



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 Darren Dovey, the Chief Fire Officer for Northamptonshire's Fire and Rescue Service will retire from the service in October 2022.
- 1.2 The Police, Fire and Crime Panel is required to undertake a confirmation hearing to review and endorse the appointment of a new 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. A decision to veto the appointment must be supported by at least two-thirds of the persons who are panel members at the time when the decision is made 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 the panel of their decision whether to accept or reject the recommendation.

2. Background to the appointment

- 2.1 During the pandemic lockdown, the PFCC updated the Panel on his intention to abate the pension of the Chief Fire Officer for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service under the provisions of the COVID-19 legislation to ensure continuity and community safety in Northamptonshire.
- 2.2 As the nation was under lockdown, and still in the depth of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was of grave concern to the PFCC that the Fire and Rescue service could lose a Chief Officer at this point in time. This was why the PFCC proposed that the current Chief Fire Officer be re-appointed on a new fixed term contract for a period of two years.
- 2.3 This contract is due to end in October 2022 and the Chief Fire Officer has informed the PFCC of his decision to retire, which signalled the start of a recruitment process to select his replacement.

3. The Proposed Appointment

- 3.1 The recruitment process started early in May 2022 when the OPFCC appointed Gatenby Sanderson who are a leading public sector recruitment company to promote and advertise the role. All applicants were given the opportunity to discuss the role and ask any questions they may have with either the OPFCC's Monitoring Officer or with Gatenby Sanderson directly. A copy of the application pack is included in appendix A of the report.
- 3.2 We had 10 applicants from which we shortlisted 4 candidates, 1 of whom subsequently withdrew from the process. The selected 3 candidates took part in two days of activities, where they presented to and took questions from senior members of partner organisations before participating in a 'question time' event with firefighters and staff. This event allowed a cross section of NFRS staff to listen to presentations from each of the candidates and then ask any questions they may have.

This session was also live streamed to enable those who were unable to attend in person the chance to follow the session and hear the views of each candidate on the future of the fire and rescue service.

- 3.3 The candidates then faced a formal interview panel, which included Stephen Mold - the PFCC, Nicci Marzec - OPFCC Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer, Helen King – OPFCC Chief Finance Officer and Gillian Webster – independent HR consultant from Routledge Blakey Associates Ltd.
- 3.4 Following this robust process, it became clear to the PFCC that Mark Jones would be the right person to take NFRS forward into 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.
- 3.5 Mark joined Grampian Fire Brigade in 1985 and after working in various roles was appointed as Deputy Chief Fire Officer in Essex in 2005, and then became Chief Fire Officer of Buckinghamshire in 2010. After leaving Buckinghamshire in 2015, Mark moved to Australia and served as the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Emergency Services Agency's "Director of Strategic Reform" for two years. He served as the London Ambulance Service's Head of Resilience and Specialist Assets in 2019 before returning to Australia, taking on the role of Chief Officer of the South Australia Country Fire Service. Among his achievements he commanded the largest ever series of bushfires in South Australia's history.
- 3.6 Mark has worked in a wide range of senior operational and strategic leadership roles. He has managed large scale emergencies, events and terror related incidents, and his career has spanned roles in emergency planning and disaster management, operational Fire Command, Fire Safety and Training. Mark has shown a particular professional interest in the fields of fairness, equality, and diversity, and these were his key responsibilities as he served as an Inspector in Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland in the early 2000s. He also worked on the 'Women in Emergency Services' project in Canberra, which saw a significant increase in the recruitment of women into the ACT's Fire and Rescue Service.

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

- 4.1 The PFCC proposes to appoint Mark Jones for a fixed term for a period of three years with the option to extend for up to two years.
- 4.2 The PFCC proposes to appoint Mark Jones on a spot salary of £140,000.00 per annum, subject to nationally negotiated pay increases.
- 4.3 Mark will be required to travel effectively between locations by car and an official vehicle will be provided in accordance with the Principal Officer's Car Scheme.
- 4.4 The terms and conditions of employment will be in accordance with the provisions of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and

Rescue Services (Gold Book) and supplemented by local and/or provincial agreements and any other local provisions. The terms and conditions will not be less favourable than those applicable to NCFRA employees subject to the National Joint Council; Authority Fire and Rescue Services (Grey Book).

- 4.5 Subject to confirmation of the proposed appointment by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel and other pre-employment clearances, the PFCC would look to commence Mark's employment in late September/ early October to enable an effective period of induction and handover before Darren Dovey retires from the position.

5. Recommendation:

- 5.1 The Panel is requested to review and confirm the proposed appointment of Mr Mark Jones to the position of Chief Fire Officer for Northamptonshire as set out above.

Nicci Marzec

Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer

Office of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner