

## Option One

Maintain the existing leadership positions with the current postholders of Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

The Fire Authority agrees to re-engage, and abate the pension for the Chief Fire Officer before 27 September 2022, until 30 September 2024; and extend the current contract with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer until 10 November 2024.

Implications for this option are:

Post	Benefits	Implications
Chief Fire Officer (re-engagement and abatement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains the integrity and continuity of the current operational command structure</li> <li>• Maintain stability and continuity of current leadership arrangements</li> <li>• Greater objectivity in relation to wider options for future of BFRS</li> <li>• Maintain continuity of the public safety considerations over the medium term</li> <li>• Engagement of internal and external stakeholders needed to deliver on the areas highlighted by the HMICFRS; and to secure longer term financial stability</li> <li>• Minimises upheaval and recruitment costs associated with change</li> <li>• Maintains the current Principal Officer rota number and costs</li> <li>• Abatement reduces pension costs to fire authority short term</li> <li>• No induction and familiarisation for new person in role required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removes opportunity for an internal promotion, or an external appointment</li> <li>• Delayed opportunity for potential candidate(s) from minority or non Fire Service / non-operational background to apply</li> </ul>

<p>Deputy Chief Fire Officer (current fixed term contract extended)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains the integrity and continuity of the current operational command structure</li> <li>• Maintain stability and continuity of current leadership arrangements</li> <li>• Greater objectivity in relation to wider options for future of BFRS</li> <li>• Minimises upheaval and recruitment costs associated with change</li> <li>• Engagement of internal and external stakeholders needed to deliver on the areas highlighted by the HMICFRS; and to secure longer term financial stability</li> <li>• Maintains the current Principal Officer rota number and costs</li> <li>• Abatement reduces pension costs to fire authority</li> <li>• No induction and familiarisation for new person in role required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removes opportunity for an internal promotion, or an external appointment</li> <li>• Delayed opportunity for potential candidate(s) from minority or non Fire Service / non-operational background to apply</li> </ul>
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### Option 1 - summary

It would create potential risks to public safety, if this option were not adopted, as it would not be realistic to expect a sufficiently qualified replacement to be in post on 27 September 2022. This would mean a reduction in Principal Officer cover to three, and no one in post to oversee the appointment of a Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

To defer commencing recruitment to both posts until 2024, respectively, will enable seamless transition and delivery of a new Public Safety Plan, ensure knowledge transfer and continuity in the leadership team. It would be optimistic to expect that a new Public Safety Plan would be ready to be consulted upon until December 2023; or later should the Authority wish to propose substantial changes from the current Public Safety Plan.

Obtaining Precept flexibility has been the focus of the CFO and Lead Members up until February 2022, which was substantially based on the skills, experience and trust that had been built in the long-standing relationships with key external partners.

The current position regionally and nationally is that there is a shortage of qualified staff in the fire and rescue service with a large majority of services currently recruiting. This is also mirrored in BFRS’s partner agencies, where there are vacancies across local authorities, ambulance services and the police.

It is likely that BFRS will be in recruiting continuously over the next three years to maintain the headcount of firefighters and support staff, across all tiers and levels of experience, needed to fulfil the Authority’s pledges in its Public Safety Plan. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer is key to the recruitment campaigns and training aspects for firefighters and is intrinsically immersed in ensuring that BFRS has the right people, in the right places, with the right skills to move the service forward. This was identified as an area for improvement in the recent report from HMICFRS -

“The service should review its succession planning to make sure that it has effective arrangements in place to manage staff turnover while continuing to provide its core service to the public”

The consultation on the White Paper ‘Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service’ was published on 18 May 2022. This will require the Authority to consider its governance model; how it works with other fire and rescue services in the future; and the interaction between the political oversight body and the individual charged with responsibility for operational matters. The relationships built up by the current Deputy and Chief Fire Officer will allow for a smoother delivery of the priorities established by the Government or the Authority in the medium term.

## Option Two

Current Chief Fire Officer retires at the due date of 27 September 2022 and the contract for the current Deputy Chief Fire Officer’s fixed term contract is extended, with abatement, for up to a further three years.

Implications for this option are:

Post	Benefits	Implications
Chief Fire Officer Vacancy advertised nationally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal promotional opportunity, or an external appointment</li><li>• Opportunity for potential candidate(s) from minority or</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disrupts the integrity and continuity of the current operational command structure</li></ul>

<p>Operational / non-operational applicants invited</p>	<p>non Fire-Service / non-operational background to apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If non-operational likely to introduce diversity of leadership focus, skills and experience.</li> <li>• If operational background, will maintain the current Principal Officer rota number and costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change to stability and continuity of leadership arrangements</li> <li>• If non-operational background, will require additional Principal Officer post on establishment to maintain the rota - additional costs.</li> <li>• If operational, on-going Fire Service Pension costs</li> <li>• Induction and training for new person in role</li> <li>• Other Fire and Rescues services are currently recruiting for CFO and DCFO positions, some have experienced issues with this</li> </ul>
<p>Deputy Chief Fire Officer (current fixed term contract extended further three years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain element of stability and continuity of current leadership arrangements</li> <li>• Experienced person to support new CFO</li> <li>• Partially minimises upheaval and recruitment costs associated with change</li> <li>• Maintains the current Principal Officer rota number and costs</li> <li>• Abatement reduces pension costs to fire authority</li> <li>• No induction or familiarisation for role required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removes opportunity for an internal promotion, or an external appointment</li> <li>• Delayed opportunity for potential candidate(s) from minority or non Fire Service / non-operational background to apply</li> <li>• Other Fire and Rescues services are currently recruiting for CFO and DCFO positions, some have experienced issues with this</li> </ul>

### Option 2 - summary

At the Annual Meeting on 10 June 2020, the Authority agreed to depart from the Succession Plan and abate the DCFO post until 31 December 2022. The Pay Policy Statement (paragraph 28) refers to abatement being for *'exceptional circumstances where specialist knowledge and expertise are required for a defined period of time'*.

Benefits of maintaining this specialist knowledge during this time was recognised including providing stability in responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic; assuming additional duties following the retirement of the Director of People and

Organisational Development; and the potential retirement of Area Managers, one of whom retired at end of March 2022.

In the view of the Chief Fire Officer, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer has had excellent performance in his current role, taking on more responsibility when the Director of People and Organisational Development retired, ensuring that BFRS made savings in the Senior Management Team.

The current position regionally and nationally is that there is a shortage of qualified staff in the fire and rescue service with a large majority of services currently recruiting. This is also mirrored in BFRS’s partner agencies, where there are vacancies across local authorities, ambulance services and the police.

### Option Three

That the Deputy Chief Fire Officer leaves the Service at the due date of his current fixed term contract of 10 November 2022 (or earlier with 3 months’ notice) and the post is advertised. The Fire Authority approves re-engagement of the current CFO for a fixed term contract with abated pension (after a break in service), for up to 31 December 2023 although likely to be sooner depending on the recruitment programme and outcome of DCFO recruitment process.

Implications for this option are:

Post	Benefits	Implications
Chief Fire Officer (re-engagement and abatement until no later than 31 December 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains the integrity and continuity of the current operational command structure</li> <li>• Maintain stability and continuity of current leadership arrangements</li> <li>• Greater objectivity in relation to wider options for future of BFRS</li> <li>• Minimises upheaval and recruitment costs associated with change</li> <li>• Maintains the current Principal Officer rota number and costs</li> <li>• Abatement reduces pension costs to fire authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removes opportunity for an internal promotion, or an external appointment</li> <li>• Delayed opportunity for potential candidate(s) from minority or non Fire Service / non-operational background to apply</li> <li>• Other Fire and Rescues services are currently recruiting for CFO and DCFO positions, some have experienced issues with this</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No induction and familiarisation for new person in role required</li> </ul>	
Deputy Chief Fire Officer Vacancy advertised nationally. Operational / non-operational applicants invited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal promotional opportunity, or an external DCFO appointed</li> <li>• Opportunity to reduce average age of the operational workforce</li> <li>• Opportunity for potential candidate(s) from minority or non Fire Service / non-operational background to apply</li> <li>• If non-operational likely to introduce diversity of management focus, skills and experience.</li> <li>• If operational background, will maintain the current Principal Officer rota number and costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disrupts the integrity and continuity of the current operational command structure</li> <li>• Change to stability and continuity of management and deputising arrangements</li> <li>• Reduced flexibility to consider wider options for future of BFRS involving leadership and organisational structure</li> <li>• If non-operational background, will require additional Principal Officer post on establishment to maintain the rota - additional costs.</li> <li>• If operational, on-going Fire Service Pension costs</li> <li>• Induction and familiarisation/training for new person in role</li> <li>• Other Fire and Rescues services are currently recruiting for CFO and DCFO positions, some have experienced issues with this</li> </ul>

### Option 3 - summary

On the same basis as the recommendation in option 1, it would create potential risks to public safety, as it would not be realistic to expect a sufficiently qualified replacement to be in post on 27 September 2022. This would mean a reduction in Principal Officer cover to three, and no one in post to oversee the appointment of a Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

The current position regionally and nationally is that there is a shortage of qualified staff in the fire and rescue service with a large majority of services currently recruiting. This is also mirrored in BFRS's partner agencies, where there are vacancies across local authorities, ambulance services and the police.

The Pay Policy Statement (paragraph 28) referring to abatement being for *'exceptional circumstances where specialist knowledge and expertise are required for*

*a defined period of time*, would apply to the post of CFO to provide continued leadership to the Service during the recruitment process for the DCFO post. A date for completion to be identified.

It would be optimistic to expect that a new Public Safety Plan would be ready to be consulted upon until December 2023; or later should the Authority wish to propose substantial changes from the current Public Safety Plan.

Obtaining Precept flexibility has been the focus of the CFO and Lead Members up until February 2022, which was substantially based on the skills, experience and trust that had been built in the long-standing relationships with key external partners.

The consultation on the White Paper ‘Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service’ was published on 18 May 2022. This will require the Authority to consider its governance model; how it works with other fire and rescue services in the future; and the interaction between the political oversight body and the individual charged with responsibility for operational matters. The relationships built up by the current Chief Fire Officer will allow for a smoother delivery of the priorities established by the Government or the Authority in the medium term.

#### Option Four

The Fire Authority does not agree to re-engage and abate the Chief Fire Officer, nor to extend the contract for the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. The CFO retires on 27 September 2022 and the fixed term contract for the DCFO ends on 10 November 2022. Both posts are advertised nationally.

Implications for this option are:

Post	Benefits	Implications
Chief Fire Officer vacancy advertised nationally. Operational / non-operational applicants invited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal promotional opportunity, or an external CFO and DCFO appointment</li> <li>Opportunity for potential candidates from minority or non Fire Service / non-operational background to apply</li> <li>If non-operational likely to introduce diversity of leadership focus, skills and experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disrupts the integrity and continuity of the current operational command structure</li> <li>Change to stability and continuity of leadership arrangements</li> <li>Reduced flexibility to consider wider options for future of BFRS involving leadership and organisational structure</li> </ul>
Deputy Chief Fire Officer vacancy advertised		

<p>nationally. Operational / non-operational applicants invited</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If operational background, will maintain the current Principal Officer rota number and costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If non-operational background, will require additional Principal Officer posts on establishment to maintain the rota - additional costs.</li> <li>• If operational, on-going Fire Service Pension costs</li> <li>• Induction and familiarisation/training for new people in role</li> <li>• Greater level of support from SMT for new postholders</li> <li>• Other Fire and Rescues services are currently recruiting for CFO and DCFO positions, some have experienced issues with this</li> </ul>
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#### **Option 4 - summary**

For both postholders to leave at the same time, this year, is likely to create instability at the leadership and operational command levels if the recruitment process is undertaken concurrently and with immediate effect. There will be little opportunity for a planned and managed handover.