

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/24/29
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	31 JULY 2024
SUBJECT OF REPORT	EXECUTIVE BOARD STRUCTURE 2024
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Fire Officer (Designate)
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>(a). <i>That the proposed Executive Board structure be endorsed and adopted;</i></p> <p>(b). <i>that the existing Head of Finance be appointed on a permanent basis as the Authority's proper officer by virtue of section 112 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1988 (Treasurer); and</i></p> <p>(c). <i>subject to (a). and (b). above, the report be noted.</i></p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Following announcement of the retirement of the substantive Chief Fire Officer, Lee Howell, on 13 September 2024, a selection process was undertaken by the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority in May 2024 (Minute DSFRA/24/7a refers) where a new, permanent Chief Fire Officer (designate) and Head of Paid Service was appointed.</p> <p>This followed a temporary Executive Board structure being in place for over 16 months (since May 2023 – Minute DSFRA/23/10 refers), due to the Director of Corporate Services retiring, the Monitoring Officer retiring as well as the Director of Finance and Corporate Services moving on for career development. The Authority appointed a substantive Chief Fire Officer (designate), a new Treasurer and Monitoring Officer as the 'Golden Triangle' of statutory officers.</p> <p>The Chief Fire Officer (designate) has identified a new, permanent Executive Board structure that provides resilience, capacity to drive change as well as managing operational preparedness and community safety as well as providing career pathways for operational and non-operational posts. This new structure together with the rationale behind it are set out in this report.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	None.

EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	The contents of this report are considered compatible with existing Equalities and Human Rights legislation.
APPENDICES	A. Structure charts for existing, temporary and proposed Executive Board structures
BACKGROUND PAPERS	Report DSFRA/23/16 and associated Minute DSFRA/23/10.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Following announcement of the retirement of the substantive Chief Fire Officer, Lee Howell, on September 13, 2024, a selection process was undertaken by the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority (hereinafter referred to as “the Authority”) in May 2024 (Minute DSFRA/24/7a refers) where a new, permanent Chief Fire Officer (designate) and Head of Paid Service was appointed.
- 1.2. This followed a temporary Executive Board structure being in place for over 16 months (since May 2023 – Minute DSFRA/23/10 refers), due to the Director of Corporate Services retiring, the Monitoring Officer retiring as well as the Director of Finance and Corporate Services moving on. The Authority appointed a substantive Chief Fire Officer (designate), a new Treasurer and Monitoring Officer as the ‘Golden Triangle.’
- 1.3. The Chief Fire Officer has identified a new permanent Executive Board structure that provides resilience, capacity to drive change as well as managing operational preparedness and community safety as well as providing career pathways for operational and non-operational posts.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Following the secondment of the permanent Chief Fire Officer, retirement of the Director of Governance & Corporate Services (and Monitoring Officer) and resignation of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, a temporary structure for the Executive Board was established (Minute DSFRA/23/xx refers).
- 2.2. The permanent structure as was, and the proposed structure with the temporary arrangements can be found in appendix A of this report.
- 2.3. The interim Chief Fire Officer has embarked on an ambitious transformation programme for the Service, which drives the outcomes of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), a people improvement plan in response to His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the introduction of a Target Operating Model which provides the guiding principles for driving strategic change to meet the needs of the medium-term financial plan and overall budget.
- 2.4. The transformation plan identifies a number of areas where financial efficiencies can be made, but also where fundamental changes are required around the way in which we operate and provide our services to our communities and partners. This is against the backdrop of new and emerging risks being identified within the CRMP, such as severe weather events and the growing risks associated with electric vehicles, bulk battery storage, flooding and inland water rescues and incidents related to welfare and mental health. All of this shows that the Fire & Rescue Service is in a pivotal role of supporting partners and the community to become more resilient and prepared for the changing environment.

- 2.5. The Fire & Rescue National Framework document set in 2018 is currently being reviewed which may be out for consultation later in 2024. There has also been a change in Government which may impact from a legislative and procedural perspective. Dame Diana Johnson has been appointed as the new Policing, Fire and Crime Minister. The service does not currently know the impact of these two areas on the sector, however, work is underway across the Local Government Association, National Fire Chiefs Council and with the Authority to request a change to legislation and funding to support the fire and rescue service to become the primary organisation to respond to and deal with flooding and in-land water rescues.
- 2.6. Due to a number of areas including the need to take interim savings from the Executive Board, a temporary structure was put in place, with only four members of the Board. Over the last 16 months, this has worked but has shown a significant impact on the capacity of individuals to balance their day jobs, while driving transformation change as well as responding to our people improvement plan. Therefore, the temporary structure does not provide the resilience required to meet the demands of the workload, or on the wellbeing of its leaders that hold the posts. It is of strategic importance that the Executive Board provides the leadership, capacity, and capability to match the needs and direction of travel within the transformation programme, and that require the executive leaders to role model exemplary behaviours for the rest of the organisation.
- 2.7. The Chief Fire Officer (designate) has considered the position carefully considering the points raised at paragraph 2.6 above and, as a result, is putting into place a new structure to address these matters. This is as set out in the following paragraphs 3 to 11 of this report.

Operational Rota Requirements

- 2.8. There is a requirement to ensure the appropriate level of Incident Command Level 4 cover and Gold Command on the Principal Officer and Area Manager rota as shown below. There is a requirement to maintain four members on each rota system as part of the existing conditions of service and requirements to provide operational preparedness and resilience.

Current permanent arrangement	Proposed arrangement
<i>Principal Officer Rota</i>	<i>Principal Officer Rota</i>
Chief Fire Officer	Chief Fire Officer
Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Deputy Assistant Chief Fire Officer
<i>Area Manager Rota</i>	<i>Area Manager Rota</i>
4 x Area Manager	4 x Area Manager

3. DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

- 3.1. Due to the size of the organisation, as the largest non-metropolitan fire & rescue service it is recommended that the deputy role remains within the structure.
- 3.2. The workload identified through the ambitious change programme, as well as the external drivers mentioned previously, have created large workloads outside of 'business as usual' activity. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) post remains within the structure and was last held by the newly appointed Chief Fire Officer (CFO) in May 2023. The post was held vacant to realise financial efficiencies.
- 3.3. Under the proposed structure, the DCFO would support the CFO alongside the Director of Strategy & Improvement to lead the Service. The post will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the service and the implementation of plans and strategies, allowing the CFO to focus on the national drivers and influence national direction.
- 3.4. They will support the CFO to create and drive the vision and organisational strategy and continue to drive organisational trust through our people improvement journey and cultural improvements.
- 3.5. The DCFO would be the Director of Service Delivery with direct responsibility for Community Safety, Response and Resilience, People and would be the safeguarding lead for the Service.

4. DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICER - DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY & IMPROVEMENT

- 4.1 The Director of Strategy & Improvement would sit under the CFO as a non-uniformed Deputy Chief equivalent.
- 4.2 The Director of Strategy & Improvement would directly line manage the Director of Corporate Services and the Deputy Assistant Chief Fire Officer.
- 4.3 The post would be responsible for driving the strategy and vision on behalf of the Chief Fire Officer working directly along side the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, ensuring the vision, strategy, improvement plans, and performance are driven from the most senior levels of the organisation encompassing all areas of the service. This also provides additional resilience during major incidents that impact on the operational side of the organisation allowing continuity of workload while operational officers are required for operational activity.

5. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES.

- 5.1. Following a number of inspections of the Service by the 'His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), it has identified cultural and people improvements that are required across the sector and the service. DSFRS received a cause for concern for culture within the last inspection.
- 5.2. A large amount of work has been developed and driven from the very top by the then Deputy Chief Fire Officer and then into the Temporary Chief Fire Officer.
- 5.3. With the workload required to continually develop the people improvement journey and the Service's people strategy, there is a need for a dedicated assistant director's role on the Executive Board, to provide guidance and shape the organisations people services with up-to-date experience on employment law and organisational development change programmes.
- 5.4. This post will also provide broader diversity of thinking to the Executive Board as the strategy is continually developed to drive the organisation forward, particularly in-line with the ambitious change programme and medium-term financial plan.
- 5.5. This would be accountable to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and be a new post to the Executive Board set at pay scale EB 1

6. DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

- 6.1. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services is an established post on the Executive Board and is currently vacant. The post is currently held on a temporary basis as the Assistant Director of Corporate Services, with the Temporary Treasurer maintaining responsibility for Finance. The Director of Corporate Services will be responsible for support functions such as Digital and Data, Organisational Assurance, Health & Safety and Corporate Communications. The role will also be the nominated Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) for the service. The post would be a part of the Executive Board and set at pay scale EB 3.

7. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (DEPUTY ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER)

- 7.1. The role of Deputy Assistant Chief Fire Officer (DACO) will form the fourth member of the operational Principal Officer Rota and will support the Director of Strategy and Improvement to discharge their functions as they will be responsible for organisational strategy and performance.
- 7.2. As an interim, the Service has been rotating the Area Managers onto the Principal Officer rota for experience and due to the Executive Board being in a temporary state to provide the fourth senior operational officer. This has been of benefit and will continue.

7.3. The DACO would not be a sitting member of the Executive Board. The DACO would chair the Service Leadership Team meetings and be an advisor to the Executive Board.

8. ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER POSTS

8.1. The two Assistant Chief Fire Officers (ACFO's) with responsibility for Service Delivery and Service Delivery Support are existing permanent posts within the Executive Board structure. One post is filled on a permanent basis, with the second post is currently filled on a temporary basis.

8.2. The proposal would be to remove one ACFO post currently designated Service Delivery Support.

9. TREASURER POST

9.1. On 25 March 2024 (Minute DSFRA/23/41 refers), the Authority appointed the existing Service Head of Finance as the proper officer for the administration of financial affairs, in accordance with Section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, for a period of twelve months to allow sufficient time for the appointment of a new Chief Fire Officer and review of Service Executive Board structure thereafter.

9.2. Since the CFO designate has now been appointed and has considered the structure at Executive Board level, this paper also proposes that the Authority appoints the Head of Finance as permanent Treasurer to the Authority.

10. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

10.1. Since the introduction of the current temporary Executive Board structure in May 2023, an additional Area Manager (AM) was introduced, which allowed for the rotation of an AM onto the Principal Officer rota, as well as supporting the four AM on their rota. The introduction of the additional AM allowed the geographical Area Commander role to be split. Rather than one AM responsible for all fire stations, assets, and people across Devon & Somerset, a second AM was introduced to allow geographical responsibilities for Devon & for Somerset.

10.2. This has also allowed the Area Managers and officers and staff within their counties to align more to partners and local authorities. This has shown significant benefits, and it is intended that this model remains. The introduction of the DACO role allows the current Area Managers to maintain their responsibilities with the DACO post being enhanced to become an assistant director.

- 10.3. As the service moves forward, it is vital that the ability to broaden the diversity of thinking on the Executive Board and therefore the influence onto the Service Leadership Team and the wider organisation is key to enable the organisation to achieve its ambitious change programme. We want to be an excellent organisation, attracting and retaining high-performing talent must be a requirement for the organisation.
- 10.4. The additional post onto the Executive Board provides greater overall resilience and the ability to maintain continuity within the organisation. This is evident through the ability to maintain Executive Board meetings with the quorate numbers being three to maintain the meeting schedule which has not always been possible with the temporary structure.

11. RECRUITMENT

- 11.1. There is a requirement to undertake a national recruitment process for the following posts:
- Deputy Chief Fire Officer
 - Deputy Chief Officer, Director of Strategy & Improvement
 - Assistant Director of People
 - Director of Corporate Services
 - Assistant Director, Deputy Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Delegated to the CFO)
- 11.2. The Chief Fire Officer will request that the Monitoring Officer identifies appropriate dates and a process in the first instance for the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Director of Strategy & Improvement roles.

12. FINANCIAL COST

- 12.1. The Chief Fire Officer designate is leading on a service wide re-structure and the costs of the Executive Board would be factored into the wider efficiencies of the service.
- 12.2. Following the recruitment of the Director of Corporate Services and Assistant Director of People, should they be internal appointments, the vacated posts would be reviewed for efficiencies.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1. The change required for the Service, to meet the needs of the medium-term financial plan, external factors such as the Grenfell Inquiry recommendations, HMICFRS inspection framework, re-write of the national framework, change to national government and a drive to improve culture requires additional capacity at the Executive Board.

- 13.2. The temporary board, currently made up of four directors is currently does not have enough capacity to drive meaningful change and will have an impact on leading a good work/life balance and on decision making due to the diversity of thinking being reduced to a temporary structure. This also does not provide enough resilience to service the number of meetings required within the 'business as usual' work.
- 13.3. The Executive Board structure as attached in Appendix A shows the line management of the directors, this also allows a formalisation of the structure below the Executive Board.
- 13.4. The balance of Operational and Non-Operational posts on the Executive Board allows career pathways for all staff within the service as part of the wider leadership framework.
- 13.5. If the proposed structure is not agreed, there will need to be further proposals developed and presented back to the Authority. Which will have a further impact on capacity and the ability of the temporary Executive Board to drive sustainable change.
- 13.6. In accordance with the National Framework for England 2018 (paragraph 6.1), posts at Executive Board level need to be advertised nationally to ensure a competitive process. This will also impact on timescales for recruitment of candidates to potential new roles in the proposed structure.
- 13.7. The Authority's Appointments & Disciplinary Committee already has delegated power to appoint to all Executive Board posts with the exception of the statutory officers - CFO, Treasurer and Monitoring Officer. If the proposal is adopted, recruitment to the post of Deputy Chief Fire Officer can commence with potential other vacancies being filled in due course.
- 13.8. The Authority's Pay Policy Statement will also require amendment in due course to reflect the potential new structure.

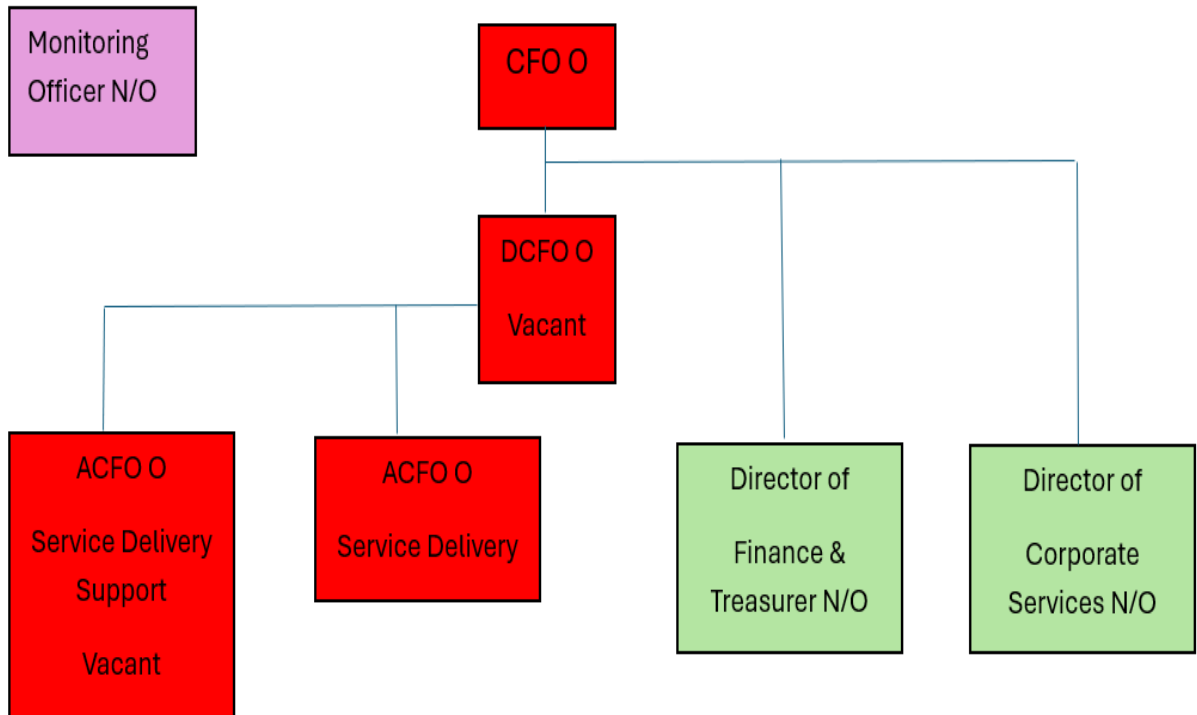
GAVIN ELLIS
Chief Fire Officer

APPENDIX A TO REPORT DSFRA/24/29

Structure Established Posts

O = Operational Posts

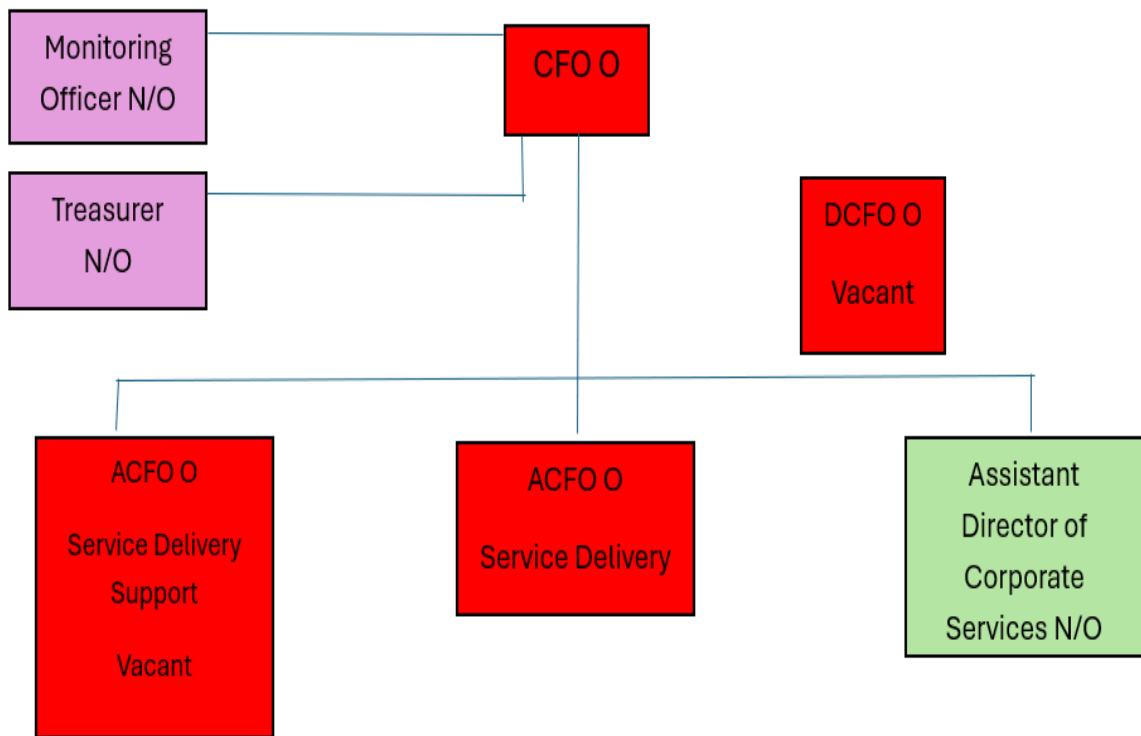
N/O = Non-Operational Posts



Current Temporary Structure May 2023 -

O = Operational Posts

N/O = Non-Operational Posts



Proposed Structure Post Sept 2024

O = Operational Posts

N/O = Non-Operational Posts

