



DEVON &
SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Director of Strategy and Improvement

Application pack



www.dsfire.gov.uk

January 2025



**DEVON &
SOMERSET**
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE



Devon and Somerset
Fire and Rescue Authority

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the role of Director of Strategy and Improvement at Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.

This application pack provides information about us, the job profile and job description, our Service values and code of ethics, a person specification and information about the package we are offering and how to apply.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service is the largest non-metropolitan fire and rescue service in England.

We have a proud history of keeping people safe, providing prevention, protection and response services across the local government areas of Devon County, Plymouth City, Somerset and Torbay Councils. We have 83 fire stations and over 1,900 highly skilled and motivated staff who work tirelessly to protect the 1.8 million people who live in our two counties, plus the 1.1 million people who come to Devon and Somerset on holiday each year.

We will continue to provide the best possible working environment for all of our people. We want a place where everyone can achieve their full potential, a place where people are valued for being themselves and a place where our values of working together, honesty, respect and pride in helping others are our day to day experience.

If you think you are the type of leader who can inspire and guide our team, then we would like to hear from you.

I wish you the best of luck.

Simon Coles
Chair, Fire and Rescue Authority



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Message from Chief Fire Officer

As the newly appointed Chief Fire Officer I am looking for an ambitious, forward thinking, and inclusive strategic leader to join me as Director of Strategy and Improvement.

With a track record of delivering strategic change initiatives as well as driving organisational performance and culture, you will support me in our vision of delivering continual excellent services to our communities.

Working and living within the counties of Devon & Somerset has significant wellbeing benefits, with numerous areas of outstanding natural beauty, sandy coastlines and beautiful towns and cities. We are the largest non-metropolitan fire service in England with 83 fire stations and 112 fire appliances. We are also the largest employer of on-call staff. We have a real diversity of risk within the service area and as Director of Strategy and Improvement it is vital that you have a proven track record of managing the response and preparedness to risk as well as commanding and leading our response to complex and major incidents.

This is an exciting time to join us as Director of Strategy and Improvement, we are in the process of delivering a change programme where we are transforming the service to ensure future sustainability as well as providing resilient services for the future challenges.

If you are driven, looking for a challenge and want to relocate to one of the most stunning places within the UK then I welcome your application.

Good luck






Gavin Ellis
Chief Fire Officer

Service Values and Code of Ethics

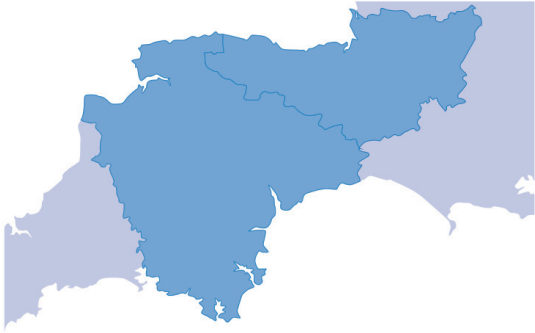
Our values and ethics must be at the heart of everything we say and do within the Service.

They guide us in both promoting positive behaviours and in addressing where they are not demonstrated.



-  We are proud to help and put the interests of our communities first.
-  We act with integrity, being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.
-  We make decisions objectively based on evidence, without prejudice or bias, and always with respect.
-  We promote equality, diversity and inclusion for all. We stand against all forms of discrimination and we celebrate difference.
-  We are all positive role models, always demonstrating consistent and resilient leadership.

About us



We are the largest non-metropolitan fire and rescue service in England, covering almost **4,000** square miles

We have:



83
fire
stations



332 emergency response vehicles



1,900 dedicated staff

We protect **820,000** households, **74,000** businesses and a further **1.1 million** visitors a year

Job description

Job role and title: Director of Strategy and Improvement (DSI)

Grade: EB4

Reports to: Chief Fire Officer

Main purpose of job

The Director of Strategy and Improvement (DSI) will report to and support the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) in leading the Service. As part of the Executive Board, they will assist the CFO in creating a vision, direction and culture of the Service which builds public trust and confidence through the delivery of effective services, and for the strategic leadership and the performance of the Service in the achievement of its collective goals

The DSI will have responsibility for the operations for core support staff departments ensuring that agreed policies are implemented effectively and performance managed. The DSI will have direct responsibility for the Corporate Services directorate and the strategy and improvement function that is responsible for organisational strategy and performance.

The postholder will be responsible for driving the strategy and vision on behalf of the Chief Fire Officer working directly along side the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, ensuring the vision, strategy, improvement plans, and performance are driven from the most senior levels of the organisation encompassing all areas of the service.

- To contribute to corporate performance both by ensuring a high quality service and by leading or supporting corporate initiatives and projects and by carrying a specific or statutory corporate role where appropriate.
- To advise Members of the Authority, to engage in strategic and service partnerships and to promote and communicate on behalf of the Service.
- To act as the Authority's corporate adviser on all issues covered by the Director's major accountabilities.

Service, strategic and corporate responsibilities:

Service responsibilities

1. To produce, commission and gain approval to operational and support service plans which meet the Service's values and any relevant statutory or regulatory framework.
2. To take such management decisions as are necessary to achieve service objectives and to act as the Service's lead officer for the service activity and to ensure that professional standards of conduct are developed, maintained and monitored.
3. To organise structures and systems to ensure that service objectives are met in a manner which is operationally effective and which ensures quality of service.
4. To take responsibility for the performance outcomes of the service and to ensure that service improvement measures are agreed, implemented and reviewed. To take such developmental or remedial actions as are necessary following review.
5. To ensure that an effective risk management strategy and arrangements (including business continuity plans and insurance) are in place for the service area.
6. To maintain and improve the capacity of the service by ensuring the most effective and flexible use of available resources and to ensure that all sources are properly researched and utilised.
7. Provide leadership and motivation to staff and ensure their appropriate training and development. To ensure that the service operates within agreed financial criteria and to achieve best value.
8. To ensure the operation of effective programme/project management arrangements in delivering service area outputs and benefits realisation.
9. To ensure effective working relationships with partners, suppliers and contractors who have a key influence on the Service's abilities to deliver services at the quality required.
10. To ensure that the Service's approach to equalities and diversity is firmly embedded within the service area both from an employment and service delivery point of view.

Strategic responsibilities

11. To ensure the successful development of Service's organisational strategy and performance measures and outputs to drive the service forward.
12. As a member of the Executive Board participate in the establishment and achievement of the strategic direction of the Authority, sharing accountability for overall performance.
13. To ensure the provision and review of a framework of strategic and tactical performance and support service strategies, policies and procedures which support and facilitate the achievement of the Service's strategic objectives.
14. To take a strategic approach to the engagement and operation with partners and stakeholders to ensure the definition and delivery of community and individual based services which meet the Authority's strategic objectives.
15. To ensure that the Authority meets all statutory and regulatory obligations in the design and delivery of its service.

Corporate responsibilities

16. To ensure that the departments activities are fully integrated into the Service's corporate objectives and to promote and achieve a positive approach to cultural and organisational change to meet corporate objectives.
17. To undertake a specific corporate role on behalf of the Service as required. This may be a statutory position or the Service's lead officer for a cross functional activity.
18. To advise, influence and inform the Fire Authority, the Executive Board and other senior managers on the direction and approach on strategic and operational service matters which best sustains the Service's actions in regard to Performance Management, Quality Assurance and Value for Money.
19. To take a proactive role in the delivery of corporate priorities and undertake the leadership or high level support of corporate projects as required.
20. To ensure that the corporate interests of the Service are served in promoting and communicating the Authority's services to individuals, community groups, MPs, MEPs and other representatives and to the media in general.
21. To direct and develop an appetite for strategic partnering and commercial activity.

Individual job responsibilities:

Senior accountabilities

1. To deputise for and assist the CFO in creating a vision, direction and culture of the Service which builds public trust and confidence.
2. Supporting the CFO to drive forward the culture of DSFRS and in the delivery of corporate governance and objectives.
3. To report to, support and advise the Authority, Audit Committee, Resources Committee, and People Committee on appropriate matters and internal controls.
4. To provide advisory and “trouble shooting” expertise to Members and the Executive Board where expert knowledge and sound interpretation or statutory guidance and/or accepted practice is vital to the resolution of the matter.
5. To ensure that Change Governance arrangements adequately reflect the financial resources required to implement projects and that associated business plans capture costs and realisable benefits.
6. To challenge and support decision makers, especially on affordability and value for money, by ensuring policy and operational proposals with financial implications are signed off by the finance function.
7. To implement appropriate measures to prevent and detect fraud and corruption.

Service resourcing accountabilities

8. To lead via the Director of Corporate Services and DACO a Directorate consisting of Finance, Digital, Data and Technology, Estates, Communications and Engagement, Fleet and Procurement, Organisational Assurance, Democratic Services and Corporate Support and the strategy and improvement functions of the Service.
9. To direct the strategic and operational management of the Directorate’s functions, monitoring performance against plans to ensure effective and efficient delivery of services to highest standards including financial, procurement, performance, governance, risk, health and safety, people and change management.
10. To coordinate activities, problem solving and prioritising across the portfolio.
11. Take ownership and oversight of the Authority’s capital planning and prioritisation activities

12. Provide professional and strategic advice to Members and the Leadership Team on matters covered by the role and ensure Service Resourcing leaders and managers provide appropriate professional advice and guidance to the Executive Board, Members and associated committees.
13. To support the resourcing of high performing internal and external services to ensure maximum effectiveness and providing a reporting line for directorate activities back to the Executive Board
14. Work with a range of internal and external partners to explore opportunities for collaborative/joint working, commercial approaches to delivery and investment.
15. Collaboratively identify and commission change activity which will support development and improvement of services
16. To ensure that relevant policies and working practices are developed which support the strategic direction of the Service, its Fire and Rescue Plan and Continuous Improvement Culture.
17. To ensure that each service meets its statutory requirements and is carried out to a high standard.
18. To lead, via the Director of Corporate Services and DACO, a team of appropriately trained professionals to provide effective services.
19. To provide visible leadership and advocate for the Directorate, championing services and individuals.

Staffing

Direct reports = 5

- Director of Corporate Services
- Deputy Assistant Chief Fire Officer
- Head of Organisational Assurance
- Head of Communications and Engagement
- Head of Finance

Problem solving and creativity

A key requirement is the preparation, production and implementation of strategic plans. This will involve consultation with stakeholders, innovation, interpretation of corporate and political objectives and planning within financial and other resource constraints.

There is a continual requirement to review service effectiveness and integration and to seek to introduce new ways of working to improve performance and/or quality assurance and to ensure best value. To achieve these service objectives will require the exploration, negotiation and consolidation of revised relationships with key stakeholders who have an interest in, or who can influence the direction of, the Service in order to agree aims and objectives which meet stakeholders' needs without compromising the quality of service delivery.

As a director the jobholder will have responsibility for setting, maintaining and improving professional standards and for ensuring that the service's staff are trained and motivated to deliver high quality integrated services. This will often require the ability to lead staff through changing circumstances which will produce revised cultural and organisational arrangements.

The post requires a broad range of standard setting skills and the Director of Strategy and Improvement will 'set the tone' for management decisions and actions.

A Director will be required to take full responsibility for policy advice and development relating to their service but will also be required on a regular basis to play a leading part in developing and implementing corporate policies or actions associated with corporate projects.

Decision making

The jobholder is required to demonstrate and utilise a full range of general management decision-making over a wide range of service specification, delivery and performance issues. This will involve the deployment of a range of judgements, initiatives, recommendations, responses and tactics to ensure the achievement of service objectives, the maintenance of professional standards, maintaining the Service's values and meeting financial and other resource commitments.

On service based issues the jobholder acts as the highest level policy advisor to the Authority and the Executive Board. In some cases the Director may carry statutory powers. In this context the advice and recommendations given are required to be of the highest calibre and will require significant evaluative judgement combined with high level influencing skills. Increasingly less of this framework is prescriptive and the jobholder will require high level influencing skills.

A Director is also required to play a leading role in the development and implementation of projects and action plans which are designed to enable the Service to achieve its cross cutting themes and objectives. This will require innovation, revised relationships and an ability to analyse and bring policy and service standards to reconfigure or new areas of activity, new ways of working and new accountabilities.

Contacts and relationships

The post reports to the Chief Fire Officer in order to confer on service improvements, to deal with high level service conflicts and issues and to share initiatives in the formulation of strategic direction and policy.

The jobholder will need to develop and maintain a high level network at Authority, Executive Board and with other senior managers in order to influence and initiate change, to negotiate and agree remedies and settlements and to complete a wide range of organisational transactions.

The jobholder needs to have a significant profile and influence on the regional and national service agendas as decisions taken at this level can have a significant impact on the Service's ability to deliver cost effective services. National engagement will be essential to understanding and planning for changes to baseline funding.

The jobholder will require high levels of communication with service based staff to ensure their continued understanding, commitment and motivation during periods of change when performance improvement is paramount.

Knowledge, skills and experience

The post holder will act as the Service's lead officer for a major service and will be the Head of Profession for that service area and this may include statutory responsibilities or a statutory requirement for a relevant professional qualification.

The minimum general education standard/qualification is degree level or equivalent. Significant post qualification experience is required, with at least three years at senior management level which has included a corporate role.

Significant knowledge of the statutory and regulatory framework within which a Fire Authority operates and an in depth understanding of the specific framework in relation to the activities concerned.

Significant experience and high level expertise in the technique and practices required to influence strategic thinking and approaches to complex service issues and cross cutting

corporate developments and the experience and ability in delivering solutions to these issues.

The post requires a full range of general management skills to deliver/manage the service.

The provision of service by the Service is a constantly changing and challenging environment within which there are few - if any - absolute measures but many external assessments. The key demand for the jobholder is to use their knowledge, skills and experience to produce effective solutions which generate the improvements required, sustain the performance of the Service as a whole, support the community and which will often be unique to the particular circumstances and requirements of the Service.



Core values of the Service

- We are proud to help
- We are honest
- We are respectful
- We are working together

Please follow this link to the [Service Core Values Behavioural Framework](#)



Person specification

Grade: EB4

Job title: Director of Strategy & Improvement (DSI)

Please refer to the numbered criteria below when completing the application form, as this will provide the basis for shortlisting.

Key competencies

Ability to manage complex issues and have sound analytical, numerical and problem solving skills

Essential and measured by application and selection process

Proven analytical and report writing skills.

Essential and measured by application and selection process

Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to develop successful networks within, and external to, organisation.

Essential and measured by application and selection process

Evidence of strategy development and implementation

Essential and measured by application and selection process

The ability to initiate and lead change

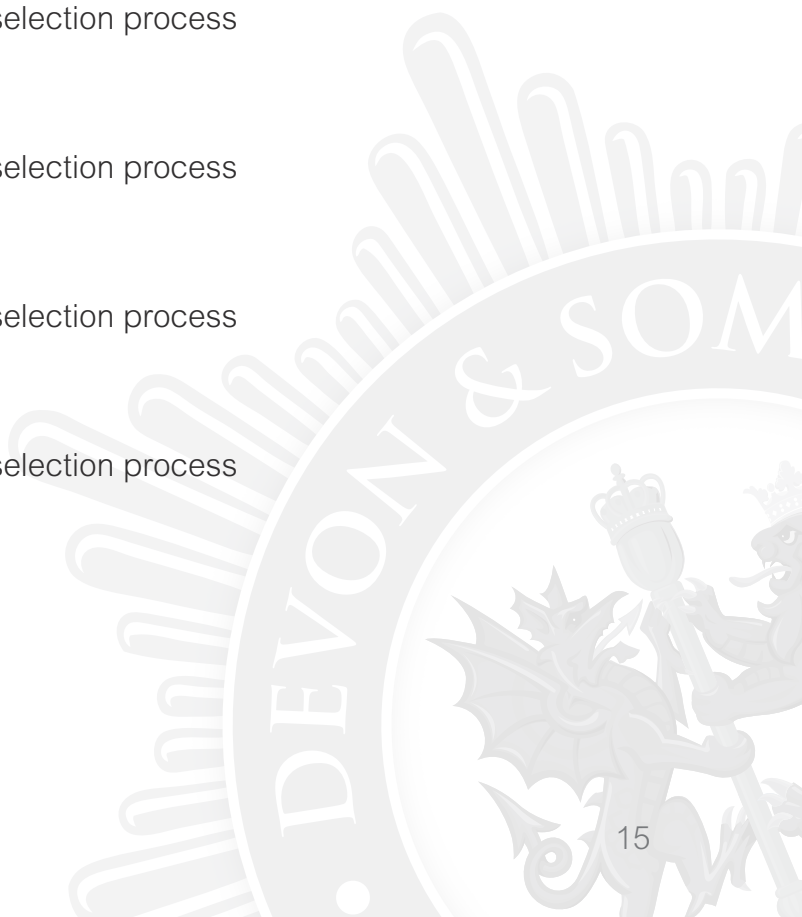
Essential and measured by application and selection process

Political awareness and sensitivity

Essential and measured by application and selection process

Ability to communicate at all levels

Essential and measured by application and selection process



Work experience

Significant experience in senior leadership roles

Essential and measured by application and selection process

Experience in leading and managing multi-disciplinary teams

Essential and measured by application and selection process

Experience of successfully managing and developing staff.

Essential and measured by application and selection process

Qualifications/knowledge

Leadership or management qualification or evidence of development in these skills

Essential and measured by application and selection process

Personal qualities and attributes

A high level of energy and resilience.

Essential and measured by selection process

An awareness of national issues affecting local Government.

Essential and measured by application and selection process

Ability to operate with probity, e.g. awareness and adherences to all legislative regulations relating to financial matters.

Essential and measured by application and selection process





How to apply

Please apply visiting the Director of Strategy and Improvement role vacancy listed in the Careers section of our website (dsfire.gov.uk/careers).

The closing date for applications is **Monday 3 February 2025 @ 23.59**. Shortlisting will take place week commencing **10 February 2025** selection and interview processes will take place week commencing **17 February** and interviews week commencing **3 March 2025**.

If, having read the application pack you would like additional information, or an informal discussion, please contact **Gavin Ellis, Chief Fire Officer** by emailing ExecutiveSupport@dsfire.gov.uk

Recruitment package

Remuneration: £112,296 salary with a provided car or taxable car allowance up to the value of £6,850.

Relocation support available to maximum of £11,983 (including VAT) relocation costs, of which, the first £8,000 being exempt from tax and NI contributions.

Further information

For further information about our Service and strategic documents to support your application, please visit our website at www.dsfire.gov.uk

As an equal opportunities employer, we are committed to ensuring:

- our employment, development and promotion opportunities are open and accessible
- our assessment processes are consistent, fair and transparent and based on criteria that are objective and justifiable
- successful individuals are selected on the basis of their merits and abilities, ensuring appointment of the best person for the role.

We are an inclusive employer and we welcome expressions of interest from all sectors of the community but are particularly keen to hear from underrepresented groups who would help us better represent the communities we serve.

We hope that you have now gained a better understanding of the process. Thank you for your interest in the role of Director of Strategy and Improvement for the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.

