

APPENDIX A**Chief Constable –Surrey Police Appointment Process****Independent Member Report****Di Newton****March 2019**

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 detail in Home Office Circular 20/2012. It sets out that Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are responsible for the recruitment and appointment to Chief Constable (CC) vacancies within their own areas. They have the flexibility to decide on the detail of the processes used but must ensure that the appointment itself has been based on the key principles of merit, fairness and openness. The process should also provide for candidates to be challenged and tested against the requirements for the Chief Officer role. These principles are discussed further at paragraph 8 of this report.

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. I was selected and invited to join the interview panel as the independent panel member for the appointment of the Chief Constable of Surrey on 15 January. I therefore had the opportunity to be fully involved in the selection process at every stage. Further details on the role of the independent member are covered at paragraph 4 of this report.

Purpose

3 The aim of this report is to provide an independent and objective assessment of the extent to which the selection process was conducted in line with the key principles of merit, fairness and openness, and the extent to which the panel was able to fulfil its responsibility to challenge and test candidates' suitability against the role requirements.

Role and Involvement of the Independent Member

4 The role of the independent member is to verify that the selection process is conducted in line with the both the key principles and the "challenge and test" requirement described in paragraph 1. Independent members should be experienced and competent in assessment and selection processes.

5 I am one of a number of assessors who were openly selected on merit and trained by the College of Policing (the College). I have a strong background in recruitment and assessment and experience in the areas of external assessment and quality assurance particularly in the public sector. Further information about my experience is at **Annex 1**.

Interview Panel

6 In recruiting to CC vacancies PCCs should establish an interview panel at an early stage of the appointments process. The College has developed detailed guidance to support PCCs and their teams in putting in place appropriate selection processes. This guidance includes information on the role, purpose and duties of the interview panel as well as detailed documentation to support each 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. The PCC has a duty to ensure that the panel membership is diverse, suitably experienced, and competent in selection practices. The panel comprised:

- David Munro (PCC)
- Sarah Goad (former Lord Lieutenant for Surrey)
- Simon Edens (former Chief Constable of Northampton police and policing adviser)
- Dianne Newton FCIPD (the designated 'Independent Member')

The panel was supported Alison Bolton Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the OPCC. Panel members brought a range of relevant and diverse skills with them and these were used to good effect in the selection process.

7 Training on the detailed process was provided for members, including the CEO, by Surrey-Sussex Police People Services. This ensured that there was a consistent understanding of the process. The training was based on the detailed guidance issued by the College. Simon Eden and I are both fully trained in the College's assessment process and did not therefore take part in the training session. As the independent member I did review the slides around which the training was based and was able to confirm at both the shortlisting and interview stage that members were well briefed and took a consistent approach to the exercises. All panel members were provided with a copy of the published guidance together with copies of the role profile, person specification and supporting documentation, including a copy of the National Competency and Framework for Policing.

Selection Process

8 The selection process was based on the national framework for senior appointments as 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 to provide national consistency and help PCCs to ensure that their 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 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

9 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. A detailed person specification was developed and agreed by the PCC. The profile and specification were based around the competences set out in the national Competence and Values Framework for Policing. Additional elements were included ensuring that the skills and qualities were current and relevant to the needs of the PCC and the Surrey force. This approach ensured that the profile and person specification were underpinned by relevant and objective criteria providing a sound basis for assessment. Copies of the role profile and person specification can be found at annexes 2 and 3 respectively.

10 The advertising and communication strategy was designed to ensure that the process was open and transparent and that information would reach a wide range of potential applicants. Details were placed on a number of websites, namely those of the:

- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey where a dedicated section was created
- College of Policing's job hub
- Chief's Net (run by the National Police Chief's Council)

In addition, they were sent to all PCCs along with a letter from David Munro to all Chief Officers welcoming applications and emphasising his wish to appoint the best person for the job. This was an entirely appropriate strategy for advertising the vacancy within the Chief Officer community.

11. Prospective candidates were able to download applications and supporting information and were invited to contact the CEO to discuss the post. This ensured that all potential candidates were treated consistently and received the same information. The advertising covered a three week period from 4 February with a closing date for applications of 8 March. This was sufficient time to ensure that potential candidates were aware of the vacancy as in reality, the size and structure of the policing community is such that eligible officers are usually well aware of which vacancies are coming up and when they will be advertised.

12 At the end of the period the PCC received one application. Whilst it is preferable to have a wider range of candidates, it is not unusual to receive a single application for a chief officer role. The difficulty in attracting applicants for chief officer roles is a recognised national issue and historically, Surrey Chief Officer vacancies have attracted very low numbers of applicants. However, having only one candidate to consider is not in itself an issue where, as in this case, the candidate is subsequently assessed via a robust process as being an excellent candidate who fully met the role requirements.

13 I had the opportunity to review all aspects of the process at every stage and there was nothing in the processes or the assessment criteria themselves that would have prevented or discouraged any eligible candidates from applying. I am confident that the process itself was fair and open. The PCC made every effort to attract candidates and in my view nothing more could reasonably have been done to attract a wider pool of candidates.

Shortlisting

14 Despite having only one candidate the panel needed to be satisfied that the individual's application met the criteria and was suitable to be taken forward to the final assessment stage. The shortlisting assessment took place on 11 March. Panel members were provided with copies of the application form and additional relevant documentation including the guidance provided by the College. Prior to any discussion by the panel a training session was provided for those panel members who had no previous experience in using the assessment system. Simon Edens and I joined the panel for the shortlisting process via a telephone conference facility.

15 The application was assessed by panel members individually and discussed collectively to reach a final conclusion. Assessments were based on the recommended 5 point scale against the identified competences and behaviours set out in the role profile. All members were in agreement that the application provided very clear evidence of the candidate's suitability for selection to the interview stage. Where appropriate, evidence gathered from the shortlisting process was used to inform the final interview questions

Final Assessment Process

16 To ensure a robust and challenging process three assessment methods were used:

- Presentation and question session with a stakeholder panel representing a range of community, voluntary, public and private sector groups
- Presentation and question session with the interview panel
- Interview with questions directed at eliciting evidence of suitability against the identified skills and competences

The topics for both the stakeholder and interview panel presentations were provided on the day ensuring integrity of the process and providing additional challenge for the candidate.

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

Stakeholder Panel

18 Panel members were fully briefed on the process, including the scoring mechanism. The panel chairman, Joanna Killian (CEX of Surrey County Council), was responsible for collating the feedback from the discussion and presenting this to the interview panel at the conclusion of the session.

19 The panel feedback from the chair of the stakeholder panel was extremely positive. Members had been constructive but challenging in their approach. At the end of the exercise all members were in full agreement that Gavin Stephens was an excellent candidate whose presentation delivery, content and responses to questions deserved the highest rating. She reported that some members who had initially expressed some concerns about the lack of candidates were very clear by the end of the exercise that given the candidate's high level of performance this was no longer an issue of concern for them. They were reassured that on the evidence available to them the candidate was highly appointable to the role of CC.

Presentation and Panel Interview

20 The overall process was designed to ensure that candidates would be challenged and tested across all the requirements of the role. The panel had been given details of the presentation topic and potential interview questions in advance and were well prepared. The assessment day was held on 18 March and the panel met prior to the interview to finalise the questions and to consider what good answers might look like.

21 The interview questions were designed to be open and to elicit evidence against the key competency requirements of the role with a good mix of future based hypothetical questions and others based on past behaviours. All panel members participated in the post-presentation and interview questioning. Whilst individual members led on specific questions the chair gave other members the opportunity to pick up and probe any further points. This approach helped to make sure that the panel fulfilled its responsibility to challenge and test the candidate across all of the requirements.

22 The panel used the same system of individual assessment followed by group discussion to agree an overall rating as used in the shortlisting process. The presentation and interview elements were scored as separate elements.

There was a fair degree of consistency in the scoring and where there was a difference in individual ratings panel members were prepared to justify and evidence their assessment. The panel was unanimous that Gavin Stephens had provided very strong evidence that his skills and competence fully matched the requirements of the role and should be recommended for appointment to the role of Chief Constable.

Conclusion

23 From the start of the process it was evident that the PCC and CEO had adopted an open and transparent approach to the appointment and were keen to secure the best possible person for the role of Chief Constable. This was evidenced at every stage from the initial design phase, through the selection and training of the stakeholder and interview panel members and the conduct of the final selection and presentation exercises. The PCC ensured that I was involved at all stages and was willing to take on board comments. Panel members were consulted and had input to the design of the exercise contents and were provided with a wide range of relevant information and well presented documentation.

24 The processes and practices adopted by the PCC and used throughout this appointment process closely followed the guidance provided by the College. This resulted in a very well run and robust recruitment exercise that provided every opportunity for the panels to test and challenge the candidate, gather robust evidence and make a full assessment of the candidate. At the end of the process both the stakeholder panel and the interview panel were fully satisfied that Gavin Stephens was a very strong candidate who fully met the role requirements and who would be an excellent appointment to the role of Chief Constable of Surrey.

25 In view of the above I am happy to confirm that the appointment recommendation was arrived at as a result of a testing and challenging process and that Gavin Stephens was chosen firmly on the basis of the principles of fairness, openness and selection on merit

Annex 1

Dianne Newton – Background and Experience

Formerly an HR director in the public sector, for the last ten years I have worked at consultant working with a variety of clients on projects including complex organisational mergers and restructuring; and senior recruitment and assessment assignments. I am professionally qualified and a Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Personnel and Development.

Prior to the abolition of Police Authorities, I spent nine years as an independent member of the Leicestershire Police Authority; amongst other responsibilities I was lead member for HR and a member of the Appointments Panel. I have been involved in the selection and appointment of a range of senior policing roles including the appointment of chief, deputy and assistant constables for Leicestershire Police Authority.

For a short period I continued to work with the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire as an interim member of the Joint Audit Risk and Assurance Panel pending recruitment of the permanent members of the panel.

I have a strong recruitment background coupled with extensive experience of quality assurance and reporting on selection and appointment processes. I was a registered independent assessor with the Office for Commissioner of Public Appointments and worked as an assessor for non-executive appointments with the NHS Appointments Commission and the Welsh Assembly Government.

I sit as a member for the Employment Tribunals Service in the East Midlands. I am also a lay member of the Lord Chancellors Advisory Committee with responsibility for the selection and appointment of magistrates in the region.

As an associate assessor for the Police College I have assessed on a wide range of senior assessment programmes including, the senior Police National Assessment Centre (PNAC) used to establish suitability for promotion to Chief Officer level. In December 2012, following a formal application and selection process I was appointed to the Policing College's list of accredited, independent assessors and have subsequently worked with a number of PCCs and Chief Constables on appointments to Chief Officer vacancies.