



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: 21 September 2012

Purpose of Report:

To report to Members the business and actions of the Strategic Equalities Board of Friday 29 June 2012.

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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 With the ESLG being superseded by the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG), the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) in partnership with the Chief Fire Officers Association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 29 June 2012 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. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

		Action
4	<p>“EXCELLENT LEVEL” PRESENTATION</p> <p>Matt provided Members with a presentation update as to where we are now in terms of equalities. In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Equality Act 2010</u> – now in place. Lists specific duties for the public sector to adhere to i.e. publish information on who works for us – gender, race, disability details etc. • <u>Excellent Level</u> – aim to achieve this level by 2013. Key areas we need to focus on are: leadership, inclusion, community safety work, employment, training etc. A lot of work has been done on procurement – ensuring the contractors we use have equality policies/procedures in place etc. and fulfil our requirements. A fire fighter recruitment campaign is being held in September 2012. “Be a Fire Fighter for a day” event has been held for females and people from ethnic backgrounds. We currently have 25 female fire fighters, including retained. At the last recruitment drive there was 100% fall-out rate of BME applicants at the fitness test stage. Government changes and local issues mean that we are now trying to recruit fire fighters within the county. Councillor Barnfather requested statistics on how NFRS has arrived at where we are currently. Matt to give him the HR Monitoring report which holds all the relevant information. Command competence was discussed. • <u>Action Plan</u> – ensuring accessibility for everyone to access our website. Working with BME health forums and Muslim groups. High-risk Home Safety Checks (HSC’s) objective is to be at 75% by 2014. Need to ensure managers have an understanding of transgender guidance. • <u>Vulnerable people</u> – we have targeted all the high-risk individuals we needed to. A “blanket approach” has been taken and we have now hit a plateau. Chris Hooper, our Partnership Manager, is working with partnerships working with people we know have issues. We work with Nottingham City Housing and A1 Housing regarding building infrastructure etc. • <u>Local Performance Indicators (LPI’s)</u> – local targets are agreed at Performance Monitoring Committee. MS to circulate the Equalities Review document to Members. • <u>Stonewall Workplace Equality Index</u> – NFRS has been with Stonewall (a benchmarking system) since 2009 and each year we use Stonewall to see how we can improve. Training was an issue for us but we have addressed this since. Our performance is ranked 119th/363 organisations (3rd out of 20 fire and rescue services). Our target for this year is 115th place. • <u>Learning & Development</u> – embedding the Equality Act through mentoring and training opportunities for staff. Piloting a User Satisfaction service this month then look to see where we want to go from there. We expect Members to apply scrutiny to our progress. • <u>Firefighter Recruitment “Positive Action”</u> – NFRS challenged CLG’s process on recruitment. The current Minister, Bob Neill, 	<p>MS</p> <p>MS</p>

			Action
		has now put the onus on fire and rescue services to undertake their own positive action provided it's within legal remits.	
5		<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Family groups and comparators were discussed and it was queried whether we have different comparators for different things? A benchmarking process is used for these.</p>	
6		<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Confirmed to take place at the rising of the Fire Authority on Friday 21st September 2012.</p>	

For Note