

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 5 November 2021** at **10.00 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor B Jones (Chair)**

**Durham County Council:**

Councillors D Boyes, L Brown (Substitute), L Hovvells, J Nicholson (Vice-Chair), R Potts, A Savory and C Varty (Substitute)

**Darlington Borough Council:**

Councillors J Dulston

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Nicholls and M Simmons and Mr N Cooke and Mr D Dodwell.

### **2 Substitute Members**

Councillors C Varty substituted for Councillor D Nicholls and Councillor L Brown substituted for Councillor M Simmons.

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

### **4 Confirmation Hearing - Appointment of a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Panel considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented by the Governance Solicitor. The report provided information on the process to be undertaken to hold a confirmation hearing for the post of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and also considered a report from the Police and Crime Commissioner (Commissioner) for the proposed candidate for the post of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham (for copy see file of minutes).

The Governance Solicitor informed the Panel that the Clerk to the Panel had received formal notification from the Commissioner of the proposed appointment of Mr Nigel Bryson to the role of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner on 18 October 2021. The Governance Solicitor advised the Panel on the procedure for the confirmation hearing as set out at paragraphs 15 to 21 of the report.

The Commissioner introduced Mr N Bryson, noting their work together in Bishop Auckland, Mr N Bryson's work in respect of her PCC election campaign and Mr N Bryson's professional background.

The Panel asked the Commissioner as regards:

- The rationale in terms of not allowing other Labour candidates or going through a recruitment process;
- Given that a formal recruitment process was not required for the appointment, how could the Commissioner assure the Panel that she had taken a fair and transparent approach in proposing the appointment;
- What percentage of other Police and Crime Commissioners had a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner;
- Would the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner take over any responsibilities from other senior officers; and
- The proposed salary for this position, and how would the cost of this be met within the existing budget;

The Commissioner provided the Panel with responses to the questions, noting Mr N Bryson's skills and his knowledge of the Police and Crime Plan. She referred to the report which set out that the proposed appointment was for 2 days a week, with a special responsibility allowance.

The Panel then questioned Mr N Bryson around the following issues:

- What skills and qualities he would bring to complement those of the Police and Crime Commissioner;
- How he would avoid duplication in terms the work of existing officers, his past experience as relevant to this role, and how he hoped to support the Police and Crime Commissioner with her ambitions in this area;
- His understanding of the relationship of accountability between the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Panel;
- What he believed the relationship between the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Police and Crime Panel should be, and how he would seek to develop that relationship;

- How he intended to ensure that he represented all communities across the whole of County Durham and Darlington;
- It was noted that, as Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, one of the key responsibilities would be to represent the views of the Police and Crime Commissioner to relevant stakeholders and local residents. He was asked how he would approach a situation where his personal viewpoint conflicted with that he was representing on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- How he would engage with hard to reach groups, partners and stakeholders.
- How he would build upon relationships with existing stakeholders and reach out into the wider community, noting the diverse communities across County Durham and Darlington.
- Whether it was fair, as a long standing Labour Party Member and Unionist, that he had not been required to go through a recruitment process.
- In reference to the job specification at appendix 3 to the report, it was noted holding the Chief Constable to account was a role for the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner when acting for the Commissioner. He was asked as regards his credibility in being able to scrutinise any potential issues with recruitment irregularities with the Police, given he had not gone through a recruitment process himself.
- In further reference to the job specification at appendix 3, it was noted one of the main duties and responsibilities, set out at point 5, was in respect of engaging with local people to help build trust and confidence in policing. He was asked whether, having not gone through a recruitment process himself, would that fact build or diminish confidence in the policing.

Mr N Bryson provided the Panel with responses to the questions asked. The Panel thanked Mr N Bryson and the Commissioner for their attendance and informed them they would be notified of the Panel's decision in due course.

## **5 Exclusion of the Public**

### **Resolved:**

That under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following discussion on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

## **6 Confirmation Hearing - Appointment of a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Panel discussed the Police and Crime Commissioner's recommendation to appoint Mr N Bryson as Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner. Upon a vote being taken it was:

### **Resolved:**

That the Panel endorse the appointment of Mr N Bryson to the post of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham Constabulary in accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.