

Report by: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

SUBJECT: Proposed appointment of Mr Alan Pughsley as Chief Constable

Date: 20 December 2013

DECISION

The Panel recommend that the Commissioner appoints Mr Pughsley as Chief Constable.

Background

1. The Panel have a statutory duty under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and associated Regulations to:
 - Review and report on the proposed appointment of a Chief Constable
 - Make a recommendation on the proposed appointment

The Panel may also, by a two thirds majority, veto the proposed appointment.

Proposed Appointment

2. The Panel were provided with a report by the Commissioner in advance of their meeting. The report set out the Commissioner's proposed job description and person specification for the Chief Constable and explained the recruitment process. The report stated that, at the conclusion of the selection process, the Commissioner proposed to appoint Mr Alan Pughsley and gave reasons her proposal. The Panel was satisfied that this report provided them with the information set out in Schedule 1(9) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Commissioner's report also provided the Panel with detailed information about the advertisement, shortlisting and selection process and the briefing provided to candidates in advance of the selection. The Commissioner also provided the Panel with a copy of the report by the independent member who had observed and advised on the process in line with the requirements of Home Office Circular 20/2012. The Panel noted the conclusion of the independent member that the selection was fair, transparent and merit-based.
3. The Commissioner explained that she had undertaken a rigorous and transparent process and that Mr Pughsley had fully demonstrated his ability to fulfil the role effectively.
4. The Panel Chairman, who had been invited by the Commissioner to sit as an observer at the final selection process, advised the Panel he felt the selection process had been fair, objective and transparent.

5. The Panel asked whether the Commissioner had considered including Council Leaders and other partners in the selection process and were advised that invitations had been sent to all Councils to participate in the briefing arrangements. The Commissioner advised the Panel that she intended to undertake a programme of public engagement, with Mr Pughsley in the next 3 months.
6. The Panel sought an assurance from Mr Pughsley that he fully intended to serve for the full 5 year term of his contract, an assurance which Mr Pughsley gave.
7. Panel members expressed some concern at the fact that there were only 3 candidates and that the opportunity to apply had been limited to police officers. The Commissioner explained the extensive efforts she and the Chief Constable had made to invite applications but pointed out that there were large numbers of recent Chief Constable vacancies and a relatively small pool of potential applicants. The Commissioner explained that, under present rules, only Chief Police Officers who had passed the senior command course were eligible to apply.
8. The Panel asked Mr Pughsley about his commitment to the development and progress of female and BME officers and staff. Mr Pughsley gave an assurance of his commitment and drew attention to the increased number of female Superintendents and the appointment of a dedicated diversity officer as evidence of his commitment. The Commissioner pointed out that, as Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Pughsley had personally mentored 8 or 9 women.
9. The Panel expressed some concern at the relatively frequent movement of police officers in senior local roles. Mr Pughsley said that, apart from movement occurring as a result of retirement or promotion, his expectation was that local commanders would serve a minimum of 2 years in post.
10. The Panel asked about Mr Pughsley's role in the Crime recording issue that had been the subject of a recent HMIC report. Mr Pughsley said that as Deputy Chief Constable he held responsibility for the audit of crime recording and that he fully accepted that 90% accuracy was not good enough. He had, at the Chief Constable's request, led the recovery programme after the HMIC report and said that the current crime recording procedures are 96% accurate.
11. The Panel said that the recruitment had been undertaken quickly and asked whether the Commissioner had considered taking longer in order to generate a larger field of applicants. The Commissioner said she had considered an interim appointment for 6 months but had decided that the Force needed continuity at a difficult time and that the recruitment situation was unlikely to be any different in 6 months time

Conclusion

12. The Panel concluded that the Commissioner had undertaken a thorough, objective, fair and transparent recruitment process and unanimously recommended that the Commissioner appoint Mr Pughsley as Chief Constable.