



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 February 2011

Purpose of Report:

To report to Members the business and actions of the Strategic Equalities Board of Wednesday 08 December 2010.

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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 With the ESLG being superseded by the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG), the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) in partnership with the Chief Fire Officers Association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 08 December 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>Wednesday 08 December 2010 Fire & Rescue Service HQ</p>
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Present:	<p>Councillor Darrell Pulk (Chair)</p> <p>Frank Swann</p> <p>Councillor Barrie Cooper</p> <p>Councillor Penny Griggs</p> <p>Councillor Alex Foster</p> <p>Andrew Beale</p> <p>Matt Sismey</p> <p>Lea-Anne Abbiss</p>	<p>Fire & Rescue Authority Chief Fire Officer</p> <p>Fire & Rescue Authority Fire & Rescue Authority</p> <p>Fire & Rescue Authority Fire & Rescue Authority</p> <p>Deputy Chief Fire Officer</p> <p>Equality & Diversity Officer</p> <p>Notes</p>
Apologies:	<p>Councillor John Hemsall</p> <p>John Buckley</p>	<p>Fire & Rescue Authority Assistant Chief Fire Officer</p>

		Action
1	<p>APOLOGIES</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor John Hemsall and ACFO John Buckley.</p>	
2	<p>PREVIOUS MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 10 September 2010 were considered and agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
3	<p>MATTERS/ACTIONS ARISING</p> <p>4 <u>Future Approach to Equality and Diversity</u> – John Buckley and Matt Sismey are looking at a process of structure and will look to present to the next meeting of the Board.</p> <p>8.1 <u>Member Training</u> – LGIP feedback will inform this work, as will assessment through a questionnaire process.</p>	
4	<p>PROGRESS ON EQUALITIES FRAMEWORK</p> <p>NFRS has attained the 'Achieving' level of the Framework, with written confirmation being received on 7 December. The team were impressed with the submission, narrative and the on-site challenge. A paper will be going to the Fire Authority on 17 December to offer</p>	

			Action
		<p>an update on this. Following on from reaching this level, it is felt to be realistic and achievable to go for the 'Excellent' level by 2013.</p> <p>Matt Sismey to discuss with Liz Reeson the potential for corporate use of the 'Achieving' logo.</p> <p>Training for Members was an area highlighted in the assessment and the need to deal with what training is received by Members as City and County Councillors and what NFRFS needs to do to bridge any potential gaps.</p>	MS
5		<p>PROGRESS AGAINST EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY TARGETS</p> <p>It was highlighted to the Board that a suite of local performance indicators were being taken to the Performance Monitoring Committee in January. Discussion around the impact of budget implications and the likelihood that figures will remain static. When the Service is in a recruitment phase again, any shortfalls may be able to be addressed and the outcomes of the work Matt and John are doing will also inform this. Discussion also of the status of regional recruitment and the potential to look at other avenues, such as apprenticeships.</p> <p>The Board asked for clarity around mechanisms in place regarding retention of staff, and the monitoring of those who leave, in terms of reasons for this etc. The Board were offered assurances that this data and associated trends were reported to the Equalities Steering Group on a regular basis, who monitor it accordingly.</p>	
6		<p>PROGRESS AGAINST ACTION PLAN</p> <p>Further to the last meeting of the Board, the Equalities Steering Group has met and looked at the Action Plan. Through the review of equalities which is taking place there will be a review and refresh of the action plan which will start from April. A gap analysis will be done in terms of what is required at the 'Excellent' level, which will feed in to an update of the action plan, to ensure the Service is doing everything that it needs to. Once the gaps have been identified, the commitment and support of managers and staff will be sought to reach the 'Excellent' level. A revised action plan will be presented to this Board at a future date.</p>	

			Action
7		ANY OTHER BUSINESS There were no other business items.	
8		DATE OF NEXT MEETING Confirmed for Friday 04 February 2011, 11:00, Fire Service HQ.	

FOR NOTE