

MEETING: 24 January 2011

SUBJECT: INVESTORS IN PEOPLE (IIP) ACHIEVEMENT OF GOLD AWARD STANDARD**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of the Investors In People (IIP) re-accreditation audit undertaken within Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority in November 2010.

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 As well as being a symbol of good management the Standard also assists in further improving performance, ensuring better teamwork and developing a more robust ability to manage change. Organisations also find value in the process of continuous improvement as the Standard encourages and supports a fully integrated performance management system.
- 2.3 This Authority first achieved IIP status in December 2007, with the accreditation period lasting for a total of three years. Accordingly, work commenced in the autumn of 2010 in preparation for the independent audit required as part of the re-accreditation process.
- 2.4 This work involved undertaking an internal assessment of the service against the detailed IIP standard, which covers the following key areas:
- Developing Strategies to improve the performance of the organisation
 - Taking action to improve the performance
 - Evaluating the impact on the performance of the organisation
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- 2.5 One consequence of this preparatory work was that sufficient evidence was amassed to encourage the service to apply for the IIP Gold Award Standard. To achieve the Gold Award Standard the independent auditing team would need to consider the service's performance and confirm that performance was satisfactory in a minimum of 165 out of a total of 196 key performance criteria, including the original 39 criteria previously assessed in 2007.

- 2.6 In November 2010, the independent assessment team visited the organisation for approximately two weeks, during which time they undertook a comprehensive audit against the IIP framework. Formal interviews were arranged with a total of 81 individuals selected from all levels of the service. In addition, the assessors supplemented their interview schedule with ad-hoc informal discussions with staff during their visit.

3 OUTCOME OF THE ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Further to the independent audit, the Chief Fire Officer is pleased to report that that Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority have been successful in gaining accreditation at Gold Award Standard, thereby becoming the first fire and rescue authority in the country to achieve this.

In summary, the assessment team recognised the service's key strengths as follows:

- A passion for the organisation's vision and values;
 - A commitment to serving the community;
 - Effective communication strategies;
 - Extremely well developed learning and development opportunities;
 - Evaluation of all development activities, projects and exercises;
 - Diversity and Equality management including access to development and career progression;
 - A Strong commitment to continuous improvement;
 - Local partnership working and; external audit and scrutiny;
 - Significant trust and respect for senior management team members.
- 3.2 Recommendations for further development were also provided relating to the small number of areas where the required standard was not met in full. These action points will be considered and addressed as part of the Authority's improvement planning framework.
- 3.3 Finally, following further discussion with IIP North East, it has been identified that the Authority qualifies for 'Champion' status. This will provide the Authority with additional recognition as a 'role model organisation' enabling us to share our best practice with other organisations at a local and national level.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This award represents a significant achievement for the Authority and it serves as a testament to the work of Members and staff in establishing excellent management practices and, most importantly, it acknowledges the efforts of all the staff who have embraced the considerable changes that have been necessary to move the Authority forward.
- 4.2 The Investor in People award enables the Authority to use the 'IIP Champion' Quality Mark on its documentation. This logo will be added to the Authority's website and to all outgoing correspondence templates.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Authority is recommended to:-

- a) Note that the Authority has been awarded the IIP Gold Award Standard;
 - b) Consider congratulating staff of the core work team for their assistance in this achievement;
 - c) Receive further reports as appropriate.
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

- *Investor in People –Assessment Report, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority 3rd December 2010*
- *Investor in People – Framework Summary 2010*

