



# Northumberland County Council

## **STAFF & APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

**25<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

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### **PROPOSED APPOINTMENT PROCESS – Chief Fire Officer (CFO)**

Report of the Chief Executive

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

This report sets out the proposed appointment process for the role of Chief Fire Officer (CFO) within Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service. The current postholder has notified the Chief Executive of their intention to retire in August 2023.

This report aims to set out the proposed process to appoint a permanent replacement.

#### **Recommendations**

**To agree the following recommendations:**

1. Approve the remuneration for Chief Fire Officer (CFO) post at the top of Band 17 (£139,366).
2. Approve external advertisement of the post following approval at Staffing and Appointments Committee for the period 26 April 2023 to 10 May 2023. Shortlisted candidates will be required to attend an Assessment Day at the end of May 2023 (date TBA). The assessment will include Psychometric Testing, staff panel comprising NRFS key employees, internal and external stakeholder Panel and a formal interview by a panel comprising senior managers.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to all areas of the Corporate Plan as it relates to ensuring that the Council is compliant with the constitution and fulfilling its legal duties and requirements to ensure that there is an effective and fit for purpose staffing establishment.

#### **Key Issues and Background**

Salary

The job description (Appendix 1) has been evaluated through the LGE process as part of the currently proposed changes to the senior management structure within NCC. The job description incorporates the proposed changes in service management for the CFO postholder to include responsibility for Public Protection, Civil Contingency and Corporate Health & Safety as well as the Northumberland Fire & Rescue service.

Band 17 currently consists of 6 spinal column points (SCP):

SCP 68 - £115,325

SCP 69 - £120,997

SCP 70 - £126,665

SCP 71 - £129,529

SCP 72 - £138,006

SCP 73 - £139,366.

The intention is to make an offer at the highest SCP as this is the same SCP that the current postholder holds and recognises the scale and scope of the services areas covered. Payment at the highest SCP also represents differentiation of seniority from the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, also evaluated and paid at Band 17 (SCP 70). The advertisement will ask for previous Fire Principal Officer experience to ensure knowledge and experience for the role reflects the remuneration.

#### Outline Recruitment timeline and process/methodology

- Psychometric Assessment to gain information on candidate personality and potential suitability against the role profile. Psychometric assessment will also allow the mapping of desirable values and behaviours against personality attributes and traits. The tool that is proposed to be used is called 'Lumina' and will be administered by a company called 'Odyssey'. This tool and provider have been used to great effect in previous recruitment exercises for the Chief Executive and executive team.
- Delivery of a CFO Assessment Centre at West Hartford HQ. This will be designed to be delivered in-person, using a combination of in-house assessors and co-ordinators and will be supported by HR. Elements to be included:
  - A presentation to a panel of NFRS staff
  - A presentation to a comprehensive panel of key stakeholders – consisting of internal and external stakeholders
  - A Structured interview conducted by a panel comprising of Chief Executive, Portfolio holder, HR and an External Fire Professional to allow panel to have some technical expertise.

## **Timeline**

The process has been structured to keep to tight timelines, keeping candidate interest and momentum, while affording the opportunity to ensure all constitutional approval requirements are fully adhered to.

## **The next steps**

Once a preferred candidate has been identified, the Staff and Appointments Committee will meet and consider approval of the appointment.

## **Statutory Obligations and Pay Policy**

There are certain statutory appointments which must be made. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 section 4 requires that the Council designate one of its officers as Head of the Paid Service (usually the Chief Executive) who is responsible for preparing reports on the way the local authority's staff is organised, on the authority's staffing needs and on the coordination of the way in which the authority's functions are discharged.

In addition, by section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council is required to produce a Pay Policy each financial year. Approval of the Pay Policy is a matter for full Council and cannot be delegated. The Council's current Pay Policy is 2023/2024 and sets out details, amongst other things, of the payment to chief officers.

As stated in the Pay Policy the role of Chief Fire Officer is deemed a Chief Officer role with the following definition - The Chief Fire Officer of a fire brigade maintained under the Fire Services Act 1947 and appointed under regulations made under section 18(1)(a) of that Act.

The Staff & Appointments Committee is therefore required to consider and approve the appointments of the roles of on a salary of over £100,000 in line with the Council's agreed Pay Policy 2023/24 as follows,

*“Notwithstanding any other requirement of the Constitution, any appointment within the Council that attracts a salary package of £100,000 or more will be considered and approved by the Staff & Appointments Committee. Salary package in this respect includes salary and any other fees, allowances, bonuses and benefits in kind that the post holder would routinely be entitled to”.*

## **Officer Appointment Procedure Rules**

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended) requires that, where a Council is operating a Cabinet and Leader model of governance, before any offer of appointment is made to a Chief or Deputy Chief Officer, the Proper Officer designated for that purpose, notifies the Leader and every member of the Cabinet of the intention to make the appointment, the name, salary and other relevant particulars of the post, and allows the Leader and Cabinet an opportunity to make any substantial or well-founded objections to that appointment, before the appointment is made. These provisions apply irrespective of whether the appointment is made by the full council, a committee, or by an officer of the council delegated to do so. The provisions are broadly set out in Part 4.3 of the Northumberland County Council Constitution. These provisions also apply whether the appointment is permanent or interim.

## Implications

<b>Policy</b>	Oversight of HR Policies and Procedure
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Permanent appointments are deemed to be appropriate in relation to finance and value for money. The cost of the appointment can be met from existing budgets as it will be a direct replacement.
<b>Legal</b>	<p>The functions of the Staff and Appointments Committee are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To discharge the Council's functions of the employer in relation to the Chief and Deputy Chief Officers.</li> <li>b. To consider, approve, or make recommendations to the County Council, in relation to any changes to the overall structure of the Council's workforce, and the number and designation of Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer posts.</li> <li>c. To determine the terms and conditions relating to employees of the County Council to include the remuneration and terms and conditions of employment for the Head of Paid Service and Chief and Deputy Chief Officers.</li> </ol> <p>Section 2 (6) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 specifies that the chief officer of a fire brigade maintained under the Fire Services Act 1947 is a Statutory Chief Officer.</p>
<b>Procurement</b>	N/A
<b>Human Resources</b>	The appointments will be made in line with appropriate employment recruitment processes. Relevant legal implications have been set out in the body of this report.
<b>Property</b>	N/A
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The recruitment process for these posts will be in line with best practice in relation to promoting equality and diversity within the Council's recruitment processes.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Consistent with Independent Corporate Governance Review (Caller Report)
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	N/A
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	N/A
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	N/A
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	The recommendations will support the health and wellbeing of Council Employees at varying levels within the organisation
<b>Wards</b>	The recommendations not related to any particular ward but cover the whole of Northumberland.

**Report sign off.**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	Full Name of Officer
Interim Director of Corporate Governance and Law	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer)	Jan Willis
Chief Executive	Dr Helen Paterson
Portfolio Holder(s)	Staff & Appeals Committee

**Linked reports**

- 20th of September 2022 - Staff and Appointments Committee 'Revised Executive Management Structure'
- 20 February 2023 - Staff and Appointments Committee report 'Senior Management Restructure Proposal'

**Background information**

N/A

**Authors and Contact Details**

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