

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY	
date	24 February 2006	agenda item number

REPORT OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE POST OF HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek Fire & Rescue Authority approval for the establishment of the post of Head of Communications.

2. BACKGROUND

Fire & Rescue Services have traditionally had to communicate safety messages and details of operational incidents. This has been enough to satisfy both internal and external stakeholders and to portray a positive image for the Service. As a result of the implementation of a greater degree of local accountability, the media and the public have taken a higher degree of interest in the proposals of Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service and their potential impact.

3. REPORT

3.1 To deal with its media and community needs the Service has managed its communications through an external contract with Nottinghamshire County Council. Through their offices the Service has been able to deliver positive messages with regard to Community Safety, operational response and media campaigns.

3.2 The recent modernisation process and the move towards a wider Community Safety agenda and prevention rather than intervention strategies has meant that the demands on this arrangement have become excessive.

3.3 Whilst the press and public relations arrangement has served and supported the Service well, its capacity to fully support the needs identified above is now being exceeded. As a consequence a decision had been made to establish an internal communications team within Information Services.

3.4 The Service does already possess some in-house capability and the option to appoint a Head of Communications will be coupled with a realignment of the management of existing staff. The proposed team (see Appendix A) will also be supplemented by another new post of Communications Officer, although this will be achieved by the conversion of an existing non-uniformed post within Information Services.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Head of Communications post will attract a salary range of £29958 - £32361 This will be funded through the termination of the press and public relations contract with Nottinghamshire County Council.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

As a new post the job will be advertised in both local and national media. Normal selection criteria will apply.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An initial impact assessment has been carried out on the job description and person specification revealing no equality issues.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A failure to improve both internal and external communications will leave the Service with the potential to undermine the wider Community Safety agenda and the proposals within the Community Safety Plan.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve the establishment of the post of Head of Communications.

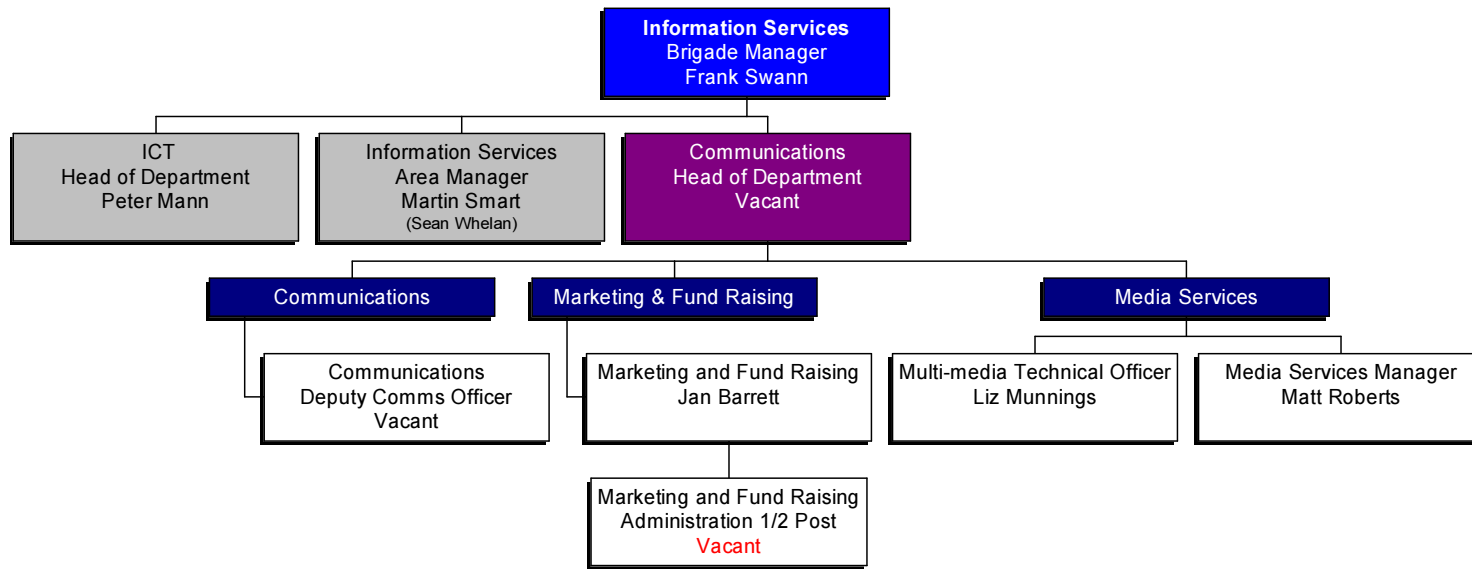
9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

- Head of Communications Job Description (attached) ;
- Head of Communications Person Specification (attached).

Paul Woods
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Functional Team Structure- Part 3

Information Services Functional Team Structure



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Head of Communications

Grade: TBA

Personnel Reference: TBA

Conditions of Service: NJC for Local Government Services

Working to: ACFO Information Services

Responsible to: Strategic Management Team

Responsible for: A five strong communications department comprising Communications (internal and external), Fundraising and Marketing, Electronic Media Services and Administrative Support.

General Description of Post

To develop and implement external and internal communications strategies for Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) and to take on the role of external spokesperson for media and other stakeholders where appropriate.

Specific Duties

1. To establish fully co-ordinated, proactive external and internal communications strategies which support the objectives and promote the achievements of NFRS.
2. To support integrated marketing efforts to make NFRS a recognisable brand which benefits from the good will of the Nottinghamshire community.
3. To work closely with senior NFRS management and department heads to ensure that communications strategy and activity is compatible with the Service's remit, objectives and operational requirements.
4. To establish and implement appropriate policies and procedures to successfully deliver a proactive communications strategy on the ground, both internally and externally.
5. To co-ordinate communications activity with overall marketing efforts, in order to gain optimum effect and ensure a consistent brand image and tone of voice for NFRS.
6. To oversee and participate in the implementation of the communications strategy on a day-to-day basis, including the management of internal and external agencies as appropriate.
7. To direct, manage and work closely with the Communications Officer to ensure the smooth and successful implementation of the communications strategy.
8. To provide ongoing guidance and coaching to the Communications Officer where required.
9. To be aware of current and emerging issues facing fire and rescue services, and NFRS in particular, and to plan and manage internal and external communications to anticipate these.

10. To implement procedures for the effective, proactive delivery of key NFRS messages to media, and for the efficient handling of reactive media enquiries.
11. To establish and successfully maintain effective working relationships with journalists and editors from key national, regional, and specialist media.
12. To act as media spokesperson on behalf of NFRS and prepare statements where appropriate.
13. To establish and successfully maintain effective working relationships with internal stakeholders and their representatives.
14. To advise on communications strategy and tactics in the face of unforeseen events, negative publicity or 'crises'; to communicate NFRS' key messages in the face of such events as quickly and effectively as possible.
15. To occasionally attend meetings and respond to emerging situations outside normal business hours; to travel to meetings within Nottinghamshire and occasionally outside of the county.
16. To monitor and report on expenditure by the Communications Department on publications, consultation publicity and marketing.
17. To attend Fire & Rescue Authority and other relevant committee meetings relating to Fire & Rescue Authority business.
18. To undertake any other duties which may be reasonably regarded as within the nature of the duties, responsibilities and grade of the post.

General Responsibilities (all employees)

19. (a) Health and Safety

To take reasonable care for your own health and safety and work and that of other persons who may be affected by your work activities.

To co-operate with Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue's attempts to comply with health and safety legislation. Where appropriate you must safeguard the health and safety of all persons affected by the work activities you supervise at any premises you have control over.

To work in a safe manner in which you have been trained and instructed and advise your line manager of any health and safety problems you become aware of.

To familiarise yourself with the contents of the Service's Written Safety Policy, as well as any technical information provided to assist you to operate appliances or equipment or to handle hazardous substances.

To wear personal protective equipment supplied to you by the Service in the manner in which you have been instructed to do so.

(b) Use of equipment and other appliances

To take proper care in the handling, operation and safeguarding of any equipment, vehicles or appliance, used or issued by the Service or provided or issued by a third party for individual or collective use in the performance of the job holder's duties

(c) **Equalities**

To uphold the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's Fairness at Work and Equal Opportunities policies and practices and to treat all colleagues, service users and contacts with respect and in accordance with the expectations laid down by the Service.

To promote and deliver fair and quality services that are sensitive and responsive to all service users.

(d) **Code of Conduct**

To adhere to the standards of the Code of Conduct established by the Service.

(e) **Personal Development**

To keep up to date with current practice, undertake training and Continuous Professional Development as appropriate.

(f) **Information Technology**

To comply with security measures to protect against unauthorised access to, alteration or disclosure of information held on computer and ensure adherence to the principles of the Data Protection Act.

To undertake any training and operation of new technologies and associated systems as required.

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
PERSON SPECIFICATION**

HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications	Degree level qualification.	Degree or professional qualification(s) relevant to communications role (such as CIPR Diploma, Chartered Institute of Marketing qualification).
Experience	At least two years senior management level experience in a PR, marketing or communications role.	Experience in corporate communications.
	Experience of planning and directing communications strategy; track record of success in achieving strategic communications objectives.	In-house experience.
	Experience of directing and managing PR/Communications Teams.	Experience in a public sector environment.
	Experience of acting as a media spokesperson.	Experience/knowledge of emergency services.
	Experience of issues management and 'crisis' communications.	
Skills	Self-starter able to develop communications strategies, lead and manage teams to deliver results.	Experience establishing or re-organising a communications department.
	Excellent interpersonal and oral/written communications skills – ability to communicate and interact with people at all levels. Tactful and diplomatic.	
	Able to act as a credible, well-presented spokesperson.	
	Able to convey complex information at all levels.	
	Ability to deal with emerging issues without losing sight of strategic direction.	
	Ability to keep abreast of/respond to issues facing public sector organisations and emergency services.	In-depth knowledge of current issues facing emergency services.

	Ability to thrive under pressure and work without supervision; self-motivated.	
	Methodical, accurate and with excellent attention to detail.	
Specialist Knowledge	Ability to quickly gain in-depth knowledge of the history, role and function of fire and rescue services and of NFRS in particular.	Knowledge of the function and role of Fire & Rescue Services in the current climate.
	Ability to absorb and understand the national and local socio-political climates in which NFRS operates; ability to respond to this in planning communications strategy and implementing day-to-day communications activity.	Knowledge of the National Framework for Fire & Rescue Services.
		Knowledge of current and historical industrial relations among Fire & Rescue Services and NFRS in particular.
		Knowledge of Nottinghamshire County and the issues facing the area.
Personal Circumstances	Able to respond to situations beyond normal working hours on occasions as required.	
	Full clean driving licence.	Own transport.