



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

11 March 2024

Director Recruitment – Delegated Authority Request

Report of the Director of People and Organisational Development

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This paper seeks approval from the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) to give delegated authority to the Appointments Panel to fully oversee the appointment of the Uniformed Director role, which is currently out to advert.

BACKGROUND

2. Following the approval of the appointment of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer at the CFA meeting held on 5 January 2024, a vacancy was created for a Uniformed Director post in the Service Leadership Team (SLT) structure.
3. A report was agreed at the CFA meeting on the 16 February to make a minor change to the constitution to enable the Appointments Panel to oversee the selection process and appoint all roles which form part of the SLT, which includes the Uniformed Director post.
4. The Appointments Panel met on Friday 16 February and agreed the salary level, job description, person specification, advert, and the details of the appointments process. The appointments panel also agreed a date for the final interview.
5. It was agreed that CFO Steve Helps undertakes the role of advisor to the panel, to cover any technical and sector specific advice and that the Director of People and Organisational Development provides administrative support and specialist HR advice, should it be needed.
6. Normally, the Appointments Panel would oversee the process and make a recommendation to full CFA of the appointment of a suitable candidate. However, when agreeing the recruitment timeline, it was evident that gaining final approval from the CFA due to the next planned CFA meeting was going to cause a significant delay in the appointment. This is outlined in the timeline in point 9.
7. If an external candidate was successful and had a contractual notice period of three months, it could be October before a start date was agreed. Such a delay would not only potentially portray the Service in an unprofessional way to the successful candidate, but also cause the SLT to continue working at a reduced capacity for a

further prolonged period. To overcome this, the Appointments Panel formally request that they are given delegated authority to make the appointment to the Director role without full approval from the CFA. This would allow an offer of appointment to be made immediately following the final interview with the successful candidate taking up their role within a reasonable timeframe. A report will be taken to a future CFA meeting outlining the decision made.

APPOINTMENTS PROCESS AND TIMELINE

8. The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England 2018 states:

“To ensure greater fairness and the exchange of talent and ideas, all principal fire officer posts must be open to competition nationally, and fire and rescue authorities must take account of this in their workforce planning.”

It is therefore a requirement that the Authority advertise the Director role nationally. Senior roles within the fire and rescue service (FRS) sector are generally advertised on the National Fire Chiefs Council’s (NFCC) website. The site is followed closely by those considering the opportunities that are available within other services.

9. The detailed arrangements for the recruitment process agreed by the Appointments Panel are outlined below:

Task / Assessment	Date
Appointments Panel met to agree the process and documentation	16/02/2024
Role advertised through the NFCC job page and service website	16/02/2024
Shortlisting of applications	06/03/2024
Media Assessment / Online Exercises	11/03/2024
Assessment Centre	18/03/2024
Final Interview	28/03/2024
First available date for approval by the Full Fire Authority and formal offer of appointment	25/06/2024

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. Members are asked to:
- a. **Note** the report and timeline for Director recruitment.
 - b. **Approve** the Appointments Panel to have delegated authority to appoint the successful candidate to the role of Director.