

Report of the Head of Corporate Services

Equality and Diversity Objectives – 2017/2020

Purpose of report

1. To recommend that the Committee approves the Service's proposed Equality and Diversity Objectives for 2017/2020.
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Recommendations

It is recommended that the following be approved as the revised Equality Objectives for 2017–2020:

- **Leadership and Corporate Commitment**
We will encourage a culture that supports equal treatment, opportunity, inclusion and transparency at all levels of the Authority.
- **Service Delivery and Community Risk**
We will make sure that our prevention, protection and response activities target the most vulnerable people and the greatest risks.
- **People and Culture**
To have a diverse workforce that represents our community.

Equality and Diversity Objective Background

2. Public authorities are required under the Equality Act 2010 to prepare and publish one or more objectives they believe they should achieve in order to support delivery of the aims of the general public sector equality duty. This had to be in place for the first time by 6 April 2012, and should be revised at least every four years thereafter.

Equality and Diversity Objectives

3. The Organisational Development Working Group has developed the Service's 2017 – 2020 Equality & Diversity Objectives. The areas of focus for the equality objectives are as follows:
 - **Leadership and Corporate Commitment**
We will encourage a culture that supports equal treatment, opportunity, inclusion and transparency at all levels of the Authority.

- **Service *Delivery* and Community Risk**

We will make sure that our prevention, protection and response activities target the most vulnerable people and the greatest risks.

- **People and Culture**

To have a diverse workforce that represents our community.

Organisational Development Working Group Background and Progress

3. The Policy and Resources Committee were notified on 21 September 2016 that it had been agreed to disband the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group in its current form and replace it with a working group tasked by an Organisational Development Board, which is led by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer. This is in order to better support the embedding of equality and diversity, and mainstream it into other people and community focused work streams. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Head of Corporate Services task the Organisational Development Working Group and provide Committee updates as appropriate.
4. Membership of the Organisational Development Working Group is voluntary and is a mixture of both operational and support members of staff from across the Service.
5. Since the last update the Group has met on three occasions, and has agreed on the Service's Equality Objectives for 2017/2020 and is looking to develop an action plan once a review of the equality, diversity and organisational culture has been evaluated.

Progress Update in Other Areas

6. There has been progress in a number of important areas, as noted below.

The Wisdom Factory CIC

7. In order to ensure that an action plan is appropriately focused, information which is available on equality, diversity and organisational culture is being evaluated. The Service has chosen the 'The Wisdom Factory CIC' to carry out this review, which will consist of the following:
 - An analysis of the demographic composition of the Service;
 - Conducting a self-assessment against the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework, focussing on the 'Leadership, partnership and organisation commitment' requirements;
 - A review of the relevant Service Policy Instructions (SPIs).
8. The review is due to be completed by 2 March 2017.

Inclusive Fire Service Workshop

9. The NJC-led Inclusive Fire Service Group is undertaking work relating to equality, diversity and cultural issues in the UK-wide fire and rescue service with the intention of developing strategies to deliver improvements. As part of this work the group has organised focus groups with female, BME and LGBT employees. An employee survey is also been undertaken, which our staff have been encouraged to complete.
10. The Inclusive Fire Service Group is also keen to gather wider views, via focus groups. Two Service representatives attended the Inclusive Fire Service Workshop which was facilitated by the Local Government Association at Avon Fire and Rescue Service on 3 February 2017. The main areas covered at the workshop were recruitment, progression, retention of minority group employees and cultural issues of bullying and harassment in general. The outputs from this meeting will be shared with the Organisational Development Group at its next meeting.

Asian Fire Service Association

11. Two Service representatives attended the two day National Conference which was held at the Holiday Inn in Wembley on 24 and 25 November 2016. The theme for the Conference was 'The changing role of the Fire and Rescue Service – the role of culture and inclusion'. The key messages from this event were considered as part of the work the Organisational Development Working Group is undertaking on refreshing the Service's Equality Objectives.

Conclusion

12. The Service continues to make good progress in embedding equality and diversity including a revision to its Equality Objectives and will continue to provide updates to this Committee.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Current associated costs are £5320.00 (The Wisdom Factory) and it is expected that further financial costs will be required in regards to progressing the E&D agenda.
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 Organisational Development 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?)	Yes

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