

Minutes of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

County Hall, Worcester

Monday, 11 July 2022, 10.00 am

Present:

Cllr Roger Evans, Cllr Rob Adams, Cllr Graham Ballinger, Cllr Marc Bayliss,
Mrs C Clive and Cllr Jim Lavery

Also attended:

John Champion, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner
Paul Benfield, Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
Gareth Boulton, Deputy Chief Executive

Tim Rice, Senior Public Health Practitioner
Sheena Jones, Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager
Samantha Morris, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Available Papers

The members had before them:

A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated).

(A copy of document A will be attached to the signed Minutes).

437 Welcome and Introductions

The Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager welcomed everyone to the meeting.

438 Named Substitutes

Cllr Marc Bayliss (Worcestershire County Council) for Cllr Aled Luckman.

439 Election of Chairman

Cllr Roger Evans was elected as Chairman.

440 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Cllrs Aled Luckman, Barry Durkin, Tom Wells, Nigel Lumby, Vivienne Parry, James Stanley and Beth McDowall (Independent Lay Member).

There were no declaration of interests.

441 Public Participation

None.

442 Confirmation Hearing - Chief Executive of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office

The Panel was asked to consider the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) preferred candidate, Gareth Boulton, for the role of Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

In doing so, the Panel was required to satisfy itself that the preferred candidate selected by the PCC had the professional competence to undertake the role and had significant personal independence to be able to act operationally independently of the PCC.

The PCC introduced the report which provided an overview of the appointment process that was undertaken between May and June 2022 by the PCC to select the preferred candidate.

The PCC must under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (Act) notify the Panel of the preferred candidate for appointment as Chief Executive Officer. As per Schedule 1 of the Act the PCC provided the following information to the Panel:

- a) The name of the person whom the PCC is proposing to appoint;
- b) The criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate
- c) Why the candidate satisfies these criteria; and
- d) The terms and conditions on which the candidate is to be appointed.

Also provided for the Panel's consideration were the details relating to:

- i) The recruitment, application and interview process;
- ii) The candidate recruitment pack including the role profile and person specification;
- iii) The criteria used for assessment;
- iv) CV/covering letter of the preferred candidate.

During the discussion and opportunity for questions, the following main points were made:

- There were 8 applicants for the role, of which 3 were interviewed.
- It was confirmed that the post was politically restricted.
- A Member noted that the PCC's preferred candidate (Gareth Boulton) was the current Deputy Chief Executive and questioned whether

consideration had been given to appointing from outside the organisation. The PCC confirmed that this was an area that he had given careful consideration to but believed that having the appropriate skills and competencies was most important and the preferred candidate had a very clear pitch to focus on resources to make them more efficient.

- Gareth Boulton (current Deputy Chief Executive and the PCC's preferred candidate) was welcomed to the meeting.
- A Member questioned how Gareth would develop his relationship with the Panel. He believed that understanding, trust, respect, openness and honesty were the starting blocks to build upon. He believed in the value of good Scrutiny and planned to continue to engage with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and support officers to the Panel to best effect.
- In terms of the Deputy Chief Executive role, it was confirmed that this vital role which fulfilled a key function and provided resilience would be backfilled. Moving forward there would be more focus on strengthening governance. It was hoped that a Deputy would be in post by the end of the calendar year.
- Gareth provided the Panel with examples of what had gone well and not so well whilst in post as Deputy Chief Executive.
- A Member highlighted the importance of the independence of the Chief Executive and questioned how this would be achieved. Gareth advised the Panel that he had the rigour and confidence to be independent from the PCC, some of the skills for which had been gained from his previous experience of working for BBC Wales. He believed that the role of critical friend was very important and planned to take a colligative approach.
- In response to the request for an example of giving truth to power, Gareth explained a situation in respect of the dissolution of the West Mercia/Warwickshire alliance where it was necessary to take a different approach to the preferred approach suggested by the Home Office.
- In terms of the recruitment to the post of the Deputy Chief Executive, it was important to ensure stability where possible given the recent organisational changes eg appointment of a new Treasurer, departure of the Deputy PCC but also to ensure that unit was high performing and understanding of what good looked like.
- It was confirmed that the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer role were combined.
- A Member requested that future reports were more concise, an area that the Gareth agreed to focus on.

The Panel were supportive of Gareth Boulton's appointment as Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer for the PCC. The Panel was satisfied that Gareth Boulton had the professional competence to undertake the role and had significant personal independence to be able to act operationally independently of the PCC.

A report from the Panel would be provided to the PCC.

The meeting ended at 11.00 am

Chairman