

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

REPORT OF THE CLERK



For Information

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to advise the elected members of Cleveland Fire Authority that following a robust and competitive appointment process, the Executive Committee have made a conditional offer of appointment to Mr. Peter Rickard to be the next Chief Fire Officer of Cleveland Fire Brigade.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the appointment of Peter Rickard to the post of Chief Fire Officer, subject to the confirmation of the necessary medical, reference checks and Enhanced DBS and Security Clearance be noted.

3. BACKGROUND

Due to the notification of retirement from the current Chief Fire Officer (CFO), the Executive Committee of the Fire Authority agreed to start a CFO recruitment process to appoint the next suitable qualified and experienced prospective Chief Fire Officer who can take the Authority and Brigade forward and continue the continuous improvement journey while driving transformational change in the face of continuing financial challenges.

4. APPOINTMENT PROCESS

4.1 The recruitment was carried out in accordance with best practice to ensure that:

- a strong field of interest was generated in the opportunity; and
- that the proposed appointee was chosen on merit (in accordance with s7 Local Government and Housing Act 1989); and
- that the process adhered to the three principles of merit, fairness and openness.

4.2 The recruitment process was designed to be challenging and exhaustive, using several stages. The process explores relevant experience, key strengths and capabilities, technical and professional skills, engagement, and values and behaviours as a basis for informing decision-making on talent acquisition, giving a rich picture of the candidate's suitability for the Chief Fire Officer's role.

4.3 The Appointment Process consisted of:

- **Stage 1: Eligibility and Application**

Candidates for the role of Chief Fire Officer, as a minimum, must be a serving Deputy Chief Fire Officer or Assistant Chief Fire Officer of a Local Authority Fire and rescue Service.

For the role of Chief Executive Officer, candidates must be a Deputy or Assistant Executive Officer.

Candidates were required to submit a CV along with supporting statements highlighting their relevant Skills and Experience related to the Job Description and Person Specification, alignment to the Authority's Values and Ethical Behaviours Framework, and a statement on their Suitability for the Role.

- **Stage 2 Assessment**

Candidates were required to complete a Personality Profile to identify essential personal strengths, and development areas; and an Incident Command Assessment to assess decision-making abilities at Level 4 Strategic Incident Command and Strategic Gold (multi-agency) Command.

- **Stage 3 Interview**

The Executive Committee will conduct a Strategic Interview, inclusive of a presentation, of all shortlisted candidates

5. APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

5.1 Following the Appointment Panel strategic interview and review of all associated recruitment process documentation, the Executive Committee of the Fire Authority appointed Peter Rickard as Chief Fire Officer for Cleveland Fire Brigade, subject to medical, reference checks and Enhanced DBS and Security Clearance.

5.2 The appointment was made following a robust and competitive selection process.

5.3 Mr. Rickard provided a demonstrable track record in the fire and rescue service which included:

- the necessary professional qualifications for the role, complemented by appropriate experience at a senior level within the Fire and Rescue Service;
- experience of working, at a senior level, with Elected Members of a Local Authority Fire and Rescue Service;
- experience of leading and managing fire services and of leading and managing change;
- A comprehensive understanding of Fire Service governance arrangements and of operating within a corporate governance framework.

- 5.4 He demonstrated a detailed knowledge of the Authority area and the Brigade, making him an excellent candidate to lead the Authority through further transformational change.
- 5.3 In summary, the Executive Committee were content that Mr. Rickard had the relevant experience and professional skills to work effectively and efficiently with the Authority and with the Brigade in the role of Chief Fire Officer. Moreover, Members were confident that Mr Rickard will be able to discharge the duties of the Chief Fire Officer.
- 5.4 Mr. Rickard is currently serving in an Assistant Chief Fire Officer role working at West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and will officially take up his new substantive post later this year.
- 5.5 ACO Peter Rickard started his career in the fire and rescue service at London Fire Brigade (LFB) back in 2001. His career progressed in LFB and in 2019 was appointed to the senior role of Deputy Assistant Commissioner as Head of Operational Risk and Strategic Planning.
- 5.6 In his current Assistant Chief Officer role at West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service he holds the portfolio lead for prevention, protection, service delivery, resilience and emergencies and business continuity. Mr. Rickard brings a wide breadth and depth of knowledge, skills, and experience that provides a firm platform to progress into the Chief Fire Officer's role at Cleveland Fire Brigade.

6. PROPOSED TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

- 6.1 A copy of the recruitment pack is attached as Appendix No.1, which contains the Job Description, Person Specification, Appointment Process, Key Responsibilities of the role and the associated remuneration package.

7. SUMMARY

- 7.1 For the reasons set out in this report, the Executive Committee commends to the full Cleveland Fire Authority the suitability of Peter Rickard as their preferred candidate for the next Chief Fire Officer for Cleveland Fire Brigade.

**KAREN WINTER
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY**