

Cumbria Police Authority
Personnel Committee
27th February 2006.

Agenda Item No. 12

Report by the Clerk & Chief Executive.

**APPOINTMENT OF A MAGISTRATE MEMBER TO THE POLICE
AUTHORITY**

Background

On 1st April 2005 the Courts Act 2003 abolished Magistrates' Courts Committees, which had been the mechanism by which Magistrate Members of the Police Authority were appointed. The responsibility for the appointment of new "Lay Justice" Members now rests with the Police Authority itself.

RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.

Detail

A vacancy, as from 1st April 2006, will exist for a Magistrate Member of the Police Authority. A notice to that effect, produced by the Police Authority, was circulated to all Magistrates in Cumbria by the Courts Service. A copy of the notice is attached at Appendix 1.

In accordance with the Police Authorities (Lay Justice Selection Panel) Regulations 2005 arrangements will be made to convene a meeting of the Selection Panel that is responsible for compiling a short-list of applicants for consideration by the Police Authority. The Selection Panel comprises:-

- A representative from the Police Authority (Mr R Watson);
- A representative appointed by the Home Secretary (Ms T Calway); and
- A third member (Mr W Swarbrick).

Unlike the appointment of Independent Members there is no role in the process for the Home Secretary.

Following short-listing the actual appointment falls to the Police Authority. Draft guidance issued jointly by the Home Office and Association of Police Authorities strongly recommends that a small group of Members carry out the interviews of short-listed applicants. This is a role usually fulfilled by the Personnel Committee, though on this occasion the Magistrate Member of the Committee (Mrs Slavin) would not be able to participate in the process. A meeting of the Committee will be convened to conduct interviews before the end of March.

The most recent advice received from the Association of Police Authorities with regard to the term of office of the newly appointed Magistrate Member is that they should be appointed for a full four year period. If the Authority were to be dissolved on the creation of a new strategic police authority then the appointment would automatically cease. If any new advice is received on this particular matter it will be reported at the meeting.

C R Alcock
Clerk and Chief Executive

17th February 2006.

Background documents:

“Selection and Appointment of Lay Justice Members of Police Authorities in England and Wales”, draft joint guidance issued by the Home Office and Association of Police Authorities.

Race and Diversity and Human Rights Act Implications:

All Lay Justices will be given the opportunity to make an application to become a Member of the Police Authority.

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS FOR AUTHORITY MEMBERSHIP

Cumbria Police Authority is established under the Police Act 1996 to secure the maintenance of an efficient and effective police force in Cumbria. This information sheet is specifically for magistrates considering an application and gives an outline of the requirements and responsibilities demanded of members of Cumbria Police Authority. It is provided to remind those considering an application, not only of the personal qualities needed but also the duties placed upon the Authority itself.

General

This is the first time that the selection of Magistrate members of Cumbria Police Authority has been conducted in accordance with revised arrangements introduced by the Courts Act 2003. This year the process is to be overseen by a Selection Panel composed of one person appointed by the Secretary of State; and two further people appointed by the Councillor and Independent Members of the Police Authority. This Panel produces a shortlist of candidates who will be interviewed by the Police Authority's Personnel Committee. Unlike previous years, candidates do not have to be nominated by a Magistrate, but applicants should provide the name and address of two referees.

There is one vacancy on the Authority for a period of 4 years; beginning on 1st April 2006. Although the present incumbent will have completed a 4-year term of office and is therefore still eligible for re-appointment, this is a complete and competitive process of selection for appointment by interview, where any competent applicant could prove successful on the merits, on the day.

The Police Authority wishes to reflect the composition of the area and welcomes applications from all eligible people irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability or any other factor.

Background

The Authority has 17 members, 9 County Council appointees, 5 independent members and 3 Magistrates. Magistrate Members are eligible for re-selection after serving a Term subject to them not attaining the age of 70 years before their term of office would normally end. Magistrate members of the Authority do not represent the Bench from which they are appointed.

Appointments to the Authority will be made by a Selection Panel (as referred to above) and the Authority's Personnel Committee. Interviews will therefore be necessary and the intention is that they will be held in March 2006.

The personal skills and qualities required of a Police Authority Member are – team working, self confidence, enthusiasm and drive, respect for others, integrity and leadership. Competencies include – analytical ability, the ability to scrutinise and challenge, strategic thinking, good judgement, the ability to communicate effectively and effective time management.

Membership of the Authority represents an interesting and significant responsibility; one which is time-consuming but satisfying in the contribution members can make to achieving accountable and successful policing in Cumbria. A minimum of 7 – 10 hours per week (at meetings, in project groups or in reading papers) is estimated as required, but this level of commitment can easily increase, depending on the roles/responsibilities chosen to be taken on by individual members.

During 2006/2007, there will probably be at 7 full Police Authority meetings. Members must also expect to be appointed to one or more of the Committees or Working Groups through

which the Authority operates, as well as taking on Lead Member roles and representing the Authority on Constabulary Working Groups.

Arrangements for reimbursing Police Authority Members (including Magistrates) changed during 2002. An annual allowance of £8,493 is paid to Members with further, additional "special responsibility" allowances paid to the holders of certain roles. The members annual allowance is paid monthly whilst travelling and other out of pocket expenses are also reimbursed by the Police Authority.

The Role of the Member

- ❑ To ensure that there is an effective and efficient police force for the area
- ❑ To ensure that local communities receive best value in local policing services
- ❑ To set the strategic direction for the Constabulary and exercise effective oversight of force performance
- ❑ To represent the interests of all those who live in, work in, or visit the Police Authority area and to ensure that the views of local people are reflected in the nature and style of local policing
- ❑ To ensure that policing services are provided fairly and in a way which does not discriminate against any group or individual
- ❑ To participate constructively in the good governance of both the Authority and the Constabulary.

The Key Functions of the Police Authority

- To secure an efficient and effective police service (Section 6, Police Act 1996)
- To secure best value i.e. continuous improvement in the way (their functions) are exercised having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Section 3, Local Government Act 1999)
- To make arrangements for obtaining
 - The views of (local) people (about) the policing of their area; and
 - The co-operation (of local people) in preventing crime
- To set the budget.

Further information

To discuss the role, potential applicants should contact: -

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Application forms and supporting information are available from:-

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