



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

STRATEGIC EQUALITIES BOARD OUTCOMES

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda No:

Date: 28 May 2010

Purpose of Report:

To report to Members the business and actions of the Strategic Equalities Board of Friday 29 January 2010.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : Frank Swann
Chief Fire Officer

Tel : (0115) 967 0880
Email : frank.swann @notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Contact : Elisabeth Reeson
(0115) 967 5889 elisabeth.reeson@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Since its introduction, the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) has been required to report on its performance against the equalities agenda against the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG). Performance indicators were largely devised from the best value framework, along with specific recruitment and retention targets for FRSs.
- 1.2 As the ESLG was devised primarily for local government, the FRS nationally had sought a sector specific framework so that its own performance could be measured accurately. With the ESLG being superseded by the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG), the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) in partnership with the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) have produced the new Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework (FRS EF). This Framework recognises and addresses the equality and diversity objectives which are a priority for the FRS.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 At its meeting on Friday 19 February 2010 the Fire Authority approved a revised terms of reference for the Strategic Equalities Board to include reference to the new Framework and the Single Equality Scheme, in order to ensure appropriate scrutiny on progress towards the objectives.
- 2.2 The minutes of the Strategic Equalities Board held on Friday 29 January 2010 are attached to this report at Appendix A, to update Members on items currently being discussed by the Board and progress made to date.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The FRS EF is the measure by which the Service can judge its delivery to those under-represented within both the Service and the community. The Framework tests the commitment and achievement of the Service from Elected Members through to all employee levels. By progressing against this Framework, the Service will be ensuring that it is an employer of choice for all, as well as being able to demonstrate its delivery of service is equal to all.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

8.1 As a public body Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has both general and specific legal duties to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination for service users and employees. Failure to comply with such requirements may not only lead to prosecution but could also:

- Reduce the Service's ability to protect and serve the community because of a poor understanding of its needs;
- Cause detriment to employees who may not have the equality of opportunity to develop their potential; and
- Damage the standing and reputation of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

8.2 The Service's performance against the FRS EF will form part of the audit process along with CLG targets within the national strategy for the recruitment and retention of staff. Through the Audit Commission's process of inspection the Service will struggle to achieve better performance results until it achieves the 'achieving' category.


9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report and the business undertaken by the Strategic Equalities Board.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

 <p>NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Fire & Rescue Service <i>Creating Safer Communities</i></p>	<p>STRATEGIC EQUALITIES BOARD</p> <p>Friday 29 January 2010 Fire & Rescue Service HQ</p>
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Present:	<p>Councillor Darrell Pulk (Chair)</p> <p>Councillor Penny Griggs</p> <p>Councillor Alex Foster</p> <p>Councillor Barrie Cooper</p> <p>Frank Swann</p> <p>Andrew Beale</p> <p>Matt Sismey</p> <p>John Buckley</p> <p>Lea-Anne Abbiss</p> <p>Lorraine Butler</p>	<p>Fire & Rescue Authority</p> <p>Fire & Rescue Authority</p> <p>Fire & Rescue Authority</p> <p>Fire & Rescue Authority</p> <p>Chief Fire Officer</p> <p>Deputy Chief Fire Officer</p> <p>Equality & Diversity Officer</p> <p>Assistant Chief Fire Officer</p> <p>Notes</p> <p>Notes</p>
Apologies:	<p>Councillor John Hemsall</p>	<p>Fire & Rescue Authority</p>
In Attendance:	<p>Ruth Clayton (Community Safety Advocate)</p> <p>Annette Warren (County Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer)</p> <p>Asha Pawar</p>	<p>Item 2 only</p> <p>Item 2 only</p> <p>Item 3 only</p>

		Action
1	<p>APOLOGIES</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor John Hemsall.</p>	
2	<p>GYPSY TRAVELLER UPDATE</p> <p>Ruth Clayton and Annette Warren in attendance for this item, to provide the Board an update around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the relationship between the gypsy/traveller community and the settled community. • Reasons why the gypsy/traveller community do not readily access services. • Awareness training. • Positive partnership approach to the issue of unauthorised encampments. • Statistical information – life expectancies/education. • Dispelling myths. • Code of practice – NFRS are involved with this at County level. • Local issues and the communities in Nottinghamshire, outlining the shortage of pitches and Local Authority run sites, along with difficulties in accessing services. Site safety was also flagged up as an issue. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service are working closely with the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Group within the county. Brief discussion around problems experienced when referring issues on as a 	

	<p>result of home safety checks conducted, and the length of time it takes for these to be dealt with. NFRS does everything it can to ensure members of these communities are safe and in terms of accessing key individuals on each static site, Ruth Clayton (and other CSAs) are the conduits for this.</p> <p>The Board were in agreement that all issues should be highlighted through LAAs etc., in terms of inconsistency in access to medical and other services. Additionally it should be highlighted within partnership working arrangements how the gypsy and traveller communities are affected by different issues.</p>	
3	<p>BASELINE AUDIT – EQUALITIES FRAMEWORK</p> <p>Asha Pawar in attendance for this item to provide an update on the outcomes of the recent baseline audit of progress against the equalities framework. A copy of Asha's presentation will be appended to the minutes for information and future reference. Asha outlined that the aim of the assessment was to help NFRS understand what its strengths were and also where there were areas for development. Progress has been made at Levels 1, 2 and 3 of the Equalities Standard, but gaps have been identified. A number of challenges for the future were highlighted, as was the need to continue to build on the new approach NFRS has.</p> <p>This led in to a discussion around the role of the Strategic Equalities Board and the reporting of progress against the objectives as outlined in the Single Equality Scheme. The need to ensure frequency of meetings was highlighted, as was utilising the time earmarked as development time (the Board agreed that whilst this would be principally for Members on SEB, there was scope to broaden this). It was agreed that in terms of providing a focus for the Board, its terms of reference should be appended to future agendas.</p>	FS
4	<p>PREVIOUS MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 30 October 2009 were considered and agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
5	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p><u>Regional Dyslexia Policy</u> – this is now being progressed by the HR Department.</p> <p><u>Membership of Strategic Equalities Board</u> – circulation lists have been updated to reflect the current membership of the Board.</p>	
6	<p>EQUALITIES BOARD REVIEW</p> <p>Covered in Item 3 above.</p>	

7	<p>STANDING ITEM: EQUALITIES STEERING GROUP MATTERS</p> <p>John Buckley attended his first Equalities Steering Group on 24 November 2009 after taking over from Dave Horton and had asked all departments to report on their progress against the Single Equality Scheme, as this is now the responsibility of line managers. This information will be fed back to the next Strategic Equalities Board.</p>	Agenda
8	<p>STANDING ITEM: EQUALITIES ACTION PLAN</p> <p>For the next meeting of the board, Members would like to have reports on any actions that had reached/passed their deadlines and any concerns there may be.</p> <p>FS to put together a draft paper for the current terms of reference and proposed amendments before the next FA meeting.</p>	<p>Agenda</p> <p>FS</p>
9	<p>STANDING ITEM: UPDATE FROM EQUALITY & DIVERSITY OFFICER</p> <p><u>CLG Positive Action</u> – CLG are running national campaigns to attract female and BMEs into the Fire Service. The campaigns are co-ordinated by CLG but delivered by contracted bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-16 year old girls are being targeted through teenage magazines. • They have also identified the more difficult groups to attract. One of the easiest being Pakistani, for which Nottinghamshire has a high representation. • Producing DVDs. • They also have stated that there were no issues around the recruitment written test, which MS has raised with Gill McManus. John Foley is collating information on the recruitment written tests on behalf of CFOA. <p><u>Stonewall Index</u> – as expected NFRS didn't do particularly well. The average for the Fire Service is 98/200 and NFRS scored 61. Some of the gaps have already been filled and the Service is moving in the right direction. General perception of NFRS is good.</p> <p>There has been a positive reaction from the organisation generally to equality and diversity.</p>	

<p>10</p>	<p>10.1 10.2</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p><u>National Champions Network</u> – Councillors Darrell Pulk and Penny Griggs were present at the last meeting. It proved to be useful as it gave a better perspective of where NFRS are with the rest of the country. It was suggested that Councillor Alex Foster attended the next meeting on 30 September 2010 and Councillor Barrie Cooper would be invited to another one.</p> <p><u>Sexual Orientation & Disability Awareness Training</u> – all managers are currently attending training sessions. Feedback so far is positive.</p>	
<p>11</p>		<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Confirmed as Friday 30 April 2010 at the rising of Policy & Strategy Committee.</p>	

FOR NOTE