

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 5

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: 12 OCTOBER 2015

SUBJECT: FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK RE-ACCREDITATION

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report provides members with 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 satisfactory self-assessment against the criteria.

2.2 In order to maintain excellent status the Authority is required to undergo the re-accreditation process every three years. This process should therefore be conducted before the end of March 2016.

3 TIMESCALES

3.1 Whilst the timescales set out in section 2.2 provide a guide to re-accreditation, the LGA offer some flexibility over when re-accreditation should take place. This can be up to twelve months after the expiry date, meaning the Authority has some flexibility over when to undertake the process. However, this should not extend beyond this period as the Authority would then become subject to the full peer challenge process to become re-accredited.

3.2 The LGA have indicated that a May/June 2016 date for re-accreditation is feasible based upon their availability and provide sufficient time for an LGA review manager to be appointed. The re-accreditation process is considerably shorter than the full peer challenge, taking a total of two days for a site visit to complete the process.

4 RE-ACCREDITATION PROCESS

- 4.1 The re-accreditation process is a reflection on the progress the Authority has been made since the last full assessment. The process will consider the areas the Authority can demonstrate continuous improvement and the evidence that supports the Authority remaining at the excellent level.
- 4.2 Following the assessment the Authority will receive initial verbal feedback on the final afternoon of the visit with a brief report to follow.

5 SECTOR LEADER

- 5.1 Should the Authority decide to undergo re-accreditation it will be the first in the country to do so. The LGA reported that the CFOA Equality Lead would be highly supportive of re-accreditation, something which would ensure the Authority remains a public sector equality leader.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

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

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The cost of re-accreditation is £4,500 plus any expenses associated with travel and accommodation for members of the Peer Challenge Team. The financial implications from this report can be met from existing budgets.

8 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 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.

9 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

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

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The members are recommended to:
- a) Endorse the content of this report;

- b) Approve undertaking the re-accreditation process ;
 - c) Receive further reports as appropriate.
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- Fire And Rescue Service Equality Framework
- Fire And Rescue Service Equality Framework – Peer Assessment Report
March 2013

