

Report to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire and Police and Crime Panel (PCP) Meeting on 11 June 2021

Subject: Report from the Independent Advisor on the appointment of the Chief Constable on 28 May 2021

Report author and contact details: John Anderson, Chair Joint Audit and Standards Committee for Warwickshire

Purpose of the Report:

1. To provide the Police and Crime Panel with a report on the merit, fairness and transparency of the process, documentation and conduct of the interview and assessment process for the appointment of the new Chief Constable.

Background

2. In early March 2021 I was approached by Polly Reid, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Philip Seccombe, about the Independent Advisor role required for the appointment of the new Chief Constable. After confirming I held no exempting roles, I was accepted by the PCC for the role.
3. During March, I briefed myself on the College of Policing Guidance for appointing Chief Officers, particularly on the requirements in fulfilling the role of Independent Advisor. The CEO, who holds the position of Chief Monitoring Officer of this interview process for the PCC to achieve merit, fairness and openness in the selection process, also provided me with a timetable of the process, a copy of the application pack, details of the extent and coverage for advertising the position widely and requesting responses from applicants and a virtual briefing on the whole process.
4. In April I received the applicants detailed responses together with a scoring system for rating them. I carefully reviewed the responses, assessed them against the criteria for scoring, rated them and advised the CEO that in my opinion both applicants achieved the standard to be taken forward for interview.

Interviews 27 and 28 May 2021

5. The interviews of the two applicants were held over two days and were timed sessions. On the first day the applicants were each interviewed by a Partner Advisory Panel consisting of 5 members and an Internal Advisory Panel consisting of 10 members. The panels were provided with an Interview timetable, job profile, the candidates applications, 6 set questions with space to record notes taken and the Equality policy. The PCC and CEO gave each panel a briefing and chairpersons for each panel had been selected to provide a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of each applicant to the Interview Panel on the second day. The panels had been asked by the PCC not to rate or rank the applicants.
6. I attended the whole day of interviews but had to split my time between each panel as they were run concurrently. I attended each panel interview and heard the questioning and responses of each applicant by the Partner Advisory Panel and then the individual member's assessment and summarisation of the applicant's responses by the Internal Advisory Panel. Although I had to miss the reverse of this process (the questioning by the Internal Panel and then the assessment and summarisation by the Partner Advisory Panel), at least it enabled me to see that a consistent questioning approach (the same panel member asked the same question of each applicant) and assessment and summarisation (each panel member contributed fully and consistently) of the applicant's strengths and weaknesses by each panel was undertaken. These assessments and summarisations were drafted into a written report for delivery by the panel chairpersons at the first session of the Interview Panel on the second day. All the panel members contributed fully to these two parts of the interview process, were unbiased, objective and consistent.
7. On the second day, the Interview Panel of 5 members, including myself, and chaired by the PCC, were provided with the same set of documentation as the panels on the first day, subject to a different set of 6 pre-set questions and the interview process was timed. After a briefing by the PCC and CEO, the first session of the day consisted of the Interview Panel hearing a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of each applicant from the Chairpersons of the Stakeholder Panel and Internal Advisory Panel.
8. Then the two applicants were interviewed by the Interview Panel using the 6 pre-set questions. For the first question the applicants had been asked to prepare a timed presentation as a response and supplementary questions were asked with responses. All the members asked the same questions with the same supplementary questions asked of both candidates by the same panel member. All the panel members prepared notes of the responses to each question for the later discussion of their assessments of the applicants. This provided consistency and fairness.
9. At the end of the interviews the panel fully discussed the applicant's strengths and weaknesses and their responses to the 6 pre-set questions. Each member contributed fully to these discussions and then provided a

summary of their assessment of each candidate and a scoring. The scores were collated by the CEO, a total score for each candidate recorded and a result declared by the PCC on merit. The successful applicant will be put forward by the PCC to the PCP for ratification at their meeting on 11 June 2021.

Conclusion and report

10. I have briefly outlined in this report the interview process I was asked to report on and attended on the days of the interviews for the appointment of a new Chief Constable for Warwickshire. This covers the documentation prepared and used in the process, the means and criteria used for the applicant's assessment and scoring and the impartial and consistent conduct of the three interview panels to arrive at a result on merit.

11. I can confirm to the PCC and PCP that I was not aware of any bias, the selection process was robust, objective, fair and transparent.

Recommendation:

To review the contents of this report and comment as appropriate.