



**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:** 25 June 2010

**Purpose of Report:**

To report to Members the business and actions of the Strategic Equalities Board of Wednesday 19 May 2010.

## CONTACT OFFICER

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## **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 With the ESLG being superseded by the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG), the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) in partnership with the Chief Fire Officers Association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 Wednesday 19 May 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**

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|  <p><b>NOTTINGHAMSHIRE</b><br/>Fire &amp; Rescue Service<br/><i>Creating Safer Communities</i></p> | <p><b>STRATEGIC EQUALITIES BOARD</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday 19 May 2010</b><br/><b>Fire &amp; Rescue Service HQ</b></p> |
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|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Present:</b>   | <p>Councillor Darrell Pulk (Chair)      Fire &amp; Rescue Authority<br/> Councillor Penny Griggs              Fire &amp; Rescue Authority<br/> Councillor Alex Foster                 Fire &amp; Rescue Authority<br/> Frank Swann                                Chief Fire Officer<br/> Andrew Beale                             Deputy Chief Fire Officer<br/> John Buckley                             Assistant Chief Fire Officer<br/> Matt Sismey                                Equality &amp; Diversity Officer<br/> Lea-Anne Abbiss                         Notes</p> |
| <b>Apologies:</b> | <p>Councillor Barrie Cooper              Fire &amp; Rescue Authority<br/> Councillor Lynn Sykes                  Fire &amp; Rescue Authority<br/> Councillor John Hemsall                Fire &amp; Rescue Authority</p>  |

|   |  | Action |
|---|--|--------|
| 1 | <p><b>APOLOGIES</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillors Cooper, Sykes and Hemsall.</p>   |        |
| 2 | <p><b>PREVIOUS MINUTES</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 29 January 2010 were considered and agreed as an accurate record.</p>  |        |
| 3 | <p><b>MATTERS ACTIONS/ARISING</b></p> <p>(3) <u>Terms of Reference</u> – report taken to Fire Authority in February proposing revised terms of reference for this Board. Terms of reference will now be appended to all agendas for future reference.</p> <p>(10.1) <u>Members Champions Network</u> – next meeting is to take place on 30 September 2010.</p> |        |
| 8 | <p><b>ANNUAL REPORT (DRAFT)</b></p> <p>Draft annual report circulated to the Board prior to and at the meeting, with a view to taking it to the full Fire Authority as part of the annual report.</p>  |        |

|  |  | Action |
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|  | <p>The report gave the Board the opportunity to see the progress made on various areas of the equalities agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework</li> <li>• Single Equality Scheme 2009-13</li> <li>• Learning and development</li> <li>• Recruitment data/positive action</li> <li>• Corporate equality agenda</li> <li>• Policy development and equality impact assessments</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Equal pay</li> <li>• Service delivery</li> </ul> <p>The main discussion points arising were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Corporate Management Board has made a commitment to reach the 'Achieving' level of the Equality Framework by November 2010, and plans are in place to reach this. Initial evidence was gathered by the end of April and actions are being undertaken across departments, looking at how E&amp;D is encompassed and governed. Community engagement has been highlighted as an area for FRS improvement and this has been addressed at a recent meeting of the Equalities Steering Group.</li> <li>• The Equalities Steering Group has agreed to refresh the objectives at the back of the Single Equality Scheme document (which was produced prior to the Framework being released). In looking forward to 2013 and getting to 'Excellent' level, gaps need to be identified, explored and incorporated into everyday business.</li> <li>• Sexual orientation and disability awareness training has been delivered to 210 managers. Now the training is complete the impetus will be maintained in this kind of training through LearnPro.</li> <li>• Recruitment data and positive action – the Board were pleased to note the way this is working. In terms of regional recruitment, Leicestershire will be leading the next round. However, one problem has been identified by the Regional Workforce Development Board. The issue is around the decision which has been made to require a minimum of what was old O-level, grade A-C in English and Maths. NFRS did raise its concerns regarding this, but these minimum qualifications are now in place. It is thought these will prove to be prohibitive. This led in to discussion by the Board concerning the pros and cons of minimum requirements, and the need for there to be mechanisms in place if people are interested but do not have these minimum requirements. The Board will be kept up to date as the matter progresses.</li> </ul> |        |

|    |  |  | Action |
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|    |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New local performance indicators were introduced to replace the old best value performance indicators, and these are now being reported upon.</li> <li>• In terms of the corporate equality agenda, there were a number of areas for note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality impact assessments – refresher training is being introduced.</li> <li>• Equal Pay – an audit will be finished by end of the year.</li> <li>• Stonewall – NFRS will be re-doing the index this year and hope to have an improved score.</li> <li>• Equality Act 2010 – has gained Royal Assent. Outline given to the Board of the areas introduced and phased implementations. Extension to positive action highlighted.</li> <li>• Procurement – the strategy in place requires a re-write.</li> <li>• Service Delivery – meetings will be taking place with Response and Prevention managers to look at vulnerable and marginalised groups in order to reduce risk in the community.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |        |
| 7  |  | <p><b>MEMBER TRAINING PROGRAMME</b></p> <p>Following on from the last item, it was agreed that there needed to be a mechanism in place to ensure that all Members of the Authority are briefed on the requirements on them, the Authority and the Service as part of the Equality Framework. Discussion of tying this in as part of a programme through future Members' seminars. As a starting point FS and MS will put together a questionnaire to be circulated to Members and look to take forward from there.</p>   | FS/MS  |
| 9  |  | <p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There were no further business items for discussion at today's meeting.</p>  |        |
| 10 |  | <p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>Confirmed as Friday 30 July 2010, 11:00, Rowan Room (at the rising of Policy &amp; Strategy Committee).</p>  |        |