

MERSEYSIDE FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

The Role and Remuneration of the Executive Team

Introduction

This note is to explain the management structure of the Authority and the roles they have to undertake and to give an overview of the remuneration that is paid to them.

The body ultimately responsible for agreeing the major policies and procedures of the organisation is Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority - the political elected leadership. The Fire Authority is made up of locally elected councilors from the five districts of Merseyside. The Authority's responsibility is to ensure that the fire service is run properly and responsibly. More information about the running of the Fire Authority can be found at www.merseyfire.gov.uk

The management team is responsible for implementing the policies procedures and decisions of the Fire Authority and carry out a variety of professional advisory roles.

Chief Fire Officer or **CFO** is the highest ranking Officer in the UK Fire & Rescue Service. The rank is of equivalent stature to that of Chief Constable within the British Police Force, and Chief Ambulance Officer in the UK Ambulance Service

Other titles for this office around the country can include 'County Fire Officer' and 'Chief Executive'. In the London Fire Brigade, the CFO is known as **Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Planning**. Chief Fire Officers in the UK are represented by the Chief Fire Officers Association; it has a separate section representing principal officers in fire and rescue services in Scotland.

CFOs are expected to adopt best practice in organisational leadership to reflect the modern "business approach" of many local authorities. Most current Chief Fire Officers have progressed from frontline firefighter roles through the rank structure

Overview

A CFO is responsible for the day-to-day command of the Fire and Rescue Service in their areas. They implement the major policies and procedures agreed and passed by the Fire Authority to whom the CFO reports. The Fire Authority is a committee of locally elected councilors. The Authority's prime responsibility is to ensure that the fire service is run properly and responsibly.

In simple terms the Chief Officer is directly answerable to someone who represents the interests of the general public. The Chief Fire Officer is supported by an Executive Team of 2, with the DCFO also providing operational cover.

A number of team members are also part of the National Co-ordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) which provides support and advice to the Fire and Rescue Service and central government during incidents that are of national significance and/or require national co-ordination. This will also include the professional and timely advice on incidents involving a FRS response that is provided for Ministers and other government departments that meet within the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR). The NCAF will provide a clear and coherent methodology for coordinating national resource mobilisation when preparing for and responding to such incidents.

The Fire Authority continually monitors the management arrangements it has in place and has undertaken a number of reviews of its Executive Management Team to ensure that that it is fit for purpose and providing value for money.

As a single purpose Local Authority we have all of the statutory requirements of a stand alone authority and in addition members of our Executive team also have the operational demands of giving cover to Merseyside, the North West region and potentially national events/incidents

Since 1996 when the management team comprised of 8 officers (*A Chief Fire Officer, a Deputy Chief Fire Officer and four Assistant Chief Officers (3 of whom were operational) and this operational team were supported by a Clerk to the Authority and a Treasurer.*) the Authority's commitment to continuous review of its efficiency has now reduced the team to 3 members (including the Treasurer).

As part of that review process the Authority considers its attractiveness/competitiveness as an employer, when balanced against its need to have the best people for the job and the demands and expectations that are being placed upon the postholders.

Situation Today

The management structure is now the leanest in the country and comprises an Executive team of 3:-

- Chief Fire Officer
- Deputy Chief Fire Officer
- Deputy Chief Executive

Current post holders

The current Chief Fire Officer is Dan Stephens, who has been with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service since 1990.

The CFO is the most senior officer who leads and takes responsibility for the work of the nearly 1500 paid staff of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS), who deliver the Services to the community on a day to day basis.

He leads a small executive team consisting of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer Phil Garrigan and Deputy Chief Executive Kieran Timmins.

The current team has been appointed as an interim arrangement by the Fire Authority which is made up of 18 local councillors sent from each of the 5 Metropolitan Districts that make up the Merseyside region.

By law, senior Fire Authority staff are not allowed to participate in any party political activity and are required to provide professional advice and assistance to all councillors irrespective of their political affiliation.

As head of the paid service, the CFO works closely with elected members to deliver the following:

Emergency Response: To provide 'Gold Command' Leadership for emergency incidents

Leadership: working with elected members to ensure strong and visible leadership and direction, encouraging and enabling managers to motivate and inspire their teams

Strategic Direction: ensuring all staff understand and adhere to the strategic aims of the organisation and follow the direction set by the elected members

Policy Advice: acting as the principal policy adviser to the elected members of the Fire Authority to lead the development of workable strategies which will deliver the objectives set by the councillors

Partnerships: leading and developing strong partnerships across the local community to achieve a safer, stronger, healthier community for Merseyside.

Operational Management: overseeing financial and performance management, risk management, people management and change management within the Fire Authority

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA)

MFRA is a large, complex organisation serving a diverse community. Merseyside suffers from some of the highest level of social deprivation and health inequality in the country and these facts lead to significant emergency response and community safety challenges for the fire and rescue service. We are responsible for providing community safety services including

emergency response across a wide range of activities. The total annual turnover is in excess of £70m and the annual capital programme is around £5m.

The Authority has achieved unparalleled success in recent years as recognised by external bodies. It was one of just 2 FRAs to be judged as 'Excellent' by the Audit Commission in 2006 and has been scored as improving well ever since and so maintaining its Excellence status. It has achieved 'Beacon Status' (a measure of excellence by Government) on no fewer than 3 occasions in the categories of Services to Older People, Young People; Children at Risk and Reducing Health Inequalities. This is a unique achievement for a UK FRS.

More importantly, it has also been recognised by independent review for achieving the biggest reductions in domestic fires and fire injuries since 2004 of any FRA in the country. Its pioneering community safety work has been widely recognised and has been copied nationally and internationally. The Audit Commission have also recognised the innovation taking place in MFRS and the fact that we have delivered some of the highest efficiencies of any FRA in the country.

The People

Chief Fire Officer Dan Stephens joined Merseyside FRS in 1990 as a Firefighter and has progressed through the Service management structure with regular promotions over the 21 years. He is the CFOA lead officer for the National Urban Search and Rescue capability and the Technical Response strategic work stream and also represents the Service at the CFOA National Operations Policy Committee and locally at the Merseyside Resilience Forum

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer is Phil Garrigan who was previously in charge of Community Fire Safety. Phil joined Merseyside FRS in 1990 and has worked at stations across Merseyside, spending time in Community Fire Safety and the District management Team before being seconded into a partnership role with Liverpool city council. He returned to the Service last year and was promoted to Area Manager.

Deputy Chief Executive Kieran Timmins began working with the Fire Authority in 1999 having formerly worked at Liverpool City Council. He is the responsible finance officer for the Fire Authority (finance director). The five key roles of the CFO (finance director) in local government are:

1. the maintenance of strong financial management underpinned by effective financial controls;
2. a contribution to corporate management and leadership;
3. support and advise the democratic process;

4. lead and manage an effective and responsive financial service;
5. support and advise officers in their operational roles.

In addition he manages other support services – ICT, Procurement, Legal Services and Estates. He coordinates a national network of fire finance professionals and is an advisor to the LGA.

Remuneration

The Fire Authority has faced many financial challenges in recent years because government grant increases (which make up the majority of income) have been restricted below inflation and below the rate of pay increases for staff. The Authority has managed to improve the Service to the community, manage the cost to the council tax payer by limiting council tax rises whilst avoiding compulsory redundancy and giving staff who deliver more and work more flexibly suitable opportunities for reward.

To control costs the Authority has had to employ significantly fewer staff but ensure that remaining staff taking on the extra workload and responsibility have the opportunity for appropriate rewards. For instance, whilst the basic pay of firefighters has risen to over £28k, many firefighters are able to earn more than £40k by working some of the flexible shift systems that have maintained the fast emergency response whilst saving the taxpayer considerable amounts of money.

The principle of more pay for doing more and working more flexibly to reduce overall costs has included the Executive Team. Unusually for any Fire Authority in the country and uniquely for a Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Service, Merseyside operates with just 3 principal managers (CFO, DCFO, Deputy Chief Executive) making the overall pay bill for the Executive Team relatively low.

Although there is a national pay framework, the Fire Authority has negotiated a more flexible local agreement which has enabled it to reduce overall numbers. The rates of pay described below and the reduction in the size of the team have been agreed by the Fire Authority and are delivering a 6.3% reduction in executive salary costs and a total executive team cost saving of 33% (£333,000).

The Chief Fire Officer is paid £170,000. The DCFO and Deputy Chief Executive are both paid at 85% of the Chief Fire Officer salary.

Pension

The CFO and DCFO are members of the Firefighter Pension Scheme (FPS). This is the scheme that covers the majority of firefighters although newer entrants are now members of the 'New Firefighter Pension Scheme'. The

FPS is a contributory scheme; this means that the employee contributes to the scheme from his or her own salary. Employees contribute 11% of their salaries. Since 2006 there has been an Employer's contribution to the FPS which is currently 21.3% and both employee and employer's contribution are paid into an Authority pensions account and the cost of pensions, when they are taken, are also then paid from this account with the net deficit then reimbursed by Government. The rules governing the pension scheme are contained in regulations made by Parliament and are available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/working/firefighterpensions/>.

The Deputy Chief Executive is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme which is a contributory scheme; this means that the employee contributes to the scheme from his or her own salary. The Assistant Chief Executive contributes 7.5% of his salary and the Employer's contribution to the LGPS is currently 18.6% (the figure varies depending upon how much is needed to ensure benefits under the scheme are properly funded, and are set independently). The rules governing the pension scheme are contained in regulation made by Parliament and are available at <http://www.lgps.org.uk/lge/core/page.do?pagelid=1>

Other Benefits

All the Executive Team are expected to work such hours as are necessary to ensure the job gets done. This routinely involves evening work as well as the standard Monday to Friday business week. Weekend working is required. No extra payments are made for such extended hours.

In addition the CFO and DCFO work a 'continuous duty' system whereby they have to remain available for work for protracted periods. The very nature of a senior officer role also means that they regularly have evening and weekend work commitments.

A car is required to carry out their duties and each officer is provided with a lease amount (currently the allowance for the CFO is £8k with other officers entitled to proportionately smaller amounts) which typically would provide for a car such as an Audi A6. The officers are given the flexibility to add to this lease amount at their own expense if they want to exercise their personal choice for a more expensive car. The Authority has clear guidelines on the type of vehicle that can be used given the operational nature of the role.

All officers are taxed on the benefit of their vehicle.

In addition other benefits may be applicable. The Authority strives to be an excellent employer and makes a wide range of benefits and support available to **all** staff. The Executive team may be eligible/take advantage of these benefits in certain instances. The range of benefits includes:

Benefits available to all Authority Employees

- ICAS (Employee Assistance Programme)
- Counselling services
- Childcare vouchers
- Health advice clinics
- Specialist Nurse advisor Health assessment
- Physiotherapy services
- Early Intervention Diagnostic Assessment
- Internet access may be provided at home for access to critical Authority computer systems

- Essential Communications equipment may be provided

- Medical Financial Assistance
- Total Fitness Rehabilitation Exercise Referrals
- Massage Rehabilitation Clinic
- Active Sefton
- Smoking Cessation Support
- Absence and Attendance Policy
- Corporate Uniform and clothing allowances
- Flexi time
- Pre-retirement Leave
- Enhance maternity benefits
- Relocation Expenses
- On Site Gym
- Season Ticket Loans
- Home Computer Initiative
- Additional personal Security based on a police risk assessment

Expenses/Allowances

The Authority reimburses officers for costs incurred when working away from home, when at conferences and so on. The costs of work travel, accommodation and subsistence are claimable.

The very nature of the role means that Executive Team members are regularly required to work in different parts of the country and spend nights away from home. Claims are either based upon actual expenditure incurred according to strict controls and rules or, on occasion, can be payable in line with the Authority's scheme for Member Allowances that can be found through the following link:
http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/aspix/pages/fire_auth/pdf/scheme_of_members_allowance_2008-09.pdf. This allowance scheme is considered annually by the Authority and applies to Authority Members (Councillors) and the principal officers. The Authority publishes total political member allowance claims annually in a public report.

Typically an Executive Team member is likely to be required to work away from home once a week.