



Northumberland County Council

Appendix A

Staff & Appointments Committee

22nd February 2024

Appointment of Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Report of Responsible Officer : Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

1. Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan

- 1.1 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.

2. Purpose of report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to confirm and set out to the Staff and Appointments Committee the outcome of the selection process for the Assistant Chief Fire Officer and to seek approval for the appointment of the preferred candidate. Attached to this report is a confidential (part 2) exempt Appendix 1 setting out the application of the preferred candidate.
- 2.2 The Committee will recall at its meeting on 5th December 2023, that arrangements for the permanent recruitment to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer role was agreed.
- 2.3 This report also reminds the Committee of the requirements under the Officer Employment Procedure Rules in relation to the appointment (or dismissal) of all Chief and Deputy Chief Officers. Accordingly, please note that the appointments referred to in this report are 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).

3. Recommendations

To agree the following recommendations:

- 3.1 To accept the findings of the selection panel that the preferred candidate be appointed to the role of Assistant Chief Fire Officer. Details are set out in the attached confidential appendix 1.

- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 To note that offers of employment will be subject to all necessary pre-employment checks.
- 3.4 To note that the effective date of commencement of employment is to be confirmed following all necessary pre-employment checks.
- 3.5 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. This cost excludes employer's national insurance and employer's pension contributions.

4. Background

- 4.1 At the meeting of the Staff and Appointments Committee on 5th December 2023 the appointment process for the role of Assistant Chief Fire Officer was agreed. Also agreed was the Job Description (and salary scale point), the indicative timetable for the recruitment process and the selection methodology.
- 4.2 The assessment and selection process for the single shortlisted candidate involved the following:
 - 4.2.1 Psychometric assessment using Lumina Spark, with full outcome report presented to interview panel.
 - 4.2.2 A staff panel question and answer session with 6 employees from Northumberland Fire and Rescue facilitated by Human Resources.
 - 4.2.3 A 10-minute presentation including question and answer session as well as a structured interview comprising the Portfolio Holder, Chief Fire Officer to whom the role reports to, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Chief Fire Officer from Tyne & Wear Fire Brigade and a HR Manager.
 - 4.2.4 A summary session was conducted to discuss the outcomes of the earlier assessment centre exercises – Lumina Spark and Staff Panel.

5. Options open to the Council and reasons for the recommendations

- 5.1 Following completion of the assessment set out above, the interview panel identified the preferred candidate for the role, currently employed as Area Manager.
- 5.2 Conclusions were reached following a thorough assessment of the candidate's skills, knowledge and experience. The processes also considered the candidate fit against the Council's values and the Nolan Principles. The candidate's application form (confidential) is attached at appendix 1.

5.3 The candidate has been informed that he is the preferred candidate for the role and has indicated his acceptance of the conditional offer of appointment. The offer has been made subject to the recommendation of this Committee and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules (as set out below).

5.4 Officer Employment Procedure Rules

5.4.1 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.

5.4.2 Accordingly, for these purposes, appointment of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer is deemed to be a deputy chief officer.

5.4.3 The Proper Officer designated for this purpose is the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service. Accordingly, the Council's Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service will discharge the functions as required under the Officer Employment Procedure Rules.

6. Implications

Policy	Oversight of HR Policies and Procedure
Finance and value for money	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.

Legal	<p>The functions of the Staff and Appointments Committee are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To discharge the Council's functions of the employer in relation to the Chief and Deputy Chief Officers. 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. 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. <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>
Procurement	N/A
Human resources	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.
Property	N/A
The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached?	<p>This process will be conducted in line with best practice in relation to promoting equality and diversity within the Council's employment processes.</p> <p>N/A</p>
Risk assessment	Consistent approved management restructure with Corporate Governance Review.
Crime and disorder	N/A
Customer considerations	N/A
Carbon reduction	N/A
Health and wellbeing	The recommendation will support the health and wellbeing of employees
Wards	Not related to any particular ward but cover the whole of Northumberland

7. Background papers

N/A

8. Links to other key reports already published

StAC Report dated 5th December 2023.

9. Author and Contact Details

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

	Full Name of Officer
Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Stephen Gerrard
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