

Review of Appointment and Selection Procedures which Led to the Offer of Appointment to Paris Brown

Commissioned by the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner

Conducted by the University of Central Lancashire

September 2013

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List of Post Holders Supporting the Review

- Senior Policy Officer, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Head of Resourcing for the Kent and Essex Police
- Acting Chief of Staff / Chief Executive for the PCC from 4/1/13 to 29/7/13
- Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent - Ann BARNES
- Vetting and Disclosure Manager, Kent Police
- Vetting Team Leader, Kent Police
- Final Panel Member Paul WEST – Former Chief Constable of West Mercia Police
- Head of Central Vetting Unit, Kent Police

Scope of the Review Agreed between the University and the PCC

1. Whilst this review was commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner following events triggered in relation to vetting, the PCC nevertheless sought a review of the entire selection process not just the vetting arrangements. The terms of reference or scope of the work was therefore agreed as:
2. *To review the recruitment and selection processes which led to the offer of appointment to Paris Brown as Youth Commissioner in early April 2013 and make recommendations accordingly for consideration in future similar processes.*
3. Within the scope of the above to specifically consider:
 - a. The appropriateness of recruitment and selection policies and the extent to which they were fit for purpose
 - b. The extent to which those policies were adhered to or otherwise

- c. The appropriateness of individuals to advise on the process of selection
- d. The extent to which any such advice was followed
- e. The suitability of panel members
- f. The agreement, formal or informal, of vetting arrangements with the Kent Police for candidates, the suitability of such arrangements and agreements and the extent to which any such agreement was carried out
- g. The transparency of the process and, for example, records and audit trails of decisions within the selection process
- h. The extent to which the adopted processes, including candidate application forms and interview / selection methods did or did not take reasonable steps to identify individuals who by nature of their background would be unsuitable to take up the post of Youth Commissioner

Out of scope

It will *not* be part of the review to

- i. Take a view on the selection of the candidate, or rejection of others, either at shortlisting or by the appointment panel
- j. Take a view on the issues which eventually led to Paris Brown standing down
- k. Explore in detail the deliberation, questioning of the panel or the suitability of questions posed to candidates save as in respect of h) above.

4. Chronology and Key Events

- January 2013 – Senior Policy Officer for the PCC’s Office picks up the lead role in facilitating, project managing and securing the selection process.
- 8th January to 4th February – Senior Policy Officer works with Head of Resourcing and other police HR staff to develop materials for the selection process – advert, Job Description, etc. The PCC contributes to and gives direction on the content of documents
- February 2013, PCC writes to partners and other bodies to help encourage applications.
- 5th February - Advert Launched with closing date of the 26th February
- 27th February to 1st March - ‘Long Listing’. 170 applicants reduced to 18 to be taken to the short-listing stage. Conducted by Senior Policy Officer and another senior policy officer from the PCC’s office.

- Week commencing the 4th March - the PCC reduces the 'long-list' down to six or seven to be taken to the final stages. Shortlisted applicants invited to interview and vetting paperwork for them to complete is sent out shortly afterwards
- Between the 4th March and 21st March - Kent Police vetting staff provide telephone support to applicants in completing vetting forms.
- 21st March - the peer panel, media exercise and final interview for candidates takes place. Paris BROWN is the successful candidate.
- 22nd March - vetting paperwork for Paris BROWN is submitted by the PCC's office to the Force Vetting Team and received by the Vetting Team on the 25th March
- 28th March – vetting checks returned from the Vetting Team to the PCC's office.
- Week commencing the 2nd April – the PCC announces the appointment of Paris BROWN as Youth Commissioner.

Methodology

5. Following the commission of the Review to be conducted by the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) David MALLABY, the Academic Lead for Policing attended the offices of the Police and Crime Commissioner between the 3rd and 4th September 2013 where he interviewed six witnesses in the order they appear above. He subsequently had telephone conversations with staff that had not been available and email exchanges with a number of the witnesses listed for the purposes of clarity and factual accuracy. During the course of the review and interviews a number of documents were viewed and retained as appropriate, see List of Documents at the end of this review

Findings

People Involved in the Recruitment, selection and Appointment Process

6. The Senior Policy Officer supervises seven members of staff and took up her role in November 2012 following the election of the PCC. However she had carried out an almost identical role under the Police Authority arrangements for the previous three years. She has particular experience of, and providing member advice on, professional standards, tribunals, case work, complaints and has worked closely with the Independent Advisory Group. In the context of this review it is noteworthy that she has considerable experience of, and was advisor to the Police Authority on, Equality and Diversity. The Senior Policy Officer was an ideal choice for the role she undertook in this selection and appointment process.

7. The Head of Resourcing is the Head of Resourcing for the Kent and Essex Police and has been employed by Kent police in a senior HR management position since 2009 and in August 2012 took on his additional responsibilities across both forces. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and is the named post

holder ‘..responsible for fair practice in the selection procedures used throughout the organisation’ ¹ He is the most senior specialist post holder in respect of recruitment and selection and provides guidance, advice, training and a wide cross-section of support for recruitment to all posts across the force(s) including the most senior appointments. The Head of Resourcing is highly qualified and experienced in providing the support and guidance needed by the PCC and her team in this appointment.

8. Acting Chief of Staff / Chief Executive for the PCC from 4/1/13 to 29/7/13. Whilst interviewed as part of this review this post holder took no direct role in the recruitment or selection process.

9. Ann BARNES – Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent. The Commissioner is very experienced in the field of recruitment and selection. Amongst other roles she has been the Chair of the HR Committee for the Police Authority, Chair of the Police Authority since 1996 during which time she chaired numerous selection panels including for ACPO officers, Chief Executive, Head of IT and other senior posts. Again, a highly experienced individual entirely suitable to oversee and contribute to the selection process and Chair the Final Panel.

10. Disclosure and Vetting Manager and Vetting Team Leader Kent Police – Both these post holders are experienced and knowledgeable individuals with a clear understanding of policy and its application.

11. Paul WEST – Former Chief Constable of West Mercia Police and Panel Member. Again a very senior and experienced police officer with a great deal of experience and responsibility for recruitment and selection and an ideal Final Panel member

12. Head of Central Vetting Unit, Kent Police – This post holder is also very experienced in both her understanding of policy and its practical application. Her role includes advising Chief Officers on issues relating to vetting as well as having ultimate responsibility for its implementation across the Force.

Process – Preparing for Selection

13. The establishment of the post of Youth Commissioner was clearly important to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) who pledged to introduce this role as part of her manifesto prior to election. She was involved at all stages of the process, providing energy and impetus to the selection and appointment. The PCC was clear from the outset that ideally she was looking for someone with experience of working with young people, be that through a formal or informal arrangement. In particular she wanted someone who may facilitate contact with young people who might otherwise be difficult for the police to engage with. Amongst other matters she was also of the view that the successful candidate would have to be comfortable with the use of social media.

¹ Kent Police L49 Selection Process: Police Staff para 4.3

14. An experienced senior policy officer in the PCC's office was appointed by the PCC to oversee and project manage the selection and appointment process.

15. The PCC had already come to an informal agreement with the Chief Constable for staff and resource support for the PCC's office where skills or staff numbers were not available within the office. In addition the PCC and her office staff utilise a number of Force policies which may be replaced over time in the event that more appropriate policies or guidance is needed and where the Force versions do not exist or are considered unsuitable, in part or in whole.

16. For the selection process of the Youth Commissioner the Force's 'Selection Process: Police Staff – L49' was adopted.² The Senior Policy Officer made early contact with Head of Resourcing in January 2013 to seek his advice from the outset.

17. Both the documentation used as part of the selection process (Advert, the Job Description, short-listing scoring matrix etc) and the design of the process itself were a product of frequent discussion, meetings, emails and exchanges between Head of Resourcing (and his HR staff) and Senior Policy Officer and the PCC. The Head of Resourcing played an active and direct role throughout and his support was comprehensive.

18. In order to stimulate interest and in an attempt to secure future support for this new post of Youth Commissioner the PCC wrote to a wide cross-section of public and other bodies, including existing partners asking that the vacancy be brought to the attention of as many young people as possible.

Process – Preparing Documentation

19. A number of documents were produced as part of the selection process. In all cases they were developed through dialogue and exchanges of drafts between HR and the PCC's office. The PCC was involved in those arrangements and 'signed off' all the documentation used. These included

- Job Description and Person Specification / Role Requirement
- Scenarios for the Media Exercise
- Peer Panel Questions
- Final Panel Questions
- Post Advert
- Short-Listing Matrix

Process – The Selection Arrangements

20. Approximately one hundred and seventy applications were received. The Senior Policy Officer, together with another Senior Policy Officer from the PCC's office, reviewed all the applications, reducing the numbers down to eighteen, which became

² http://www.kent.police.uk/about_us/policies//I049.html

known as the 'long-list'. The Senior Policy Officer states that the application of the successful candidate, Paris BROWN, included reference to the use of social media and, in common with a number of other candidates, declared the use of 'closed' social media sites which, by definition, only 'invited others' could access and contribute (no applications were viewed as a part of this review).

21. The PCC had agreed with HR that the next stage in the process would be for her to take this long-list and reduce it to a more manageable number for the final assessment day. This she did during the week of the 4th March, bringing the numbers down to six or seven³. The PCC will say that she was looking for someone who had the ability to engage with hard to reach young people, consistent with the original criteria for the post.

22. Those six or seven were invited for interview and immediately after the invitation they were also sent the vetting forms to complete (see section below for more information on vetting)

23. The selection took place over two days day consisted of three elements; a media exercise, a peer panel and the final interview chaired by the PCC.

24. *Media Exercise* – This was organised and conducted by the Media and Communications Manager of the Commissioner's Office (not interviewed as a part of this review). The candidates were given two scenarios and five minutes each to prepare a response before being given a mock-interview. The first scenario was reactive in that it tested the candidate's ability to deal with the media following an over-night public order event involving young people. The second was proactive in that it tested the candidate in presenting to the media their plans for the future.

25. Written assessment of each candidate was provided by the Media and Communications Manager and this was made available to the Final Interview Panel

26. *Peer Panel* – Young people who had been specifically 'trained' in this sort of work were used. Four were individuals provided via Kent County Council and two from Medway Unitary Authority, both councils using these young people in similar processes for the selection of youth workers. The panel questions were designed with the peer panel themselves, based upon the Job Description and agreed with HR.

27. Five areas were explored by the peer panel with the candidates; 1) personal experience which may help them relate to young people, especially those with a difficult background or had been in trouble with the police. 2) What social media they used and how. Had they ever experienced any problems and how did they deal with it. 3) How they had helped young people in the past. 4) What they did with their leisure time 5) Views on police and policing

³ Details of the exact number could have been made available but this was not needed for this review

28. In respect of 2) above, nothing emerged from this line of questioning which gave any indication that Paris BROWN had social media entries which later emerged and generated the subsequent media interest.

29. The Senior Policy Officer sat in and observed all the candidates, made notes on the panel's views and gathered the written feedback from the panel. This was then used to form the basis of a verbal briefing by the Senior Policy Officer to the main panel conducting the Final Interview.

30. *Final Interview* – The final interviews took place on the 21st March. The panel was chaired by the PCC with the other two panel members being Paul WEST, former Chief Constable of West Mercia Police and a Chief Inspector from Kent Police (not interviewed as a part of this review). The Chief Inspector has the Kent Police lead role for Children and Young People. The Senior Policy Officer was present during the interviews, facilitated the sessions, took notes and passed comment on the candidates to the panel members after the interviews. She did not ask any questions of the candidates and was not a 'voting member' of the panel.

31. Seven areas of questioning had been drawn up between the PCC, the Senior Policy Officer and Kent Police HR. These formed the basis of the questioning of each candidate albeit that responses would trigger supplementary questions pertinent to individual candidates. The seven identified ahead of the interviews were:

- What do you hope to gain personally from being the Youth Commissioner?
- You will be travelling with the Commissioner on her community outreach tours, amongst other things, engaging directly with members of the public, and discussing their issues. Can you give me an example of when you have done something similar? What did you do? What was the result?
- You will be expected to produce short reports for the Commissioner about Youth issues, and to brief her generally about some of the problems young people may face. Do have any examples of where you have undertake similar work? What was the topic?
- What barriers do you think the Police face when dealing with young people? What are the barriers that young people face when dealing with the Police?
- What ideas do you have about how to improve the relationship between the Police and young people?
- Your role will be very public, involve speaking with the media, and senior officers from national organisations. Your actions will reflect on the Commissioner and her office. Do you think you will be comfortable with that, and if so, can you tell me why?

- Why do you feel, considering your background, experience and aims, that you would make an excellent Youth Commissioner for Kent?

32. Additionally, the Chair asked all candidates if there was anything in their background, history or current life which could cause them or the PCC difficulty or embarrassment, given the high profile nature of the role and that of the PCC. Ann BARNES states that she always asks this question of all candidates for all posts and has done so for a very long time and usually leaves it to the end of the interview, as she did in this case. Both Paul WEST and the Senior Policy Officer confirm that this question was asked by the Chair of all the candidates. All the panel members interviewed also say that Paris BROWN gave no indication of anything which may have caused any such difficulty or embarrassment.

33. At the conclusion of the final interview all information from the three stages of the process was considered. The panel were unanimous in choosing to appoint Paris BROWN. All were of the view that she would make an excellent appointment.

Vetting

34. Arrangements had been made for the Kent Vetting Team to support via telephone those candidates who were required to complete vetting forms; those who had made it to the final two day process. It is thought that all the candidates availed themselves of this support. This support is made available for any person needing to fill in vetting forms for any post.

35. On the 22nd March Paris BROWN's completed vetting form was sent to the Kent Vetting Team from the PCC's office and was received by the Vetting Team on 25th March. There were no specific instructions or requests accompanying the vetting form from the PCC's office and both the Senior Policy Officer and the PCC were of the view that the police would carry out the standard vetting process which would take place for any such recruitment within the Force. Essentially, if it was good enough for police staff recruitment then it would be good enough for this post. It was also their view that the level of vetting would be the same as for a candidate wishing to be a police officer – again suggesting that the level of vetting was proportionate and appropriate.

36. Kent Police follow the ACPO / ACPOS National Vetting Policy for the Police Community, Version 3.1 which is the current national policy, having been written in February 2012 and implemented from April that year. The policy has 19 associated Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

37. SOP 1 states at Para 6.1.1, page 10,

38. “There are no national guidelines in respect of police staff recruitment. However, due to the increasingly wide range of duties carried out by police staff, and resultant access to information, assets and premises, the vetting criteria for the

recruitment of police officers and members of the Special Constabulary has been extended to include persons applying for police staff vacancies”

39. Therefore, the assertion made by the PCC and the Senior Policy Officer is correct in that the level of vetting applied to Paris Brown was the same as for police staff and police officers within the Kent Police Force

40. In addition, SOP 3, Recruitment Vetting (RV) para 4.3, page 26 says that “*The following checks are suggested as a minimum for RV Internet (open source) enquiries (if felt appropriate)*”

41. The Head of Central Vetting Unit for Kent Police advised that reference to Internet enquiries was included in the 2010 revision of the ACPO/ACPOS National Vetting Policy for the Police Community - the most recent revision being 2012. She met with the then ACC on 5 November 2010 to discuss the changes in the revised (2010) vetting policy and to agree any changes to Kent's vetting procedures. It was decided at that time not to commence routinely conducting open source searches as part of the vetting process and that position remains unchanged.

42. Therefore, Paris BROWN’s social media sites were not checked as part of her recruitment vetting. On the 28th March Paris Brown's vetting check returned to the PCC's office granting vetting clearance.

43. The PCC had, following discussion with the Head of Resourcing , decided that the name of the candidate who would be offered the post was not to be released until vetting had been completed. The Commissioner took this approach to ensure, in respect of duty of care, that neither the young person nor their family were exposed to any public attention before background checks had been completed.

Observations

44. The following observations are made against the scope of this review outlined in; Scope of the Review Sections a. to h. above.

The appropriateness of recruitment and selection policies and the extent to which they were fit for purpose

45. The selection and appointment process adopted the Force L49 Selection Process: Police Staff policy. This policy is available on the Force internet site. The policy includes all the elements one would expect from a fair, equitable, transparent and lawful approach to staff selection. It is entirely consistent with similar policies used by other forces and the majority of public bodies. It was fit for purpose.

The extent to which those policies were adhered to or otherwise

46. There is strong evidence that this process was very well managed and complied both with the policy and with all expected levels of probity and ethical integrity examined within the scope of this review. This was a robust process with very good audit trails and accountable decision making.

The appropriateness of individuals to advise on the process of selection

47. The key players in this selection process were the PCC herself, the Senior Policy Officer and the Head of Resourcing (see section on *People* above). Whilst all very experienced, the Head of Resourcing was the HR professional and he advised from the very outset and at all stages, but understandably not personally on all detail. For example he was on leave when the panel questions were developed, nor did he advise on the design of the Media Exercise. He and staff within HR were instrumental in the design and delivery of a number of elements of the selection process; the preparation of the Job Description, Person Specification, areas for questioning etc. This was not a 'light touch' approach but a very healthy and mutually supportive arrangement between the PCC's office and HR professionals.

The extent to which any such advice was followed

48. The Head of Resourcing is confident that all the advice provided was followed throughout. There was nothing in this review to suggest otherwise. Indeed, the level of backward and forward communication between HR and the PCC's office was commendable.

The suitability of panel members

49. See section on *People* above. As well as providing a gender balance, the makeup of the panel was entirely suitable for this selection process, particularly given the additional element of the peer review within the process. With a former Chief Constable, Chief Inspector and the PCC one could argue that, if anything, the panel was 'over the top' for what was quite a junior appointment. However, the high profile nature of the post, on balance, probably warranted the make up being as it was. There is no doubt that the panel was highly experienced and had a proven track record of staff selection.

The agreement, formal or informal, of vetting arrangements with the Kent Police for candidates, the suitability of such arrangements and agreements and the extent to which any such agreement was carried out

50. Agreement was reached at the outset that vetting would take place, in line with most other staff appointments within the Force. Support for candidates was also agreed and provided. The Recruitment Vetting was in accordance with ACPO Policy as implemented for all other Kent Police recruitment vetting. The vetting took place by the police vetting team as had been agreed with the PCC's office. Kent Police do not carry out routine social media checks on applicants. Neither the PCC nor her office requested

that such checks should take place, nor were they advised to – if indeed the Force would have agreed to do so in any event.

51. Given that the selection process had two distinct opportunities to allow the candidates to reflect and declare anything of a potentially embarrassing nature (Peer Panel and Final Panel) and that Kent Police recruit significant numbers of staff and officers without incident it is only with hindsight that one may speculate that it would have been useful to carry out such social media checks.

52. There is the additional question as to whether such checks would have revealed anything in any event – it is the Reviewer’s understanding that open source checks may well not have revealed much relevant information given the ‘private’ nature of some of Paris BROWN’s pages. On her application she had indicated that she used Twitter and Facebook and that her Twitter account was locked. Paris BROWN did provide her Facebook Profile.

The transparency of the process and, for example, records and audit trails of decisions within the selection process

53. Selection processes by their very nature are confidential in many aspects. However, the process undertaken, the questions posed, the fairness and equality provided should all be able to stand scrutiny. This process was very well documented indeed. Copies of all pertinent documents were available for viewing, the method by which they were designed and by who was clear and auditable and the outcome was applied equitably to all candidates. Additionally there were numerous examples where additional layers of quality assurance had been added.

The extent to which the adopted processes, including candidate application forms and interview / selection methods did or did not take reasonable steps to identify individuals who by nature of their background would be unsuitable to take up the post of Youth Commissioner

54. If one believes in advance that social media is likely to present problems once an appointment is made then one would expect appropriate probing during the selection process. However, despite being keen that the successful applicant be active in social media, there was no reason why this should have been singled out as a specific area to explore during the selection process or during vetting. Many posts offered by the Kent Police have the potential to cause embarrassment, or worse, in the event of inappropriate entries being uncovered on social media sites – there was no real reason that this post should have been singled out for special attention.

Additional Observations and Recommendations

55. Person Specification - The nature of the post had always been identified as one which would involve meeting with young people, often in stressful environments or dealing with challenging issues. Also, the post is one which was clearly going to be high

profile. Therefore, the interpersonal skills, the resilience of the individual and a range of other competencies are important in the selection process. One would perhaps expect to see these reflected in more detail in a Person Specification.

56. The Person Specification for this post had been condensed to three points at the foot of the Job Description; Openness to Change, Professionalism and Working with Others. Whilst some competences do appear elsewhere (verbal and communication skills for example) the ‘personal attributes’ element does appear a little light – albeit the applicant pool is likely to be drawn from young people who are still developing in this area. As Paul WEST said during discussions with him, ‘...we were not expecting the finished article’

57. This change would not have realistically prevented the situation which arose in relation to social media.

58. Respect for Race and Diversity - One thing which might have helped, however, (and linked to the person specification point above) would have been a more overt expectation of candidates to demonstrate a Respect for Race and Diversity. It could trigger an area of probing and questioning, establish the values of the PCC’s office from the outset and allows the candidates to reflect if they are right for the job. Those present at the Final Interview will say that these areas were however addressed, being led by Paul WEST. Whilst not a specific question on the pre-prepared list it was picked up with all candidates, Mr West tailoring the question on the back of responses to earlier questions.

59. The Head of Resourcing was able to point out that Respect for Race and Diversity no longer sits on the national competency framework as a behaviour in its own right. Rather it is included within the behaviour ‘professionalism’, which does appear on the person specification / role requirement for this post.

60. Whilst this is accepted, the reviewer is of the view that a more explicit form of words, whatever they may be; respecting diversity, challenging discrimination, supporting equality etc. may be worth considering for future posts of a similar nature.

61. That said, it should also be noted that Paris BROWN in her application, did take the opportunity to proactively raise that she was opposed to any form of discrimination, strongly supporting ‘equal rights’ and ‘equal treatment’. This would provide a degree of reassurance to any selection panel

62. Vetting of Social Media – If the PCC’s office wish to ensure that social media is examined in future recruitment processes and are inclined to step outside this aspect of the Force procedure, one option is to consider doing so by consent – the candidate grants authority and access for their private pages. Legal advice will need to be sought on this. The reviewer is aware that the Commissioner’s Office has already taken this issue on board and commissioned legal advice to create a policy for the vetting of social media and which has already been used on two occasions.

63. Evidence of Good Practice – The use of the Peer Panel and the Media Exercise should be considered very good practice. It is likely that these two elements added much to the quality and outcome of the selection process, the Peer Panel almost certainly adding some real value with the candidates being judged by their peers and potentially relaxing the candidates by engaging with people of a similar age.

Conclusions

64. This was a robust, transparent and very well designed and run process. It is the view of the reviewer that it satisfied and exceeded the high standards expected of any public body – including the standards of those in the policing community. There was a clear and publicly available recruitment policy which was adopted and followed. Professional advice of a very high standard was sought and followed and there were frequent checks and balances along the way. There was nothing to suggest that the process was anything other than fair and equitable.

65. The vetting checks were identical to those carried out for the bulk of posts within the Kent Police and at the time there was no identified reason to seek to go beyond those checks.

David Mallaby
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University of Central Lancashire
4th October 2013

List of Documents Considered

- L49 Selection Process: Police Staff. Kent Police
- I11C Recruitment Vetting. Kent Police
- Shortlisting Matrix
- Post Job Description and Person Specification
- Advert for the post
- Application form (blank)
- ACPO / ACPOS National Vetting Policy for the Police Community v3.1
- Media Exercise Scenarios
- Peer Panel Prepared Questions
- Final Panel Prepared Questions
- Post Advert

About the Reviewer

David Mallaby is the Academic Lead for Policing at the University of Central Lancashire within the school of Forensic and Investigative Science. He is responsible for the evidence based police research carried out as well as for the various police and investigative degrees offered.

He is a former serving Chief Superintendent, retiring in 2008 as the Divisional Commander for Lancashire Constabulary's Eastern Division. Between 2008 and 2011 he was a Strategic Director for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, joining UCLan in 2011.

He has a wealth of experience in recruitment and selection and has carried out a number of HR based investigations and reviews in the past.