

## North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

6 February 2020

### Recruitment of Independent Co-opted Members

#### Purpose of the report

1. To recommend a process for selecting two people to be Independent Co-opted (“Community”) members of the Panel.

#### Background

2. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires that at least two members of the Panel are co-opted by the Panel and are independent, that is they are not a:
  - member of the staff of the police, fire and crime commissioner for North Yorkshire;
  - member of the civilian staff of the area police force;
  - member of staff of the fire and rescue authority (as applicable where the Commissioner has assumed governance);
  - Member of Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Parliament or the European Parliament; or
  - member of a local authority which is covered by the force area.
3. Guidance from the Home Office also indicates that serving police officers should not be eligible to serve as a member of a Panel.<sup>1</sup>
4. The Panel’s Arrangements set out that co-opted Members appointed to the Panel may be re-appointed for a further term of four years provided that the balanced appointment objective is met by that re-appointment. The balanced appointment objective in this regard is concerned with the Panel having the necessary balance of skills, knowledge and expertise to ensure the effective functioning of the Panel.
5. The term for the two current co-opted members to the Panel ends prior to the October 2020 meeting of the Panel; that is, once appointments have been offered in the summer, they will need to be formally agreed through the Panel at its meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

#### Process when appointing independent co-opted members

6. The Panel arrangements (paragraph 4.23) state that:

*“The Panel shall put in place arrangements to ensure that appointments of co-opted Members are undertaken following public advertisement in accordance with the following principles:*

<sup>1</sup> Under section 1(2)(a) of Schedule 1 to the Police Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/527) a member of a police force may not “take any active part in politics”. The Home Office would regard co-option to a Panel, for the purpose of scrutinising an elected PFCC, as taking an active part in politics, and accordingly as being prohibited for police officers.

- a) *The appointment will be made on merit of candidates whose skills, experience and qualities are considered best to ensure the effective functioning of the Panel;*
- b) *The selection process must be fair, objective, impartial and consistently applied to all candidates who will be assessed against the same predetermined criteria; and,*
- c) *The selection process will be conducted transparently with information about the requirements for the appointment and the process being publicly advertised and made available with a view to attracting a strong and diverse field of suitable candidates.”*

7. LGA guidance (published 2012) sets out that “planning for the appointment of co-optees must take account of the fact that the panel will need to be involved at key points in the process of seeking, short-listing and appointing co-optees”.
8. The process for appointing the independent co-opted members in 2016 started before the end of March with the creation of a small task group of Panel Members, whose role it was to oversee the arrangements for recruitment and selection, which were administered through the County Council.
9. The vacancies were advertised widely via press releases, websites and relevant networks in early May 2016, including parish council networks, the voluntary and community sector, community safety partnerships and health sector publications. Interviews were held in July 2016.
10. By initiating this work in early spring, the newly-appointed independent co-opted members were able to begin their induction to the Panel prior to the October 2016 meeting and as such this also benefited the continued effective functioning of the Panel.

### **Next steps in appointing independent co-opted members for 2020**

11. The Panel is invited to consider conducting a similar process for the recruitment, shortlisting and interviewing of two members for when the period of office of the current two individuals expires at the beginning of October 2020.
12. In terms of the position as regards the current members, Santokh Sidhu will have served the maximum tenure of eight years in October 2020. Paula Stott has served a single term and as such may apply again.
13. Given the size of the Panel and the potential for a reasonable number of applications to be received, it would be impractical for the entire Panel to be involved in every stage of the process.

### **Recommended**

14. The Panel appoint a task group of no more than five Panel members, in accordance with the Panel rules of procedure, to:
  - review the application pack material and recommend changes where appropriate;

- oversee the arrangements for recruitment;
  - agree the shortlisting of applicants to around five or six for interview;
  - interview all shortlisted applicants (only three of the five members need serve);  
and
  - agree two applicants to be recommended to the Panel for co-option.
15. The task group should ideally comprise the Chair and Vice Chairs (if willing and available), plus two further Members of the wider Panel.
16. The process be concluded by no later than the end of September so that the task group recommendations can be considered at the October 2020 meeting.

Diane Parsons  
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North Yorkshire County Council

28<sup>th</sup> January 2020

**Background Documents:**

None.