

Report of Chief Fire Officer

Appointment of Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of report

1. To seek approval to make a permanent appointment to the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) in place of the current temporary arrangements. This will be achieved by appointing a second substantive ACFO whilst the existing ACFO will continue in the role of temporary DCFO.
-

Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that a second substantive post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer be appointed at the earliest opportunity.

Background

2. As a consequence of the retirement of the previous Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) in July 2018 the Fire Authority agreed at the time to temporarily promote the current Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) to the DCFO role and back-fill the resultant ACFO vacancy with a temporary internal candidate. This arrangement was immediately put in place and has now been operating successfully for approximately six months.

Proposal

3. Whilst the above arrangement has been working well, and it has enabled the Service to seamlessly progress many of its key strategic objectives, the continued uncertainty over governance arrangements and the associated potential for changes to senior officer structures, linked to the PCC Business Case, is now beginning to cause concern over effective succession planning at senior manager level. This concern has been exacerbated by the fact that a number of Principal Officer vacancies have recently occurred across the wider FRS sector, including within our own neighbouring services, which puts H&WFRS at a potential disadvantage in respect to both retaining and /or attracting senior manager talent and operational expertise.
4. With this in mind, whilst it would be imprudent to appoint a substantive DCFO post at this time, it is considered appropriate to progress with the appointment of a second substantive ACFO whilst continuing to maintain the existing temporary arrangements for the DCFO role. Such an approach would naturally align with the current Principal Officer team's retirement profile and

would help to maintain the existing senior management structure during this uncertain period.

5. As the appointment of an ACFO falls within the Chief Fire Officer's delegated responsibilities the Chief Officer has recently consulted with the Chairman of the Fire Authority and Members of the Appointments Committee who have indicated strong support for this suggested approach. Therefore this paper seeks permission for the Chief Officer to proceed with the appointment of a permanent ACFO at the earliest opportunity.

Summary

6. As a consequence of the continued uncertainty over governance arrangements and the associated potential for changes to senior officer structures linked to the PCC Business Case, as well as the fact that a number of Principal Officer vacancies have occurred across the wider Fire sector, the Fire Authority is requested to support the decision to appoint a second substantive ACFO at the earliest opportunity, whilst the existing ACFO continues in the temporary role of DCFO. In this manner, the overall establishment of the Service will remain the same.

Corporate Considerations

| | |
|---|--|
| Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues) | There will be additional costs associated with the recruitment process but all salaries are within the existing budget |
| Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications). | The proposal is in the interests of the long-term strategic management of the Service. |
| Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores). | None |
| Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter) | None external |

| | |
|--|--|
| Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?) | The recruitment process will be undertaken in accordance with our existing equal opportunities policies. |
|--|--|

Supporting Information

Background papers – Fire Authority report 14/12/2017 (Item 8 – Principal Officer Temporary Structure)

Contact Officer

Nathan Travis
(01905 368201)
Email: ntravis@hwfire.org.uk