

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

Ged Fitzgerald
Clerk to the Authority.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Meeting of the HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE to be held in the Fire Authority Rooms at the Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Nissan Way, Barmston Mere, Sunderland on MONDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2006 at 10.30 A.M.

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Our Vision Statement:
"CREATING THE SAFEST COMMUNITY"

Our Mission Statement:
"TO SAVE LIFE, REDUCE RISK, PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN SERVICES AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT"

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8. **Fire and Rescue Service Circular 49/2006 – Improving Sickness Absence in the Fire and Rescue Service for England** 61
Report of the Chief Fire Officer (copy herewith).
9. **Review of the Race Equality Scheme – Action Plan** 65
Joint report of the Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor (copy herewith).

Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order) 2006

The following report is not for publication as the Committee is likely to exclude the public during consideration thereof as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph 3).

Part II

10. **Minutes – Part II** 77
Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 10th July, 2006, Part II (copy herewith).
(Copy herewith).

GED FITZGERALD,
Clerk to the Authority.

Civic Centre,
SUNDERLAND.

1st September, 2006

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

Ged Fitzgerald
Clerk to the Authority.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE held in
the Conference Room, Fire and Rescue
Headquarters, Nissan Way, Barmston Mere,
Sunderland on MONDAY, 10TH JULY, 2006 at
10.30 a.m.

Present:

Councillor Bollands in the Chair

Councillors Cooney, O'Neil, Anglin, Boyes, Woodwark and Gibson.

Part I

Appointment of Chairman

1. RESOLVED that Councillor Bollands be appointed as Chairman of the Human Resources Committee for the ensuing period to the next Annual Meeting.

Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs. Forbes.

Appointment of Vice-Chairman

2. RESOLVED that Councillor O'Neil be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Human Resources Committee for the ensuing period to the next Annual Meeting.

Our Vision Statement:
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Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of the Personnel and Training Committee – Part I

The minutes of the Personnel and Training Committee held on 21st November, 2005, Part I (copy circulated) were submitted for the information of the Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

3. RESOLVED that the minutes be received and noted.

Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006/08 – HR Issues

The Chief Fire Officer and Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report together with a revised report to the meeting (copies circulated) on an overview of the progress made and the future work programmes in respect of the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006/08.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Assistant Chief Officer advised the Committee of the current position regarding human resource issues in relation to the “people” aspect of the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

Members were informed that the Regional Management Board were due to consider a Regional HR Strategy and Regional Equalities Strategy which would also be tabled at a future meeting of this Committee for consideration and approval by Members.

The HR Strategy highlighted core values setting out the principles which the Service consider are fundamental to the development of the organisation, therefore had been integrated into the workforce.

The Authority had also referenced within the document that flexible working had been introduced as well as job-share and part-time job opportunities. Whole-time retained contracts and a personnel system had been embedded. In addition the Authority had in place e-learning and distance learning on evenings and weekends.

Occupational health arrangements including the provision of services had recently gone out to tender and Members were informed that medical services were now available in Occupational Health. The Authority was working closely with Durham and Cleveland Fire and Rescue Authorities to ascertain whether they were willing to put the same occupational health systems in place when their current systems expire.

An absence management plan had been put in place which the Authority were making steady progress with. Linking in with this a re-deployment system had also been implemented.

Members were then afforded the opportunity to ask any questions, or make any comments.

The Chairman commented that it would be interesting if some additional information could be included on secondary employment.

Councillor Woodwark queried whether there were any timescales in place for expanding the new role of Occupational Health throughout other parts of the region.

The Assistant Fire Officer responded, and in doing so informed the Committee that Cleveland Fire and Rescue Authority's contract expired in 2007, however Durham's contract still had two to three years left to run. The Assistant Fire Officer confirmed that he was in discussions with both to achieve regional collaborative working.

Councillor Cooney commended the report and the great strides being made to address sickness absence.

Councillor Gibson reported that an article had been published in the Evening Chronicle relating to Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority absence rates, and suggested that it would be useful for Committee Members if a copy of this could be circulated.

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be noted until the report had been submitted to the Regional Management Board; and
- (ii) further reports be received as appropriate.

Rank to Role – Pay Protection Review

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report (copy circulated) providing an overall review of the implementation of rank to role for consideration by the Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer outlined the report and in particular highlighted the current situation and financial implications following the implementation of rank to role.

Committee Members were informed of the cost implications associated with increasing the protection period for those personnel whose jobs had been assimilated into Crew Managers (who were originally Sub-Officers) and Watch Managers (who were originally Station Officers). Further negotiations for the pay settlement were expected to be made in July, 2007.

Councillor Boyes having queried whether the amounts stated in the report would be decreasing amounts, was advised by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer that the amount was expected to decrease year on year.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be noted;
- (ii) the current pay protection arrangements be maintained; and
- (iii) further reports be received as appropriate.

Occupational Health Unit – Annual Report

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (copy circulated) advising Members of the services provided by Occupational Health and its staff over the period 1st April, 2005 to 31st March, 2006.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Woodwark commented that he would strongly encourage emphasising that Occupational Health provide counselling and welfare support to Authority staff who are experiencing problems that are both work and non-work related and that it was important that any non-work related issues were addressed.

The Committee having given consideration to the report, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Culture Club – The Equality and Diversity Newsletter for the Fire and Rescue Services of the North East

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (circulated) regarding the introduction of an equality and diversity newsletter for the Fire and Rescue Services of the North East.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Assistant Fire Officer outlined to Members that equality and diversity was highly regarded at both a national and regional level, not to mention within the Authority. In order to raise awareness of the subject, a regional newsletter had been produced

entitled 'Culture Club'. The purpose of the newsletter was to fully inform employees of developments regarding diversity and also provide a forum highlighting good practice. The intention was to distribute the newsletter to all four North East Fire and Rescue Services. It would also be shared with partners and the local community to promote diversity.

The Chairman commented that the newsletter circulated was a second edition. In response, the Chief Fire Officer clarified that the first edition had been a pilot exercise.

7. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (ii) the introduction of the equality newsletter with the Fire and Rescue Service be approved.

Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order) 2006

At the instance of the Chairman, it was:-

8. RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it is considered to involve a likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph 3).

(Signed) D. BOLLANDS,
Chairman,

Note:-

The above minutes comprise only those relating to items during which the meeting was open to the public.

Additional minutes in respect of other items are included in Part II.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: 11 SEPTEMBER 2006

SUBJECT: HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY,
THE FINANCE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Authority's Human Resource (HR) Strategy is a key part of the strategic planning process and is focused at all staff in the organisation with responsibility for human resources. The Human Resource Strategy aims to provide a framework within which the Authority can manage its most important asset – its people.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to present a draft Human Resources Strategy (HR Strategy) and action plan for consideration and for approval by members.

2. THE HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

- 2.1 The HR Strategy is designed to deliver outcomes in accordance with the action plan in the following areas:
- Develop employees in accordance with the Authority's strategic plan incorporating our shared vision, aims and core values and build a culture that respects and values personal development;
 - Promote diversity with a clear focus of dignity and respect for all;
 - Provide employees with an understanding of where they fit into the organisation and to create an environment where all feel proud to work for the Authority;
 - Define and embed the standards of leadership expected at all levels, providing appropriate individual development in accordance with the principles of IPDS;
 - Clearly identify and define the roles and responsibilities in managing human resources within the Authority and the varying functions which contribute to this;
 - Ensure that the HR services provided to all employees fulfils their needs and are delivered in an efficient and effective manner in line with Best Value principles;
 - Deliver the HR objectives of the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006 – 2008
- 2.2 The Strategy itself underpins to the realisation of the ultimate goal which is the efficient and effective delivery of HR services. This does not however remove or negate the need for HR practitioners to operate locally. In fact this has been made clear in many other reports (such as the Bain report) that HR should and must be delivered locally by qualified practitioners working to centrally developed policies and practices.

- 2.3 The Strategy is underpinned by a comprehensive action plan which has clear responsibilities and deliverables build in. The action plan will be monitored by the Chief Fire Officer and an annual review undertaken with further reports to this Committee as appropriate. The action plan, if approved, will also need to be reflected in the Authority's Strategic Planning process.
- 2.4 The Chief Fire Officer is pleased to report that some of the actions detailed within the action plan have been completed. This has resulted in a continuous improvement in HR service delivery driven by the Strategic Plan and annual action plans previously developed. All the actions now clearly defined will be incorporated into the Strategic Plan at the appropriate time.
- 2.5 The HR Strategy and action Plan is attached at Appendix A for consideration and approval by Members.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The costs for implementing the strategy are not envisaged to be significant and can be met from within existing budget headings for this financial year. Further reports in this respect will be tabled for approval by Members as appropriate.

4. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Central to the HR Strategy is the further mainstreaming of equality and diversity within the Service. To that end, the HR Strategy is underpinned by a comprehensive Equality and Diversity Strategy which is the subject of a separate report on the agenda today.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Members are requested to:-
- (a) Approve the HR Strategy and Action Plan; and
 - (b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006/08
- CFOA HR Strategy
- Strategic Plan 2006-2011

HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY



“Our Greatest Strength is our People”

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

PART ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A modern and effective fire and rescue service needs a skilled and competent workforce able to deliver the objectives of the service as set out in the National Framework and locally developed Integrated Risk Management Plan underpinned by the Strategic Plan.
- 1.2 The Authority's Human Resource (HR) Strategy is a key part of the strategic planning process and is focused at all staff in the organisation with responsibility for human resources. The Human Resource Strategy aims to provide a framework within which the Authority can manage its most important asset – its people.
- 1.3 The Fire and Rescue Service is facing many challenges and it is recognised that the successful management and development of employees can only be achieved by taking a holistic approach. Therefore, human resource management is a collaborative partnership between the HR Function, Learning and Development and responsible officers within the Service which in areas of common interest can increase our capacity to provide a more efficient and effective service. This Strategy provides a local perspective on HR to enable the delivery of a real and sustained programme of change, and will deliver business benefits, provide value for money, support the principles of public service reform and diversity and equality.
- 1.4 The business benefits that are expected to evolve from the implementation of this strategy include:
- The development of a more skilled and integrated HR function;
 - The development of workforce planning skills and the HR capacity to assist in the modernisation of the current service;
 - Meeting the needs set out in the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan;
 - Achieving equality and leading in diversity issues;
 - More effective use of available human resources and improved quality of service delivery;
 - Working within the region and nationally to deliver a common and consistently applied range of policies, practices and procedures which will enhance the provision of the HR function;
 - Delivery of the Government's modernisation agenda.
- 1.5 In order to delivery a strategy for this Authority, due cognisance has been taken of the national and regional perspective.

2 THE STRATEGIC PLAN

- 2.1 Underpinning the Human Resource Strategy for the Authority is the Strategic Plan which provides a clear definition about where we:-
- are now
 - want to be
 - how to get there

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- 2.2 The Strategic Plan provides a dynamic framework, which is capable of being amended where necessary to meet external or internal influences. In addition the document clearly outlines the aims and objectives of the Authority and targets against which these will be measured. The plan also provides a consistency of approach throughout the Authority, shares best practice and encourages all personnel to work towards continuous improvement and increased efficiency. The HR Strategy is one of the cornerstones in delivering the goals and objectives set out within the Strategic Plan.
- 2.3 The Authority has a core vision of where it wants to be and those are embodied in 4 corporate goals within the Strategic Plan. These are:-
- Preventing loss of life and injury from fires and other emergencies;
 - To respond appropriately to the risk;
 - To plan and prepare for exceptional events;
 - To deliver a modern, effective service.
- 2.4 To be effective in achieving these objectives we must ensure that the Authority:
- Is well managed – employees are expected to manage the areas for which they are responsible within budget;
 - Aims for excellence in service provision taking into account stakeholders views;
 - Works in effective partnership with the communities it represents, and external organisations.
- 2.5 From these objectives, the HR Strategy has been developed and includes detailed targets which will allow the success of the Strategy to be measured and evaluated. It is envisaged that this Strategy will continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of HR service delivery and underpin the overall strategic aims of the Authority.

3 THE NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

- 3.1 Nationally, a HR Strategy, published by the Chief Fire Officer's Association (CFOA), sets out a comprehensive approach to help ensure that local authority fire and rescue services (FRS) have the right number of skilled people in the right place and at the right time to deliver more "customer focused" front line services and drive down risk to life. The national strategy is designed to enable the Fire and Rescue Service to achieve its primary purpose, live up to its core values and to deliver its vision. In developing this Authority's HR Strategy, due cognisance has been taken of the national strategy.
- 3.2 The primary purpose of the modern Fire and Rescue Service is to help build a safer society and a sustainable community by working in partnership with others to promote community well being, whilst reducing death and injury, damage to property and damage to the environment from fire and other emergencies.
- 3.3 In order to achieve this purpose, changing public expectations of what the service is here to do must be addressed, and the high levels of public respect and support which the fire and rescue service currently enjoys must be retained. Consequently, it is necessary to have a clear picture of the outcomes for the Service.

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3.4 CFOA's vision of the modern Fire and Rescue Service is of one that:

- works with local communities and other agencies to promote community safety and community well being, and to sustain those communities by reducing risks to life, property and the environment from fire and other emergencies;
- intervenes promptly and effectively when fire and other emergencies occur;
- has a well equipped, skilled and motivated workforce, able to work safely and whose composition reflects the diverse communities we serve;
- pursues continuous improvement in all its functions in order to deliver best value and make efficient use of resources.

3.5 The Objectives of the National HR Strategy are to:

- Support the FRS in meeting current and future organisational needs;
- Support the FRS in achieving an effective balance between intervention, prevention, safety, civil protection and resilience;
- Support the FRS in achieving a culture of continuous improvement in organisational, team and individual performance;
- Support the FRS in achieving a diverse workforce that is representative of the communities it serves across all occupational groups and at all levels promoting equality, fairness and dignity in the treatment of all employees;
- Support the FRS in achieving best value from its investment in people management; including the efficient and effective targeting, deployment and management of resources and expertise;
- Support the FRS in creating and sustaining a competent, motivated and well-led workforce - recognising the particular context of leadership in the operational/critical incident management aspect of FRS activity;
- Support the FRS in developing and implementing employment packages that meet the needs of a modernised service and flexible workforce;
- Support the FRS in developing collaborative methods of working and effective partnerships;
- Support the FRS in promoting the Fire and Rescue Service as an employer of choice;
- Support the FRS in recognising the contribution of all employees across the Fire and Rescue Service.

3.6 In order to achieve the objectives above, six key priorities are being addressed:

Priority 1 - Developing Leadership Capacity – amongst both senior managers and elected members (including attracting effective leaders into Fire and Rescue Services from other sectors.)

Priority 2 - Developing the Organisation - to achieve excellence in people and performance management, partnerships and the efficient delivery of services.

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Priority 3 - Developing the Skills and Capacity of the Workforce - across all areas within Fire and Rescue Services, including technical, specialist and support services, management and the frontline workforce.

Priority 4 - Resourcing the Fire and Rescue Service – ensuring that authorities plan for, recruit, develop and retain the employees they need, whilst supporting and promoting equality and diversity.

Priority 5 - Recognition and Reward - having pay, reward and recognition structures that attract, retain, motivate and develop a skilled and flexible workforce whilst achieving value for money in service delivery.

Priority 6 - Developing the Capacity of HR – Identifying and building on the skills and expertise of the HR function in planning and delivering the modernisation agenda.

Detailed work in terms of developing policies, procedures and processes for each of the above priorities is being undertaken nationally, and when each becomes available, the national strategy will be reviewed.

- 3.7 The CFOA Strategy and Action Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis with progress monitored by Officers of the Authority. As and when the priorities are delivered, the Chief Fire Officer will consider the impact on this Authority's Strategy and integrate best practice into the policies and procedures as appropriate.

4 THE REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

- 4.1 A draft regional HR Strategy has been developed and is to be considered by the Regional Management Board in the near future. However, in order to ensure that full account is taken of the regional perspective, this authority's Strategy, where appropriate, includes regional principles and policies.

- 4.2 The initial strategic regional deliverables are:

- To continue the implementation of IPDS
- To produce single solutions across the four Northeast Fire and Rescue Services
- To strengthen the delivery and quality of HR across the region
- Develop specialist expertise
- Improve the approach to Diversity

- 4.3 To achieve these, this regional strategy aims to deliver the following outcomes:

- Regional implementation of **IPDS** including regional **recruitment, and assessment and development centres**;
- A regional approach to **workforce planning** and **succession planning** to ensure timely recruitment and talent management;
- A regional **Equality and Diversity** programme to ensure we are complying with legislation and being proactive to achieve a diverse workforce;
- Regional HR support to the **Regional Control** project;

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- A Regional programme of **Learning and Development**;
- A best practice approach to **Health and Safety Management** including **occupational health** and **attendance management**;
- A protocol and machinery for **employee relations** at a Regional level.

5 OUR HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY

5.1 Our Human Resource Strategy is designed to: -

- Develop employees in accordance with the Authority's strategic plan incorporating our shared vision, aims and core values and build a culture that respects and values personal development;
- Promote diversity with a clear focus of dignity and respect for all;
- Provide employees with an understanding of where they fit into the organisation and to create an environment where all feel proud to work for the Authority;
- Define and embed the standards of leadership expected at all levels, providing appropriate individual development in accordance with the principles of IPDS;
- Clearly identify and define the roles and responsibilities in managing human resources within the Authority and the varying functions which contribute to this;
- Ensure that the HR services provided to all employees fulfils their needs and are delivered in an efficient and effective manner in line with Best Value principles;
- Deliver the HR objectives of the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006 - 2008.

5.2 In addition to the above, the Human Resource Strategy has focussed upon the strategic aims laid down in the Strategic Plan of this Authority and in particular corporate goal (4), namely:

Corporate Goal 4

To Deliver a Modern Effective Service

- Ensure continuous improvement in service delivery and adopt a positive approach to change;
- Promote a culture and values which incorporates health and safety and ensures that the health and welfare needs of staff are identified and addressed;
- Work towards equality and diversity for the community we serve;
- Attract, select and retain the right people;
- Develop the potential of all our personnel in the workplace;
- Extend the network of effective partnerships including achievement of appropriate funding

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- 5.3 Within the Authority, supporting these goals and corporate vision are already a key number of policies and procedures, which are appropriate to Human Resources. These include:-
- Fairness and Equality Policy;
 - Appointment Procedure for all categories of staff;
 - Health and Safety policy;
 - Learning and Development policy;
 - Race Equality Scheme;
 - Disability Equality Scheme;
 - Workforce Planning Strategy;
 - Corporate Equality Plan.
- 5.4 The Authority provides a quality, cost effective and valued service to the community it protects and serves. The Human Resource Strategy is designed to ensure that the principle of sustainable development assists in underpinning service provision. The key objective of the Human Resource Function is to support the aforementioned Strategic Goals of the Authority by helping individuals, departments and functions within the Authority to achieve success in terms of human resource issues.
- 5.5 The action plan (attached) is the method by which delivery of this strategy will be achieved for the benefit of all who work within the Authority. Measurement of success will be through utilising the Best Value Performance Indicators as detailed in section 9.
- 5.6 In addition, there are 6 strategic principles which support and underpin the Strategy and the way in which sustainable improvement is achieved in delivering this HR Strategy. These are:-

5.6.1 PRINCIPLE 1:

HUMAN RESOURCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – Human resource policies and procedures will conform to current guidance, legislation and best practice thereby promoting the application of such within the Authority. A rolling programme of review of all policies, procedures and practices including the identification and action of any learning needs in support of these is ongoing.

5.6.2 PRINCIPLE 2:

BEST VALUE - By seeking to ensure that Best Value principles are embedded in the services to the community, there will be a sustainable improvement and continual change in the way service delivery is achieved. By continuous monitoring, an appropriate review of the management of human resources will continue to be undertaken.

5.6.3 PRINCIPLE 3:

LEGISLATION AND THE LAW – Due cognisance is taken of current and future legislative changes, which are likely to impact upon aspects of the Authority's business. The Chief Fire Officer will also continue to develop effective policies and procedures to meet the demands of legislation and any impact upon human resources.

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5.6.4 PRINCIPLE 4:

NATIONAL DOCUMENTATION – Any documentation received which supports the work of the service in meeting the Strategic Goals, will underpin the HR policies and procedures. Striving to improve HR services and abilities to carry out these services to the highest standard will be the primary focus.

5.6.5 PRINCIPLE 5:

EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES – To ensure the effective management of the function, it is vital that the resources required are matched to the resources available. As part of the Authority's commitment to continuous improvement for employees, those resources require individuals to become more effective, creative and business orientated within the framework of the Authority's strategic vision. Investment in human resources will therefore underpin the success of and improve efficiency within the Service.

5.6.6 PRINCIPLE 6:

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT - The Authority's Strategic Plan is aimed at success in a number of objectives. Once an action is complete it is important that the overall success rate is evaluated against these objectives. Most actions can take some considerable time to complete and are therefore divided into stages within interim milestones identified. Progress against each milestone is regularly monitored so that necessary changes can be made to address any problems and ensure that performance is maintained. More detail on the way performance management operates can be found in the Authority's Strategic Plan (available on the website www.twfire.gov.uk). The overall goal is to fully integrate Quality Standards wherever and whenever possible.

6 DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

- 6.1 The Authority is committed to the principles of equality and diversity and constantly strives to meet a high standard and consistent approach to equality and diversity. The goal is to embed diversity, tackle discrimination or harassment and address inequalities throughout the Service. Central to this commitment is the shared belief that all employees and members of the local communities must be treated with due dignity and respect regardless of their situation, circumstances or life style. To achieve this, not only must equality and diversity be integrated and mainstreamed into all areas of the service but also sustained if it is to achieve credibility and be owned by all.
- 6.2 Equality is underpinned by legislation protecting the rights of individuals. It is firmly focused on avoiding discrimination and treating everyone the same
- 6.3 Diversity recognises and values the differences of individuals, seeking to understand and promote these differences and treat everyone as an individual. Diversity goes beyond legislation and attempts to use these differences to improve the performance and productivity of the organisation.
- 6.4 Equality and diversity are the cornerstones of the HR Strategy and are clearly integrated within the Strategy. In addition, a Regional Diversity Strategy is held as an appendix to the

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Authority's HR Strategy however, it is emphasised that equality and diversity is inherent in everything undertaken within HR management.

7 CORE VALUES

7.1 The Authority recognised that all employees need to have a clear understanding about the Fire and Rescue Service's working practices, and the core values held for long term success. The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for ensuring that all employees understand and adopt these values. These core values have been introduced and the HR Strategy is committed to further embedding these throughout the Service. The core values are as follows: ('we' in this context refers to anybody working for or with the Authority)

We Value Service to the Community by:-

- Working with all groups to reduce risk,
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect,
- Being answerable to those we serve,
- Striving for excellence in all we do.

We Value All Our Employees by Practising and Promoting:

- Fairness and respect,
- Recognition of merit,
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust,
- Personal development,
- Co-operative and inclusive working.

We Value Improvement at all Levels of the Service By:-

- Accepting responsibility for our performance,
- Being open minded,
- Considering criticism thoughtfully,
- Learning from our experience,
- Consulting others.

We Value Diversity in the Service and Community By:-

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect,
- Providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations,
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment within the Service,
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination.

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8 RISKS

- 8.1 The Chief Fire Officer is actively and continuously identifying risks that will prevent the achievement of the action plan and improvement in HR practices. A standard risk identification methodology has been developed and the following current and emerging issues identified as requiring comprehensive monitoring to ensure success in delivering this strategy.

Issues	Priority based on risk rating
Failure to ensure the health, safety and well-being of staff and others who may be affected by our operations	High
Failure to provide a competent workforce	High
Failure to meet equality standards	Medium
Failure to provide a suitable reward and recognition scheme	Medium
Failure to provide effective leadership and management	Medium
Failure to effectively manage sickness absence	High
Failure to effectively forecast and plan the current and future workforce requirements	High
Failure to effectively engage and communicate with the workforce	High
Failure to embed our core values into our culture	Medium

- 8.2 The Strategy and its priorities have been designed to minimise and mitigate against the aforementioned risks.

9 MEASURING SUCCESS

- 9.1 There are a number of best value performance indicators specifically relevant to HR that measure and evaluate success in achieving the aims of this strategy.

Corporate BVPI's	Descriptor	Target 2006/07
BVPI 2	a) The level (if any) of the Equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms.	2
	b) The duty to promote race equality	100
BVPI 11	a) The percentage of the top 5% of Authority earners that are women.	5.2
	b) The percentage of the top 5% of Authority earners that are from black or ethnic minority communities	1.0
	c) The percentage of the top 5% of Authority earners with a disability	0.5

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Corporate BVPI's	Descriptor	Target 2006/07
BVPI 12	a) Number of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per employee - wholetime uniformed staff b) Number of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per employee - All Staff	8.8 8.9
BVPI 15	a) Percentage of those staff eligible for the Firefighters Pension Scheme retiring on the grounds of ill health as a percentage of the workforce b) Percentage of those staff eligible for the Local Government Pension Scheme retiring on the grounds of ill health as a percentage of the workforce	0.3 2.0
BVPI 16	a) The percentage of employees with a disability	None Set
BVPI 17	Percentage of staff from minority ethnic communities within the best value authority's workforce compared with the percentage of ethnic minority community population in Authority area (currently 3.2% in Tyne and Wear).	0.85
BVPI 210	The percentage of women firefighters	2.0

10 QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 10.1 The Chief Fire Officer will ensure that quality assurance principles are enacted within the HR function in delivering the service and in the outcomes from this Strategy. There are currently in place external quality assessments from recognised bodies as detailed below.
- 10.2 District and Internal Audit are commissioned to audit specific systems based upon identified risk on an annual basis. The most recent findings as they relate to HR have been minor issues of compliance.
- 10.3 Regular meetings are held with the Health and Safety Executive as part of the health and safety arrangements, and the Authority has been inspected by the HSE with all outstanding items following that inspection delivered.
- 10.4 Continuous workplace assessment is the foundation for effective people development. In 2005, prior to the implementation of rank to role, the arrangements were independently assessed by Edexcel. The key findings indicate that the Authority fully meets the criteria for quality assessment and internal verification and that management monitoring and review arrangements are effectively identifying both good practice and areas for improvement.

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

11 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY

- 11.1 In order to achieve the aforementioned, the Human Resources Function within the Authority falls within the HR, Learning and Development Division under the day to day remit of the Area Manager (HR, Learning and Development) supported by the Personal advisor to the Authority.
- 11.2 Within each specific area of Human Resources, strategic operating plans have been determined from which Departmental long term, medium term and short-term objectives are created. Part Two of this Strategy, the Action Plan, describes the aims, objectives and success criteria of each.

PART TWO – ACTION PLAN

For each core area, a timescale and target date will determine our objectives in moving forward with the provision of the best possible service.

- Long term means 5 or more years
- Medium term means 2 to 4 years
- Short terms means within 1 year

All of the workstreams indicated are implicit within the Authority's Strategic Plan and are provided here to enhance and support the detail within the Strategic Plan.

As this is a dynamic document undergoing its fourth update, those items already completed are also included for evidential purposes.

AIM	TIMESCALE	TARGET DATE
Develop our people in accordance with the Authority's strategic plan incorporating our shared vision, aims and core values and build a culture that respects and values personal development		
The expectations, aspirations and concerns of employees are fully considered in the implementation of personnel strategies via:- Joint Consultative Forums and other appropriate management/trades union liaison. Success Criteria- The implementation of any resultant recommendations identified during the above, and the measurement of success following implementation.	Ongoing commitment	Quarterly meetings held

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AIM	TIMESCALE	TARGET DATE
<p>Implement an electronic Personal Development Record to enable appropriate monitoring and delivery of development in accordance with the principles of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) to enable targeted Personal development to be identified and delivered in the most timely, efficient and cost-effective manner</p> <p>Success Criteria – all staff development is delivered to meet the needs of each individual</p>	Short term	01/04/07
<p>To ensure work life balance issues are addressed to meet the demands of the workforce and the organisation</p> <p>Success Criteria- A greater degree of staff satisfaction measured by reduction in short-term sickness and staff turnover.</p>	Medium term	31/12/07
<p>A full stress at work audit is completed and a comprehensive stress management programme is implemented.</p> <p>Success Criteria – Measurable reduction in stress related incidents</p>	Medium Term	31/12/07
<p>Ensure that the workforce understands and shares the values of the organisation.</p> <p>Success Criteria – Workforce attitudes show a measurable improvement in respect of organisational values and objectives</p>	Medium Term	01/04/09

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AIM	TIMESCALE	TARGET DATE
Promote diversity with a clear focus of dignity and respect for all		
A protocol and procedure which requires all policy documents submitted to the Authority to have an 'equality impact statement' to be developed and implemented. Success Criteria- All Authority reports and policies will include an impact statement.	Ongoing commitment	Completion by 01/04/07
A training strategy for diversity and equality training to be produced and implemented (which includes an awareness of positive action). Success Criteria- Strategy implemented and delivers a measurable improvement in employee awareness.	Short term	01/04/07
Review and update of facilities for people with disabilities and women. Success Criteria – No negative impact on any member of staff or the community due to premise facilities and the award of the two-ticks symbol as an employer of choice.		Complete
A Race Equality Scheme to be updated in line with current legislation and best practice. Success Criteria- Compliance with legislation and best practice.		Complete
To monitor and review the Equal and Diversity Policy and the Race Equality Scheme on an annual basis. Success Criteria – A policy that meets legislation and also informs and raises an awareness of diversity in the workplace, whilst actively assisting in encouraging greater diversity and increasing the numbers of under-represented groups within the workforce	Ongoing commitment	Annual review
A strategy to deal with the issues raised by monitoring recruitment. Success Criteria – A sustainable increase in numbers applying from under-represented groups reflecting and increase in the numbers achieving success.	Long term	31/03/09
A review of the advertising strategy to ensure widespread coverage to all members of the community and particular target groups. Success Criteria – A sustainable increase in numbers applying thereby further diversifying the workforce.	Long term	31/03/09

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AIM	TIMESCALE	TARGET DATE
<p>Ensure that the workforce is representative of our diverse community.</p> <p>Success Criteria – Community representation in the workforce is achieved.</p>	Long Term	01/04/09
<p>To ensure that equality feeds into all aspects of policy, employment and service delivery</p> <p>Success Criteria –Improvement from level 1 to Level 2 on the Equality Standard for Local Government</p>	Short Term	01/04/07
<p>Policies/procedures to be tested for differences of application to groups of employees or to different sections of the community using the equality impact assessment procedure.</p> <p>Success Criteria- All policies and procedures will not affect one or more groups in a different way to any other group(s).</p>	Medium term	01/04/08
<p>Equality and diversity monitoring to be undertaken.</p> <p>Success Criteria – No adverse effects are apparent between diverse members of the community</p>	Ongoing commitment	Quarterly monitoring
<p>A rights and responsibilities document to be produced.</p> <p>Success Criteria – Policy approved by the Authority and issued to all new starters and available to all employees.</p>		Complete
<p>To develop a comprehensive Disability Equality Scheme and fully implement within the Service</p> <p>Success Criteria - A policy that meets legislation and also informs and raises an awareness of diversity in the workplace</p>	Short Term	31/12/06
<p>An equal pay audit to be undertaken separately for Green Book staff</p> <p>Success Criteria – The audit proves that there are no differences between the remuneration of men and women employed.</p>	Short Term	31/03/06

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AIM	TIMESCALE	TARGET DATE
<p>Provide our people with an understanding of where they fit into the organisation and to create an environment where staff feel proud to work for the Authority</p>		
<p>A review of the establishment takes place to introduce a comprehensive role alignment and role justification policy.</p> <p>Success Criteria – Rank to role fully completed and equivalent managerial roles implemented for corporate staff.</p>	<p>Short Term</p>	<p>01/04/06</p>
<p>That a communication strategy be introduced which employs a wide range of communication methods.</p> <p>Success Criteria – Measured improvements in communication within the organisation.</p>	<p>Short term</p>	<p>31/12/06</p>
<p>To undertake briefing sessions for all staff and for their managers.</p> <p>Success Criteria – Managers and staff display a measurable increasing in understanding of this issue.</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>	<p>31/12/07</p>
<p>To ensure necessary HR guidance and information is readily available to all.</p> <p>Success Criteria – All necessary HR guidance is available via the intranet.</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>	<p>01/04/08</p>
<p>To employ an employee attitude survey considering fully the needs of the staff.</p> <p>Success Criteria- Measured changes in culture, and resultant recommendations fully implemented</p>	<p>Medium term</p>	<p>01/04/08</p>
<p>To review the terms and conditions of service for FRS staff (local conditions of service)</p> <p>Success Criteria – Full Harmonisation (where possible) between Green and Grey book employees</p>	<p>Long Term</p>	<p>01/04/10</p>

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AIM	TIMESCALE	TARGET DATE
Define and embed the standards of leadership expected at all levels, providing appropriate individual development in accordance with the principles of IPDS		
<p>Fully implement IPDS within the Service</p> <p>Success Criteria – IPDS implemented and monitoring shows improvements in the quality of identified learning and development thereby increasing the potential of our staff and improving the managerial qualities of our leaders</p>	Short Term	31/12/06
<p>To critically examine assessment centres for corporate staff in line with IPDS.</p> <p>Success Criteria – Implementation of robust selection procedures based upon the principles of IPDS.</p>	Medium term	01/04/07
<p>A management of change policy/strategy is introduced to take forward the changing needs of the organisation, which embraces communication and liaison as a core feature.</p> <p>Success Criteria- Successful management of change process.</p>	Medium term	01/04/08
<p>The national Assessment and Development (ADCs) process is fully embedded into the Service</p> <p>Success Criteria – ADCs provide sufficient persons to meet the organisational need</p>	Medium term	01/04/08

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AIM	TIMESCALE	TARGET DATE
Clearly identify and define the roles and responsibilities in managing human resources within the Authority and the varying functions which contribute to this		
<p>To implement an efficient IT system for HR function covering all staff within the organisation which ensures access to:-</p> <p>Establishment data</p> <p>Sickness Records</p> <p>Learning and Development Records</p> <p>Personal Staff Data</p> <p>Monitoring Information</p> <p>Succession Planning Data</p> <p>Success Criteria- The full implementation of the above with one point of entry and access throughout the organisation.</p>		Complete
<p>To review the discipline procedure for all staff.</p> <p>Success Criteria – The implementation of any resultant recommendations.</p>		Complete
<p>To produce a capability procedure for all staff.</p> <p>Success Criteria – The implementation of any resultant recommendations.</p>		Complete
<p>To review the grievance procedure for all staff.</p> <p>Success Criteria – The implementation of any resultant recommendations.</p>		Complete
<p>To introduce an effective and targeted attendance management policy and procedure</p> <p>Success Criteria- A visible reduction in sickness absence and a reduction in the amount of time lost due to sickness</p>	Ongoing commitment	Quarterly reviews, annual reports
<p>To ensure that the Fire Authority is regularly consulted about the organisations performance in managing sickness absence.</p> <p>Success Criteria – Six monthly consultations with the Authority.</p>	Ongoing commitment	Six monthly consultations

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AIM	TIMESCALE	TARGET DATE
<p>To provide briefing sessions for line managers in managing sickness absence.</p> <p>Success Criteria – Smooth operation of procedure with minimum help desk queries.</p>	Ongoing	Six monthly sessions
<p>To ensure an efficient appeals mechanism relating to the above</p> <p>Success Criteria- Measured in operation, the mechanism produces effective and timely results.</p>	Short term	31/12/06
<p>To ensure an efficient evaluation system for new/proposed corporate positions.</p> <p>Success Criteria – There is no delay in filling new/proposed posts based upon the Authority average</p>	Short Term	31/12/06
<p>To consider aspects of harmonisation between all positions</p> <p>Success Criteria – The creation of parity between staff</p>	Short term	31/12/06
<p>To complete the single status exercise for corporate staff.</p> <p>Success Criteria - Implement the results of the single status exercise</p>	Short term	01/04/07
<p>To undertake briefing sessions for corporate staff and for their managers.</p> <p>Success Criteria – Managers and staff display a measurable increasing in understanding of this issue.</p>	Short term	01/04/07

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AIM	TIMESCALE	TARGET DATE
Ensure that the service we provide to all staff fulfils their needs and is delivered in an efficient and effective manner in line with the Best Value principles		
<p>To work towards reducing the number of early retirements for all staff.</p> <p>Success Criteria – A reduction in the number of early retirements to the upper quartile figure for UK fire services.</p>	Ongoing	Annual reductions
<p>A policy document outlining the procedure for dealing with corporate support staff who may not be fit enough to continue in their present position ie redeployment.</p> <p>Success Criteria- A workable redeployment policy in operation.</p>	Short term	30/06/07
<p>To monitor resignations and to undertake meaningful exit interviews, including the use of external providers for exit interviews.</p> <p>Success Criteria – Quarterly reports in terms of exit interviews and identification of trends with appropriate corrective action.</p>	Ongoing	Quarterly reports
<p>To examine the Authority's relocation procedure for personnel joining the service from outside the locality.</p> <p>Success Criteria – A robust and practical policy implemented.</p>		Complete
<p>To examine all issues which may affect personnel in relocating to a new workplace within the Authority ie relocation to Barmston Mere and to other locations under the PPP scheme.</p> <p>Success Criteria – A smooth transition to the new locations with the least detrimental affect on staff.</p>		Complete
<p>To ensure selection policies enable the organisation to attract and recruit staff of the highest calibre</p> <p>Success Criteria – Full implementation of IPDS.</p>	Medium term	01/04/07
<p>To review promotion procedures for operational personnel.</p> <p>Success Criteria – A procedure which is fully aligned with and compliments IDPS</p>		Complete and ongoing

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AIM	TIMESCALE	TARGET DATE
Deliver our commitment to the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006 - 2008		
<p>To develop a single regional recruitment strategy</p> <p>Success Criteria – Full implementation of recruitment strategy ensuring each FRS is able to meet its firefighter recruitment requirements at the appropriate time using the nationally agreed firefighter selection tests.</p>	Medium Term	01/04/08
<p>To develop a single regional strategy for disciplinary procedures</p> <p>Success Criteria – All Services implement the same strategy</p>		Complete
<p>Identify opportunities for collaborative delivery of development and training opportunities</p> <p>Identify and support common approaches to core training</p> <p>Complete a regional audit of training delivery</p> <p>Success Criteria – Learning and development is delivered within each FRS in the most proven cost-effective and efficient manner.</p>	Short Term	01/04/07
<p>To identify the opportunity for regional service delivery in respect of discipline</p> <p>Success Criteria – All Services adopt a proven cost-effective and efficient delivery system</p>	Short Term	01/04/07
<p>To develop a single regional strategy for mobility</p> <p>Success Criteria – All Services enjoy mobility of workforce</p>	Short Term	01/04/07
<p>To collaborate on regional recruitment and selection procedures for all staff.</p> <p>Success Criteria – A procedure which is fully implemented within each FRS delivering staff to the same standard and compliments IDPS</p>	Medium term	01/04/08
<p>To identify opportunities for a single service delivery point.</p> <p>Success Criteria – Implementation of robust selection procedures based upon IPDS at a single service delivery point.</p>	Medium term	01/04/08

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: 11 SEPTEMBER 2006

SUBJECT: REGIONAL DIVERSITY STRATEGY

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY,
THE FINANCE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The basic concept of managing diversity accepts that the workforce consists of a diverse population of people. The diversity consists of visible and non-visible difference, which includes factors such as sex, age, background, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, personality and work style. It is founded on the premise that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, where their targets are being fully utilised and in which organisations goals are met.
- 1.2 The Regional Management Board (RMB) has six key strategic policy workstreams, one of which is to '*introduce regional personnel and human resource functions*'. Underpinning the local HR Strategy is therefore the requirement for a Regional Diversity Strategy. The work has now been concluded and a draft Regional Diversity Strategy is attached for consideration and/or approval by Members.

2 BUSINESS DRIVERS

- 2.1 The main business drivers for the fire and rescue service to adopt strategies relating to diversity are:
- Managing risk and reputation
 - Engender personal ownership
 - Enhance individual and business performance
 - Developing a creative and innovative culture
 - Attraction, retention and development of staff
- 2.2 One of the key components of a diversity strategy remains the need to be a fair and equitable employer. All internal policies and procedures must reflect the requirements of the law. One of the major corporate risks in failing to have equitable HR policies and strategies in place is in terms of significant damage to the image and reputation of the Service and its staff.

3 DEVELOPING A CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE CULTURE

- 3.1 The benefits of a diverse workforce are the value of having different people in the team, department or Service. The freshness and richness that difference brings to team, budget or strategy meetings is valuable and on the whole leads to better quality decisions and outputs. The other obvious benefit is that a diverse team understands diverse service users and communities.

4 CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

4.1 There is naturally a strong alignment between the agendas of diversity and corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the fire and rescue service has firmly positioned diversity at the heart of its corporate social responsibility strategy with the adoption of its Core Values. The Service is not only expected to be fair and equitable, but to take greater responsibility for the welfare of employees and to manage areas such as:

- Work life balance
- Dignity at Work
- Harassment and Bullying
- Workplace stress and absenteeism
- Long-hours and presenteeism
- Unreasonable workloads, timescales

4.2 When individuals begin to see evidence of the Service driving forward the CSR agenda with real demonstrable change, this undoubtedly enhances the attractiveness of that service both as an employer and service provider.

5 DIVERSITY STRATEGY

5.1 Diversity is a fundamental business issue and requires long term planning and commitment to effect real personal and organisational change. To facilitate this the strategy outlines:

- Our vision statement
- Our values
- Our Objectives

5.2 Attached at Appendix A is the draft Regional Equality Strategy for consideration and approval by Members. The Chief Fire Officer is pleased to report that in many respects, issues contained in the Regional Strategy – Action Plan form an integral part of this Authority's work programme and indeed, in a number of areas, have already been achieved.

6 EQUALITY STANDARD FOR MODERNISATION

6.1 To assist in meeting our Diversity Strategy there is a need to put in place comprehensive audit and monitoring systems. One of the recognised best practice methods of achieving that is to adopt the Equality Standard for Local Government as this is the major driver for equality practice. Working with the five levels of the Standard will allow this Service to introduce a comprehensive and systematic approach to dealing with equality and diversity in all aspects of policy making, service delivery and employment.

6.2 The Chief Fire Officer is also pleased to report that, by the end of this financial year the Authority will be at Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, an improvement from the previous years Level 1.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The financial implications of implementing this Strategy are not considered to be significant and will be met from existing budgetary provision in the current year, with future provision made as appropriate.

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members are recommended to:

- a) Approve the regional diversity strategy;
- b) Endorse the progress made in respect of the Equality Standard for Local Government;
- c) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The undermentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Strategic Plan 2006-2011
- National Framework 2006 - 2008

The North East Fire & Rescue Services

'Strategy into Action'

2006-2009

Cleveland Fire Brigade
Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service
Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service
Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service

1 Introduction

1.1 The regional vision for equality and diversity is that:

We will create a culture, in accordance with our fire service values, which recognises all the differences that employees and communities bring. We will do this by adopting fair and equitable employment policies and ensuring diversity is mainstreamed throughout our service delivery. This will ensure we provide the best possible service to our individual communities.

1.2 In order to achieve this vision, this must be translated into an approach to equality and diversity which is easily understood and owned by all staff. This vision must also be supported by a corporate commitment to equality and diversity which goes beyond rhetoric and the responsibility of just its Diversity officers or HR staff.

1.3 All Fire and Rescue services have contributed to the development of this strategy and it is therefore anticipated that this document should meet the needs of those staff who are charged with the principle responsibility for ensuring all obligations are met.

1.4 The regional vision can be translated into two cornerstones fundamental to the success of equality and diversity. These being:

- To develop an organisation where its staff and the local community perceive the Fire & Rescue Service as a model service, where all feel valued and receive fair, equitable and appropriate service but are treated in a way that responds to and recognises their specific needs.
- To develop a workforce that reflects the community they serve and one which is fully aware of and contributes to equality and diversity.

2 Strategy into Action

2.1 A coherent and systematic approach is essential and the principal purpose of this document is to highlight what we should be doing if all of us are to meet the requirements places upon us by: legislation, Comprehensive performance assessment, equality standards for local government and other good practice initiatives and processes.

2.2 If the equality and diversity strategy is to be successful it too must be built upon the principles of equality and diversity. The regional approach must reflect equality in the sense that there must be equitable and consistent practices and messages across all four services with equal access to resources and knowledge. However to reflect diversity, each service needs to be able to respond to the specific needs of their staff or local communities and

good practice will be encouraged over and above the minimum requirements that each service must meet.

- 2.3 To achieve our objectives, key goals with specific objectives have been identified, all of which are then translated into a comprehensive action plan. This document however should be viewed as an evolving document that will reflect changes in the law, strategy and our achievement of key objectives.

Goal 1	Legislative Requirements
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All F&RS will demonstrate their commitment to equality and diversity by consistently meeting and fulfilling all obligations under law in particular:

- Ensure all relevant policies and procedure are in place, current, agreed and up to date and reflect all legislative developments
- Ensure all staff are aware of the legal implications for equality and diversity and their own responsibilities
- Meet the general and specific duties laid down by the RES
- Developing an all encompassing Equality Scheme that will fulfil future duties that we are expected to meet such as disability equality and gender equality, tackling any inequalities in service delivery
- Ensuring Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken as appropriate

Goal 2	Performance Management
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The F&RS need to demonstrate measurable progress towards achieving equality and diversity within its services. In order to achieve this, all F&RS will meet the specific targets set by:

- Performance management systems and targets such as
 - The CPA process
 - Equality Standards for Local Government
 - Race Equality Scheme (and soon to be Equality scheme)
 - Government Recruitment Targets
 - Good Practice such as standards set by external bodies such as Opportunity Now, Disability Two Ticks symbol, Stonewall, Age
- Regular monitoring and review of data should take place so to highlight progress and achievements as well as enabling appropriate action to take place when areas for improvement are highlighted.
- Benchmarking against equality and diversity initiatives against other Fire and Rescue services and other public bodies should also take place.
- Evaluation of all equality and diversity initiatives not just training should take place in order for us to be able to demonstrate that we are and have made a difference and whether or not some initiatives have been successful. This evaluation will also help shape future policy and developments.

Goal 3**Organisational Strategy, policy and procedure**

All F&RS need to ensure that their organisation is able to meet legislative and performance management requirements by:

- That Business planning takes into consideration and reflects all relevant equality and diversity issues
- Ensuring there is in place an Equality & Diversity policy that underpins all the service is trying to achieve
- Develop a clear and concise Bullying and Harassment policy
- Ensure all staff who participate in Recruitment and Selection have undertaken training in this area.
- Requiring that Equality and Diversity features into key individual's objectives
- Equal pay audits are regularly undertaken
- Exit information is obtained in order to capture the experience of all staff in particular all BME or female staff
- Members and Union Representatives are clearly involved in and champion equality and diversity and support is evident across the whole of the service
- Appropriate networks and groups exist within each service and across the region in order to progress initiatives

All services will demonstrate that they are able to respond appropriately to the needs of all their staff by:

- Supporting those staff who experience health problems or develop a disability
- Recognise religious or cultural commitments
- Support alternative working patterns which may enable the individual to meet their work/life demands
- Ensuring all policies and procedures are supportive of and inclusive of all the needs of all the staff

Goal 4**Recruitment, Selection & Retention**

All services will attempt to ensure that their workforce profile reflects that of the community through encouraging applications from many diverse groups. To achieve this all fire and rescue services must:

- Make sure all targets (national and local) are clearly understood, communicated and owned
- Market themselves appropriately and promote a positive, inclusive image of the F&RS to encourage applications from under represented groups through considering the explicit and implicit messages that they contain
- Where appropriate use high impact positive action initiatives to encourage these applications
- Ensure all recruitment and selection processes and procedures themselves support the commitment to equality and diversity

- Develop tracker systems so that it can be understood where these under represented groups 'fall' out of the recruitment process

All services will attempt to retain committed and enthusiastic staff by ensuring that:

- All employees have equal access to promotion, secondments, training and development
- All staff are able to work in a safe and supportive environment free from bullying, harassment, intimidation, violent, abusive or offensive behaviour
- The contribution made by all members of staff are valued and appropriately recognised

Goal 5	Training, Learning & Development
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All services will act as responsible employers by ensuring that all staff have access to training and development in order for them to be aware of, fulfil and meet the diverse needs of their colleagues, service users and local partners. To achieve this, all services must ensure:

- all staff (including members) receive an Induction which covers Service values, organisational expectations and their own responsibilities for equality and diversity
- all staff (including members) attend Equality & Diversity awareness training provision to access to further training and development sessions such as cultural awareness, disability awareness, gender awareness
- Equality and diversity must also be an integral part of the design and delivery of all training
- All training, development and learning is designed to cross map with the IPDS system as well as supporting staff in achieving promotion.
- A Virtual Regional resource room is developed to support the professional development of those delivering on the diversity agenda and personal development of all staff

Goal 6	Communication, Collaboration & Information
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The F&RS will attempt to ensure that all services are accessible, fair and appropriate to the needs of the diverse populations that they serve:

- All services will attempt to provide services free from discrimination and appropriate to their needs by working with their local communities and key stakeholders, attempts should be made not only to identify how to engage with these key stakeholders but how they can actively be part of any relevant consultations.
- All members of the community should also be aware of how to access our services or voice their concerns and therefore Information and resources should be available to all

All staff and our local communities need to be aware of and understand our commitment to equality and diversity and what this means to them through each service communicating objectives, requirements and achievements. Each service should ensure:

- All information is available or could be made available in alternative languages and formats
- A dedicated Equality & Diversity webpage for both the Intranet and Internet is developed and kept up to date which can promote activities as well as asking for feedback from users. The websites should also support the recruitment process as well as support equality and diversity initiatives.
- All staff should receive a Staff handbook which includes information and guidance on equality and diversity matters
- A system is developed for collating good practice which is then showcased on a local and national basis and where appropriate entered for Awards or developed into a Regional Conference
- A quarterly Regional Diversity newsletter is used to support training and development needs as well as keeping staff up to date with all relevant changes and amendments
- Station visits are undertaken in each area which also include a Diversity officer to allow for a two way exchange of information and views which should help develop future pieces of work
- Promote membership of any local or national groups that we are members of and fully utilise any benefits that this membership brings.

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 The North East Fire and Rescue Services are fully committed to equality and diversity and it is this commitment that has been translated into a meaningful strategy and action plan. Progress has been made towards the equality and diversity agenda but specific goals and objectives are to be met if the authorities are to fulfil all obligations under legislation, performance management and good practice. Equality and Diversity is the responsibility of all staff and this responsibility has therefore been reflected throughout the action plan.

REGIONAL DIVERSITY STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN

Date 05/07/2006

Progress Report	Service	PROGRESS TO DATE
ISSUE	ACTION	
1		
Legislative Requirements		
Policies and procedures	All policies and procedures current and have been Equality Impact assessed	Commenced and ongoing
	All HR related policies and procedures reviewed to ensure they reflect current equalities legislation and the varied circumstances of all our staff.	Commenced and ongoing
	All staff are aware of all relevant policies, procedures, legislation, responsibilities and obligations with regards to E&D.	Staff are briefed at induction, team meetings, internal communication, training and awareness sessions.
Race Equality Scheme	Progress towards achieving the aims of the scheme Annual review undertaken	Requires review Requires review
Disability	Drafting of a new Disability Equality Scheme	Regional approach commenced
Gender	Equal pay audits to be conducted to ensure our pay systems support equality.	Job evaluation commenced
	Preparation for the new Gender Equality Duty which comes into force 2007.	Regional approach TBA
Sexual Orientation	All policies and procedures are inclusive to all members	Now working with Stonewall
Age	Preparation for the new Age legislation	Ongoing. Questions submitted to National D&E Conference with ACAS & DCLG in July
2		
Performance management		
CPA	All organisations need to respond the specific equality and diversity issues highlighted their respective CPA reports	CPA DoT document and internal assessment underway with Corporate Planning.
ES4LG	Action Plans need to be developed by each organisation as to how each level will be achieved, in particular Level 2	Awaiting Fire Service standard expected end of October.
Good practice/Benchmarking	Opportunity Now/Disability Two Ticks symbol/Stonewall/Employers Forum on Age	Joined & working with Stonewall. Disability Two Ticks symbol review on 7 th July

Items greyed out have been completed for this Authority

REGIONAL DIVERSITY STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN

ISSUE	ACTION	PROGRESS TO DATE
3 Organisational strategy, policy and procedure		
Business Planning process	Equality and Diversity is inherent in the business planning process	Yes
Policy and Procedure	There is a Corporate Equality and Diversity plan, policy and procedure	Yes
	The Bullying and Harassment policy should be communicated to all staff with clearly identify roles and responsibilities.	New booklet was issued in Jan/Feb 06 to all employees and is issued at induction and included in training
	Consideration of a Regional network of B&H advisors who are trained and appropriately supported on a regular basis	Ongoing
	All appointing officers and those involved in the selection process should be fully aware of their legal obligations and as well as trying to prevent discriminatory practices.	Recruitment & Selection courses ongoing
	Policies which support family friendly or individual friendly practices should be developed and made available.	Available & have been extended to all employees.
	Regional models for all policies and procedures could be developed which would involve a sharing of knowledge, skills and expertise as well as ensuring a consistent approach.	Sharing best practice ongoing for example Diversity Equality Scheme.
Values and Behaviours	All organisations must clearly communicate their values to their staff so that these are clearly understood and owned by all.	Complete – values not part of core training schemes
Objectives & Accountability	Key members of staff such as managers, HR staff, Occupational Health and Community Safety should have specific equality and diversity goals written into their objectives other than those required by IPDS.	Complete – in job descriptions

Items greyed out have been completed for this Authority

REGIONAL DIVERSITY STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN

ISSUE	ACTION	PROGRESS TO DATE
Exit Information	Information relating to an individual's experience of working within the Fire Service should be collected and acted upon where issues of E&D are raised	Exit interview system has been revised. The D&E Officer is included within the process.
Members & Staff Representatives	Members and Staff Representatives should be encouraged to take a greater role in championing equality and diversity issues.	2 recently elected UNISON reps. Have been invited to attend meetings.
Networks and Groups	Equality and Diversity related groups should be established and maintained within each service or across the region as appropriate. Each group should have clear terms of reference which would link to the organisations equality and diversity goals.	A D&E Committee is in place. Regional steering group in place.
4 Recruitment, Selection and Retention		
Targets	Progress towards Government targets	Waiting statement re revision of targets from DCLG which will include all strands of D&E
Marketing	Positive images and messages both written and visual evident in all materials that we produce.	Communications Manager is pro-actively developing this aspect
Positive action	Targeted events undertaken on a regular basis	To be implemented on next regional recruitment process.
Tracker systems	Tracker systems should be in place	Monitoring takes place and is reported to D&E committee and DCLG.
5 Training, Learning and Development		
Induction	All staff should receive an Organisation and departmental induction. This induction should highlight values, organisational expectations, behaviours and our commitment to equality and diversity	Complete
Training for all	All staff should attend Equality and Diversity awareness training on a regular basis	A trial of an on-line D&E module is currently underway by a small number of operational employees.

Items greyed out have been completed for this Authority

REGIONAL DIVERSITY STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN

ISSUE	ACTION	PROGRESS TO DATE
Further Learning & Development	Cultural Awareness, Gender Awareness, Disability Awareness, EIA and Managing Diversity should be developed and made available to all staff. This may be delivered on a Regional basis.	In partnership. For example some employees will be attending a Stonewall masterclass in November.
Mentoring & Role Models	Mentoring schemes and role models should be encouraged so to help to raise profile of under represented groups. This should be developed on a regional basis so to allow for an exchange of experience.	Best practice examples will be shared via CFOA.
Design and Delivery	This reflects equality and diversity issues.	Publicity reflects ethnicity/gender mix
Cross mapping	All Equality and Diversity training should also cross map to other key issues such as IPDS, PQA's	In place.
Resource room	A virtual resource room should be developed which would include a document database, books, videos and other relevant materials.	Sharing of training material as appropriate upon request.
6 Communication, collaboration and Information		
Alternative formats and languages	Where possible information and resources should be (or could easily) be made available in alternative languages or formats to ensure that all information is accessible to both staff and members of the community	Complete for this Authority
Web pages	There should be pages on both the Internet and intranet devoted to equality and diversity which we can use to provide information and obtain feedback from both staff and public	Regular updates will be posted to the recently created Diversity & Equality pages which have been made easier to access from the home page.
Internal	Stations/watch visits supported by Union representatives and Equalities Officers should take place	Undertaken in partnership in this Authority

Items greyed out have been completed for this Authority

REGIONAL DIVERSITY STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN

ISSUE	ACTION	PROGRESS TO DATE
	Equality and Diversity achievements, statistics, objectives and challenges should be published	The magazine Culture Club is being utilised as part of the ongoing process.
	A system needs to be established to ensure that good practice is regularly collated, shared and promoted across the region.	Ongoing and will be reinforced by CFOA updates.
External	Consideration should be given to hosting a Regional conference which could be used to highlight the work of the fire service and show case good practice	Discussed at Regional Steering group
	Develop relationship with other key players in the community and influence our suppliers.	Requires further development by regional team.

Items greyed out have been completed for this Authority

SUBJECT: EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY (AGE) REGULATIONS 2006

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY, THE FINANCE OFFICER AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Age Discrimination Legislation is due to come into effect from 1 October 2006. The legislation will prohibit unjustified direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of age, and harassment and victimisation on grounds of age.
- 1.2 The new law will apply to all workers, employees, job seekers and trainees.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide information for Members in relation to the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006; to note that the Chief Fire Officer is presently assessing the impact of these Regulations upon current policies and procedures; and also for Members to consider and/or approve the Management of Retirement Procedure attached to this report.

2 AGE DISCRIMINATION

- 2.1 **Direct discrimination:** is less favourable treatment on grounds of age in employment and will occur where a person is treated less favourably than another person in a comparable situation.
- 2.2 **Indirect discrimination:** will occur when selection criteria, policies, benefits or practice, when applied to all employees causes particular disadvantage to those people of a particular age group. But as with direct discrimination, indirect age discrimination will not be unlawful if it can be shown to be objectively justified.
- 2.3 **Harassment:** is defined as unwanted conduct, that violates a persons dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Harassment on grounds of age cannot be objectively justified.
- 2.4 **Victimisation:** is defined as being treated unfairly as a consequence of making a complaint of age discrimination.

3 OBJECTIVE JUSTIFICATION

- 3.1 You may treat people differently on the grounds of their age if you have an Objective justification. In order to show objective justification an employer will need to be able to show that the discrimination in question is a "proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim". The employer will have to show that there is a very good reason for treating a person less favourably.

4 GENUINE OCCUPATIONAL REQUIREMENT

- 4.1 It will be lawful for an employer to treat people differently if it is a genuine occupational requirement that the job holder must be of a particular age. When deciding if this applies, it will be necessary to consider carefully the nature of the work or context. In practice, this is likely to be very difficult to demonstrate.

5 THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

- 5.1 It will be lawful to follow the age bands and minimum wage levels set out in the national minimum wage legislation.

6 SERVICE RELATED BENEFIT

- 6.1 Employers may continue to award pay and benefits to employees based on length of service. However, for any employee whose service exceeds 5 years the employer will have to show that the service related benefit must reasonably appear to fulfil a business need.

7 UNFAIR DISMISSAL, REDUNDANCY AND STATUTORY SICK PAY

- 7.1 The regulations remove the current age limit for unfair dismissal, statutory redundancy payments and statutory sick pay. It will continue to be lawful for the amount of redundancy payments to be calculated using the employees age, length of service and weekly pay.

8 OCCUPATIONAL PENSIONS

- 8.1 The regulations will not effect the age at which people can claim their state pension and will provide exemptions for many age-based rules in occupational pension schemes.
- 8.2 The Firefighters' Pension Scheme no longer has a compulsory retirement provision other than the national default retirement age of 65.

9 RETIREMENT

- 9.1 The regulations set a national default retirement age of 65 for both men and woman (to be reviewed in 2011) making compulsory retirement below 65 unlawful unless objectively justified.
- 9.2 Employers will be able to retire employees at 65 or over or, where objectively justified, at a lower normal retirement age.
- 9.2 Under the new regulations an employer who wishes to retire an employee will have to inform that employee, at least 6 months (but no more than 12 months) in advance, of his/her intended retirement date. The employer must also remind the employee of their obligation to give consideration to any request to work after the normal retirement age. In order not to raise the expectations of the employee it should be explained that there is an entitlement to refuse the request.

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

- 9.3 If the employee requests in writing not to be retired, the employer has a duty to consider that request before the employee is retired. A meeting should be arranged within a reasonable period of time to discuss the request.
- 9.4 The new right is only a right to request staying on. The employer can refuse the request and the employee can appeal against this decision, however, the regulations do not require the employer to give their reasons for the decision.
- 9.5 A 'Management of Retirements' procedure has been produced and is attached at Appendix A for the information of and approval by Members.

10 POSITIVE ACTION

- 10.1 The regulations contain an exception from unlawful age discrimination in relation to acts done or in connection with, training to fit people of a particular age or age group for particular work or encouraging people of a particular age or age group to take advantage of opportunities for doing particular work.

11 ACTION BY THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

- 11.1 The Chief Fire Officer is presently undertaking a comprehensive review of all current policies and procedures to assess the impact of these Regulations and, where appropriate further reports will be presented to Members for consideration and/or approval.

12 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The financial implications of implementing these Regulations are not considered to be significant and will be met from existing budgetary provision in the current year, with future provision made as appropriate.

11 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The equality and fairness implications are contained within the body of this report.

12 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

13 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 The Authority is recommended to:
- a) Note that changes that the legislation introduces;
 - b) Endorse the actions taken by the Chief Fire Officer;
 - c) Approve the 'Management of Retirement' procedure;
 - d) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The undermentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- ACAS Guide for employers – Age and the Workplace
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

APPENDIX A

Management of Retirement Procedure

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to actively preventing discrimination occurring in all aspects of employment. This document sets out our policy and approach to managing retirement at the national default retirement age.
- 1.2 The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 introduce a national default retirement age of 65 (which is in line with our default retirement age for Green book staff); this means that it will not amount to age discrimination if employers retire employees at or above the age of 65. The Government intends to review the default retirement age in 2011.
- 1.3 The Age Regulations set out a new procedure that must be used for any compulsory retirement referred to as the duty to consider procedure. The duty to consider procedure requires employers to consider any request made by an employee to work beyond the national default retirement age. The way in which the Authority is approaching the duty to consider procedure is set out later in this document.

2 Policy Statement

- 2.1 It is the Authority's policy to retire employees at the national default retirement age of 65 years, which will be known as a planned retirement date. As a major employer we are committed to ensuring that we have a diverse workforce that represents all sections of the community. We understand that an increasing proportion of the workforce may wish to consider working beyond the national default retirement age.
- 2.2 Therefore, as long as an employee is fully fit and competent in their role and the Authority still has a need for employees to do the type of work carried out by the employee, an individual may, at the Authority's discretion, be allowed to work beyond the age of 65.
- 2.3 No employee will be required to undergo a medical assessment to show their fitness to work simply because of their age. A medical assessment should only be carried out where there is a justified reason for doing so for example, the employee is in an operational Firefighting role or there is reason to be concerned over the person's fitness for work or to fulfil a health and safety or statutory requirement.
- 2.4 In accordance with the duty to consider procedure outlined in the Age Regulations an employee will be given prior written notice of the Authority's intention to retire them on reaching age 65. This notice will be issued no earlier than one year and not later than six months prior to the intended date of retirement. This notice will include details of the procedure for an employee to request working beyond the intended retirement date.

- 2.5 Should the Authority agree to an employee continuing to work beyond the age of 65, a new planned retirement date may be agreed at the time of granting any extension to work beyond 65.
- 2.6 An individual may request that employment continue indefinitely, for a stated period or until a stated date, however to ensure that individual needs and the duty to consider process can be accommodated, it is suggested that the new planned retirement date should be set no earlier than 6 months and that a stated date or review period is mutually agreed.
- 2.7 An employee may submit further applications to work beyond any new planned retirement date in line with the procedures outlined in the Authority's duty to consider procedure, however only one request to carry on working during an intended retirement date may be made.

3 Benefits of the Retirement Policy

- 3.1 By ensuring that opportunities are presented to retain older employees this will;
- Demonstrate that the Authority values all employees as individuals and is committed to supporting their specific needs;
 - Encourage and enable managers and employees to work in partnership to understand and to meet the needs of both the service and the individual;
 - Allow the Authority to become an employer of choice through demonstrating commitment to employees;
 - Assist with the retention of employees and allow the Authority to develop a highly trained and committed workforce.

4 Planned Retirements

- 4.1 The following conditions must be met for a retirement to be considered as a 'planned retirement';
- the retirement takes effect at the national default retirement age of 65;
 - the retirement takes effect at the employer's justified normal retirement age;
 - the employer has given at least 6 months written notice to the employee of the retirement date.
- 4.2 A retirement will also be considered as planned, where the retirement would have taken place on another planned retirement date, but was delayed due to the employer complying with the duty to consider working beyond that date.
- 4.3 It is possible for an employee to request early retirement and requests will be considered in line with the Authority's current procedures.

- 4.4 Retirement will be added to the list of potentially fair reasons for dismissal set out in the Employment Rights Act 1996. This allows an employer to dismiss fairly an employee at age 65 or above provided the dismissal is for retirement, and it takes effect on a planned retirement date.

5 Unplanned Retirements

- 5.1 The Authority will not dismiss an individual for reasons of retirement, on a date which is not a planned retirement date.
- 5.2 The new section s.98Z of the Employment Relations Act 1996, states that to dismiss an employee, where they have not been notified of the right to make a request not to retire on the intended retirement date would be considered an unfair dismissal.

6 The Duty to Consider Procedure

- 6.1 The Authority will give employees written notification of the date on which they intend to retire them, outlining the employee's right to make a request to work beyond retirement. This notification will be given not more than 1 year and not less than six months prior to the planned retirement date. If for any reason notification is not provided within this timeframe, notice must be given at least 14 days before the retirement dismissal takes place.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1 The HR Department will be responsible for making sure that employees are given proper notification that they will be retired. As part of the workforce planning process, the HR Department is aware of the potential retirement dates for all employees.
- 7.2 The HR Department must ensure that an employee's retirement is managed in line with this policy. Whilst an employer does not have to substantiate a retirement dismissal other than the dismissal is for reasons of retirement; retirement is anticipated to be largely employee driven. Retirement should not be used as an alternative to capability, disciplinary or redundancy dismissals.

8 Requests to Continue Working

- 8.1 Employees wishing to submit a request to work beyond retirement should do so in writing at the earliest possible opportunity; this should be submitted not less than 3 months before the planned retirement date.
- 8.2 An individual may request that employment continue indefinitely, for a stated period or until a stated date, however to ensure that individual needs and the duty to consider process can be accommodated, the new planned retirement date should be set at no earlier than 6 months and that a stated date or review period is mutually agreed.

- 8.3 Only one request in relation to working beyond an intended retirement date can be made, therefore, where an extended period is agreed it is recommended that this is subject to regular reviews to ensure that an individual is able to submit such requests at an appropriate time.

9 Considering Requests to Continue Working

- 9.1 All requests must be made to the Chief Fire Officer and will be given full and fair consideration and no employee will be expected to undergo a medical assessment to show their fitness to work simply because of their age. A medical assessment should only be carried out where there is a justified reason for doing so for example, the employee wishes to continue in the operational role or there is reason to be concerned over the person's fitness for work or to fulfil a health and safety or statutory requirement.
- 9.2 The use of retirement should not be an alternative to redundancy and in any redundancy situation; age should not be a factor in determining selection.
- 9.3 Equally the use of retirement should not be an alternative to managing capability which should be managed in line with the Authority's Disciplinary procedures.
- 9.4 It may be appropriate to consider alternative working patterns as part of a phased approach to retirement and managers and employees are encouraged to consider all options available in line with business and individual needs.
- 9.5 The Authority is not required to give an employee a reason for refusing a request as if the retirement procedure has been followed the reason for dismissal will always be retirement. Employment Tribunals will not hear a claim challenging the adequacy of an employer's reason for refusing a request as retirement is considered to be a fair reason for dismissal.

10 Responding to Requests to Continue Working

- 10.1 Employees will receive a written, dated response to their request as soon as is reasonably practicable and usually within three months prior to their planned retirement date indicating that either:
- the employee may continue to work beyond retirement and that a new planned retirement date has been agreed, or
 - that the employee may continue to work beyond retirement and that a meeting has been arranged to agree a new planned retirement date, or
 - that the employee's request has been refused and that a meeting will take place to discuss the request.

It is not necessary to hold a meeting where the request is agreed.

- 10.2 If an employee's request is declined, a meeting to discuss this should be held as soon as is reasonably practicable. Employees may be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague. The employee's representative may confer with the employee during the meeting; however they should not answer questions that are put to the employee.
- 10.3 If the meeting cannot be held within a reasonable period, employees may be informed of the Authority's decision in writing. In this situation steps must be taken to ensure that the employee's views are known and considered. The employee should be given a response at the earliest opportunity.
- 10.4 Any response to a request to work beyond a planned retirement date must be given in writing and dated. If the notification relates to a refusal to grant working beyond retirement, the letter should confirm that the employee will be retired and the date on which this will take effect, and include details of the appeals procedure.

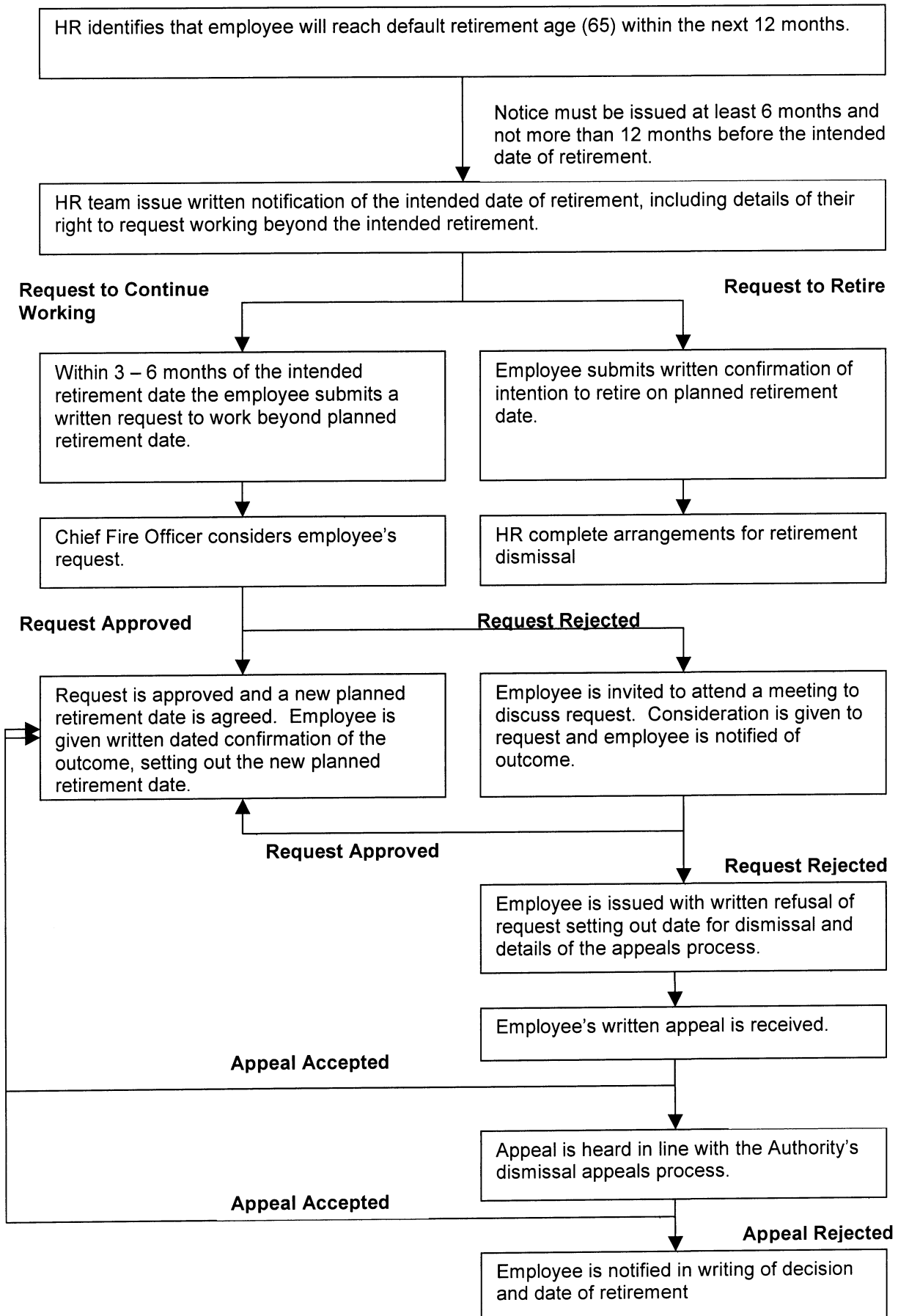
11 Appeals

- 11.1 As an appeal may potentially end in dismissal, and to ensure all appeals are treated fairly and consistently, appeals will be heard in line with the Authority's current dismissal appeals process. Details can be found in the Disciplinary Procedures.
- 11.2 If an employee wishes to appeal against a decision to refuse a request to work beyond retirement, they should submit a written and dated request to the Chief Fire Officer, setting out the grounds of their appeal. Any appeal should be made as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- 11.3 The appeal will be heard in line with the aims of this policy under the Disciplinary appeals procedures as laid out in Admin Procedure 3.5.

12 Procedural Flow chart

- 12.1 A flow chart outlining the stages in the duty to consider procedure can be found below.

How the 'Duty to Consider' process works



TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No.7

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: 11 SEPTEMBER 2006

SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE PROCESS**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, FINANCE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following the introduction of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Fire Services (Appointment and Promotion)(England and Wales) Regulations 2004 were repealed. Guidance, issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG previously ODPM), replaced those regulations and was intended to help fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) ensure that they assess, develop and promote staff on the basis of good practice in accordance with legal requirements and the principles of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS).
- 1.2 In addition, the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2004/5 stated that authorities should "use the nationally developed personal qualities and attributes for assessing the potential of candidates for a new operational ... role". The "Personal Qualities and Attributes" (PQAs) have been developed for operational staff at the three managerial levels (supervisory, middle and strategic) within the IPDS role structure. These PQAs define the behaviours required for effective performance in managerial roles. It is important to note that this process applies equally to all staff i.e. operational and corporate staff.
- 1.3 The PQA framework should be used to assess people's potential to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to perform effectively in a new role. Within the IPDS system, the outcome of these assessments will determine access to development programmes and this, in turn, will help determine access to promotion opportunities. Together with other IPDS guidance material, the PQAs will also help inform development needs and learning objectives for individuals.
- 1.4 To that end, DCLG (ODPM) sponsored the production of a national Assessment and Development Toolkit for the UK Fire and Rescue Service. This toolkit effectively replaces previously utilised assessment processes within the Service as a whole. In fact, the latest National Framework 2006-08 makes it clear that Central Government's expectations are that authorities will use the new national Assessment Development Centres (ADC) processes, which were designed to measure the PQAs, and have them in place before April 2007. It is pleasing to report that this Authority will have the full ADC process in place including regional collaboration by April 2007.

2 THE NATIONAL ADC PROCESS

2.1 Nationally three ADC toolkits have been developed and issued to authorities for use, namely:

- Supervisory Manager– for roles of Crew and Watch Manager;
- Middle Manager- for the roles of Station and Group Manager;
- Strategic Manager – for the roles of Area and Brigade Manager

2.2 During 2005, the Chief Fire Officer examined the potential requirements of the Supervisory and Middle Manger ADC. It was obvious from the resource requirements inherent within the process, and following the guidance issued with the process, that full implementation could only be achieved on a regional basis. Therefore, the Chief Fire Officer in collaboration with the other North East Fire and Rescue Services, decided that the full ADC process be piloted during 2006 primarily to provide further information as to future resource requirements and budgetary implications.

2.3 The first ADC to be implemented on a regional basis was the Supervisory Manager ADC with a regional advert being placed in January 2006. The whole process continued until June 2006.

2.4 In July 2006, the Middle Manager ADC commenced and it is envisaged will run until December 2006.

2.5 The following information offers a brief outline of the process and a breakdown, of the involvement of candidates, assessors, role players and resources for the Supervisory ADC with a forecast included for the Middle Managers ADC.

2.5.1 Each ADC is has 2 main stages:

Stage 1 is the Initial Test of Potential (ITOP) comprising of 2 parts, both tests are completed in a controlled environment, candidates must be successful in the ITOP to enable them to progress to the full ADC. Members should note that resource requirements for this stage of the process are minimal and can be contained within current budgetary headings.

Stage 2 is the full ADC comprising of different role related exercises which will takes one working day to complete. Members are advised that only six candidates can be assessed during any one day, due to the in-depth assessment processes utilised.

3 OVERVIEW

3.1 Supervisory Manager ADC

3.1.1 Stage 1 is the Initial Test of Potential (ITOP) comprising of 2 parts, both tests are completed in a controlled environment, candidates must be successful in the ITOP to enable them to progress to the full ADC. Members should note that resource requirements for this stage of the process are minimal and can be contained within current budgetary headings.

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

3.1.2 Stage 2 is the full ADC comprising of different role related exercises which will takes one working day to complete. Members are advised that only six candidates can be assessed during any one day, due to the in-depth assessment processes utilised.

3.1.3 The candidate numbers involved from the application form stage, through the Initial Test of Potential and to the final ADC are as follows:

	Applications Received	Passed ITOP	% pass
TWFRS	105	52	54.6%
CFRS	44	24	54.5%
NFRS	17	8	47%
DDFS	32	18	56.25%
Total	198	102	51.5%

3.1.4 Candidates passing the IToP are in the process of completing the next stage of the ADC and it is anticipated that this will be completed by October 2006. Within the next stage each FRS has the following percentages of candidates:

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service	50%
Cleveland Fire and Rescue Service	24%
Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service	8%
Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Service	18%

3.1.5 In order to complete the ADC prior to role related testing, each session required the following staffing levels:

- 1 Centre Manager (2 days each)
- 6 Assessors (2 days each)
- 6 Role players (1/2 day only)
- 1 Administrator (2 days)

3.1.6 As can be seen there were 18 days required for this section of the ADC process, staffing requirements were met in co-operation with FRS from the region with this Authority providing accommodation, administrative support and subsistence.

3.1.7 In order to ensure that the each of the 18 days for ADCs were appropriately resourced, each FRS provided the following staff, which were Centre Manager (CM), Assessor (Ass) and Role Player (RP):

	CM	Ass	RP	Total Days
CFRS	4	70	10.5	84.5
NFRS	12	42	0	54
TWFRS	6	52	26.5	84.5
D&DFRS	14	52	14	80

3.2 Middle Manager ADC

3.2.1 The process for the Middle Manager ADC (which includes all categories of staff) commenced in July 2006 and is anticipated to be completed by December 2006. At this stage initial analysis of applicants and progress through the ITOP is as follows:

	Regional Applications Received	Passed ITOP	% pass
Total	150	80	53%

3.2.2 In order to complete the ADC process for this number of candidates will require 14 ADCs and a total of 350 working days to complete, plus accommodation, administration and co-ordination. In addition, the staffing requirements for the process are higher than those for the Supervisory Manager ADC, therefore the costs associated with operating this process will be higher per candidate.

3.2.3 The resource requirements for the fourteen ADC sessions are as follows:

- 1 Centre Manager (2 days each)
- 6 Assessors (2 days each)
- 9 Role players (1/2 day only)
- 1 Administrator (2 days)

3.2.4 The main increase in staffing for this ADC is that there is an additional requirement for 3 role players per session. It should also be noted that only six candidates can be assessed during each full ADC day due to the in-depth assessment procedures utilised.

3.3 This process is presently underway and is being resourced in co-operation with all FRS's in the region. Costs associated with this and the Supervisory ADC are being contained within present budgetary allocations in each authority.

3.4 The Chief Fire Officer will be presenting further detailed reports for the consideration of and approval by Members in relation to the full ADC pilot results and associated financial implications in March 2007.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial analysis of the Supervisory ADC indicates that this Authority incurred costs in the region of £42,000 for 52 candidates (approximately £800 per candidate). The majority of the costs are associated with the second part of the ADC process which includes role play requiring high staff numbers. The costs in other authorities have been accounted for by them but as can be seen in paragraph 3.1.3 for a lower number of candidates.

4.2 In addition to the above, the ADC process does require significant support which includes accommodation, administration, subsistence and co-ordination. On this occasion, this Authority has provided these facilities in co-operation with the other FRS's. It is estimated that taking all costs into account would mean that the process will cost in the region of £1000f per candidate for this Authority in 2007/08 and future years.

- 4.3 Initial analysis indicates that the costs incurred in the Middle Manager ADC will be similar to those outlined above primarily due to the fact that at this stage a smaller number of candidates are involved but increased staffing is required.
- 4.4 Later this year the Strategic Manager ADC will be piloted. Here again the costs associated with running this process are anticipated to be in the region of £1,000 per candidate but again with a reduced number of candidates applying for the process each year.
- 4.5 It is estimated that in a full year costs associated with operating the full ADC process in this Authority may be in the region of £154,000 per annum. However, a substantial proportion of these costs are the salaries associated with staffing provisions. These are presently being provided by utilising existing staff resources diverting officers from their normal day to day duties in order to meet the requirements of the ADC process. The Chief Fire Officer is presently examining the possibility of resourcing this ADC process at a regional level with each FRS supporting the process both financially and with appropriate staff. For 2007/08, provision will be made in the estimated revenue budget for the ADC process based upon the principles and costings provided in this report.

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The ADC process applies equally to all staff therefore there are no implications in this respect.

6 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no health and safety implications.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Members are recommended to:-
- a) Consider the interim results from the interim pilot of the full ADC process and the significant resources required to support the system; and
 - b) Agree that the Chief Fire Officer examines the potential to undertake this process at a region tier; and
 - c) Agree that provision will be made in the estimated revenue budget for 2007/08 for the full ADC process subject to further reports being submitted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

FSC 51/2004
National Framework 2004/05
National Framework 2006/08

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: 11 SEPTEMBER 2006

**SUBJECT: FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE CIRCULAR 49/2006 -
IMPROVING SICKNESS ABSENCE MANAGEMENT IN THE FIRE
AND RESCUE SERVICE FOR ENGLAND****REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006-08 (chapter 5) outlines the need for Fire and Rescue Authorities to take effective steps to improve sickness absence management and reduce ill health retirements.
- 1.2 Effective sickness absence management is also embedded in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's public sector efficiency programme and Office of Government Commerce (OGC), National Audit Office (NAO) and Audit Commission public sector performance audits.
- 1.3 Effective sickness absence management is also key to the Ministerial Task Force on Health, Safety, and Productivity's (MTF) aim of reducing working days lost to sickness absence across the public sector by 30 per cent (equivalent to an average of 7.5 days lost per public sector worker) by 2010.
- 1.4 This circular informs Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) that the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is working in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive to undertake a study of sickness absence management in the Fire and Rescue Service for England. This is to support the FRA as it strives to improve sickness absence management. It is envisaged the first stage of the study will report in spring 2007.

2 JOINT PROJECT TO REDUCE SICKNESS ABSENCE

- 2.1 The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006-08 refers to joint proposals from the Health and Safety Executive and DCLG for a study of sickness absence management in the FRS and to design improvements in sickness absence management that are in line with MTF recommendations.
- 2.2 The project will:
 - Explore patterns and causes of sickness absence;
 - Assess current sickness absence management systems across the FRS;
 - On the basis of the research findings, develop approaches for enhanced FRS sickness management systems and processes, using good practice where possible;

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

- Develop and evaluate a pathfinder project that trials any enhanced sickness absence management systems and processes with a small number of FRS's.

2.3 The project will be divided into three phases:

- Phase 1 (Summer/Autumn 2006) - Research by DCLG/HSE and an independent research contractor;
- Phase 2 (Early 2007) - Identify best practice;
- Phase 3 (Summer 2007) - Possible pathfinder project to trial processes developed in phases 1 & 2.

2.4 Members are advised that phase 1 of this study is intended to commence in September/October 2006.

3 NEXT STEPS

3.1 In September/October 2006 every FRA in England will be contacted by DCLG analysts and asked to take part in a survey including a questionnaire on sickness absence data collection and the management information systems in place. DCLG will analyse the results from these questionnaires.

3.2 The Authority may then be selected to take part in the next stage of phase 1 research. If so, the Authority you will be contacted by an independent research contractor in late 2006. The research contractor will be undertaking in-depth interviews with staff at a sample of FRA's in England. Information staff provide to the independent research contractor will be treated in confidence and will be reported in a way that will ensure that individual staff members and the local FRS cannot be identified.

3.3 As Members are aware the Authority has made inroads into reducing sickness absence in recent years, but there is a long way to go. The Chief Fire Officer therefore welcomes this project which, it is envisaged, will produce positive initiatives for future consideration by the Authority.

4 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

5.1 There are no equality and diversity issues by virtue of this Circular.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Members are recommended to:

- a) Welcome the initiation of the project sponsored by DCLG;
- b) Approve the participation in the project subject to invitation;

- c) Receive further reports as appropriate.
-

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The undermentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Strategic Plan 2006-2010
- FSC 49/2006

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE RACE EQUALITY SCHEME – ACTION PLAN

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY, THE FINANCE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 came into force in April 2001 (minute No 16 of 2001 refers).
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to advise the Authority that a review of the Race Equality Scheme – Action Plan has been completed by the Chief Fire Officer.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 gave to public authorities a general duty to promote race equality. Under the duty public authorities must aim to:-
- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
 - Promote equality of opportunity;
 - Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.
- 2.2 The aim of the duty is to make the promotion of racial equality central to the work of all public authorities. This general duty also expects public authorities to take the lead in promoting equality of opportunity and good race relations, and preventing unlawful discrimination.
- 2.3 In practice, the Authority is required to take account of racial equality in the day to day work of policy-making, service delivery, employment practice and other functions. In order to achieve this, two factors must be taken into account:-
- The weight which the Authority attaches to racial equality should be in proportion to its relevance to a particular function
 - Since the Authority must meet all three parts of the General Duty, arrangements must ensure that all policies and services are considered for their impact on race equality.

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

2.4 In effect, this duty and its greatly widened application means that the Authority is required to consider the implications for racial equality in everything undertaken as part of the provision of Fire and Rescue Service.

3 REVIEW OF THE RACE EQUALITY SCHEME - ACTION PLAN

3.1 Under the legislation, the Authority prepared and published its first Race Equality Scheme by 31st May 2002 (minute 16 of 2002 refers), which was reviewed in 2005 and appropriate amendments made. A further full review of the Scheme is scheduled to take place during 2008.

3.2 The Legislation also requires the Authority to annually:-

- Review the Action Plan;
- Produce employment statistics in relation to ethnicity;
- Review Policies and Procedures.

3.3 In reviewing the Action Plan, the Authority must consider two specific issues, namely:-

3.3.1 Policy and Service Delivery

- To assess and decide whether a function or policy is relevant to the general duty;
- To assess and consult on the likely impact of proposed policies and changes to existing policies;
- To establish processes for monitoring any adverse impact;
- To publish results of assessments consultation and monitoring carried out;
- To ensure that the public has access to information and public services;
- To train staff to carry out their duties.

3.3.2 Employment

- To monitor the ethnicity of staff in post and applicants for job promotion and training;
- To monitor the ethnicity of individuals and analyse information in relation to grievance, disciplinary action, appraisals, training, dismissals and leavers;
- To publish the results of ethnic monitoring on an annual basis.

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PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

- 3.3 The Chief Fire Officer has undertaken a review of the Scheme and action plan in accordance with the legislation and a revised plan is attached at Appendix A for consideration and/or approval by Members.
- 3.4 Members should note that the full recruitment statistics are not yet available and will be subject of a future report. In addition, all policies and procedures are currently being reviewed in light of the Race Equality Scheme.

4 PROGRESS MADE DURING 2005/06

4.1 In considering the requirements of the above, the Chief Fire Officer is pleased to report that in 2005/06 the Authority has:

- ✓ Established a Regional Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group in partnership with the Fire and Rescue Services of the North East
- ✓ Extended the availability of key safety and contact information on the website www.twfire.gov.uk to include the following languages:-
 - English
 - Bengali
 - Urdu
 - Hindi
 - Punjabi
 - Portuguese
 - Kurdish
 - Farsi
 - French
 - Cantonese
- ✓ Introduced the option via an external link for the whole of the web site to be translated into:-
 - Russian
 - German
 - Spanish
 - Italian
 - Japanese
 - Greek
 - Dutch
 - Korean
- ✓ Formalised a policy on translation and interpretation services

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- ✓ Ensured the availability of Introduction to Islam and the Muslim Culture training is available to all employees via their Personal Development Plans
- ✓ Increased the number of Home Fire Risk Assessments in target areas
- ✓ Worked in conjunction with the Orthodox Jewish Community
- ✓ Worked with Compact for Race Equality in South Tyneside (CREST) and the communities of South Tyneside
- ✓ Commenced Equality Impact Assessments and implemented an internal Administrative Procedure for advice and guidance.
- ✓ Ensured Diversity & Equality awareness sessions are scheduled into the Firefighter quarterly training programme in conjunction with the Fire Brigades Union
- ✓ Extended Diversity & Equality training to Corporate staff.
- ✓ Job advertisements forwarded to Commission for Race Equality for circulation to it's members
- ✓ Meals can be provided for external training to meet the ethnic needs of attendees
- ✓ Introduced a methodology to record attacks on Fire Crews including racist incidents
- ✓ Provided statistical information on applications for employment to the Diversity & Equality Committee, including Ethnicity
- ✓ Adopted the National Fire and Rescue Service Core Values to underpin its' vision and values

5 PROPOSALS FOR 2006/07

5.1 in order to maintain progress In delivering race equality throughout the Authority, the Chief Fire Officer proposes the following objectives are incorporated into the action plan:

- Work towards a local Positive Action event taking into account the statistical information provided by the Recruitment and Selection team
- Regional Positive Action event to be arranged to coincide with black history month

Creating the Safest Community

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

- Ensure that the Service Procurement Policy does not disadvantage minority led business
 - Work with the Refugees in Sustainable Employment (RISE) project with regard to work placements for BME people trying to find employment
 - Statistics to be made available in relation to racist attacks on Fire Crews
 - Re-visit the current translation provision
 - Statistics on the number of Home Fire Risk Assessments carried out in BME premises to be compiled for 2006/07
- 5.2 A comprehensive monitoring programme of the workforce is underway and it is proposed to use the findings in order to develop further strategies to increase BME representation within the workforce. It is envisaged that this will involve liaising with the Regional Diversity Manager and working towards achieving the Risk Based Action Plan that has been formulated and is part of the regional equality and diversity strategy.
- 5.3 Positive action carried out during the last recruitment campaign has led to a significant increase in the number of applications received from BME people. The Authority has not however, seen a subsequent increase in the numbers of BME people gaining success through the testing process and investigations are underway as to the reasons for this. On completion, a comprehensive programme will be implemented to address these issues.
- 5.4 During 2005-2006 the Authority has successfully reviewed its' recruitment and selection procedures in line with national and regional recommendations. The Authority is now utilising the National firefighter point of entry selection tests that have been reviewed in order to remove any unintentional discriminatory procedures or standards that may have been prohibitive to the recruitment of BME people that are currently underrepresented within the Service.
- 5.5 Regional Assessment Development Centres (ADC) commenced in September 2005 and all candidates are questioned and assessed in Diversity & Integrity.
- 5.6 All application forms and interviews have a question about Diversity & Equality and panel members must have attended Recruitment & Selection training.

- 5.7 The total number of complaints received during the period 1st April 2005 to 31st March 2006 was 10, of which 2 were from persons who declared themselves as 'other' under the recognised Ethnic Groups as recommended by the Commission for Racial Equality. Both complaints were investigated under current procedures and the necessary action taken to prevent any recurrence.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are financial implications associated with delivering the Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan. Provision has been made in relevant budget headings for this financial year.

7 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Members are requested to:
- a) Endorse the progress made in respect of Race Equality;
 - b) Consider the Action Plan as outlines in the Appendix to this report and in appraising the actions provide comments as appropriate;
 - c) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The undermentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE RACIAL EQUALITY - ACTION PLAN - ANNUAL REVIEW as 31st March 2006

Note – items greyed out have been completed

DELIVERY AIM	KEY TASK	TIMELINE	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	EVIDENCE	PROGRESS
1. Publish the Race Equality Scheme (RES)	Publish the Race Equality Scheme (RES)	Publish May 2002	Assistant Chief Officer Human Resources & Learning & Development Diversity & Equality Officer to advise	Race Equality scheme 2005 – 2008	Completed
2. Review of the RES	Review RES 2006-2008	Review March 2008	Assistant Chief Officer Human Resources & Learning & Development Diversity & Equality Officer to advise	Annual Review of RES 2006/8	To commence in 2008
3. Ensure managers are aware of the responsibilities under the RES	Copies of RES distributed to managers Reports to management meetings	On going	Assistant Chief Officer Human Resources & Learning & Development Diversity & Equality Officer to advise	Minutes	Ongoing
4. Ensure all Authority Members are aware of their responsibilities	Included in legislative responsibilities of the Authority Authority update reports	Annually	D&E Committee Chief Fire Officer	Minutes Authority reports	Ongoing

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

DELIVERY AIM	KEY TASK	TIMELINE	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	EVIDENCE	PROGRESS
5. Update Diversity & Equality Committee	Agenda as required	Ongoing	Area Manager	Minutes	September 2006
	Present annual report	Annually	Diversity & Equality Officer to advise	Report	
6. Ensure employees are aware of the RES and updates	Utilise intranet	2006	D&E Officer	ICT system	In place
	Team meetings	Ongoing	Managers	Minutes	Ongoing
	Induction	On employment	D&E Officer	L&D Records	As required
	Training	Ongoing	D&E Officer / L&D	L&D Records	Ongoing
7. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Training	Set up training package for employees likely to undertake equality impact assessments (EIA)	2005	National lead with D&E Officer	L&D Records	Commenced and as required
	Implement Admin. Procedure for undertaking EIA	2005	Area Manager HR & L&D with the Diversity & Equality Officer	Admin. Procedure 1:32	

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

DELIVERY AIM	KEY TASK	TIMELINE	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	EVIDENCE	PROGRESS
8. Training and awareness of Diversity & Equality (D&E)	Ensure D&E training is scheduled into the FF quarterly training programme	2005	North & South Division Training Officers	Quarterly training plans	In place
	Ensure FF trainees receive 1 full day D&E training	2005	Training Centre Manager & D&E Officer	Training course programme	In place
	Ensure FF trainees complete the D&E workbook	2005	Training Centre Manager & D&E Officer	Course records & D&E Officer	In place
	Ensure all new employees are given a D&E workbook to complete	2005	Training Centre Manager & D&E Officer	L&D records & D&E Officer	In place
8. Training and awareness of Diversity & Equality (D&E)	Ensure identified training needs in D&E are met	Ongoing	Managers and L&D	Managers and L&D	Annual PDP
	Continue with Islam Awareness Courses	Ongoing	Managers and L&D	Managers and L&D	
9. Ensure Strategic elements of Diversity & Equality and undergo consultation with the community	Ensure that consultation and diversity and equality are built into the planning process	Ongoing	Corporate Planning	Corporate Planning	Corporate Planning

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DELIVERY AIM	KEY TASK	TIMELINE	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	EVIDENCE	PROGRESS
10. Commence the EIA process	Continue training	Ongoing	D&E Officer	L&D Records	Further training scheduled for Sept 2006
	Prepare & Publish an EIA Admin. Proc.	2005	Area Manager HR & L&D with the Diversity & Equality Officer	Admin. Procedure 1:32	In place April 2006
	Commence EIA on all new and revised documents	2005-2007	All department managers	Audit files SMT presentation	Commenced
	Continue with EIA on all other policies on a risk based basis	2005-2007	All department managers	SMT update	Ongoing
11. Ensure accessibility of Fire Service information to all sections of the community	Increase languages on the web site	April 2006	Corporate Planning	Website	Completed
	Ensure National FRS documents are used	2005	Community Fire Safety Department	Leaflets	Completed
	Respond to requests for information in alternative formats	Ongoing	ACO HR L&D with D&E Officer	Audit files Translated strategic plan	Ongoing
	Prepare & Publish Admin. Proc.	August 2006	D&E Officer	Draft policy with D&E Officer	On target
12. Community Safety Campaigns aimed at religious and traditional festivals	Ensure timely and appropriate campaigns are undertaken	2005-2008	Area Manager Community Fire Safety	National and local campaigns	In place and ongoing
13. Benchmark TWFRS against the Equality Standard for Local Government	Achieve level 2 of the ESLG by April 2007	April 2007	ACO HR L&D with D&E Officer	Internal evidence CPA advice	Complete

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

DELIVERY AIM	KEY TASK	TIMELINE	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	EVIDENCE	PROGRESS
14. Establish & Maintain consultation and involvement forums ensuring inclusion of B&EM groups	Formulate and maintain community and group contacts	2005-2008	All managers especially CFS	Station and departmental start plans	In place
	Work with strategic partners including NE FRS	2005-2008	All managers	Minutes and departmental plans	In place
	Record current initiatives with regard to community and group contacts in order to use to the optimum	2006	Corporate Planning	As provided to Corporate Planning	Commenced
15. Ensure exit interviews are monitored for any race related issues	Review and revise exit interview process	2005	Area Manager HR L&D with the HR Manager	Introduction of revised process	Admin. Proc 2:27 in place with effect from 01/11/05
	Act on any race related issues	2005-2008	Area Manager HR L&D with the HR Manager	Statistics and investigation	Held in confidence
16. Positive Action	Implement positive action events in conjunction with the regional recruitment campaign	2006	Recruitment and Diversity and Equality Officers	Increase in application rates from BME population	To commence Autumn 2006
17. Service Procurement Policy	Review Service procurement policy to ensure gender and race clarity	2006	Procurement and Equality and Diversity Officer	Policy is proved bias free	To commence Autumn 2006
18. Refugees in Sustainable Employment (RISE)	Work with RISE to secure work placements for people trying to find permanent employment	2007	Equality and Diversity Officer	Work placements secured	To commence January 2007
19. Statistics	Full reporting of racist attacks on fire crews	2007	Equality and Diversity Officer	Appropriate action to address the issue taken	Ongoing
20. Translation provision	Review the provision of documentation in different languages	2007	Equality and Diversity Officer	Translations provided in the most appropriate local languages	To commence January 2007

