

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AUTHORITY	
date	11 JUNE 2004	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

AD-HOC MEMBERS GROUP ON EQUALITIES

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update Members on the ongoing work being carried out in the Service with regards to Fairness and Equality.

2 BACKGROUND

The Ad-Hoc Members Group on Equalities has now been formed for some time and it was agreed that all minutes from the meetings of the Group would be submitted to Fire Authority Members for their information. Please find attached as **(Appendix A)** the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2004.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

This report contains issues that will invariably lead to changes in Service policy and procedures.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of the report and attached minutes.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

None

P. Woods
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
Minutes of THE AD HOC MEMBERS GROUP ON EQUALITIES
 held on
Tuesday 16 March, 2004
At 10.00 A.M.
Service Headquarters
In the Conference Room

Present:

Councillor Graham Jackson	CFA Member
Councillor Parry Tsimbirdis	CFA Member
Gina Turner	Human Resources Manager
Julie Dennis	Equality and Fairness Advisor
Naseem Begum	BME Development Worker
Pete Allen	Sub Officer Retained
Alan McClean	FBU Representative
George Ware	Unison Representative
Margaret Spooner	Administrator (Minutes)

Absent :

Councillor Ken O'Toole	CFA Member
Councillor Joyce Bosnjak	CFA Member
Paul Woods	Chief Fire Officer
Shaun Whelan	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Paul Smith	FBU Representative

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Joyce Bosnjak, CFO P Woods and ACFO Shaun Whelan

2. 02/03 PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes for the meeting held on Tuesday 3 February 2004 were approved as an accurate record.

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3. MATTERS ARISING

04/04 CACFOA – REGIONAL EQUALITIES

Julie Dennis informed Members that she had attended a CACFOA National Equalities Practitioner Group meeting in London on Wednesday 11 February 2004. As this was the first CACFOA National Equality and Diversity Practitioners Group meeting, Julie Dennis highlighted the main

topics covered at the meeting. Gill McManus opened the meeting by explaining the overall structure at national level, including the role of the Project Board. An Equality Project Board will also be formed with representation from CACFOA and ODPM. Pat Oakley and Maria Tonks offered to represent CACFOA. Some of the other issues discussed were:

- 04/04/02** the core values, questionnaire assessment, targets for equalities based on the percentage of overall future recruitment, the government equality targets for women and ethnic minorities and whether these targets were relevant and achievable. The current status of the Toward Diversity 1 and 2 and to compare them to the Equality Standards for Local Government, to ascertain if there are any outstanding issues that are not covered by the ESLG. Maria Tonks has to devise a matrix and circulate to Members. The next meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday 18 May 2004 in Crewe. Julie Dennis to report back to Members at the June Ad Hoc meeting.

JD

AGENDA ITEMS

14/04 A CULTURAL AUDIT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM FIRE SERVICE

- 14/04/01** A report as been received by NFRS called "one more last working class hero: A Cultural Audit of the United Kingdom Fire Service" which was produced by Doctor Dave Baigent, Director of Fire Research and Training Unit, APU Cambridge. Julie Dennis highlighted sections of the report :
- 14/04/02** • **Watch Culture** – Social structure and hierarchy on watch probationers conform to existing culture rather than the way they want it to be. Probationers feel that if they resist there will be repercussions and they will not fit it.
- 14/04/03** • **Community Fire Safety** – Firefighters join the Service to fight fires rather than 'save lives'. The masculine links with hero status and that the public perception of their image will change as they become more involved with the Community.
- 14/04/04** • **Fitting in** – Firefighters prefer to work alongside those that they believe share their standards and codes. Thus firefighters chose people who look like them (white, able bodied, fit and heterosexual males).
- 14/04/05** • **Gender** - Theory that firefighters masculinity is only a male state. However, females can learn masculinity, also, in order to fit in. Some firefighters feel females feminise the role – hence harassment and intimidation to preserve their masculinity.
- 14/04/06** Members were told that the report is available from NFRS Library if they would like more details. The consensus between Members was that there was nothing really new in the report and that NFRS have been addressing these issues for some time.

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05/04/ TWO TICKS FOR DISABILITY

05/04/01 NFRS has achieved Two Ticks for Disability. NFRS is waiting for the regional office to publish a notice. Two Ticks for Disability only applies to non-uniformed staff at the moment, but will effect uniformed staff once NFRS loses its exemption in October 2004.

05/04/02 An audit of all buildings will be carried out with DDA implications. The audit is to be carried out by an outside Company. Councillor Graham Jackson informed Members that some money is available from the capital programme, which will be used for certain alterations such as wheelchair access and female facilities on stations, but there will not be

any major refurbishment's similar to that at West Bridgford. It was noted that not all the alterations could be carried out straight away.

15/04/ CHANGE TO DATE FOR APRIL'S MEETING

Julie Dennis informed Members that she would not be able to attend the next Ad Hoc meeting scheduled for Tuesday 20 April. She is committed to attend a seminar on that date. After a discussion between Members on their work and diary timetables, it was decided to cancel the next scheduled meeting. The next Ad Hoc meeting will take place on Tuesday 15 June 2004. A letter is to be circulated informing everyone concerned of the changes.

MSp

16/04 WORK LIFE BALANCE

Questionnaires have been received and collated by ORS and Focus Groups. NFRS are now awaiting a full report on initial feedback. It was noted that FBU members had some initial reservations concerning some of the questions set out in the questionnaire. FBU were informed that the questionnaire was only to be used as a work directive. Julie Dennis to report the findings back at the next meeting.

JD

17/04 BME DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Naseem Begum, NFRS BME Development Officer, was introduced to Ad Hoc Members. Naseem informed Members that she speaks four different languages, and that previously she had worked for New Deal Communities for 3 years. In that time, many links have been formed between Black and Asian voluntary and community organisations.

Naseem will be based in Community Safety, with Mary McEvoy as her line manager and will liaise with Julie Dennis on equalities matters. One of the projects Naseem will be working on is a cultural and religious awareness booklet for staff. This booklet is designed to highlight the

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	<p>differences in cultures, such as dress codes and religious holidays. Naseem is also working on a presentation for firefighters, highlighting cultural differences. It was agreed that Naseem should attend the meeting in June to update Members on her progress.</p>	NB
18/04	PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS FOR JOINT APPROACHES	
18/04/01	<p>Alan McClean told Members that some concerns had been raised with the procedures and protocols relating to harassment within the Service. FBU would like more guidance and clarification surrounding certain issues. A discussion followed. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for all concerned to nip any potential grievances or discipline issues in the bud to reduce the negative ways of viewing procedures and protocols.</p>	
18/04/02	<p>Members agreed that in the interim an informal working group meeting between representative bodies should be arranged in order to review procedures and protocols. Alan McClean to contact all representative bodies to arrange a meeting. Julie Dennis to facilitate.</p>	AMcC/JD
19/04	CULTURE CHANGES AND AWARENESS WITHIN THE ORGANISATION	
19/04/01	<p>Since the introduction of the Fairness and Equality and Harassment and Bullying Policies, the number of reported cases relating to these policies has risen within the Fire Service. Whilst Members acknowledged that NFRS has come a long way towards achieving the aims set out in the policies, there are still some issues that need addressing. Over the last few years NFRS has been going through a learning curve and a natural evolution process.</p>	
20/04	HARASSMENT POLICY REVIEW	
20/04/01	<p>Julie Dennis informed Members that there will be a review of the Services Harassment & Bullying Policy and that is likely to be integrated into the Regional Equalities Agenda in Nottinghamshire. By April 2004, all line managers will have received training and will be aware of the procedures in place. Line managers have also been informed that all allegations of harassment must be reported to Personnel via the Harassment Complaint Monitoring Form.</p>	
20/04/02	<p>Issues to be reviewed: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across the region a Harassment & Bullying Investigation Team is established with reporting mechanisms to enable the procedure to sit With the Head of Human Resources. 	

- The Service to establish a Steering Group consisting of the Head of Personnel and Training, the Equalities Officer and the Head of Safety Services.
- The Steering Group would meet on a six monthly basis to review harassment cases. All investigating Officers would receive appropriate training.
- The Service to consider the appointment of Workplace Mediators.
- The FBU and Unison to nominate a representative to co-ordinate requests for representation during harassment investigations.

These recommendations were considered and will be brought to a future meeting for further discussion.

20/04/03 Gina Turner told Members that the Harassment Policy will go through the Regional Management Board, who will make comments on whether NFRS policy could be implemented and adopted with a view to adopting A consistent policy and procedure across the Services in the Region.

21/04 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS STATEMENT

21/04/01 Julie Dennis informed Members that the current Service Fairness at Work Policy Statement has been in place since 2000. During this time there has been changes to both UK and European Legislation that has lead to the review of the Equalities and Fairness Policy Statement. Equalities training is currently being rolled out across the Service making staff aware of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the workplace. By amending and re-launching the policy statement, there is a clear message across the Service of its expectations in regard to Equality and Diversity. The Service will no longer accept ignorance as an excuse for inappropriate behaviour.

21/04/01 Recommendations:-

- to rename the policy to Equality & Diversity at Work.
- Paragraph two of the policy statement to include gender reassignment as per the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) regulations 1999.
- Exclude political belief
- Financial Implications are minimal.
- All current policy statements on stations to be replaced with the amended version.

These recommendations were considered and will be brought to a future meeting for final approval.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to be discussed.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**The next Meeting Tuesday 15 June 2004 at 10.00 am in the
Conference Room**

ALL