

Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee

23rd March, 2015 at 12 noon
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Tranter (Chair);
Councillor Spence (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Collingswood, Hogarth, and Skinner.

Apologies: Councillors Philips and Young.

4/15 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th February, 2015 be approved as a correct record.

5/15 **Diversity Inclusion Cohesion Equality (DICE) Report Covering Period September 2014 to March 2015**

The Committee received the Service's Equality Workforce Profile Report, which had been published on 31 January 2015, as required under the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010.

The Service's current scoring against the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) Equality Framework was also noted. As the FRS Equality and Diversity Framework had been changed, the DICE team would be supporting the migration to the new framework over the next two quarters of 2015. To move from 'good' to 'excellence' within the framework there needed to be an increased review and monitoring of approaches to assess whether equality outcomes were being achieved or were likely to be achieved. This required a more outward looking, outcomes focused approach to service delivery, as opposed to initiative focused.

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Performance around the Service's current Equality Objectives and themes of the FRS Equality Excellence Framework, were also noted, which demonstrated the progress that the Service was making through a specific focus around the gaps identified on the path to achieving 'excellence'.

The Committee was also provided with equality workforce profile statistics and trend data that covered the period between July 2007 and October 2014, with the exception of the race equality data, which was due to a more detailed analysis undertaken as at September 2014.

A number of positive action initiatives had been implemented as part of a recruitment process that had taken place in December, 2014. The Committee noted that this had resulted in an increase in the number of female applicants from 9.9% in 2013 to 11.2% in 2014 and BME applicants had increased from 15.2% in 2013 to 15.4% in 2014.

The Equality Objectives would be reviewed before 2016 to ensure that focus remained in the right direction.

6/15 **Dispute Resolution**

The Committee noted a report detailing the number, type and outcomes of discipline and grievance hearings and other dispute resolution activity, including Employment Tribunals, for the period 1st July to 31st December, 2014.

The report also provided a summary of lessons learned, taking into account issues raised by trades unions' representative bodies, line managers and People Support Services business partners.

A training programme, "The Effective Managers" series, had been launched to support managers in dealing with behavioural issues in order to deal with them as soon as possible and prevent them from escalating to more formal levels. The sessions were also being attended by trades unions.

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The Committee discussed the relevance of having member involvement in the appeals process. The Authority had taken the decision to remove members from the process in 2004. Having reviewed the situation again in 2010 there were no plans to involve members again at present.

Resolved that the Disputes Resolution report for the period 1st July to 31st December, 2014 be submitted to the Joint Consultative Panel.

7/15 **Work Programme**

The Committee noted its work programme for the remainder of the year.

It was reported that the Partnerships Review Working Group had met on 9th March, 2015 with officers from the Community Safety Team and decided to accompany a crew on a home safety check. The Group had also decided to meet with partnerships officers at their local stations.

(Meeting ended at 2.13pm.)

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