

## report

meeting	<b>NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>	
date	<b>16 December 2005</b>	agenda item number

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

#### AD-HOC MEMBERS GROUP ON EQUALITIES

##### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

##### 2 BACKGROUND

It was agreed that minutes from the Ad-Hoc Members Group on Equalities would be submitted to Fire Authority Members for their information.

##### 3 REPORT

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2005 are attached as Appendix A for information.

##### 4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

##### 5 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

##### 6 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

##### 7 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

##### 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

**9 BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION**

None.

Paul Woods  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**  
**Minutes of THE AD HOC MEMBERS GROUP ON EQUALITIES**  
 held on  
**Wednesday 5 October 2005**  
**At 10.00 A.M.**  
**Bestwood Lodge Hotel**  
**In the Sherwood Room**

**Present:**

Councillor Darrell Pulk	Chairperson (CFA Member)
Councillor Pat Lally	CFA Member
Paul Woods	Chief Fire Officer
Martyn Emberson	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Julie Dennis	Equality and Fairness Advisor
Paul Smith	FBU Representative
Patrica Griffith	Gay & Lesbian Community Representative
Alan Sheldon	Unison Representative
Margaret Spooner	Administrator (Minutes)

**Absent :**

Councillor Timothy Spencer	CFA Member
Councillor Penny Griggs	CFA Member
Gina Turner	Human Resources Manager
Naseem Begum	BME Development Worker
Ian Young	FBU Representative
Nicola Austin	Women's FBU Representative
Prad Verma	B&EMM Representative
Pete Allen	Area Manager

**APOLOGIES**

1. Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Timothy Spencer, Councillor Penny Griggs, Gina Turner, Naseem Begum, Area Manager Pete Allen.

<b>Action</b>	Julie Dennis informed Members that Prad Verma, the B&EMM Representative, has resigned. Julie Dennis has been making enquiries and is in talks with someone in Nottinghamshire. It was agreed by Members that the successor should be given all the support and encouragement they will need whilst they are officiating in the role. Julie Dennis to update Members at the next meeting.	<b>Action By</b>  <b>JD</b>
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2. PREVIOUS MEETING
- 02/05 **Minutes for the meeting held on Tuesday July 2005 were approved as an accurate record.**
3. MATTERS ARISING
- 4.1 **Race Equality Scheme 3 yearly review** – Scheme now in place. Work is still continuing regarding publishing the new 3 year scheme and Members will be updated on a regular basis.

**5.2  
Action**

**CFOA Equality and Diversity Strategy** - A draft copy of the Equality & Diversity Strategy was circulated to Members. Julie Dennis requested that Members read this document and return their comments to her by 14 October 2005. A meeting has been arranged for the 1 November 2005 in Northamptonshire between Gina Turner, Julie Dennis and DCFO Bruce Hoad who is the chairperson of the CFOA East Midlands Equalities and Diversity Group. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss any outstanding issues. The document should be ready for finalisation on the 8 November 2005. Members will be given an update at the next meeting.

**Action By**

**ALL**

**Action**

**JD**

**5.3**

Due to a change of circumstances Julie Dennis was not available to attend CFOA East Midlands Equality and Diversity Group meeting on 27 July 2005. The next meeting is scheduled for 8 November 2005 and Members will be updated on the action points from this meeting at the next Ad Hoc Group meeting.

**JD**

**Action**

**6.4**

**Race Equality Scheme** – Julie Dennis reported that she has attended a recent Pact Group meeting. The purpose of attending the Pact meeting was to identify additional training to help managers with identifying and dealing with issues involving fairness and equality, be aware of their accountability to the Race Equality Scheme, DDA training for recruitment and workforce development, cultural awareness, new legislation in employment laws, identifying our policies and equality impact assessment.

**Action**

Julie Dennis is to arrange a meeting with ACFO Frank Swann to discuss how the Race Equality Scheme should be launched, where the event should be held, and which community groups are to be invited. The suggestion was made that the event could take place at Headquarters and that other recent events could be linked into this event.

**JD**

**Action**

A meeting is also to be arranged with Julie Dennis and SMT to discuss how NFRS identifies its equalities policies needs, and how to priorities these needs into levels of high, medium and low.

**JD**

Members were informed that all the equality policies can be viewed on the intranet and website. Members agreed that this is a huge project and that the Service faced some of their biggest challenges and acknowledged that some of the work may have to be outsourced.

DDA audit has been completed. To comply with DDA, NFRS will have to ensure that all Fire Service premises meet the necessary requirements. The recommendations that came from the DDA consultation report are now being actioned. This is a two phase approach where the refurbishment of stations is being undertaken and the DDA recommendations are being included. Instances whereby stations are not currently included in refurbishment, the DDA requirements will be satisfied. Terry Breheny is considering the options available at Headquarters in moving the present position of Reception Area. One of the options being considered is including the Reception Area down the side of the extension to the canteen. Money has been made available for the implementation of some of these recommendations from NFRS budget.

**Action By**

**Action** Julie Dennis to arrange a meeting with personnel in Safety Services to discuss how DDA can be linked together through IRMP. Julie Dennis is to compile a report and bring to the next Ad Hoc Group Meeting. **JD**

**8.2 Core Values** – Work still continuing on DRC. All work to be collated to present at a future CFA meeting.

**10. Islamic Cultural Awareness Course** – Due to an unforeseen change of circumstances DCFO Emberson was not available to attend this event on behalf of NFRS. Councillor Pat Lally attended on behalf of Ad Hoc Group and Councillor Tom Stevenson attend on behalf of CFA. Because of the duty rota or other commitments no one from Stations attended.

Councillor Pat Lally is to cover this item in more detail under Any Other Business.

**14. AGENDA ITEMS**

**CIRCULARS – ODPM 39/05-37/05/-36/05**

Prior to the meeting Members were given the above circulars to read and to bring back any comments to the meeting.

**Action** **Stonewall Diversity Champions Circular 39/05** – Julie Dennis asked Members for their views on whether NFRS should sign up to be Stonewall Champions? Following a lengthy discussion the general consensus was that Julie Dennis should contact Stonewall for more information, speak to CFA Equalities Panel Members, and wait until the Regional Management Board have issued their statement before making a final decision. **JD**

**Action** It was agreed that some of the ideas were positive and this item should be brought forward to a future meeting. **B/F**

**Community Cohesion Circular 37/05** – Some concerns were raised that the ODPM circular on Community Cohesion was not very clear with its definition. Julie Dennis reported that Community Safety and the Arson Task Force are working closely with Radford Youth Inclusion Group in establishing a pilot scheme for a period of 5-7 weeks. The aim is to give presentations on Fire prevention and to highlight the consequences of fires. Fire Crews on station are working with minority ethnic and disabled groups to remove barriers, and create a better understanding of cultural awareness and the problems people are faced with.

All Members agreed that NFRS have made significant progress with regards to Community Cohesion but feel that greater interactivity within the community is still required. It was felt that further training in Community Cohesion for District Performance and Change Managers would benefit the Service and this training could be then cascaded down.

**Consultation on draft regulations to outlaw age discrimination Circular 36/05** – Legislation on age discrimination is scheduled to be implemented in October 2006, alongside extended legislation on sex,

race, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief. The consultation process period ends on 17 October 2005.

Julie Dennis reported that she is working with Human Resources on an action plan and that they are currently reviewing the Human Resources Policy to ensure that all the new legislations are being implemented.

**Action**

Julie Dennis is to meet with Alan Hughes to enquire what the national response is, and to discuss what are the implications on the Service with CFOA Members. It was acknowledged that this will be a major project.

**JD**

**15. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY PLUS ACTION PLAN**

Members were told that NFRS are currently working through the Equality Standards for local government. All departments will be required to submit a quarterly report to CFA via the Ad Hoc Group. To enable departments to process their reports a template is being produced. It was stressed that the Service must ensure that all Equality Policies, Action Plans, Core Values and Equality impact assessment training are in place within the timescale set.

This agenda item was also discussed in more detail under Matters Arising .

**16. BME DEVELOPMENT WORK UPDATE**

In the absence of Naseem Begum, Julie Dennis updated Members with the information available. Since the last meeting Naseem Begum has been involved in the: Asian Mela Festival, Vaisakhi procession in Nottingham, participated with Faith in Action on the release of balloons in memory of the 7 July bombings. At the moment Naseem is working on a project with community groups in Radford and Hyson Green and the IRMP with Group Manager Rod Oldroyd. The material used by NFRS for the Eid Festival is to be used nationally. Further update to be given at the next meeting.

**Action**

**NB**

**17. BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENT**

A black history event is to take place at the Pilgrim Church Centre in the Meadows on Thursday 27 October 2005 at 10.00 am. The theme is called Empowering African/Caribbean Residents in Community Safety. Talks and a demonstration will be given by Julie Dennis, Naseem Begum, ACFO Frank Swann on behalf of NFRS.

**18. RACE EQUALITY SCHEME LAUNCH**

No final decision has been made on a venue, time, place or content for the venue. It has been suggested that the launch could take place at Headquarters and that the launch should be linked together with the Race Equality Diversity Strategy, BME Development, Black History Month and the Chinese New Year.

A committee is to be formed to organise date, time and venue for the Race Equality Scheme launch. The committee will also decide who to invite, as well as ascertaining any transport, food or entertainment needs.

		<u>Action By</u>
<b>Action</b>	Julie Dennis is to work out details after consultation with FBU. Julie Dennis will be seeking volunteers to become members of this committee. Feedback on progress will be given at the next meeting.	<b>JD/PS</b>
<b>19.</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
<b>20.</b>	<b>ISLAMIC CULTURAL AWARENESS COURSE</b>	
	<p>Councillor Lally updated Members on the introduction to Islam and the Muslim Culture and the Islamic Cultural Awareness Course, which was held in Nottingham on 26 September 2005. The course was produced and presented by Kaushar Tai, the director of Islam Education. The course proved to be very beneficial and fulfilling, giving a greater understanding of Islam and the Muslim Culture. The course also highlighted the practical needs of the Muslim community.</p> <p>Nottinghamshire Police asked if there would be any more courses available in the near future. They were advised to contact the local Mosque in Nottingham. If there are other courses available, it was suggested that District Performance Change Managers and Group Managers should be encouraged to attend the course and in turn cascade the information down.</p> <p>Julie Dennis told Members she was thinking of incorporating a training and cultural awareness package into the strategy plans, and will be discussing this idea with personnel. It was agreed that NFRS should be more active in the community and find a way of linking issues together.</p>	
<b>Action</b>	Julie Dennis is to speak to Mary Gill from Nottinghamshire County Council.	<b>JD</b>
<b>21.</b>	<b>AMENDMENTS TO THE SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT</b>	
	<p>From 1 October 2005, amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act will clarify a number of existing obligations. Under the regulations NFRS must ensure that its working environment is free from discrimination and harassment. If any instances of discrimination/harassment are received the Service will have to respond within twenty eight days.</p> <p>Julie Dennis informed Members that an explanation regarding the changes to the definition of sexual harassment will be put into routine orders.</p> <p>It was suggested that a meeting should be arranged between FBU and Unison for their joint view on these amendments and the implications to the Service.</p>	
<b>Action</b>	DCFO Emberson will take up these amendments to the next Consultation Negotiation Panel and Julie Dennis is to produce a summary for Members.	<b>ME/JD</b>
<b>22.</b>	<b>CHANGE OF DATE FOR THE NEXT AD HOC GROUP MEETING</b>	
	Councillor Darrell Pulk asked Members if the date of the next scheduled	

**Action By**

Ad Hoc Group Meeting could be changed from Tuesday 6 December to

**Action**

Monday 5 December 2005. This request was made because of an unforeseen change in Councillor Pulk's diary commitments. The Ad Hoc Group Members who attended today's meeting had no objections to this request.

**ALL**

23.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – Monday 5 December 2005 at 2.00pm in the Conference Room**

**ALL**