

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY	
	POLICY & STRATEGY COMMITTEE	
date	30 March 2007	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY AND JOB SATISFACTION THROUGH CULTURAL CHANGE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Members on progress and seek approval for future action on the programme of cultural change within Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire & Rescue Authority meeting of 13 September 2006 received a report outlining proposals for a cultural audit of the organisation, followed by internal and external focus group work on perceptions of the Service.
- 2.2 Background papers at that stage explained that the purpose of cultural change is to improve service delivery and, it is now believed, job satisfaction, through reducing the dissonance between individual perceptions of the prevalent culture within NFRS and the values required to perform challenging and changing roles within a modernising organisation. As the background paper put it: "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." At that stage it was anticipated that the next report to the Authority would be to the meeting on 8 December 2006, but in the event progress deferred whilst the organisation concentrated on the implementation of the new shift pattern.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 The Service has undertaken a Cultural Audit, facilitated by Opinion Research Services (ORS), who reported in November 2006. This report has been considered by the Ad Hoc Members Group on Equalities (16 January 2007) and it was agreed to place it on the intranet so that all staff and Members could access it.
- 3.2 In addition ORS have completed external focus group work with members of the public, and reported in draft on this in January 2007. This report gives an insight into citizens' hopes and expectations for NFRS fulfilling its potential for greater community involvement. This report is scheduled to be considered at the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Members Group on Equalities.

- 3.3 Following a positive consultation with Representative Bodies, work is currently being undertaken by ORS with focus groups of NFRS staff and this will be reported on by ORS towards the end of April. There is also an intention to run a focus group of Members at a suitable date in the future. All three outcomes from this cultural process will then be considered.
- 3.4 During this period the next phase of this work has been designed. The central element is a programme of personal development activities to be delivered to all members of staff and Members. This will be accomplished by recruiting an internal delivery team to work with the project team, after initial facilitation and training from a consultancy (external delivery partner) with experience of work of this nature. Progress has been made on selecting an external delivery partner, and the reports emanating from the ORS work will form an important input into the design and delivery of the programme.
- 3.5 It is hoped that this work will be well underway by the end of August so that the Authority can incorporate progress and outcomes into the consultation phase of the next update of its Community Safety Plan.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific personnel implications arising from this report. Eight focus groups have been scheduled in order to encourage staff to feel comfortable and able to speak freely amongst peers at the same level within the organisation. An important planning consideration has been to design the process in a way which ensures the reliability of findings by engaging as broad a group of personnel as possible.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The budget for this work is contained within the overall shift-change budget.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

It is anticipated that this work will have a positive impact on equality and diversity issues within the Service. Public facing focus groups drew from diverse communities around the County and City, and those designed for staff have been designed to all staff to speak freely, including groups for different grades of staff, female staff and black and ethnic minority staff. The personal development opportunities deriving from this work will be offered to all staff and Members.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The cultural change programme has been designed to reduce organisational risk. Specifically, it is recognised that a failure to engage staff in the modernisation agenda could result in the Authority not realising its ambitions with regard to community safety. Without this activity the Authority would not be able to contribute as expected to Local Area Agreements and stated Government aims.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That Members discuss the progress to date and continue to support these;
- 8.2 That Members approve the continuation of this work as outlined in this report.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

- Cultural Audit report (ORS)
- Draft report on community focus group work (ORS)

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