

## MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 FEBRUARY 2021

Present: Councillors J Chatterley (Chair), Y Waheed, C Atkins, D Franks and D McVicar  
CFO P Fuller, Ms S Fecondi and Mr J Atkinson

### 20-21/EC/33 Apologies

33.1 There were no apologies.

### 20-21/EC/34 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

34.1 There were no declarations of interests.

### 20-21/EC/35 Communications

35.1 Councillor Atkins praised the passing out booklet that had recently been issued celebrating the Service's new recruits.

### 20-21/EC/36 Minutes

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2021 be confirmed as a true record.

### 20-21/EC/37 Chief Fire Officer - Recruitment Process

37. The Chief Fire Officer submitted the main information pack for the recruitment of his successor, which had previously been circulated to Members, and introduced Sarah Fecondi, the new Head of Human Resources, who would be providing advice and support throughout the recruitment process, to Members of the Executive.

The Executive was advised that the advertisement for the post had been issued the previous week with a closing date of 15 February 2021. The applicants would be asked to submit a 3 page CV and a 3 page statement outlining examples of how they fulfilled the personal attributes required.

The work involved in updating the pack, particularly in relation to the job description and person specification, was acknowledged.

Shortlisting would take place on 16 and 17 February 2021, with Members of the Executive receiving the applications with notes from the Chief Fire Officer electronically, unless hard copies were requested.

Two days of interview would be conducted on 4 and 5 March 2021. Day 1 would consist of a personal and technical interview. This interview would be attended by the Chief Executive of Bedford Borough Council and the Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police as representatives of the Service's partner organisations. There would also be a media role play exercise which would test the candidates' ability to act under pressure. During Day 2 of the interviews, the candidates would be asked to give a 15 minute presentation on a subject yet to be determined.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that a decision would be made in the days following the interviews, and that the appointment would then be confirmed at the next meeting of the full Fire and Rescue Authority, which was on 23 March 2021.

Councillor Atkins commented that it was her understanding that it had already been agreed that a special meeting of the Authority be called as soon as possible following a decision being made and proposed that a meeting be held during the week commencing 8 March 2021 for this purpose. This was seconded by the Chair and supported by the other Executive Members.

The Chief Fire Officer suggested that the request for an additional meeting could form part of the report on the Chief Fire Officer Recruitment Process that would be considered at the next meeting of the Authority on 11 February 2021.

In response to questions about how the interviews would be conducted virtually, Ms Fecondi advised that an HR Officer would be present at all Panel meetings to advise Members and administer the hosting process via Microsoft Teams. Each interview would be set up as a separate appointment, and a separate room would be available for Members and their advisors in the event that they wished to speak in private. A representative of the ICT team would also be available at all times to provide technical support if required.

The process would be kept as simple as possible to make it more comfortable for the candidates and for the Selection Panel and a "test run" could be arranged for Members prior to the first interview so that they could familiarise themselves with the platform and the process.

Only those on the Panel would be able to attend the interviews as the Service was seeking to replicate, as far as possible, the interview process as it would be conducted non-remotely.

Members of the Executive confirmed that they were happy with the process as described.

In relation to the ongoing discussions around succession planning, Mr J Atkinson, the Secretary and Monitoring Officer, advised that the Executive had, at previous meetings, agreed that the Chair and Chief Fire Officer meet to develop proposals which then be brought forward for consideration. However, this had been superseded by the Chief Fire Officer tendering his notice of resignation and the subsequent recruitment process for his successor. It was also noted that plans were in place to enhance the role of the Assistant Chief Officer and this was being considered as part of the budget proposals. As there were no decisions to be made regarding succession planning outside of these processes, this matter could be closed.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the full Authority be recommended to approve the calling of a special meeting during the week commencing 8 March 2021 to confirm the appointment of the new Chief Fire Officer, if required.
2. That it be noted that Councillors Chatterley and Franks will be the Member representatives on the Day 1 interview panel.
3. That it be acknowledged that succession planning discussions were no longer required at this time as a result of the recruitment of a new Chief Fire Officer, the budget proposals put forward in relation to the Assistant Chief Officer post and the measures put in place by the CFO under the Scheme of Delegation.

The meeting ended at 11.00 am