

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/17/24
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	26 JULY 2017
SUBJECT OF REPORT	STRUCTURE OF THE SERVICE EXECUTIVE BOARD
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>(a) <i>the Service Executive Board structure presented at Appendix A, together with the process outlined in paragraph 1.9 where changes in responsibilities require a review of job descriptions and/or job evaluation is necessary, be approved;</i></p> <p>(b) <i>that, subject to approval of (a) above, the Authority determines whether to run an internal or external process for appointment of the second Assistant Chief Fire Officer and appoints an Appointment Panel with delegated authority to determine the appointment;</i></p> <p>(c) <i>that, subject to (a) and (b) above, the Chief Fire Officer be delegated authority to determine, in consultation with the members of the Appointment Panel, the detail of the process determined in (b) above.</i></p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>At its meeting on meeting on 27 July 2016, the Fire Authority asked the Chief Fire Officer to review the top two levels of management structure in the Service with two main areas of focus, efficiency and effectiveness (Minute DSFRA/22 refers).</p> <p>In coming to a view, the Chief Fire Officer has consulted with current members of the Executive Board as well as with other colleagues.</p> <p>In recent months, there has been an increase in demand for operational response capability, including that at strategic (Gold Command) level and this is anticipated to continue. In addition, Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service determined that it would revert to a self-sufficient model for Principal Officer cover so the shared Principal Officer arrangement with Cornwall has come to an end.</p> <p>Consequently, it is proposed that the number of Executive Board members remains the same as is currently the case but that an additional Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operational) post is established in place of the vacant Director of People and Commercial Services position. This change will significantly improve Principal Officer resilience within the Service.</p> <p>The alternative option of retaining the current structure which includes the vacant post of Director of HR/Training, operating with one Assistant Chief Fire Officer can be considered but is not the preferred option for the reasons set out within this report.</p>

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Savings of circa £40,000
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	The contents of this report are considered compatible with existing equalities and human rights legislation.
APPENDICES	A. Structure Chart 2009, 2016 and 2017.
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	Minute DSFRA/22 of the meeting of the Authority held on 27 July 2017.

1. **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. The request for a top team structural review comes at a time of significant change for the Service where financial pressures continue to require the management team to bear down on costs and at the same time ensure that there is sufficient resilience in the operational structure to meet current and forecasted operational requirements. In progressing this review, a number of operating principles were used to drive thinking:
- Our focus will continue to be on improving community outcomes and performance management will be at the heart of all that we do at all levels.
 - We aim to become an even more agile, responsive organisation and will 'buy in' capacity from others as and when needed rather than always resource 'in-house' in a traditional manner
 - We will not be able to progress our appetite for change and improvement and take out significant savings at the same time. Note: We plan to use the £5m Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) reserve to fund change and improvement over the next three/five years.
 - In terms of the operational and strategic rota, our experience has shown we need to be more resilient given demands on the Service.
 - We plan to compress a number of roles in time and further savings may be presented even after taking into account any regrading issue linked to job size – within existing budgets.
 - Structure changes and changes to ways of working (meetings) will free up opportunity costs which will improve efficiency and a greater emphasis on empowerment.
- 1.2. In recent months, there has been an increase in demand for operational response capability, including that at strategic (Gold Command) level. This is anticipated to continue and it will be important that that the organisation is able to meet both current and forecasted demands on the Service.
- 1.3. At the same time, tragic events elsewhere within the Country as well as within Devon and Somerset have meant significant additional workload, not just dealing with the incidents themselves but also in the management of the consequences, be it investigation, training or operational assurance.
- 1.4. In addition, Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service determined that it would prefer to revert to a self-sufficient model for senior operational cover arrangements and as such the shared Principal Officer cover arrangement with Cornwall has come to an end.
- 1.5. As well as providing an additional Principal Officer on the strategic operational rota on a temporary basis (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), the opportunity has been taken to train the Director of Corporate Services to be able to attend the Strategic Coordinating Group (Multi Agency Gold) to represent the organisation on occasions (not to direct operational tactics). Whilst this will be in a supporting role initially, over time this may be a role that can be effectively discharged and this in itself will provide additional resilience for the organisation.

- 1.6. By way of further information, during major incidents there are two main roles for strategic commanders. The first is to take command of the operational incident itself which will take place at the scene. The second is to work with multi agency partners to ensure a joined up approach is provided to the operational response and recovery phase of the incident. The latter function takes place at Police Headquarters.
- 1.7. In terms of organisational effectiveness, the temporary structure that has been in place for a number of months now has been proven to be effective. We have absolute clarity as to roles and responsibility and where these best sit at Director level. The two Assistant Chief Fire Officers in particular have clear separation between actions which deliver the Service today and those which are focused on improving the Service for tomorrow. When benchmarked against other Combined Fire Authorities, this Service has a low level of Principal Officers as illustrated in Figure 1 (**Note:** 'Brigade Managers' refers to Assistant/Deputy Chief Fire Officers and Chief Fire Officers).

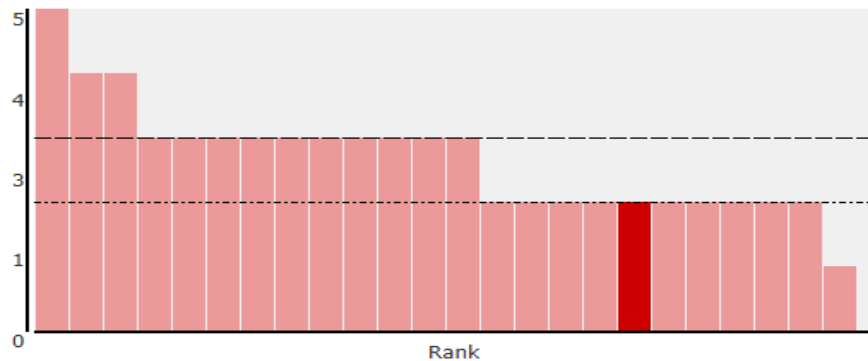
Figure 1 Benchmarking information

This statistical report displays figures for Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service compared against the following comparator class(es):

- Combined Fire Authorities: England

Wholetime Firefighters at 31.03.2016 - Brigade Managers (FTE) (FTE)

■ Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service ■ Selected Authorities



Rank	Local Authority	FTE
1	Hampshire Combined Fire Authority	5
2	Avon Combined Fire Authority	4
3	Kent Combined Fire Authority	4
4	Hereford and Worcester Combined Fire Authority	3
5	Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	3
6	Leicestershire Combined Fire Authority	3
Upper Quartile		
7	Nottinghamshire Combined Fire Authority	3
8	Shropshire Combined Fire Authority	3
9	Cambridgeshire Combined Fire Authority	3
10	Derbyshire Combined Fire Authority	3
11	Dorset Combined Fire Authority	3
12	Essex Combined Fire Authority	3
Median		
13	Berkshire Combined Fire Authority	3
14	Buckinghamshire Combined Fire Authority	2
15	Bedfordshire Combined Fire Authority	2
16	Durham Combined Fire Authority	2
17	East Sussex Combined Fire Authority	2
18	Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service	2

- 1.8. There are a number of immediate changes that will offset the costs of the proposed changes to the Executive Board structure. Savings will be generated as a result of not replacing the Director of Human Resources and Commercial Services (responsibilities for this post have been realigned within the new Executive Board structure) and one Area Manager post can be removed.
- 1.9. Where changes in responsibilities require a review of job descriptions and/or job evaluation, this will be undertaken in accordance with the established procedures agreed with representative bodies and with any changes applied against existing pay and grading structures. In terms of any changes at Executive Board level that may arise from this process, it is proposed that the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to implement the changes in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority.
- 1.10. The net impact is that these proposed changes will result in a saving of circa £40,000. This figure includes provision for any changes resulting from job evaluation.
- 1.11. We have also a range of established contracts with other potential providers (e.g. legal services, human resources, occupational health) and we will consider greater use of these to meet peaks in demand. Historically, we would have automatically recruited staff to meet additional demands but moving forward, we will look to 'buy in' additional capacity when needed to assist manage specific projects where others have greater expertise.
- 1.12. It is noteworthy that the cost of the top team in 2009 was 1.35% of the net budget. If the additional Assistant Chief Officer post is approved by the Fire Authority, the Executive Board will cost 0.97% of the net budget - a reduction in cost of 38% and from nine to five posts.
- 1.13. If the Authority is minded to approve the top team structure as outlined, a decision as to whether to progress an internal or external process for appointment of the second Assistant Chief Fire Officer post will be needed.
- 1.14. The benefit of an internal process would be reduced time and cost as we can bring through the two 'appointable' candidates from the Assistant Chief Fire Officer interview post held nine months ago. A simple interview process, chaired by the Authority Chairman and a small group of members, with professional advice from the Chief Fire Officer might seem appropriate. This would also mean the savings from reducing an Area Manager position would drop out straight away as the successful candidate would be an existing member of staff.
- 1.15. The benefit of an external process would be to 'test the market' to ensure that any appointment was the best possible candidate. An external process would take some effort to set up and would incur costs in terms of command assessments, psychometric testing and interviewing, but could be facilitated if this was to be the desired approach. External candidates, if appointed, may need to give three months notice.
- 1.16. Once the Authority has determined the Executive Board structure, the Chief Fire Officer will be able to complete his review of the second tier of the Service management structure. The Chief Fire Officer has delegated authority within the Authority's Scheme of Delegations (4.17) to:

- (a) effect minor variations in the establishment between uniformed and non-uniformed posts where this is in the best interests of the Service and subject to consultation with representative bodies and to there being no additional resource implications associated with the variation;
- (b) to effect changes in the establishment structure subject to any financial implications being contained from within existing resources and to compliance with the virement thresholds as contained in the Authority's Financial Regulations

1.17. Accordingly, it is proposed that any changes to the second tier of the Service management that may result from the Chief Fire Officer's review, and do not constitute a 'major restructuring' (Scheme of Delegations 4.18 (ii)) may be implemented by the Chief Fire Officer. A report detailing any such changes should be submitted to the first meeting of the Human Resources and Development Committee following implementation of the changes, for noting.

1.18. Should any changes to the second tier of the Service management that may result from the Chief Fire Officer's review constitute a 'major restructuring', e.g. proposed changes to the existing pay a grading structure, but where the costs can be met from within existing budget provision, then a full report detailing the proposals must be submitted to the Human Resources and Development Committee for consideration and determination. Where the costs cannot be met from within existing budget provision, then a full report detailing the proposals must be submitted, in the first instance, to the Human Resources and Development Committee for consideration of a recommendation to be made by the Committee to the full Authority for determination.

2. CONCLUSION

2.1. The proposed structure has been operated on a temporary basis for some time now and during this period, the Chief Fire Officer has seen improvements in performance due to greater clarity of roles, greater accountability and this has also provided much needed additional operational resilience at strategic level. It has also seen improvement in employee relations with an operational officer (Assistant Chief Fire Officer) overseeing engagement and consultation with trade unions. The revised structure is therefore recommended to the Authority for approval.

LEE HOWELL
Chief Fire Officer