



SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

CONFIRMATION HEARING HELD VIRTUALLY

10 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT: Councillor D Nevett (Doncaster MBC) (Chair)

Councillor S Sansome (Rotherham MBC) (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: A Cherryholme (Barnsley MBC), J Grocutt (Sheffield City Council), J Otten (Sheffield City Council), C Pickering (Barnsley MBC), P Short (Rotherham MBC) - (part attendance due to technical issues), J Steinke (Sheffield City Council) and S Wilkinson (Doncaster MBC)

Independent Co-opted Members: Mr A Carter and Professor A James

Dr A Billings (South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner)

M Buttery
(Office of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner)

M McCarthy, J Field, L Noble and A Shirt
(Barnsley MBC)

Guest in attendance: S Abbott (Candidate)

Apologies for absence were received from
Councillor P Garbutt (Sheffield City Council)

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS IN RELATION TO ANY ITEM OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA**

None.

3 **ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED – That the Confirmation Hearing be held in public with exception of the deliberation by the Panel in respect of the proposed appointment which would take place at the end of the Confirmation Hearing in the absence of the public and press.

4 CONFIRMATION HEARING - CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER, OFFICE OF THE
SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Police and Crime Panel considered a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner in regard to his proposed appointment of Ms Sophia Abbott to the post of Chief Finance Officer.

The Chair, Councillor Nevett welcomed everyone to the Hearing. He reminded Members that the Confirmation Hearing process was a requirement under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, that the Police and Crime Panel holds Confirmation Hearings for the appointment of the Chief Constable, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, PCC's Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer.

Councillor Nevett outlined the process to be adhered to as stated in the LGA Confirmation Hearings Guidance document which had been circulated to all Members. He reminded the Panel that, this was not a re-run of the interview process, but the opportunity for the Panel to review the appointment and make their recommendation to the Commissioner.

Councillor Nevett invited the Commissioner to address the meeting to explain the recruitment process which had been undertaken to select the Commissioner's preferred candidate, Ms Abbott.

The Commissioner gave a short overview of the process followed to select his preferred candidate, Ms Abbott. He was satisfied that Ms Abbott has all the professional qualifications which he was looking for in accountancy. Ms Abbott also had a background in audit and commissioning.

Furthermore, Ms Abbott had been undertaking the role as Interim Chief Finance Officer since March 2020, which she had performed very well. The Commissioner was pleased that the candidate, Ms Abbott, was able to effectively carry out horizon scanning, which was a quality he was looking for. Furthermore, Ms Abbott was able to inform him of issues which would impact policing and the services which the Force provide.

Crucially, Ms Abbott was a good team worker; she was able to challenge the Commissioner, but would work with him, his office and South Yorkshire Police Force and their finance department, which he had seen been demonstrated. The Commissioner concluded that Ms Abbott was an excellent candidate and commended her to the Panel.

Panel Members then questioned Ms Abbott regarding her suitability for the role. Ms Abbott was asked questions relating to the challenges faced, professional competence, personal independence and measures of success.

At the conclusion of the Panel's questions and responses from Ms Abbott, Councillor Nevett thanked Ms Abbott for attending and answering the questions from the Panel.

At this point in the Hearing, Ms Abbott, Dr Billings and M Buttery were asked to leave the virtual meeting so that the Panel could deliberate its decision.

5 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED - That, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest not to disclose information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

6 PANEL DELIBERATIONS ON THE PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF A CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

The Panel, having gone into exempt session, considered the statements and answers provided by Ms Abbott to their questions, in addition to the introduction provided by the Commissioner and all relevant paperwork provided.

In light of the responses given relating to the professional competence and personal independence required of the post of Chief Finance Officer, the Panel unanimously endorsed the Commissioner's appointment of Ms Abbott to the post of Chief Finance Officer.

RESOLVED – That Members of the Police and Crime Panel:-

- i) Reviewed the proposed appointment of Ms Abbott as the Commissioner's permanent Chief Finance Officer.
- ii) Agreed to make a report to the Commissioner on the proposed appointment of Ms Abbott in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Act.

CHAIR