

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

25TH SEPTEMBER 2006

1. CORPORATE BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Authority note the changes in corporate structure and individual responsibilities.
- 1.2 THAT the Authority approve the proposal that three of the Director posts require substantive ACFO appointments.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted to explain the steps being taken to ensure improvement in the Authority's performance and to establish that the Authority requires three substantive Assistant Chief Fire Officers (ACFOs) to provide effective Principal Officer command cover.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2005 the Authority underwent a Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Overall the Authority was assessed as being a 'good performer'. There were, however, two areas where the Authority was assessed as being at level two. These were the 'Performance Management' and 'Capacity: People' categories. Level two indicates that the Authority 'is performing at only the minimum required level and performance is adequate'.
- 3.2 In January 2006 the West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA) was commissioned to undertake an independent review of the Human Resources (HR) function within the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (WMFRA). Following consultation, the scope of this review was expanded and drew conclusions in respect of both people and performance management.

- 3.3 The WMLGA review drew four main conclusions in respect of the HR function. On 24th July 2006 the Authority's Executive Committee approved recommendations made by the Chief Fire Officer designed to improve the Authority's performance in respect of the 'Capacity: People' category. This included the establishment of a non-uniformed HR post.
- 3.4 The WMLGA review drew two main conclusions in respect of Performance Management and the Borough Command structure:
- 3.4.1 'The introduction of the Borough Commander structure is a positive move that has the potential to operate as the primary mechanism for devolving the relevant aspects of people management and allow a refocusing of the Corporate HR function towards an advisory, developmental and more strategic role;'
- 3.4.2 'Based on the evidence obtained during this review, the current corporate approach to performance management fails to provide robust mechanisms which ensure the 'golden thread' is visible or make the shift from 'monitoring to management' identified as necessary in the CPA report.'
- 3.5 In July 2006 the Authority carried out a self assessment of its 'Operational Service Delivery'. This self assessment is part of the Audit Commission's service assessment of Fire and Rescue Authorities. The conclusion of this self assessment is that the Authority is 'performing well' but needs to take steps to be assessed as 'performing strongly'.
- 3.6 Prior to the completion of the self assessment referred to in paragraph 3.5, the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) had recognised that changes needed to be made to the corporate management structure supporting the Borough Commanders and Community Protection. On 24th July 2006 the Authority's Executive Committee approved the interim appointment of an Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Service Delivery to manage the nine Borough Commanders. Appendix 1 shows the structure prior to 24th July and Appendix 2 shows the interim structure put in place post 24th July 2006.

3.7 In order to support ongoing improvement a new structure, as shown in Appendix 3 to this report, is outlined for the management of the Authority's Service Delivery Departments and Boroughs. An ACFO Operations will manage Borough staff and other staff engaged in directly delivering the Brigade's services to its communities. An ACFO Operations Support will manage the functions presently carried out by the Community Protection Department that strategically and tactically support the work of staff working for the ACFO Operations.

3.7.1 Operations refers to all of the Brigade's risk reduction activity not just the narrower scope of emergency response activity.

3.7.2 In the proposed corporate management structure as shown in Appendix 3 there are three ACFO posts. Since 2004 only two of the Authority's ACFO posts have been substantively filled. The third post has been filled using temporary appointments. This is detrimental to the effective management of the Brigade. Three ACFO posts are required to allow the Authority to provide effective Principal Officer command cover. This allows for a three week rota with each ACFO on call for a third of the time. It is proposed that the Authority approve the substantive appointment of a third ACFO.

3.8 In order to support the changes outlined in 3.7 and improve the Authority's approach to performance management the following steps will be implemented:

3.8.1 The Authority's Integrated Risk Management (IRM), planning, data analysis and risk control functions will be brought together into a single Department managed by the Director Administration. In order to clearly communicate this functional change, the Director Administration post will be re-titled Director Corporate Planning and Support.

3.8.2 The Performance and Planning Department's responsibilities will be changed. As reported in 3.8.1, responsibility for the planning process will rest exclusively with the Director Corporate Planning and Support. Responsibility for Best Value Reviews will move to the Performance and Planning Department bringing together all internal audit and review functions into a single Department. The role of the Department will be to ensure that performance management is effectively applied across all of the Authority's areas of

responsibility. The Department will be re-titled Performance Improvement.

3.8.3 The Performance Improvement Department will be managed by a Senior Divisional Officer who will report directly to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO). Other changes to the DCFO role are detailed in paragraph 3.11.

3.9 As part of the interim steps taken on 24th July 2006, responsibility for managing the Personnel and Training functions were given to separate Directors as shown in Appendix 2 to this report. This was done to allow the Director Personnel, Performance and Planning to focus on improving the performance of the Personnel Department. It is the intention of the CFO to return responsibility for Training to the Human Resources Department when the structure outlined in Appendix 3 is implemented.

3.9.1 In order to ensure that the Authority would be able to recruit a high performing Head of HR a professional recruitment agency was determined as being the best route to ensure we attracted responses from high performing candidates. A recruitment agency specialising in HR recruitment and having recent experience of working with another Fire Authority was chosen to undertake this work.

3.9.2 Work has begun with this agency and Officers expect to be able to advertise the Head of HR post in the first week of October. The advertising and search process will be completed for the last week of October. Long listing and first stage interviews will be carried out by the agency and will be completed in the second week in November. Shortlisting will be completed in the third week of November and a final shortlist of candidates will be available to present to the Authority's Appointments Committee in the final week of November.

3.10 The Director Technical Services (TS) has a wide range of responsibilities including three of the Authority's major change projects:

- the re-location of Headquarters;
- the integration of ICT systems;
- Regional Fire Control.

In order to support the Director (TS) in delivering these projects the Procurement Section will cease to report to him and become a responsibility of the Finance Officer. In order to recognise this change the Head of Finance post will be re-titled Head of Finance and Procurement, see Appendix 3.

3.11 In order to integrate these changes and provide proper performance management the following posts will now report to the DCFO:

- Director Operations (ACFO)
- Director Operations Support (ACFO)
- Director Technical Services (ACFO)
- Head of Human Resources
- Director Corporate Planning and Support
- Head of Finance and Procurement.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer will take responsibility for performance improvement. This structure is shown in Appendix 3 to this report.

3.12 The proposed changes are planned for implementation in the period up to January 2007.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is required and has been carried out. The initial Equality Impact Assessment did not raise issues which required a full Equality Impact Assessment to be completed.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The course of action recommended in this report does not raise issues which should be drawn to the attention of the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The estimated cost and funding arrangements of £40k for the interim staffing structures were contained in the report to the Authority's Executive Committee on 24th July 2006. Furthermore, the estimated increased ongoing salary costs of approximately £20k arising from the establishment of the Head of Human Resources post and the dis-establishment of the City of Birmingham Borough Commander post will be taken into account during the Authority's budget setting process as set out in the same Executive Committee report.
- 6.2 The cost of using a recruitment agency for the Head of HR post will be approximately £20k. This cost will be met from within the Authority's existing recruitment budget.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

WMLGA Review of People Management and HR Service Executive Summary June 2006.

Executive Committee report 24th July 2006, Corporate Board Responsibilities.

Fire and Rescue Service Operational Assessment of Service Delivery July 2006.

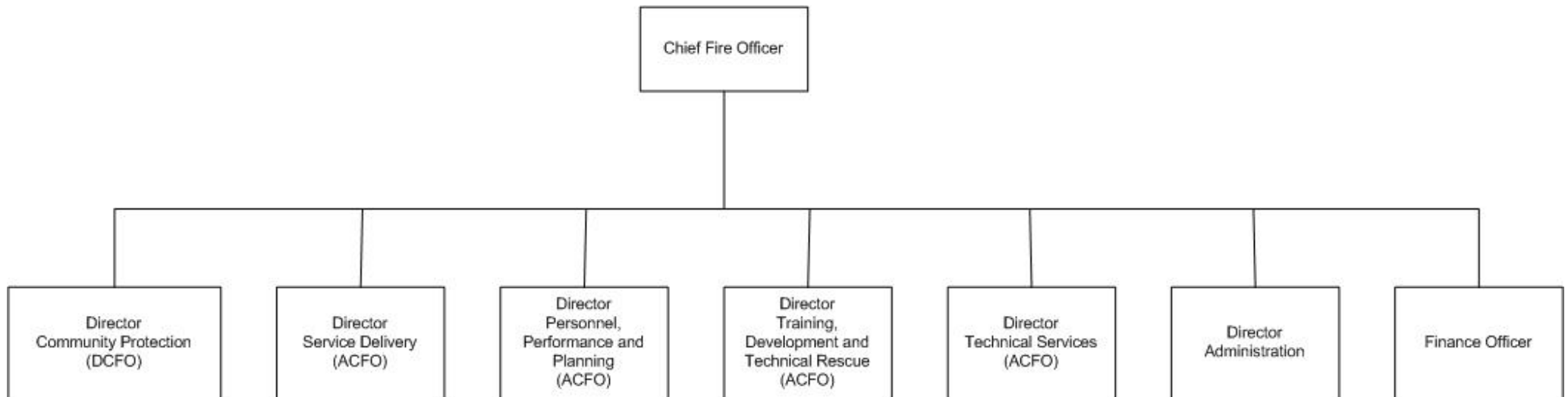
F. J. E. SHEEHAN
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

STRUCTURE PRE 24TH JULY 2006



APPENDIX 2

INTERIM STRUCTURE POST 24TH JULY 2006



APPENDIX 3

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

