

North Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel

4 November 2021

Appointment of an additional independent co-opted member to the Panel

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To seek agreement from the Panel to pass a resolution to co-opt a third independent member (Mags Godderidge) to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel;
- 1.2 To agree that a further process is undertaken via the Home Office to seek formal agreement to the appointment of a third co-option.

2. At the last meeting of the Panel on 14th October 2021, the Panel formally approved the appointments of Martin Walker and Fraser Forsyth as independent co-opted members to the Panel, thereby filling the two vacancies held for these roles.
3. As part of the background to that proposal, Members will recall that, prior to the meeting take place, it had been intended that the Panel would also be asked to consider passing resolution to co-opt three independent co-opted members to Panel; thereby effecting a change to the Panel Arrangements.
4. This proposal was due to be made following the recruitment exercise undertaken, which had resulted in three outstanding candidates being identified. In particular, a third co-optee, Mags Godderidge, was to be proposed to Panel on the basis that this candidate had not only scored very highly during assessment but would bring strong complementarity of skillset and experience which would be invaluable to the Panel. Mags is the Chief Executive Officer of Survive; a charity which supports survivors of rape and sexual assault. Prior to this role, Mags was a Lead Investigator for the Independent Office for Police Conduct and has also been Director of a national suicide-prevention charity. As such, the Panel's recruitment working group felt that Mags's appointment would bring additional strength to the Panel's obligation to ensure it has the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to provide for a balanced Panel.
5. However, in light of the events leading up to the last Panel meeting in respect of the Commissioner's remarks relating to the murder of Sarah Everard, Mags decided to withdraw from the appointment process at that stage in order to be assured of maintaining a fully unfettered voice for victims of sexual violence and sexual abuse while the Commissioner remained in post.
6. Further to the resignation of Mr Allott on 15th October 2021, further contact has been established with Mags, who has confirmed her interest in the role. Further guidance has also been provided to Mags around undertaking a role on the Panel and any implications for continuing their professional role. Essentially, clarification has been provided that there is no conflict of interest to maintaining a professional role in victim support – and giving a public voice to that – while also becoming an active member of the Panel. The key considerations would be that the professional

interest would need to be declared as appropriate at Panel meetings and that interest cannot be promoted through the Panel for reasons of gain. In addition, Mags would need to be mindful not to predetermine her vote to be taken at Panel on a given issue by publicly expressing how she may vote in her capacity as CEO of Survive.

7. This guidance is really germane to any member of the Panel – Councillor or independent co-opted member – who has a standing professional or disclosable interest outside of the Panel.
8. The legal position in terms of taking on an additional co-opted member is that the Panel cannot independently agree to make this third co-option. This must be done via the Home Office, once the Panel has passed a resolution to have three co-opted members. This is outlined further below.

Stage One – Panel resolution

9. The Panel's Arrangements, as originally agreed by the Leaders of each of the constituent authorities in 2012, state at section 4.7 that "The Panel shall also include two independent Members co-opted by the Panel." As such, the Panel is asked to agree that the Arrangements are amended to include three co-options. Each of the Leaders or key representatives for the constituent authorities have been asked to agree that their representative to the Panel endorse the proposal.

Stage Two – Submission to the Home Office

10. Once the Panel has passed a resolution to have three co-opted members, a short proforma must be submitted to the Home Office, for the Secretary of State to consider. Having already discussed the matter with the Home Office, the principle of making an additional co-option on the basis of complementarity of skills and experience is a wholly legitimate use of the process. While we cannot be 100% conclusive that the request will be approved, there do not appear to have been any rejections of such cases in the past; the key considerations for the Home Office really being around managing the numbers of members on each Panel and as such how this impacts on the grant awarded by them to the host authority.
11. The Home Office have indicated it will likely take five to six weeks for approval although on previous occasions it has taken several months and is very dependent on prioritisation of national cases and issues to the Secretary of State.
12. In the meantime, Mags would assume the position of an observer to the Panel but would be able to fully participate in discussions at Panel. The only aspect that Mags would be unable to participate in while the Panel awaits the formal decision is where a vote has to be taken on an issue, although these occasions are relatively few and far between. Having discussed the process and terms with Mags, she has agreed that she is willing to participate on the Panel in this way while awaiting the formal decision. Mags is very keen to join the Panel and to put her skills and knowledge to use for the Panel's benefit.
13. The Panel is asked to agree that a formal request for a third co-opted member is put through the Home Office.

Other considerations

14. The only other consideration to highlight for the Panel (and NYCC as host authority) is that, assuming the third co-option is agreed, Mags will be fully entitled to receive the annual allowance payable to each independent co-opted member on the Panel (currently £1741), in addition to travel expenses. The Home Office will normally budget for an additional member to the Panel as part of the wider grant allocation (circa £900). As such, if formally agreed by them, it is expected that further funding would be made available – certainly by the 2022/23 financial year – to help defray some of the additional costs for allowance and expenses incurred.

15. Recommendations

15.1 That the Panel:

- (a) Agrees to pass a resolution for the Panel to co-opt three independent members;
- (b) Agrees to the co-option of Mags Godderidge to the Panel; and
- (c) Agrees that a formal process is pursued via the Home Office to formally request a third co-option.

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25 October 2021