

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Meeting to be held on 18 January 2021

CONFIRMATION HEARING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A CHIEF CONSTABLE

Contact for further information: asad.laher@blackburn.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide background information to the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) on the appointment process leading to the selection of Mr Christopher Rowley as the proposed candidate for the role of Chief Constable of Lancashire.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel notes its responsibilities in the confirmation hearing process and considers the proposed appointment of Mr Christopher Rowley to the position of Chief Constable.

1. Background

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 specifies that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for a police area is to appoint the Chief Constable of the police force for that area.

Schedule 8 of the 2011 Act requires that a PCC must notify the relevant Police and Crime Panel (PCP) of the proposed appointment of a Chief Constable. It is the duty of the PCP to hold a public Confirmation Hearing and to review, make reports and recommendations in respect of the proposed appointment of a Chief Constable and to publish their reports or recommendations.

The PCC's notification of the proposed appointment was received on 6 January 2021 prompting the confirmation hearing to be arranged. The confirmation hearing will be held in public at which at which the candidate is requested to appear for the purpose of answering questions relating to the appointment. Supporting guidance produced by the Local Government Association (LGA) advises that usually, no other business should be undertaken at a meeting convened to be a confirmation hearing. A confirmation hearing should not be dealt with as an item of business at a standard Panel meeting but conducted as a separate meeting. The guidance specifies that *"the convening of a separate meeting will mean that proper time and preparation will be put in to the exercise and panel members will be able to approach the session with the right mindset"*.

There is a report on the Agenda from the Police and Crime Commissioner providing information on the preferred candidate's skills and experiences. The Panel should consider the information provided for its questions to the candidate.

The LGA guidance recommends that confirmation hearings should focus on the following:

- Professional competence: i.e. the candidate's ability to carry out the role, for example, their professional judgement and insight; and

- Personal independence: i.e. the need for the candidate to act in a manner that is operationally independent of the PCC.

The guidance further recommends that PCPs should think in terms of minimum standards applying to particular attributes: i.e. there should be minimum standards below which it would not be appropriate to appoint a candidate under any circumstances. Above this level, the Panel might have concerns but the candidate would still be 'appointable' at the discretion of the PCC.

The Appendix sets out the Chief Constable Confirmation Hearing Procedure. Further information on the procedure and the Panel's role is contained in the guidance from the LGA: Police & Crime Panels Guidance on Confirmation Hearings Local Government Association and Centre for Public Scrutiny (August 2012), which is also attached.