

Independent Member's Report

Lincolnshire Police
Chief Constable Appointment Process

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Introduction

1. This report sets out my key observations as the Independent Member for the process put in place in order to identify the proposed candidate for appointment to the role of Chief Constable for Lincolnshire Police.

Role of the Independent Member

2. Home Office Circular 013/2018 states that at least one member of the appointment panel in the selection process for the post of Chief Constable should be an independent member. The guidance on this matter highlights that it is important that the independent member: -
 - is suitably experienced in selection and assessment practices in order so they can determine the extent to which the appointment process is conducted in line with the principles of merit, fairness, and openness.
 - undertakes appropriate briefing/assessor training and to be aware and have an understanding of the needs and interests of the recruiting force and local community.
 - in collaboration with the PCC and other panel members, shortlists and assesses applicants against the agreed appointment criteria and considers which candidates most closely meet the appointment criteria.
 - produces a written report on the appointment process, to be submitted to the Police and Crime Panel at the same time as the name of the referred appointee, expressly and explicitly addressing the appointment principles of merit, fairness and openness and the extent to which the Appointment panel was able to fulfil its purpose (e.g., to challenge and test that the candidate meets the necessary requirements to perform the role).
3. In respect of each of these highlighted matters: -
 - I confirm that I am an experienced assessor and have regularly taken the lead role in assessing for senior appointments, including for the role of Chief Constable on a previous occasion.
 - I was provided with a copy of the College of Policing Guidance for Appointing Chief Officers (2021) by the Office of the OPCC and I refreshed my knowledge of this. I also ensured that I was up to date on the recruiting practices for such a position and undertook a briefing and discussion with Helen Slimmon, a Senior Psychologist at the College of Policing who constructed the assessment process that the panel followed.
 - I am familiar of the needs of the local community both from my many years as the County Council's Chief Executive and from my continuing interest and involvement in local matters. I am also familiar with the demands and

requirement of the recruiting force having for many years been engaged in partnership activities with the force. In addition, I (and the other panel members) have been informed of current interests and pressures upon the force by the PCC in the course of the process.

- I have set out below the processes which I and the other panel members followed for shortlisting and assessing applicants for the post.
- This is the written report referred to above.

Background

4. Following the resignation of Chris Haward as Chief Constable in November 2023, a recruitment process for a new Chief Constable was initiated by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Marc Jones. The PCC sought support from the outset from the College of Policing in order to ensure that the process to be followed was in accordance with the College of Policing Guidance for Appointment of Chief Officers and current best practice in selection and assessment. The PCC also enlisted key staff of the College to assist him in the recruitment process.
5. The role was advertised on 4 December 2023 and applications sought by 28 December 2023. The advertisement was placed on the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) ChiefNet, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCCs) website and College of Policing website pages dedicated to job opportunities within policing. The advertisement was also placed with the Scottish Police Authority (SPA).
6. Within the advertisement, a link to the Lincolnshire PCC's website drew potential applicants' attention to the Chief Constable Candidate Information Pack and referenced other information including a Professional Role Profile which outlined the purpose and key accountabilities of the role, together with the behaviours, education, qualifications, skills, and experience needed.

Purpose of this Report

7. The purpose of this report is to provide an objective assessment of the extent to which the selection process was conducted on the basis of merit, fairness, and openness.
8. It also sets out how the Appointment Panel fulfilled their responsibility to challenge and test the candidates' suitability against the requirements of the role.

The Appointment Panel

9. The panel which was assembled for this selection process comprised:

- Marc Jones, PCC for Lincolnshire
 - Myself, Tony McArdle, as Independent Member
 - Ursula Lidbetter, former Chief Executive, Lincolnshire Cooperative Society
 - Andy Marsh, Chief Executive of the College of Policing, as technical policing adviser and Chair of the panel
10. In addition, Helen Slimmon, Senior Psychologist; Selection & Assessment at the College of Policing provided advice to the panel members on selection and assessment practice for chief officers and specific recruitment matters throughout the process.
11. In my view this panel consisted of experienced senior leaders who had substantial and credible previous assessment experience. In addition, all of the panel members had previously been involved in senior police appointments.

Applications

12. Three applications were received. These, together with a reference provided by each applicant's current Chief Constable were incorporated within a shortlisting pack which was distributed to panel members by courier on 29 December 2023. Information in the pack drew attention to panel members' responsibilities in the process and referenced the specific qualities that the PCC had explicitly identified as being needed in the next chief constable. It also contained comprehensive and consistent briefing in relation to the shortlisting activity, making clear reference to, and expanding upon the principles of merit, fairness and openness, and the characteristics of barriers to accurate assessment that members would need to recognise and take steps to counter.
13. Panel members were asked to shortlist applications individually prior to the shortlisting meeting which was convened virtually on 5 January 2024.

Briefing and discussion in advance of shortlisting

14. At the outset of the shortlisting session on 5 January 2024, and together with the other members of the Appointment Panel, I was briefed by Helen Slimmon in respect of the panel's responsibilities to ensure that our discussions and decisions were underpinned by the principles of merit, fairness, and openness. We were reminded of the need to ensure that our assessments had to be based on evidence and we also reviewed the potential barriers to effective recruitment in order to ensure our familiarity with these and our responsibility to overcome them.
15. I can confirm that the panel was thereby made fully cognisant of its responsibilities and of the principles upon which its decisions would have to be made.

Shortlisting

16. At the shortlisting meeting the panel members were required to assess the applications and CV against the pre-agreed assessment criteria, using a rating scale developed by the College of Policing. Panel members shared their individual scores and where differences in these were recorded, discussed the evidence that had resulted in those scores in order to seek to ensure consistency in arriving at those scores and arrive at an agreed collective score for each candidate.
17. Areas to be probed through questioning on the assessment day were identified and Helen Slimmon was tasked with drawing up a set of common questions which would enable such identified ground to be covered consistently for each candidate.
18. Resulting from the panel's considerations and scoring, all three candidates were considered to be potentially appointable and were invited to participate further in the assessment process.
19. One candidate then withdrew from the process.
20. Psychometric tests on the two remaining candidates were carried out by Helen Slimmon prior to the assessment days. Candidates were asked to complete the 16PF-5, a widely used broad-based measure of personality. It is a well-researched and developed personality questionnaire, asking about attitudes, preferences, beliefs, and typical style of behaving which explores an individual's preferences in relation to relating to others, influence, and collaboration, thinking style, structure and flexibility and management of pressure. Following completion of the questionnaire candidates took part in a confirmatory interview to verify the accuracy of the findings of the personality assessment and explore how these preferences and tendencies can influence the way they operate in the workplace. A summary report was produced to indicate areas of strength and development for each candidate. The information in this summary was designed to provide insight for the panel but was not formally scored.

The Assessment Process

21. The assessment process was organised to take place over two days, 23 & 24 January 2024.
22. On 23 January, the candidates met with a panel of stakeholders. This was an opportunity for candidates to be tested by stakeholders and partners they

would be working with if appointed and to explore the key issues and challenges they would be likely to face.

23. The stakeholder panel comprised the following members:

- Chairman of Lincoln Central Mosque and Cultural Centre
- Chief Executive Officer; YMCA Lincolnshire
- Service Delivery Manager; OPCC Victims of Crime
- Force Partnerships Area Manager (Northern England and Wales) at Police Now/Independent Advisory Group Lincolnshire Police/Independent Chair VAWG Voices Advisory Group
- General Manager; Just Lincolnshire
- Union President; Students' Union, Bishop Grosseteste University
- NFU County Adviser for Lincolnshire
- Executive County Councillor for NHS Liaison, Integrated Care System, Registration and Coroners

24. The answers and responses provided by the candidates were used to identify areas of interest or concern that the stakeholders believed should be shared and brought to the attention of the Appointment Panel. This was facilitated by Helen Slimmon including capturing feedback for the Appointment Panel. This stakeholder panel did not score or play a role in the appointment decision making.

25. On 24 January, the Appointment Panel was briefed by Helen Slimmon on the practical arrangements for the assessment during the day. We were reminded about interview practice and the assessment criteria for the role as had been covered during the briefing in advance of the shortlisting session, and as further set out in the Interview Panel Pack distributed on the day, which included the proposed questions. The panel reviewed this list of questions, agreed these and the timings available for them, which would include the scope for follow-up questions, and allocated each question for individual panel members to ask. The panel was reminded of the approach to scoring the Briefing Exercise that the candidates had been asked to prepare in advance and the scoring criteria for the interview.

26. Panel members were also reminded of the requirement upon conclusion of each interview to work independently classifying and evaluating information provided by the candidate to arrive at individual awarded ratings and of the importance of recording the evidence required to support their awarded ratings.

27. Prior to each interview Helen Slimmon debriefed on the views of the stakeholder panel roundtable meeting and on key elements of the psychometric tests. A summary of the psychometric test results for each candidate was also issued to panel members in writing.
28. The candidates were each required to deliver a 10-minute briefing that they had prepared in advance outlining the vision of their role as chief constable of Lincolnshire Police, and to answer questions from the panel on this for a further five minutes. This was followed by a 60-minute interview with the panel. Throughout, panel members exercised their responsibility to challenge and test candidates against the competencies and requirements of the role. A four-point rating scale defined and provided by the College of Policing was used to record ratings. Each panel member recorded and marked the briefing and the interview questions independently.
29. At the conclusion of the interviews, the ratings recorded by panel members were shared and recorded. In each instance where there was any difference in the scoring a discussion took place between panel members in order to understand the scores individually arrived at and to seek justification from the evidence base for these scores. Discussions that arose from this challenge were facilitated by Helen Slimmon and enabled us to arrive at agreed scores in each instance of variation, with final scores being then totalled.
30. One candidate scored at a sufficiently high standard, thereby providing positive evidence of their suitability, and at a level markedly higher than the other.
31. It was accordingly agreed by the panel that Paul Gibson be recommended for appointment.

Summary Statement

32. I can confirm I have been involved with the assessment process throughout and have been provided full opportunity during the process to comment, challenge and question any areas of the assessment if I felt necessary to do so. I can confirm that I did not identify any issues arising from the assessment process which caused me any concern in relation to the assessment and the proper principles being applied.
33. I am satisfied that the process followed the principles of the relevant guidance and legislation and that this proposed appointment is appropriate based on merit, fairness, and openness.

34. I am satisfied that the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Marc Jones, fulfilled his responsibility to ensure the assessment process put in place was in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance.

Tony McArdle
Independent Member