

## **Report of the Head of Corporate Services**

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

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To provide an update from the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group since the last report to Committee on 14 September 2015

---

#### **Recommendations**

*It is recommended that the following areas of progress are noted:*

- i) Service representatives attended the recent Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) National Conference on 26 and 27 November 2015;*
- ii) Progress against the Service's equality objectives will be reported to the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group Meeting on 23 March 2016;*
- iii) The Service has subscribed to Quiltbag.*

#### **Background**

2. The core function of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group is to promote equality of opportunity and thereby help to eliminate unnecessary and unlawful discrimination within Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and to develop a working environment where individual diversity is valued.
3. 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.
4. Since the last update to the Policy and Resources Committee on 14 September 2015, there have been two meetings of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group: on 8 September 2015 and 1 December 2015.

## **Progress Update**

5. Since the last update, there has been progress in a number of important areas, as noted below.

### Asian Fire Service Association National Conference

6. The Service was represented at the Asian Fire Service Association National Conference on 26 and 27 November 2015. Seminars available included engaging with a diverse workforce and diversity and cultural change. Feedback and next steps will be discussed at the next Equality and Diversity Advisory Group on 23 March 2016.

### Equality and Diversity objectives

7. Progress against the Service's Equality and Diversity objectives is currently being evaluated and will be reported to the next Equality and Diversity Advisory Group.

### Quiltbag

8. The Service has subscribed to Quiltbag. Quiltbag is a national charity which has been set up to provide best practice advice and support to Fire and Rescue Services in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity issues.

### Ethical Framework training

9. All Service employees are required to have annual Ethical Framework training. At the last Equality and Diversity Advisory Group on 1 December 2015, it was reported that training was outstanding. A further update will be provided to the next Equality and Diversity Advisory Group.

### Open For All Sub-Group

10. A meeting of the Open for All Sub-Group took place on 17 November 2015. As a result, work is currently being undertaken to complete the following:
  - The exit interview form and associated process. This has been reviewed and is ready for pilot implementation within the Service.
  - A research project into "How can we increase the number of females applying to be on call Firefighters?"

## **Conclusion**

11. The Service continues to make good progress in embedding its Equality and Diversity agenda and will continue to provide updates to this Committee.

## Corporate Considerations

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The core function of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group 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
<b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (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".
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	None
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	Not necessary, this report provides an update of current work and does not require a decision to be made.

### Contact Officer(s)

Katharine Stanley, Senior HR Advisor  
(01905) 368340  
Email: [kstanley@hwfire.org.uk](mailto:kstanley@hwfire.org.uk)