



**Formal Notification to the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel of the Proposed Appointment to the Position of Chief Fire Officer for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service as required under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Fire and Rescue Authority (Police and Crime Commissioner) (Application of Local Policing Provisions, Inspection, Powers to Trade and Consequential Amendments) Order 2017**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Following the sudden departure of Mark Jones as the Chief Fire Officer for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service; it was essential that we identified someone with the skills and experience to undertake the role of Chief Fire Officer for a brief period, to bring stability and continuity until the role is advertised and a new chief officer is recruited.
- 1.2 The Police, Fire and Crime Panel is required to undertake a confirmation hearing to review and endorse the appointment of a Chief Fire Officer.
- 1.3 In line with the Policing and Crime Act 2017 schedule A2 (8(1)) with ref to section 28 (5) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act / Schedule 8, in relation to the confirmation of a new Chief Fire Officer, the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner must notify the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel of his preferred appointment to the post.
- 1.4 The Commissioner must include the following information in the notification:
  - a) the name of the person whom the commissioner is proposing to appoint ("the candidate").
  - b) the criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate for the appointment.
  - c) why the candidate satisfies those criteria; and
  - d) the terms and conditions on which the candidate is to be appointed.
- 1.5 The Act, also sets out the Panel's responsibility to review the proposed appointment and make a report to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner within a period of three weeks from when the panel received notification from the Commissioner of the proposed appointment, including a recommendation as to whether or not the candidate should be appointed.

- 1.6 The Police, Fire and Crime Panel must hold a public confirmation hearing before making a report and recommendation to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in relation to a proposed senior appointment. At this meeting, the candidate is requested to appear to answer any questions relating to the appointment.
- 1.7 The Police, Fire and Crime Panel may, having reviewed the proposed appointment, veto the appointment of the candidate. There needs to be at least two-thirds of panel members to support a decision to veto the appointment for it to be carried and this power is only exercisable in relation to a proposed appointment during the three-week appointment process. If the panel vetoes the appointment of the candidate, their report must include a statement that the panel has vetoed it and the PFCC must not appoint that candidate as Chief Fire Officer.
- 1.8 If the panel does not veto the proposed appointment, the PFCC may accept or reject the panel's recommendation as to whether or not the candidate should be appointed and must notify them of their decision whether to accept or reject the recommendation.

## **2. Background to the appointment**

- 2.1 When the Chief Fire Officer left, I had to act immediately to secure cover in the chief officer role. The Fire and Rescue Service has plenty of firefighting expertise, however this is not what was needed then or is needed now.
- 2.2 Following HMICFRS's inspection, it was clear to me that it was vital that the service was able to progress to the next stage of its development, creating a positive, welcoming culture, embracing change, and taking the undoubted skills of the firefighters and staff to build on the already significant work being undertaken in the broader community safety arena.
- 2.3 What was, and is needed, is someone to provide leadership for the organisation in the short term and take forward the cultural and business improvements that are critical to the future of the organisation.
- 2.4 Looking to the future, it is essential that we consider how we can add additional capacity and skills into our fire service and help tackle the cultural issues. We should not be afraid of embracing new ideas and perspectives to ensure that we have a high performing fire and rescue service that can best meet the needs of a fast-growing county.

## **3. The Proposed Appointment**

- 3.1 Given the urgency and the need to ensure this statutory role is undertaken, I have chosen Simon Tuhill, who has joined Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service as our

new Deputy Chief Fire Officer, to undertake the Chief Fire Officer's role on a temporary basis.

- 3.2 Simon has served for over 25 years as a firefighter and began his career with London Fire Brigade where he served for 22 years in busy areas of Central London, including Paddington, Westminster and Knightsbridge. His career took him across the capital in a variety of dense urban environments, each posing unique risks and challenges, such as the country's tallest building (the Shard) whilst Borough Commander in Southwark and many of the capital's main hospitals and the HS2 construction site as Borough Commander for Camden. He also worked closely with London's two biggest sporting arenas, Twickenham and Wembley whilst in roles in Richmond and Brent respectively.
- 3.3 As a firefighter in London, Simon was involved in the response to many incidents of national significance, including the 7/7 bombings, the London pub bombings, the Paddington Train Crash, the Westminster Bridge terror attack, and the Grenfell Tower fire.
- 3.4 In Hertfordshire, Simon was responsible for service delivery, prevention and improvement, managing all twenty-nine stations and firefighters. This experience gave Simon experience of a more rural area but with its own urban challenges. During his three years in Hertfordshire, Simon has been Senior Operational Commander at a range of large complex incidents including 12-pump fires at Hemel Hempstead, St Albans and Welwyn Garden City. He has also acted as the Gold commander at various events and major incidents including the wildfires of last summer, the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Just Stop Oil protests.
- 3.5 When the decision was taken to appoint a new Deputy Chief Fire Officer for Northamptonshire, a robust selection process was undertaken by the service with support from an independent external recruitment agency and our joint HR team. Simon beat a strong field of candidates and demonstrated that he had the skills and vision to drive a vigorous programme of change to further improve the service and deliver the cultural changes required for us to deliver a truly excellent fire and rescue service for Northamptonshire.
- 3.6 In his role. Simon will have the support of the existing team of Assistant Chief Fire Officer Rob Porter and Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer Phil Pells, who have considerable operational experience, and Assistant Chief Officer Paul Bullen, who leads the Enabling Services teams.

#### **4. The terms and Conditions on which the Candidate is to be appointed**

- 4.1 The PFCC has considered the salary band for the interim Chief Fire Officer, and it is proposed that Simon Tuhill will be appointed to the position on a salary of equivalent to £140k for the interim period.

4.2 It is my intention that I will advertise for the new Chief Fire Officer role to all applicants in August 2023. This was always my intention, and I will ensure the Panel are kept updated of the recruitment process before I formally announce a preferred candidate.

**5. Financial Implications**

5.1 For the period of this arrangement, Simon will receive a salary equivalent to £140k per annum. This is an increase of around £13k per annum on his current Deputy Chief Fire Officer salary.

5.2 If the Deputy role remains vacant for the interim period, this would equate to a saving in respect of pay and on-costs of approximately £12k per month.

**6. Recommendation:**

6.1 The Panel is requested to review and confirm the proposed appointment of Simon Tuhill, to the position of interim Chief Fire Officer for Northamptonshire as set out above.

Appendix A - Job Description of the Chief Fire Officer for Northamptonshire

**Stephen Mold**  
**Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire**