

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No. 6

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: 8 FEBRUARY 2016

SUBJECT: FIRE AND RESECUE SERVICE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK RE-ACCREDITATION

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

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report provides members with updated information regarding the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework (FRSEF) re-accreditation process.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will recall that in March 2013 the Authority was awarded the 'Excellent' level of the FRSEF by the Local Government Association (LGA) having completed a rigorous self-assessment and site visit process.

2.2 In order to maintain this status the Authority is required to undergo the re-accreditation process approximately every three years. Further to the report presented to Committee in October 2015, it can be confirmed this process will take place on 15-16th June 2016.

3. NEXT STEPS

3.1 Initial work for the re-accreditation and site visit process has already commenced and a programme of events and meetings with key officers and members leading up to the site visit is being arranged. This will ensure the Authority is fully prepared for what is expected to be a thorough and robust re-assessment process.

3.2 Key milestones leading up to the site visit include:

Completion Date (2016)	Action
1 st February	Briefing meeting with department heads.
29 th February	Complete draft self-assessment, based upon the FRSEF and implementation the Improvement Action Plan that resulted from the 2013 process.
February to June	Monthly progress meetings.
29 th April	Prepare timetable for site visit.
20 th May	Finalise the self-assessment including the journey narrative and case studies; ensure all documentary evidence is collated.
27 th May	Hold participants briefing sessions.
27 th May	Finalise visit timetable and programme.
15-16 th June	Peer Team – Site Visit

4. RE-ACCREDITATION PROCESS

- 4.1 Whilst the re-accreditation process shorter than a full assessment and the process is still expected to be a challenging reflection on progress made since the full Peer Challenge assessment in 2013.
- 4.2 The Peer Team are expected to look back at the original report, consider the recommendations that were made and the improved outcomes that can be clearly demonstrated by the Authority. Verbal feedback and a brief report will follow from which it will be determined if the 'Excellent' standard has been maintained.

5. SECTOR LEADER

- 5.1 The LGA reported that the CFOA Equality Lead is highly supportive of re-accreditation, something which would ensure the Authority remains a public sector equality leader.

6. LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Whilst there are no specific legislative implications, the Equality Peer Challenge is an effective tool allowing the Authority to evaluate its performance in relation to its duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The cost of re-evaluation is £4,500 plus expenses associated with travel and accommodation for members of the Peer Challenge Team.

8. STRATEGIC PLAN LINK

- 8.1 Goal Four: To deliver a modern effective service ensuring value for money with staff who reflect the communities we serve.

9 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 By participating in the re-accreditation process the Authority will gain an independent view of the progress it has made since its original Equality Peer Challenge and receive further recommendations for consideration. This demonstrates a clear commitment to continuous improvement in relation to equality and inclusion.

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

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

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 Members are recommended to:
- a) Note the information detailed in the report.
 - b) Receive future reports as appropriate
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