

Equality and Diversity Steering Group Summary Report

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Paul Raymond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260203 or Jonathan Hyams, Equality and Diversity Officer on 01743 260236.

1 Purpose of Report

This report provides the Committee with a summary report on the work of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the content of this report.

3 Background

The remit of The Equality and Diversity Steering Group is:

- To improve the services we provide to the wider Shropshire community;
- To promote community cohesion and anti-discrimination with people living and working in Shropshire, including issues of rural access, social isolation and income inequality;
- To initiate, facilitate and monitor projects to improve the wellbeing of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) employees;
- To promote excellence in equality and diversity practice throughout the organisation;
- To maintain organisational focus and ensure strategic priorities for Equality and Diversity in the organisation and the communities we serve;
- To ensure that SFRS culture encourages employees and service users to be valued and accepted as individuals; and

- Provide leadership, strategic direction, development and resources to ensure progression of our Equality Framework and Single Equality Scheme.

For further information, see full Terms of Reference (attached as an appendix).

4 Main areas of work

The work of the Steering Group has made good progress since February 2010 on enabling implementation of actions in the new Single Equality Action Plan.

Some of the main areas of Steering Group work during this period are summarised below:

- The Single Equality Action Plan has been monitored for progress;
- The Steering Group has initiated a review of the Equality Impact Assessment process, to ensure that it continues to be both relevant and engaging for staff who are responsible for completing the assessments. The three year plan has continued to be monitored, and progress on completing outstanding assessments prioritised;
- Feedback information from other groups – e.g. Shropshire Partnership Equality Forum, Telford Race, Equality and Diversity Partnership, regional working;
- Dealing with membership subscriptions and funding requests, including the Gender Advisory Bureau and Telford Race, Equality and Diversity Partnership;
- Continued work on analysing SFRS performance against the new Equality Framework criteria and producing a gap analysis;
- Continuing to plan, administer and deliver training – including Hate Crime briefings, E & D staff catch-up training, cultural awareness induction training, and Leading in Diversity Management - Driving Change courses;
- Drafting an Anti Harassment and Bullying Brigade Policy; and
- In partnership with Shropshire Council, Shropshire PCT and Shropshire LGB Network planning a Shropshire-wide LGB consultation about levels of satisfaction in those communities with public services.

In addition, the Steering Group has asked for reports on: the possibility of:

- An SFRS 'Bring Your Daughters to Work' day; and
- Initiating RDS taster sessions to encourage women and BME people to apply for operational posts

5 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6 Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is an update report looking at historical information.

7 Appendices

Terms of Reference for the Equality and Diversity Steering Group

8 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Business Continuity Planning		Legal	
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	*
Comprehensive Area Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	*
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	*
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*
Integrated Risk Management Planning			

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service

Terms of Reference for the Equality and Diversity Steering Group Annual Review October 2009

1. Vision

The vision of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group is to ensure that that all employees feel valued and are treated appropriately at work and that our services meet the needs of Shropshire's diverse communities,

2. Aims

The aims of the Steering Group are to provide a forum:

- To improve the services we provide to the wider Shropshire community.
- To promote community cohesion and anti-discrimination with people living and working in Shropshire, including issues of rural access, social isolation and income inequality.
- To initiate, facilitate and monitor projects to improve the wellbeing of SFRS employees.
- To promote excellence in equality and diversity practice throughout the organisation.
- To maintain organisational focus and ensure strategic priorities for Equality and Diversity in the organisation and the communities we serve.
- To ensure that SFRS culture encourages employees and service users to be valued and accepted as individuals.
- Provide leadership, strategic direction, development and resources to ensure progression of our Equality Framework and Single Equality Scheme.

3. Objectives

The group will:

- Agree action plans, monitor and enable SFRS to progress implementation of the Fire Service Equality Framework, National Equality and Diversity Strategy, Single Equality Scheme and the Corporate Equality Action Plan to a standard of excellence.
- Ensure that SFRS values and is approachable by all of the communities we serve.
- Provide a rigorous and structured approach for promoting improvement against the above.
- Ensure that all managers are aware of their equality and diversity priorities and objectives.
- Make equality improvements to the 7 strands of diversity, and other areas as identified by the Steering Group.
- Maintain the positive culture of the organisation.
- Ensure that all areas of the organisation understand and support the implementation of SFRS Equality and Diversity priorities.
- Identify and encourage best practice and positive initiatives.

4. **Membership**

The core membership will be 8 individuals representing the range of services and departments across the Service. The group will be chaired by the Chief Fire Officer.

The core membership will be:

- Chief Fire Officer (Chair)
- Deputy Chief Fire Officer
- Brigade Manager – Human Resources, Training and Development
- Brigade Manager – Service Support
- Brigade Manager – Service Delivery
- Head of Resources
- Equality & Diversity Officer
- Human Resources Manager
- Member Champion for Equality and Diversity

Representative bodies will be invited to attend all appropriate meetings.

5. **Frequency**

The group will meet at least every 6 weeks. The duration of meetings will be between 1½ – 3 hours. Additional meetings will be arranged if required.

6. **Governance**

The group will send update reports to the Human Resources Committee.

An update will be given to the Chair of the Fire Authority during Chair's Briefings.

7. **Role of the membership**

- To attend meetings regularly
- To contribute fully, to enable the group to comply with its terms of reference
- To undertake duties assigned by the group
- To act as advocates of the Equality and Diversity Steering group and the broader equality and diversity agenda within their area.
- To ensure that the work of the group and the broader equality and diversity agenda are communicated widely.

8. **Role of representative bodies**

- To contribute fully to the group enable it to comply with its terms of reference
- To represent the views of their members on equality and diversity issues in SFRS

9. **Scrutiny**

Scrutiny is undertaken by Policy Group who report to the Human Resources Committee. External equality groups are used for peer and/or critical friend challenge and the Audit Commission undertakes statutory scrutiny.

10. **Review**

These terms of reference will be reviewed annually