

## **STAFF & APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

**5<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

---

### **Proposed Appointment Process of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)**

Report of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

---

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed appointment process for the role of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) within Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service. The current postholder has been successful in their application and subject to StAC approval on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 will be appointed to Deputy Chief Fire Officer, therefore, the ACFO post will become vacant from 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023. This report aims to set out the proposed process to appoint a permanent replacement.
- 1.2 This report also seeks approval that at the conclusion to the selection process, the preferred candidate will be notified of their conditional appointment, subject to the approval of Staff and Appointments Committee.
- 1.3 This report also reminds the Committee of the requirements under the Officer Employment Procedure Rules in relation to the appointment of all Chief and Deputy Chief Officers. Accordingly, please note that the appointment referred to in this report is subject to no substantial and well-founded objections being notified to the Leader of the Council, in accordance with Part 4.3 of the Constitution (Officer Employment Procedure Rules).

#### **2. Recommendations**

To agree the following recommendations:

- 2.1 To agree that the Assistant Chief Fire Officer will align to the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services terms and conditions ('Gold Book') with remuneration aligning to NCC pay grade of Band 16, £103,133 SCP 65 (spot salary). This cost excludes employer's national insurance and employer's pension contributions.

- 2.2 To approve external advertisement of the post following consideration at this meeting of the Staffing and Appointments Committee for the period 15 December 2023 to 12 January 2024. Shortlisted candidates will be required to attend an Assessment Day at the end of January 2024 (date TBA). The assessment will include Psychometric testing, staff panel comprising NFRS key employees, and a formal interview by a panel comprising senior managers.
- 2.3 To accept the findings of the selection panels that the preferred candidate be offered the role of Assistant Chief Fire Officer subject to the final approval of Staff and Appointments Committee.
- 2.4 To agree that in the event that any objection is received from the Leader and/or Cabinet that the appointment in question be referred back to this Committee for urgent consideration.
- 2.5 To note that offers of employment will be subject to all necessary pre-employment checks.
- 2.6 To note that the effective date of commencement of employment is to be confirmed following completion of all the necessary pre-employment checks.

### **3. Link to Corporate Plan**

- 3.1 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 is fulfilling its legal duties and requirements to ensure that there is an effective and fit for purpose staffing establishment.

### **4. Key Issues and Background**

#### **4.1 Salary**

4.1.1 The job description (Appendix 1) has been evaluated through the LGE process as part of the changes to the senior management structure within NCC.

4.1.2 Band 16 currently consists of 6 spinal column points (SCP) :

SCP 64 - £100,157

SCP 65 - £103,133

SCP 66 - £106,107

SCP 67 - £109,081

- 4.1.3 The intention is to make an offer at SCP65 (spot salary) as this matches the SCP that the current postholder is paid and recognises the scale and scope of the services areas covered. The advertisement will ask for a minimum level of substantive Area Manager with significant sector experience operating at a strategic level to ensure knowledge and experience for the role reflects the remuneration

## **5. Outline Recruitment timeline and process/methodology**

- 5.1 Psychometric Assessment will be undertaken 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 internally via our HR/OD service. This tool has been used to great effect in previous recruitment exercises for the Chief Executive and executive team, as well as the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer.
- 5.2 An ACFO Assessment Centre will be delivered 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:
- o A structured interview with a panel of NFRS staff
  - o A 10-minute presentation to panel and a structured interview conducted by a panel comprising of Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Portfolio holder and HR.

## **6. Timeline**

- 6.1 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.

## **7. The next steps**

- 7.1 Once a preferred candidate has been identified, a further report will be prepared for the Staff and Appointments Committee to convene at a later date and consider approval of the appointment.

## **8. Statutory Obligations and Pay Policy**

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 The Staff & Appointments Committee is therefore required to consider and approve the appointments of the roles 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".*

## **9. Officer Appointment Procedure Rules**

- 9.1 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 appointment is 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> <ul 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> </ul> <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. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer reports to the Chief Fire Officer and is, therefore, classed as a Deputy Chief Officer</p>
<b>Procurement</b>	N/A
<b>Human Resources</b>	The appointment 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 this post 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.

Formatted: Font:

Formatted: Font:

Formatted: Font: (Default) Arial

Formatted: Font: (Default) Arial

**Appendices** N/A

**Background papers:**

N/A

**Linked Reports**

N/A

**Report sign off.**

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

	<b>Full Name of Officer</b>
Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Stephen Gerrard
Executive Director of Transformation & Resources (s151 Officer)	Jan Willis
Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)	Helen Paterson

**Authors and Contact Details**

This report has been prepared by Deborah Watson, HR Manager

Contact details: [deborah.watson@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.watson@northumberland.gov.uk)