

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AUTHORITY	
date	22 October 2004	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

FULL TIME SECONDMENT TO FBU REGIONAL SECRETARY POSITION

1. PURPOSE

To seek Members ratification of a decision made by the Chairman to allow the full-time secondment of an employee to the post of FBU Regional Secretary.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will be aware from previous reports that the Regional Management Board (RMB) has been established for the East Midlands Region. This Board has six major work streams to lead on. It is doing this on behalf of the five constituent Fire Authorities. These work streams are defined in the National Framework, which became Statute when the Fire Services Act 2004 came into force earlier this year.

2.2 Each of the RMB work streams is led by one of the East Midland Fire Services Chief Fire Officers. There is a need for that Chief Fire Officer to consult with the Representative Bodies on the effects and methods of implementation of the work stream. This is being done on a regional basis.

2.3 The Fire Brigades Union for a number of years now has had a regional structure so as to co-ordinate its activity and communications. This regional structure has included a Regional Secretary. With the development of RMBs the FBU's national executive has identified the increasing role that the regional secretary will have in the future.

3. REPORT

3.1 The FBU's Regional Secretary is employed by Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority. The Service has received a request from the Assistant General Secretary to allow the release of the Regional Secretary so as to be able to undertake full-time union activities. It was indicated that the union would like this individual to be released as early as possible, due to the growing pace and amount of regional work. The Assistant General Secretary has confirmed in writing that the Union is prepared to reimburse the Authority the full costs of the Secretary's position.

3.2 With the introduction of the Integrated Personnel Development System (IPDS) the Service is aware that a number of other conditions need to be addressed, other than just the salary costs, so discussions were entered into upon the terms and conditions of release, prior to seeking the Chairman's approval.

3.3 The terms agreed were as follows :

- Full salary costs, including pension and other employment costs, to be met by the FBU.

- The Regional secretary would be on secondment to the FBU until the next region elections and beyond subject to being elected to the position.
- Return to the Service would be subject to a vacancy being available. The FBU would be expected to meet the full costs until re-absorption into the establishment could be achieved. This will enable the position to be permanently back filled. This will ensure that the Service can meet its operational commitments.
- In order to maintain competence as a firefighter, the Regional Secretary would return to the service for at least one-week a year to undertake familiarisation training. If the Service deems there is a need to undertake further training, due to future Service developments, this will be undertaken. The Service would undertake to block this training together, whenever possible, and give as much notice as is feasible.
- On return to the Service at the end of the secondment the individual would undergo extensive retraining along the lines that are carried out for others who are away for any length of time.

3.4 In order to facilitate the FBU's growing Regional workload, the Chairman gave his approval for immediate release, subject to ratification at the next Fire Authority meeting.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial costs to the Service as the full salary costs are being met by the FBU. There are some training and retraining costs associated with this release, but these are minor and deemed to be offset by the benefits in having a regional FBU official with whom to consult.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

The personnel implications are limited to the individual who has requested to undertake the role of Regional Secretary. The individual has agreed to those implications

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct equal opportunities implications of the release. The existence of a full time Regional Secretary, may assist in the implementation of region-wide equal opportunities.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members endorse the action taken by the Chairman in releasing a member of staff to take up the role of FBU Regional Secretary.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

- Fire Services Act 2004.
- The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework.