

Status of Report: Public

Meeting: Combined Fire Authority

Date: 16 June 2021

Subject: Urgent Action taken by the Monitoring Officer and Treasurer – Recruitment of the Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

Report by: The Monitoring Officer and the Treasurer

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For: Decision

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Combined Fire Authority of urgent action taken by the Monitoring Officer and the Treasurer, following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, to put in place arrangements for the appointment of the Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer following the departure of the previous post holder.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) notes the urgent action taken by the Monitoring Officer and Treasurer to put in place arrangements for the recruitment of the Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (ACFO) following the departure of the previous post holder.

Executive Summary

3. Follow the resignation of the previous Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (CFO) on 4 September 2020, interim arrangements were put in place at both CFO and ACFO positions in order to bring stability to the Service during a time of immense challenge. This was approved by the CFA at its meeting in July 2020, and it was also agreed that the interim arrangements would be in place until May/June 2021, when the positions would be filled permanently.
4. Whilst the temporary arrangements for the CFO have been in place, both ACFO positions have been filled on an interim basis and it is now considered timely, to advertise the ACFO position to bring stability to the Service.

Background

5. Following the resignation of the previous Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (CFO) on 4 September 2020, interim arrangements were put in place at both CFO and ACFO positions in order to bring stability to the Service during a time of immense challenge. This was approved by the CFA at its meeting in July 2020,

and it was also agreed that the interim arrangements would be in place until May/June 2021, when the positions would be filled permanently.

6. Due to the need to minimise disruption to the Service and bring stability to the LFRS Senior Management Team so that the many challenges ahead could be addressed, it was imperative that arrangements to recruit permanently to the ACFO position were put in place immediately, and this could not wait until the next meeting of the CFA in June.
7. The matter of the appointment of the ACFO is vested in the CFA (on the recommendation of the Employment Panel). The CFA's Constitution permits urgent action to be taken between meetings subject to this being reported to the next meeting of the CFA, as follows:

'35.1 The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer, or in his absence the Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer be authorised to take any action between meetings which he considers to be urgent in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair (or their nominated representatives) subject to the details of such action being reported for information to the next meeting of the CFA.

35.2 Where any urgent actions proposed in 35.1 affects the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer or any of his Deputies, the Treasurer and/or Monitoring Officer (the Statutory Officers) shall initiate consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair and take such action as may be required.'

8. Following the agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair, the recruitment process for the ACFO position was commenced. The job description, person specification and advert were reviewed, and this was approved by members of the Employment Panel – ACFO Recruitment. The position will be advertised on the National Fire Chief Council website.
9. An Employment Panel has been convened and includes the following members of the CFA:
 - Mr. Ghattoraya
 - Mr. Orson
 - Councillor Bool
 - Mrs. Newton
 - Cllr. Barton
 - Mr. Boulter
10. The position will be advertised on 23 June, with a closing date of 14 July 2021. Applications received will be considered by the Employment Panel (shortlisting) on 29 July. Following an Assessment Centre in August, the interviews will be held on 13 September. The appointment to the ACFO position will be considered by the CFA at its meeting on 22 September 2021.

Report Implications/Impact

11. Legal (including crime and disorder)

The statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the CFA to appoint a Chief Fire Officer with responsibility for managing the fire and rescue service and to carry out the functions conferred on it by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and other enactments . This will include the appointment of a senior officers to support the statutory functions.

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

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

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

13. 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 Assistant 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 in the longer term. With the recent appointment of a new CFO, the recommendation in this report will achieve this.

14. 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.

15. Environmental

There are no environmental implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

16. Impact upon "Our Plan" Objectives

The appointment of a permanent ACFO enables the continued delivery of all aspects of 'Our Plan'.

Background Papers

Report to the CFA 10 February 2021 “Recruitment of Chief Fire and Rescue Officer”
<https://leics-fire.gov.uk/your-fire-service/decision-making/cfa-meetings/>

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