

**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**Item No 04**

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: 14 OCTOBER 2013**

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**SUBJECT: EQUALITY PEER CHALLENGE PROGRESS UPDATE**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a progress update following the Equality Peer Challenge.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 In March 2013, the Authority underwent an Equality Peer Challenge at the 'excellent' level of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework. The challenge was organised by the Local Government Association (LGA) and involved a team of trained peers undertaking a series of interviews and focus groups with employees, Members and other stakeholders.

2.2 Following a rigorous and intensive process, the peer team awarded the Authority 'excellent' status and initial results of the challenge were reported in the HR Committee Report of 8<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

**3. PEER CHALLENGE REPORT**

3.1 The Equality Peer Challenge report, produced by the LGA is attached at Appendix A.

3.2 The report provides background to the challenge, an executive summary, the impact of the challenge on the Authority, and detailed findings, outlining strengths and areas for consideration for each performance area of the Equality Framework. In addition, the report highlights innovative projects and initiatives identified during the challenge, and signposts to areas of good practice.

**4. NEXT STEPS**

4.1 The Equality Peer Challenge report will be published both internally and externally following final approval from Members.

4.2 A draft improvement action plan based on the areas for consideration identified by the peer team is being developed. Further consultation will be carried out with Strategic Management Team, Equality Committee Members and other key staff to finalise the action plan. This will then be presented to HR Committee prior to completion.

- 4.3 An internal communications plan is also being developed to ensure the findings of the challenge are communicated effectively.

## **5. FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

## **6. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Achieving the 'excellent' level of the FRS Equality framework demonstrates the Authority's on-going commitment to equality for all.
- 6.2 The improvements that will be achieved through further development around the equality and inclusion agenda, steered by the Peer Challenge results, will benefit our diverse communities of Tyne and Wear and all employees of TWFRS.

## **7. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 The Authority is recommended to:
- a) Note the content of this report;
  - b) Receive further reports as appropriate.