

BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR BEDFORDSHIRE

**ON THE APPOINTMENT OF MS JUSTINE CURRELL
AS DEPUTY POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF BEDFORDSHIRE**

25 SEPTEMBER 2017

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This document constitutes the report and recommendations of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel in respect of the proposed appointment of Ms. Justine Currell to the post of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner of Bedfordshire and is submitted to the Commissioner in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.
- 1.2 The report recommends that Ms. Justine Currell be appointed as Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner of Bedfordshire. The Panel made further comments regarding this appointment and these are listed in Section 3 below.
- 1.3 In submitting its report, the Panel would like to thank Ms. Currell for her attendance at the Confirmation Hearing on 25 September 2017 and to congratulate her on her appointment.

2 CONFIRMATION HEARING

- 2.1 On 7 September 2017 the Panel's Host Authority (Bedford Borough Council) received formal notification from the Commissioner's Office of Ms. Currell's proposed appointment. By law the Panel is required to hold a Confirmation Hearing (a meeting of the Panel held in public at which the candidate for appointment is requested to appear for the purpose of answering questions relating to that appointment) in sufficient time to enable it to submit its report and recommendations in respect of the proposed appointment to the Commissioner within three weeks of the day on which it received notification.
- 2.2 The Confirmation Hearing for this appointment was held at 3.00 pm on 25 September 2017 at Police HQ, Woburn Road, Kempston, Bedfordshire, MK43 9AX. The following Panel Members were present:

PRESENT

Mr. P Cain, Independent Member - Chair
Cllr P Downing, Central Bedfordshire Council – Vice Chair
Cllr F Chapman, Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr I Dalgarno, Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr P Hollick, Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr D Warburton, Independent Member

The following officers of the Panel's Host Authority were also present to support the Panel in conducting the hearing:

Mrs. B Morris, Assistant Chief Executive (Law and Governance)
Mr. J Welch, Democratic Services Officer

- 2.3 Members of the Panel questioned Ms. Currell and the Police and Crime Commissioner in relation to the proposed appointment and considered their responses to their questions and other information supplied to the Panel by the Commissioner in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. This information comprised:
- the criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate for the appointment;
 - why the candidate satisfies those criteria;
 - the terms and conditions on which the candidate is to be appointed.
- 2.4 During the hearing the Commissioner and Ms. Currell confirmed that the appointment would be entirely unpaid. The Panel questioned the Commissioner in relation to the potential conflict of interest in appointing a person who was the Executive Director at "UNSEEN UK", a charity which was a recipient of grant funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). The Commissioner responded that all decisions relating to grant funding were made by a panel which included the current Chair of the Police and Crime Panel. There were three stages to the process of allocating grant funding and at no stage did the Commissioner act alone. In addition, she had ensured that she herself did not have sight of the UNSEEN grant application. Ms. Currell added that the £41K grant received from the OPCC was only a very small part of the overall £2M in annual grants received by UNSEEN.
- 2.5 The Panel considered the responses from Ms. Currell and the Commissioner and offered its caution around issues of sensitivity of the role and potential conflicts of interest that might arise.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Commissioner Holloway be recommended to proceed with the appointment of Ms. Justine Currell to the post of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire with the following additional points to be addressed:
- 3.1.1 That the Commissioner does produce within 14 calendar days clear Terms of Reference for this voluntary appointment, setting out:
- a. Performance expectations of the appointment including measures of success to be delivered within the first 12 months
 - b. Specific roles, tasks and responsibilities for the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
 - c. Delegated authorities and decision making powers of the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
- 3.1.2 That the Commissioner confirms the candidate will undergo full disclosure and barring checks.
- 3.1.3 That the Commissioner acknowledges the caution offered by the Panel at the confirmation hearing, around issues of sensitivity of the role and potential conflicts of interest that might arise.

4 REPORT PUBLICATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires the Panel to publish this report in such manner as the Panel determines.
- 4.2 The Panel wishes to allow the Commissioner time to receive and consider this report, convey its contents to the candidate and consider the response she wishes to make to the report, before it is published. This reflects the guidance on Confirmation Hearings provided by the Local Government Association, which envisages a time lapse between a Hearing and the release of information about the Panel's recommendations.
- 4.3 In recognition of this, the Panel will not publish this report or provide any comment on the outcome of the Hearing until noon on Monday 2 October 2017, following which a press release may be issued and the report will be published on the Panel's webpages at: www.bedford.gov.uk/bedspcp

Mr. Paul Cain
Chair, Bedfordshire Police
and Crime Panel

Philip Simpkins
Clerk, Bedfordshire Police
and Crime Panel