

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 12 September 2013.

PRESENT

Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC (in the Chair)

Cllr. David Bill MBE
Cllr. J. Boyce
Miss. H. Kynaston
Col. R. Martin OBE, DL

Cllr. Trevor Pendleton
Cllr. Lynn Senior
Cllr. D. Slater
Cllr. Manjula Sood, MBE

Apologies

Cllr. R. B. Begy, Cllr. P. King, Cllr. Byron Rhodes, Cllr. Sarah Russell and Cllr. Paul Westley

In attendance

Helen King and Sir Clive Loader

25. Minutes.

The Minutes of the meeting on 28 August were agreed as a correct record.

26. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

27. 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.

Cllr. Sood declared personal interests as the Chairman of the Leicester Council of Faiths, the Regional Ambassador of Sport England and as a patron of CLASP – The Carers' Centre.

28. Confirmation Hearing for the Post of Chief Finance Officer.

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) in regard to its proposed appointment of Mrs. Helen King to the recently vacated post of Chief Finance Officer (CFO). A copy of a report of the OPCC, marked '4', is filed with these minutes.

Prior to the commencement of the Confirmation Hearing, the Chairman outlined the process to be adhered to, taking those present through a process document which had been circulated to all members with the agenda for the meeting. A copy of this report was filed with the minutes.

The Chairman welcomed the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Mrs. Helen King to the meeting, both of whom were present to respond to any questions the Panel

had about the appointment process and Mrs. King's abilities in respect of "professional competence" and "personal independence". Each member of the Panel introduced themselves to Mrs. King.

In introducing the candidate the Panel, the PCC outlined the following points in explaining how the OPCC had arrived at Mrs. King as being the most suitable candidate for the role of CFO:

- The recruitment process that had been followed had represented "best practice" in terms of human resources;
- The PCC had recruited the candidate whom he felt would be the most able to challenge him. He wished not to appoint someone who would be prone to sycophancy, instead opting for someone who had a deep professional confidence who would feel able to robustly hold him to account when required to do so;
- The OPCC's office was open-plan and consisted of a very small and tight team. For this reason, the PCC felt that he had to appoint someone with the right chemistry, in order they would be able to quickly develop strong working relationships with key officers such as the CEO and the Chief Constable's finance officer, Paul Dawkins;
- The salary for the CFO was "spot salary" of £80,000. This meant that there was no progression beyond this amount, subject to the wishes of the PCC, should he feel the candidate was worthy of a rise in salary commensurate with their performance. The probation period for the post was six months.

Arising from the Panel's questioning of the PCC following his introduction, the following points were noted:

- The PCC had appointed an officer to carry out the CFO role on a temporary basis following the departure of Peter Lewis in early September. This officer was a qualified accountant who had received the relevant security clearances and was working to the PCC;
- The terms and conditions of Mrs. King's current post at Northamptonshire Probation Service required her to serve 3 months' notice, but it was noted that she had managed to negotiate with her current employer a reduced notice period which meant she was able to start her new job on 4 November.

Following questioning, the Chairman invited the PCC to leave the room in order that the Panel could assess the candidate in he viewed to be a fair way, particularly in respect of "personal independence". The Chairman confirmed that this request was in line with best practice established elsewhere at other Confirmation Hearings across the country.

In agreeing to leave the room, the PCC suggested that the Panel might have been better able to assess the candidate's abilities in respect of personal independence had he remained in the room, to ensure that she was able to robustly and confidently stand up to the PCC in the questioning process.

(The PCC left the room at 4.20pm.)

In introducing herself and the reasons why she had applied for the job, Mrs. King covered the following key points:

- She was a qualified accountant with an MSc in Business Administration;
- She had always worked in the public sector, with previous roles at the Police and the Probation Service. She stressed her loyalty to the organisations she had been previously employed at and confirmed that she was not someone who regularly moved jobs. Whilst her portfolio had been dynamic, it had always had finance at its core. She was passionate about criminal justice and using public money effectively;
- She had watched the legislative changes in respect of the Police with interest and recognised that the environment was had changed vastly over a relatively short period of time. She hoped she would be able to build on the good work carried out by the OPCC thus far and looked forward to working with them and partners;
- She had already spent two days with staff at the OPCC in order to become acclimatised to the new role and be briefed on the high priority issues she would face on taking office. She had further time booked to spend at the OPCC prior to taking up the role on an official basis.

Arising from Mrs. King's introduction and the questioning of the Panel, the following points were noted.

Professional Competence

- In working as part of a team, she felt she had "made a difference" in her previous role at the Probation Service by making significant budgetary reductions as painlessly as possible, avoiding compulsory redundancies;
- She was expecting to be part of a strong team at the OPCC, offering professional advice on Section 151 issues and the content of key strategic plans, as well as playing a role in respect of commissioning and performance monitoring. She expected these responsibilities to be carried out through close liaison with others and by having a strategic view of the issues at hand;
- She recognised the financially challenging times within which the Police and partners were operating in, but felt that maintaining the confidence of the public was paramount. For this reason, communications with the public and the way in which messages were delivered would be key to ensuring their confidence in the Force remained;
- It would be her role to ensure robust scrutiny of financial plans and highlighting to colleagues where there were significant risk factors. It would also be essential to regularly monitor the Police and Crime Plan and to keep track of what actions were being taken;
- In her previous role she had been required to evaluate a contract to deliver services to young offenders. In essence, this meant looking at how the Service could get the best from the contract and ensure a high quality and accessible service for users;
- Having worked in the Probation Service, her role had involved partnership working in the public and voluntary sectors. She was aware of the challenges facing partners and how they differed from each other in terms of size, risk factors and the pressures

they faced. Her previous role had also involved working in the area of commissioning;

Personal Independence

- She fully understood the separation of duties between the PCC and the Chief Constable. It would be important to pro-actively challenge each other when necessary to ensure alignment to the Police and Crime Plan;
- She had been required to show personal independence in her previous role, when she disagreed with the approach taken on an issue by her boss. She had looked at the facts, sought professional advice accordingly and remained of the view that the actions taken by her boss were wrong. She further felt that she would have been able to demonstrate this ability had the PCC remained in the room while she was being questioned by the Panel;
- As a senior leader she was fully aware of the “Nolan Principles” and how they applied to her previous role and the role of CFO;
- She had no outside interests which would prejudice her ability to carry the role.

(The PCC re-joined the room at 4.55pm.)

The Chairman thanked the PCC and Mrs. King 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 Chairman indicated that the OPCC would be notified of the Panel’s decision within 24 hours and that they would need to come to a view together on when it would be appropriate to publicise this decision in order that Mrs. King be given a cooling off period to consider her position and ask any further questions of the PCC prior to agreeing to take on the role.

(The PCC and Mrs. King left the room and the Panel went into private session to discuss and make its decision.)

RESOLVED:

That, in light of the responses given relating to the strategic role, performance management and independence required of the post of CFO, the Panel has no hesitation in agreeing to endorse the PCC’s appointment of Mrs. Helen King to the post of CFO.

29. Date of next meeting.

It was NOTED that the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel was scheduled to take place on 2 October at 9.30am.

4.00 - 5.00 pm
12 September 2013

CHAIRMAN