

**Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority**

**Human Resources Committee**

**Item 6**

**9 July 2014**

**Chief Officer Recruitment**

**Report by Director of Professional Services**

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**1 Summary**

- 1.1 The current Chief Officer has announced his retirement. His last day of Service is 31 December 2014. The process for recruiting his replacement has been started with the aim of getting the new Chief Officer in post for the beginning of December to allow for a suitable hand-over period.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the process for recruiting the new Chief Officer, as set out in paragraph 4 to this report, be endorsed.

**3 Introduction and background**

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) on 4 June 2014 the Chairman confirmed the retirement of the Chief Officer, John Bonney. Although this is due to happen later in the year, a process is already in place for his replacement and Members would be kept informed of progress.
- 3.2 His last day of Service is 31 December 2014. The process for recruiting his replacement has been started with the aim of getting the new Chief Officer in post at the latest at the beginning of December to allow for a suitable hand-over period.

**4 Process**

- 4.1 The HR Committee has the responsibility for recruiting the Chief Officer. The Committee's Terms of Reference state under the responsibilities for Employment Policy:

*"To be responsible for the appointment of Chief and Deputy Chief Fire Officer posts."*

- 4.2 A Selection Panel will be established to interview short-listed candidates and to make a recommendation on the appointment of the preferred candidate to the HR Committee. The Selection Panel will comprise members (to be agreed in advance with the Chairman of the HR Committee in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority). The current Chief Officer will act as the main technical adviser to the Panel.
- 4.3 Given the timings, which are yet to be determined, there will be a requirement for

an extraordinary meeting of the HR Committee to review and make a decision on the appointment of the new Chief Officer. Once available, a date will be put in the diary to ensure the maximum notice possible.

## **5 Organisational Structure**

5.1 In 2009, the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) initiated a review of the Directorate structure. The scope of that review covered all posts within the Directors Group at the time. This included the Chief Officer and four Directors. The Director cadre consisted of two non-uniformed posts and two Deputy Chief Officers (DCOs). The Review report recommended a phased reduction in the number of Directorates and therefore the number of Director posts that were required. The first reduction from four to three was completed in 2010, with the final stage of reducing to two directorates completed in 2014. This has resulted in one DCO post and one non-uniformed post. This has reduced the strategic leadership capacity significantly and to a point at which further reductions would create organisational risks.

5.2 There are significant challenges facing the Service in the immediate and medium term future, which will require strong dedicated leadership. The current period of industrial action provides its own challenges and maintaining the high quality of service that the people of Hampshire have become accustomed to, is driven from the very top. Our Medium Term Financial Plan has a number of critical elements designed to reduce our cost base by at least £12.2M. These include the Risk Review, Joint Working in Hampshire through our partnership within H3, the formation and review of the new Professional Service Directorate plus other initiatives, which all require strong leadership and a focus on the Service. At the same time, the Service continues to deliver its 'Safer' and 'Stronger' aims, which provide the underlying strategy to achieve its aspiration of HFRS becoming the best FRS in the country. This ambitious and essential series of requirements will only be delivered with strong and dedicated leadership. The retention of a full-time Chief Officer who is dedicated to this Service will be critical to the successful delivery of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority's expectations on behalf of Hampshire communities.

5.3 Judging on previous experience, the profile of Hampshire and its high regard both within the sector and further afield will make this an attractive position which is expected to attract talented individuals.

## **6 Chief Officer Pay**

6.1 The process for setting the Chief Officer's Pay is contained within the Principal Officer Pay Review process. A report from the Principal Officers' Pay Sub-group is to be submitted to the HR Committee in July. As this is the mechanism for setting the pay for the Chief Officer, the timing could not be better and will provide the most current possible assessment of the right level at which to offer the post within the advertising materials.

## **7 Supporting our corporate aims and objectives**

7.1 The delivery of the organisational strategy, Safer and Stronger, will require strong and dedicated leadership. The continued provision of a focused Chief Officer will support the delivery of these challenging aims.

## **8 Risk analysis**

- 8.1 Failure to attract and appoint a high calibre Chief Officer will compromise the ability of HFRS to achieve its objectives.

## **9 People Impact Assessment**

- 9.1 The proposals in this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the equality and human rights legislation.
- 9.2 All appointment processes comply with our recruitment policies and the embedded equality requirements, giving all applicants fair and equal access to apply for the post and be successful in their application.

## **10 Resource implications**

### **10.1 Human Resources**

The processes will utilise the recruitment resources provided within H3. There will be some additional requirements for people to support the assessment centre. These will be taken from existing sources within HFRS and H3.

### **10.2 Physical Resources**

There will be some additional requirements for physical resources to support the assessment centre. These will be taken from existing sources within HFRS and H3.

### **10.3 Information and Communications Technology Resources**

There will be some additional requirements for ICT resources to support the assessment centre. These will be taken from existing sources within HFRS and H3.

### **10.4 Financial Implications**

The recruitment and selection to the Chief Officer post will require funding. There is a budget allocated to recruitment activity. The cost of the recruitment will be taken from within this budget.

## **11 Consultation**

- 11.1 Members of the HFRA have been consulted and the HR Committee will continue to be the prime authority for appointment of the Chief Officer.

## **12 Conclusion**

- 12.1 The Service is currently facing significant challenges in the immediate and medium term future. The appointment of a high calibre replacement for our current Chief Officer will be crucial to our continued success. This is a critical appointment and a full and thorough assessment process will be undertaken to ensure the best candidate possible is appointed. Members, and in particular, the HR Committee have key roles to play in the process.

## **13 Background papers**

- 13.1 The following documents disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report:

Terms of Reference for the HR Committee.

Note: The list excludes: (1) published works; and (2) documents that disclose exempt or confidential information defined in the Act.