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Police and Crime  
Commissioner  
for Warwickshire

# APPOINTMENT: CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

*CONFIRMATION HEARING - 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019*

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to enable members of the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) to consider the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) proposed appointment of a Chief Finance Officer (CFO).

In doing so the panel must satisfy itself that the preferred candidate selected by the PCC has the professional competence to undertake the role and has significant personal independence to be able to act operationally independent of the PCC.

The report provides an overview of the appointment process that has been undertaken to select the preferred candidate.

The PCC wishes to appoint Mrs Sara Ansell as his CFO.

## Recommendation

It is recommended that the PCP considers the PCC's preferred candidate Mrs Sara Ansell for the role of CFO to the PCC, at the confirmation hearing on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

### 1. Introduction and Background

Since June 2016 the PCC has shared his CFO, Elizabeth Hall with the PCC for West Mercia, providing 50% of the funding for the post. The current post holder works 3 days a week and splits her time to provide CFO advice and support to both PCC's.

Elizabeth is supported in her role by the Head of Finance and Deputy 151 Officer Sara Ansell who works fulltime. The PCC in Warwickshire provides 31% of the funding for this post and as with Elizabeth, Sara splits her time supporting both PCC's on a 69%:31% basis.

Following West Mercia's decision to terminate the Strategic Alliance (SA) which was announced on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2018 the PCC has reviewed his requirement for financial advice in the light of this decision.

The PCC is firmly of the view that he requires financial advice that is independent of the Police. Both the '**CIPFA statement on the role of the CFO of the PCC and the CFO of the Chief Constable**' and the '**Financial Management code of practice for Police Forces of England and Wales**' clearly state that the PCC and Chief Constable should have their own CFO. The statement requires that both the PCC and Chief Constable should appoint separate CFO's and when under existing arrangements a joint CFO has been appointed the reasons should be explained publically in the PCC's Annual Governance Report, together with an explanation of how the arrangement will deliver the same impact.

The PCC wishes to appoint his own CFO and not rely upon a shared arrangement as outlined. Further, in the light of West Mercia's decision to terminate the SA the PCC considers it is imperative that he has his own independent financial advice which is separate to the force. The impact of the termination is likely to be very significant from a financial perspective and with this in mind the PCC is seeking to appoint a fulltime CFO to meet the challenges that the termination will undoubtedly bring.

The PCC must under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (Act) notify the PCP of the preferred candidate for appointment as CFO. Schedule 8 of the Act states that the PCC must provide the following information:

- a) The name of the person who the PCC is proposing to appoint;
- b) The criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate and how the candidate satisfies these criteria; and
- c) The terms and conditions under which the candidate is to be appointed.

Also provided for the PCP's consideration are

- i. Job Profile and Person Specification
- ii. The HR and selection process followed;
- iii. Expression of interest of the preferred candidate.
- iv. Questions posed during the selection interview;

## **2. Matters for consideration.**

### **2.1 Job Profile and Person Specification**

The role profile is a key document in the appointment process. It sets out clearly the expectations and requirements of the role. Please see **Appendix A** of this report.

### **2.2 The HR and selection process**

As a consequence of termination both Elizabeth Hall and Sara Ansell were put at risk as clearly the existing arrangement as set out in Section 1 could not continue after 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

Following the Alliance management of change policy both Elizabeth Hall (as a slot in) and Sara Ansell were offered this post.

Elizabeth Hall declined the post. Sara Ansell following request submitted an expression of interest for the post which is attached at **Appendix B** for the panel's consideration. This sets out how Sara feels that she has the necessary experience and skills to perform the CFO role.

Sara has worked in her current role since March 2017 and as such her skills and abilities are already known to the PCC. Some panel members will also be familiar with Sara as she has attended full panel meetings and meetings of the panel's Budget Working Group since she was appointed.

On Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2019 Sara was interviewed for this role by the PCC, Neil Hewison Chief Executive and Jat Virk HR Business Partner.

A copy of the questions posed are attached for the panel's consideration at **Appendix C**.

Sara answered all of the interview questions well and passed the interview.

Based upon her previous experience with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), her expression of interest in the role and her performance during interview the PCC was satisfied that Sara was suitable to be appointed as his CFO.

### **2.3 Preferred Candidate – Sara Ansell**

As is apparent from her expression of interest Sara has extensive experience in public sector finance. For 12 months she successfully performed the acting CFO role at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough before joining the OPCC. She is a qualified public sector accountant and a member of CIPFA. In addition, Sara has deputised for the existing OPCC CFO over the past two years and has benefited and learnt from Elizabeth Hall's extensive experience as a CFO.

Sara's proposed appointment is a well-deserved career progression.

### **2.4 Terms and Conditions of appointment**

This permanent full time appointment will commence on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

The CFO post has been independently 'Hay' evaluated as a Grade L (Alliance Police Staff Pay Grade). The annual salary being £64,847.

The post holder will be eligible to enrol in the Local Government Pension Scheme. Expenses and business mileage costs incurred in connection with the role will be reimbursed.

### **2.5 Deputy CFO**

Following Sara's appointment arrangements will be made to identify a deputy CFO as is required under legislation. The PCC has no intention of appointing a deputy but will seek support from possibly Warwickshire Police or other public sector partners in Warwickshire to provide deputy CFO cover for the OPCC when it is required.

**Philip Seccombe TD**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Seccombe', written on a light-colored grid background.

**Philip Seccombe TD**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner.**

## **Appendix A- JOB PROFILE**

- Post:** Chief Finance Officer (Treasurer)
- Hours and Salary:** Full time – 37 hours Grade L
- Reporting to:** Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner
- Responsible for:** Finance and Audit
- Location:** Office of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner,  
Northgate Street, Warwick

### **PURPOSE OF ROLE**

- The post holder will be the principal advisor to the PCC on the preparation of financial strategies to achieve the commissioner's objectives.
- The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) will work with the Chief Constable and the Force Head of Finance to ensure that the PCC strategies are resourced and implemented in a timely and cost-effective way.
- The CFO will ensure that high standards of financial governance and control are maintained for all aspects of the Commissioners' activities.
- To provide the PCC, Chief Executive, and OPCC staff with professional, financial, and business advice to support them to deliver the best possible service within the resources available.
- The post holder will be a key member of the PCC senior management team.

This is a statutory role and the statutory responsibilities of the CFO are set out in the following legislation:

- Paragraph 6 of Schedule 1 to the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
- Sections 112 and 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972

This role is the Section 151 officer for the Police and Crime Commissioner.

### **KEY STRATEGIC AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

The CFO will provide professional advice on financial matters to the PCC, and will:

- Contribute to the Police and Crime Commissioner's strategic, managerial and planning decisions, providing impartial, accurate, specialist, professional financial advice to ensure that all decisions are made in an informed way with consideration to wider financial and strategic business implications
- Actively contribute to regular Office, Force and partnership meetings to explain complex financial information in a way that can be clearly understood
- Lead on the development of the PCC's medium term financial plan

- Be actively involved in, and able to influence, all strategic business decisions of the PCC, ensuring that all the financial implications, opportunities and risks are fully considered and aligned with the PCC's financial strategy
- Work with managers of the Commissioner's Office and the Force to support change programmes, ensuring sufficient challenge and rigour is built into the process and ensuring the effective implementation of business plans; capturing and monitoring the business benefits and financial impacts. This includes responsibility for ensuring that all benefits are captured accurately and fully realised by the appropriate changes to the Commissioner's and Force's budget
- Lead in the preparation of budgets and to provide specialist advice and contribute to the strategic decision of the PCC as to the availability of resources and the setting of the precept
- Be the main point of contact for all Partnership and Grant related funding and finance issues and to lead on the development of financial and governance arrangements for the proper management and audit of grants
- Lead the preparation and audit of the annual accounts (and any Group accounts) Police and Crime Plans and value for money statement as required by the PCC and Chief Executive
- Lead on the risk management arrangements for the PCC, providing advice and guidance and developing and maintaining the PCC's risk management strategy and risk register
- Provide specialist advice to the PCC on the adoption and review of financial delegations, a scheme of consent and arrangements for the oversight of budget controls and related records as required
- Ensure sound financial governance in the OPCC and Force through the development of sound financial reporting frameworks and the OPCC risk management strategy
- Provide advice on the levels of reserves and balances that is in line with good practice guidance
- Lead the promotion and delivery by the PCC good financial management so that public money is safeguarded and used appropriately, economically, efficiently, and effectively, and ensure that the finance function of the OPCC is resourced and fit for purpose
- Liaise with the force Head of Finance to advise the PCC and Chief Constable on value for money in relation to all aspects of PCC and Chief Constable / Force expenditure
- Ensure that effective monitoring arrangements are in place to retain a clear view on how force budgets are being spent and adhered to throughout the financial year
- Ensure publication of the statement of accounts and other external reporting requirements
- Lead on the development of the Treasury Management Strategy
- Closely scrutinise force saving plans to ensure that they are delivered
- Jointly, with the Head of Finance, manage the Internal Audit function and support the joint audit and standards committee.
- To provide day to day leadership, management and development of the Finance Officer and management of the Administration Team, to ensure the delivery of a professional Financial Management service

- Any other responsibilities as required by the PCC.

### **STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Chief Financial Officer of the PCC is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the financial affairs of the PCC are properly administered and all financial regulations are observed and kept up to date;
- Ensuring regularity, propriety, and value for money in the use of public funds;
- Ensuring that the funding required to finance agreed programmes is available from government funding, precept, other contributions and recharges;
- Reports to the PCC, the Police and Crime Panel, and to the external auditors any unlawful, or potentially unlawful, expenditure by the PCC or officers of the PCC;
- Reporting to the PCC, the Police and Crime Panel, and to the external auditor when it appears that expenditure is likely to exceed the resources available to meet that expenditure;
- Advising the PCC on the robustness of the budget and adequacy of financial reserves;
- Ensuring production of the statements of accounts of the PCC;
- Ensuring receipt and scrutiny of the statements of accounts of the Chief Constables and ensuring production of the group accounts;
- Liaising with the external auditor;
- Advising the PCC on the application of value for money principles by the police force to support the PCC in holding the Chief Constable to account for efficient and effective financial management; and
- Advising, in consultation with the Chief Executive, on the safeguarding of assets, including risk management and insurance.

**N.B.** The CFO of the PCC has certain statutory duties which cannot be delegated, namely: reporting any potentially unlawful decisions by the PCC on expenditure, and preparing each year, in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts, a statement of the PCC's accounts, including group accounts. The Chief Financial Officer of a PCC is the PCC's professional adviser on financial matters.

### **POLITICAL RESTRICTIONS**

The Chief Financial Officer is a politically restricted post.

In summary, the restrictions imposed on post-holders include:

- Becoming or remaining, whether by election or otherwise, a member of a Local Authority, of the National Assembly of Wales, of the European Parliament, of the House of Commons, or a Police and Crime Commissioner;
- Announcing, or allowing others to announce, one's candidature for one of the aforementioned offices;
- Holding office in a political party;
- Canvassing at elections; and
- Speaking or writing publicly on matters of party political controversy.



## **SPECIAL CONDITIONS / POINTS TO NOTE**

- The purpose of this job description is to indicate the general level of the duties and responsibilities of the role. The duties may, from time to time, vary without changing the general character of the role or the levels of responsibilities.
- The role will be based at the Warwickshire OPCC.
- The role will require some out-of-hours working.
- Appointment to this post is subject to:
  - security clearance, and
  - A confirmation hearing by the Police and Crime Panel.

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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|-----|--|------------------|
| 1.  | Member of an accountancy body recognised by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), qualified through examination. | <b>Essential</b> |
| 2.  | Adhere to international standards set by IFAC on ethics and Continuing Professional Development.                               | <b>Essential</b> |
| 3.  | Experience of managing large scale budgets in the public sector.   | <b>Essential</b> |
| 4.  | Proven experience of operating at a strategic level in a political and high profile public environment.                        | <b>Essential</b> |
| 5.  | Proven negotiation and influencing skills at a senior level within complex stakeholder relationships.                          | <b>Essential</b> |
| 6.  | Recent experience of working at a strategic level with partner organisations to plan and deliver effective services.           | <b>Essential</b> |
| 7.  | Recent direct experience of designing and monitoring sound and effective corporate governance arrangements.                    | <b>Essential</b> |
| 8.  | Experience of large scale financial appraisals and decision making on complex projects.  | <b>Essential</b> |
| 9.  | Degree level or equivalent in an area related to public sector policy making or the management of resources.                   | <b>Desirable</b> |
| 10. | Recent experience within the Policing and Community Safety sector.   | <b>Desirable</b> |
| 11. | Knowledge and experience of modern processes for the effective allocation of resources.  | <b>Desirable</b> |

Personal Qualities Level: Senior Manager, Schedule to be inserted

**Appendix B- Warwickshire Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner**  
**Sara Ansell - Expression of Interest – Treasurer Vacancy - July 2019**

I am very grateful for the opportunity to apply for this post and hope that the information provided demonstrates my suitability for the role. As you are aware I have been working as the Deputy CFO for the PCC's across the Alliance since taking up the position in March 2017. Throughout that time I have been exposed to a number of opportunities and challenges, many finance-related and others more overarching, but all have required me to apply some of the key skills and qualities that I feel I possess, and that are transferable to this role. Crucially my current role has also given me knowledge and experience of working within the 'policing' environment at a senior level in both OPCC's, and during a period of unprecedented change.

I consider some of my significant achievements over this period include playing a fundamental role in preparing budgets and medium term financial plans in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and the associated reports, undertaking critical budget monitoring and financial control processes, coordinating and preparing narrative reports and PCC accounts for inclusion within the Statement of Accounts for each PCC and Chief Constable, actively working with the Warwickshire OPCC on their commissioning work throughout 2018/19 and working closely with the Chief Officer team to support Warwickshire as it exits from the Strategic Alliance, whilst balancing any potential conflicts of interests arising from my shared role, requiring me to work with integrity and diplomacy, as well as confidentially, whilst maintaining relationships on both sides.

Whilst the Treasurer role represents a career progression opportunity, it is one that I am confident I can fulfil. I have previously acted up into a S151 role for a 10-11 month period to cover maternity leave at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council in 2017. This was the direct period before leaving to take up my current role. This involved me setting their 2017/18 budget, signing off the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts and preparing savings plans and working with Chief Officers, senior managers and elected Members to plan for the 18/19 budget cycle, whereby significant cost reductions and efficiencies had to be identified, developed and implemented, based on anticipated reduced central funding. I found this period rewarding, and enjoyed the responsibility and challenge that the role provided, and was thanked publicly by Members and Chief Officers for the work that I had undertaken and the oversight provided in fulfilling the role, during that period.

In my current role I deputise for the Treasurer who works part-time, and whose main focus over recent months has been supporting West Mercia during the Alliance exit negotiations, whilst I have worked more closely with Warwickshire. This 'division of duties' has meant that I have had to step up into the role of Treasurer on an unofficial basis more readily in my daily role. This has included updating the Commissioner and Chief Executive on budget and precept issues, final accounts and auditor concerns, alliance exit matters and active involvement in business case, budget planning and decision notice preparation, being some of the most recent examples of my work at a more strategic level.

However, I also feel that I have been the main 'go-to' finance contact for Warwickshire staff, partly due to my visible presence within the Office and the working relationships that I have built up with other OPCC staff. I have worked with others to deal with general finance and budgetary issues in relation to grants and other office costs and provide strategic and financial advice on a daily basis. This has included addressing issues due to significant changes to the estates and IT capital programmes including the monitoring of the financing arrangements, being heavily involved in establishing an effective reserves strategy to manage risk during the Alliance exit process and working with PPL and the force to establish an effective process for dealing with S106 monies in Warwickshire as well as routine finance issues like raising grant payments to partners, recovering underspending grants where appropriate and providing training and support to OPCC staff on financial systems and processes. One of the main projects I was involved in last year within the OPCC was taking a full and active role in the commissioning work that was undertaken by the Office for victims services, meeting providers and other stakeholders to have oversight of the issues and to have a greater understanding of the process in a wider context than just the finance element. I have also provided support at PCP meetings and more actively at budget working group meetings to give balanced financial advice and information to support their work, enabling me to build up working relationships with some members of the Panel and apply some of the skills and abilities acquired over a number of years at Cabinet and Scrutiny panels whilst working within Local Government.

I consider that the main additional responsibilities of the Treasurer role, from my current position are detailed below, and I have also tried to document the relevant skills, abilities and experience I possess to fulfil these requirements of the role:

- Undertaking the statutory responsibilities of the role, including ensuring proper financial administration and regulations are observed, ensuring the delivery of VFM in the use of public funds, appropriate reporting of any unlawful financial activity and ensuring that proper funding is in place to meet agreed spending plans.
  - I have been involved in reviewing financial procedure rules and the corporate governance framework in my current role as part of the annual review presented to the Audit Committee and this also encompasses some value for money (VFM) work in terms of ensuring that the governance arrangements are in place and adhered to, to enable the delivery of VFM, particularly on the basis of compliance with contract and financial procedure rules.
  - VFM work also extends to having robust business planning and business case processes in place to manage risk and ensure that all options are being considered and VFM achieved. I have been involved in reviewing business cases within Warwickshire in relation to the alliance exit, especially concerning the work the Evolve team have undertaken on budgeting and the rebuild of Warwickshire services and

specifically more recently on their cost liability work. In the case of West Mercia I was involved in reviewing the fire business case as presented by the consultant.

- Whilst I have never had to report on any inappropriate or unlawful financial activity, I see this as a positive in terms of the organisations, financial accountability, controls and integrity in place at the organisations I have been involved with and the individuals with whom I work. Whilst I am sure that such a situation would not arise, I feel that the professional relationships I have built, along with my communication skills and the availability of professional guidance from CIPFA, would mean I could access advice readily and would therefore be suitably-equipped to deal with such a situation should it arise.
- Since qualifying as a CIPFA member in 1996/97 most of my professional career has focussed on preparing budgets, assessing income and financing levels and monitoring and controlling expenditure. I am comfortable with my skills and abilities in this area to assess funding and ensuring that controls' keep spending within plan, even though there are significant challenges ahead as the Alliance ends.
- Taking the lead role on the development of the PCC's budget and setting of the precept including the production of the medium term financial plan and preparing a statement on the adequacy of reserves.
  - I have built up significant skills and working relationships across my career in preparing budget reports and papers, to consider precept options and develop savings plans. As Acting S151 at NBBC I was responsible for signing off the 17/18 budget, including a statement on the reserves and working towards delivering a balanced budget in 18/19. I have played an instrumental role in preparing the budgets for Warwickshire and West Mercia in my current role, writing some parts independently and updating the budget reports to reflect each PCC's wishes.
- Influencing and informing strategic decision making by the PCC, especially on matters relating to finance.
  - I feel that I have had open and frank discussions with the PCC and Chief Executive in both Offices to inform decision making and to manage risk. My work has also included the preparation of information to provide evidence and support decision making. Some of my specific work has been in relation to various projects and business cases, including the OPU move, precept options and budget monitoring

papers. I feel that this statutory responsibility will be an extension of the work I have undertaken to date.

- Preparing and leading the setting of strategy for treasury management, capital and reserves to comply with regulations and best practise.
  - I have reviewed treasury management reports presented to the Joint Audit and Standards Committee and worked with colleagues in the force finance team, whom I have built strong professional relationships with.
  - I have helped prepare capital and reserves strategies, and networked with other colleagues across PACCTS and Warwickshire Districts to understand more about best practise in preparing such documents. I also regularly complete reserve returns for PACCTS and CIPFA which feed and inform the strategy documents.
  - I also work very closely with force finance colleagues to re-work capital programmes and financing based on emerging information and changing circumstances, so I feel confident in continuing this work and developing such strategies in the future.
- Ensuring compliance with all statutory obligations in terms of financial reporting including the Statement of Accounts and liaising with the external auditors as necessary.
  - Throughout my career I have played fundamental roles in terms of the preparation of the year end accounts, and within increasingly shortened timescales. I have worked closely with force finance colleagues and other colleagues within the OPCC to ensure that the statements are published in accordance with statutory guidelines. I have also worked extensively with external audit in my previous roles, and also throughout my work with the PCC's on the Joint Audit and Standards Committee.

I feel that my experience and knowledge, along with my desire to work effectively and setting myself high personal standards, mean that I can fulfil the four main themes that I consider essential in fulfilling a Treasurer role, notably, providing effective management and leadership qualities; providing sound financial management and administration skills to ensure that robust and well-understood financial controls and governance arrangements are in place, including risk management; providing support and advice to the PCC in respect of all strategic financial matters and providing an effective and responsive financial service to the OPCC.

The next few months and years will undoubtedly be busy and challenging as Warwickshire exits from the Alliance, but this is a challenge that I hope I can play a

role in and ensure that services to the communities within Warwickshire continue to improve.

## **Appendix C- interview questions**

1. What do you believe is the fundamental purpose of a Treasurer CFO to the PCC and how does it differ from your current role?

Prompt:

- How will your skills and experience help you to perform the role?
- What will be the challenges?
- What personal development do you feel you require, if any?
- What would you look to achieve during your first 3 months / 6 months in post?

2. Can you explain a change that you have implemented?

Prompt:

- What was your personal contribution to this?
- What was successful?
- What would you do differently in the future?
- What did you learn?

3. Can you describe a situation where you found yourself having to deal with a complex or important issue where you have acted as mediator or arbitrator between parties with different opinions?

Prompt:

- What personal qualities did you find most helpful in resolving the situation?
- What were the main challenges that you faced?

4. Can you describe how you establish effective working relationships with multiple stakeholders from different organisations or professional backgrounds?

5. Have you dealt with an external audit issue that may affect the opinion on the accounts, can you describe this and what you did to resolve the issue?

Prompt:

- Do you think the relationship with external audit was effected by this event and if so how?
- Were you able to maintain relationship with the auditors thereafter and was there opportunity to improve relationships, process etc.