



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority  
Human Resources Committee

# CHANGE TO PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 29 April 2022

**Purpose of Report:**

To propose the creation of new roles of: Fire Investigation Dog Handler, Equipment and Fire Hydrant Technicians, Rostering Manager and Pensions Officer and (ii) to amend the role and grade of a Human Resources Business Partner role.

**Recommendations:**

That Members support changes to the permanent establishment, subject to Fire Authority approval:

- The creation of a new role of Fire Investigation Dog Handler;
- The creation of two Equipment and Fire Hydrant Technician roles;
- The creation of a Rostering Manager role;
- The creation of a Pensions Officer role;
- The dis-establishment of a HR Business Partner role and creation of an HR Officer as a career-graded post.

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Human Resources Committee considers and recommends approval to the Fire Authority of any proposals for permanent change to the workforce establishment.
- 1.2 The following change proposals have been submitted for consideration:
  - Fire Investigation Dog Handler;
  - Engineering Technicians x 2;
  - Rostering Manager;
  - Pensions Officer;
  - HR Officer.
- 1.3 As part of the annual budget setting process, which supports the delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan, funding for a number of these new roles has been approved at the Finance and Resources Committee subject to approval of permanent establishment changes.

## **2. REPORT**

### **CREATION OF A NEW ROLE OF FIRE INVESTIGATION DOG HANDLER**

- 2.1 The Regional Fire Investigation Dog Unit plays a vital part to support the joint working between Police and Fire and Rescue Services in detecting the use of hydrocarbons at the scene of fires of suspicious origin.
- 2.2 Since 2004 this role has been funded regionally and been based within the Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS). However, the current post-holder will be retiring and DFRS will no longer be hosting the dog unit. Therefore, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) indicated a willingness to host the regional dog unit within its Fire Protection and Arson Reduction team.
- 2.3 It is proposed that a new role will be created as a Grade 6 support role Fire Investigation Dog Handler with responsibility for a Hydrocarbon Detection Dog. The funding for this role to be split between Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire fire and rescue services. The role would report to the Fire Investigation Team Manager.

### **CREATION OF EQUIPMENT AND FIRE HYDRANT TECHNICIAN ROLES X2**

- 2.4 NFRS has a statutory duty to ensure there is adequate water for firefighting, fulfilling part of this duty by ensuring approximately 17,000 fire hydrants in Nottinghamshire are serviceable and fit for purpose. To assure this, the Service, through its equipment section, must undertake a risk-based inspection programme to each hydrant every 1– 5 years.

- 2.5 The Engineering Section has two posts which undertake both equipment maintenance and hydrant maintenance, however it has become apparent that this capacity is insufficient to meet Service demand.
- 2.6 A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken into this provision, against other local fire and rescue services providing hydrant maintenance and this has supported the view that additional resources are required. It is therefore proposed that a further two roles are created within the Engineering Section to support this work and ensure the Service can meet its statutory duty.
- 2.7 Funding for these additional roles has been secured within the budget setting process.

### **CREATION OF PENSIONS OFFICER ROLE**

- 2.8 The Service administers the Firefighter Pension Scheme and Local Government Pension Scheme through the role of Head of Finance, with support from the Human Resources Manager. However, the level and complexity of changes to pension regulations, particularly those applying to the Firefighter Pension Scheme, over recent years has meant that managing the scheme and implementing the regulations has become a highly specialist area, to the extent that it has been identified as a high risk on the Services' risk register.
- 2.9 In order to support the Head of Finance, and to ensure that the Service remains compliant with changing pension requirements, it is proposed that a Pensions Officer role is created as a part-time Grade 6 role (subject to job evaluation).
- 2.10 This specialist role will support the implementation of the remedying legislation resulting from the McCloud age discrimination case and also respond to the Matthews and O'Brien case which has resulted in on-call firefighters employed before 1 July 2000 being able to elect to become a special member of the pension scheme from the start of their employment. These are cases which were brought before an employment tribunal at a national level and are being progressed through the Local Government Association and will result in a significant workload for the Finance and Human Resources teams.
- 2.11 Funding for this role has been secured within the budget setting process.

### **CREATION OF ROSTERING MANAGER ROLE**

- 2.12 The implementation of a new rostering system is a key Community Risk Management Plan commitment. The project is within its final stages, with delivery expected by April 2023 and is supported by a crewing team of two, one of whom is on a fixed-term contract.
- 2.13 In order to maintain this specialist project support and in recognition of the resources that will be needed to maintain the rostering system for 650 employees, once it is fully implemented, it is proposed that a Rostering

Manager role is created at a Grade 5 level to lead the rostering team and manage system maintenance and development.

2.14 Funding for this role has been secured within the budget setting process.

### **AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISHMENT – HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER**

2.15 Due to the recent retirement of a Human Resources Business Partner, a review of existing human resources (HR) professional support has been undertaken. This has considered the changing requirements and a commitment to develop career pathways for support roles.

2.16 Currently, three HR Business Partners roles provide comprehensive professional support to the Service and work with departmental managers across a range of HR functions including recruitment and promotions, contractual issues, absence management, performance, advising on grievance and disciplinary issues. Two of the HR Business Partner (HRBP) roles work within geographical districts (north and south) aligned to Wholetime and On-call stations and the third supports those engaged in support roles. All the HRBPs are professionally qualified with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

2.17 In order to better align Service demands, it is proposed that the vacant HRBP role focuses specifically on recruitment activity and policy development, rather than departmental support, to release capacity for the other HRBP roles to provide more dedicated support to managers and employees. This also provides an opportunity to recruit and develop a CIPD student at Grade 4 and to provide a career pathway to progress to a qualified status (Grade 6).

2.18 This will be a career graded role encompassing Grades 4, 5 and 6 and the HR Officer will progress across the grading bands in accordance with attaining their CIPD qualification and the level of work undertaken. Their professional development will be overseen by the HR Manager.

2.19 This proposal will lead to savings in the salary budget.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 As the funding for the proposed Fire Investigation Dog Handler role will be shared within a regional cost-sharing agreement, there are no additional costs to the Service, and this can be contained within existing salary budgets.

3.2 The 2 Equipment and Fire Hydrant roles (Grade 4) will result in a cost ranging from £65,104 to £70,696 (incl. on costs) depending on the spinal point on appointment.

3.3 The Pensions Officer role (Grade 6 subject to JE) will result in a cost ranging from £42,399 to £47,168 (incl. on costs) depending on the spinal point on appointment.

- 3.4 Rostering Manager role (Grade 5) will result in a cost ranging from £35,348 to £39,979 (incl. on costs) depending on the spinal point on appointment.
- 3.5 The proposed career grading of the HR Officer role will result in a saving ranging from £16,213 to £18,786 (incl. on costs) depending on the spinal point on appointment at Grade 4 and a sustained saving ranging from £6,366 to £6,966 (incl. on costs), when the post-holder attains full professional status at Grade 6.

#### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The new roles will be advertised internally and externally in accordance with the Service's recruitment policy to widen the pool of potential candidates.
- 4.2 The HR Officer role will be supported to complete a CIPD qualification as part of their development pathway. This will be funded by the Service as per current arrangements.

#### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken as this does not represent a change to service policy or service delivery.

#### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no additional crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The funding of these additional posts will help the Service to meet its statutory and regulatory responsibilities.

#### **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Effective fire investigations can result in the conviction of individuals for deliberate fire setting. It is therefore imperative that investigations are undertaken as thoroughly as possible to reduce the risk of failed convictions. The creation of a Fire Investigation Dog Handler post will support the investigation and prosecution of incidents, deliver specialist training for regional fire and rescue services, and support community activities which assist in reducing instances of deliberate fire setting.
- 8.2 The proposed new roles of Equipment and Hydrant Maintenance Technicians, Senior Pensions Officer and Rostering Manager will support

delivery against statutory requirements and contribute to the delivery of key strategic commitments within the Community Risk Management Plan.

- 8.3 The re-alignment of human resources support will ensure that the Service can deliver on its workforce planning commitments and more effectively utilise the resources available to provide a professional and comprehensive HR service.

## **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

The employment of a Fire Investigation Dog Handler role forms part of a regional collaboration with Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members support changes to the permanent establishment, subject to Fire Authority approval:

- The creation of a new role of Fire Investigation Dog Handler;
- The creation of two Equipment and Fire Hydrant Technician roles;
- The creation of a Rostering Manager role;
- The creation of a Pensions Officer role;
- The dis-establishment of a HR Business Partner role and creation of an HR Officer as a career-graded post.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

Craig Parkin  
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