

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY	
	POLICY & STRATEGY COMMITTEE	
date	4 August 2006	Agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

AD-HOC MEMBERS GROUP ON EQUALITIES/CORE VALUES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on the ongoing work being carried out in the Service in the area of equalities and fairness.

2. BACKGROUND

The Ad Hoc Members Group on Equalities has been established for a number of years. It was agreed that the minutes of the group would be submitted to the Authority for information. Within the revised governance arrangements, equalities and fairness issues are the responsibility of the Policy and Strategy Committee.

3. REPORT

3.1 The minutes of the last meeting of the group, held on 22 June 2006, are attached as Appendix A.

3.2 Appendix B provides detail from a meeting held in June 2006 and reported to the Ad Hoc Group at the meeting on 22 June. It provides a framework for the outcomes of the Cultural Audit work discussed at Item 34 of the Ad Hoc Group minutes. The full project plan is being prepared and will be presented to the Authority at its September meeting. The decision to defer shift change implementation to 3 January 2007 as previously reported to this Committee will provide additional time for the completion of this work.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of work associated with this report is contained within the modernisation budget.

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

Failure to deal with equalities and fairness issues appropriately will put the Authority and Service at risk in terms of its engagement with the community and as an employer.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Policy and Strategy Committee note the contents of this report.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

None.

Paul Woods
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
Minutes of THE AD HOC MEMBERS GROUP ON EQUALITIES
 held on
Thursday 22 June 2006
At 10.00 A.M.
Bestwood Lodge
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
Dalton Powell	B&EMM Representative
Pete Allen	Area Manager
Patricia Griffith	Gay & Lesbian Community Representative
Alan Sheldon	Unison Representative
Margaret Spooner	Administrator (Minutes)
Mark Healy	Industrial Relations Officer (Guest)

Absent :

Councillor John Cottee	CFA Member
Councillor Penny Griggs	CFA Member
Gina Turner	Human Resources Manager
Nicola Austin	Women's FBU Representative
Paul Smith	FBU Representative
Steve Jenkins	Emergency Planning Officer

APOLOGIES

1. Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor John Cottee, Councillor Penny Griggs, Gina Turner, Nicola Austin and Steve Jenkins.

2. **PREVIOUS MEETING**

02/05

Minutes for the meeting held on Tuesday 17 January 2006 were approved as an accurate record.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

6.4

Race Equality Scheme – the Service has produced a second Race Equality Scheme which outlines the Service's commitment to the Race Relations Amendments Act 2000 General Duty. A copy of the scheme and action plan is available on NFRS website. Year one review will take place during July.

6.4.4

DDA – Adaptations to Fire Service premises which were highlighted via DDA audit are being progressed by Terry Breheny within station refurbishment. Issues relating to Service Headquarters will be incorporated in the new extension.

Action By

		<u>Action By</u>
4.	East Midlands Regional Equality and Fairness Group Meeting – there has been some progress made in resolving the difficulties identified surrounding the draft Regional Equality and Fairness and Regional Strategy. An amended draft policy has been agreed. A further meeting has been scheduled for July. Councillor Pulk asked if he could have a copy of the draft policy and be updated on the progress of the meeting in July.	JD
7.	Diversity in Diction (Unison Handbook) –.	
8.	ODPM 39/05 – Stonewall Diversity Champions Update – all stations and departments have received their copy of the Diversity in Diction handbook. It was agreed that this agenda item should be signed off.	
9.	Sign Community – discussions are still on going between Julie Dennis and Judi Beresford.	
10.	Islamic Cultural Awareness Course Update – members who visited the Islamic Cultural Centre and mosques in St Anne’s and Radford in February agreed that the day had been a great success and very beneficial. It is anticipated that further visits will be planned. Naseem Begum has contacted the Islamic Centre and all personnel concerned, to thank them for making everyone welcome on the day and for giving an insight to their cultures and traditions .	
12.	Wholetime Crewing – the two week pilot scheme arranged by Job Centre Plus in March was well attended. Julie Dennis is to have a meeting with Nottinghamshire Police on Friday 22 June to discuss the best way of implementing a positive action course. Members were informed that two individuals who attended the course had applied to Leicestershire and one had been successful. Julie Dennis, Dalton Powell and Patricia Griffith are working together with other faiths and organisations to encourage members of the public to attend awareness events. An update will be given at the next meeting.	JD/DP/PG
	A process needs to be introduced to highlight where an event had been successful and where more input is needed to achieve a better result.	
16.	Retained Training- this issue has been discussed and any action deemed necessary has been implemented. It was agreed that this agenda item should be signed off.	
25.2	Rushcliffe Awareness Forum – work on developing the race forum event for 29 July 2006 is at the final stage of completion. It was suggested that Councillors Cottee and Fielding should be invited to attend this event. Dalton Powell to contact Councillors Cottee and Fielding with all the necessary information.	DP
25.3	Fire Safety Talks – unfortunately Kim Manday of Broxtowe has not been available to discuss how to roll out fire safety in high risk areas. Dalton Powell to try Broxtowe Borough Council to arrange a suitable date.	DP

Action By

26. Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan – consultation period completed for Management and Unions and at present document is out for consultation with community. Julie Dennis is to discuss with Information Services how Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan will be distributed to Stations, SDC and Headquarters.

Action

JD

27. Cultural Awareness Training – Julie Dennis and Neil Colton are still trying to identify specific cultural awareness training needs, in order to gain a comprehensive programme for all personnel to have a basic understanding of cultural awareness. It was acknowledged that different Stations would have different needs depending on location. It was also decided that NFRS should keep a record of all the activities and training surrounding cultural awareness. Julie Dennis to discuss this issue with Safety Services and Information Services. DCFO Emberson is to arrange to speak to Information Services on how this can be achieved using the MIS system. All Stations are to be reminded that the folders containing all information should be displayed in areas easily accessible. Julie Dennis and Dalton Powell are to work together on future training needs and ways of cascading the training down. It was stressed again that all personnel should have a collective understanding of Cultural Awareness. It was proposed that Management and Unions should go out to Stations, SDC and HQ to speak to personnel to ensure that they understand how critical cultural awareness is.

Action

JD/ME

JD/DP

4. AGENDA ITEMS
31. B&EMM VIDEO

Ad Hoc Members were shown a video called Rise to the Challenge. The video depicted the experiences and expectations of B&EM firefighters. It was agreed that the Fire Service has come a long way in thirty three years. Attitudes towards B&EM have changed, but everyone appreciated the fact that there is still room for improvement. It was acknowledged that more needs to be done to encourage firefighters to apply for promotions and raise their expectations. Julie Dennis informed members that she had been invited to attend this year's B&EMM School. An update will be given to Ad Hoc Members at a future meeting.

Action

JD

32. B&EMM DEVELOPMENT WORK UPDATE

Dalton Powell has taken over responsibility of B&EMM development work whilst Naseem Begum is on maternity leave. Dalton Powell updated members on the following events and on-going projects:-

Vaisakhi Celebrations - thousands of people attended the celebrations. During the celebrations hundreds of leaflets in Punjab and English were distributed by crews from different Stations, and Community Safety staff.

Faith in Action – NFRS are working in partnership with multi-faith groups, Faith in Action meet monthly in the Radford and Hyson Green areas of Nottingham. These meetings are aimed at organising community based events such as Mela Asian Festival and the Radford Carnival.

Action By

Faith Visits – The second faith visit was well received. Trainee firefighters were given positive feedback. Most trainees agreed that the spiritual leaders answered their questions clearly. It was agreed that the best way towards breaking down the barriers was to show mutual respect and understanding. The third faith visit has been scheduled to take place on Thursday 6 July 2006

Healthy Living Day – This event was held at the Acna Community Centre. The aim of the day was to inform the Black elderly community of the dangers of fire in their homes. A video was shown on the dangers of house fires. Following the video personnel from NFRS took names and addresses of anyone wishing to have home safety assessment.

Positive Action Day – working in partnership with Nottinghamshire Police and BME community a Positive Action Day was organised and held at Radford. The aim of the day was to inform BME groups on the different services provided by the Emergency Services.

Strategy for Children and Young People 2006 – 2010 – A third consultation with regard to the above was held at Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters. The aim of the consultation was to invite members of the community to provide valuable input to the workshops. CFO Woods suggested that Dalton Powell liase with Rick Allen in the Prince's Trust Team, to discuss opportunities to introduce young people from the BME onto the Team Programme.

Action

DP

Ongoing Projects – Pride in the Park, Nottingham Carnival, Riverside Festival and Black History month, Working with Youth open forum.

Action

Julie Dennis is to arrange for members of staff to send out flyers and emails to ensure that all NFRS personnel are aware of forthcoming events, and ask for volunteers to assist on the day. Dalton Powell to liase with the Civic Office at County Hall and the Asian Community on ways of linking in with events. Following the events Dalton Powell is to write a report which will be presented to members at a future meeting. It was suggested that Ad Hoc Members should attend at least one of the events.

JD

DP

Action

DP

33.

CULTURAL VISIT FEEDBACK

As stated in matters arising item 10, members found the visit very useful and enlightening. Following a discussion it was suggested that NFRS could invite local communities to visit Headquarters and Stations. Julie Dennis to liase with John Buckley on how stations could link with local communities, find ways of taking forward further training and informing members of PaCT on future visits. Julie Dennis and Dalton Powell are to contact Partnership leaders for possible dates and times for future visits to the Cultural Centre and Mosques. Watch Managers and station crews are to be encouraged to take up this invitation. This agenda item is to be carried forward to the next meeting.

Action

JD/DP

B/F

34.**CULTURAL AUDIT**

Julie Dennis explained that as part of the Equalities and Diversity programme the Service will be conducting a cultural audit in June 2006. The audit is aimed to gain staffs perception of Equality and Fairness within the Service. The Audit has been commissioned by CFOA and will be undertaken by Opinion Research Services (ORS). All Fire & Rescue Services across England and Wales will be encouraged to undertake the cultural audit in order to benchmark equalities and fairness within the Fire Service over the next few months. The project has been agreed and supported by the FBU, Unison, RFU and FOA. All unions will be consulted on the outcomes of the audit.

The Audit will be completed via questionnaires sent to all members of the organisation and will be asked questions focusing around the following areas:-

- General Fairness in the Workplace
- Fairness in Training and Development
- Work life balance
- Fairness in Management
- Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment
- Equal Opportunities

Members were told that all questionnaires will be sent to home addresses and will be treated in the strictest confidence. It was stressed that no one within NFRS will have access to any completed questionnaires, and no individual will be identified. A Freepost return envelope will also be enclosed.

NFRS will receive a report outlining the outcome of the audit in mid August and these outcomes will be built into the Equalities and Diversity work on Core Values. A report will be presented to CFA outlining proposals in September and a completed report will be submitted in December.

35.**JOINT STATEMENT**

A copy of the Policy Statement on Harassment and Bullying was distributed to members prior to the meeting. Julie Dennis explained that this policy is the result of work completed some time ago. All have agreed to the policy, apart from CFA. It is anticipated that this will be endorsed as a paper in September.

Action

Julie Dennis is to write a report to go into the Harassment and Bullying Policy with the full support of Ad Hoc. Clarification is needed on who has to sign the Harassment & Bullying Statement.

JD

Following a discussion on recent alleged cases of harassment and bullying, it was stressed again that all allegations would be fully investigated and disciplinary procedures will be taken where appropriate.

Action By

36. FUTURE MEETING DATES FOR 2006/2007

Action Due to some members diary commitments it was agreed that next months meeting should go ahead as scheduled and dates for the following 2 or 3 meetings will be discussed as an agenda item in July. It was agreed that trying to plan a years meetings in advance was becoming more difficult. This item to be brought forward to the next meeting.

**ALL
B/F**

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

37. RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

Race Equality Scheme is ready for its year one review. Julie Dennis has contacted managers with responsibilities under the Scheme and report will be brought to next meeting. The Performance Monitoring Committee of the Fire and Rescue Authority has determined that progress towards level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, this is an area for the Committee to consider as one of a range of strategic priorities.

38. ACTION PLAN

Action The Equalities Action Plan needs to be brought to the next meeting of the Group for review.

B/F

39. EURO PRIDE PARADE

Action A Euro Pride Parade has been scheduled to take place in London on Saturday 1 July 2006. Prior to the parade there will be a full breakfast. Julie Dennis, and Patricia Griffith will be attending and Julie Dennis asked if anyone would like to come along and represent Ad Hoc. Councillor Lally and Alan Sheldon agreed to attend. Details of times and meeting place to be given nearer the day.

JD

40. RECRUITING DAYS

Action Julie Dennis and Dalton Powell are in the process of organising a two day awareness event. Contact has been made with several organisations, gyms and partnerships to make them aware of the event. Julie Dennis is to write to staff to ask for help on the days. It was suggested that a mail shot could be sent out. An update will be given at the next meeting.

JD

Date of next meeting – To be Confirmed.

THREE YEAR COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN SERVICE DELIVERY IMPROVEMENT

Meeting: 5 June 2006

Present: Cllr. Darrell Pulk, Paul Woods, Martyn Emberson, Julie Dennis and Mark Healy.

The meeting was called to consider issues relating to the earlier work of the Ad-Hoc Equalities Group, the proposed transition to new working patterns in September 2006 and the delivery of the three year Community Safety Plan objectives. Specifically, how to address as part of a broad approach to internal and external stakeholder engagement and communication, the introduction of 'core values' into the Service.

Having considered the issue of 'culture'; it was agreed that 1) there may be issues in terms of definition and 2) the potentially negative connotation it generates and consequential reaction to attempts to "address it". It was therefore agreed to focus on a positive approach to improving Service Delivery to the public and how the ownership of a set of core values is integral to its success.

It was further discussed and agreed that attempts to impose core values on an organisation is likely to be unproductive and that there needs to be both an internal and external approach to this work. One further agreed outcome is the need to engage all representative bodies in this work.

The meeting went on to discuss the process and timetable to deliver the desired result. In terms of timetable, the following is proposed:-

1. Management to raise with RB's at its meeting on 13 June 2006
2. Introduce proposals to Ad-Hoc equalities Group on 22 June 2006
3. Report to 15 September Fire Authority outlining proposals
4. Report to 17 November Policy & Strategy Committee
5. Completed report to 8 December Fire Authority

In terms of process, the following paragraphs cover the key areas of work.

1. The Service is to undertake a cultural audit from 20 June 2006, facilitated by ORS. This exercise is being done by a number of Authorities across the country to an agreed pattern. The results of that audit will be known mid-August.
2. Previous audits shall be reviewed to assess change e.g. RREASS.
3. The Service will arrange through ORS to undertake internal and external focus group work, using the three-year plan vision, aims and objectives and the link to Service Delivery, together with core values as its basis. The ORS work should also consider the relevant outcomes from

recent focus group work. The outcomes from the external work is to be fed into the internal arrangements.

In terms of participants there are a number of sub-groups:-

Internal

CFA
Senior Management
Middle Management
Junior Management
Firefighters, including RDS
Fire & Rescue Service Staff

External

Cross Sectional
BME
Young People
Older People

4. Works needs to be done to identify academic and service related work covering core values and organisational culture. That background work to include previous Ad-Hoc Group work including RES. Also to be included in the evidence gathering work is the outcome of the equalities training programme.
5. The exercise needs to be linked into work already being undertaken by SMT to manage communication and service marketing. That work is being done in order to inform the new Communication Team's priorities and to raise awareness etc. ahead of 5 September. SMT may need to consider external assistance to deliver this work.
6. To consider evidence of good practice in this area identified in other Fire & Rescue Authorities.

The outcome sought (in overview) is the engagement internally with the vision, aims and objectives of the Authority within an expanded service and individual role. Externally, to move to a Service that is truly embedded in communities, working towards meeting the needs of an informed public. In order to achieve those things, to adopt an agreed and owned set of values and behaviours that create the environment within which it can be achieved.

Action

To consider each of the components referred to above and produce a project plan to secure the achievement of the outcome.