



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Report of the Chair of the Appointments Committee

Date: 15 February 2019

Purpose of Report:

To seek the approval of the recommendation of the Appointments Committee to the appointment of Mr Craig Parkin as the next Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

CONTACT OFFICER

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting of 16 November 2018, Policy and Strategy Committee were in receipt of a report regarding the resignation of the current Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), following his successful appointment as the Chief Fire Officer in another fire and rescue service. Since that meeting, it has been agreed to release him from Nottinghamshire on 24 February 2019.
- 1.2 The resignation of the DCFO created an opportunity to review the current structure and give consideration to potential changes. The Committee were updated on previous reviews which had seen the Principal Officer team reduce from five to three, with roles being deleted in May 2014 and October 2015, with a redistribution of functions to the remaining three Principal Officers. A number of changes had also been made to the posts at the level below Principal Officer, in that individuals' responsibilities had increased and parity created across 'Head of Department' roles.
- 1.3 Since 2015, additional challenges have emerged in terms of the Government's reform agenda, expectations contained within the Policing and Crime Act 2017 and the inspection regime by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.
- 1.4 In light of these growing expectations placed upon the Service and in recognition of the recent reductions within the number of strategic roles, it was proposed that the current level of three Principal Officers be maintained. This is consistent with many other Services of a similar size.
- 1.5 The report therefore sought the approval of the Committee for the Chief Fire Officer to work with the Clerk to the Authority to put in place a recruitment process for the impending DCFO vacancy.
- 1.6 The Policy and Strategy Committee approved the report and as a consequence, the selection of a DCFO began, with an expectation that an appointment could be confirmed at the Fire Authority meeting in February 2019.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The selection process for the DCFO post was extensive and involved the convening of the Appointments Committee to assess the candidates and provide recommendations to the full Fire Authority.
- 2.2 To support the process and ensure the relevant expertise was in place, the assistance of MPCG professional services was utilised in order to maximise the exposure of the vacancies and also to attract greater interest. A budget of £20k was created from anticipated in year underspends to support this, however the final cost was only £12.5k.
- 2.3 In December the process commenced and the advert attracted a number of quality applicants and the robust selection process involved application, written papers, profiling, media interview, presentation and panel interview.

This process was facilitated and arranged by MPCG with support from Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

- 2.4 The Appointments Committee convened on Wednesday 30 January 2019 and following the process, the Committee came to the unanimous decision that Mr Craig Parkin, the current Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) should be offered the post of DCFO with effect from 25 February 2019 to coincide with the revised leaving date of the current incumbent.
- 2.5 Should the appointment of Mr Parkin be approved, it will leave a vacancy at the Assistant level. To provide an interim solution to the vacancy, and to support the delivery of the Joint Headquarters (JHQ) programme being considered elsewhere on this agenda, the Chief Fire Officer proposes that the current Head of Procurement and Resources be temporarily appointed as Assistant Chief Officer pending a review, and report to the Fire Authority later in 2019.
- 2.6 This temporary arrangement will ensure continuity and provide time to consider future options for permanently dealing with the vacancy. This will have a partial impact on the operational rota, however, it is anticipated that during the temporary period the individual will be able to provide strategic support within the multi-agency arena and both the Chief Fire Officer, and proposed Deputy Chief Fire Officer are able to provide additional capacity in the short term to mitigate the impact.
- 2.7 This approach would also lead to a saving in the region of £15k per annum as the individual is currently in receipt of an uplift to recognise the additional responsibility regarding the joint HQ programme. Internal backfill arrangements will be covered by existing budgets.
- 2.8 If approved, the current Head of Procurement and Resources would be appointed as temporary Assistant Chief Officer effective from 25 February 2019 on the lowest scale point for the role.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 MPCG were appointed to provide professional recruitment services at a cost of £12.5k which has previously been allocated from anticipated underspends.
- 3.2 The salary range for the DCFO post is £113,853 to £126,503 (90 – 100%). Appointment to the post would normally be at the lowest point and increase proportionally over two years, however, Mr Parkin is currently paid at the top of scale in the ACFO role (scale £103,503 - £115,003) so he will be appointed on the 95% level at £120,178.
- 3.3 If the proposal to appoint to the temporary Assistant Chief Officer post is approved, the incumbent will be appointed at the lowest point within the scale; £103,503.
- 3.4 This will provide a short-term saving within the first year of £17k plus on-costs due to the lower scale appointments of both roles, which over the following two years will diminish.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

All human resources implications arising from this process were managed by the internal human resources team with the assistance of specialist external support as detailed above.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken as this report does not suggest any changes to policy or service delivery functions. However, in terms of the process, MPCG ensured it has complied with all equalities requirements.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Appointment of the two posts will provide continuity and immediate capacity to ensure the Service is able to continue with current workloads, and create time to review the structure for the longer term. This will mitigate the risk of such a senior individual leaving the Authority.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

Although there are no direct collaboration implications arising from this report, it must be acknowledged that peer support has been provided to the Service where the current DCFO is moving to assist them, and the Chief Fire Officer has received a letter of thanks for that support.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Agree to the appointment of Mr Craig Parkin as the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, with effect from 25 February 2019, as recommended by the Appointments Committee.
- 10.2 Support the proposal of the Chief Fire Officer to temporarily appoint Mr Ian Pritchard as the Assistant Chief Officer pending a review and report to the Fire Authority later in 2019.

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

None.

Councillor Brian Grocock
CHAIR OF THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE