

**SUBJECT: INVESTORS IN PEOPLE GOLD AWARD 2014**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the outcome of the Investors in People (IIP) re-accreditation audit, undertaken in Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority in February 2014.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the IIP standard is one of the most widely recognised and respected marks of good practice and quality that can be awarded to organisations in the United Kingdom.
- 2.2 IIP is a continuous business improvement framework which the Authority has held for over six years and we were re-assessed in February 2014, with 58 staff interviewed from all roles and locations across the Organisation. The accreditation period lasts for three years and this is the third time the Authority has been audited.
- 2.3 Members will recall that in December 2007 the Authority gained recognition as an IIP organisation, which assessed the Service against 39 performance areas and we achieved the "Basic" standard. The next 2010 assessment saw TWFRS achieve "Gold" status which required the Service to be assessed against 179 performance criteria and further we were also awarded "Championship" status which identified us as one of the best performing IIP Organisations.

**3 THE INVESTORS IN PEOPLE STANDARD**

- 3.1 The standard is divided into 10 indicators which are underpinned by various evidence requirements. The process is designed to establish whether we are undertaking activities which meet the evidence requirements within the award.

3.2 The 10 indicators are:

- Business Strategy
- Learning & Development Strategy
- People Management Strategy
- Leadership & Management Strategy
- Management Effectiveness
- Recognition & Reward
- Involvement & Empowerment
- Learning & Development
- Performance Measurement
- Continuous Improvement

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3.3 The Standard is based on 3 Key Principles:

- **Plan** – Developing strategies to improve the performance of the organisation;
- **Do** – Taking action to improve the performance of the organisation;
- **Review** – Evaluating the impact on the performance of the organisation.

#### **4 THE 2014 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSMENT**

4.1 Since the previous re-accreditation the audit has evolved and there now 196 performance assessment criteria, of which in 2014 the Authority were assessed against 170.

4.2 Of the 170, 117 were met in full, 23 were met with development needs and 4 were not met. The Authority achieved 127 additional evidence requirements above the 39 required for the basic standard.

4.3 Further to the independent audit, the Chief Fire Officer is pleased to report that Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority have been successful in gaining accreditation at Gold award standard for a second time.



## **5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

- 5.1 This award represents a significant achievement for the Authority and serves as a testament to the work of Members and staff in establishing excellent management practices.
- 5.2 With the maintenance of the Gold standard, some areas of organisational development have been identified.
- 5.3 It was acknowledged that the 2014 IIP assessment took place at an extremely challenging time (February 2014); both in terms of national issues around industrial action, as well as local issues related to promotion and recruitment freezes and the latest IRMP, in particular at that time, the Fire Cover Response Review.
- 5.4 However, the IIP team recognise “the fabric of the organisation remains intact” and despite these recent events the Authority leads an organisation with a strong and cohesive culture and the Members continue to demonstrate a commitment to its employees in terms of their personal development.
- 5.5 This was further re-enforced during a recent IIP Presentation to the Senior Management Team detailing an overview of the audit. It was highlighted that we remain an excellent organisation despite the recent issues and challenges.

## **6 AREAS OF STRONG PERFORMANCE**

- 6.1 Through-out the interview process the IIP team identified key areas where the Service was fully committed to investing in its workforce. The key findings are detailed below:
- The values of the Authority remain intact;
  - The Authority have a strong sense of social responsibility;
  - There is a strong and continuing investment in learning and development, which is recognised by most people;
  - Operational training is highly regarded;
  - Staff generally hold their line manager in high regard, with managers taking time to get to know their teams to provide support to individual, team and organisational improvement;
  - The workforce feels valued by colleagues and the public, although firefighters do not currently feel valued by the Government.



## **7 AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

7.1 However, the IIP team also identified areas where the Authority could develop and improve its performance around how it values its staff:

- IIP identified a requirement for senior managers to continue to engage staff in shaping the future organisation and this would require the vision and strategy to be clearly articulated, particularly during current challenging times;
- Due to the recent industrial action as part of the national pension's dispute, the approach to retirement has almost created a "sub-culture", which encourages the belief that the Service is a job to leave rather than stay.
- Management and leadership development requires further analysis, with the current Institute of Leadership and Management programme receiving mixed reviews;
- The IIP team felt that there was an uncertainty about the commitment to coaching within the Authority and further development in the area was seen as a means of improving performance;
- Due to the promotion and recruitment freeze, some of the workforce highlighted that there is currently a lack of personal development within the Service.

## **8 NEXT STEPS**

8.1 The outcome of the recommendations for areas of improvement will be considered and addressed as part of the Authority's improvement action plan. Further details will be reported as to performance against the action plan.

## **9 LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no direct legislative requirements in respect of this specific report.

## **10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The assessment and associated costs was met from existing cost headings.



## **11 STRATEGIC PLAN LINK**

- 11.1 This report links to Strategic Goal 4: Deliver a modern effective service, ensuring value for money with staff who reflects the communities we serve.

## **12 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 There are no Equality and Fairness implications in respect of this report.

## **13 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 There are no Health and Safety implications in respect of this report.

## **14 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

- 14.1 No specific consultation was carried out.

## **15 CONCLUSION**

- 15.1 Working within the IIP standard assists the Authority in achieving our Strategic Goals. The standard provides a framework for continual monitoring and review enabling us to fully invest in one of our most important resources, our people.
- 15.2 The awarding of the “Gold” standard demonstrates the Authority’s and Senior Management’s commitment to our staff and although there were specific development needs identified through the audit, these will be addressed through the improvement action plan.
- 15.3 This is a significant achievement which recognises that the Authority continues to have a strong commitment to our staff, whilst simultaneously navigating through significant change under intense budgetary pressure, as well as managing and mitigating the impact of the national pension dispute.

## **24 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 24.1 Members are recommended to:
- a) Note that the Authority has been awarded the IIP Gold Award Standard;
  - b) Receive further reports as necessary.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

Investors in People 2014 Report.

