

North Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel

14 October 2021

Appointment of co-opted independent members

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To update the Panel on the recruitment exercise undertaken for its two co-opted independent members.

2. Background

- 2.1. The governing legislation for Police (Fire) and Crime Panels states that each Panel must comprise two co-opted independent members who are not:
- members of the staff of the police, fire and crime commissioner for North Yorkshire;
 - members of the civilian staff of the North Yorkshire police force (or North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service);
 - Members of Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales or the Scottish Parliament;
 - members of a local authority which is covered by the police area;
 - serving police officers or firefighters.
- 2.2. As Members will be aware, following an extension to the normal term of office for the Panel's independent co-opted members due to Covid-19, a recruitment exercise has been held over the summer to recruit for the Panel's two co-opted members. Co-opted members serve a four-year term.
- 2.3. Co-options provide a means of enabling the Panel to meet its legal obligation to ensure that it is balanced; namely that it is not only geographically and politically representative of the area served but that it has the "skills, knowledge and experience necessary for the police and crime panel to discharge its functions effectively."¹

3. Selection process

- 3.1. The Panel agreed earlier this year to form a task group of five Members to oversee arrangements for the recruitment and selection of candidates to fill the two positions, with support from the Secretariat. Particular focus was given to ensuring that the promotion of the role was given as wide a reach as possible across the force area and learning from the experiences of other Panels around how to ensure that the application materials were as comprehensible and as appealing as possible.
- 3.2. While the advertisement developed for the roles encouraged anyone with relevant skills to apply, it was identified that particular areas of interest would include

¹ Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011; Sch 6, para 31(5)(c).

community safety, criminal justice, victim support, commissioning, health (including mental health) and advocacy. A light-touch skills audit was also undertaken of the councillor members on the Panel, to help identify potential gaps in expertise or knowledge and which may be usefully enhanced through a co-opted appointment. The audit identified that the areas in which Panel members generally feel to have the least direct experience or knowledge are:

- the health sector (including mental health);
- victim support / witness support; and
- the criminal justice system.

- 3.3. The role was advertised extensively in June 2021 via the local press, the voluntary and community sector, NYCC, City of York Council, NHS, parish councils, advocacy groups and safeguarding boards, to name a few. Social media updates were also released through the NYCC Comms team.
- 3.4. A large number of applications were received, particularly in comparison with 2016, with a very strong field of interest from applicants with extensive experience in areas of interest to the Panel. As such, eight were shortlisted for interview and interviews took place on 6th and 8th September 2021. The interviews involved a set of eight questions asked of each candidate, which related to the key skills and competencies advertised for the role. The interview panel comprised Councillors Les, Grant, Wilkinson and Chambers.
- 3.5. Following the assessment of the candidates' performance at interview, and taking into account the application forms provided, the panel agreed that there were three candidates who had excelled during the process and who each had very different but invaluable backgrounds and skills to offer the Panel. Namely, they would, between them, fill the gaps adequately around criminal justice, mental health and victim support.
- 3.6. It was agreed that as there are two existing vacancies, the fairest process would be to offer the roles (provisional on full Panel agreement) to the two highest scoring candidates and it was intended that the Panel would be asked to endorse that a third co-option be made through the Home Office.
- 3.7. However, following the Commissioner's interview with BBC Radio York on 1st October and comments made regarding the Sarah Everard case, the individual who was to be proposed to Panel as the 'third co-option' has regrettably decided that she cannot take up a position on the Panel. Her professional role centres around victim support and she felt it important to maintain the ability to comment in the strongest terms on what she felt to be inappropriate comments by the Commissioner, without concern for potentially feeling conflicted in her role on the Panel.
- 3.8. In relation to the other proposed appointees, the office is currently in the process of making the necessary final administrative checks, prior to a formal recommendation being made to the Panel for their endorsement. It is expected these will be completed shortly and as such a verbal update will be provided to Members at the Panel meeting.

4. Recommendations

- (a) That the Panel notes the update report provided.

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NYCC

6th October 2021