

## **8. Equality Scheme Update and Equality Objectives**

### **Purpose of report**

1. To inform Members of progress with regard to the Service's existing Equality Scheme Action Plan and to seek approval for the publication of future organisational equality objectives.

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### **Recommendation**

***The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the Authority note progress with the existing Equality Scheme Action Plan and approve the following equality objectives for publication in 2013.***

- (i) To continue to embed equality and diversity within all aspects of relevant service delivery and support functions***
  - Embed equality impact assessments of all service policies into core business***
  - Appropriately target community engagement in response to our available data***
  - To analyse recruitment and employment data for trends and take appropriate action***
- (ii) To develop partnerships to promote equality***
  - Utilise a Positive Action Sub Group made up of representatives from the local communities and other stakeholders***
  - This Sub Group will recommend initiatives and actions, including positive action campaigns, to the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group.***

### **Introduction and Background**

2. The Service currently sets out and delivers its commitment to embedding equality and diversity throughout the Service through the "Delivering Equality for All: The Scheme 2010 – 2013". The general equality duty ('the 3 Arms') requires all public bodies to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. In addition, the Equality Act 2010 places a legal obligation on all public bodies to publish equality objectives at least every four years and publish information demonstrating compliance with the equality duty at least annually. This includes equality impact assessment of all services specifically including organisational Policy.

3. The Service discharges its Statutory Duties, its moral responsibilities and duty of care through the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group. This group, chaired by the Chief Fire Officer, consists of a variety of stakeholders at departmental head and senior management level from across the Service. Also in attendance are two Authority Members who have specific responsibility within their portfolios for equality and diversity.
4. Following the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group meeting held on 31 July 2012, an Equality and Diversity Sub Group was formed in order to review current arrangements and progress with regard to the “Delivering Equality for All: The Scheme 2010 – 2013” and to identify suitable organisational equality objectives for publication April 2013. (The subgroup consists of four Group Commanders from across the Service, with lead expert responsibility provided by the qualified Senior HR Advisor (Equality)).
5. The Equality and Diversity Sub Group met on 8 October 2012, reviewed the Service’s progress against the existing scheme and developed the recommendations set out in this report.

## **Summary of Position of Current Equality Scheme Action Plan**

### **Leadership and Promoting Inclusion**

6. The Equality and Diversity Advisory Group is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer, and advises the Senior Management Board on matters relating to Equality and Diversity. A Senior Human Resources Advisor is the nominated lead for advising on Equality and Diversity.
7. The Ethical Framework and Code of Conduct Policy describes the behaviours that the Service expects all employees to uphold and the different routes that employees can explore if they feel they need advice or support. Managers have been provided with training on the Ethical Framework and leadership training is being developed throughout the organisation. The Harassment and Bullying Policy, Grievance Policy, Capability Policy and Disciplinary Policy support this document. The Ethical Framework has recently been updated to take into account changes in legislation and refresher training for all staff is due to be delivered in 2013.
8. There is limited evidence that marketing and public events reinforce the Service’s commitment to all equality strands.
9. The Service risk assesses all new Policies using a form that requires the assessor to confirm whether the Policy is likely to impact on equality and diversity; however the results of these are not published on the Service’s website.

### **Accountability**

10. Equality and diversity is embedded within the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The Service is in the process of developing a new Integrated

Risk Management Plan which will have equality and diversity as the foundation of its delivery.

### **Effective Service Delivery and Community Engagement**

11. Operational data is monitored using the Pinpoint database and trends are identified and actioned accordingly by the Technical Fire Safety Team and Community Fire Safety Team. The Service runs a number of community engagement events and initiatives which are co-ordinated by the Community Fire Safety Team. In addition, the Service supports local equality and diversity initiatives and the Chief Fire Officer was recently a keynote speaker at an equality and diversity conference run by the University of Worcester.
12. The Integrated Risk Management Plan considers the changing and conflicting needs of the community. Injuries and fatalities remain consistent with previous years and there are no underlying trends in relation to equality and diversity.
13. The systems are currently being reviewed in relation to monitoring complaints data.
14. There are currently no systems in place to ensure all plans, procedures and practices are regularly reviewed in relation to equality and diversity.
15. There is limited information in relation to equality and diversity on the Service's website.

### **Employment and Training**

16. Recruitment procedures have been reviewed by the Head of Human Resources and promotion procedures for operational staff have been reviewed by the Group Commander for the Training and Development Centre.
17. Human resources casework is monitored in relation to equality and diversity, and reported to the Fire and Rescue Authority. Any areas of concern are raised with the relevant operational or support staff manager.
18. There are no specific equality and diversity objectives in appraisal documentation; however, attitudes and behaviours as a whole are assessed as part of the appraisal process. The basis for this assessment would be the behaviours described in the Ethical Framework and Code of Conduct Policy.
19. The equal pay audit has not been finalised.

### **Evaluation and Sharing Good Practice**

20. Peer assessments of the Service have been completed by West Midlands Fire Service and Shropshire and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services.
21. Annual data is collected in relation to service delivery and employment practice.

22. Equality and diversity is embedded within the capital planning processes through the Procurement Framework document.

### **Equality Objectives**

23. The Equality and Diversity Advisory Group recommends the following equality objectives for publication in 2013:
- (i) To continue to embed equality and diversity within all aspects of service delivery and support functions
    - Embed equality impact assessments of all service policies into core business
    - Appropriately target community engagement in response to our available data
    - To analyse recruitment and employment data for trends and take appropriate action
  - (ii) To develop partnerships to promote equality
    - Utilise a Positive Action Sub Group made up of representatives from the local communities and other stakeholders
    - This Sub Group will recommend initiatives and actions, including positive action campaigns, to the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group.
24. It is also recommended that, as part of the consultation process, feedback on these objectives is sought from the local community via the Service website and the appropriate county based equality groups.

### **Conclusion/Summary**

25. The Service has reviewed its Equality Scheme Action Plan. New objectives have been identified for publication in 2013. The Authority is asked to note the Service's progress against the existing scheme and to approve the recommended future objectives for publication in 2013.

### **Financial Considerations**

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	Yes	Training

## Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	Yes	Compliance with Equality Act 2010

## Additional Considerations

26. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
<b>Resources</b> (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	Yes	Whole Report
<b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (e.g. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	Yes	Whole Report
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	Yes	Potential failure to meet Statutory Obligations
<b>Consultation with Representative Bodies</b>	Yes	Whole Report

## Background Papers

Delivering Equality for All: The Scheme 2010-2013

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