

# **Report to Ethics, Transparency & Audit Panel**

## **Election 2021 Task and Finish Group**

### **Introduction**

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner was created and is governed by The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. Election for office is required to be held every four years. The first election for a PCC took place in November 2012 followed by the second election in May 2016. The next election was due to take place on 7 May 2020 but due to the Covid 19 Pandemic it was cancelled. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 amended the 2011 Act, enabling PCC's to take on the governance of the local Fire and Rescue service in addition to the existing role overseeing Police. Since 1 August 2018 the office has operated in Staffordshire as the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

### **Background**

In December 2019 an Election Task and Finish Group was set up, I was asked to attend the meetings and report back to ETAP. After only a few meetings the government, in response to the ongoing pandemic, postponed all Elections in 2020. The Commissioner, Matthew Ellis, even although he had decided that he was not standing for re-election in 2020, agreed to remain in post for another year. As no elections were taking place the Task and Finish Group did not require to meet again in 2020. At the beginning of this year Election 2021 Task and Finish Group met to take up from where it left off in 2020 and prepare for (1) the election due to take place on Thursday 6 May 2021 and (2) the first 100 days in office of the newly elected Commissioner.

## **Approach and Objectives**

In preparation for the election a joint protocol was set up between the Office for Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner's Staff (Commissioner's Office) Staffordshire Police Officers and Staff Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Officers and Staff copied to the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO). The PARO for the 2021 election being Andy O'Brien, Chief Executive, East Staffordshire Borough Council. The Single Point of Contact SPOC is David Morris. The joint protocol provided guidelines, principles and safeguards for all staff so as to avoid allegations of bias and ensure neutrality. The SPOC would deal with requests for information, the PARO any concerns regarding the election process.

The meetings had 5 main agenda items: Action Log, Election Process/review of previous election, horizon scan of candidates' activity, 100 day plan, ceremony and oath signing. The group also prepared extensive Candidates Packs to assist with all aspects of the election and give each candidate information and overview on the role of the Commissioner.

Regular updates at the meetings gave assurance that the election process was being closely monitored and the action log meant that tasks recorded were carried out timeously.

The ongoing horizon scan of candidates' activity has let the Group know which candidates have been most active in the area and provided an awareness of their main areas of interest and their proposals. It was noted that each candidate has focused on the Police role of the Commissioner with little mention of the Fire and Rescue role.

A great deal of work has gone into the 100 Day Plan, this document sets out a very comprehensive and full timetable for the incoming Commissioner. It covers meeting with Chief Officers, Elected

Members in Local Authorities, Voluntary Groups, Partnership Organisations, PFCC, CCU IOPC, Auditors etc. It also includes training and induction days. It is accepted that the timetable will be subject to change but will give the newly elected Commissioner an insight in to how extensive the role is that they have taken on.

Due to current circumstances the Ceremony for the newly elected commissioner will only have 15 attendees. It is scheduled to take place at Hanley Community Fire Station on 14 May 2021. It will be live streamed.

The Oath for acceptance of office as Police Commissioner has been set out in statute however no such oath exists for the Fire and Rescue role. As a result an Oath has been prepared and approved by the Group. Both Oaths will be completed at the ceremony on 14 May. It is hoped that a statutory Oath will be put in place before the next elections in 2024.

## **Election and Candidates**

As you are all aware the election will take place on Thursday 6 May 2021. There are 5 candidates standing in Staffordshire

- Ben Adams (Conservative)
- Deneice Florence-Jukes (Independent)
- Tony Kearon (Labour)
- Michael Riley (Reform UK)
- Richard Whelan (Liberal Democrat)

The Individual profiles for each candidate can be found at [www.choosemypcc.org.uk](http://www.choosemypcc.org.uk)

## **Conclusion**

ETAP are assured appropriate management of the pre-election period and post-election planning was demonstrated through the Election Task and Finish Group.

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