

Report of the
HAMPSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
CONFIRMATION HEARING FOR THE ROLE OF CHIEF
FINANCE OFFICER

Friday 7 July 2017

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This document constitutes the report and recommendations of the Hampshire Police and Crime Panel (hereafter referred to as 'the Panel') in respect of the proposed appointment of Mr Andy Lowe to the role of Chief Finance Officer, and is submitted to the Commissioner in accordance with the requirements of Paragraph 10, Schedule 1 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.
- 1.2. The report recommends that Mr Lowe be confirmed in his appointment to the role of Chief Finance Officer.
- 1.3. The Panel would like to thank Mr Lowe for his attendance at the confirmation hearing on 7 July 2017.

2. Hampshire Police and Crime Panel

- 2.1. The Membership of the Panel for the Confirmation Hearing was as follows:
 - Councillor David Stewart (*Conservative, Isle of Wight*) (Chair)
 - Councillor Jan Warwick (*Conservative, Hampshire*) (Vice Chair)
 - Councillor Reginald Barry (*Liberal Democrat, Co-opted Member*)
 - Councillor John Beavis MBE (*Conservative, Gosport*)
 - Councillor Simon Bound (*Conservative, Basingstoke & Deane*)
 - Councillor Ken Carter (*Conservative, East Hampshire*)
 - Councillor Adrian Collett (*Liberal Democrat, Hart*)
 - Mr Michael Coombes (*Independent Co-opted Member*)
 - Councillor Ian Richards (*Conservative, Test Valley*)
 - Councillor Frank Rust (*Labour, Co-opted Member*)
 - Councillor Leah Turner (*Conservative, Havant*)

3. Powers of the Hampshire Police and Crime Panel

- 3.1. The Panel have the functions conferred by Schedule 1 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (Police and Crime Commissioners). This enables them to:
- (i) Review the proposed appointment, by holding a Confirmation Hearing within three weeks of notification being given. A 'confirmation hearing' is a meeting of the Panel, held in public, at which the candidate is requested to appear for the purpose of answering questions relating to the appointment;
 - (ii) Make a report to the Commissioner on the proposed senior appointment;
 - (iii) Include a recommendation to the Police and crime commissioner as to whether or not the candidate should be appointed;
 - (iv) Publish the report to the commissioner made under this paragraph.

4. Confirmation Hearing for the role of Chief Finance Officer

- 4.1. The Panel received notification from the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner (hereafter referred to as 'the Commissioner') of the proposed appointment to the role of Chief Finance Officer on 26 June 2017. It was agreed that the Confirmation Hearing would be convened to take place after the Panel's scheduled formal meeting on 7 July 2017
- 4.2. The Confirmation Hearing was held at 2pm on 7 July, in the Ashburton Hall, Winchester, Hampshire County Council (with the specific Chief Finance Officer hearing taking place from 2.45pm). The Hearing was held in public, with the Panel retiring to a closed session after this in order to agree their recommendation. The Panel agreed that if members of the press or public were present during this session, there could be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.
- 4.3. During the public session, the Panel asked questions of the candidate which related to his professional competence and personal independence, the answers to which enabled the Members to evaluate their suitability for the role.

Professional Competence

4.4. The Panel explored the candidate's ability to undertake the role through an appraisal of the supporting documents provided by the Commissioner, and through questioning. The Panel asked the following questions:

1. What do you think the role of the Chief Finance Officer is within the OPCC, and what skills and qualities do you feel you can offer which makes you the best candidate for this role?
2. How would you ensure sound financial planning for the PCC, both in the medium and long term, to support the delivery of the objectives of the Police and Crime Plan?
3. How would you seek to ensure that the financial governance arrangements of the OPCC are sufficiently robust to enable you to make certain that public monies are safeguarded and used appropriately?
4. Who do you see as being key internal and external partners in this role? How would you set about developing strong and constructive relationships with them?
5. What is your understanding of the relationship of accountability between the PCC, the Chief Constable and the PCP?
6. Thinking about how you might approach your role, is there any merit in establishing how your financial colleagues in other PCC offices areas might approach the same issues? How would you go about learning of good practice emerging from other police force areas?
7. Can you provide an example demonstrating where you have contributed to a change programme through the identification of enhanced service efficiency and/or value for money?

Personal Independence

4.5. The Panel explored the candidate's ability to act in a manner that is operationally independent from the Commissioner through an appraisal of the supporting documents provided, and through questioning. The Panel asked the following questions:

1. What would you do if the PCC was preparing to do something you felt was unwise or unlawful?
2. Can you give an example of a time when you faced conflict with stakeholders? How did you resolve it?

3. How do you intend to maintain a balance between the deeper financial aspects of the CFO role and the need to meet the requirements and expectations of the PCC. Specifically, what would you do if the advice provided in the CFO role conflicted with colleagues or superiors in the shared services arrangement?

5. Conclusions and Recommendation

5.1. The Panel, through discussions and examination of the evidence in the meeting and the closed session, agreed:

- That the candidate interviewed competently, and understood clearly the statutory role of the Chief Finance Officer.
- That the candidate had a strong background in providing strategic financial advice in a public sector setting.
- Where gaps were identified in the candidate's knowledge or skillset (e.g. wider external networking opportunities), a clear plan was provided as to how the candidate would address these, should he be confirmed in post.
- The appointment would enable continuity of financial advice as part of the shared service arrangement, as the candidate already worked closely with partners as Deputy Chief Finance Officer.
- There was a clear understanding of the role of the PCC, the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Panel, and how the lines of accountability linked between these roles. Within this setting, the candidate clearly understood his role, and the importance of working in partnership with colleagues.
- Answers to questions on personal independence were robust, and the recent examples given where the candidate acted independently and impartially when holding difficult discussions were helpful in confirming the candidate's capability to operate in line with the statutory requirements of the role.

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

RESOLVED:

That the proposed candidate, Mr Andy Lowe, is recommended to be appointed to the position of Chief Finance Officer.