

Status of Report: Public

Meeting: Combined Fire Authority

Date: 10 February 2021

Subject: Recruitment of Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

Report by: The Monitoring Officer and the Treasurer

Author: Lauren Haslam, The Monitoring Officer

For: Information

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Combined Fire Authority of the proposed arrangements to recruit on a permanent basis to the post of Chief Fire and Rescue Officer.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the Combined Fire Authority
 - a) Note the proposed arrangements for the recruitment and appointment of a new Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (CFO); and
 - b) appoint a panel of 5 members drawn from the membership of the CFA Employment Committee to serve on the Employment Panel (Appointment of CFO) with delegated powers to consider and agree the following:
 - i) A revised job description and person specification for the post;
 - ii) The terms and conditions for the post;
 - iii) The interview process including the type of tests and assessments to be undertaken; and to make recommendations to the CFA regarding the appointment of a new Chief Fire and Rescue Officer.

Executive Summary

3. The previous Chief Fire and Rescue Officer resigned with effect from 4 September 2020.
4. At its meeting on 29 July, the CFA approved the urgent action taken by the Monitoring Officer and Treasurer to recruit internally on an interim basis until a permanent appointment could be made. Callum Faint, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer was appointed from 4 September 2020 until May/June 2021.
5. It is now timely to advertise the vacancy to ensure that permanent arrangements are in place from 1 June 2021 to bring stability to the Service.

Background

6. Following the resignation of the previous Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (CFO) on 4 September 2020, the Monitoring Officer and Treasurer took urgent action to appoint an interim CFO and this was reported to the CFA under an exempt report at its meeting on 29 July 2020. With the many challenges facing the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service over the following few months, it was agreed that an interim internal appointment be made until a permanent CFO could be appointed in May/June 2021. Callum Faint, the Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer was appointed on an interim basis from 4 September 2020.
7. At the meeting on 29 July 2020, the CFA also authorised the Monitoring Officer and the Treasurer to jointly progress the permanent appointment of a Chief Fire and Rescue Officer depending on the current national situation and the challenges facing the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service. It is now felt timely to advertise the post to bring stability to the Service within such a challenging operating environment.
8. The appointment of the CFO is vested in the CFA on the recommendations of the Employment Panel appointed for the purpose.

Suggested approach

9. It is proposed that the following approach is adopted for the appointment of a CFO on a permanent basis. This mirrors the approach used for previous appointments to the CFO post. Candidates will:
 - Submit a written report;
 - Make a presentation;
 - Undertake a technical test led by a CFO from another area (and any other tests as advised);
 - Meet with senior officers within the Service;
 - Undergo an interview undertaken by an Employment Panel.

Review of job description

10. The post was previously appointed to on a permanent basis in 2018, and before proceeding with this current recruitment process, it is recommended that consideration should be given to the nature of the post in this changing and challenging environment. As such, the job description will be reviewed by the Employment Panel prior to advertising the vacancy as well as the terms and conditions to ensure that these are up to date and fit for purpose.
11. The Employment Panel (CFO Salary Review) convened from the Employment Committee on 8 June 2020 resolved that the vacancy for the position of Chief Fire and Rescue Officer be advertised for future recruitment with a salary band of £130,000 - £140,000. This current vacancy will be advertised at this level.

12. If the CFA wishes to proceed as outlined above, it is recommended that the Group Leaders be invited to nominate 5 members of the Employment Committee to serve on the Employment Panel (Appointment of CFO) with delegated powers to consider and agree the following:-
- i) A revised job description and person specification for the post (Note – any decision to significantly increase or reduce the current remuneration package will require the approval of the CFA or be dealt with using urgency powers set out in the Constitution);
 - ii) The recruitment and appointment process including the type of tests and assessments to be undertaken.
13. The interview will be undertaken by the Panel, assisted by the Monitoring Officer, Treasurer and the Area Manager People and Organisational Development. The recommendation of the Committee will be made to the CFA for approval.
14. The following indicative timetable is proposed.

ACTION	DATE
Review of current role and responsibilities of the CFO and agreement to new job description, person specification, job advert and interview process and report to the CFA if required (if a change in designation or a significant change in the remuneration package is proposed)	February / March
Advertisement of vacancy (2 weeks).	w/c 22 March
Closing Date.	w/c 4 April
Employment Panel – Shortlisting meeting advised by the Monitoring Officer, Treasurer and Area Manager People and Organisational Development and any other persons as previously determined by the Committee. Agree presentation topic/format and questions for final interviews.	w/c 10 May
Technical Interviews	w/c 17 May
Circulation of agenda for final interviews to include candidate packs	w/c 24 May
Employment Panel - Final Interviews.	w/c 7 June
Meeting of CFA to consider the recommendations of the Employment Committee.	16 June 2021
Start Date (assuming 3 months' notice)	September 2021

Report Implications/Impact

9. Legal (including crime and disorder)

The process proposed accords with the provision in the CFA Constitution.

10. Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

The cost of the recruitment process will be met from existing budgets. The proposed salary is as was agreed by the Employment Committee (CFO Salary Review) on 8 June 2020, following analysis by external consultants and is in line as published in the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service's pay policy statement. Any changes to the existing remuneration package for the CFO will need to be agreed by the CFA and will be reflected in the statutory pay policy statement for 2021/22.

11. Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)

The need to recruit permanently to the position of Chief Fire and Rescue Officer has been identified at a time when the service is facing significant challenges. It is important that there is a strong leadership and management of the Authority, and stability, both in the interim and in the longer term. The recommendations in this report will achieve this.

12. Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

The overriding equality objective is to ensure a fair recruitment process and the public sector equality duty requires the CFA and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service to have regard to the requirement to advance equality of opportunity. An external recruitment process achieves these objectives.

13. Environmental

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

14. Impact upon "Our Plan" Objectives

None.

Officer to Contact

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