



Members of Northumbria Police and Crime Panel

Office of the Chief Executive  
City Hall, Plater Way  
Sunderland, SR1 3AA

Web: [www.sunderland.gov.uk](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk)

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022  
Our ref: PM/JM  
Your ref:

Dear Panel Members

This letter is to provide assurance that the recent recruitment exercise led by the PCC for Northumbria to find a preferred candidate for the role of Chief Constable was conducted in accordance with the principles of merit, fairness and openness.

The role of the independent member is to ensure the selection and appointment process is conducted fairly and openly, and the successful candidate is selected on merit. The independent member should have experience and competence in assessment and selection processes. As Chief Executive for Sunderland City Council I agreed to act as the Independent Member and can confirm that I have significant experience of assessment and selection for senior posts in local government and felt able to carry out this role.

This letter provides members of the Northumbria Police and Crime Panel with assurance that the appointment process for this post has been conducted fairly, openly and based on merit. It also discusses the extent to which the interview panel fulfilled its responsibility to challenge and test candidates' suitability against the requirements of the role during both the shortlisting and the formal interview stages.

To assist me in my role as 'Independent Member' the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner provided a copy of the College of Policing guidance for appointing Chief Officers published January 2021. This guidance equips those responsible for appointing Chief Officers with the skills and knowledge to deliver an appointment process based on merit, fairness and openness.

### **Advertising the vacancy**

The role was widely shared on the Senior Leaders Hub, College of Policing Website and Northumbria Police Website. It was advertised for three weeks as recommended by the guidance. Potential candidates were offered familiarisation visits to meet key members

of Northumbria Police and other partners and importantly the opportunity to have an informal conversation with the PCC. I am confident that the Police and Crime Commissioner advertised the vacancy openly and widely to attract the best possible candidate pool.

### **Shortlisting**

To aid shortlisting the rank profile, details of key accountabilities and qualifications and skills required for the role were outlined in shortlisting assessment guide produced by Helen Cooksley. Helen is a Professional Development & Assessment Partner from Northumbria Police People and Organisational Development. She also personally briefed myself and the PCC on the assessment criteria and unconscious bias. Using the agreed assessment criteria, the PCC and I independently reviewed the applicants' forms using an evidence-based approach. We both separately read and evaluated the evidence provided by the applicants in response to the six questions posed in the application form. We then met and jointly reviewed the evidence. I can confirm that there were three applicants for the role of Chief Constable of Northumbria Police and all three were assessed as meeting the requirements of the role and being eligible for consideration for appointment to the role. I am confident that this shortlisting approach ensured that the candidates were shortlisted based on merit and fairness.

### **Assessment Process and Criteria**

As a member of the panel, I was briefed along with the other members on the process and assessment criteria by Helen Cooksley. We were aware of the eligibility criteria and role profile having received this information in advance of the interview along with the application forms. On the day we also had the informal feedback from the two stakeholder events. The questions and the presentation were clearly linked to the criteria within the national competency and values framework provided to assist with evaluation.

Helen provided an overview of the OCRE (observe, record, classify, evaluate) approach to assessing candidates which was used. This process helps assessors to reduce the impact of unconscious bias and ensure that a fair and objective decision is made.

During each interview the panel members recorded evidence from the candidate responses and individually allocated scores for each question. After all interviews had taken place, the panel discussed the evidence relating to the responses. This then informed an overall score for each candidate based on merit. In my view this assessment process ensured the selection of the preferred candidate was based on merit and that the process was fair.

Yours sincerely



Patrick Melia  
Chief Executive

E.mail: [patrick.melia@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.melia@sunderland.gov.uk)