

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY	
	HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE	
date	5 October 2007	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SERVICE POLICY REVIEW

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Human Resources (HR) Committee on the progress being made with regard to Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service policies.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The changing complexity of the workplace requires every organisation to have in place a series of written policies that clearly regulates the relationship between the organisation, its staff and its external environment. Such policies provide a safeguard for the organisation when things go wrong, and provide staff with some certainty about how they can expect to be treated by the organisation and what it expects of them.

2.2 HR Committee received a progress report on specific HR policies on 4 April 2007 and further information is contained within the report "HR Update" being presented on 5 October 2007. This report updates Members on the wider policy situation (e.g. IT policy, Email policy etc.)

3. REPORT

3.1 In July 2006 the Service Administration Manager developed a process to record and ensure that the Service maintains and updates the range of policies that have developed within the Service. This was supported by guidance on the Creation, Development, Implementation and Management of Policies. This process introduced the recording of policies on an administrative database and the requirement for each policy to have a formal review date and to be subjected to an Equalities Impact Assessment and a Risk Management Assessment both of which are to be attached to the master copy.

3.2 The first stage of this process was to being to collate a database of all of the existing policies which had been produced. To date the Policy database shows 108 policies, of which:-

Equalities Impact Assessments required	84
Risk Assessments required	95
Policy in incorrect format	85

In addition many policies do not have a formal review date and some are recorded as being overdue for review.

3.3 As part of the ongoing project the Organisational Development Manager is undertaking a review of Service Policies. This consists of reviewing and commenting on individual and appropriate groupings of policies from the Strategic Policy perspective and returning these to an appropriate policy owner for a full review including 'fitness for purpose' and adherence to internal policy requirements. The suite of policies concerning Communications are currently being reviewed and will shortly be referred to relevant Responsible Officers. Although a quicker process would be to simply identify Responsible Officers and send them their policies for self review; it is considered that current approach will prompt a more comprehensive and critical examination.

3.3 The current Policy Database has been designed and used for administrative purposes and has successfully enabled the Service to highlight the breadth of our policies, the disparity in format, content and other issues. It has also enabled the Service to implement version control and has catalysed the start of the current process. However, a new front end is currently being added to the database which will enable Members and Officers to easily track and review the current situation and our progress. This front end will enable appropriate reporting and will provide staff with the following information in a clear table.

Policy reference:

Title:

Purpose/topic:

Link to **Strategy:**

Review position (Red/Amber/Green to include Equalities and Risk Impact Assessment position:

Any relevant **Commentary:**

This will ensure that any future enquiries by HR Committee will be easy to action with timely reports.

3.4 The intention is to fundamentally review all of the existing policies and supplement them with those of a new status. The style and format is also in synergy with that used by HR in updating all of the HR policies which will result in a single style recognisable to all staff.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications arising from this report are contained to the administrative requirement of producing and updating the policies. These costs are met from existing budgets.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

The development of policies and any subsequent amendments are all subject to consultation with the representative bodies. This means that each revision is subject to a 28 day process of engagement. Those that relate to Personnel issues may also involve some element of negotiation. This does have an impact on the time it will take to complete the revision process.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The format required by the Service requires each Policy to be Equality Impact Assessed and for the Responsible Officer to make appropriate adjustments to take account of that assessment.

7, RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Internal policies and procedures provide safeguards for the organisation when things go wrong. They also provide staff with guidance in relation to their employment. Absence of appropriate policies can leave the organisation vulnerable to challenge through employment routes such as grievance and employment tribunal processes.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That HR Committee note the current work being undertaken by the Corporate Services department to update and upgrade all existing policies.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

- HR Committee report - "Policies Update" dated 4 April 2007

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