

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of a meeting of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel held at Jeffrey Room, The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton NN1 1DE on Wednesday 6 December 2023 at 1.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor David Smith (Chair)
Councillor Gill Mercer (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Fiona Baker
Councillor Jon-Paul Carr
Councillor André González De Savage
Councillor Dorothy Maxwell
Councillor Zoe McGhee
Councillor Ken Pritchard
Councillor Russell Roberts
Councillor Winston Strachan
Mrs Anita Shields
Miss Pauline Woodhouse

Also Present:

Stephen Mold, Northamptonshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner
Jonny Bugg, proposed candidate for appointment as the Chief Executive, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
David Peet, Interim Chief Executive, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Helen King, Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Deborah Denton, Head of Communications, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Stuart McCartney, Governance and Accountability Manager, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Sam Dobbs, Northants Police Federation
Catherine Whitehead, Director Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer, West Northamptonshire Council
James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager, West Northamptonshire Council
Diana Davies, Democratic Services Officer, West Northamptonshire Council
Josh West, Political Assistant to the Labour Group, West Northamptonshire Council

There were also 3 members of the public in attendance

200. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

None received.

201. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

A Panel member requested to raise a point of order challenging that the confirmation hearing did not include an opportunity for members of the public to address the Panel.

Due to a disturbance, the Chair briefly adjourned the meeting until order was restored.

In response to the Panel member's point of order the Chair confirmed that the subject matter raised did not constitute a valid point of order under the Panel's Rules of Procedure.

Mrs Shields noted that she had requested to ask an additional question to the candidate as part of the confirmation hearing on the appointment of a Chief Fire Officer and questioned that this did not appear on the list of proposed questions circulated to Panel members. The Democratic Services Assistant Manager responded that it had been understood that Mrs Shields would ask her question as a supplementary question.

202. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting. The Chair subsequently commented on the change of procedure regarding public speaking at confirmation hearings. The Panel was advised that:

- Nationally, other panels did not generally allow public questions at confirmation hearings
- Allowing members of the public to speak about an individual who the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) proposed to appoint involved a significant risk of comments being made about the individual that were inappropriate, outside the remit of the Panel, or that may even expose the Panel to formal challenge
- Confirmation hearings formed a part of the recruitment process and allowing public speaking was not considered good practice.

203. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The Chair advised the Panel that he had received notification shortly before the start of the meeting that the PFCC's preferred candidate for appointment as Chief Fire Officer was unable to attend the confirmation hearing. The Panel would receive an update on the situation when more was known.

The Chair advised the Panel that the PFCC's preferred candidate for the proposed appointment of a Chief Executive was expected at approximately 2.00pm. The Chair therefore proposed that the meeting should adjourn until this point.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 13.41.

The Chair reconvened the meeting at 14.20.

204. **Proposed appointment by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire of a Chief Fire Officer**

Agenda item withdrawn.

205. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Agenda item withdrawn.

206. **Report and recommendation to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire on the proposed appointment of a Chief Fire Officer**

Agenda item withdrawn.

207. **Proposed appointment by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire of a Chief Executive**

The Chair welcomed Mr Jonny Bugg to the meeting and Panel members present introduced themselves.

The Chair invited questions from the Panel regarding the Panel's statutory responsibilities and processes to be followed for the confirmation hearing.

There were none.

The Chair then invited the PFCC to introduce Mr Bugg as his preferred candidate for appointment as Chief Executive of the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC).

The PFCC made an apology for the late notification which had resulted in the confirmation hearing for the proposed appointment a Chief Fire Officer not going ahead. The preferred candidate had notified the PFCC that she was unable to attend for personal reasons and had asked for her apologies to be extended to the Panel. The PFCC would write to the Panel in due course to arrange another date for the confirmation hearing.

The PFCC formally introduced Mr Bugg and made the following points:

- A comprehensive recruitment process had been carried out for the role of Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, which had resulted in the submission of 18 applications from high calibre candidates. 4 applicants had been shortlisted for interview.
- Mr Bugg had experience working in Local Authorities, Police and Crime Commissioners' Offices and, at a senior level, in the Home Office where he led the Fire Strategy and Reform Unit.
- A key area of experience was in Fire Standards with standards and organisational culture being a key consideration for the Fire and Rescue Services both locally and nationally.
- Mr Bugg had extensive experience in Community Safety, Policing and the Criminal Justice System and Fire Standards. This would equip him to lead the OPFCC to keep Northamptonshire residents safe.

- The Panel had an important role in relation to the proposed appointment of Mr Bugg and he was confident the Panel would carry it out with vigour and insight.

The Panel then asked Mr Bugg a series of questions relating to his professional competence and personal independence.

Mr Bugg was asked what interested him in the role of Chief Executive of the OPFCC for Northamptonshire.

Mr Bugg advised that he had 20 years of experience working in public safety, in both national and local government roles. He considered the Northamptonshire model of to be the ideal version of local public safety governance, which worked collaboratively with a range of partners, identifying synergies and working together efficiently to best serve the community.

Mr Bugg considered that his experience in Local Government, Children's Services, in central Government with Youth Services Safety and in Police and Fire and Rescue Policy gave him transferrable skills and experience that would be suited to the role.

Mr Bugg was asked to describe his approach to leadership and management and how he aimed to apply this in the role of Chief Executive.

Mr Bugg identified his leadership style as both collaborative and networked as confirmed from the feedback of a 360° peer view. He assured the Panel he was aware of the importance of the strength of network arrangements and would be focused on maintaining existing partnerships whilst building new avenues to innovate and develop the role of the OPFCC.

Mr Bugg was asked what he saw as the current key priorities for the OPFCC and if appointed what he would take from his previous professional experience to enable him to support these effectively.

Mr Bugg recognised the positive delivery outcomes from the OPFCC which provided a good basis for the future which highlighted the good partnership arrangements between the OPFCC and other community and public safety organisations.

Mr Bugg highlighted his 3 key priorities as:

- Stability for the team – which was required after a period of change and with new operational leaders and a Chief Executive in post.
- Strengthen the partnership agenda further – with an emphasis on the importance of collective delivery of services.
- Innovation - The PFCC model was rooted in creativity and he would promote that agenda locally.

Mr Bugg was asked to give an example of his previous experience of working on the development and delivery of strategic plans or policy relating to community safety, what challenges were involved and how he ensured that a successful outcome was achieved.

Mr Bugg provided the Panel with an example of his experience when working in the Community Safety Team at the Home Office, when the Community Safety Team planned to introduce the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) model. This represented a major change to police governance on a national level. He had acted as the lead officer working with organisations in each area, holding roadshows with the aim of identifying how the model would work, the possible pitfalls and how success would be measured. Mr Bugg highlighted that it was a contentious policy, and he considered that by ensuring it was a collaborative process involving policing, community safety and justice partnerships the process had been successful.

Mr Bugg provided the Panel with an example of his local experience whilst in post as the Director of Strategy, for the Hertfordshire PCC, where he had spent a period of time on secondment from the Home Office. The work had involved responding quickly to set up a Police and Crime Plan and establish a budget due to the election and the budget setting timetable. With the new PCC, they had a Plan and budget in place and built governance arrangements, which had provided Hertfordshire with the foundation for success.

Mr Bugg was asked how he would ensure he become familiar with Northamptonshire and the residents who live there.

Mr Bugg indicated that he considered it important to know the area that he worked in and it was customary for him to prioritise engaging with the community to gain an understanding of the requirements of the local communities both urban and rural.

Mr Bugg was asked what he saw as the key factors involved in enabling the OPFCC to operate as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible in a demanding financial environment and how would seek to address these.

Mr Bugg advised the Panel of his experience in governance both at local and national level. Mr Bugg expressed his intention to understand how the OPFCC operated, understand any frustrations, and ensure the smooth running of the team. He was confident that he would apply his experience in his governance role to bring about positive outcomes. Mr Bugg expressed a commitment to investing in staff wellbeing, which was a key factor in improving the service to the community.

Mr Bugg was asked to provide an example of when he had identified and implemented an innovative solution to a significant problem or need and how he had sought to ensure that it was successful.

Mr Bugg explained that he could not discuss advice given to ministers. He provided an example of his experience with the Police Workforce Unit which was public facing focussing on frontline policing. When collating advice from the leadership of policing it was identified that neither the Police Staff nor the Police Officers views were being sufficiently represented.

Mr Bugg had conceived the Front-line Review, working to the Policing Minister to change the way policing was considered, by engaging with front-line support staff and Police Officers. A team was formed from the representative groups, those with the experience best to inform the process. Using social media to engage with front-

line services to elicit feedback to identify areas for change. Which resulted in production of a national report on the front-line experience which moved away from the original focus and focussed on the wellbeing of Police Officers and support of officers with mental health issues. Mr Bugg expressed his pride in the work carried out, and the positive impact it had for front-line staff.

Mr Bugg was asked what approach he would take to build and maintain productive relationships with local, regional and national partners, particularly when dealing with challenging matters, in order to achieve good outcomes.

Mr Bugg responded that both the Police and Local Authorities shared the same approach, and that working collaboratively was more productive and that he would look to build on the strong partnership arrangements in place. Mr Bugg added the following points:

- He had a strong network with his senior civil service counterparts, Police, Fire and Justice in national government. His experience with the PFCC model provided the insight in to how it interfaced with the agendas of each of those bodies.
- On a local level, he would be visiting local communities to ensure that he understood their issues, and to make new contacts.
- Northamptonshire had strong regional policing arrangements in place and that he would look to build on those arrangements. The borders of Northamptonshire were broad, with partners in the various regions, and he added that he would not want to be limited by geographic structures.

Mr Bugg was asked to expand on the work he had carried out with the youth offending services.

Mr Bugg provided further information on his experience in this area:

- He had worked for Children's services in Hertfordshire, where he looked at exclusions and admissions in education.
- His first national policy role had been with the Youth Justice Board, where he worked on restraint techniques in youth in custody covering decency and treatment of young people.
- He had experience in resettlement from custody, the integration of people with community services.

Mr Bugg explained that this work led to a commitment to work with children and young people's issues. The role with the OPFCC offered the opportunity for him to work in an area where the focus was on prevention.

Mr Bugg further added that he was the Chair of Governors at his local secondary school and retained contact with Children's Services locally and that he had previously sat as a youth magistrate.

Mr Bugg was asked how, as the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, he would seek to ensure the maintenance of high standards in the way that the PFCC and the OPFCC operates.

Mr Bugg explained that he was experienced at maintaining the professional boundaries required in the role. He had worked with ministers and PCCs and had been involved in governance and integrity matters at a local level. He considered himself well versed in the legal framework regarding the role of the PFCC. He was also aware of the Panel's role of support, challenge and scrutiny for the PFCC and was keen to work closely with the Panel.

Mr Bugg was asked to provide an example of when he had been required to challenge someone at a senior level about a course of action that they were proposing and how he went about doing that effectively.

Mr Bugg advised that, as a policy adviser and a senior civil servant, he had over 20 years' experience of working with Ministers and had considerable experience of holding conversations of this nature. Due to the confidential nature of his work at the Home Office he could not provide detailed examples of his experience but gave the Panel an insight into his approach for working with ministers, how he assisted them to achieve their goals, how he guided them through the various constricting factors, in order to reach an outcome. He was used to identifying solutions to assist political principals achieve their aims within the bounds of financial, ethical, legal and equalities requirements. This involved an approach that provided them with a detailed understanding of the constraints involved, the achievability of their goals and the reasoning for the final decision. He was confident that his approach could be applied in the role with the OPFCC.

It was noted that Mr Bugg, if appointed, would be taking up the role of Chief Executive less than a year before the next PFCC election. Mr Bugg was asked how he thought this would affect the operating context for the role and how he would seek to respond to any issues or challenges involved. Mr Bugg was also asked how that would affect his current role.

Mr Bugg noted that his career included work with all political parties, a coalition government and a series of different Ministers. He informed the Panel that he was mindful of the shortness of the period before an election and would be drawing on his experience of managing boundaries whilst working in both local government and national government in the pre-election period. He would also be providing the PFCC with advice regarding policy decisions and announcements.

Mr Bugg further explained to the Panel that he was not in a political post and that he had a clear separation between his role as an official and the political role.

Mr Bugg confirmed that when taking up the role of Chief Executive he would give up his existing role as Head of the Fire Strategy and Reform Unit with the Home Office.

Mr Bugg was asked to provide an example of what innovation he intended to apply in this role and how he saw the Police and Fire and Rescue Service working together.

Mr Bugg reflected that the Police and the Fire and Rescue Service were different organisations with their own histories. At the same time, further collaborative working options could be considered to support communities in areas such as prevention of crime, prevention of fire and health.

In response to a supplemental question regarding the role of effective communication and the good working relationship between the Home Office and Fire and Rescue services in preventing industrial action Mr Bugg advised that all parties had a role to play and there was scope for collaboration and that there was a mutual interest in pursuing those relationships. In his current role he worked with the different representative bodies for police officers.

Mr Bugg was asked what relationship he would seek to have with the Police, Fire and Crime Panel if he were appointed and how the Panel could contribute to supporting his role.

Mr Bugg indicated that he would value the support and challenge the Panel could offer. Recognising that Members represented organisations and communities, he would value their support to understand communities and the partnership in Northamptonshire, to identify the challenges, and to identify what actions the key partners required from the OPFCC.

Councillor Gonzalez de Savage advised that he had previously met Mr Bugg but did not hold any predetermined views about the proposed appointment. Mr Bugg was then asked if appointed what would represent success for him in the role of Chief Executive.

Mr Bugg outlined a 3 part plan to:

- Stabilise local leadership, supporting the PFCC to hold to account a new operational leadership team
- Strengthen partnership arrangements both locally and nationally to support innovation and the PFCC's input in national developments, and
- Encourage innovation

In response to a supplemental question regarding key priorities for his first 100 days as Chief Executive, Mr Bugg indicated that he would work with the OPFCC team to develop a plan to get the most from the integrated organisational model it reflected.

Mr Bugg was asked whether he saw the new role as demanding and as satisfying as other roles he had held and not a step down in any way.

Mr Bugg responded that he viewed the role as a promotion, and a development opportunity. There was a perception that national roles were higher, but it was possible to do more at local level. He had also not been a chief executive before. The role with the OPFCC would provide exciting challenges both locally and nationally.

The Chair invited Mr Bugg to raise any questions that he wished to ask the Panel or further comments that he wished to make.

Mr Bugg thought he had provided the Panel with a sense of who he was in his responses to their questions and added that he would welcome the opportunity to work with the Panel in 2024.

208. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

The Chair requested the Panel to agree that the remainder of the meeting be held in private session.

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 if the public and press were present it would be likely that exempt information under Part I Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the act of the descriptions would be disclosed to them.

The remainder of the meeting took place in private session.

209. **Report and recommendation to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire on the proposed appointment of a Chief Executive**

The Panel considered its report and recommendation on the proposed appointment.

At the conclusion of discussion the Chair invited the Panel to reach a resolution on the proposed appointment and by consensus it was:

RESOLVED that: the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel recommends that the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire appoints Mr Jonny Bugg as Chief Executive.

The meeting closed at 3.40 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____