

**FEBRUARY 2021**

**Chief Executive  
Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner  
Appointment Process**

**Independent Member Report**  
Carolyn Dhanraj MBE JP

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides information on the appointment process for the role of Chief Executive for the Cambridgeshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner:

- how the process met the principles of merit, fairness and openness and
- the extent to which the Interview Panel were able to fulfil their purpose, to challenge and test the candidates against the stated criteria.

1.2 Previous Home Office guidance and the new College of Policing guidelines published in January 2021, outlines that it is for the Police and Crime Commissioner to decide how they wish to run their appointment process and which candidate they wish to appoint as Chief Constable. However, they should involve an Independent Member as soon as practicable in the process: job specification, shortlisting and interviewing of candidates.

1.3 **There is currently no such guidance for the appointment of a Chief Executive to the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, and as such, there is no requirement to include an Independent Member in the process. The Acting Police and Crime Commissioner chose to add this additional level of scrutiny, to demonstrate his openness to ensure there was a fair and robust appointment.**

1.4 This report is the Independent Member's Report, Carolyn Dhanraj, relating to the appointment process for the role of Chief Executive, which was the responsibility of the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner Ray Bisby, and refers in most part to the above guidance.

## 2. Aim

2.1 The aim of this report is to provide an assessment of the extent to which the appointment process has been conducted fairly, openly and based on merit. It will also comment on the extent to which the Interview Panel fulfilled their responsibility to challenge and test the candidates' suitability against the requirements of the Chief Executive role.

## 3. Independent Member involvement in the Chief Executive Appointment process

3.1 I was invited to join the process on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 by Aly Flowers, Cambridgeshire OPCC, due to a change of circumstances for the original Independent Member. This was followed by a detailed conversation the following day with Ms Flowers who outlined the process to date. I was satisfied that the process prior to my involvement demonstrated an openness and transparency to enable a range of candidates to apply.

## 4. Interview panel

4.1 The Interview Panel role is set out in the January 2021 College of Policing Guidance for Appointing Chief Officers, namely that the Interview Panel should be convened by the Police and Crime Commissioner, before any stage of the appointment process takes place and that consideration may be given to having Interview Panel members involved in helping to define the requirements of the role.

4.2 In addition, it states the purpose of the Interview Panel is to challenge and test that the candidate meets the necessary requirements to perform the role and that the Police and Crime Commissioner should select an Interview Panel capable of discharging this responsibility.

4.3 The Police and Crime Commissioner should ensure that Interview Panel members are diverse and suitably experienced and competent in selection practices and that they adhere to the principles of merit, fairness and openness. It is also the Police and Crime Commissioner's responsibility to ensure that appropriate briefing/assessor training is undertaken by all Interview Panel members. It is suggested that an Interview Panel of approximately five members is convened but this is at the discretion of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

4.4 The Interview Panel appointed by the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner were selected to provide an expertise and experience to test potential candidates at an executive level.

4.5 There were four Interview Panel members comprising of two male and two female members; two white men, one white woman and one minority ethnic women, who was also the Independent Member.

4.6 **INTERVIEW PANEL:**

- Ray Bisby, Acting Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner;
- Nick Dean, Chief Constable, Cambridgeshire Constabulary;
- Rachel Wilkinson, Director of HR; and
- Carolyn Dhanraj, Independent Member.

**5. Role profile and attraction strategy**

5.1 The advertisement was placed on the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner's website, Cambridgeshire Constabulary's website, and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) website, with the APCC then distributing a document within which included the link to the advert which was emailed to over 800 people. This approach demonstrated an openness to enable a range of candidates to apply for the post.

5.2 The post was advertised following good practice, in that the vacancy must be advertised for at least three weeks and must be advertised through a public website or some other form of publication that deals with policing matters.

5.3 I am fully satisfied that the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner advertised the vacancy openly to attract the best possible candidate pool.

**6. Shortlisting and Panel briefing**

6.1 By the closing date, six application forms had been received for the role of Chief Executive.

6.2 I was advised in my conversation with Ms Flowers, that three candidates had been shortlisted and that one candidate was an internal applicant. I emphasised that any assessment should be based on the evidence provided in the application form and not on previous knowledge, and she confirmed this was adhered to during the shortlisting stage. This approach is to ensure fairness and transparency throughout all stages of the assessment.

6.3 I was emailed prior to the assessment day, the following documentation for the Chief Executive role:

- Advertisement;
- Role profile;
- Panel timetable;

- Scenario for the assessment day;
- Three shortlisted candidate's CV and supporting statements

## **7. Assessment**

7.1 The Panel prior to my involvement had agreed a process of:

- a presentation, where the topic was outlined in advance and in more detail on the day
- a competency based interview.

7.2 On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February the full Interview Panel held a virtual meeting to discuss the assessment scheduled for Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and to agree the presentation and questions that would test the College of Policing's Competency and Values Framework (CVF).

7.3 On the assessment day, Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the Interview Panel were briefed on the documentation contained in each Interview Panel member's folder. The Interview Panel was chaired by the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner and the questions were evenly asked by the Interview Panel members. The ORCE (observe, record, classify, evaluate) approach to assessing was reinforced to ensure the Interview Panel gathered evidence and a further confirmation of what each scale descriptor represented in terms of evidence observed and the resultant score between 1-5. Once again this was beneficial as it ensured that we assessed the candidate in a fair, merit based and transparent manner.

7.4 Each candidate followed the process of:

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 30 minutes | Presentation preparation                                       |
| 1 hour     | Presentation delivery and interview, with flexibility to probe |

## **8. Assessment Decision Making**

8.1 Each Interview Panel member's folder enabled the Interview Panel to record and mark the presentation and the interview questions independently.

8.2 To reinforce the open and transparent process, an overall grid with the candidate's name, presentation and interview competency areas was drawn up and we openly populated the grid with the Interview Panel's scores for each of the three candidates. One candidate scored 70% of the maximum score possible, with the second scoring less and the third substantially less than that score.

8.3 The Interview Panel unanimously supported Ray Bisby, Acting Police and Crime Commissioner, in his recommendation to the Police and Crime Panel that Jim Haylett, currently the Acting Chief Executive, be the proposed candidate for Chief Executive for the Cambridgeshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

8.4 I am confident that the Interview Panel appointed, performed their duty on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021 to challenge and assess the candidates in manner that was fair, transparent and merit based, following the best practice recruitment principles such as those articulated in the College of Policing Guidance.

Carolyn Dhanraj MBE JP BPS

**Independent Member**

### **Background reference document**

'Guidance for appointing chief officers', College of Policing, January 2021

[https://public/cop-chief-officer-guidance-2020\\_0.pdf](https://public/cop-chief-officer-guidance-2020_0.pdf)