

AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING:	Avon Fire Authority
MEETING DATE:	Wednesday, 20 March 2024
REPORT OF:	The Clerk
SUBJECT:	Annual Review of Remuneration of CFO/CE

1. **SUMMARY**

This paper outlines the National Joint Council's Gold Book pay award for Brigade Managers for 2024, which has recently been announced on 25 January 2024.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the National Joint Council (NJC) pay award for Brigade Managers for 2024 of 3% on basic pay, which was announced on 25 January 2024.
- b) Note that the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (CFO/CE) does not seek to engage the two-track approach, which allows for a local pay award.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The CFO/CEO is engaged subject to the 'National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services, Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service (5th Edition)', otherwise known as the 'Gold Book'.

3.2 In respect of salaries, the Gold Book section on 'Scheme of Conditions of Service' provides:

9. The NJC will publish annually recommended minimum levels of salary applicable to chief fire officers/chief executives employed by local authority fire and rescue authorities.

10. There is a two-track approach for determining levels of pay for Brigade Manager roles. At national level, the NJC shall review annually the level of pay increase applicable to all those covered by this agreement. In doing so, the NJC will consider affordability, other relevant pay deals and the rate of

inflation at the appropriate date. Any increase agreed by the NJC will be communicated to fire authorities by circular.

11. All other decisions about the level of pay and remuneration to be awarded to individual Brigade Manager roles will be taken by the local Fire and Rescue Authority, who will annually review these salary levels.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Funding for staffing costs is contained within existing budgets. Any increase agreed nationally will also be met from existing budgets.

5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 On 25 January 2024, the NJC announced the pay award for Brigade Managers of an increase on basic pay of 3% with effect from 1 January 2024; NJC letter at **Appendix 1**. This award will be backdated.

5.2 The NJC pay award is applied to 'bands' which reflect the total population covered by the Fire and Rescue Service; Avon Fire & Rescue Service falls within population band 3 (1,000,001- 1,500,000). The latest 'NJC for Brigade Managers Pay Survey Report – 2021 & 2022' was issued on 5 July 2023. That Survey provided pay data for two collection dates, namely 31 March 2021 and 31 March 2022. For population band 3 the average basic pay of a Chief Fire Officer in 2022 was £153,181. This salary figure does not include the NJC pay awards for Brigade Managers for 1 January 2022 (4%) and 1 January 2023 (3.5%), which was announced on 31 May 2023. The table below shows the CFO's salary compared to the national average for population band 3 for years 2021-2024:

Year	National Average	Avon CFO salary
2021	153,181	148,238
2022 (4% NJC pay award)	159,308	154,167
2023 (3.5% NJC pay award)	164,883	159,562
2024 (3% NJC pay award)	169,829	164,351

5.3 As explained in the Gold Book extract provided at paragraph 3.2 above, the second part of the two-track approach to the CFO/CE's pay, is determined locally by the Fire Authority.

5.4 As in previous years, the CFO/CE recommends that at this stage there is no local pay award.

- 5.5 Last year, the annual review of remuneration was presented to the later 21 June Fire Authority meeting due to the late announcement of pay awards for Brigade Managers for both 2022 and 2023. At that meeting the CFO recommended an independent review of senior officer salaries to ensure that they are aligned to national averages and reflect the responsibilities of senior officers. The Fire Authority delegated responsibility for such a review to the Policy and Resources Committee. At their meeting on 27 Jul 2023, the Policy and Resources Committee gave the 'go ahead' for an Independent Review by South West Councils. However, since that date the Service has been fully engaged with the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Chair of the Fire Authority and CFO recommended that this independent review be 'paused' to allow focus on the causes of concern raised by HMICFRS. The CFO suggests that for the time being this independent review is not commissioned, particularly in light of (i) recent re-structuring and changes of responsibility resulting from the Service's HMICFRS Action Plan, and (ii) the finance settlement for 2024/25, which shows a deficit as outlined in the budget paper to this meeting. The need for an independent review can be re-considered at a later date.
- 5.6 All Members of the Service Leadership Board (SLB) and the Statutory Officers are currently paid a set percentage of the CFO/CE salary and therefore the pay rates for SLB and Statutory Officers, as from 1 January 2024 are:

Post	New Appointments
CFO/CEO	£164,351*
ACFO (75%)	£123,263
Directors & Statutory Officers (65%)	£106,828
*This figure includes the NJC pay award of 3% from 1st January 2024 (announced 25 January 2024).	

NB the Statutory officers earn pro-rata salaries to reflect their part-time roles.

6. RISKS

- 6.1 The Fire Authority is required to be transparent about its pay to the CFO/CE. Salary levels can impact upon recruitment and retention, particularly when considering pay differentials with Area Managers employed under the Grey Book. It is important that the Fire Authority has quality and talented individuals holding senior roles, to drive its priorities.

7. LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Under the Localism Act 2011 the Fire Authority is required to publish a Pay Policy Statement by 31 March each year, which includes the pay of the CFO/CE and a comparison of that pay to other members of staff. The Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 is also being presented to this Fire Authority meeting on 20 March 2024.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- a) National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services 'Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service', known as the 'Gold Book'.
- b) Paper 16, 'Annual Review of Remuneration of CFO/CE' to Avon Fire Authority meeting on 21 June 2023, at the following link:

<https://avonfire.moderngov.co.uk/Fire Authority papers for 21 June 2023>

9. APPENDIX

1. National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Local Authority and Fire and Rescue Services letter entitled 'Gold Book Pay Award 2024' dated 25 January 2024.

10. REPORT CONTACT

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