

Report to	Executive Panel
Date	16 December 2024
Lead Officer	Gareth Owens, Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer	Llinos Gutierrez-Jones, Head of Human Resources
Subject	Triannual benchmarking of the Chief Fire Officer's salary



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To advise Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) of the outcome of the triannual benchmarking of the Chief Fire Officer's (CFO) salary.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2 It is recommended that Members:
 - i) Confirm to the Authority that, through the Executive Panel, they have discharged their duty to undertake a triannual benchmarking exercise in line with the "two-track" approach for determining levels of pay for Brigade Managers as prescribed by the National Joint Council; and
 - ii) note the findings of the exercise.

BACKGROUND

- 3 On 25 October 2021 the Authority adopted a single set of pay principles for Principal Management Pay. This provided Members with a consistent method of formulating an independently derived figure that reflected the Authority's aspirations and values.
- 4 These pay principles are:
 - i. pay scales will be linked to the average basic pay rates collated and published by the national joint council for brigade managers of local authority fire and rescue services in order to give appropriate sector-specific comparisons;
 - ii. each seniority level will be employed on a three-point scale with progression up the scale to be subject to satisfactory annual appraisal. Each increment in scale will be based upon £1,500 for the CFO; and a relative proportion for the other posts;

iii. the authority will pay, at the bottom of the three-point scale, the average basic pay for an authority in population band 2, which will be inclusive of all duties;

iv. the nationally negotiated and agreed annual pay awards will be automatically applied, as currently happens in the case of “grey book” and “green book” employees (subject to an employee choosing to forego any part of it);

v. the pay relativities between the roles of CFO, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) and Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACO) were restored to the proportions within North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) prior to 2009, and which are custom and practice in most Fire and Rescue Services. The salary of each seniority level will be calculated as a proportion of the CFO’s salary as follows: Deputy Chief Fire Officer 80%; Assistant Chief Fire Officer 75%; Assistant Chief Officer 60%;

vi. posts will be sized appropriately, relative to their seniority level, and will be of equal size across all at that level in order to ensure that officers receive equal pay for work of equal value; and

vii. pay will be reviewed at regular intervals in line with the requirements under the ‘two-track’ approach for determining levels of pay for Brigade Managers, as prescribed by the National Joint Council. Three years is the accepted interval.

INFORMATION

- 5 The seven pay principles enable the Authority to set senior pay based on comparable rates paid to the Chief Fire Officers of Population Band 2 areas. This removes an element of subjectivity and helps to ensure that the Authority remains competitive when seeking to attract and retain senior leaders from within the Service or elsewhere.
- 6 The Clerk, CFO and Treasurer have reviewed the current CFO's salary against benchmarking figures produced by the Local Government Association as the employer's side in the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services. The report for 2021 & 2022 gives the most recent benchmark and is based on examining levels of pay of all UK fire authorities. The benchmark figure is £138,623.
- 7 Applying the annual increase that has been agreed nationally (4% 3.5% and 3%) to the figures collected as at 31 March 2022, before the 2021 increase had been agreed, produces a benchmark figure of £153,690. This shows that the Authority's rates of pay are still consistent with principles i and ii and that they remain competitive.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	N/A
Budget	The funding for this role is within the existing budget
Legal	The Authority discharges its duties to benchmark the CFO's salary every three years
Staffing	The salary can now be demonstrated to be competitive
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	The salary for this post does not discriminate against any person with the protective characteristics, providing they meet the essential criteria for the role.
Risks	None

APPENDIX ONE

LGA Pay survey – published 2023

The average basic pay of chief fire officers in all fire and rescue authorities at 31st March 2022 was £149,056, an increase of 0.1 per cent since 2021. Among deputy chief fire officers, average basic pay fell by 1.3 per cent to £122,452. The average basic pay of assistant chief fire officers fell by 0.7 per cent to £109,865. A breakdown by population band is shown in Table 3.

	Chief fire officer	Chief fire officer	Deputy chief fire officer	Deputy chief fire officer	Assistant chief fire officer	Assistant chief fire officer
Population band	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
1	130,956	131,918	117,023	107,504	92,376	93,170
2	139,618	138,623	111,717	111,117	98,837	101,333
3	152,038	153,181	131,075	131,980	110,716	109,198
4	161,353	162,472	132,658	129,847	116,838	115,420
Total (incl London)	148,986	149,156	124,044	122,452	110,666	109,865

Base: All respondents (48).

Overall average gross total pay of chief fire officers changed negligibly between 2021 and 2022 when it stood at £149,752. For DCFOs, gross pay fell by 0.9 per cent to £124,744 and for ACFOs it fell by 1.4 per cent to £110,076. A full breakdown by population band is shown in Table 4.