

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

16 APRIL 2012

1. ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS - CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Authority continues to endorse and recognise the value of the Chief Fire Officer's role within the Chief Fire Officer's Association (CFOA) and also approves his role of Chair of the Board of Governors, Birmingham Metropolitan College.
- 1.2 THAT the Authority also notes the commitment and associated benefits to the Authority and the Service as set out in the report.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted further to the Executive Committee paper dated 10th January 2011, to outline the commitments of the Chief Fire Officer in his current role as Vice-President of CFOA, and gain further approval for proposed future role as President from September 2012 until September 2013.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In August 2010, the Chief Fire Officer was elected to the Presidential Team of CFOA, and from September 2010 he assumed the position of Vice-President Elect.
- 3.2 In September 2011, the CFO assumed the role of Vice-President, and will hold this position within CFOA until September 2012, whereupon he will assume the role of President until September 2013.
- 3.3 CFOA is the professional voice of the UK Fire and Rescue Service, providing expert advice and information to all services nationally. CFOA participates in over 80 national work groups and 30 national committees, provides professional recognition and has the ability to publish enforcement data in a legally compliant way and identify national trends.

- 3.4 The roles undertaken by the Chief Fire Officer provide an opportunity for involvement at the heart of the Fire Service at a national level. This includes:
- close involvement with the Fire Minister, the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Association;
 - working with groups within the wider fire sector including the Fire Protection Association, Building Research Establishment, Construction Industry, other Emergency Services, other public services and the media;
 - also many opportunities to represent the West Midlands Fire Service in a wider context including speaking at Conferences and Events; and
 - a leading role in driving the national fire agenda by leading national debates and forums.
- 3.5 The election to the final role of President by all the senior staff in the UK FRS is regarded by many as the pinnacle of their professional career. It is also a great honour for the Fire Authority to be acknowledged as having a service that is seen by others to shape and lead the way forward.
- 3.6 The personal time commitment will be significant, however in the role of Chief Fire Officer and as a member of CFOA, a significant amount of time is spent keeping up to date with CFOA and national issues as a matter of course. It is estimated that time commitment will be approximately one day per week within the Presidential year.
- 3.7 CFOA membership provides many benefits to West Midlands Fire Service as a whole, including:
- a seat on the Fire and Rescue Service Council;
 - involvement with Fire Future Forums;
 - access to CFOA online communities;
 - online toolkits and guidance on operational issues;
 - access to national bulletins and alerts and access to national operation intelligence;
 - scanning of EU standards and input into their development;
 - providing a voice in Europe and Internationally;
 - providing technical bulletins; and
 - soon to be involved in the creation of national standards.

3.8 Vice Presidential Portfolio

The Vice President (VP) is involved with CFOA's contribution to the creation of the new National Framework document currently being drafted by DCLG. CFOA's contribution is vitally important as this document will affect the running of the Fire Service over the next three years.

The VP also has responsibility for the CFOA Nations and Regions – which includes the nine English Regions, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. During the course of the year, the VP attends regional/national board meetings, which helps build relationships with fire services across the UK.

Since its introduction in October 2011, the VP has chaired FRS Council, where a representative from each Fire and Rescue Service (principally the Chiefs) has the opportunity to express their opinion on a variety of subjects on behalf of their brigade. This allows CFOA to gauge the general feeling of the UK Fire and Rescue Service on a wide range issues.

3.9 Presidential Portfolio

The President has responsibility for external stakeholder liaison, which includes meeting regularly with Ministers, civil servants and leaders from within the Fire Sector. CFOA occupies a unique position of influence within the sector as the recognised professional voice of the UK Fire and Rescue Service.

The President acts as line manager to the CFOA Business Director, Rhonda Bedford, who has responsibility for the day to day running of the association.

Working with CFOA strategic directors, the President is involved in the development of Fire Service National Functions, in which CFOA play a pivotal role. This includes issues of National Resilience, operational standards and training.

The President also chairs the newly created Fire Futures Forums, which bring together experts and stakeholders from the Fire Sector and beyond to discuss high level issues in which the Fire Service has a role, such as the Fire Service College or Children and Young People.

3.10 **Role of Chair of the Board of Governors – Birmingham Metropolitan College**

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service enjoys a proud history and tradition of supporting its employees in undertaking wider roles within the community and in public service. Members will be aware of some of the activities undertaken by WMFS employees locally, nationally and internationally. During the last 12 months approximately 97 employees have been granted special leave. The roles undertaken by these employees include acting as School Governors, Magistrates, Tribunal Members as well as other public duties roles.

The policy of the Service is that employees may be granted up to 15 full days' special leave per year to undertake public duties.

It should be noted that the Chief Fire Officer has proposed an alternative to being granted special leave to undertake the role of Chair of the Board of Governors for Birmingham Metropolitan College. The Chief Fire Officer has proposed that these duties are conducted in his own time and using his contractual annual leave entitlement so as to avoid any potential (or perceived) impact upon his role of Chief Fire Officer.

Birmingham Metropolitan College are one of the leading providers of further and higher education in the West Midlands. The college recruits over 9000 14-19 year old learners each year and has over 35,000 full and part time adult learners. The student mix is diverse with over 40% being from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

The role of the Chair includes acting as an ambassador for the college and chairing committee meetings which take place 5-6 times each year. Meetings are usually 2 hours in the morning commencing at 8.00am.

The Board of Governors is made up of a diverse group of people from different sectors including business, education and voluntary. Undertaking the role of Chair provides benefits to the Chief in terms of his continuous development. It also provides longer term benefits to WMFS in relation to fulfilling aspects of its corporate social responsibility and influence of a major educational provider within the West Midlands.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out.

The matters contained in this report do not relate to a policy change.

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**

All expenses relating to CFOA business are paid for by the Association, and during the presidential year funding is provided for support costs, which will minimise impact upon the Chief Fire Officer's time.

There are no financial implications arising from the Chief Fire Officer undertaking the role of Chair of the Board of Governors – Birmingham Metropolitan College.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFOA documents

VIJ RANDENIYA
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER