

Police and Crime Panel

25 January 2024

Appointment of Chief Finance Officer – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) – PCC's Proposed Candidate



Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to notify the Police and Crime Panel of the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed candidate for the Chief Finance Officer role in the OPCC following a recent recruitment and selection process.

Background

2. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the Act), Schedule 1, Section 6, requires the Police and Crime Commissioner to appoint a Chief Finance Officer.
3. The Act also requires Police and Crime Panels to scrutinise senior appointments proposed by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Schedule 1 paragraph 9 (1) of the Act defines senior appointments as the Commissioner's Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.
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 (see Appendix 2).
 - c. Why the candidate satisfies the criteria; and
 - d. The terms and conditions on which the candidate is to be appointed.
5. Schedule 1 paragraph 11 of the Act requires the Panel to hold a confirmation hearing before making a report and recommendation under paragraph 10 to the Police and Crime Commissioner in relation to the proposed senior appointment.
6. Schedule 1 paragraph 12 allows the Police and Crime Commissioner the right to accept or reject the Panel's recommendation and she must notify the Panel of her decision.

Recruitment Process

7. The CFO role was advertised on the OPCC website, North East Jobs Portal and, as this role was deemed to be specialist, the OPCC commissioned the services of a Durham Recruitment Agency.
8. A copy of the Chief Finance Officer job description is attached at Appendix 2 for information. This includes the terms and conditions and person specification on which the CFO position is appointed to.
9. Two candidates applied for the CFO position (one identified through the Recruitment Agency) and both were interviewed.
10. The appointment panel was made up of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the current Joint Chief Finance Officer/Assistant Chief Officer, the OPCC Chief of Staff and a HR Manager.

11. Both candidates were required to provide a presentation on the importance of this CFO role (Section 151 Officer), providing examples of how they would undertake the role and how they would support the Police and Crime Commissioner in holding Durham Constabulary to account for their financial spend and governance.
12. This was followed by five questions focussing on:
 - The difference of the OPCC and Constabulary Chief Finance Officer roles
 - Effective processes for grant funding
 - Efficiency, productivity and value for money
 - Being data driven when making financial decisions
 - Contribution to the Police and Crime Plan.
13. Ms Rachel Allsop demonstrated a very good understanding of the requirements of the role of Chief Finance Officer and had the highest scores on a 5-point scale from “poor” to “excellent”.
14. In terms of meeting the criteria for the role, Ms Allsop is an experienced accountant who has worked across the public sector and academia for around 14 years. She is educated to degree level with a professional qualification of ICEAW Chartered Accountant and is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales. She has experience of financial /budget management processes and procedures, internal and external audit, risk management, appraisal to support investment decisions, management of staff, producing management accounts, treasury management and cashflow forecasts.

Proposed CFO Appointment

15. It is proposed that Ms Rachel Allsop be appointed as Chief Finance Officer as she is the most suitable candidate in terms of carrying out the CFO role. This proposal is made subject to the receipt of satisfactory references and all relevant clearances.

Terms and Conditions

16. The CFO’s salary is agreed at £59,118 - £64,992 (pro rata) plus £5,000 market supplement. The post will be 0.6 full time equivalent.

Recommendations

17. In accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, Schedule 1 9 (1) the Panel is invited to:
 - (i) Review the proposed appointment of Ms Allsop as the statutory Chief Finance Officer for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham.
 - (ii) Following the confirmation hearing to make a recommendation to the Commissioner as to whether Ms Allsop should be appointed in accordance with Schedule 1 10 (4) of the Act.

Joy Allen
Durham Police and Crime Commissioner

Appendix 1: Risks and Implications

Finance

The Chief Finance Officer will ensure all decisions with financial implications are made with value for money as a key consideration and are affordable within budgets.

Staffing

The Police and Crime Commissioner has a preferred candidate for the role of Chief Finance Officer.

Equality and Diversity

Fair recruitment processes were followed.

Accommodation

The Chief Finance Officer will work in a flexible/hybrid way.

Crime and Disorder

The Chief Finance Officer will support the PCC to hold Durham Constabulary to account for finance and governance matters.

Children's Act 2004

n/a

Stakeholder/Community Engagement

n/a

Environment

n/a

Collaboration and Partnerships

The Chief Finance Officer will be part of the Police and Crime Commissioners Treasurers' Society (PACCS)

Value for Money and Productivity

This will be a key component of the Chief Finance Officer's role.

Potential Impact on Police and Crime Plan Priorities

Decisions will impact directly or indirectly on the pursuit of Police and Crime Plan priorities.

Commissioning

Several decisions relate to commissioning of services.

Other risks

n/a

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