

## **Report of the Deputy 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 10 September 2014
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#### **Recommendations**

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

- ***Positive Action Sub Group – key development areas***
- ***AFSA National Conference 2014***
- ***Corporate membership of Networking Women in the Fire Service 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 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 reported to the Committee on 10 September 2014 there has been one meeting of the Advisory Group, in December 2014.

#### **Areas of Development**

5. One meeting of the Positive Action (recruitment) Sub Group has taken place. As a result of this, work is currently being undertaken to complete the following:
  - Review the Exit Interview Form and associated process.
  - Consider Positive Action initiatives in relation to Recruitment and Development.
  - Identify Positive Action initiatives linked with the nine protected characteristics.
  - Liaise with minority communities and groups throughout Herefordshire and Worcestershire through the Authority representatives that are part of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group.

6. Two members of operational staff represented the Service at the National AFSA Conference in 2014, and an overview was provided to the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group in December 2014. The key themes from the conference have been noted as follows:
  - To focus on collaboration and be creative in discovering flexible solutions to ever changing problems.
  - The workshops looked at prevention through community engagement, apprenticeships, collaborative leadership and maximising benefits from community budgets, mutual learning and support to agencies abroad.
7. The Service has renewed its corporate membership of the Networking Women in the Fire Service UK with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015.
8. The Equality and Diversity Group met in December 2014 and the following key pieces of work are taking place:
  - To identify the possibility of creating an over-arching Equality Framework and Action Plan in order to strengthen the current set of Equality objectives.
  - Ongoing programme of Equality and Diversity training to the Senior Management Board and throughout the Service.

## 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

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| <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?)   | None  |

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