



HAMPSHIRE &
ISLE OF WIGHT
POLICE & CRIME PANEL

Monday, 11th March, 2024 at 1.00 pm
Held in Austen Room, Ell Court East, Winchester
(Hampshire County Council)

Councillors:

Chairman

p Seán Woodward
(Fareham Borough Council)

Vice Chairman

p Vivian Achwal
(Winchester City Council)

a Tonia Craig
(Eastleigh Borough Council)
a Phillip Davies
(East Hampshire District Council)
a Jason Fazackarley
(Portsmouth City Council)
a Philip Lashbrook
(Test Valley Borough Council)
a Karen Lucioni
(Isle of Wight Council)
p Lesley Meenaghan
(Hampshire County Council)

a Simon Minas-Bound
(Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council)
a Alan Oliver
(Hart District Council)
a Martin Pepper
(Gosport Borough Council)
a Dan Poole
(New Forest District Council)
p Matthew Renyard
(Southampton City Council)
a Gwen Robinson
(Havant Borough Council)
p Maurice Sheehan
(Rushmoor Borough Council)

Co-opted Members:

Independent Members

a Trevor Cartwright
a Shirley Young

Local Authority

p Luigi Gregori
a Tony Jones
a David Podger

At the invitation of the Chairman:

Peter Baulf
Donna Jones

Richard Croucher

Legal Advisor to the Panel
Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the
Isle of Wight

Candidate

BROADCASTING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recordings for broadcasting purposes.

66. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

- Councillor Alan Oliver (Hart District Council)
- Councillor Jason Fazackarley (Portsmouth City Council)
- Councillor Philip Lashbrook (Test Valley Borough Council)
- Councillor Dan Poole (New Forest District Council)
- Councillor Tonia Craig (Eastleigh Borough Council)
- Councillor Gwen Robinson (Havant Borough Council)
- Shirley Young (Independent Co-opted Member)
- Councillor Tony Jones (Additional Local Authority Co-opted Member)
- Councillor Phillip Davies (East Hampshire District Council)
- Councillor Simon Minas-Bound (Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council)
- Councillor Karen Lucioni (Isle of Wight Council)
- Councillor David Podger (East Hampshire District Council)

67. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were able to disclose to the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest they may have in any matter on the agenda for the meeting, where that interest is not already entered in their appointing authority's register of interests, and any other pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in any such matter that Members may wish to disclose.

No declarations were made.

68. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes from the 7 December 2023 Confirmation Hearing were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

69. QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

No questions or deputations were received by the Panel on this occasion.

70. CONFIRMATION HEARING FOR THE ROLE OF CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (OPCC)

Following notification from the Commissioner, to the Panel, of her intention to appoint a preferred candidate, Richard Croucher, to the role of Chief Finance Officer for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), the Panel

held a Confirmation Hearing in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

Members received a report setting out the powers of the Panel and the process to be followed in the Confirmation Hearing, as per the agreed 'Confirmation Hearing protocol'. The Panel noted the information provided by the Commissioner relating to the appointment, which included:

- name of the preferred candidate;
- Report from the Commissioner stating why the preferred candidate meets the criteria of the role;
- Joint Chief Finance Officer Protocol

The Commissioner explained her rationale that having separate Chief Finance Officers for the OPCC and the Constabulary created duplication and there were examples of this being carried out as a joint role elsewhere. She reported that a protocol had been adopted in case any conflict of interest should arise between advising both the commissioner and the Chief Constable.

The candidate introduced himself, providing an overview of his past experience relevant to the role. The Panel then asked questions of the candidate which related to his professional competence and personal independence, the answers to which enabled Members to evaluate Richard Croucher's suitability for the role. At the end of questioning, the Chairman thanked the candidate and provided an opportunity to clarify any responses given.

71. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item of business, as it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during that item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information) and, further, that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. While there may have been a public interest in disclosing this information, namely openness in the deliberations of the Panel in determining its recommendation regarding the proposed appointment, it was felt that, on balance, this was outweighed by other factors in favour of maintaining the exemption, namely enabling a full discussion regarding the merits of the proposed appointment.

72. CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED APPOINTMENT TO THE ROLE OF CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (OPCC)

The Panel held exempt discussions which examined the evidence provided in the Confirmation Hearing session. The final report of the Panel is appended to these minutes.

The Panel agreed that:

- The PCC had made the case for a joint appointment
- The protocol to mitigate the risk of a conflict of interest through having one individual as the joint Chief Finance Officer for both the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Constabulary provided reassurance
- The confirmation hearing process had demonstrated that the individual had excellent relevant experience
- The candidate interviewed well and the Panel did not have any concerns regarding his capacity to perform the role

On the basis of the information provided by the Commissioner, and the discussions held in the Confirmation Hearing, the Panel agreed unanimously the proposed recommendation in relation to the appointment of the preferred candidate to the role of Chief Finance Officer for the OPCC.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed candidate, Richard Croucher, is recommended to be appointed to the position of Chief Finance Officer for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Chairman,