

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel. held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 18 June 2024.

PRESENT

Cllr. Liz Blackshaw
Cllr. Sarah Cox
Cllr. Mohammed Dawood
Cllr. Jim Knight
Salma Manzoor

Cllr. Les Phillimore
Mrs D. Taylor CC
Cllr. G. Whittle
Cllr. Christine Wise
Cllr. Andrew Woodman

In attendance

Rupert Matthews – Police and Crime Commissioner
Ajmer Kaur Mahal – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner candidate.
Claire Trewartha – Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Kira Hughes – Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

1. Appointment of Chairman.

RESOLVED:

It was proposed, seconded, and AGREED that Mrs. D. Taylor CC be elected Chairman of the Panel for 2024/25.

Mrs. D. Taylor CC in the Chair

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED:

It was proposed, seconded, and AGREED that Cllr. S. Russell be elected Vice Chairman of the Panel for 2024/25.

3. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

4. Confirmation Hearing for Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) regarding the proposed appointment of Mrs Ajmer Kaur Mahal to the post of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC). A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 4', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Mrs Ajmer Kaur Mahal to the meeting.

The Chairman outlined the process for the hearing and the options available to the Panel on the conclusion of the hearing which were as follows:

1. If the Panel was content with the proposed senior appointment, it could agree to report its endorsement to the PCC.
2. Where a candidate met the standards, but the Panel had concerns about their suitability, such concerns could form part of the Panel's report and recommendations to the PCC.
3. In the event that the Panel determined that the candidate did not meet the requirements for the post, the Panel could provide advice and recommendations accordingly to the PCC in its report.

The Chairman asked the PCC to explain why Mrs Ajmer Kaur Mahal was his chosen candidate for the post. The PCC emphasised that Mrs Mahal had already served as his Deputy for 3 years and had knowledge of the current Police and Crime Plan which would be in place for the rest of the year. Mrs Mahal had been a member of several public sector and charitable organisations some of which she had chaired. Mrs Mahal had the ability to run her own projects which would be useful as DPCC.

The Panel questioned Mrs Mahal with regards to her professional competence and personal independence. In response to questions Mrs Mahal made the following points:

- (i) She had a good working relationship with the current staff at the OPCC;
- (ii) She had good communication skills, was a good listener and had the ability to meet and engage with members of the public of all backgrounds and faiths;
- (iii) She would be able to use the feedback she received from the public for the next iteration of the Police and Crime Plan;
- (iv) She had media and IT skills;
- (v) She understood that the relationship between the OPCC and the Police and Crime Panel had to be one of mutual respect;
- (vi) She understood the importance of partnership working particularly at a time when many organisations were short of funding. Working in partnership enabled organisations to pool resources and work towards shared goals. She recognised that Community Safety Partnerships were an important forum for partners to meet and resolve mutual issues of concern. An example of when she had played a lead role in partnership working was her role on the Strategic Partnership Board;
- (vii) One area where she had driven a particular policy was her work tackling violence against women and girls;
- (viii) She had also been involved in meetings about business crime;

- (ix) She understood that the Police Force was operationally independent from the OPCC which meant that the OPCC should not cross the boundary and interfere in operational policing matters.
- (x) She understood that personal independence meant that she should make up her own mind about a policy or course of action and make decisions based on what she personally felt was right. Were the PCC to pursue a course of action that she felt was unwise she would have a conversation with the PCC and make him aware of her feelings. Exactly how far she would go in advocating against that course of action would depend on exactly what the issue was;
- (xi) With regards to ensuring that she acted fairly across the County, City and Rutland to ensure all areas got an equal focus in the role of DPCC, Mrs Mahal stated that she would treat them equally. For example, with the Parish Council Engagement Programme which Mrs Mahal had led on as DPCC she ensured that all the meetings were held in the same way and the same questions were asked;
- (xii) Whether the DPCC's term of office had been a success should be judged on whether the Police and Crime Plan was successfully implemented;

The Chairman thanked the PCC and Mrs Mahal for their attendance and informed them that it would be necessary for the Panel to come to a view in private on whether to endorse or otherwise the PCC's proposed appointment.

(The PCC and Mrs Mahal left the room.)

5. Exclusion of Press and Public.

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information:

- Panel deliberations on the proposed appointment of a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

6. Panel deliberations on the proposed appointment of a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Panel, having gone into exempt session, considered the statement and answers provided by Mrs. Mahal to their questions, in addition to the introduction and responses to questions provided by the PCC and all relevant paperwork provided.

RESOLVED:

In accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and following consideration of the information submitted to it, the Panel recommends that the candidate is appointed to the position of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Panel determined that the candidate understood the role, met the criteria, and will be fully committed to carrying out her duties as Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

Although the Panel considered some of Mrs Mahal's responses to be more high level rather than detailed and in-depth, the Panel understood that she will continue to develop the knowledge and skills needed to help the Commissioner deliver his Police and Crime Plan; and will continue to deepen her understanding of, and relationships with, the full diversity of communities and stakeholders across the whole of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

1.30 - 2.00 pm
18 June 2024

CHAIRMAN