

Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee
15 July 2013

Report by the Secretary/
Director of People

ACCOUNTABILITY OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Members will be aware the new National Framework effectively sets out the need to put in place arrangements to hold the Chief Fire Officer to account. The extract from the Framework is attached at Appendix 1. There is no prescribed means by which this should be done and as such it is left to individual authorities to determine. Obviously in a County structure the system is very different. Having consulted with colleagues in other Services, the practice appears to be patchy, with little commonality.

This paper sets out some options for consideration by the Authority. The options have been discussed with the Chair and then the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, although clearly this is a matter for the Authority to determine.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members are asked to consider this report and decide the approach they wish to adopt regarding the review of the performance of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and in turn the Corporate Management Team.

SOME HISTORY

2. Under the previous Committee structure, the Policy and Executive Committee had responsibility under the Constitution to set and review the performance of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and in turn the Corporate Management Team.
3. However the Committee, perhaps for a number of reasons, did not undertake that role but did consider the remuneration of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, most recently in 2010.
4. Since 2010, there has been a full review (third) of the corporate governance arrangements of the Authority, culminating in the current governance structure which was approved in April 2012.
5. However at present, other than broadly through the normal reporting to the Authority, there are no annual objectives set or indeed a review of performance subsequently. This is not uncommon in the sector.
6. In respect to all other members of staff, a new appraisal system is being introduced and will be reviewed in due course.

FOUR OPTIONS – WHO

7. Presuming the Fire Authority accepts the need and benefit in undertaking some form of an annual appraisal, it is for Members to consider what approach might be most effective, bearing in mind that it would be right and proper for whatever panel, group or committee is established, to report to the full Fire Authority. The following are suggested options, but Members may wish to come forward with alternatives or variations, as they consider appropriate:

(1) Joint Arrangements

It would be possible to enter into a joint arrangement with another Authority (Fire & Rescue perhaps) to jointly populate a review group, providing a degree of external benchmarking and independence.

(2) Panel of the Fire Authority

The Fire Authority could establish a committee or panel of Elected Members. Political proportionality would apply, although the Authority could agree to disapply the rules, as it has done in respect to the Appeals Committee. Previously there has been an Appointments Committee comprising eight Members and a parallel could be drawn. Alternatively, perhaps given the nature of appraisal, that this is better conducted as a smaller group, and therefore the Chair of the Authority alongside the Group Secretaries might be more of a fit.

(3) Independent Review and Role of Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Given the strength in corporate governance terms of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee, Members should consider the extent of the involvement of the Committee might be beneficial. Members may also wish to involve an independent person(s) in the process and/or an external adviser, akin to that adopted with the

appointment of a Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive. The latter could support options 2 and 4.

(4) One to One

Either as part of an initial process or as the process in its entirety (other than reporting to and perhaps ratification by the full Fire Authority), it may be preferable for the Chair of the Fire Authority to undertake an appraisal with the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive. This would be much more in line with the Service appraisal system.

HOW

8. This depends in part on the process to be adopted by Members.
9. Reference should be had to key reports or steps, which may include:
 - Peer Audit
 - Annual Performance Report
 - Progress towards achieving Vision
 - External and Internal Audit Annual Reports
 - 360° review
 - Outcomes for the Service
 - Initial discussion with the Fire Authority
10. Once objectives are set and agreed then in future years:
 - Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive will undertake self-assessment v objectives
 - Key Reports consolidated and traffic lighted

TIMING

11. The Authority cycle is not readily conducive to annual performance appraisal, given an AGM each year towards the end of May and with the prospect of a significant turnover of Members. However, below are the two suggestions:
 - (1) 1st September each year: almost mid-point, annual performance reports completed and Accounts will be finalised – Appraisal reported to end of September HFA.
 - (2) 1st April: Beginning of new financial year. Appraisal to be reported to end of April HFA (last meeting in a cycle).
12. In terms of 2013/14, clearly a timetable would need to be adopted and then reviewed in readiness for 2014/15.

THE ROLE OF FULL FIRE AUTHORITY

13. The Authority acts in a board-like manner and as such it is important that all Members have at least knowledge and some degree of involvement in the process, whether that be by ratification or otherwise.
14. Members might want to first develop and then refine the process. What may assist Members would be knowledge of the objectives of CMT.

REVIEW

15. Given the background (history) outlined above, it is recommended that Members review any process adopted early in Spring 2014, perhaps on that occasion, acting like a mid-year review. This will enable the process to be redefined in readiness for 2014/15.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPATIBILITY

16. The delivery of the Vision should be reflected in the objectives set and reviewed accordingly.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCES/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

17. This report concerns holding the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive to account. The report is not concerned with reward and remuneration.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

18. As outlined above. Regardless of the National Framework, the Constitution of the Authority and good governance generally, requires that the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive be accountable to the Authority and in turn the residents and stakeholders of Humberside.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/HR IMPLICATIONS

19. None arising directly. Clearly the establishment of objectives may have broader implications.

CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

20. None arising directly.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

21. None arising directly.

COMMUNICATION ACTIONS ARISING

22. None directly.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

23. Chair of the Authority.
Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR ACCESS

24. None.

RECOMMENDATIONS RESTATED

25. Members are asked to consider this report and decide the approach they wish to adopt regarding the review of the performance of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and in turn the Corporate Management Team.

R GRAHAM

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