

For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Executive Committee
26 May 2022**

REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON RESOURCING OPTIONS FOR A NEW MONITORING OFFICER

For further information on this report contact: Steve Frank
Head of Strategic Support and Assurance
Tel No: 07876 144846

Background Papers: FRA Executive paper on Resourcing Options for A Monitoring Officer dated 20 April 2022

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to present Members of the Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) Executive Committee with information on progress with replacing our Monitoring Officer.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members acknowledge the content of this paper and discuss the proposals and next steps.

1. Summary

- 1.1 The FRA Executive on the 26th May will be a discussion led by LLG to continue their review of the role.
- 1.2 The LLG are taking an inclusive approach with Members and are making clear and steady progress with resourcing options for a new monitoring officer.
- 1.3 The review of the role and status of the Monitoring Officer complements the wider review of governance as set out in Agenda Item 7 of this Executive meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1 The recent announcement of the current Monitoring Officer (MO) to step down from the role after the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June 2022, provides Members with an opportunity to consider options on how best to review current and future needs and the best approach to adopt in recruiting a new MO.
- 2.2 At the last Executive meeting held on the 20 April 2022, the FRA Executive agreed to the Chief Fire Officer's recommendation to approach the Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) organisation to seek their advice on options for recruiting a new Monitoring Officer.

3. A Reminder of the Current Role of the Monitoring Officer

- 3.1 This is a statutory role which is detailed in Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Localism Act 2011. The main three responsibilities are:
 - i. To report on matters they believe to be illegal or amount to maladministration;
 - ii. To be responsible for matters relating to the conduct of Members and officers; and
 - iii. To be responsible for the operation of the constitution.
- 3.2 Currently at Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS), the Monitoring Officer role is delivered on a part time basis equating to approximately 30 days per year and receives a salary based on 10% of the Assistant Chief Officer post. The

focus of activity is on advising and supporting the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) including acting as the solicitor to the FRA.

4. Current Position

- 4.1 The current Monitoring Officer has advised he is willing to stay on beyond the end of June whilst his successor is recruited.
- 4.2 The LLG has already met with Members in small groups, and the CFO, ACO. Current Monitoring Officer and Service Assurance Manager. The LLG will share their emerging thoughts but will not be presenting firm proposals.
- 4.3 The LLG will lead a group discussion to discuss their work so far and to inform the final options report for 22 June when Members will be asked to make a decision.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Under the guidance of the FRA Chair, the Chief Fire Officer will progress the review and recruitment to the MO role.
- 5.2 LLG will use the feedback from discussions to inform a paper to be presented to the FRA Executive on 22nd June. Only then will Members be asked to make a decision.
- 5.3 The review of the role and status of the Monitoring Officer complements the wider review of governance as set out in Agenda Item 7 of this Executive meeting.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 That Members acknowledge the content of this paper and discuss the proposals and next steps.

**ANDREW HOPKINSON
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**