

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 8 JANUARY 2024 AT 2.00PM AT COUNTY HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Christine Goldstraw OBE – Independent Member
Councillor David Ellis – Gedling Borough Council

Executive Mayor Andy Abrahams – Mansfield District Council - **Apologies**
Councillor Teresa Cullen – Broxtowe Borough Council - **Apologies**
Lesley Dalby – Independent Member
Councillor Boyd Elliott – Nottinghamshire County Council
Suma Harding – Independent Member
Councillor Rob Inglis – Rushcliffe Borough Council
Councillor Mike Introna – Nottinghamshire County Council
Councillor Sajid Mohammed – Nottingham City Council - **Apologies**
Councillor Madelaine Richardson – Bassetlaw District Council - **Apologies**
Councillor Paul Taylor – Newark & Sherwood District Council - **Apologies**
Bob Vaughan-Newton – Independent Member
Councillor John Wilmott – Ashfield District Council
Councillor Linda Woodings – Nottingham City Council - **Apologies**

OFFICERS PRESENT

Jo Toomey - Advanced Democratic Services } Nottinghamshire County
Officer } Council (Host Authority)

OTHERS PRESENT

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Caroline Henry
Gillian Holder – Chief Financial Officer (OPCC)

Michelle Buttery – Commissioner’s preferred candidate for Interim Chief Executive

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Executive Mayor Abrahams (Mansfield District Council)
- Councillor Teresa Cullen (Broxtowe Borough Council)
- Councillor Sajid Mohammed (Nottingham City Council)
- Councillor Madelaine Richardson (Bassetlaw District Council)
- Councillor Paul Taylor (Newark and Sherwood District Council)
- Councillor Linda Woodings (Nottingham City Council)

The Chair also welcomed Councillor Boyd Elliott (who had permanently replaced Councillor Scott Carlton, Nottinghamshire County Council) and Councillor John Wilmott (who had permanently replaced Councillor Helen-Ann Smith, Ashfield District Council)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

3. PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Commissioner introduced Michelle Buttery, her preferred candidate for the role of Interim Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. She explained the vacancy had arisen when the previous Chief Executive left the employment of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) on 31 October 2023. Since that time, the different elements of the role had been covered by members of the OPCC, whom she thanked.

Members were advised that to fill the vacancy as quickly as possible while ensuring the recruitment process was robust and transparent, the Commissioner had engaged an independent resources consultant. Of the applications received, three candidates were short-listed. Following a series of exercises, Michelle Buttery was identified as the Commissioner's preferred candidate; the Commissioner highlighted the candidate's 22 years working in policing, highlighting in particular her current role as CEO and solicitor for South Yorkshire Police, and indicated she would be a good fit for what was needed in the office.

Panel members were given the opportunity to ask questions of the Commissioner about the reasons for selecting the preferred candidate and the process she followed. The answers the Panel received are summarised below:

- The Commissioner felt the candidate shared her values of public service and gave an example of the candidate's leadership style and the way she supported her team.
- The candidate had a lot of experience around improving transparency.
- The Commissioner had confidence the candidate would continue to deliver following the election, including continuing delivery of work commissioned during the current term.
- Filling the vacancy on an interim basis had been preferred in the interests of expediency.
- Recruitment to the permanent role was expected to begin shortly after the election in May 2024.

The Panel was then given the opportunity to ask questions of the Commissioner's preferred candidate to test her knowledge, experience, and independence.

The first question probed the candidate's understanding of the police and crime context in Nottinghamshire. The response highlighted similarities between the profiles of Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire. Reference was made to historic and anticipated inspections of the force and the policing structure that was in place. The candidate had also researched the financial position of the force and its plans to address anticipated funding gaps. The response also covered Nottinghamshire's arrangements around community safety partnerships, the violence reduction partnership and how they compared with the structures she had experienced previously.

Members of the Panel asked about the candidate's interest in Nottinghamshire and what she saw as the major challenges. The candidate explained she had spent 10 years working for the South Yorkshire PCC and the breadth of issues and progress on which she had led. She identified the biggest challenges as trust and confidence, a young workforce and the balance between demand, resourcing and financial challenges.

A follow up question explored diverse communities and opportunities to build trust and confidence through robust processes and scrutiny.

In response to question about her experience, the candidate referred to her career progression, including 10 years in a similar role. She highlighted a key achievement as strengthening her current Commissioner holding Chief Constables to account. She hoped experience would assist the Commissioner in her ambition of ensuring robust systems were in place to support the PCC fulfilling her functions.

Members explored how the candidate would work with all the different councils in Nottinghamshire and balance competing priorities. The answer focussed on using the Commissioner's plan to bring people together and finding opportunities to dovetail outcomes for the common good. The candidate also recognised the complexities of operating across the wider partnership arena.

One member asked whether the candidate had any questions regarding the Panel and the support she would want from it. She was interested in whether the Panel felt it had sufficient support around scrutiny and assurance and whether there were opportunities for the OPCC to provide support for the areas in which it was interested. She also gave an example with work she had undertaken with a Panel in the past, asking it what it felt a value for money framework would look like.

The Panel was interested in how the candidate would balance her role with Nottinghamshire and national portfolio work. Reference was made to the benefits that national-level work could bring to the force, but the candidate indicated balancing any such commitments would be done in conjunction with the Commissioner.

The next question explored how the candidate would build relationships with colleagues and key stakeholders, recognising the short-term nature of the proposed appointment. The candidate explained her approach to understanding

the way people work and recognising them as individuals rather than parts of large organisations. She added that, whilst the role was hybrid, she would be more physically present as she built relationships with colleagues and partners and then review that balance with the Commissioner as time progressed.

Reference was made to the track record of the OPCC in securing large amounts of grant funding and high value commissioning. A question was asked about the candidate's experience of running this kind of environment. She referred to similar funding and commissioning experience in her current role. The candidate also highlighted the importance of ensuring that priorities aligned with the funding offer and that all partners could deliver within the tight timescales set out in the grant conditions. She also highlighted potential political or partner consequences if the OPCC did not lead in pursuit of a grant; in those circumstances she would see the OPCC supporting partners to lead the bid.

Noting the upcoming PCC elections, members wanted to explore the candidate's experience of managing change and providing stability, including a specific focus around the role of the CEO and OPCC during the election campaign, particularly the pre-election period. Members were advised that the candidate had led preparations for three elections, including a by-election which had a high media profile. She also gave examples of working with key elections contacts, candidates, inducting new PCCs and ensuring business continued during that transition period.

Members of the Panel were interested in the candidate's experience of challenging people in authority and providing advice that might not be welcome. The response talked about the importance of building credibility and trust, and ensuring advice was well-researched and based on a sound legal basis. The candidate saw governance as finding a way to support decision-makers to do things legally rather than a reason to say no. She added that it was important for a decision-maker to understand the likely consequences of a decision. She concluded by stating that she was clear who the decision-maker was and that they could choose whether or not to take the advice, but she would still be there, continuing to support them professionally in dealing with any consequences and accepting the decision that they have reached. A question was also asked about a specific example from the candidate's experience in their current role.

The final question related to key processes and attributes required to ensure that robust systems of governance were in place. The candidate approached this from two different perspectives. In response to wider governance, the candidate referred to the Nolan principles, the policies, strategies and procedures within which the OPCC and force operated and making them user friendly. She also highlighted the importance of culture and bringing those values to life, keeping policies and strategies under review and using audit as a means of providing assurance. The second part of the answer covered the governance around the Commissioner holding the Chief Constable to account. It also talked about wider assurance about other contributors to the Police and Crime Plan. She emphasised the importance of assurance arrangements that were public, transparent, open and robust.

Members concluded the session by asking the Commissioner of the anticipated timeline for the candidate taking up post. Members were advised that vetting was on standby to run the process in an expedited way. The candidate's official notice period with their current employer, but it was hoped that with negotiation a transitional co-working period might be possible. This was something that the Commissioner would negotiate with the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner in the event the preferred candidate was supported by the Panel and passed pre-employment checks.

4. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED 2024/01

That the public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the discussions are likely to involve disclosure of exempt information described in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

5. PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF A CHIEF EXECUTIVE – PANEL'S DECISION-MAKING

Panel members considered the Commissioner's preferred candidate for the Interim Chief Executive role, taking account of the process that was followed and the answers given by the candidate to the questions posed by Panel members.

RESOLVED 2024/02

Members of the Panel unanimously supported the appointment of Michelle Buttery as Interim Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The meeting was closed at 3.20pm.