

GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel held on Friday 7 July 2023 at the Cabinet Suite - Shire Hall, Gloucester.

PRESENT:

Cllr Philip Burford	Cllr George Porter
Cllr Joe Harris	Cllr Steve Robinson (Chair)
Cllr Sajid Patel (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Brian Tipper

Apologies: Cllr Ray Brassington, Cllr Flo Clucas, Cllr Collette Finnegan, Kingston Myles, Cllr Martin Percy and Stella Tams

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER HEARING

- 3.1 The Panel understood that the confirmatory hearing for the appointment of the Chief Finance Officer was required by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Police and Crime Commissioner would be invited to speak to the Panel to outline the selection process and to introduce the candidate. The candidate would then have the opportunity to address the Panel, and members could ask questions of the candidate relating to professional competence and personal independence. The Panel would then go into exempt session to make its decision on whether to recommend or recommend against the appointment.
- 3.2 The Commissioner introduced the preferred candidate, Peter Lewis. He explained that Peter was the standout candidate from the interview process and was very excited to hopefully have Peter join the team after today's Hearing. The Commissioner highlighted Peter's wealth of experience and different perspectives that could further strengthen the current team.
- 3.3 Ruth Greenwood, Chief Executive, added that the position of Chief Finance Office had been under interim arrangements for some time now, partly due to two previous recruitment processes that had failed to obtain any suitable applicants. The advert went live on 10 May 2023 and was published on a variety of channels including a national recognised specialist publication in this field, which paid dividends as the position attracted 6 applications, of which 3 were invited to interview.
- 3.4 The Chair invited Peter to address the Panel. They heard that Peter's understanding of the role in summary was to ensure funds were available through a sustainable Medium Term Financial Plan to realise the Commissioner's priorities and within an established, appropriate accountability framework.

- 3.5 He shared that this summary translated into 5 key value for money principles, to spend money:
- Strategically & fairly – ensuring resources were available for all 6 priorities within the Commissioner’s Police and Crime Prevention Plan, with appropriate feedback loops on performance monitoring and ensuring each resource was reaching its intended audience for those priorities.
 - Well – spending efficiently, ensuring good allocation and effective processes throughout.
 - Less – ensuring good commissioning and procurement was taking place.
 - Wisely – making sure all spending was achieving its initial aim.
- 3.6 It was added that this role also carried the title of Section 151 officer which was a statutory role within the OPCC. He shared that the best way to fulfil this role was to build credibility and trust with the colleagues and partners he worked with, so they felt comfortable listening and acting on his advice from a personal level, rather than just because of his title.
- 3.7 Peter also highlighted the importance of his relationship with the Force, working on good communication and mutual respect with the Constabulary’s equivalent officer.

Questions to the preferred candidate

- 3.8 The Panel had a set of questions to ask Peter and they noted the following responses:
- Peter had previous experience working in a police environment, two roles within the Constabulary and two within the OPCC, all of which he thoroughly enjoyed and noted the proximity between the services he was working to support in the police, felt a lot closer than it did during his role in Local Government. He felt the contribution he was making was much more visible and this was what had led him back to apply for a role at the OPCC this time around.
 - There was also a personal aspect as to why he had applied for the role, he lived in Gloucestershire and welcomed the opportunity to both be closer to home, but also have that opportunity to work in the office and spend time building relationships with the team. He added that the number of previous interim roles had been what he wanted at the time, but he had recently taken the decision to look for something permanent which provided a better work/life balance.
 - It was noted that the lessons Peter had learnt from his past roles was to listen to people in the organisation in which you work, build trust and respect amongst colleagues, not to take anything on face value and understand the mood and objectives of the organisation.
 - Peter had spent most of his career working in a political environment, working closely with, and advising elected members from all political

parties. He had also experienced different majority set ups and therefore had learnt to adapt to the different priorities and challenges this brought.

- In relation to working with other partners and organisations, Peter shared that he had a proven track record for building relationships, ensuring he understood the issue before making his own judgements/opinions. Building trust was also key, as it enabled people to feel more comfortable to challenge and build solutions together. He had a calm nature, was an authentic individual and was committed to his work.
- He saw the Constabulary's most important priorities as dealing with issues that were of concern to the public e.g., violence and intimidation against women and girls, and moving out of special measures. In terms of how this role contributed to these priorities, it was key that financial tools and techniques were realised to ensure every pound was being spent wisely, strategically, and effectively.

4. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

4.1 Democratic Services explained that the guidance from the Home Office and LGA/Centre for Public Scrutiny recommended that the Panel move into exempt session in order to consider all the information available and discuss the decision they wished to make regarding the appointment.

4.2 The Panel took a vote and it was unanimously resolved:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the remaining items on the agenda in accordance with the provisions of section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (schedule 12A paragraphs 1 & 2) which were:

Information relating to any individual.

Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

4.3 This was because it was likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

5. PANEL DISCUSSION

5.1 Members understood the options open to the Panel as defined using the Act and the Local Government Association Guidance that:

- The Panel could recommend approval of the candidate; or
- The Panel could recommend against the candidate where it felt that the candidate did not meet the minimum standards and/or had cause for concern. In this case the Commissioner could continue with the appointment.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- 5.2 The Panel confirmed they were satisfied that the candidate, Peter Lewis, met the job profile requirements for this role. They felt confident that he had a very good understanding of public finances in particular and his experience of working in a number of different organisations and roles would bring a wealth of knowledge to the OPCC.
- 5.3 They were impressed by his response to the questions around personal qualities needed to be successful in this role, drawing the distinction between the technical role he would have, and the qualities needed to work well with colleagues and organisations, highlighting the need to listen, show respect and build trust.
- 5.4 The Panel were also comfortable that Peter had a good level of experience working in a public sector political environment and, although supportive of helping to deliver your priorities, the need to maintain personal independence.
- 5.5 The Panel therefore agreed to:

Unanimously recommend the appointment of Peter Lewis as the Chief Finance Officer.

CHAIR

Meeting concluded at 14:15.