

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 SEPTEMBER 2013

1. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY QUARTERLY UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Scrutiny Committee considers the changes to the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) Equality and Diversity Framework led by the Local Government Association and Chief Fire Officers' Association.
- 1.2 To approve the decision to undertake a review of our Equality Objectives in view of the changes to the Equality and Diversity (E&D) Framework and gap analysis against the Excellence level of the revised Framework.
- 1.3 To consider the content of this report that provides an overview of our current progress against the existing WMFS Equality Objectives attached as Appendix A.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The report outlines the key differences between the new and old FRS Equality and Diversity Framework of which the Service is at the Achieving level.
- 2.2 The report makes recommendations of actions that will align the Equality and Diversity work to the Plan whilst responding to the changes under the revised Excellence level of the FRS Equality Framework. It also outlines our plans to meet the annual reporting requirements under the Specific Duties of the Equality Act 2010.

- 2.3 The report concludes with an overview of the Service's current progress with regard to the published WMFS Equality Objectives 2012-2015.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Equality Framework is an approach based on the previously established Equality Standard which the Local Government Association produced for local authorities. In 2010, the Equality Standard was updated to the Framework model, which in essence was less prescriptive in detail and allowed more interpretation with regard to the range of evidence used by a Service to demonstrate the level at which they are performing. The Standard also moved from 5 levels of performance to a simpler three level approach of 'Developing, Achieving and Excellence'.
- 3.2 The Framework is intended for use as a self-assessment tool; a national benchmark; a means of facilitating consistent external challenge, and an opportunity to identify and draw out learning and good practice to share throughout the sector.
- 3.3 In 2012, The Local Government Association in partnership with the Chief Fire Officers produced a revised version to:
- Reflect the new national policy and legal context, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
 - Bring the headings and structure more into line with Equality Framework for Local Government to enable benchmarking, information sharing and liaison with partners on local equality priorities and objectives.
 - Reflect the removal of the national 'Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018' (CLG).
- 3.4 In addition to the above, it is noted that:
- There is specific reference to community needs reflected in the Integrated Risk Management Plan.
 - The language and style of the revised Framework areas reflects current approaches such as referring to 'what is the Equality story'.

- The performance indicators relate to clear equality outcomes.
 - There is less repetition between equality indicators throughout the document.
- 3.5 Overall the revised FRS Equality and Diversity Framework has shifted emphasis to become more outcome focused around the needs of local communities. This is particularly reflected in the changes in the key policy themes which are outlined in Appendix B.
- 3.6 In view of the changes proposed under the revised Equality Framework, the Service will be required to review its current Equality Objectives.
- 3.7 In addition, such a review will provide an opportunity for the Service to determine its progress and performance through a gap analysis activity against the revised framework key policy themes. Any gaps identified will be considered in view and alignment to the Plan.
- 3.8 A proposal outlining the work programme to undertake the above work is detailed in Appendix C. The work programme also outlines the timeframes for collating and presenting our equality data for publishing in January 2014 as required under the Specific Duties of the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.9 A report will be presented to the Scrutiny Panel in January 2014, with recommendations following the review for decision.
- 3.10 Meanwhile the Service will continue to work towards its current Equality Objectives and will continue to provide updates to the Scrutiny panel with regard to progress.
- 3.11 Below highlighted are key actions undertaken and planned under the current Equality Objectives.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- 3.12 The Governance arrangements for E&D continue to be monitored through the Authority's Scrutiny Committee overseeing progress and providing challenge and support. The Scrutiny Committee directed the Service to produce a Positive Action Strategy which was presented in January 2013. Progress against positive action

is detailed in the employment and training section below.

- 3.13 Corporate Board continue to monitor and direct work through developing the equality agenda in its quarterly E&D updates. In view of achieving the Equality Objectives aligned to the Plan, the Equality and Diversity section was recently moved into the Operations Directorate. This move was to provide the Service with best use of its in house experts in delivering equality outcomes to our communities.
- 3.14 There continues to be the opportunity for management of the organisation to align to the plan, monitor and progress its performance against the Equality Objectives through the corporate performance reporting structures. This will further enable the organisation to embed E&D at all levels of delivering services. This will be considered in the Equality Review as detailed in 3.5 above.

LEADERSHIP & INCLUSION

- 3.15 Authority Members alongside Corporate Board members continue to provide their personal support and leadership to E&D initiatives to increase the profile of work internally and externally. For example, The Deputy Chief Fire Officer recently attended the We are Women @ WMFS Forum to offer support to female employees.
- 3.16 The Chairman has undertaken an honorary position on the National Asian Fire Service Association as the National Advisor for local Government matters. The Chairman alongside Cllr Spence and Cllr Chambers and ACO Gary Taylor, Director of Operations are representing WMFS through contributing to the forthcoming International Asian Fire Service Association conference in Manchester on 31 October and 1 November.
- 3.17 The DCFO Phil Loach and ACO Gary Taylor have invited employees, key stakeholders and Authority members to come together to discuss a future vision for equality and diversity through enabling inclusion and engagement at the conference event 'Enabling Leadership at all levels' to be held at WMFS on 27 September 2013.
- 3.18 The ACUA Leadership Capability Course in partnership with Coventry University is in its third year. The course is open to diverse groups of operational and non operational employees and strives to develop leadership skills in emerging talent through

inviting them to engage in corporate and strategic issues and in doing so supporting the organisation in delivering better outcomes.

- 3.19 18 members of the first ACUA cohort will complete their final year of study in 2014 and in doing so many of them will be awarded a foundation degree which is an additional outcome for these employees.

PREVENTION, PROTECTION & RESPONSE

- 3.20 The Service through the review of its community safety strategy has made a number of fundamental improvements to ensure that we are striving towards meeting the needs of all our communities and are proportionately aligning our resources in accordance to high risk groups.
- 3.21 This work has led to adopting the 'making every contact count' approach to community safety work which stems from working with the NHS and local authorities. This in essence reflects a joined up approach from Public Services so that they share data of vulnerable people and ensure they work together to reduce risks and improve the quality of their lives.
- 3.22 Our most vulnerable groups often are the same as those that have one or more protected characteristics. These people often have limiting life opportunities, deprived social and economic positioning, lack of education and work or can have negative behaviours and choices that lead them to be disadvantaged and more vulnerable within society. They often are the same people with housing, safety, health, financial deprivation, often with limited life expectancy.
- 3.23 CFS has moved towards a more coherent approach with its partners from Health, Police and Local Authorities to support vulnerable people through its partnership work placing the spirit of the Public Sector Equality duty and the Human rights Act at the heart of its business planning and service delivery.
- 3.24 An example of this is the work around the outcomes of the Marmot Review. This review outlined how there is a social gradient in health inequalities and how all public services need to work together to make a sustainable difference to these groups. WMFS recognise that these individuals, for instance, may be suffering with obesity, learning difficulties or mental health issues are likely to be vulnerable from fire, road, water and personal safety.

- 3.25 The Service is now working towards gaining Marmot status which officially recognises the contribution we make within the health and wellbeing agenda in local communities of West Midlands alongside the broader community safety agenda.
- 3.26 To further focus our engagement and consultation with local communities the CFS team, Equality Officers and Marketing team are supporting the Service to carry out local risk mapping to determine how we engage with our diverse communities and to seek ways of improving relations.
- 3.27 The work of the 100 VPOs; the new partnership officers and community risk reduction officers and front line firefighters is to enable the delivery of this more coherent and inclusive approach to delivering services to local communities.
- 3.28 The CFS team continue to support the range of targeted projects as detailed in the last report:
- *Welcome to the West Midlands*: is an education programme for new migrants to promote safety, wellbeing, community understanding and citizenship. It has been funded by the Big Lottery Fund and developed in consultation with migrants to meet the information gap which can occur when someone arrives in the UK. The mobile education package is delivered by our Community Volunteers and is an interactive experiential learning experience.
 - *Special Education Need (SEN) Educators* who are serving firefighters who have received additional training; deliver fire safety education to people with learning disabilities. The majority of the input is delivered to groups either through special schools, SEN groups within mainstream schools, colleges, residential homes and day care centres as well as activity groups. SEN Educators also provide the SEN programme at Safeside where visiting groups, again of children or adults, are able to learn about keeping safe and keeping others safe tailored to their needs and ability.
 - *The Safestart programme at Safeside* aims to increase the confidence and skills of parents and carers of babies, pre-school children and Foundation Stage children. The programme covers the key safety issues for this age group including road safety, in car safety, fire safety, general home safety and basic first aid.

- YOYO (*You're on Your Own*) programme at Safeside covers risk in different situations including risk for themselves and others, what to do in an emergency, dealing with peer pressure, key skills in independent living. YOYO is for children leaving care, students, school leavers, young offenders and teenage parents, with a target age range of 14-22. Visits are adapted depending on the age and background of the visiting groups.
- The West Midlands Fire Service Arson Task force co-coordinator is now working closely with a new crime prevention team established for West Midlands Police. A team of 10 Crime Prevention Officers have been placed at 3 cluster points across the West Midlands region each having differing portfolios from arson prevention, cannabis to metal thefts. This is an opportunity to forge stronger links.
- Through the Arson Task Force *one project* already taking shape, there is the opportunity for all emergency services to share web space promoting prevention protection seasonal messages to all schools web sites across the West Midlands. A Pilot scheme will trial this with several other local authority education teams who have expressed an interest.

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

- 3.29 The Service undertook a range of positive action initiatives as part of the recent recruitment campaign led by a female operational officer placed within Recruitment. Supported by the Recruitment team and Operations, the officer undertook an eight week positive action recruitment awareness campaign targeting under-represented groups such as women and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people. The officer targeted community groups, places of worship, fitness clubs and gyms to access people from these groups. Positive action activity stopped at the point of recruitment and selection processes starting, which was based purely on merit.
- 3.30 The outcome of the positive action work led to 10% of the 9516 applicants to be female; 15% to be from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and 1% to declare a disability.

- 3.31 The purpose of the recruitment and selection process was to seek the best candidates for the roles. The process was rigorous and varying, testing a range of attributes, skills and abilities of the applicants. The diagram in Appendix D provides an overview of the different levels of assessment and the notable findings around the performance of under-represented groups.
- 3.32 In particular, it was noted that despite being successful at earlier stages people from under representative groups including women, BME candidates and older people were likely to drop out through out the process.
- 3.33 It was also observed that Asian candidates performed significantly below their counterparts in the questions around duties and the scenario tests.
- 3.34 It was noted that female candidates and BME candidates also scored low in the written tests. Female candidates also performed lower than men in the physical tests.
- 3.35 Despite the above trends and patterns, of the final 55 candidates, 11% were female and 12.7% were BME, which approximately reflected the overall number of people from these groups at the start of the process. Whilst the figures are lower than the demographic representation of these groups (51% for women and 35% for BME across West Midlands), considering the timeframes this has been a successful campaign.
- 3.36 The Service is now learning from the recent experience and we aim to consider what further positive action strategies can be deployed alongside any other organisational learning from the process.
- 3.37 WMFS are beginning to implement the longer term recruitment strategies to attract more diverse employees to the Service by contact with girls and other under represented groups through educational programmes.
- 3.38 The Service is continuing with its range of employee engagement initiatives, particularly targeting under representative groups. These include:

'We are Women @ West Midlands Fire Service', women's group was launched in March 2012. The aims of the group are:

- Professional development and progression (influence leaders and colleagues).
- Personal development and networking such as building confidence through support.
- Achieving tangible outcomes (improve policy and facilities).

The group has now invited a number of guest speakers and has successfully supported the Service to have welfare packs for female operational employees. The group provided feedback and consultation around the Reaching for the Stars programme and the Facilities Review across stations.

The regional Asian Fire Service Association group was launched in December 2011, the aims of the group are:

1. To support professional development and progression and to share learning experiences.
2. To build a solid network of mutual support for employees that delivers real outcomes.
3. To support charities and fundraising.
4. Regional and national AFSA to work together to achieve mutual outcomes.

3.39 The group works through sharing information and supporting national AFSA events, charities and work streams.

3.40 The Personal Effectiveness Course 'Reaching for the Stars' targeting under represented operational and support staff to develop essential skills to release their potential and was very successful in terms of attendance and feedback from delegates. Many operational delegates committed to giving their own time to undertake the training which is a testament to their commitment and the value of the course. Some delegates from the course have actively sought out activities and ways to engage with an organisational learning and development agenda. For instance, many have gone onto undertake the ACUA course or joined the employee forums.

3.41 The course is being repeated again in September 2013; details of testimonials and course content are attached as Appendix E).

- 3.42 The Personal Effectiveness Course also supported the launch of a Buddy Scheme. The purpose of the scheme was to provide delegates with support from often more senior colleagues or peers after the course completed. Based on a coaching model, the buddy scheme was to enable delegates to channel their energy back into the organisation through exploring ways of contributing. The buddies enabled delegates to understand how to network outside of their teams and also to signpost them to different opportunities to sustain engagement.
- 3.43 The buddy scheme has been very successful also. The current delegates are being developed to become buddies themselves. The scheme is also now recruiting new buddies and will be supporting the new recruits.
- 3.44 The Employee Opinion Survey will be launched again this year. There is also Investors in People internal review taking place in October 2013.
- 3.45 The Service has also supported a number of places on the Wolverhampton FRS Degree course specifically encouraging employees below Watch Commander level and as a positive action initiative. We have four women and three men undertaking the course.
- 3.46 Equality considerations in decision making at all levels within the Service is managed through the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Framework. The Service has recognised that there are areas of performance with regard to building understanding of how and when to use an EIA that can be improved. We are taking specific actions including upskilling sessions and scenario based discussions and a broader approach to promoting equality analysis and practices through leadership and community engagement.

ONGOING WORK & GOOD PRACTICE

- 3.47 Work with the Dementia Alliance has identified people with dementia scoring high on the vulnerability scale; recently leading 300 referrals through partnership work. Dementia is recognised as one of the biggest diseases that is impacting an ageing population with issues of poor diagnoses, medication and support. We are actively working with our NHS partners to ensure that we are playing our role to keep vulnerable adults with dementia safe.

- 3.48 The Prince's Trust: 'Get started' pilot cohort group included young people who were homeless, at risk of offending and with special educational needs. We hope to continue to work with the Prince's Trust to support services to vulnerable young people.
- 3.49 Social housing shortages are leading to private landlords housing vulnerable people. Wolverhampton Command is leading in the area of work to educate and inform private landlords of how to support vulnerable people through working with public services.
- 3.50 Work continues with safeguarding boards to support vulnerable adults and children in all Command Areas.

4. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This report and Equality Objectives within it respond directly to the General and Specific duties of the Equality Act and considers the Equality and Diversity issues that are pertinent to the needs of the Service. In doing so a range of equality data has been analysed and considered with regard to all the protected characteristics.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The report responds to our requirements under the Equality Act 2010; Public Sector Equality Duties 2011. The Equality Objectives 2012 – 2015 further advance our compliance with the General Duty and Specific Duties. The Objectives also support the organisation with better response to employment and service delivery legislative requirements.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of producing the Equality and Diversity report and objectives for 2012-2015 would be accommodated within the existing budget provision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Quick Start Guide: Public Sector Equality Duty
Quick Start Guide: Specific duties
Meeting the Equality Duty in policy and decision-making
Engagement and the Equality Duty

The contact name for this report is Gary Taylor, 0121 380 6914.

VIJ RANDENIYA
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY OBJECTIVES 2012 - 2015

ACCOUNTABILITY

The journey towards achieving excellence requires us to challenge ourselves and continuously improve. We recognise that inclusion strategies will form a key dimension to the Equality and Diversity agenda as we move forward. Some of our key specific and measurable Equality Objectives that promote accountability at all levels of the Service includes:

1. Our *Strategic direction and drive* will continue to be given through our Authority and Corporate Board members. They will also monitor progress and provide scrutiny on our Equality and Diversity performance *through equality analysis* such as through quarterly reports and equality impact assessments. We shall continue to have an Equality and Diversity lead member on the Authority who will champion E&D issues at a strategic level.
2. Managers will lead in *identifying and embedding* Equality and Diversity actions into their local directorate/section plans and all employees will identify and promote relevant E&D principals and actions within their work accordingly.

LEADERSHIP & INCLUSION

Attributes of leadership can be displayed at all levels; each and every person within the service is encouraged to promote Equality and Diversity which is reflected in our commitment to our core values in all that we do.

1. Authority and Corporate Board members will continue to demonstrate their commitment to Equality and Diversity through leadership actions and personal impact.
2. The Authority continues to profile and provide the support and resources required to deliver equality and diversity improvements.

SERVICE DELIVERY AND ENGAGEMENT

The service is committed to using the appropriate and varied prevention, protection and response activities to meet the needs of our diverse communities.

Prevention & Protection Activities

1. Our local plans demonstrate the sophisticated way in which we use our intelligence data and risk mapping within the context of understanding the changing nature of who our communities are and the environment that they live in. We use this information to achieve better outcomes in our prevention, protection and response work. We will publish our local plans to communicate with residents and demonstrate our commitment to and understanding of the needs of our communities and set our accountability towards continuous improvement. In particular, by identifying 20% of the most 'at risk groups' with regard to home fires, road safety, personal safety and community safety and target our resources to make these communities safer.
2. We will continue to raise the awareness of our communities towards managing safety through a range of interventions and educational activities that promote community cohesion; such as through publicity, open days, schools visits, youth work, Safeside and local station level activities.

Response

1. We will be well prepared at all times and respond to all emergency response situations with the highest level of expertise, skills and abilities to reduce the risk of fires, road traffic incidents, injury and death.
2. We will ensure that our enforcement activities do not disproportionately impact any specific communities without reasonable justification. Where possible, where trends are identified we will make efforts to advise and provide guidance so that these communities be more proactive in responding to the requirements of the law.

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

1. We will ensure that we tackle any barriers to communication Development, inclusion and progression.
2. We will ensure that all of our employees are treated with dignity and respect at all levels regardless of their differences.

3. We will promote positive action initiatives to specifically engage employees from under representative groups to engage with organisational development as well as their own development.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE

Monitoring, evaluation, sharing good practice and ensuring the best use of resources are the key to our aspiration of achieving and sustaining excellence in equality and diversity for our employees and our communities.

1. We will assess the effectiveness of our partnership work in achieving equality outcomes.

APPENDIX B

Revised Equality Framework Policy work Areas:

Old FRS Equality Framework	Revised FRS Equality Framework
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Leadership and promoting Inclusion.2. Accountability.3. Effective service delivery and community engagement.4. Employment and training.5. Evaluation and sharing good practice.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Knowing your communities.2. Leadership, partnership and service commitment.3. Community engagement and satisfaction.4. Responsive services.5. A skilled and committed workforce.

APPENDIX C

Annual Reporting and Review of Equality and Diversity Objectives – Work Programme

Actions required	D/L
<p>Scrutiny Committee – Equality & Diversity Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Current progress against Equality Objectives. • Inform members of the changes to the FRS Equality Framework. • Proposals for a work programme including review of Equality Objectives and working towards Excellence. • Proposal to presenting findings of the review and reporting back in January meeting. 	<p>Sandwell: 5 Sept Meeting 16 Sept 12.30n</p>
<p>WMFS Equality and Diversity Desktop gap analysis of performance against the NEW FRS Equality and Diversity Framework – Excellence level.</p>	<p>Raise at SAG 16 October.</p> <p>Present outcomes at Quarterly E&D Update to CB 19 November 2013</p>
<p>Report against existing Objectives at Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>Inform them of progress with regard to the work programme towards new framework.</p>	<p>Internal deadline for Scrutiny report 9 October 2013.</p> <p>4 November 2013 – E&D progress report to Scrutiny Report</p>
<p>Undertake Review of Equality Objectives against new Equality Framework and excellence level and the delivery of E&D within WMFS, considering the outcomes of the gap analysis.</p> <p>Prepare data for annual Publishing as required by the Equality Act 2010.</p>	

<p>Completion of Review and Annual reporting for specific duties – update to Corporate Board</p> <p>Opportunity to consider whether the Service would like to go for Excellence.</p> <p>Submit report to Scrutiny.</p>	<p>Corporate Board meeting 17 December 2013.</p> <p>Internal deadline for January meeting: 17 December 2013</p>
<p>Equality and Diversity update to Scrutiny Panel</p>	<p>Scrutiny meeting – 20 January meeting</p>
<p>Migration from old framework to new and implementation of outcomes from the Review.</p>	<p>Programme of work to be confirmed</p>

APPENDIX D

Performance overview of under representative groups in the various stages of the recruitment process

Start of the process 9516 applicants registered 10% female 15% BME 1% disability Av Age 25.8 118 wholetime FF	517 passed online test. Eligibility stage: no trends Duties: 12% of Asian 8% other BME Failed compared with 2% WB	Three tests Understanding information Situational awareness working with numbers Drop out rate post tests Higher Women BME and older people	Scenario Assessment Asian Ap Low scoring (2% compared to 8% WB and 5% other BM Drop out of 20% Wholetime FF 31% of women 19% of men Written tests	Written tests 29% females 12% males On understanding information BME 18% failed On numbers ex. Drop out rate post tests Higher Women BME and older people	Physical Tests Females had higher failure rates then men. Interview stage Final 55 that passed all tests: 11% female 12.7% BME
---	--	--	---	---	---

Reaching for the Stars

A Self Awareness and
Personal Development Course

AFSA We Are Women @
West Midlands Fire Service

Making West Midlands Safer
WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE
www.wmfs.net

Prevention Protection Response