

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	Avon Fire Authority
MEETING DATE:	Wednesday, 29 March 2023
REPORT OF:	Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Appointment of Statutory Finance Officer

1. SUMMARY

The People and Culture Committee were tasked by Avon Fire Authority to conduct a recruitment process for a new Statutory Finance Officer. Interviews took place on 30 January 2023 and the Fire Authority is asked to formally appoint Ms Verity Lee as Avon Fire Authority's new Statutory Finance Officer.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Avon Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Appoint Ms Verity Lee as Avon Fire Authority's new Statutory Finance Officer from 2 May 2023.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 5 October 2022, the Fire Authority decided to start a recruitment process for a Statutory Finance Officer and, in accordance with the Officer Employment Rules, they delegated the recruitment exercise to Members of the People and Culture Committee.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Statutory Finance Officer is a part-time post and the full-time equivalent salary is £96,355 per annum, which is 65% of the CFO/CE's salary, in line with the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23, approved by Avon Fire Authority on 30 March 2022. The Statutory Officer's working pattern is 3 days' a week, plus an additional 24 days a year to be worked flexibly to respond to peaks in demand and capacity. This averages a 3.5 working day week and the salary, pension and annual leave entitlements are calculated on this basis.

- 4.2 The Statutory Officer's salary is already funded from the Authority's revenue budget.

5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 At People and Culture Committee's meeting on 9 December 2022, Members retrospectively endorsed the advertisement and Job Description for the role of Statutory Finance Officer, which, following approval of those documents by Members of the Committee by email, was publicised on 1 December 2022. The Committee also approved the recruitment process and timeline. The closing date for applications was 3 January 2023.
- 5.2 Applications were first reviewed by Human Resources (HR) when it was found that several applicants did not meet the essential criteria of being a qualified accountant. Members of People and Culture Committee shortlisted those suitably qualified candidates on 18 January 2023 and two candidates were invited to interview by the Committee on the 30 January.
- 5.3 Following interviews, the Committee decided to offer the role to Ms Verity Lee, who accepted the offer. Ms Lee is a qualified accountant and brings considerable experience working for an accountants, where she specialised in audit work. She has most recently worked in the aerospace industry as a finance manager with wide responsibility, including governance and compliance.
- 5.4 Under the Fire Authority's Constitution, Members are collectively responsible for appointing Statutory Officers, therefore Members are asked to formally make the Statutory Finance Officer appointment in accordance with the recommendation of the People and Culture Committee.

6. RISKS

- 6.1 Ms Lee must work notice with her current employer and is available to start her role as Statutory Finance Officer on 2 May 2023. In the meantime, the CFO/CEO has extended the appointment of Mr Kevin Woodward as interim Treasurer until 30 April 2023, to ensure that the Service is able to meet its statutory responsibilities.

7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Avon Fire Authority is required under Section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. The Statutory Finance Officer is the designated officer for this purpose and is required to report expenditure and ensure compliance with The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

7.2 Both the interim Treasurer and Ms Lee, who will be formally appointed from 2 May 2023, are qualified accountants and hold full professional membership of the relevant financial body for accountants as set out in s113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

a) Recruitment of Statutory Finance Officer, item 11 of People and Culture Committee Agenda on 9 December 2022 with appendices.

9. APPENDICES

None.

10. REPORT CONTACT

Amanda Brown, Clerk/Monitoring Officer to Avon Fire Authority, extension 347.