

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 at its meeting on 6 March 2008 that the Audit and Performance Management Committee monitor the progress against the plan of action for the ESLG.

The ESLG for Local Government:

- Was first introduced in 2001, the need for this was underlined by the findings of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (Macpherson, 1999) – it highlighted institutional discrimination and how this influences organisations;
- Is a Framework to mainstream equalities into service delivery and employment;
- Is a way to combat institutional processes that lead to discrimination;
- Has five levels - with checklists;
- Initially only focused on gender, race and disability;
- Has been updated since 2006 and now includes age, religion/belief and sexual orientation;

- Should remove any discriminatory practices in the six strands of diversity through its implementation.

Implementing the Standard:

- Provides a systematic framework for mainstreaming of equalities;
- Helps authorities to meet their obligations under the law;
- Integrates equalities policies and objectives with Best Value;
- Encourages the development of anti-discriminatory practice appropriate to local circumstances;
- Provides basis for tackling forms of institutional discrimination;
- Provides a framework for improving performance over time.

The ESLG has 5 levels and is built on principles of **Quality, Leadership and Community involvement**. The overarching headings of each level are listed.

Level 1 - Commitment to a Comprehensive Equality Policy

Level 2 - Assessment and Consultation

Level 3 - Setting equality objectives and targets

Level 4 - Information systems and monitoring against targets

Level 5 - Achieving and reviewing outcomes

4 Updated Equality Standard Action Plan

In order to progress the Equality Standard for Local Government to level 3, it was necessary to devise an action plan to monitor progress on this, the action plan is attached to this report at Appendix A. This details the major steps that have been taken to ensure progression on the Standard.

5 Terms of Reference for the Equality and Diversity Steering Group

Attached to this report at Appendix B, are the terms of reference for the Equality and Diversity Steering Group. This group is responsible for progressing and monitoring achievement of the Equality Standard for Local Government and other Equality initiatives as detailed within the terms of reference.

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

This report is purely an update on progress of the action plan and so the recommendations within the report have no impact on people. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed for this report.

9 Appendices

Appendix A

Equality Standard for Local Government Plan of Action

Appendix B

Terms of Reference for the Equalities 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

Time	Action	Person	Completed
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	In progress
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	In progress
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
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	In progress
w/c 03/03/08	Start collecting evidence	Equality & Diversity Officer & Secondee (when in place)	In progress
22/05/08	External consultant informal assessment to advise of any improvement areas and give recommendations	Equality & Diversity Officer	
w/c 26/05/08	Implement actions from consultants report and devise any actions for improvement areas	ALL	
w/c 02/06/08	Finalise self assessment report	To be determined	
w/c 02/06/08	Steering group to validate self assessment report	Steering group	
w/c 02/06/08	Finalise collection of evidence	Equality & Diversity Officer	
w/c 16/06/08	Send self assessment report and evidence to Edgehill	Equality & Diversity Officer	
23/06 – 04/08/08	External validation lead in time	n/a	
5-6/08/08	External validation	Equality & Diversity Officer	
w/c 18/08/08 (approx date)	Amendment to external report	Steering group	
End of August / beginning Sept	Confirmation received level 3	Edgehill	

* Representative bodies to be invited to the steering group; when the action plan has been devised.

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 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.

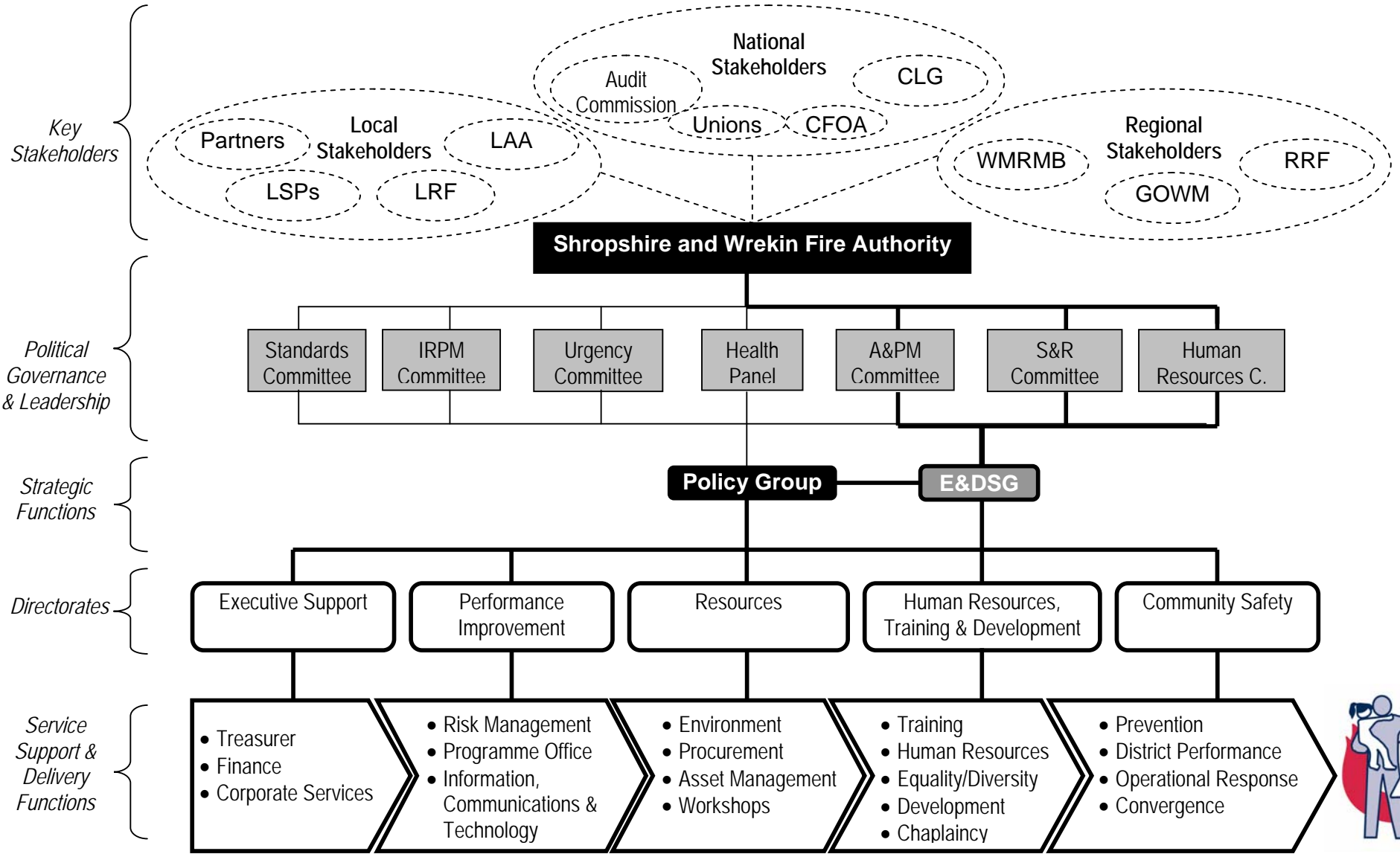
7. Scrutiny

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