



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

# Fire and Rescue Monthly Bulletin

Bulletin number: 27

05 November 2012

**Addressed to:**

The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Chief Executive of the County Council  
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority  
The London Commissioner  
The Chief Fire Officer

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## Fire and Rescue Seconddees: Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser

### 1. Introduction

The Department for Communities and Local Government is commencing the recruitment for a new Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser.

### 2. Information

The Department for Communities and Local Government is seeking an exceptional candidate to succeed Sir Ken Knight, who is due to retire as Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser to the government.

The post is being advertised as a two year contract and the department is seeking to attract an outstanding leader to provide authoritative, impartial advice and judgment on matters relating to fire and rescue in England.

The chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's advice will help to shape Government's policy on fire and rescue in England. The role requires flexibility and involves working across government, fire and rescue authorities and services, and other bodies to ensure excellence in prevention, resilience and response. A key element is providing advice to Ministers and senior officials on fire and rescue issues and priorities, and including national resilience, as well as advice during major incidents and deployment of national assets.

The successful candidate will be appointed by Her Majesty as an Inspector in order to access the powers available under Section 28 of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004.

Further information including details of the job role, responsibilities and criteria will be available from 5 November 2012 on the Civil Service jobs website at the following link - <https://jobsstatic.civilservice.gov.uk/csjobs.html>.

The closing date for the post is 3 December 2012, with indicative interview dates in week commencing the 10 December 2012.

For further information please contact:

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Director, Fire Resilience and Emergencies	Email	<a href="mailto:recruitment@communities.gsi.gov.uk">recruitment@communities.gsi.gov.uk</a>

## Fire and Rescue Secondees

### 1. Introduction

The Department for Communities and Local Government is looking for two secondees, each for a minimum of one year, one to provide technical advice, and one to work with the Department and to support the Chief Fire Officers Association in the Department for Business Innovation and Skill's piloting of a Primary Authority Scheme for fire.

### 2. Information

Neil O'Connor has written to all Chief Fire Officers alerting them to a new scheme to bring in secondees to the Department for Communities and Local Government to provide advice to government, but also to offer a range of training and leadership opportunities.

There are two roles:

1. A suitably experienced person is sought to provide the Department with a range of technical advice on fire fighter communications systems and control rooms systems, radio spectrum, fire-fighter BA telemetry. It is likely that this secondment will be for at least a year, with the possibility for a two year placement. This secondment is expected to start in December 2012.

2. A secondee with experience of enforcement policy and/or practice is sought to support the Department for Communities and Local Government on the Primary Authority Scheme and its application for fire. The role of the secondee will be to ensure that the Department's interests in fire safety policy are properly represented and that the pilots, being run by the Department of Business Innovation and Skills, benefit from technical advice. The secondee will also support the Chief Fire Officers Association, who are leading on the pilots for the sector. This secondment is immediate and we are looking for someone who can start as soon as possible. The pilot process will be one to two months in preparation, six months piloting then an evaluation. The secondment is likely to be for a year.

The Department is changing the way it undertakes secondments, and as part of this is looking at an approach where it pays the fire and rescue authority in the region of £60k pa (full time equivalent). Under the new arrangements secondees would be embedded in the policy teams with an offer from the Department for Communities and Local Government to participate in a package of training and development opportunities, tailored, to a certain extent, to the needs of the individual. This could include:

- Access to Department learning and development opportunities (for example attendance at leadership events)
- Opportunities to deputise for the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser
- An understanding of Departmental budgets and financial management processes within Government
- Development of a deep understanding of central government finance regimes, exposure to and opportunities to work with civil servants within the Treasury Department
- Programme and project management - Involvement in the delivery of a national project
- Leadership development programmes for senior civil servants
- Experience or working across Whitehall
- Experience of a parliamentary process (legislation, or a debate in the house)
- Government media and communications
- Experience of briefing ministers and senior officials face to face, and the development of written briefing

We are looking for aspiring officers at group or area manager level. If you are interested in either of these secondments you should send an initial email to [FireSecondees@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FireSecondees@communities.gsi.gov.uk) and you will be sent further details. As this arrangement is new, and may result in a cost impaction for the loaning authority, applicants will need to have the support of their Chief Fire Officer.

For further information please contact:

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## The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency

### 1. Background

Fire and Rescue Monthly Bulletin Number 15 issued on 15 October 2011 highlighted the publication of the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/fsb152011>.

The Code asks all local authorities to follow three principles of transparency when publishing data they hold; responding to public demand; releasing data in open formats available for re-use; and, releasing data in a timely way. This includes data on senior pay, the structure of their workforce, tenders, contracts, councillor expenses, voluntary sector funding, meetings, and frontline service data so that 'armchair auditors' can clearly see the decisions being made on their behalf. The code can be found at: [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/transparencycode](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/transparencycode).

### 2. Consultation on "Improving Local Government Transparency"

The Government is now consulting on making regulations to require local authorities, including fire and rescue authorities, to publish data falling within certain descriptions of information specified in the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency.

The consultation proposes amendments and additions to the code to facilitate greater clarity as to what data must be published, when and in what format. It also adds clarity to what the requirements will be under the proposed regulations. To take account of experience and improved best practice, the Code will be revised and updated as and when needed.

All principal local authorities are now publishing expenditure over £500. As one of Government's transparency trailblazers, the Department for Communities and Local Government, has now extended this to include the publication of all transactions above a new low threshold of £250.

For further information please contact:

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## Third Year of Council Tax Freeze Announced 2013-14

### 1. Introduction

On 8 October 2012 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced new support for local authorities in England to help them freeze council tax for a further year and assist in keeping council tax bills down.

### 2. Council Tax Freeze and Referendum Threshold

The Government will set aside an extra £450 million to help freeze council tax bills in England. The support for local authorities means that taxpayers living in an average Band D home in England could save up to £72 on a five per cent rise in council tax.

Over the last two years the Government has provided grants of around £2billion to help freeze council tax. A freeze in council tax in 2013-14 would represent a real terms cut of around two per cent and a fall of nine per cent in real terms over the past three years.

The funding will be made available, through an unringfenced grant, to councils, police and fire authorities who decide to freeze or reduce their council tax next year. Those which do so will receive £225million of funding in both financial years 2013-14 and 2014-15, equivalent to raising their council tax by one per cent. The council tax freeze offer will therefore apply separately to each billing and major precepting authority in England, rather than to each council tax bill issued.

In addition, in 2013-14 the Government will propose to lower the council tax referendum threshold to two per cent. This would mean if an authority seeks to raise its relevant basic amount of council tax by more than two per cent, local people would have the right to approve or veto the increase in a binding referendum. The Secretary of State will set out the detail on this in December 2012.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer's council tax freeze statement can be found at: [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press\\_110\\_11.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press_110_11.htm)

Details on the council tax freeze can be found on the Departments website at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/2232092>

For further information please contact:

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## Transitional Grant for Localising Support for Council Tax

### 1. Introduction

The Department for Communities and Local Government is making available an additional £100 million for one year to support local authorities in developing well-designed council tax support schemes and maintain positive incentives to work.

### 2. Funding Support

The Department for Communities and Local Government has already provided £30 million of funding to help councils draw up local council tax support schemes. The £100 million announced by the Department on 16 October 2012 is new and additional funding.

The grant will be payable in March 2013 to those authorities who adopt schemes that must comply with criteria set by Government to ensure that low income households do not face an extensive increase in their council tax liability in 2013-14. This funding will enable councils to explore more sustainable approaches to managing the funding reduction that minimise the impact on vulnerable taxpayers.

Details on the transitional grant scheme including a Frequently Asked Questions guide can be found at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/localtransitionalgrant>

For further information please contact:

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