

# CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

**MEETING OF:** FIRE AUTHORITY  
**DATE:** 13 FEBRUARY 2019  
**REPORT OF:** CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
**AUTHOR:** ANDREA HARVEY

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**SUBJECT:** NEW BRIGADE MANAGER STRUCTURE

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## Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with details of the proposed new Brigade Manager structure, appointment process and changes to the Constitution which will be required if the proposal is approved.

**Recommended:** That Members

- [1] Approve the new Brigade Manager structure
- [2] Vote on the creation of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer posts (see Legal Implications section for the reason for this recommendation)
- [3] Note the appointment process
- [4] Approve minor changes to the Constitution

## Background

2. Over the course of the last decade there have been a number of brigade management structures that have been in operation within Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service. These are summarised in the table below:

Year	Chief Fire Officer	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
2007	1	3* * Included non operational director post	
2009	1	2	
2010	1	1	1
2016	1	1	

3. As can be seen in the table the Service halved the brigade manager establishment from 4 to 2. The most recent reduction was made in 2016 when an Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) post was deleted after the post holder retired. This was necessary due to ongoing austerity, budget cuts and the need to demonstrate value for money. Although the elimination of the ACFO post generated tangible savings, with only two brigade managers remaining, this created a potential risk that such a lean structure could impact on operational resilience. There was also a question-mark about whether it would be sustainable in the long term.
4. Despite this, up until earlier this year when Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive (CFO) Paul Hancock retired, both the CFO and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) demonstrated the ability to manage their increased workloads and as a result the reduced brigade manager structure did not falter nor put the Service at risk. The critical success factor was a highly effective and cooperative working relationship between the CFO and DCFO that had been established over a nine year period of working together as experienced brigade managers within Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.
5. The increased workloads and competing demands on the CFO's and DCFO's time have, however, inadvertently created a disconnect between the brigade managers and staff. Staff survey results have highlighted the need for the brigade managers to be seen across the organisation as visible and accessible and both direct and indirect staff feedback has amplified this as a critical factor in strengthening organisational culture, developing staff engagement and improving morale.

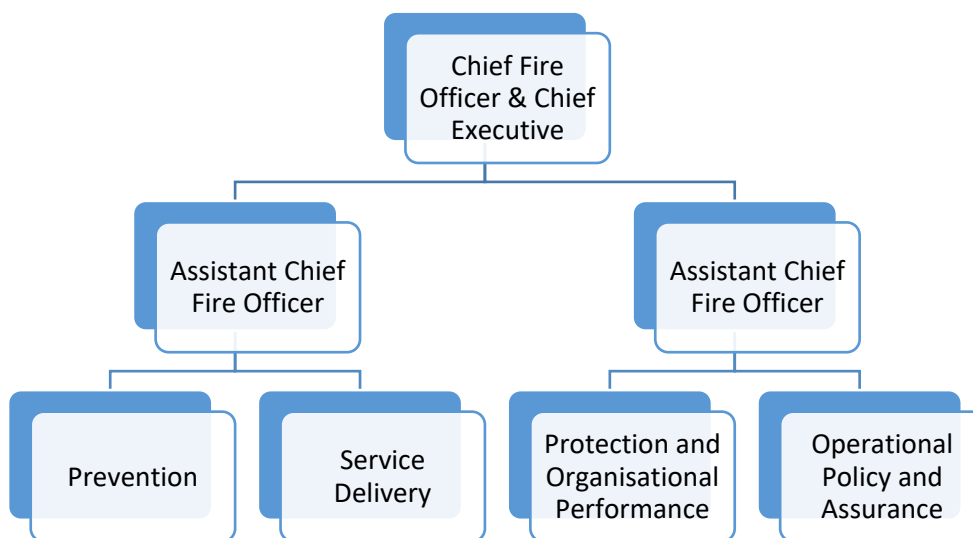
## **Information**

### **The New Brigade Manager Structure**

6. In recognition of the need to have a sustainable brigade manager structure with sufficient capacity to lead effectively whilst supporting the initial development and settling in of a new CFO, a revised brigade manager structure has been piloted for a period of six months.
7. To support the pilot an internal recruitment process was undertaken and two substantive Area Managers were appointed into two temporary ACFO posts for the duration of the pilot which ran from 1 July 2018. No one was designated as DCFO during this period.
8. The temporary structure shown in the diagram on the next page was designed around a number of important principles.
  - It was recognised that the portfolio of the DCFO post was disproportionate, with responsibility for all of the Service's directorates with the exception of Corporate Communications and Business Intelligence. The new structure required the apportionment of the

responsibilities between the two ACFO posts to be appropriately focused, realistic and sustainable with no more than four direct reports each.

- The new structure also considered the need for maintaining a sustainable out-of-hours rota for gold command and operational resilience whilst also ensuring that the brigade managers could achieve an appropriate work-life balance.
- Of significant importance was the need to create roles that had sufficient capacity to enable brigade managers to drive positive cultural change through more direct engagement with staff and more effective, timely and frequent communications.



9. A report was presented to the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019 containing details of the six month pilot. The report concluded that the new structure had fulfilled the design principles and had seen a significant improvement in the ability of the brigade managers to apply sufficient time and focus to their areas of responsibility. One to ones and communication with direct reports have been more frequent and the introduction of two ACFOs has allowed the CFO to step away from the day to day business in order to focus more on the strategic, political and partnership aspects of his new role.
10. The new structure has also enabled significant progress to be made in addressing the challenge and stated problem of staff engagement, visibility and accessibility. This was identified as an area for improvement in the report of HMICFRS following the inspection of the Service which was focused on effectiveness, efficiency and people. The report identified that the Service's promotion of the right values and cultures required improvement. The report stated that station based staff did not have regular access to senior managers. This meant that these managers were not able to role model the behaviours which the Service requires. The Service needs to assure itself that senior

managers are visible to act as role models to staff. There is also a need for the service to improve communication between staff and senior managers.

11. The table below illustrates one aspect of the improved visibility and engagement with staff over the six month trial period compared with the same period during 2017 under the previous brigade manager structure. It is the intention of the CFO to maintain a published list of brigade manager visits to fire stations to ensure that staff engagement and visibility of senior officers remains a key priority and that the significant increase is maintained from year to year.

July 1 <sup>st</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> December	Number of Visits to Staff Groups/Watches	Number of Brigade Managers
2017	17	2
2018	75	3

12. As part of the evaluation of the pilot and prior to submitting the structure to Members as a formal recommendation, wider research was also carried out to understand and compare the brigade management structures within other fire and rescue services.
13. In respect of the national comparisons it is worthy of note that there is an increasing trend across the sector for services to revert back to having two ACFO posts within their brigade manager structures. This pattern also includes some services who have reverted back from the previous trend of having non operational director level posts in their brigade manager structures, to re-establish operational ACFO roles. This is particularly noticeable where new CFOs have been appointed and are seeking the necessary support and operational resilience.
14. The Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee decided to recommend the new Brigade Manager structure to the Fire Authority.

### **Appointment process**

15. Subject to this structure being approved, a national recruitment campaign would be required to fill the two ACFO posts. It could begin in late February inviting both internal and external applications. The first stage of the selection process would comprise of a technical interview, a behavioural interview, a psychometric assessment and a media assessment. As has been done in the past for senior appointments the make up of the assessment panels would include independent assessors from outside of the Service.
16. The second stage of the selection process would comprise of an interview and presentation to be assessed by Members of the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee. The selection process could be completed by the first week in April 2019 and subject to potential notice periods, it is anticipated that the posts could be filled by May/June 2019.

## **Changes to the Constitution**

17. The rules relating to the appointment, appraisal and remuneration of Brigade Managers are contained in Section 3 of the Authority's Constitution, "Members Decision Making Bodies".
18. Currently, the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee has responsibility for determining and undertaking the appointment process for the posts of CFO and DCFO. The Fire Authority appoints the CFO, the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee appoints the DCFO.
19. Currently, the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee determines the remuneration of the CFO and the DCFO. The committee also reviews the appraisal of the DCFO.
20. If the proposal to replace the Deputy Chief Fire Officer role with two Assistant Chief Fire Officer posts is approved, the Responsibilities of the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee will need to be changed to allow the committee to undertake the same responsibilities for the ACFO posts as it has had for the DCFO post.
21. The proposed changes are shown in red on the extract from Section 3 of the Constitution attached to this report as Appendix 1. References to the DCFO have been retained. This should avoid the need to change the Responsibilities if the structure changes in the future.

## **Financial Implications**

22. In developing this proposal consideration was given to the following financial impacts:
  - Difference in the salary of the previous CFO and the current CFO
  - Savings associated with the deletion of the DCFO post
  - Additional savings associated with the deletion of a Group Manager B post within the Transformation Team
23. A breakdown of costs comparing the proposed structure with the cost of the previous structure is contained in Appendix 2 to this report. As can be seen the total additional cost of the new structure, including employer costs, is £8,401. This is being funded from reserves in this financial year and will need to be built into the base budget in subsequent years.

## **Legal Implications**

### **Localism Act**

24. Guidance under section 40 of the Localism Act 2011 sets out the key policy principles that underpin the pay accountability provisions in the Act. As part of the drive for accountability, the guidance contains a recommendation that

elected members should be offered the opportunity to vote before salary packages in excess of £100,000 are offered in respect of a new appointment. This recommendation has been included in the Authority's Pay Policy Statement.

25. It is now proposed that this requirement is added to the Responsibilities of the Fire Authority and the proposed wording for this is shown in red as a new paragraph 3.12 in Appendix 1 to this report.
26. The overall value of the salary package for the new role of Assistant Chief Fire Officer will exceed £100,000, as detailed in the Financial Implications section of this report, and Members will need to vote to approve the creation of posts at this level of remuneration before the posts can be advertised nationally.
27. The proposed amendments should ensure that the processes utilised by the Fire Authority accord with national guidance and legislation.

### **National Framework**

28. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 includes a requirement at paragraph 6.10 concerned with the filling of certain posts. It states: To ensure greater fairness and the exchange of talent and ideas, all principal officer posts must be open to competition nationally, and fire and rescue authorities must take account of this in their workforce planning.
29. The proposed appointment process will comply with the requirement of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England that all principal fire officer posts are open to competition nationally.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

30. By advertising these posts externally and using independent assessors we are demonstrating our commitment to equality and inclusion and the Equality and Diversity Officer will be undertaking an equality impact assessment on the proposed selection process.

### **Environmental Implications**

31. Technology will be utilised as far as is practicable to ensure that the recruitment process and associated documentation supports the organisation's commitment to reducing environmental costs and the carbon footprint.

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### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

**New Brigade Manager Structure report that was considered by the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee held on 16 January 2019**