

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	Avon Fire Authority
MEETING DATE:	Friday, 17 February 2023
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Recruitment of Assistant Chief Fire Officer

1. **SUMMARY**

Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Steve Imrie has recently announced his intention to retire from Avon Fire and Rescue Service on 31 March 2023. This paper concerns the arrangements to appoint a successor.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Avon Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Decide to undertake a recruitment process for the appointment of a new Assistant Chief Fire Officer.
- b) Delegate the recruitment process to the People and Culture Committee.
- c) Ratify the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive's use of his delegated powers under the Scheme of Delegation to appoint into the role as a development opportunity for internal staff who are eligible to apply.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Following the announcement of ACFO Steve Imrie of his intention to retire on 31 March 2023, from 1 April 2023 the Service will have a vacancy for the position of ACFO. The role of ACFO is considered a Principal Officer and as such appointed by the People and Culture Committee on behalf of the Fire Authority.
- 3.2 The role is an operational uniformed position and requires the post holder to provide operational cover as part of the Principal Officer rota and as such is subject to the 'Gold Book' Terms and Conditions of Service and operational competence.

3.3 The role is an established post and part of the Service Leadership Board (SLB) which is one of the two ACFO positions as part of the organisational structure approved by the Fire Authority.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Fire Authority has established a policy that Principal Officers role below that of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (CFO/CE) and the Statutory Officers would be paid as a proportion of the locally agreed CFO/CE base pay rate. It was agreed by the full Fire Authority at their meeting on 30 March 2022 that any new appointments to the Service Leadership Board would be at the following rates:

Post	New Appointments
CFO/CE	£148,238
ACFO (75%)	£111,179
Directors & Statutory Officers (65%)	£96,355

4.2 The appointment of an ACFO attracts the current remuneration for new appointments of £111,179. The NJC pay award due on 1 January 2022 has not yet been announced or agreed so the figure of £111,179 only incorporates the pay award effective on 1 January 2021 and will be increased when the January 2022 and January 2023 pay awards are announced.

5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Due to the requirement to ensure operational resilience this position is subject to 'Gold' Book Terms and Conditions of Service and will provide operational response on the Duty Principal Officers' rota. Currently within the SLB there are only three Officers on the Duty Principal Officers' rota (the CFO/CE and two ACFOs). Three Principal Officers on the operational rota is considered to be a very lean model and any reduction in the capability will adversely increase the risk to the Authority in its ability to comply with its statutory duty.

5.2 The vacant position will be advertised nationally to ensure equality and fairness and to afford the Authority the opportunity to attract a diverse range of applicants from Fire Service backgrounds, ensuring the best possible candidate for the role.

5.3 The selection process to be led by HR will consist of the following elements:

- National advert on the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Jobs web page
- Application form and CV
- Stakeholder engagement forum

- Business continuity exercise
 - People and Culture Committee presentation and formal interview
- 5.4 The advertisement, job description and application form will be approved by People and Culture Committee and shortlisting of applications will also be undertaken by the Committee with the Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk acting as advisors to the Committee with a representative of HR. The Service will manage the stakeholder engagement forum and the business continuity exercise.
- 5.5 The People and Culture Committee will be provided with the results of the selection process for each candidate and those candidates who perform well at each stage of the process will be invited to deliver a presentation to the People and Culture Committee, followed by an interview. The Committee will be advised by the Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk, and supported by HR.
- 5.6 The anticipated timeline for recruitment has been identified below, however this may be subject to change as a result of possible industrial action announced during a current pay dispute.
- 01 May – place advert on NFCC website (6 weeks)
 - 9 June – advert closing date, preparation of packs for Members
 - 23 June - shortlisting of candidates by Members takes place
 - w/c 3 July - stakeholder engagement forum
 - w/c 10 July - business continuity exercise
 - w/c 17 July - collate results and determine candidates for interviews
 - w/c 24 July - People and Culture Committee presentation and interviews
 - 1 October 2022 - appointment.

Temporary appointments

- 5.7 The CFO/CE has decided to use his delegated powers under the Scheme of Delegation to cover the vacant ACFO role from 1 April 2023. Under the Scheme of Delegation, such temporary appointments should not exceed six months and be ratified by the next available meeting of the Fire Authority or People and Culture Committee. The CFO/CE intends to appoint an Area Manager within the Service to the role of Acting ACFO for up to six months; taking into consideration any period of handover required.

6. RISKS

- 6.1 There are risks to operational cover for the Authority should a substantive appointment not be undertaken by the Authority. Risks are mitigated between 1 April and 31 September by the appointment of an individual as Acting ACFO who will provide cover on the Duty Principal Officers' rota.

7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 National adverts would ensure quality of opportunity and enable the Authority to attract a range of applications for the role.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

9. APPENDICES

None.

10. REPORT CONTACT

Amanda Brown, Clerk/Monitoring Officer