

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 21 FEBRUARY 2011 at 10.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

Part I

Item	Page
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Receipt of Declarations of Interest (if any)	
3. Minutes	
	Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 18 October 2010 (copy herewith).
4. Better Health at Work Award – Achievement of Bronze Award	
	Report of the Chief Fire Officer (copy herewith).
5. Default Retirement Age	
	Joint report of the Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority (copy herewith).

6. **Employee Survey**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer (copy herewith).

7. **The Public Sector Equality Duty**

Joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk to the Authority (copy herewith).

8. **Review of the Corporate Equality Plan and Single Equality Scheme**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer (copy herewith).

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

The following is not for publication as the Committee is likely to exclude the public during consideration thereof as it contains information relating to any consultations or negotiations of contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Authority and employees of the Authority (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph 4).

Part II

9. **Regional Diversity and Equality Advisor**

Joint report of the Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority (copy herewith).

10. **Pay Protection Policy**

Joint report of the Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority.

DAVE SMITH,
Clerk to the Authority.

Civic Centre,
SUNDERLAND.

11 February 2011

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE held
in the Fire and Rescue Headquarters,
Barmston Mere, Sunderland on MONDAY
18 OCTOBER 2010 at 10.30 am

Present:

Councillor Charlton in the Chair

Councillors M. Forbes, Trueman and T. Wright.

Part I

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Boyes and M. Forbes.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

10. RESOLVED that the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 12 July 2010 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Review of the Diversity and Equality Policy

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report (copy circulated) informing Members of the review of the Authority's Diversity and Equality Policy and outline the main changes for approval.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the current Diversity and Equality Policy had been in place since March 2007, and that in accordance with the Policy a full review had been undertaken in order to bring its content up-to-date, assess how easy the policy was to understand and for readers to access information.

Councillor Wright, in referring to the Useful Contact Information in Appendix A, suggested that external organisations' contact details be included for employees to obtain help and support. In response, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer agreed to look into this.

Councillor Charlton then went on to enquire if the authority knew how many staff currently seek support in relation to equality and diversity issues, to which the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Fire Authority maintained records containing the numbers of employees that had made contact with the internal resources, however no records were available for the numbers of employees contacting external resources.

Councillor Wright enquired whether the announcement of the new Minister with responsibility for fire, Bob Neill, would have any impact on the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority's policies. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer responded, advising that there were no plans to deal with equality and diversity any differently.

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

11. RESOLVED to:-

- (i) note the content of the report;
- (ii) approve the amended Diversity and Equality Policy and the Dignity and Respect Policy; and
- (iii) receive further reports as appropriate.

The Equality Act 2010

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report (copy circulated) advising Members of the key features of the Equality Act 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the new Equality Act 2010 that came into force on 1 October 2010 applied to all organisations that provided services to the public and to anyone who sells goods or provides facilities.

Members were notified that the Chief Fire Officer was currently in the process of reviewing all existing policies to ensure that they comply. Consultation was also underway until 10 November 2010, regarding specific duties in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty, which it was envisaged would be implemented on 1 April 2011.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer also added that the age discrimination ban would come into force in 2012.

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

12. RESOLVED to:-

- (i) endorse the actions taken by the Chief Fire Officer; and
- (ii) receive further reports as appropriate.

Review of Audit Commission Equality and Diversity Report

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report (copy circulated) providing Members with an update regarding progress made against the recommendations of the Audit Commission Equality and Diversity Reports 2009.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members were informed that the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority were subject to a review of its equality and diversity policies and processes, which was carried out in 2008/2009 as part of the external audit process.

The audit was undertaken within a regional framework covering Tyne and Wear, Cleveland and Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authorities.

A final report was collated and presented to each Fire and Rescue Authority in May 2009 which encompassed individual authority findings along with an action plan of recommendations for improvement.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported to the Committee that the Audit Report Action Plan had been fully implemented, however development work would continue in the area recommended by the Audit Commission.

Councillor Wright enquired at what point would this be reviewed next, in order to ensure the recommendations set out by the Audit Commission had been achieved. The Deputy Chief Officer then responded advising that the Authority constantly monitor actions plans and endeavour to appoint external auditors to regularly pick up

the job that the Audit Commission used to do. Members were also assured that updates on actions would be regularly reported to the Human Resources Committee.

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

13. RESOLVED to:-

- (i) note the contents of the report;
- (ii) endorse the progress made in this area; and
- (iii) receive further reports as appropriate.

Launch of E-Network for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Employees

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report (copy circulated) providing Members with an overview of the recently launched e-network for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) employees of the Authority.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that for four consecutive years the Chief Fire Officer, on behalf of the Authority, has entered the service in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index Top 100 Employers and that one key area for improvement identified as part of this process was to enhance community engagement within LGB people, specifically with employees.

Members were then informed that an Employee Advisory Group (EAG) had been established, including LGB and non-LGB Members which had undertaken to develop an e-network to support the work of the EAG.

The aims and objectives of the e-network had been determined by the EAG Members who had carried out extensive consultation and research on e-networks and also worked closely with e-communications on key details for the e-network, plus on how to create an interesting and informative site.

The six objectives themselves were then referred to within the report and issues around access to the e-network was described to Members of the Committee.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that the e-network incorporated a confidential discussion forum, which was accessible only to LGB staff. It was considered that this facility would allow LGB employees to explore personal or sensitive issues they may be facing and receive support from the EAG.

Councillor Wright commented that he was very pleased with the progress that the Authority had made in this regard. He went on to enquire what was it that the Authority had experienced in order for them to have identified that it was a forum that was required. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer responded advising that the Authority

had in the past provided an opportunity for LGB staff to come together at an outside venue and from that it was decided that a e-network would be beneficial.

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

14. RESOLVED to:-

- (i) note the concerns of the report;
- (ii) endorse the actions taken by the Chief Fire Officer; and
- (iii) receive further reports as appropriate.

2010 North East Equality Awards

The Chief Fire Officer and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report (copy circulated) informing Members of the Authority's achievement in being selected as a finalist in the 'Outstanding Practice by a Larger Organisation' category as part of the 2010 North East Equality Awards.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the North East Equality Awards, sponsored by ONE NorthEast recognise and reward employers, learning providers and individuals who strive to ensure that good equality and diversity practices are implemented in their workplace, improving recruitment and retention for people from diverse groups.

Attention was drawn to the Awards Criteria outlined in the report. During which, Members were informed that when evaluating applicants within the 'Outstanding Practice by a Larger Organisation' category, the judges would be looking for initiatives, projects or strategies that, by their consideration support the Strategic Equality and Diversity Action Plan by:

- Encouraging participation of under-represented groups in the labour market;
- Increasing the pace of diversity and equality engagement within public sector organisations;
- Increasing awareness and engagement or diversity and equality within private sector organisations; and
- Ensuring that the procurement process effectively takes account of the diversity and equality agenda for clients and suppliers.

Details surrounding the application that had been submitted were then referred to within the report.

The results of the 'Outstanding Practice by a Larger Organisation' category were expected to be announced at an Awards event on Friday 22 October 2010 to be held at Newcastle upon Tyne. The results would be reported back to the Human Resources Committee.

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

15. RESOLVED to:-

- (i) note the contents of the report;
- (ii) endorse the actions taken by the Chief Officer;
- (iii) consider a letter of appreciation to the staff involved in the programme; and
- (iv) receive further reports as appropriate.

Community Engagement Film Project

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report (copy circulated) updating Members on progress of the Community Engagement Film Project.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that in 2008, the Authority and Tyneside Cinema came together to discuss the idea of working with young people to produce a documentary film, which would engage young people, increase the exposure of the Authority with under-represented groups and raise the profile as an employer of choice within BME Communities.

In late 2008 a group of twelve young people from a wide range of backgrounds produced a documentary on the Service, entitled "1253 Life Savers!". The documentary was premiered at Tyneside Cinema on 15 October 2009 and since then the film had been shown at recruitment and community events across the Authority area.

As part of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018 an evaluation was being undertaken to measure opinions before and after viewing the documentary. Feedback received to date following the evaluation was shown within the report, which clearly demonstrated that the documentary had a positive effect in changing the views of audiences.

Copies of the documentary were available should Members require a copy.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer commented that it had been very pleasing to see the way in which the twelve young people engaged with the process and worked to achieve the end result.

Councillor Wright commended all those involved.

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

16. RESOLVED to:-

- (i) note the content of the report;
- (ii) endorse and support the Community Engagement Film Project; and
- (iii) receive further reports as appropriate.

(Signed) D. CHARLTON,
Chairman.

SUBJECT: BETTER HEALTH AT WORK AWARD – ACHIEVEMENT OF BRONZE AWARD.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline for Members details of the Better Health at Work Award scheme.
- 1.2 In January 2010 the Authority's Occupational Health Unit committed to undertaking the Better Health at Work Bronze Award.
- 1.3 The award is a North East regional scheme to encourage employers to improve the health of their employees. The award also recognises the achievements of the organisation in managing health at work.
- 1.4 There are three levels to the award, Bronze, Silver and Gold with appropriate criteria to be met at each annual stage. The award is supported by regional public health specialists at all levels.
- 1.5 The Chief Fire Officer is pleased to report that Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority were successful in gaining the Better Health at Work Bronze Award.
- 1.6 The award will be presented at a ceremony to be held at Gateshead College on 26 February 2011.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The aims of the Better Health at Work Award were:
 - Support improvements in health and well being for North East workers and employers
 - Create an inclusive, standardised framework within the region.
 - Compliment existing, local workplace health schemes
 - Give regional recognition to those workplaces which actively promote the health of their employees.
 - Share good practice and promote the contribution workplace health can make to a healthy community.
- 2.2 Promoting a healthy workplace has considerable benefits to employers possibly leading to reduced absenteeism, enhanced productivity and improved performance.
- 2.3 The financial cost to businesses from ill health should not be underestimated. Figures from the 2008 Annual Absence survey carried out by the Chartered

Institute for Personnel and Development indicate that workplace absence costs the average employer £666 per employee.

- 2.4 Stress and other mental health issues along with obesity are major causes of ill health and sickness absence. Sickness absence costs the UK economy an estimated £12.7 billion each year while the HSE estimate that stress in the workplace costs businesses £3.8 billion per year.

3 SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 To achieve the Bronze award the Authority were required to produce evidence for eleven criteria consisting of fifty two standards.

- 3.2 The bronze level was related to basic awareness of workplace health and included the Following areas:

- a health needs assessment
- management commitment to health improvement in the work place
- promoting health issues in a simple format e.g. leaflets
- mechanisms for consulting staff on health issues and promoting healthy eating options
- general awareness of how health can be affected by work activity
- support for mental health and well being in the work place.

- 3.3 In order to achieve the award the following activities were undertaken:

- The Occupational Health staff asked for volunteer Health Champions from all Authority locations to assist in the administration of the Health Promotion topics. All locations nominated volunteers and the role proved to be successful in delivering the same standard of information across the service.
- Bespoke advertising was commissioned from the Authority's Media Resource Unit to promote the award and produce health promotion material.
- The production, issue and analysis of a Health Needs Analysis to all TWFRS staff to determine the current levels of health and activity.
- Three Health Promotion campaigns were identified from the analysis, namely Back Pain, Healthy Eating and Exercise.
- Each campaign ran for a six week period and consisted of information on the OHU intranet site, posters and literature for all locations and larger displays in the Service HQ breakout areas. A full evaluation of the campaigns was then carried out.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The award recognises that the Authority have a strong commitment to the health and wellbeing of the workforce.

- 4.2 Health Promotion has always been a function of the Authority and it is anticipated that the activities undertaken in pursuit of the award will continue to be an aspect of the Authority's work.
- 4.3 By committing to health promotion the Authority will continue to support the following outcomes
- Improved workplace health
 - Improved corporate image
 - Increased productivity
 - Improved staff moral and loyalty
 - Reduced absenteeism
 - Reduced staff turnover
 - Networking with other partners
 - Assistance in legislative compliance

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- a) Note that the Fire and Rescue Authority has been awarded the Better Health at Work Award Bronze Award.
- b) Offer congratulations to all personnel concerned within the Authority for this achievement
- c) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- North East Better Health at Work Award – Employers Guidelines
- Better Health, Fairer Health, A Strategy for 21st Century Health & Wellbeing in the North East of England (February 2008.) www.phne.org.uk
- Working for a Healthier Tomorrow. Dame Carroll Black DWP 2008
- TWFRS Health Needs Assessment report 2010
- Health Promotion Participant Survey 2010

SUBJECT: DEFAULT RETIREMENT AGE

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

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the provisions for the removal, by Government, of the default retirement age.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 13 January 2011, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) confirmed that, subject to Parliamentary approval, it will phase out the default retirement age of 65 from April 2011.
- 2.2 The Government's response to the consultation also confirms the removal of the associated statutory retirement processes, including the employer's duty to provide notice of retirement and the employee's right to request to work beyond normal retirement age.
- 2.3 As a result of these changes the government intends for employees to have more choice on whether to retire upon reaching pensionable age (either state pension age or the occupational pension age) or to continue working.
- 2.4 Members will be aware that the 'normal' retirement age for Grey Book employees, previously 55 years, was removed as a consequence of the age discrimination legislation. However, a default retirement age of 65 years is in place for all staff, and it is this which is subject to change.

3 MANAGING THE REMOVAL OF THE DEFAULT RETIREMENT AGE

- 3.1 The default retirement age will be phased out between 6 April and 1 October 2011 using transition arrangements.
- 3.2 Compulsory retirements during the transition period will be lawful provided that:
- notification of retirement has been issued before 6 April 2011, and
 - the date of retirement falls before 1 October 2011, and
 - all requirements of the statutory retirement procedures are met.
- 3.3 However, Members should note that the last bullet point of the transition arrangements require the employee to be given at least 6 months' notice of the intended date of retirement. This means that the last day employees can be lawfully compulsorily retired using the default retirement age provisions is **30 March 2011** to ensure the retirement takes place on 30 September 2011.

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

- 3.4 From 1 October 2011, Regulation 3 of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 will mean that employers will still be able to use a compulsory retirement age to dismiss employees but only where they can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate end. This will be called the Employer Justified Retirement Age.
- 3.5 Compulsory retirement will therefore be direct age discrimination but employers can objectively justify this difference of treatment on the grounds of age if they can prove that it is necessary to meet legitimate employment policy, labour market or vocational training objectives, and that a compulsory retirement is an appropriate and necessary means of achieving these objectives.
- 3.6 Where employers do not have this justification for compulsory retirement, the dismissal of an older employee will have to follow a fair dismissal procedure that relies on one of the reasons set out in section 98 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 (i.e. capability, conduct, redundancy, illegality or some other substantial reason).
- 3.7 There are clearly opportunities and benefits for employers in the removal of the Default Retirement Age and some areas of the public sector and some local authorities are successfully managing their staff without reference to a default retirement age. Nevertheless, the current system works well for this Authority for the purposes of workforce planning and in supporting those employees who wish to work beyond retirement age to do so. The legislative framework allows flexibility for both parties and, as it involves working to a point in time, it is a prompt for discussion and allows both parties to plan. Equally importantly the ability to enforce a compulsory retirement age provides employees with a controlled and dignified exit from working life where necessary, which will now be removed.
- 3.8 Members are advised that it is unlikely compulsory retirement could be justified unless the individual is not fit for role, i.e. a capability issue.
- 3.9 The Chief Fire Officer is making the necessary procedural changes as a consequence of this change in legislation.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the risk to the Authority has been minimised as far as practicable. The assessment has considered an appropriate balance between risk and control; the realisation of efficiencies; the most appropriate use of limited resources; and a comprehensive evaluation of the benefits. The risk to the authority has been assessed as medium utilising the standard risk matrix based on control measures being in place. The complete risk assessment is available on request from the Chief Fire Officer.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications by virtue of this report.

6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report, however the continued application of a default retirement age would be viewed as direct discrimination.

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 recommended to:
- a) Note the content of this report;
 - b) Endorse the actions of the Chief Fire Officer;
 - 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
- Default Retirement Age Drafts

SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE SURVEY**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of the results of the 'Your Views Count' 2010 Employee Survey.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Since 2004, the Authority has undertaken employee surveys with Opinion Research Services (ORS) based in Swansea. This company is the preferred supplier of consultation services to the Fire Services Consultation Association (FSCA) and enables the benefit of benchmarking between fire and rescue authorities.
- 2.2 In 2009, following concerns regarding the value for money of previous survey provision the Chief Fire Officer decided to develop a bespoke employee survey, presenting the opportunity to develop one survey (replacing the previous employee survey and cultural audit) that met all organisational needs, eliminating previous duplication and tailored to individual roles. In addition, external benchmarking is no longer as valuable as it was in the past and the focus is now on benchmarking against our own previous performance.
- 2.3 In December 2009 Echo-U, an independent market research company based in Newcastle was awarded the contract.

3. DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 A bespoke survey presents the opportunity to adopt an alternative approach to involve various staff groups in the design and development of the survey including the identification of relevant questions to ensure the survey was appropriate, credible and pertinent:
- The Staff Consultation Task and Finish group was formed to improve staff consultation as recommended in the Staff Communications Strategy and the employee survey was the main focus for the group. Personnel (representing all functions of the Service) also acted as advocates for staff consultation issues, discussed topics for inclusion in the survey with colleagues at their locations and reported back to the group.
 - Focus groups were held with two watches, one in Newcastle and one in Sunderland to establish the delivery method, communication, format and content of the survey. A similar focus group was held in Service Headquarters.

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

- The Deputy Chief Officer and Area Manager, Human Resource were also consulted regarding the strategic requirements of the survey.
 - Department Heads and Service Delivery Managers were emailed with a request to discuss the survey at team meetings and feedback regarding topics and issues that staff would like to see included.
 - The survey was also discussed at the Strategic Communications Group.
- 3.2 It was clear that the bespoke survey needed to incorporate necessary questions from the previous ORS surveys to enable benchmarking. In order to address criticism of previous surveys 70% of the questions were core, i.e. asked to all and 30% tailored to individual roles. In addition, there was a clear path through the questions enabling relevant follow up questions to be asked in response to previous answers.
- 3.3 In order to achieve this in the most cost effective way the survey was conducted online. Feedback from focus groups with watches (during the development of the internal communication strategy) suggested that there had been a definite shift of culture regarding electronic communication mechanisms with most staff using a PC and the intranet as part of their job that would support the introduction of an electronic survey. Online surveys are also easier to analyse and therefore more cost effective to conduct.
- 3.4 Staff were consulted in advance regarding the format (to confirm they would be generally content with an online survey) and the content of the survey in the belief that this tailored, fit for purpose approach would have a positive impact upon response rates.
- 3.5 Feedback from these groups also confirmed that staff were content with an online format -ironically headquarters based staff (focus group) were the only ones that raised concern regarding the online format of the survey for operational staff. The watch based operational staff consulted welcomed the electronic approach. In addition, feedback identified that the main concern was confidentiality issues. Station based staff were concerned regarding privacy for completing the survey online in the main station office.
- 3.6 Acting on this information, a communication plan was produced for the survey setting out the target audiences, key messages and communication mechanisms to promote the survey. It included a briefing session for middle managers, a managers' pack and a question and answer factsheet to address the issues already raised by staff in the earlier focus groups. It also included a poster, Chief Fire Officer's Bulletin, Team Talk article, dedicated intranet pages and reminders.

4. RESPONSE

- 4.1 The overall return rate was 38%, with Echo-U advising that this is an acceptable return rate for a public sector organisation. The results have been weighted to ensure they are representative of the operational / corporate mix however the change this presents is negligible.

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- 4.2 The response rate was monitored for each location and this ranged between 11.3% and 72.3%. Stations generally registered a lower response than other locations and interestingly, those stations that registered the higher response rates (stations 24 and 50) were directly involved in the development of the survey. Further research to increase the response rate will be undertaken prior to the next bi-annual survey.

5. FINDINGS

- 5.1 The survey results are presented under five headings reflecting the different sections of the survey. When reviewing the results, Members may wish to note that in the 2010 survey there was no neutral option *i.e. neither satisfied nor dissatisfied* due to the fact that 39% of respondents selected this option in the 2007 employee survey.

5.2 Your job

Overall, 87% of those who completed the survey are satisfied with their current role compared to 65% in 2007 and 54% in 2005. The area where the majority (98%) are satisfied is in their shift system / working pattern.

Employees are positive in their attitude towards their job, again this has increased since 2007 (figures in brackets):

- 94% feel valued by colleagues (80%)
- 92% find their work is interesting (81%)
- 91% feel they have the equipment to do their job correctly (71%)
- 88% feel valued by the public (63%)
- 87% are encouraged to take responsibility (67%)

The elements of their jobs that least / most satisfy staff are as follows:

	Most Satisfying	Least Satisfying
Operational / Control	Dealing with emergency incidents (46%) Working as part of a team (26%) Shift System / Working pattern (25%)	ADC/Promotion/ Development opportunities (27%) Targets (22%) Use of Jargon (20%)
Corporate	Flexible working (22%) Working as part of a team (12%) Variety of work (9%)	Duplication of work (35%) Salary (12%) Promotion / development opportunities (10%)

With regard to personal development; 90% of employees have a PDP at least once a year with 5% never receiving one. 73% disagree that the ADC is effective. Reasons given for this include "it is more suited to corporate candidates" and "too lengthy a process".

5.3 Your Fire and Rescue Service

There have been significant improvements to employee perception of culture within the Service demonstrated by the number of those who agreed to the following statements compared to the 2007 results:

The Service:	2010	2007
Consults staff on FRS plans	69%	24%
Is honest	71%	29%
Recognises good work	68%	34%
Encourages training and personal development	88%	60%
Provides clear leadership	80%	37%

The two statements that were disagreed with the most and showed little improvement since 2007 were:

The Service:	2010	2007
Minimises bureaucracy	62%	64%
Deals effectively with poor performers	48%	52%

Employees are positive regarding their attitude towards their work; 88% are treated fairly, 87% are encouraged to take responsibility and 92% find their work interesting. Despite this 45% disagree that they are listened to and 33% disagree that they are valued as an employee however both of these improved since 2007 where they scored 51% and 59% respectively.

5.4 Communication

The top three ways staff receive most of their information about the Service are as follows and this also directly reflects how staff prefer to receive information:

1. Intranet
2. Email
3. Team/Watch meetings

36% of employees think communication has improved in the last three years with a further 40% who felt that communications have stayed the same. 65% of employees feel that there are enough opportunities for them to express their views. This has increased from 24% in 2007.

69% of employees said they attended team meetings at least once a month. This has decreased from 76% in 2007. However there are still 10% who never attend team meetings.

Employees view their managers positively. 91% say their managers inform them of changes that affect them and 83% are asked for their views. 93% are treated with respect compared to 78% in 2007 and 69% in 2005.

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

Strategic Management Team members are viewed less positively with 51% of employees disagreeing that SMT understand issues affecting employees jobs and 56% disagreeing that SMT are interested in what employees think and feel about work. Both of these have improved since 2007 where both scores were 58%.

5.5 Serving the Community

90% of employees say they feel that they understand the Authority's goals for the future and 87% agree that the Authority is responding well to external major changes within the Fire and Rescue Service.

5.6 Value for Money

93% of employees agree that the Authority should be seeking efficiency savings and they demonstrated a good understanding of the term 'Value for Money' by ranking 3 statements from a list of 15 options. The top three selected were:

- Providing the best services for the lowest cost
- Not wasting money
- Achieving the same for less money

6. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

6.1 The following areas are those that have been highlighted within the report as areas that continue to concern employees. The Chief Fire Officer is developing an improvement / action plan to deal with these issues:

- ADC / Promotion / Development opportunities
- Dealing with poor performers
- Minimising bureaucracy

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct financial implications however projects introduced to address areas for improvement and key issues may have a financial impact.

8 RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the risk to the Authority has been minimised as far as practicable. The assessment has considered an appropriate balance between risk and control ; the realisation of efficiencies; the most appropriate use of limited resources; and a comprehensive evaluation of the benefits. The risk to the authority has been assessed as low utilising the standard risk matrix based on control measures being in place. The complete risk assessment is available on request from the Chief Fire Officer.

9. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

9.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment was completed prior to this survey taking place and no issues were identified.

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10. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no health and safety implications by virtue of this report.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Members are recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of this report;
- b) Consider areas for improvement; and
- c) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- Employee Survey Report 2010

SUBJECT: THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the new public sector equality duty coming into force on 6 April 2011.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 1 October 2009 the Equality Act was implemented bringing together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales.
- 2.2 The Act includes a new public sector equality duty which will replace the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality.
- 2.3 The Government has published regulations to help public authorities ensure they meet the responsibilities of the new equality duty.
- 2.4 In addition, guidance regarding the equality duty has been provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to assist public authorities to prepare for its implementation.

3 OVERVIEW OF THE EQUALITY DUTY

- 3.1 The public sector equality duty consists of a general equality duty, which is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and specific duties which are imposed by secondary legislation.
- 3.2 The new duty covers eight protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The general duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, however not for all aspects of the duty.
- 3.3 The purpose of the general equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public authorities to tackle inequality and improve outcomes for diverse communities.
- 3.4 The general duty requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected into the design of policies and the delivery of services, including internal policies, and for these issues to remain under review.

- 3.5 Specific duties are to be implemented in order to assist public authorities in complying with the general equality duty by helping them to improve the focus and transparency of activity undertaken to meet the duty.
- 3.6 Complying with the specific duties is a necessary part of complying with the general equality duty however, in order to comply with the general duty, organisations will need to have due regard to the need to achieve the aims of the duty across all of its functions.

4 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AUTHORITY

- 4.1 The EHRC guidance provides information regarding legal requirements and recommended actions for public authorities in relation to: assessing relevance, using and publishing equality information, engagement, equality analysis, equality objectives, commissioning and procurement, and business planning and reporting.
- 4.2 To meet the general equality duty, the Authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 4.3 The specific duties require the Authority to publish sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty across its functions. This will include:
- Information on the effect that the Authority's policies and practices have had on people who share a relevant protected characteristic.
 - Evidence of analysis that the Authority has undertaken to establish whether its policies and practices have (or would) further the aims of the general equality duty.
 - Details of the information that the Authority considered in carrying out this analysis.
 - Details of engagement that the Authority undertook with people from whom it considers to have an interest in furthering the aims of the general equality duty.
- 4.4 In addition to the above, by April 2012, the Authority will be required to prepare and publish equality objectives that it reasonably believes it should achieve to meet one or more aims of the general equality duty. It should also provide details of the engagement undertaken in developing these objectives. Information regarding equality objectives must be published at least every four years.
- 4.5 In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Authority is also required to consider the information that it published before preparing its objectives. It should also

ensure the objectives are specific and measurable and set out how progress will be measured.

4.6 Key dates for the equality duty include:

6 April 2011 general and specific duties come into force

31 July 2011 listed bodies (except schools) to publish equality information

31 December 2011 schools to publish equality information

6 April 2012 listed bodies (including schools) to publish objectives

5 PREPARING FOR THE DUTY

- 5.1 The Chief Fire Officer is undertaking the relevant preparations required for the implementation of the new equality duty. The Authority already has in place a Single Equality Scheme (SES) that incorporates the race, disability and gender duties and plans for religion or belief, Age and Sexual Orientation. The SES is currently under review to take into account the requirements of the Equality Act including the development of specific actions in relation to all of the protected characteristics within the Act, and will be subject to a further report.
- 5.2 Prior to the initial implementation of the Equality Act in October 2010, equality and diversity staff published a briefing for all employees. Specific briefings were also carried out with individuals where key elements of the Act would directly impact upon their department/area of work. All actions identified as part of this exercise have now been implemented, ensuring the Authority is fully complying with the Act.
- 5.3 Further staff briefings will be carried out during February and March 2011 regarding the new equality duty to ensure all staff are fully aware of its requirements.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The EHRC's guidance is a practical explanation of what can be done to ensure authorities are meeting the equality duty. It does not have legal standing in the same way as the statutory Code of Practice on the public sector equality duty, which can be used as evidence in legal proceedings under the Act.
- 6.2 Public Authorities are recommended to use the Code of Practice as their key point of reference when seeking to clarify legal issues. The Code is due to be published later in 2011.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Compliance with the equality duty is a legal obligation however it also makes good business sense. An organisation that is able to provide services to meet the diverse needs of its users should find that it carries out its core business more efficiently. A workforce that has a supportive working environment is

more productive. It is also beneficial to draw on a broader range of talent and to better represent the community we serve.

- 8.2 Compliance with the general equality duty should also result in better informed decision-making and policy development, and better policy outcomes. Overall, compliance can lead to services that are more appropriate to the user, and services that are more effective and cost-effective. This can lead to increase satisfaction with public services.

9 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

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

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Members are recommended to:
- a) Endorse the content of this report;
 - b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- The essential guide to the public sector equality duty, Equality and Human Rights Commission www.equalityhumanrights.com
- The New Equality Duty, HR Committee, 19 October 2009
- The Equality Act 2010, HR Committee, 18 October 2010

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF CORPORATE EQUALITY PLAN & SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the current review of the Authority's Corporate Equality Plan (CEP) and Single Equality Scheme (SES).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Over five years ago a CEP was developed for the Authority. It was initially introduced as the overarching diversity and equality strategy document / plan for the Authority. The plan included improvement actions in relation to diversity and equality and was monitored via the Strategic Management Team.
- 2.2 Since the introduction of the CEP, the Authority has created and implemented a Single Equality Scheme (SES) incorporating the race, disability and gender duties and plans for religion or belief, Age and Sexual Orientation.
- 2.3 When the SES was introduced in 2009, it superseded the CEP as authorities were no longer required to publish a CEP.
- 2.4 The SES is currently under review to take into account requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and as part of this process diversity and equality personnel have commenced a review of all related strategic documents / plans including the CEP.

3 REVIEW PROCESS

- 3.1 A focus group was established in late 2010 to undertake a comprehensive review of the SES. The review group was made up of key personnel who had or were likely to have actions for their specific departments / areas within the SES such as Recruitment and Selection, Occupational Health Unit, Estates, Procurement and Service Delivery.
- 3.2 During the review process the purpose of the CEP and the SES was explored. It became apparent that the SES was viewed as both an overarching strategy document and a working document with equality and diversity actions. Personnel were clearly confused about the purpose of the SES particularly in terms of its relationship with the CEP.
- 3.3 The SES should be a document with an external focus containing specific actions that the Authority is taking to make improvements for its diverse communities. It should not be viewed as a strategy document which is in the main aimed at an internal audience.

Creating the Safest Community

- 3.4 The CEP is deemed no longer required as many of the actions within the CEP have been either complete or progressed via similar plans within the current SES. However, there is still a need for an overarching equality and diversity strategy document.
- 3.5 At present diversity and equality strategic aims / objectives are detailed in different sections of the Community Safety Strategic Plan and referred to in the HR strategy. Consideration has been given to the need for a diversity and equality strategy.
- 3.6 Not only is it considered best practice but many organisations have a separate diversity and equality strategy in place which provides clear direction and pulls together all of the key priorities, policies and work streams around diversity and equality.

4 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Diversity and equality personnel are in the process of developing a diversity and equality strategy which will become the overarching strategy document for the Authority. The CEP will be subsumed into the new strategy.
- 4.2 The SES will clearly link into the diversity and equality strategy however it will be streamlined and developed into a working document that is more outcome focused.
- 4.3 The SES will be expanded to include the additional protected characteristics included in the Equality Act and revised to ensure it meets all of the requirements as set out in the Act.
- 4.4 Members are requested to consider the outcomes anticipated from the revisions and make comment as appropriate.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 Creating a diversity and equality strategy for the Authority, reviewing / revising the SES as described above and removing the CEP will provide clarity in relation to the Authority's strategic direction regarding diversity and equality. It will also allow the Authority to produce a more focused and readable SES.
- 5.2 If the review and amendment of the above documents was not carried out and a diversity and equality strategy was not developed there is a risk that diversity and equality aims, objectives and actions are not effectively aligned to the Authority's Strategic Plan.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 A clear diversity and equality strategy along with the revised SES containing action plans for all of the protected characteristics and changes as required under the Equality Act will lead to better outcomes for the Authority's diverse communities.

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) Endorse the content of this report;
 - b) Consider and comment on the anticipated outcomes;
 - c) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- Single Equality Scheme.
- Corporate Equality Plan.

