

### Police and Crime Panel

25<sup>th</sup> September 2023

### Appointment of Durham Constabulary Chief Constable – PCC's Preferred Candidate



### Report of the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner

---

#### Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to:
  - a. Notify the Police and Crime Panel of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Preferred Candidate for the Durham Constabulary Chief Constable position following a robust recruitment and selection process.
  - b. Provide the interview Panel's Independent Member report on how the process was undertaken in a fair, objective and transparent way.

#### Background

2. Section 38(1) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 provides that the Police and Crime Commissioner for a police area must appoint the Chief Constable of the police force for that area.
3. Following the notification from Jo Farrell that she will be taking up the position of Chief Constable of Police Scotland, a recruitment process commenced for a new Chief Constable for Durham Constabulary.
4. The Commissioner must notify the Panel of the following information:
  - (a) The name of the person she is proposing to appoint.
  - (b) The criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate for the appointment.
  - (c) Why the candidate satisfies the criteria; and
  - (d) The terms and conditions on which the candidate is to be appointed.

#### Recruitment Process

5. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner ensured that the recruitment process met legislative requirements and was developed in accordance with the College of Policing 'Guidance for Appointing Chief Officers', with expert advice from the College of Policing's Senior Leadership Hub.

#### Advertising

6. The post was advertised nationally to get the widest reach, through the College of Policing Website for the required three weeks; it was also on the PCC's website. A comprehensive Candidate Information pack was developed (Appendix A) and candidates were offered an informal discussion/familiarisation session with the PCC/OPCC and the Force.
7. Three applications were received and all met the required standard for the role. With advice from the College of Policing, and to ensure an open, fair and inclusive process, it was agreed to interview all three candidates.

## **Psychometric testing**

8. Candidates undertook psychometric testing, facilitated by the College of Policing and reports on findings for each candidate were provided to the Interview Panel prior to interviews.

## **Stakeholder Panels**

9. Three Stakeholder Panels were held on 4<sup>th</sup> September, comprising an extensive and broad experience of partners, a special interest group and young people. Representatives from organisations involved in the panels included Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council elected members and officers, Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, Durham Constabulary, including networks and staff support groups, UNISON, County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service, Probation Service, Integrated Care Board and young people from cadets, ambassadors and youth justice.
10. Questions were invited from stakeholders in advance to ask of candidates at the sessions (recognising they were not interviews and held no decision making powers) and the final question set was agreed with each Chair.
11. The representative from the College of Policing provided a briefing for the stakeholders in relation to the panels.

## **Interviews**

12. The formal interviews were held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The composition of the Interview Panel met the national guidance and was chosen to reflect the significance of the Chief Constable role. The interview panel members were chosen by the Police and Crime Commissioner in discussion with the OPCC Chief of Staff and the College of Policing Senior Leadership Hub and comprised of:

- PCC Joy Allen (Chair)
- Cllr Stephen Harker – Leader, Darlington Borough Council
- John Hewitt, CEO Durham County Council
- Graham Easterlow, CEO East Durham Trust, Independent Panel Member

Advisors to the Panel were:

- Andrea Petty, Chief of Staff, OPCC
- Michelle Robson, HR
- Stephen Smith, College of Policing

13. The national guidance states that at least one member must be an Independent Member who will then give their view of the recruitment process in terms of fairness, appointment on merit and objectivity. This report from Graham Easterlow confirms this and is attached at Appendix B
14. The College of Policing representative provided a briefing for panel members which included the need to record information from each candidate to ensure the assessment was evidence-based, fair and objective and to avoid unconscious bias.
15. Feedback was provided in relation to the candidates' psychometric testing and personality profiles as well as a summary from the stakeholder panels in relation to what they liked about the candidate and the areas they suggested the interview panel may wish to probe further.
16. Candidates gave a 15-minute presentation to the Panel and were each asked six questions, and two agreed supplementary questions. Scoring was initially carried out independently by each panel member, followed by a group discussion and a final score for each candidate. This process was supported by the HR Manager.

**Criteria Used to assess suitability**

17. An interview pack was provided to panel members prior to interviews which included the applications forms and a two page summary from each candidate about why they felt they should be Chief Constable, the presentation and criteria for assessing scores, the candidate information pack which included role profile and competencies, key accountabilities required for the role which supports all policing professionals, the interview questions and scoring sheet with criteria for assessing candidates.

18. For each aspect of the assessment the following scoring was used as a marking guide:

1. Poor
2. Less than acceptable
3. Acceptable
4. Above acceptable
5. Excellent

19. For the presentation additional information was provided as below:

Skill Area	Score out of 5	Comments
Communication / Presentation Skills		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good use of nonverbal language</li> <li>• Confident, clear and concise language</li> <li>• Engages panel members.</li> </ul>
Planning and Structure		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrative knowledge on subject matter</li> <li>• Relevant and informative content</li> <li>• Able to support questions providing answers which continue the conversation</li> <li>• Engaging</li> </ul>
Subject content / Knowledge		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligns to the Police and Crime plan</li> <li>• Indicates the necessity for mutually productive (Strategic) partnerships</li> <li>• Innovative</li> <li>• Transformational</li> <li>• Evidence of active listening skills</li> <li>• Emotional intelligence</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>/ 15</b>	

**Why the candidate satisfied the criteria?**

20. It is proposed by the Police and Crime Commissioner that Mrs Rachel Bacon be appointed as Durham Constabulary’s Chief Constable. She demonstrated through her application form, engagement with stakeholders and through the interview that she has the requisite depth of operational experience coupled with the desired leadership qualities, skills and ability to lead the Force. She scored highly on all aspects of the interview process and the panel combined score at the end of the process indicated that she was the most suitable candidate for the role. The Interview Panel agreed unanimously on this. This proposal is made subject to the receipt of satisfactory references, medical and vetting.

21. Mrs Bacon is presently serving as Deputy Chief Constable of South Wales Police and has almost three decades of policing experience in a variety of specialist roles. Prior to this she served at Northumbria Police as Assistant Chief Constable. She has worked in 4 forces in total across urban, rural and remote, coastal and student communities. She is suitably qualified for the position of Chief Constable.
22. Mrs Bacon demonstrated that she is an experienced policing leader who has a proven track record of leading people and delivering good performance through high performing teams, delivering effective change management, gripping operational policing, and developing business acumen. She has a breadth of experience in uniform, safeguarding and crime commands.
23. She demonstrated that has experience of partnership working at a senior level and is the National Police Chief's Council lead for "Right Care Right Person" negotiating a National Partnership Agreement to support all forces in implementation, ensuring that people who have health and/or social care needs are responded to by the right person, with the right skills, training, and experience to best meet their needs. In Wales, Mrs Bacon has led on an all-Wales approach ensuring health services better supports people in mental health crisis.
24. At interview Mrs Bacon was able to demonstrate an excellent understanding of:
  - Neighbourhood Policing, effective problem solving and partnership working including maintaining a strong focus and visible policing presence in our communities.
  - The use of Information Technology to improve public contact methods, increase public confidence and satisfaction levels of residents.
  - The data for incident and crime recording in County Durham and Darlington.
  - The issues facing policing today and in the future, including financial pressures, innovation, productivity and value for money.
  - Vision and setting the right culture of strong values, ethics and high standards and inclusivity in policing as a chief officer.
  - Response and prioritising anti-social behaviour as the public's number one priority.
  - Investing in a prevention first approach and building capacity.
  - First class service to victims.
  - Political awareness.

### **Terms and Conditions of Appointment**

25. The salary for the Chief Constable position is £162,441 per annum. The initial fixed term appointment will be for three years, reviewed after one year as outlined in the Candidate Information Pack.

### **Recommendations**

26. In accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the Police and Crime Panel is recommended to:
  - (i) Review the proposed appointment of Mrs Rachel Bacon as Chief Constable of Durham Constabulary.
  - (ii) Review the proposed appointment and make a report to the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner on the proposal, including a recommendation as to whether or not the candidate should be appointed.

**Joy Allen**  
**Durham Police and Crime Commissioner**