

## Equality and Diversity Steering Group Action Plan Progress

### Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Natalie Hill, Equality and Diversity Officer on 01743 260236.

#### 1 Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on the progress of the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG).

#### 2 Recommendations

The Audit and Performance Management Committee is asked to note the progress against the plan of action contained within this report

#### 3 Background

The Strategy and Resources Committee requested that the Audit and Performance Management Committee monitor the progress against the plan of action for the ESLG.

#### 4 Updated Equality Standard Action Plan

An update on the Equality Standard for Local Government Action Plan is attached at Appendix A. This details the major steps that have been taken to ensure progression on the Equality Standard and actions to date.

The external assessment included a selection of interviews with both internal staff and external partners, a copy of the interview timetable is attached at Appendix B.

The audit was undertaken on 5 August 2008 and it has been confirmed that we have achieved level 3 of the Equality Standard. The assessors gave verbal feedback and this is attached at Appendix C.

The report from the auditors is expected to be received at the end of September, where we will then review this and update where appropriate. This report will be taken to the Fire Authority in October for approval.

## **5 Terms of Reference for the Equality and Diversity Steering Group**

The updated terms of reference for the Equality and Diversity Steering Group are attached at Appendix D to this report.

## **6 Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **7 Legal Comment**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **8 Equality Impact Assessment**

Officers have considered the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 5 Part 2) and have decided that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from this report. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed.

## **9 Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

Updated Equality Standard Action Plan

### **Appendix B**

Interview timetable for auditor interviews

### **Appendix C**

Auditor feedback

### **Appendix D**

Updated Terms of Reference for the Equality and Diversity Steering Group

## **10 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.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance 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	*

## Equality Standard for Local Government

### Plan of Action

<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Completed</b>
11/02/08	Steering Group agree terms of reference	Steering group	Yes
w/c 11/02/08	Review level 1 and identify gaps in line with the revised standard, create action list	Equality & Diversity Officer	Yes
w/c 11/02/08	Devise Equality Impact Assessment completion plan for each Directorate	Equality & Diversity Officer	Yes
w/c 11/02/08	Equality Standard to be mainstreamed into Corporate Planning Process and Directorate Plans	Programme Manager	Yes
w/c 18/02/08	Review level 2 and identify gaps in line with the revised standard, create action list	Equality & Diversity Officer	Yes
w/c 18/02/08	Review Race Equality Scheme, Disability Equality Scheme & Gender Equality Scheme action plan to identify outstanding actions for incorporation into Directorate plans	Equality & Diversity Officer & Programme Manager	Yes
w/c 18/02/08	Start to draft the self assessment report	Deputy Chief Fire Officer (initially) Equality & Diversity Officer	Yes
w/c 25/02/08	Review level 3 and identify gaps in line with the revised standard, create action list	Equality & Diversity Officer	Yes
w/c 25/02/08	Cross reference Cultural Audit action plan with level 3 to identify any synergies	Assistant Chief Officer (Human Resources) & Equality & Diversity Officer	Yes
12/03/08	External consultant to give advice on progress to date	Equality & Diversity Officer	Yes

<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Completed</b>
w/c 03/03/08	Create and implement action plan created from reviews of level 1, 2 and 3, including Equality Impact Assessment action plan.	ALL	Yes
w/c 03/03/08	Start collecting evidence	Equality & Diversity Officer & Secondee (when in place)	Yes
22/05/08	External consultant informal assessment to advise of any improvement areas and give recommendations	Equality & Diversity Officer	Yes
w/c 26/05/08	Implement actions from consultants report and devise any actions for improvement areas	ALL	Yes
w/c 02/06/08	Finalise self assessment report	To be determined	Yes
w/c 02/06/08	Steering group to validate self assessment report	Steering group	Yes
w/c 02/06/08	Finalise collection of evidence	Equality & Diversity Officer	Yes
w/c 16/06/08	Send self assessment report and evidence to Edgehill	Equality & Diversity Officer	Yes
23/06 – 04/08/08	External validation lead in time	n/a	n/a
5-6/08/08	External validation	Equality & Diversity Officer	Yes
Report due end of September	Amendment to external report	Steering group	
End of August / beginning Sept	Confirmation received level 3	Edgehill	Yes

**External Assessment Interview Timetable 5 August 2008**

**Appendix B** to report on  
Equality and Diversity Steering Group  
Action Plan Progress  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority  
Audit and Performance Management Committee  
11 September 2008

Assessor 1			Assessor 2		
Time	Designation	Name	Time	Designation	Name
10.00 - 10.30	Chief Fire Officer	Alan Taylor	10.00 - 10.45	Community Protection Managers	Area managers: Mike Ablit, Jim Cameron Group managers: Andy Perry, John Das Gupta Station Managers: Tony Derricutt
10.30 - 11.00	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Paul Raymond			
11.00 - 11.30	Corporate Communications	ACFO Steve Worrall & Mike Ablitt (Head of Fire Prevention works with press officer)	10.45 - 11.30	Service Delivery Managers	Group managers: Jim Quinn, Glen Holloway, Phil Clarke Station manager: Dave Dickens
11.30	Break		11.30	Break	
12.00 - 13.00	Steering group	All Steering Group (except NH)	12.00 - 13.00	Service delivery / Front line Staff	Alison Teece and Delyth Humphreys (Vulnerable Persons officers), Mohammed Younis (Bilingual outreach advocate), Jan Sorrell (HR Officer) Firefighters: RW SY Cameron Taylor & FF Darren Jennings RW WL FF Douglas Duncan and FF Rob Evason Retained Support Officers: Mel Kapitanec, Dave Jennings (subject to cover)
13.00	Lunch		13.00	Lunch	
14.00 - 14.30	Head of Human Resources	ACO Louise McKenzie (HR, Training and Development) and Lisa Vickers (HR Manager)	14.00 - 15.00	External /reference/challenge group	Kal Parkash and David Bell - Equalities Forum, Diane Cuff - Telford Race, Equality and Diversity Partnership, Rico Paris - Gender Advisory Bureau, Heather Osbourne - Age Concern, Sally Edwards - West Mercia Probation Service.
14.30 - 15.30	Head of Community Safety	Paul Raymond (DCFO) & Mike Ablitt (Head of Fire Prevention)	15.00 - 16.00	External /reference/challenge group	Steve Cunningham - Community Regeneration Manager for Shrewsbury & Atcham BC (Hate Crime and Shrewsbury Action Against Racism), George Candler, Assistant Director for Learning, Culture and Community from the Healthier Communities Group, Regional E&D group - all available E&D officers/managers in the region.
15.30 - 16.00	Equality and Diversity Officer	Natalie Hill			
16.00 - 16.30	Head of Finance and Governance*	Treasurer - Keith Dixon, Alan Taylor & Joanne Coadey (Principal Accountant)	16.00 - 16.30	Consultation Officer**	Ged Edwards (Programme Manager) and Alison Pritchard (Performance Improvement Officer)
16.30 - 17.00	Authority member with equality remit	Cllr Jean Jones (E&D Member Champion)	16.30 - 17.00	Senior officer (partnerships)	Partnership group - Paul Raymond, Louise Goodhead, Steve Worrall
17.00	Assessors meeting		17.00	Assessors meeting	
17.30	Debrief	Alan Taylor, Paul Raymond, Louise McKenzie, Jean Jones & Natalie Hill	17.30	Debrief	Alan Taylor, Paul Raymond, Louise McKenzie, Jean Jones & Natalie Hill
	* There is not just one person who undertakes this specific role			** Do not have a specific consultation officer	

### **Level 3 External Audit Feedback from Assessors on 5 August 2008**

Satisfied that we are at level 3 and doing well. They did not identify any gaps in any areas or aspects of concern.

We have good engagement, we are well thought of with our partners and regionally. Everyone interviewed well and represented the service well.

They will provide a detailed report at the end of September.

They wanted to give us some preliminary comments on some developmental areas, and stressed these were for further development and not ones that we were not undertaking already, these are as follows:

- Already doing lots of consultation, engagement and scrutiny and this is working well, but could take this up a notch, particularly the scrutiny aspect, they also referred to the new framework for public sector (LAA's).
- EQIA's, good that we have been reviewing the process and making improvements and that we will bear the fruit of this in the future, it is still process driven and they would like to see more outcome based targets.
- Members, we are doing work here, they mentioned a member development programme plan around E&D.
- Training – good processes about raising awareness the next step is more focus on behaviours.
- Looking at how risk assessment and EQIA's fit together, work towards integrating these.
- Employment targets – 2 recruitment schemes, it would be good to write up the rationale for these and give to CLG, why we have local targets and why we achieve these.
- Monitoring and integration – service delivery. How we think we are doing in this area.

## **Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service**

### **Terms of Reference for the Equalities Steering Group**

#### **1. Aims**

The aim of the steering group is to provide a forum:

- To promote equalities throughout the organisation and to enable SFRS to progress its achievement on the equality standard for local government and its equality schemes.
- To maintain focus and ensure strategic priorities for the organisation in relation to Equality and Diversity
- To ensure that all areas of the organisation understand SFRS Equality and Diversity priorities and support the implementation of these.
- Identify and encourage best practice/positive initiatives
- Provide leadership, strategic direction, development and the resources to ensure progression of our Equality Standard and Equality Schemes.

#### **2. Objectives**

The group will:

- Agree any action plans, monitor and ensure progression of the Equality Standard and Equality Schemes.
- Provide a rigorous and structured approach for promoting improvement against the above.
- To ensure that all managers are aware of their equality and diversity priorities and objectives.

#### **3. Membership**

The core membership will be 7/8 individuals representing the ranges of services and department 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

Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Assistant Chief Officer

Head of Resources

Equality & Diversity Officer

Human Resources Manager

Programme Manager (initially for business planning purposes)



Members are asked to identify a deputy to attend in their absence.

#### **4. Frequency**

The group will meet fortnightly until such time the group feels that frequency can be moved to monthly meetings. The duration of such meetings will be between 2 – 3 hours.

#### **5. Governance**

The group will send update reports to the Audit and Performance Management Committee.

An update will be given to the Chair of the Fire Authority during Chairs Briefing.

#### **6. Roles of the membership**

- To regularly attend meeting and when unavailable to make arrangements for a nominated deputy to attend
- 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 is communicated widely.

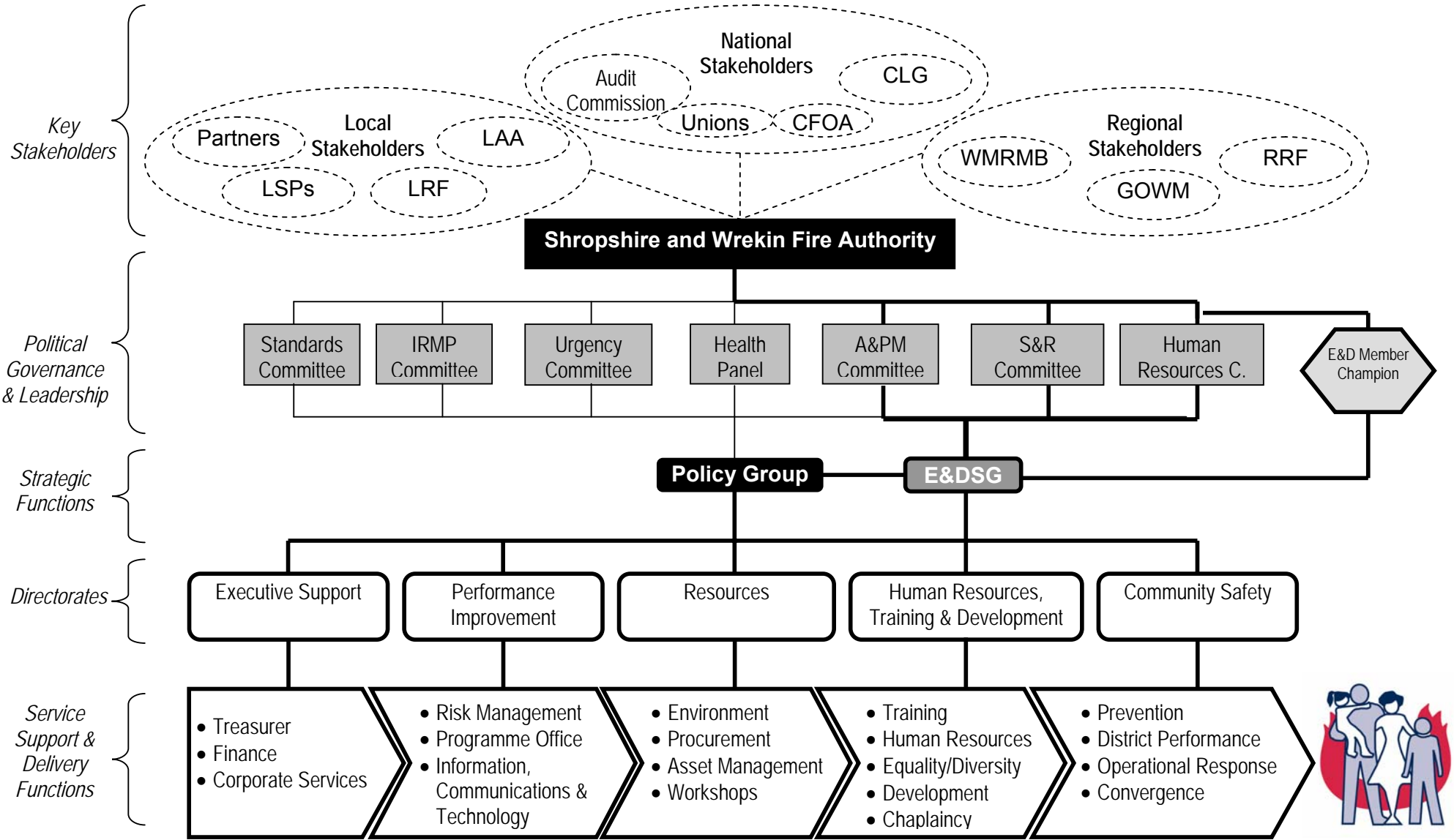
#### **7. Scrutiny**

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

#### **8. Review**

These terms of reference will be reviewed on an annual basis.

# Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Organisational Chart



- A&PMC - Audit and Performance Management Committee
- C. - Committee
- CFOA – Chief Fire Officers Association
- CLG – Department for Communities and Local Government
- E&DSG – Equality and Diversity Steering Group
- GOWM – Government Office West Midlands
- LAA – Local Area Agreement
- LRF – Local Resilience Forum
- LSPs – Local Strategic Partnerships
- RRF – Regional Resilience Forum
- IRMP – Integrated Risk Management Planning
- S&R – Strategy and Resources
- WMRMB – West Midlands Regional Management Board