

Investors in People Re-accreditation

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Louise, McKenzie, Assistant Chief Officer, on 01743 260280.

1 Purpose of Report

To provide feedback on the findings of the most recent Investors in People audit which took place in July 2007.

2 Recommendations

That Human Resources Committee note the report

3 Background

Our very first Investors in People audit took place in June 2000 with subsequent audits in 2001 and 2004. Each of these audits demonstrated that we had met all the Investors in People standards to a very high level. It is even more pleasing to note, however, that not only did we achieve similar results this year, but the auditor advised us that the standards had become more stringent and therefore more difficult to achieve.

4 The Audit

The objectives of the Investors in People audit are to determine whether an organisation can practically demonstrate that it meets the national standards for improving its performance through its people. This should be demonstrated by developing and implementing strategies to improve the performance of its people and to ensure the evaluation of this investment.

In order to establish this, the auditor, representing the West Midlands Quality Centre, interviews the required sample of staff based on the 'population' of the organisation. In the case of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, the sample was in the region of 10%. The auditor interviewed 22 RDS staff, 18 whole time operational staff, 14 support staff and 2 Fire Control staff, plus a member of the Fire Brigades Union. Whilst the sample taken for support staff appears



to be disproportionate, many of the staff identified within this group by the auditor were actually uniformed staff, constituting operational managers and fire safety staff. Only 5 really fell under the 'Support' heading.

In addition, we requested that, during his visit, the auditor sought feedback from staff on the effects of the modernisation agenda and the changes that it has brought with it.

5 The Results

In summary the report findings are set out below.

Key Areas of Strength and Effective Practice

- Very strong and ongoing commitment to the development of skills and competence across the organisation
- Commitment to equality and fairness and the efforts that are being made to change long established perceptions of the service in this respect
- Many ways by which people's development needs are met and the resources that are devoted to maintaining and improving skills levels
- Many improvements to the processes and practices that support staff development
- Efforts that have been made to address the concerns of the RDS
- Degree to which people are encouraged to have a greater involvement in and ownership of decision making (many examples were provided)

The auditor provides many examples to support the above.

Opportunities for Improvement

Whilst the auditor stated that Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service are "very proactive in introducing improvements to its staff development arrangements" he pointed out that we may wish to consider certain issues highlighted during his discussions with various staff. Several of these comments have already been highlighted in the recent cultural audit and will be addressed as agreed following the current round of Integrated Risk Management Planning consultation but including issues such as:

- A feeling that the Retained Duty System staff are held in higher regard than Wholetime
- A feeling that Community Fire Safety targets have been introduced at the expense of firefighting skills
- The need to increase the number of Individual Personal Development Reviews (IPDR) completed across the Service

In addition, the auditor has identified that discussions with staff highlighted their openness to receive more feedback and a greater opportunity to highlight development needs and aspirations. Whilst the auditor gives recognition that the full implementation of the IPDR process is already



underway, he recommends that this is actively encouraged across the organisation.

6 Financial Implications

The costs of the Investors in People assessment are provided for within the Training and Development budget. There are therefore no financial implications arising from this report.

7 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

This report details feedback given by an external assessor and is brought before the Human Resources Committee for their information. An EQIA is therefore not required.

9 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this 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	

