

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/17/10
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	18 SEPTEMBER 2017
SUBJECT OF REPORT	WORKFORCE CULTURE, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION – QUARTERLY UPDATE
LEAD OFFICER	ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER - SERVICE IMPROVEMENT
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This report proposes a framework for how the Service will plan and deliver cultural change, including a new Equality Strategy, driven by the requirements of the new IRMP and national guidance.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	None at this time.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	Where required, ERBAs will be carried out on particular projects or areas of work.
APPENDICES	Appendix A - Answers to questions from NJC 2017 document 'An Inclusive Fire Service'.
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	None.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the fourth quarterly report detailing progress towards achieving a more diverse workforce and improved inclusion, highlighting any support that is needed from the Executive Board to facilitate organisational improvement.
- 1.2 This report sets out national guidance released since the third quarterly report published in March 2017 and the work already underway within the context of those national drivers for change around workforce culture, diversity and inclusive working practices.
- 1.3 It also proposes to set up a Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Steering Group to plan and deliver this cultural change, including a new Equality Strategy, driven by the requirements of the new Integrated Risk Management Plan.

2. AIM OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AGENDA

- 2.1 Diversity and Inclusion is all about having a skilled and motivated workforce which is able to identify and meet the needs of the community we serve.
- 2.2 The Fire & Rescue Service wants the twenty first century firefighter to be perceived as just as likely to be a woman as a man, free of racial and identity stereotypes. They should be as likely to be visiting schools to provide fire safety advice as fighting a fire in a building – a respected member of their community, with the skills and expertise to protect that community in numerous ways.
- 2.3 The public respects the Fire and Rescue Service, but too many people do not see the Service as potential employers. This denies access to an enormous pool of talent at a time when the service provided is changing in significant ways. No business could expect to thrive by doing this and nor can the Fire & Rescue Service. The old clichés that ‘women can’t carry people out of burning buildings’ or certain ethnic groups ‘don’t want to be firefighters’ are no longer acceptable and must be challenged.
- 2.4 For these reasons, the Service is aiming to increase its intake of new female operational Firefighters and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals and encourage promotion and development of current staff, with targets to be determined in line with the Integrated Risk Management Plan and workforce planning.
- 2.5 To monitor progress against any targets, on a quarterly basis, at least the following performance data will be considered:
 - a. New Firefighter intake – women, black, Asian, minority and ethnic groups (BAME), lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT), disability
 - b. Promotion and temporary promotion - women, BAME
 - c. Gender/BAME/LGBT ratio – Uniformed, non-uniformed, Control and overallOn a less regular basis response rates to surveys will be considered and more qualitative data around job satisfaction, exit interviews and discipline/grievance processes.
- 2.6 In addition to the performance measures required nationally, the Service will also introduce our own performance measures in relation to Diversity & Inclusion to ensure a broader perspective.

3. EXTERNAL DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

- 3.1 There are significantly increased political expectations for the Fire & Rescue Service nationally in terms of workforce reform, increasing diversity of employees and improved culture and inclusion.
- 3.2 The Adrian Thomas review into conditions of service, published in November 2016, also provides a significant framework for modernising and transforming the workforce. The recommendations reflect that culture and trust are central to many of the changes needed to create high performing fire services aligned to the needs of people.
- 3.3 Following on from the Thomas review, and the Sir Ken Knight report before that, the National Fire Chiefs Council published 'An Inclusive Fire Service – The twenty-first century fire and rescue service', which outlines in more detail the need for Diversity and Inclusion within the modern Fire Service.
- 3.4 The key themes within these documents were:
1. Requirement to change the culture of the service to become more inclusive one which values individuals for the abilities they bring.
 2. Requirement to alter the perception of the service so the public can see the profession in its modern form.
 3. Requirement to learn from other sectors and other Fire Services.
 4. The political leadership of the fire service must fully support the change required and ensure the service delivers on diversity and exemplify inclusive leadership in the way staff treat each other and they portray themselves in public.
- 3.5 The Inclusive Fire Service Group identified improvement strategies within key theme one, which were published 5 June 2017. The four areas include promoting an inclusive culture, recruitment, progression and retention. An internal assessment was undertaken to establish which of the recommended practices are already in place within the Service.
- 3.6 A new inspectorate for fire and rescue services has been established with inspections being prepared to start taking place from September 2017. It is expected these inspections will focus on the Effectiveness, Efficiency and Leadership within each Fire Service which includes training, diversity, values and culture.
- 3.7 New legislation, in force since April 2017, in relation to the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information, Specific Duties and Public Authorities) requires Public Authorities to publish a gender pay report. The first report is due 31 March 2018 and is required to be on the employer's website for 3 years.

4. SERVICE RESPONSE TO THE EXTERNAL DRIVERS

- 3.1. Considering the issues have been highlighted in several reports over recent years, the Service has been proactive in developing and improving across many of these areas of cultural change, recognising the benefits that will bring both for staff, service delivery and the community.
- 3.2. Since the Thomas Review was published, in particular, there has been a relentless focus on diversity in planning and executing the whole-time recruitment campaign which led to encouraging results of 25% of the 28 new whole-time recruits being female (31% of recruits who attend the initial Firefighting course at Severn park) and 14% LGBT.

- 3.3. Nationally averages of 10% women at application stage have been reported, and although Gloucester reported 20% of 475 candidates (95 females), Devon & Somerset had 11.7% females registering i.e. 337. This result was achieved by a targeted recruitment campaign with use of social media, taster days and engagement with female (sports) clubs.
- 3.4. Various support mechanisms have been put in place to provide appropriate support within their induction and training to ensure they experience a culture of inclusiveness. In addition, the Service Leadership Team has been joined by a female Area Manager who was recruited externally.
- 3.5. On 7 August 2017, the Service's first all-female crew (not including driver and officer in charge) attended an incident, which was widely covered on social media. Posters, banners and other public relations material has now been produced to bring this fact to the attention of the public and encourage more women to apply for On Call roles.
- 3.6. Earlier this year, a culture review was undertaken by external consultants, highlighting areas within the same categories as the Thomas review. Together with a Memorandum of Understanding originating from the Local Government Association this has resulted in a programme to redesign new Values and Leadership Behaviours. This has introduced an interim Appraisal process in 2017/18, designed a new Appraisal process from 2018, develop a transparent promotion process, and upskilled leaders and managers including inclusion and unconscious bias training. Already changes have been made to recruitment/promotion processes which now contain specific diversity and inclusion themes and requiring candidates to evidence and show inclusive leadership behaviours.
- 3.7. The next staff satisfaction survey, which is done on a bi-annual basis, is scheduled for September this year. The outcomes of this survey will indicate what progress has been made since 2015 in relation to employee engagement and inclusive leadership/culture.
- 3.8. In July 2017, the Service was reviewed against European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) standards at 'recognised for Excellence' level, which requires evidence and include scores for leadership behaviour. At the previous EFQM assessment at 'commitment to Excellence' in 2016, the Service achieved 3 stars and the outcomes of this year's assessment will evidence the work the Service has done in the area of leadership development.
- 3.9. In the process of gathering data and drafting a new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), workshops have reached many staff providing more opportunities for employee involvement to ensure we have the right plans and resources in place to reduce the risks faced by our communities.
- 3.10. This will set the direction of our work over the next few years, and form the basis of the Diversity & Inclusion strategy. Once the strategy has been agreed, the resources necessary to deliver the strategy will be discussed, agreed and put in place.
- 3.11. At that stage we will also be able to publish our Diversity & Inclusion (Equality) objectives which are required as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011. Until that time we will rely on the Corporate Plan which contains our three main commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion. This ensures we are meeting the requirements of the Specific Duties.

- 3.12. To continue work towards the national expectations around diversity and inclusion and the local needs, and to assist in the new strategy being developed, the Service will need to adopt a continuous improvement approach to ensure that the important cultural change work already started continues at a faster pace and that diversity and inclusion considerations become part of everything we do.
- 3.13. This approach, and many of the recommendations in the National Joint Council (NJC) circular, can be achieved by putting in place a Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Steering Group which would include Representative Bodies, a member of the Fire & Rescue Authority, Senior Management and other relevant key stakeholders. This group will have the ability to consider any further national guidance, take an overview of current activity in light of diversity & inclusion, identify changes, oversee implementation and monitor performance.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. There are now significantly increased political expectations and socio-economic pressures for the Fire & Rescue Service nationally in terms of workforce reform, increasing diversity of employees and a culture of inclusion. Besides national expectations and Fire Service Inspectorate audits, the Service recognises that Diversity and Inclusion considerations form an integral part of leadership and service delivery and acts accordingly by taking actions which are nationally established as good practice.
- 6.2. A Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Steering Group will be put in place. This Steering Group will consider data and trends to identify required changes, take forward any national guidance on diversity and inclusion, and take a broad perspective on how this affects planning of Service delivery and the workforce.
- 6.3. The Steering Group will also drive development and implementation of a new Diversity & Inclusion strategy which will deliver the cultural changes needed to support the IRMP and Government expectations.

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