



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: 16 September 2011

Purpose of Report:

To report to Members the business and actions of the Strategic Equalities Board of Friday 24 June 2011.

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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 With the ESLG being superseded by the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG), the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) in partnership with the Chief Fire Officers Association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 Friday 24 June 2011 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 align="center">STRATEGIC EQUALITIES BOARD</p> <p align="center">Friday 24 June 2011 Fire & Rescue Service HQ</p>
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Present: Councillor Jason Zadrozny (Chair) Fire & Rescue Authority
 Councillor Darrell Pulk Fire & Rescue Authority
 Councillor John Hemsall Fire & Rescue Authority
 Frank Swann Chief Fire Officer
 Andy Beale Deputy Chief Fire Officer
 John Buckley Assistant Chief Fire Officer
 Matt Sismey Equality & Diversity Officer
 Lea-Anne Abbiss (notes)

Apologies: Councillor Cat Arnold Fire & Rescue Authority
 Councillor Tom Pettengell Fire & Rescue Authority

		Action
1	<p>APOLOGIES</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillors Arnold and Pettengell.</p>	
2	<p>PREVIOUS MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 01 April 2011 were considered and agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
3	<p>MATTERS ACTIONS/ARISING</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
4	<p>EQUALITIES REVIEW</p> <p>Report previously circulated, and it was highlighted that this would be taken to Policy and Strategy Committee following agreement at this Board. Discussion followed around the role of the Performance Monitoring Committee in monitoring performance and that they have not yet had any input into the equalities review. It was clarified that the governance for this Board is through the Policy and Strategy Committee and, once approved there, the review will be taken to the Performance Monitoring Committee. In view of the Performance</p>	

			Action
		<p>Committee's role, the Board requested that the recommendation in Section 9 of the report be changed to include reporting back (on the equalities review) to the Committee.</p> <p>This led into a discussion around the equalities targets which had been removed by the Minister last year, though it was outlined that revised targets for NFRS had been put in place to re-state the organisation's commitment to acknowledging diversity in the workforce. It was highlighted that the Service needs to continue to develop the openness of the organisation (reference was made to questionnaires/surveys and staff being requested to declare personal information about themselves). That said, whilst it was acknowledged this does need to be developed, it was also acknowledged that there may always be a gap in this area. It was hoped that continued training and awareness raising would help in this regard.</p>	JB
5		<p>CFOA DATA COLLECTION AND BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE</p> <p>Document previously circulated with agenda. The CFOA group has been tasked with making recommendations which will ultimately establish a national framework for FRSSs, detailing the collection of equalities data to inform service delivery. The group has reviewed existing arrangements for the collection of equalities data, and considered the impact and benefits of modifying the scope of equalities data collected by individual Services. At present data collection is patchy, but it is hoped this work will ensure that common data is collected in order that it may be utilised and compared.</p>	
6		<p>NATIONAL CFOA EQUALITIES UPDATE</p> <p>Update from Matt Sismey on his attendance at the CFOA Professionals Group on behalf of the East Midlands. Outline of work being undertaken by Mike Hagen, and in particular his meeting with Lynne Featherstone (Equalities Minister). The work Mike is doing reiterates how Fire and Rescue Services are leading on equality issues, not least in terms of prevention methods. This work continues to move forward. Update also on the consultation underway regarding specific duties within the Equalities Act around the expectation that Fire Authorities will set and publish their equalities objectives.</p>	

			Action
7		<p>PROPOSED CHANGE TO FIRE AUTHORITY REPORTING TEMPLATE</p> <p>Sample template/wording had been circulated with the agenda for information. Proposal is that the 'Equality Impact Assessment' section becomes 'Equalities Implications', and that rather than an EIA being undertaken and attached in every case, the report instead will state if one hasn't been done and why, or if it has the EIA will be attached to the report. This change will need to go to the full Authority meeting for approval and adoption.</p>	FS
8		<p>PROGRESS ON EQUALITIES FRAMEWORK</p> <p>Progress in respect of the equalities framework will be covered as part of the overall review.</p>	
9		<p>PROGRESS AGAINST EQUALITY & DIVERSITY TARGETS</p> <p>Discussed in the context of other agenda items above.</p>	
10		<p>PROGRESS AGAINST ACTION PLAN</p> <p>Appendix B of the Equalities Review report previously discussed provides an update on where NFRS is with the action plan and performance monitoring.</p>	
11	<p>11.1</p> <p>11.2</p>	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p><u>Member Equality Champion</u> – the last Member champion came from this Board and it was suggested that this should continue. It was agreed that those Members on the group would determine who should take on this role. Roles and responsibilities will be drafted and circulated to give an idea of what may be involved. Confirmation to take place at the next meeting.</p> <p><u>'Red Tape Burden'</u> – the government is looking at reducing the 'red tape burden' and comments on equalities have been requested. NFRS will be drafting a response, which is due by 30 June, and CFOA have drafted something which the Service will utilise – detailing specifics on certain parts of the Act and whether it is over bureaucratic. Response will be brought back to this Board.</p>	<p>FS Agenda</p> <p>FS</p>
12		<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Confirmed for Friday 16 September 2011, at the rising of the Fire Authority.</p>	

FOR NOTE