach and a willingness to ensure that the appointment met the principles of fairness, openness and merit.

Appointments Panel

7 The guidance states that an appointments panel should be established at an early stage of the process. The panel plays a key role in providing the test and challenge element necessary to ensure that the successful candidate fully meets the role requirements. Panel members were identified in advance and confirmed as soon as the vacancy was formally agreed. They were kept up to date and briefed as the process developed.

8 The PCC has a duty to ensure that the panel membership is diverse, suitably experienced, and competent in selection practices. The panel comprised:

- Lisa Townsend Police and Crime Commissioner
- Rt.Hon. Damian Green MP
- John Campbell QPM (Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police and policing adviser)
- Jan Warwick – Chair Neighbourhood Watch
- Dianne Newton FCIPD (designated 'Independent Member')

The panel was supported by Alison Bolton Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the OPCC. Panel members brought a range of relevant and diverse skills with them, and all had previous experience in recruiting to senior roles. In addition, all had operated at executive level which enabled them to fully test and challenge candidates at an appropriate level.

9 To ensure consistency and understanding of the process panel members were provided with copies of the Guidance on the Appointment of Chief Officers. This document contains detailed guidance relating to the legislation, recommended selection and assessment processes and describes and explains the Competency and Values Framework (CVF) used in policing. The CVF outlines the competences and behaviours associated with effective and ethical performance in the police service. In addition, panel members were given copies of the role profile, person specification and supporting documentation.

Selection Principles

10 The selection process was based on the national guidance for senior appointments designed by the College. This framework provides a clear and objective format that PCCs can tailor to match the requirements of their individual vacancies. It has been developed in consultation with stakeholders to provide national consistency and help ensure that all Chief Officer appointments meet the core principles of merit, fairness and openness. Whilst these terms are generally broad concepts, in the context of policing and other public sector recruitment they are specifically defined as:

- Merit - appointing the best person for the role. The person must be competent to do the role and the role should be offered to the person who would do it best. The successful candidate should ideally be chosen from a sufficiently strong pool of candidates.
- Fairness - there must be no bias in the assessment process. Selection must be objective, impartial and applied consistently.
- Openness – the role must be advertised publicly with a view to attracting a range of candidates. Candidates must be given information about the role, its requirements and the selection process.

Role profile and advertising strategy

11 To ensure that there was a clear and relevant definition of the role against which candidates could be assessed, the existing role profile was reviewed and updated and agreed with the PCC. The profile and specification were based around the eight competences set out in the national Competence and Values Framework for Policing (CVF). Additional elements were included ensuring that the skills and qualities were current and relevant to the PCC's key objectives. This approach ensured that the profile and person specification were underpinned by relevant and objective criteria providing a sound basis for assessment.

12 The advertising and communication strategy was designed to ensure that the process was open, transparent and that information would reach a wide range of potential applicants. The post was advertised using a combination of social media and a variety of police specific websites including those of the College of Policing, The National Police Chiefs Council, Policing Professional, Policing Today.

13 It is common for Chief Constable vacancies to attract only a single applicant and historically, all Surrey Chief Officer vacancies have attracted either single or very low numbers of applicants. The difficulty in attracting applicants for chief officer roles across the country is a recognised national issue and one of which the PCC was very aware. From the outset the PCC demonstrated that she wished to attract as wide a selection of eligible candidates as possible. To assist with this, she engaged the services of the

College of Policing's Leadership and Talent Development service. This enabled the Commissioner or College's Chief Executive to proactively approach candidates who were suitably qualified to reiterate her personal commitment to appointing the best candidate for the job and that she would welcome applications from all eligible candidates.

14 Prospective candidates were able to download applications and supporting information and were invited to contact the PCC to discuss the role. This ensured that all potential candidates were treated consistently, had the same opportunity to discuss the role and received the same information. The advertising covered a three week period from 7 November with a closing date for applications of midday 2 December. This was sufficient time to ensure that potential candidates were aware of the vacancy and had the time to research the role and complete an applications

15 The approach taken by the PCC and her team to the promotion and marketing of the role was entirely appropriate and highly successful in that it attracted applications from four potential candidates. It also demonstrated a genuine commitment to openness and the principle of appointment based on merit.

Shortlisting

16 Members of the panel met remotely via Teams on 12 December to collectively assess the candidate applications and to decide who should progress to the final interview stage. Panel members were provided in advance with copies of the application form, the candidates covering letter to the PCC and all additional relevant documentation, such as the Local Policing Plan. Guidance was provided on how to use the Competency and Values Framework (CVF) and the assessment rating forms. Members were asked to assess the applications individually prior to the meeting and be prepared to discuss and debate their views on the day. It was known in advance that one panel member could not attend on the scheduled date, but they had provided the CEO with their assessment which was then fed into the meeting.

17 The applications and individual panel members ratings were collectively discussed to reach a final consensus rating for each candidate in all of the competence and behavioural areas. It was agreed that at this stage there was insufficient evidence to rule out any of the candidates and all four should be invited to interview. One candidate later withdrew their application leaving a final selection pool of three candidates.

Final Assessment Design

18 The assessment was scheduled for 5 January and was made up of two elements:

- a short presentation to a stakeholder panel representing a range of communities, voluntary, public and private sector followed by a

discussion around the candidates' views on engaging with the public and stakeholders

- an hour long interview with the appointments panel with questions directed at eliciting evidence of suitability against the identified skills and competences

19 The design of the final process was conducted on an open and transparent basis with all interview panel members having the opportunity to contribute to the development of the interview questions.

Stakeholder Panel

20 The stakeholder panel had an advisory role and was chaired by Ellie Vesey-Thompson, Deputy PCC. Panel members were briefed in advance about the format and purpose of the session. The presentation topic was around "how candidates would address the trust, legitimacy and confidence issues in various local communities and how they would involve partners in the work". This topic was designed to allow the panel to make observations around the candidate's approach to four competence areas within the CVF. The discussions which followed the presentation were intended to be two way whereby panel members and candidates could ask questions of the other. The feedback from this exercise was intended to inform the PCC's overall decision making but did not form part of the formal assessment.

21 The feedback from the stakeholder panel was provided by the Panel Chair and panel member Clare Simkin, ACO Surrey and Sussex Police. It was given after the appointments panel had concluded the interviews and had reached a final agreement on the candidates scores. This approach ensured that the feedback from the advisory panel did not influence the panel's scoring decisions or create any form of unfair bias.

Appointments Panel Interview

22 The overall process provided for candidates to be challenged and tested across all the requirements of the role. The panel had been given guidance on the assessment methodology and the potential interview questions in advance. Members met prior to the interview for a final briefing, and to finalise the questions. The CEO reminded members about the assessment process and the need to record the evidence before reaching a decision on the assessment rating in line with the guidance provided. I was recovering from Covid and took part remotely via a Teams video link. It was agreed that I would not participate in the questioning as originally planned as this had the potential to disrupt the flow of the interview. However, I was able to observe every stage of the day and to participate fully in the scoring process and discussions.

23 The interview questions were designed to be open and to elicit evidence against the key competency requirements of the role. There was a good mix of future based hypothetical questions, closely linked to the local

priorities for Surrey. Whilst individual members led on specific questions other members were able to pick up and probe any further points if they wished. This approach helped to ensure that the panel fulfilled its responsibility to challenge and test the candidate against all the requirements.

24 After each interview individual panel members completed an assessment of the candidate's response to each question using a five point rating scale. Where there was a difference in the individual ratings the panel discussed and debated the evidence to reach an agreed final score for each competence area. On completion of the interviews and individual assessments it was agreed that Tim de Meyer was the strongest candidate providing very good evidence of his competence in all areas. Members were then provided with feedback from the stakeholder panel on the four competency areas that they had been asked to observe.

25 At the end of the process and having taken all the evidence into account the panel was unanimous that Tim de Meyer was a very strong candidate who fully met the role requirements and would be an excellent appointment to the role of Chief Constable of Surrey

Conclusion

26 From the start of the process it was evident that PCC Lisa Townsend wanted to secure the best available field of candidates for the role of Chief Constable. The processes and practices adopted by the PCC and used throughout this appointment process closely followed the guidance developed by the College on achieving fair open and merit based recruitment processes.

27 The decision-making processes were structured, transparent and enabled the clear recording of the evidence. The PCC was assisted throughout the process by the CEO, Alison Bolton who put significant time into planning the exercise and ensuring that the appointments panel had the opportunity to test and challenge the candidates and make a full and fair assessment of their competence.

28 In view of the above I am happy to confirm that the appointment recommendation was arrived at following a rigorous, testing and challenging process. I am confident that the selection of Tim Meyer as the preferred candidate was based on the principles of fairness, openness and selection on merit.

Dianne Newton, FCIPD (Independent Member)

Di is an HR professional with extensive board-level strategic and operational management experience, with expertise in senior executive and non-executive appointments. She is a lay member of the Employment Tribunal Service, hearing a range of unfair dismissal and discrimination cases.

Until recently she was a member of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, where she was involved in the selection and appointment of magistrates. Whilst in this role she was involved in a project aimed at improving the diversity of the magistracy within the region.

Di has previously been an independent member of Leicestershire Police Authority and has sat on Police Appeals Tribunals. She was a member of the Authorities Appointments panel and was closely involved in several appointments to Chief, Deputy and Assistant Constable roles.

She is trained in the College of Policing's "ORCE" model of assessment and has previously worked as a lay assessor on a wide range of College senior selection programmes including PNAC, Senior Command Course, Fast Track, High Potential Development Scheme, Direct Entry Superintendent and Inspector programmes

As an independent member initially trained and accredited by the College, Di has worked with PCCs and Chief Constables on the selection and appointment to a range of Chief Officer posts across England and Wales.

She is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.