

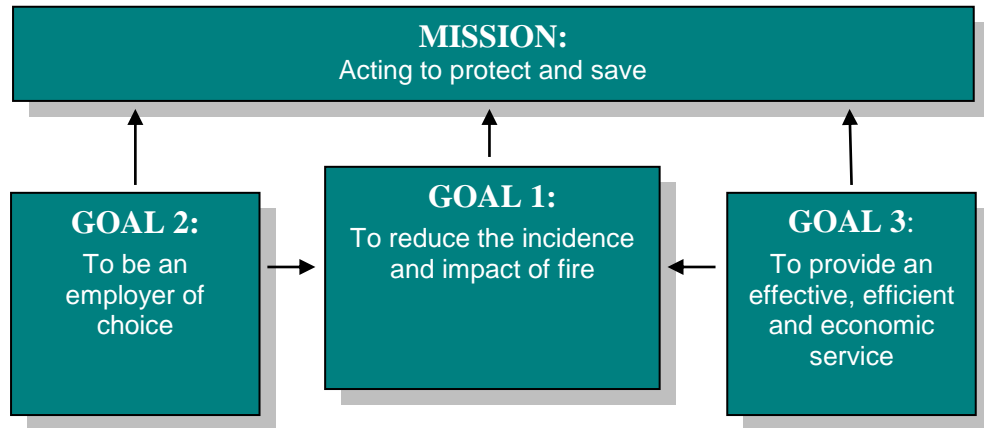
DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



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| REPORT REFERENCE NO. | HRMDC/09/3 |
| MEETING | HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE |
| DATE OF MEETING | 22 JANUARY 2009 |
| SUBJECT OF REPORT | TARGET SETTING FOR GOAL 2 OF THE DEVON AND SOMERSET FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY CORPORATE PLAN 2009/10 TO 2011/12 |
| LEAD OFFICER | Head of Human Resources Management and Development and the Head of Service Planning and Review |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | <p>(a) <i>That the options and recommendations for targets contained within this report are considered, and;</i></p> <p>(b) <i>That the targets are included in the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12. The Corporate Plan will then be submitted to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority in February 2009 for final approval.</i></p> |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | <p>A key part of any business plan is the setting of targets to demonstrate the level of ambition the organisation wishes to achieve.</p> <p>As in previous years, it is proposed that this Committee discuss and considers targets for relevant areas of the Corporate Plan before final endorsement by the full Authority in February. Therefore, this paper sets out recommendations for targets under Goal 2 'To be an employer of choice'.</p> |
| RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS | The Service is awaiting the outcome of an application to Communities and Local Government for grant funding in return for stretch targets relating to the recruitment of women into the operational roles and also the recruitment of ethnic minority employees across the whole organisation. |
| EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT | |
| APPENDICES | |
| LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS | <p>Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority Draft Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12</p> <p>Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority – Minutes DSFRA/51 (Authority Corporate Single Equality Scheme - "Making the Connections") and DSFRA 52 _National Equality & Diversity Strategy: Application for Additional Capital Grant Funding to Meet Higher Recruitment Targets refer.</p> |

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The draft Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12 set out the ambitions for the Authority for the next three years, as expressed through the following Mission and Goals:



1.2 A key part of any business plan is the setting of targets to demonstrate the level of ambition the organisation wishes to achieve

1.3 Within the Fire and Rescue Service in previous years there has been the requirement to set targets for the next three years for each of the national Best Value Performance Indicators. However, this requirement no longer exists and therefore there is greater flexibility for the Authority in the setting of targets.

1.4 Nationally the former suite of Best Value Performance Indicators has been replaced with the National Indicator Set which consists of 198 performance indicators covering a wide range of areas in the public sector. The recently renewed Local Area Agreements were required to set targets against 35 of the performance indicators in the National Indicator Set. However, all of the 198 indicators will still need to be measured and monitored on a regular basis. Within the set there are 2 specific indicators where the fire and rescue service is the primary source of the data. They are:

NI 33: Arson Incidents. To be measured as:

- (i) Number of deliberate primary fires per 10,000 population;
- (ii) Number of deliberate secondary fires per 10,000 population

NI 49: Number of primary fires and related fatalities and non-fatal casualties (excluding precautionary checks). To be measured as:

- (i) Total number of primary fires per 100,000 population;
- (ii) Total number of fatalities due to primary fires per 100,000 population;
- (iii) Total number of non-fatal casualties (excluding precautionary checks) per 100,000 population

1.5 Of course there are other indicators in the set where the work of the fire and rescue service contributes e.g. road traffic collisions, but are not the primary source of the data. Within the four Local Area Agreements within Devon and Somerset neither of the indicators above had targets set against them.

1.6 As members will be aware, central government outlines the direction of the Fire and Rescue Service by the publication of a National Framework. The latest edition of this, the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11 contains the action that FRS' must implement the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018. This strategy contains the requirement for each Authority to meet recruitment, retention and progression in its workforce diversity targets for women and minority ethnic staff by 2013. Every FRS Authority is responsible for setting its own local minority ethnic recruitment targets based upon the local Labour Force Survey (LFS) statistics rather than the census used previously. The LFS is considered much more accurate and provides current identification of the working age population. The details of these targets are contained later within this report.

2. **TARGET SETTING FOR GOAL 2**

2.1 Within the Draft Corporate Plan under Goal 2 there four priorities:

- 2.a) To improve the service's approach to equality and diversity
- 2.b) To provide effective training and development for staff
- 2.c) To improve the health and welfare of staff
- 2.d) To develop strategies to recruit and retain firefighters in rural communities

2.2 In order to achieve these priorities the Service will be measured against the targets listed below, supporting the relevant priority. Information is provided on current levels of performance, suggested targets to be adopted and activities to be undertaken to achieve the target. More detailed discussions on some of these activities will be covered earlier on the agenda of this committee meeting.

2.3 When setting targets it is important to consider:

- The priority and importance of delivering a specific issue
- Current performance and success of existing strategies to deliver the outcomes
- Resources available to undertake the activity required to achieve the target
- Benchmarking of current performance against other Fire and Rescue Services
- The possible impact of the current economic situation on performance. No-one can reliably predict what this impact might be and therefore setting targets in this climate provides a significant challenge in itself.

3. **PRIORITY 2A – TO IMPROVE THE SERVICE'S APPROACH TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

3.1 The main driver in improving the Service's approach to Equality and Diversity will be the implementation of 'Making the connections'. This is essentially a single equality scheme for Devon & Somerset covering all six equality strands. An early draft of the scheme was presented to members at the full Authority meeting on the 23 October 2008 (paper DSFRA/08/25 refers). The scheme will:

- be built on evidence provided by community/staff consultation;
- bring together and highlight in one document all the current and future activities in DSFRS that are relevant to the Local Government Equality Standard;

- have the 6 equality strands clearly identified within it;
- have DSFRS functions relating to each strand clearly identified;
- detail our priorities for Equality Impact Assessing policies;
- have a 3 year action plan setting out our direction of travel;
- have a person identified as being responsible for each action;
- contribute towards changing organisational culture (National framework document 2008 – 2011).

3.2 Existing work already being undertaken or proposed for the future that will assist in progressing the scheme are:

- On-line E-learning Equality & Diversity Training programme
- Engaging with Hard to Reach Groups
- Improved monitoring of Equality & Diversity performance data
- Undertaking Equality Impact Assessments of all training courses
- Positive Action Working Group to develop and implement a Positive Action Strategy
- Harmonisation of all Equality & Diversity Policies
- Reviewing the Equality Impact Assessment Procedures
- Promote Core Values

3.3 To monitor the success in improving the Service's approach to equality and diversity there are four measures, namely:

- The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms
- The duty to promote race equality
- The percentage of operational recruits that are women
- The percentage of all staff recruited from the local minority working age population.

3.4 The current Corporate Plan contains the Target 'Achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government in 2008/09 and 2009/10.' Work is still in progress to achieve this standard, a key component of which is a single equality scheme, as referred to above. There is also a South West Regional target for all FRA's to achieve the level of 'achieving authority' by March 2010. The wording is different in the regional plan as this reflects the new descriptive for the Standard and equates to Level 3. It is therefore proposed that the existing target stands, but is re-worded in line with the regional target.

3.5 BVPI 2b (The duty to promote race equality) has been removed from the reporting mechanisms. BVPIs ceased to exist as of 1st April 2008 as laid out in Fire Service Circular 9/2008 which states;

"The 2007 Act removes the requirement for best value authorities to compile and publish an annual best value performance plan (BVPP). The Department intends to commence this provision from 1 April 2008".

It is thus, that BVPI 2b (The Duty to Promote Race Equality) is to be removed as a specific measure from our own reporting mechanisms. The way that the Authority will measure and report on performance in relation to all equality & diversity matters, will be seen through the outcomes of the action plan in the Single Equality Scheme "Making the Connections" and the Corporate Plan. This will address not just our legal obligations and corporate issues for race, but also the other diversity strands of disability, gender, age, faith and sexual orientation. This will achieve alignment with the new local performance framework for the future measurement of our successes, achievements and areas that need further work and development.

- 3.6 The National Equality and Diversity Strategy contains the following two targets:
- By 2013, the percentage of recruits from minority ethnic groups across the whole organisation to reach the same percentage as in the local working age population
 - By 2013 recruitment of women into the operational sector to be at least 15%.
- 3.7 A paper was submitted to the Full Fire & Rescue Authority on the 23 October 2008 - National Equality & Diversity Strategy: Application for Additional Capital Grant Funding to Meet Higher Recruitment Targets (Minute DSFRA/52. refers) suggesting targets for Devon and Somerset that supported the National targets. As members will be aware, the Authority has submitted an application for funding to Communities and Local Government to support FRAs in their commitment to higher targets. Devon and Somerset FRS are requesting a share of the Capital Grant payment of £2million and we have therefore committed to achieve the higher targets as outlined below:
- The Labour Force Survey indicates that the local minority ethnic working age population across the Service area is 5.29%. We are increasing this target by 2% to achieve 7.29% of all staff recruited to be from minority ethnic groups by 2013.
 - By 2013, 18% of firefighters recruited into the service to be women (this is 3% above the national target).
- 3.8 To date we have had acknowledgment of receipt of our request to CLG but have yet to hear if the higher targets and associated grant have been approved. As well as progressing the equalities scheme 'Making the connections' to achieve these targets the Service has also been actively working with representative bodies equalities teams and has more robust strategic and tactical workforce planning.

4. **PRIORITY 2B – TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR STAFF**

- 4.1 There are no specific numerical targets within the existing Corporate Plan for this priority. However, the draft plan does propose the following two targets to measure the success of this priority. They are:
- Ensure 100% staff promoted into new roles receive risk critical elements of their development programme prior to actively commencing the role
 - Achieve and maintain 100% of station based staff trained in line with current breathing apparatus training policy.

4.2 To support achievement of these targets and priority, the Service has a five year training strategy to address the delivery of training across the two training centres with an increased emphasis on local delivery. The Service continues to undertake an annual training needs analysis so as to ensure awareness of training requirements plus there is an increased emphasis on the development and implementation of appraisal systems.

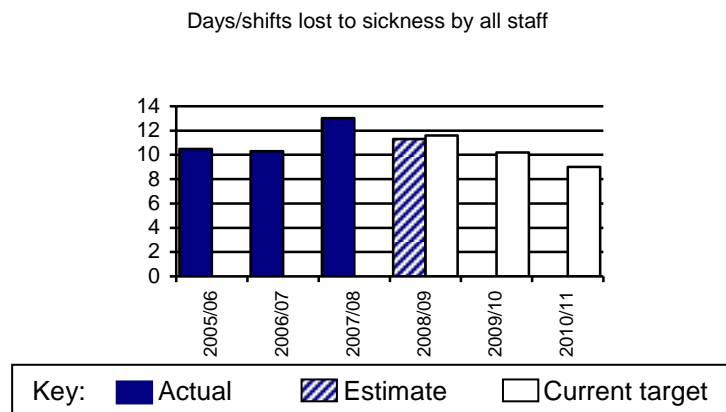
5 2C TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF STAFF

5.1 Within the existing and proposed plan there is one target that measures the achievement of this priority which relates to the levels of sickness amongst staff.

5.2 To reduce the level of sickness, the Service has re-energised the use of the existing Service policy on sickness absence. This involves the closer monitoring of absence and greater support to staff and awareness of linked policies e.g. flexible working, carers leave etc. The Service has also developed a new pressure and stress at work policy and is currently consulting on a more robust attendance and absence management policy. As part of the overall health agenda the Service will also identify and implement positive health promotion and work closely with the new Occupational Health provider to identify further opportunities for improvement. Also the Health and Safety section will continue to undertake and oversee ROSPA and station audits and use the results of these to inform changes in policies and procedures in order to reduce work place injuries.

The proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence

The current target set is to reduce the levels of sickness absence to the regional average rate of 9.0 days/shifts lost per person by 2010/11. Current performance is that sickness rates have started to decrease, down by 13% when compared to the same period last year. If this performance continues to the end of the year it is expected the rate will be 11.3 per person compared to a target of 11.6. This is a positive result for the Service due to the many factors that currently face staff such as the impact of combination, rank to role, job evaluation and the regional control centre.



The levels of sickness in Devon and Somerset are amongst the highest Nationally, with the best performing reporting rates as low as 6 days lost per person. When compared to the region, although rates are lower in other brigades, a couple have shown some increases so far in 2008/09 and may exceed sickness rates in Devon and Somerset by the end of the year.

Recommendation: To continue with the existing target for the next two years, i.e. to achieve a rate of 9.0 days by 2010/11.

6. **PRIORITY 2D – TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN FIREFIGHTERS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES**

- 6.1 This is an existing priority within the Corporate Plan. Due to the rural nature of the Service, the employment of retained staff is essential for the Service to deliver both prevention and intervention activities.
- 6.2 A previous item on this agenda will have covered the work the Service is undertaking on the review of the retained duty system. In addition to this the Service has re-engineered the recruitment process to remove some of the blocks and barriers to speed up the recruitment process.
- 6.3 The current Corporate Plan does not contain any numerical targets to reflect the achievement of this priority. However, the draft plan contains a proposal to have a target 'To ensure 90% of retained posts are filled' as it is believed that this would be a good reflection on our achievement to recruit and retain staff. Current figures show that approximately 97% of posts are filled, based upon full time equivalents. The Service is unlikely to achieve 100% as the notice period for leaving is so much shorter than that required to recruit a new member of staff. However, it is believed that current levels are fairly good and should be maintained over the next few years.

Jane Sherlock
HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Mary Bartlett
HEAD OF SERVICE PLANNING AND REVIEW