

**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**Item No 5**

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: 13 OCTOBER 2014**

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**SUBJECT: STONEWALL WORKPLACE EQUALITY INDEX**

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

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**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members regarding the Authority's Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) submission for 2015.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 For over 5 years the Authority has entered the WEI to benchmark and evaluate its performance in relation to LGBT equality and inclusion. Members will be aware that in 2014 HR Committee were informed the Authority achieved 8<sup>th</sup> place and was the first Fire and Rescue Authority in the country to achieve a place in the top 10 of the WEI (HR Committee minute 19/2014 refers). The Authority was also ranked 4<sup>th</sup> top public sector employer, sector leader and the LGBT Network was selected as one of Stonewall's 75 Star Performing Networks.

- 2.2 Stonewall have undertaken a 5 year review of the WEI and launched a new questionnaire for 2015 which is considered tougher than previous years. To support the launch, the Authority hosted a seminar for the region in May 2014. The changes to the WEI questionnaire will present challenges to organisations entering the process and it is hoped the Authority will continue to achieve positive results through participation in the WEI.

**3 PREPARING THE SUBMISSION**

- 3.1 Strengths and development areas were discussed at a feedback meeting with Stonewall representatives in late January 2014. All improvement actions identified in this meeting have been progressed by equality staff and members of the LGBT network.

3.2 Following the launch of the new WEI, a gap analysis was carried out to identify any further evidence required and any additional evidence was collated during the drafting of the submission document.

3.3 The Authority's completed WEI questionnaire, along with over 120 pieces of supporting evidence, was submitted on 6 September 2014. Members continue to feature throughout the submission and their on-going support and commitment to the LGBT agenda adds further strength to the leadership elements of the submission.

#### **4 2015 WEI RANKING**

4.1 It is anticipated that the Authority will be informed of the outcome of the 2015 WEI in mid-January. Following this a report will be provided to HR Committee regarding the results.

#### **5 RISK MANAGEMENT**

5.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the risk to the Authority has been minimised as far as practicable.

#### **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The Authority is a corporate member of Stonewall. The annual cost of membership is currently £1,500 however, with the exception of staff time, there are no additional financial costs associated with entering the WEI.

#### **7 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The on-going support of Members ensures participation in the WEI and leads to improved equality outcomes both in the workplace and in the community.

#### **8 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

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

#### **9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of this report; and
- b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

- Stonewall Top 100 Employers 2014, The Workplace Equality Index, [www.stonewall.org.uk/WEI2014](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/WEI2014).
- Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2014, HR Committee Report, 3 February 2014.

