

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

REPORT TO THE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

7 JULY 2022

Report Title	Review of the proposed appointment by the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire of a Chief Fire Officer of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report is intended to set out the results of the review by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire's proposed appointment of a Chief Fire Officer of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire is responsible for appointing the Chief Fire Officer of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service. When the Commissioner proposes to make an appointment to this position the Police, Fire & Crime Panel must hold a confirmation hearing to review the proposed appointment in order to make a recommendation on it. This report sets out the result of a confirmation hearing held by the Panel on 6th July 2022 concerning the proposed appointment of Mr Mark Jones as Chief Fire Officer.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel recommends:
- a) That the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire appoints Mr Mark Jones as the Chief Fire Officer of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service.
 - b) That the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner notifies the Panel of his decision whether to accept or reject its recommendation in accordance with the Fire & Rescue Authority (Police & Crime Commissioner) (Application of Local Policing Provisions, Inspection, Powers to Trade and Consequential Amendments) Order 2017 part 2 chapter 1 paragraph 9(3).

- 3.2 Reasons for Recommendation(s) – The recommendations are required to complete the Panel’s review of the proposed appointment by the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner of a Chief Fire Officer, in accordance with the Panel’s statutory responsibilities.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 The Policing & Crime Act 2017 makes provision for a Police & Crime Commissioner for an area to be the fire and rescue authority for that area. This position has applied in Northamptonshire from 1st January 2019. The responsibilities of a Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC) created under the 2017 Act include the functions of appointing, suspending or dismissing the chief fire officer.
- 4.2 The Fire & Rescue Authority (Police & Crime Commissioner) (Application of Local Policing Provisions, Inspection, Powers to Trade and Consequential Amendments) Order 2017 part 2 chapter 1 specifies that a PFCC must notify the relevant Police, Fire & Crime Panel of the proposed appointment of a chief fire officer. In such cases the PFCC must also notify the Police, Fire & Crime Panel of the following information:
- a) the name of the person whom the PFCC 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.
- 4.3 The Police, Fire & Crime Panel must review the proposed appointment at a confirmation hearing. A confirmation hearing is defined as: “A meeting of the Panel, held in public, at which the candidate is requested to appear for the purpose of answering questions relating to the appointment”.
- 4.4 The Police, Fire & Crime Panel must then make a report to the PFCC stating the outcome of the review. In the case of the proposed appointment of a chief fire officer the Panel must make a recommendation as to whether or not the candidate should be appointed. Alternatively, the Panel may resolve to veto the proposed appointment, if at least two-thirds of the people who are members of the Police, Fire & Crime Panel at the time vote in favour of making that decision.
- 4.5 The PFCC may accept or reject the Police, Fire & Crime Panel’s recommendation as to whether or not the candidate should be appointed. The PFCC must notify the Panel of their decision on the Panel’s recommendation. In the event that the Panel vetoes the PFCC’s proposed appointment the PFCC must not appoint that candidate. The PFCC must then propose a reserve candidate, whose appointment will be subject to review at a further confirmation hearing.
- 4.6 The Police, Fire & Crime Panel must publish its report to the PFCC, although it is for the Panel to decide the manner in which the report is published.

5. Review of the proposed appointment of a Chief Fire Officer

- 5.1 The Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel met in public on 6th July 2022 to hold a confirmation hearing for the proposed appointment of Mr Mark Jones as the Chief Fire Officer of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service.
- 5.2 The Panel was provided with information about the proposed appointment ahead of the confirmation hearing. This included the information referred to in paragraph 4.2 above.
- 5.3 At the confirmation hearing the Panel asked questions of Mr Jones, intended to enable Panel members to evaluate his suitability for the role. In accordance with relevant guidance these questions focussed on the areas of professional competence (: the candidate's ability to carry out the role) and personal independence (: the need for the candidate to act in a manner that is operationally independent of the PFCC). The questions covered the following areas:
- Mr Jones' interest in the role and perceptions of the key challenges facing Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service and how these could be addressed.
 - Approaches to improving the performance of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue and enabling it to operate as effectively as possible in a demanding financial environment.
 - Managing the effects of possible future industrial action connected with the national pay offer for firefighters and maintaining service continuity in Northamptonshire.
 - Developing partnership working with other emergency services and with partner organisations in broader areas of activity.
 - Experience of leading major service transformation projects.
 - Approaches to working together with the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner whilst reflecting the distinctions between their respective responsibilities.
 - Building a strong organisational culture within Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service that would engage and empower staff members.
 - Approaches to leadership that would inspire confidence and respect in the operational leader of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service and in the future direction of the organisation.
 - The future working relationship between the Panel and the Chief Fire Officer.
- 5.4 The confirmation hearing was webcast live and the recording is available to view at the following link: [West Northamptonshire Council - YouTube](#).

6. Outcome of the Review

- 6.1 After questioning Mr Jones and taking account of the other information provided to the Panel, members commented that he was a well-qualified candidate who would be able to bring an excellent range of Fire & Rescue experience to Northamptonshire. This included service in his current role as the chief officer for a massive geographical area; as an inspector in Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland; and involvement in work focussed on supporting equality

and diversity. Members also felt that Mr Jones had given clear, full and well-informed answers to the Panel's questions. During discussion some members referred to the importance of offering opportunities for progression to existing senior leaders when making appointments such as this one where possible. The need for the Chief Fire Officer to engage well with all stakeholders was also emphasised. The Panel noted that the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner had followed a robust recruitment and selection process to identify Mr Jones as his preferred candidate for appointment. In turn, members were generally satisfied and confident that Mr Jones had the expertise and experience required for the role.

6.2 At the conclusion of discussion the Panel resolved:

To recommend that the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire appoints Mr Mark Jones as the Chief Fire Officer of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service.

7. Background Papers

Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011

Police & Crime Panels Guidance on Confirmation Hearings Local Government Association and Centre for Public Scrutiny (August 2012)

Policing & Crime Act 2017

Fire & Rescue Authority (Police and Crime Commissioner) (Application of Local Policing Provisions, Inspection, Powers to Trade and Consequential Amendments) Order 2017

Policing and fire governance: guidance for police and crime panels Local Government Association and Centre for Public Scrutiny (July 2019)