

THE HIGHLAND AND ISLANDS FIRE BOARD

29 January 2010

SINGLE STATUS

Report by Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Summary

Following the previous update to the Fire Board, this report provides an update as to the position concerning the Single Status Review.

Background

Following the previous update to the Fire Board, no further progress has been made.

This is due to the long term sickness and subsequent retirement of the Chair of the Steering Group, and the retirement of two further members of that group coupled with a significant number of key staff changes.

As a consequence, a new steering group will need to be appointed and appropriate training given. Given the time delay, it is also required to identify and train new job analysts.

Whilst progress has stalled, the continuous legal challenges that are being faced by Authorities throughout the UK will continue to inform the process and speed of implementation.

It is the belief of the Service that such a vital process must be conducted as sensitively as possible, ensuring all our staff are able to participate and influence the outcome of their job evaluation.

To ensure that a robust and positive outcome is achieved, it is recognised that the previously proposed time scales will not be achieved. It is now anticipated that the process will re-launch in October 2010 with a completion date of October 2011. The project and resource costs of achieving these dates are estimated at £90k, and are built into the approved financial plans for 2010/11. A detailed time table and progress report will be presented at the next Board Meeting by the newly appointed chair of the steering group.

Given the time delay and to ensure the continued support of our staff and representative bodies, it is the intention of the Service that any pay increases awarded as an outcome of the Single Status review be back dated to the new launch date of October 2010. To support this, the Service would be required to make an accrual of £35k from the 2010/11 budget and this has been built into the financial plan.

This recommendation is supported by UNISON and the Personnel Adviser to the Fire Board. However, as the Board does not yet have information on the actual financial implications of the review it is recommended that, at this stage, October 2010 is an 'in principle' effective date for a new pay structure.

Recommendation

HIFRS asks that the Board:

- (i) AGREES to an "in principle" effective date of October 2010 for the new pay structure subject to further information being provided to future Board meetings on the actual financial implications, and
- (ii) NOTES the delay of implementation.

DAVID WYNNE
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
18 January 2010