Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee
3 September 2009

Equality Standard for Local Government – Achievement of Level 4

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Paul Raymond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260203 or Natalie Hill, Equality and Diversity Officer on 01743 260236.

1   Purpose of Report

To provide the Human Resources (HR) Committee with an update on the progress of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service and the achievement of levels within the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG).

2   Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the content of this report

3   Background

SFRS undertook an external assessment for Level 3 of the ESLG in August 2008 and were successful in obtaining this level.

The equality and diversity steering group agreed in February 2009 that the Service should then progress and undertake an assessment for Level 4.

4   Current position

An internal audit/assessment was undertaken in March 2009 for Level 4 and attached to this report at Appendix A is the report which details how this self assessment was undertaken. It is important to note that an external consultant who specialises in Equality and Diversity verified this internal assessment process.

SFRS are now only one of a handful of Fire Services that have achieved Level 4 of the ESLG. The Equality Standard has recently been replaced by the new Equality Framework for Local Government, this new framework only has 3 levels:

- **Developing**
- **Achieving**
- Moving towards excellence (only for those at Level 4)
- **Excellent**

As SFRS have achieved Level 4 it can classify itself as **'moving towards excellence'** which is only for those at this level of the old Standard.

Level 4 is aimed at **'Information Systems and Monitoring Against Targets'**, some of the areas that we had to achieve to achieve this were:

- Progressing against targets and monitoring these
- Developing information and monitoring systems
- Regular reporting processes in place
- Completing Equality Impact Assessments
- Action planning

5 Legal Comment

Statutory Equality Duties require public authorities to produce Equality Schemes covering race, gender and disability either individually or under the umbrella of a single Equality Scheme.
Information on the General and Specific Duties and Statutory Codes of Practice can be found on the website of the Equality and Human Rights Commission
(www.equalityhumanrights.com).

6 Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment does not need to be completed as this report is on historical information.

7 Appendix

Equality Standard for Local Government – Level 4 Self Assessment Report

8 Background Papers

Equality Standard for Local Government – Level 3 Self Assessment Report

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	*
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*

Appendix to report 14 on
Equality Standard of Local Government Achievement of Level 4
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Shropshire
Fire and Rescue Service

Equality Standard for Local Government
Level 4 Self Assessment Report

Putting Shropshire's Safety First
www.shropshirefire.gov.uk

Introduction

This Self Assessment report explains how Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) have continued to mainstream Equality and Diversity into all aspects of its business, and have maintained progress in improving in this area.

SFRS undertook an external audit in August 2008 against Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and were successful in obtaining Level 3 of this framework. Level 4 was the next stage that the organisation could achieve and after discussion and agreement with the Equality and Diversity Steering Group in February 2009 it was agreed that SFRS would audit themselves against Level 4 in March 2009.

In March 2009 SFRS completed their Self Assessment at Level 4 and have now obtained this level and are successfully working to this.

How Self Assessment against Level 4 was completed

Level 4 of the Equality Standard is broken down into 4 areas:

- **Leadership and Corporate Commitment**
- **Community Engagement and Accountability**
- **Service Delivery and Customer Care**
- **Employment and Training**

The Level 4 assessment built upon the Level 3 external assessment that was completed in August 2008.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group, which is made up of senior executives from each Directorate, and a selection of managers from each department were invited to attend to assess each of the above areas in a selection of meetings. This was to ensure that each level was sufficiently met and that evidence could be provided.

The audit for Level 4 is obtained through internal verification and self assessment, however, SFRS also obtained external advice through a specialist equality and diversity consultant who is currently involved in drafting the new Fire Service Equality Framework, to ensure that the criteria was fully met and this was verified by the consultant.

SFRS can now claim that they are working at Level 4 and for the new Equality Framework this is now called **'moving towards excellence'**.

Achievement of Level 4

In order to achieve level 4 of the Equality Standard these are the main areas that the Service had to demonstrate that they achieved:

- Progress across the authority against the targets that it set at Level 3 for race, gender and disability

- By March 2009, it has achieved progress across the authority against targets for sexual orientation, age, religion and belief

- Developed information and monitoring systems that allow it to assess progress in achieving targets

- Measuring progress against targets and effectively using its information and monitoring systems

- Monitoring reports are being produced at specified interval and circulated to designated consultation and scrutiny groups

- It is using the self-assessment process to review and revise targets, monitoring and consultation systems

- Self-assessment includes involvement of designated community, staff and stakeholder groups and seeks external validation through community involvement, peer review or expert opinion

- Continue to carry out equality impact assessment for new policies and where gaps are identified through self-assessment

- Initiated a new round of action planning and target setting

- Monitoring systems are providing useful information about progress towards specific targets

Leadership and Corporate Commitment

The Service has monitoring systems in place which are conducted on a regular and timely basis, processes are in place for scrutiny of these and targets are set using this monitoring information. Progress reports are prepared for committees and executives on a regular basis, feedback is used to shape policy objectives and targets. Regular consultation takes place through surveys and focus groups.

Community Engagement and Accountability

SFRS have developed a consultation strategy and collect information from satisfaction surveys and circulate information through various groups and committees. Targets and action plans have been developed with the involvement of internal and external groups.

Service Delivery and Customer Care

SFRS use reporting systems to monitor service delivery which are produced on a regular basis such as the Corporate Equality Action Plan (CEAP) and Quarterly Performance Planning, these reports are circulated to scrutiny groups such as PACT and Committee meetings.

Monitoring is undertaken across partnerships and contacts using SFRS policy guidelines and processes. Managers are involved in the self assessment process to review targets

such as through strategic planning days, Equality and Diversity Steering Group and Directorate Business Plans.

Actions have been set across all equality strands as shown in our CEAP, Directorate Plans and results from our Equality Impact Assessments.

Employment and Training

Human resources targets are compiled through using equality monitoring data and these are then put into the Departmental Plans and monitored through the quarterly performance report and the CEAP.   The resourcelink system allows SFRS to monitor employee data across all areas and to report on this and to undertake comparisons with employment profiles in the county. SFRS have used local data to set the National Equality and Diversity Strategy Targets.

Equality reports are sent to the relevant Committees and are endorsed by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group. Equality training is implemented against needs from action plans and implemented as required, such as Interview training, member training and Equality training on the 6 strands of Diversity.

At the back of this document you will find a detailed list of each of the Level 4 assessment criteria and evidence that was provided to ensure that this was met.

Future progression

The Equality Standard for Local Government has now been replaced with the Equality Framework, the levels within this have now changed and there are no longer 5 levels as in the old Standard, the new framework now consists of 3 levels which are called:

- **Emerging**
- **Achieving**
- Moving towards excellence (only for those who achieved Level 4 of the old standard)
- **Excellent**

SFRS are now looking to migrate from the old standard to the new Equality Framework and are now looking at how they can start to work towards 'excellence'.

- In addition to this SFRS are working towards the **'Fire and Rescue Service – Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008 – 20018'**, and the targets contained within this document.

Level 4 Assessment and Evidence

Number	Evidence
Leadership and Corporate Commitment	
4.1.1 **Corporate assessment of adequacy of departmental information and monitoring systems**	Business Planning Process Quarterly Performance Monitoring Procurement Guidelines and Strategy Partnership BO Data cleanse exercise Resourcelink monitoring reports being developed CFS – information agreement systems
4.1.2 **Set up system for review of service and employment monitoring reports by designated consultation and scrutiny groups**	Quarterly Performance Monitoring to Committees on Business Plans and the Corporate Equality Action Plan – available on website Equality and Diversity Steering Group Minutes Equality Monitoring Guidance
4.1.3 **Review targets against monitoring information and produce reports for corporate management team**	Quarterly Performance Monitoring to Committees on Business Plans and the Corporate Equality Action Plan – available on website Policy Group Meetings Equality and Diversity Steering Group Minutes – progress on actions in the CEAP Equality Impact Assessment - Actions and outcomes monitoring sheet
4.1.4 **Prepare reports on progress against policy objectives for council executive/cabinet, scrutiny bodies and audit**	Quarterly Performance Monitoring to Committees on Business Plans and the Corporate Equality Action Plan – available on website Equality and Diversity Steering Group Minutes IRMP Business Planning Process
4.1.5 **Take on board responses from designated consultation and scrutiny groups for revising policy objectives and targets**	IRMP Consultation Budget Consultation Cultural Audit Focus Groups with staff and unions Public satisfaction surveys After the Fire survey CFS Surveys Executive Officers Visits Joint consultation meetings with T&W/SCC, lets talk, PAHCH, Joint consultation on a single equality scheme with SCC and PCT in progress. National E&D Strategy
4.1.6 **Self-assess progress against the targets set at Level 3 for race, gender and disability**	Corporate Equality Action Plan Quarterly Performance Monitoring External Consultant used for external scrutiny.
4.1.7 **Self assess progress against the**	Corporate Equality Action Plan EQIA's completed on 6 strands

targets that it set at level 3 for sexual orientation, religion or belief and age by March 2009	Through undertaking the Cultural Audit it was recognised that staff needed to have an awareness of all strands and areas such as positive action to increase staff awareness - operational staff have received training on 6 strands of diversity during 2008. Non uniformed staff will be receiving training during 2009.
4.1.8 New targets and action plans have been developed through involvements of stakeholders	Equality and Diversity Steering Group Minutes CFA Minutes Policy Group minutes IRMP Consultation Public satisfaction surveys After the Fire survey Target setting letter to the CLG stating current numbers and future targets for women and minority ethnic people Age and disability targets for service delivery in place.

Community Engagement and Accountability	
4.2.1 Involve designated community, staff and stakeholder groups in deciding what kind of information will be collected and the reasons for it	Consultation strategy IRMP Consultation Public satisfaction surveys After the fire survey
4.2.2 Circulate monitoring reports to designated community, staff and stakeholder groups	Equality and Diversity Steering Group Minutes Policy Group Minutes SFRS Website TREDP / Equalities Forum Committees - CAA
4.2.3 Ensure that the participation strategy demonstrably engages designated groups in review process	IRMP Consultation – selection of participants based on demographic data Consultation strategy Cultural audit – IRMP in partnership with BTW AND SCC
4.2.4 Review by designated groups of progress against targets	Equality and Diversity Steering Group Minutes CFA Authority Minutes Policy Group Minutes SFRS website CEAP
4.2.5 Feed back response on monitoring reports to corporate and departmental teams, to directorate, council committees, employee representatives and members and to community	Committee reports Policy Group

partners	
4.2.6 **Require contractors to supply monitoring reports on service delivery and take-up**	Procurement Guidelines and Strategy BO Partnership BO Asset Management Plan European Procurement Legislation
4.2.7 **Show that consultation and scrutiny are integral to self-assessment process**	IRMP Consultation Consultation strategy EQIA BO. External Verification with consultant
4.2.8 **New targets and action plans have been developed through involvement with stakeholders**	Equality and Diversity Steering Group Minutes Committee reports Policy Group Minutes / reports IRMP Consultation Public satisfaction surveys After the fire survey Cultural Audit

Service Delivery and Customer Care

4.3.1 **All departmental and service level units are using information systems to monitor service outcomes**	Quarterly Performance Reports Actions and Outcomes monitoring Hate Crime reporting
4.3.2 **Service delivery monitoring reports are produced at specific and regular intervals**	Quarterly Performance Reporting Corporate Plan Business planning process Complaints Report CEAP Incident forms debrief – QSM role After the fire survey reports
4.3.3 **Service delivery monitoring reports are circulated to all designated consultation and scrutiny groups**	CFA Authority / Committee Minutes A & PMC PACT Mtgs IRMP Telford and Wrekin Senior Citizens panel Corporate Plan consultation Scrutiny by LSP (quarterly)
4.3.4 **Monitoring procedures are applied across contracts and partnerships**	Procurement Guidelines and Strategy Partnership BO FS partnerships use as processes for collecting data European Procurement legislation

4.3.5 **Service Managers are fully involved in the self-assessment process to review and revise targets, monitoring and consultation systems**	Quarterly Performance Monitoring Strategic Planning Days – minutes/papers Business Planning processes EQIA Process E &D steering group Directorate BP Individual station plans have E & D targets
4.3.6 **At service level there is demonstrable progress against targets set in action plans for race, gender and disability**	CEAP Equality Schemes Equality and Diversity Steering Group Minutes Full EQIA's Actions and outcomes progress Results since employing bilingual outreach advocate / vulnerable persons officers PART Team Road Safety – Motorbikes
4.3.7 **By March 2009, there is demonstrable progress against targets set in action plans for sexual orientation, religion and belief and age.**	CEAP Full EQIA's Actions and outcomes progress Results since employing bilingual outreach advocate / vulnerable persons officers CFS Directorate Plan PART Team Road Safety Team HATE Crime prevention targets Stonewall membership Attendance at LGB events
4.3.8 **Report progress on service targets to directorate members, council committees, members and consultation and scrutiny groups**	Quarterly Performance Reports CFA Authority Minutes Policy Group Minutes Directorate Plans IRMP
4.3.9 **Use monitoring to assess achievements against targets set in action plans and feed back results into policy review, targeting and revised action plans**	CEAP Home Fire Safety Check Form Application Form (Equality Monitoring) Business Planning Process
4.3.10 **Establish inter-departmental scrutiny process**	Policy Group Equality and Diversity Steering Group Minutes Inter department involvement in completing EQIA's ISO 9001 – requires this annually Consultation Strategy

Employment and Training	
4.4.1 **Use existing or adapted personnel information systems to provide equality data relating to human resource targets (recruitment, promotion, training, grievances, disciplinary action, appraisal, dismissal and other reasons for leaving, retention, and equal pay)**	HR Departmental Plan IPDR / CPD Equality Monitoring BO Quarterly Performance Monitoring report Resourcelink reports on all 6 strands Cultural Audit results Recruitment and Selection training includes eliminating discriminatory practices
4.4.2 **Produce monitoring reports at regular and specified intervals and circulate to designated consultation and scrutiny groups**	Quarterly Performance Monitoring report Corporate Plan Resourcelink reports on all 6 strands Recruitment target setting letter
4.4.3 **Use equality data to monitor use of all personnel procedures**	HR Department Plan Quarterly Performance Monitoring report Application Form (Equality Monitoring) IPDR Process Equality Monitoring BO Resourcelink reports on all 6 strands Sickness absence monitoring
4.4.4 **Use equality data to monitor the number of staff leaving employment and their reasons for leaving**	Exit Interview Process Equality and Diversity Steering Group Minutes Equality Monitoring BO Resourcelink reports on all 6 strands Retained leavers reports
4.4.5 **Use monitoring reports to assess whether authority employment profiles more closely fit the profile of local labour market**	CEAP Quarterly Performance Monitoring report Equality Monitoring BO Recruitment Target setting letter Positive action paper to steering group Resourcelink reports on all 6 strands Cultural Audit results Stonewall membership Equality schemes
4.4.6 **Self-assessment should demonstrate progress against employment targets**	BVPI's Quarterly Performance Monitoring report CEAP National Equality and Diversity Strategy Positive Active Initiatives
4.4.7 **Reports based on self-assessment sent to directorate members, council committees, members and consultation and scrutiny groups and seek verification**	ESLG Self Assessment Report CFA Minutes / Committee HR Committee A&PMC Committee

4.4.8 **Report on implementation of pay review recommendations**	National Agreement on Pay – current rates of pay
4.4.9 **Review targets for employment and pay review and agree action plans with designated stakeholders**	Quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports National Agreement on Pay – current rates of pay Maternity Policy
4.4.10 **Review training needs against service action plans and revise training plan to deliver appropriate competencies/behaviours**	Training and Development Departmental Plan IPDR process Equality training – 6 strands Equality Impact Assessment Training Equality and Diversity Training – links to Cultural Audit Member training Interview training Completed impact assessments identify training needs
4.4.11 **Incorporate targets for revised training programme in staff appraisal**	IPDR Process Equality Schemes Career Development booklet Management Development Programmes

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