

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Police and Crime Panel** held in Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 5 December 2013 at 1.30 pm**

Present:

Durham County Council:

Councillors J Armstrong, D Boyes, P Brookes, A Willis, S Morrison and B Stephens

Darlington Borough Council:

Councillor B Jones

Independent Co-opted Members:

K Larkin-Bramley

1 Election of Chairman

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, it was **Moved** by Councillor Boyes, **Seconded** by Councillor Jones and

Resolved:

That Councillor J Armstrong be appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

Councillor J Armstrong in the Chair

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Forster, S Harker, I Haszeldine, L Hovvels, D Stoker and Mr N Vaulks.

3 Substitute Members

Councillor S Morrison as named substitute for Councillor S Forster and Councillor B Stephens as named substitute for Councillor L Hovvels.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2013 were confirmed by the Panel as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 Proposed Appointment Of Chief Finance Officer

The Panel considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided information on the process to be undertaken to hold a confirmation hearing for the post of Chief Finance Officer, and a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner which notified the Panel of the proposed appointment of the Chief Finance Officer for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Panel was supplied with a communication received from Elsie Davies, Chair of the Joint Independent Audit Committee which contained areas of concern raised by the Committee when it considered the post of Chief Finance Officer in November 2013 (for copy of communication see file of Minutes).

The Panel questioned the Commissioner and Mr Ridley, the nominated candidate for the post of Chief Finance Officer, particularly relating to the following matters:

- Who had been undertaking the role of Chief Finance Officer to the PCC since the end of September 2013;
- When was the proposed candidate's appointment to commence and whether the appointment was permanent, fixed term or subject to review;
- Whether any other options to appoint to the post had been considered and why the proposed option was thought to be the most appropriate;
- The criteria used to assess the suitability of the proposed candidate and whether potential conflicts of interest had been considered;
- The period of notice required to terminate the appointment by either party;
- Whether the Audit Committee had been provided with assurance that the safeguards proposed were adequate or whether the Committee made any recommendations to improve governance arrangements;
- The status of the role of the proposed candidate's current position of providing financial advice to the Chief Constable of Cleveland, whether this role was temporary and the assurances which could be given that this would not compromise the roles with the Chief Finance Officer to the Commissioner or the Chief Constable of Durham;
- Further information relating to the proposed service level agreement from April 2014 and the terms and conditions which were to apply in the interim and whether any partnership or contractual arrangement detailed any working arrangements and protocols to address and resolve any conflicts of interest.

The Police and Crime Commissioner referred the Panel to the addendum to his report which addressed many of the issues raised, particularly to the proposed dispute resolution process.

The Commissioner informed the Panel that the Joint Audit Committee would oversee the governance of the two roles of the Chief Finance Officer and confirmed

that the proposed arrangement would be reviewed after 6 months. Mr Ridley also provided the Panel with a clear and confident assurance of his understanding of his powers and duties as a Section 151 officer.

The Panel thanked Mr Hogg and Mr Ridley for their attendance and moved in to closed session.

Resolved:

That under Section 100 (A) 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 1 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

The Panel discussed the Police and Crime Commissioners recommendation to appoint Mr Gary Ridley as his Chief Finance Officer.

Resolved:

That the Panel recommend the appointment of Mr Gary Ridley as the Chief Finance Officer for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham in accordance with Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.