

Interim Report to Ethics Review Panel

Election 2024 Task and Finish Group, 24 January 2024

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 for a PFCC was due to take place on 7 May 2020 but due to the Covid 19 Pandemic it was cancelled. The election subsequently took place on 6 May 2021.

Background

For the forthcoming election on 2 May 2024 (although no formal announcement on the date has been announced it is likely to take place on this day). An Election Task and Finish Group has been set up, I have been asked to attend the meetings and report back to ETAP. The first meeting took place on 27 November 2023, there was a further meeting on 5 January 2024. A further 6 meetings are planned.

Approach and Objectives

The Terms of Reference has been agreed and ratified at the meeting on 5 January 2024.

In preparation for the election a Joint Protocol is being set up between the Office for Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner's Staff (Commissioner's Office) Staffordshire Police Officers and

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Officers and will be copied to the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO).

The PARO for the 2024 election being Andy O'Brien, Chief Executive, East Staffordshire Borough Council.

The Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for the PFCC office is David Morris.

The joint protocol will provide guidelines, principles and safeguards for all staff so as to avoid allegations of bias and ensure neutrality. The Protocol will be approved at the Strategic Governance Board this month. David Morris will arrange election awareness training following publication of the protocol should it be required.

The SPOC will deal with requests for information, the PARO any concerns regarding the election process.

Comprehensive Candidate Packs will be prepared and published on the Commissioners website. This will assist with all aspects of the election and will give each candidate information and overview on the role of the Commissioner.

All Information Requests from candidates will be posted on PFCC website so that it is available to all interested parties.

Regular updates at the election meetings will provide assurance that the election process is being closely monitored and that Action Log tasks are being carried out timeously.

The election has been entered into the Strategic Risk Register although no risk has been identified thus far.

Once candidates are known regular Horizon Scanning of candidates' activity will 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.

The Pre Election Period, provided the election takes place on 2 May 2024, will commence on 21 March 2024. The Commissioner has been made aware of the restrictions placed on his office regarding decision making and publicity during this time and where to seek advice on any issues.

A great deal of work goes 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 provides the newly elected Commissioner an insight in to how extensive the role is that they have taken on.

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, despite the Government having four years to resolve this anomaly. As a result, an Oath will be prepared and approved by the Group. Both Oaths will be completed at the ceremony following the election.

Jane M Barr

ETAP Member