

## **Report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer**

### **12. Update from the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To provide the Committee with an update from the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group since the last report on 26 March 2014.
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#### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the following key areas of development be noted:*

- *assurance has been provided in respect of the Service's Equality Objectives;*
- *the Harassment and Bullying Policy has been updated and the associated Toolkit has been developed and implemented;*
- *the Service was represented at the Women in Fire Service UK Conference; and*
- *corporate membership of Asian Fire Service Association has been renewed.*

#### **Background**

2. The core function of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group is to promote equality of opportunity and thereby help to eliminate unlawful discrimination within Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and to develop a working environment where individual diversity is valued. The Group meets quarterly and is represented by each department across the Service in order to mainstream Equality and Diversity across the whole Service. Two Authority Members and representatives of the trade unions also attend the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group meetings.
3. Since the last update reported to the Committee on 26 March 2014 there have been two meetings of the Advisory Group.

#### **Areas of Development**

4. Assurance was provided at the Advisory Group meeting by the Heads of Department in relation to the Equality Scheme Objectives and has subsequently been reported to Senior Management Board and this Committee. Six out of seven of the key equality actions have been achieved to meet the Service's equality objectives and these were reported to this Committee on 2 June 2014 and have subsequently been published on the Service's website.

5. Three meetings of the Positive Action Sub Group have taken place. As a result of this, work is currently being undertaken to review the exit interview process, in order to ensure any equality and diversity related issues are identified and appropriately dealt with, and the Service is able to learn and continually improve its approach to equality and diversity.
6. The Harassment and Bullying Policy has been updated. An associated Toolkit has been developed which is designed to support Managers and staff when dealing with potential issues of this nature. It should be noted that no instances of harassment and bullying have been reported within the previous 12 months.
7. Two members of operational staff represented the Service at the Women in the Fire Service UK Conference, and will provide an overview of this to the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group on 9 September 2014. Women in the Fire Service UK is a voluntary and non profit organisation which aims to encourage recruitment, retention, development and progression within the Fire and Rescue Service.
8. The Service has renewed its corporate membership of the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA). The AFSA work with the national fire and rescue service and supporting agencies to enhance equality and diversity, and associated values. The AFSA provide excellent consultation and support to fire and rescue services, government and others in their development of new policies and strategies with regard to many issues ranging from recruitment, fire safety, clothing and research.

## Conclusion

9. The Service continues to make progress in delivering its Equality and Diversity agenda and will continue to provide updates to this Committee.

## Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The core function of the <b>Equality and Diversity Advisory Group</b> is to promote equality of opportunity and thereby help to eliminate unlawful discrimination within the Service. This will help the Authority meet its Public Sector Equality Duty obligations as set out in s.149 of the Equality Act 2010
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	The work of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group links to the values set out in "Our Strategy"
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None

Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	None
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for the Bullying and Harassment SPI

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