

North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

6 February 2025

Recruitment of Independent Co-opted Members

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To recommend a process for selecting up to three people to be independent co-opted members of the Panel.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (as amended by the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Order 2023) 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 Mayor for York and North Yorkshire;
- member of the civilian staff of the area police force;
- member of staff of the fire and rescue authority;
- Member of Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales or the Scottish Parliament; or
- member of a local authority which is covered by the police force area.

2.2 Guidance from the Home Office also indicates that serving police officers should not be eligible to serve as a member of a Panel.¹

2.3 The Panel's Arrangements set out that co-opted members appointed to the Panel are appointed for term of four years or re-appointed up to eight years maximum, 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.

2.4 The Panel must always have a minimum of two co-opted independent members. The Panel sought to co-opt a third independent member (Mags Godderidge) via the Home Office in 2021 in order to ensure a wide range of knowledge and expertise. As such, the Panel may continue to co-opt three independent members should it choose to do so following a selection process.

2.5 In relation to the current co-opted members, the term of office for Fraser Forsyth and Martin Walker expires on 13th October 2025 and for Mags Godderidge on 3rd November 2025. It is therefore recommended that a process for recruitment this year is agreed by the Panel to ensure that appointments can be formally approved at the Panel meeting on 8th October 2025. While there is a slight difference in term for the three members it would be sensible to run a single process, with the intention of formally approving appointments at the Panel meeting in January 2026.

3.0 Process when appointing independent co-opted members

3.1 The Panel arrangements (paragraph 4.32) 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:

¹ 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 Mayor/Deputy Mayor, 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.”*

3.2 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”.

3.3 The process for appointing the independent co-opted members in 2021 started before the end of April 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. This included considering any skills or knowledge deficits on the Panel and how the vacancies could best be promoted.

3.4 The vacancies were advertised widely via press releases, websites and relevant networks in June 2021, including parish council networks, the voluntary and community sector, community safety partnerships and health sector publications. Interviews were held in September 2021 to enable some initial induction to take place prior to the new members’ first formal meeting in October 2021. By initiating this process early, this benefited the continued effective functioning of the Panel.

4.0 Next steps in appointing independent co-opted members for 2025

4.1 The Panel is invited to consider conducting a similar process for the recruitment, shortlisting and interviewing of co-opted members. However, given that the Panel meeting in October falls within the term of the three co-opted members currently on the Panel, it is recommended that timescales for recruitment are shifted slightly from the previous timescales adopted, as follows:

- a) July 2025 – task group to convene to consider approach and agree recruitment materials etc;
- b) End September/Early October 2025 – applications invited.
- c) November 2025 – interviews held and provisional appointments offered.
- d) January 2026 – Panel to formally approve appointments.

4.2 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. It is recommended that 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 maximum for interview;
- interview all shortlisted applicants (only three of the five Panel Members need be involved for this purpose); and
- agree applicants to be recommended to the Panel for co-option.

4.3 The initial task group should ideally comprise the Chair and Vice Chair (if willing and available), plus two further Members of the wider Panel.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no significant financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 There are no significant legal implications arising from this report.

7.0 Equalities Implications

7.1 There are no significant equalities implications arising from this report.

8.0 Climate Change Implications

8.1 There are no significant climate change implications arising from this report.

9.0 Recommendations

9.1 That the Panel agrees its forward timescales for the recruitment and selection of co-opted independent members.

Background Documents:

None.

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