

Annual Report on the Work of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

To provide the Human Resources Committee with a summary report on the work of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group from September 2010 to August 2011.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report

3 Background

The remit of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group is:

- to improve the services we provide to the wider Shropshire community
- to promote community cohesion and anti-discrimination with people living and working in Shropshire, including issues of rural access, social isolation and income inequality
- to initiate, facilitate and monitor projects to improve the wellbeing of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority employees.
- to promote excellence in equality and diversity practice throughout the organisation
- to maintain organisational focus and ensure strategic priorities for equality and diversity in the organisation and the communities we serve
- to ensure that Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority culture encourages employees and service users to be valued and accepted as individuals

- provide leadership, strategic direction, development and resources to ensure progression of our Equality Framework and Single Equality Scheme.

4 Main areas of work

The work of the Steering Group has made good progress since August 2010 on enabling implementation of actions in the new Single Equality Action Plan.

The main areas of Steering Group work during this period are summarised below:

- the Single Equality Action Plan has been monitored for progress and its content and priorities have been reviewed in light of its effectiveness in delivering Equality and Diversity outcomes
- the 3 year Equality Impact Assessment plan has continued to be monitored. Individual departments have reviewed, edited and prioritised their outstanding assessments
- dealing with membership subscriptions and funding requests, including a small contribution to the Rainbow Film Festival
- agreeing to proceed with an internal audit against the Service Delivery element of the Fire Service Equality Framework, working alongside our regional counterparts to undertake this review
- continuing to plan, administer and deliver training and information – including ‘hate crime’ briefings, equality and diversity staff catch-up training, ‘cultural awareness and anti-harassment and bullying induction training, and a briefing on The Equality Act 2010
- a survey has been developed (currently in draft) about levels of satisfaction with public services for those of the community who are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGB). This has been carried out in partnership with Shropshire Council, Shropshire Primary Care Trust, Rights and Fairness Telford, Telford and Wrekin Council, Victim Support, Citizens’ Advice, Shropshire LGB Network, housing and other agencies
- dyslexia awareness sessions have been carried out for staff who have first contact with possibly dyslexic employees, in order to improve the process of identification and support
- a training session on gypsies and travellers has been delivered and is to be rolled out to other employees over the forthcoming year
- agreement to look at working on a joint Holocaust Memorial Day for 2012

- review of The Equality Act Managers' Guidance document, which has been distributed to all managers.

The Steering Group has received presentations by all Stations about the work they have carried out in their communities (see HR Committee paper 15 from 7 April 2011)

5 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6 Legal Comment

The role of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group is to integrate equality, diversity and human rights' legislation and standards, across the whole of the Authority's activities, supporting achievement of the Authority's objectives and to take action as appropriate in accordance with their statutory obligations.

7 Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is an update report looking at historical information.

8 Appendix

There are no appendices attached to this report.

9 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.