

LEICESTERSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY

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Meeting **POLICE AUTHORITY**

Date **TUESDAY 30 JUNE 2009 – 2.00 PM**

Report of **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Subject **POLICE AUTHORITY EQUALITY SCHEME – UPDATE**

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an annual update to the Authority on the progress against the Authority's Actions Plans contained in its Equality Scheme.

Background

2. Police authorities have had a statutory responsibility since 2002 to prepare, publish and work towards the actions listed within their race equality scheme. This specific duty was introduced by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and following implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 similar public duties were introduced for public authorities to develop both disability and gender equality schemes. The Authority's Equality scheme was subsequently revised to incorporate the disability and gender duty and include disability and gender equality action plans.
3. Whilst there is no statutory requirement at the present time, for the Police Authority to have in place action plans in relation to age, religion and faith and sexual orientation, these are included in the six strands of diversity and are addressed when undertaking equality impact assessments on the Authority's policies and functions. Following consultation, both internally with staff and externally via the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender Centre, the Authority has in place an action plan for sexual orientation although this is not a statutory requirement. Action plans to address age and religion and faith have yet to be compiled.
4. Progress against the Action Plans in place is overseen by the Authority's Diversity Panel with an annual report being provided to the full Police Authority.

Commentary

5. The Government published the Equality Bill on 27 April 2009. The Bill, if passed, will bring together all grounds of discrimination within one piece of legislation. The Bill received its Second Reading on 11 May and started its Commons Committee stage on 2 June 2009. Royal Assent is expected in Spring 2010 and most parts of the legislation are not expected to come into force until Autumn 2010. Under the Equality Bill the existing separate equality duties on public authorities will be replaced by a single equality duty which will also extend to gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

6. It is expected that the new Equality Act will include the responsibility for all public authorities to have in place a Combined Equality Scheme, covering all strands of diversity. As a result of the formation of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the introduction of the Equality Act 2009, the Association of Police Authorities, (APA), have already issued guidance providing a framework for Combined Equality Schemes. The move to a combined scheme will be less confusing for members of the public and reduce much duplication already contained in the existing scheme.
7. Work is progressing on a combined scheme for the Police Authority which will run from 2009 to 2011. Where possible joint consultation on the scheme will be undertaken with the Constabulary. It was hoped that a draft version of the scheme could be presented to this meeting however the task has proved to be greater than first anticipated and whilst good progress is being made in compiling the document it is not as yet in any final form to present to members for approval. There is as yet no legal requirement to have a combined equality scheme in place however the intention is for this document to be finalised and in approved by the Authority well before the legal requirement to do so.
8. In March 2009 the Association of Police Authorities (APA) issued interim guidance on setting local employment targets for under represented groups to be included in local policing plans for 2009/10. The Authority's Human Resources Committee received a report on the Human Resources Business Plan for 09/10 at their meeting held on 14 May 2009. The Committee agreed the targets of 15% of student officers coming from the BME community and 26% of the officer establishment to be female.

Progress Against Action Plans

9. During the past 12 months the following progress has been made against the action plans in place:-
 - The Authority's website has been amended to include a button on the home page to increase the font size to either normal, large or extra large. The background colour can also be altered to suit the user's needs to either normal, high contrast or none. The website now also includes audio software and any part of the site can be read aloud.
 - Equality monitoring data has been collated on all members and staff of the Police Authority and has been published on the Authority's website. The data has been collated in relation to all six strands of diversity. The data for members of the Authority will be amended in light of changes to the membership following the local elections and when the appointments to the Authority are notified. A breakdown of the data will be reported to the next meeting of the Diversity Panel. In relation to the staff of the Authority there good representation of males and females but little representation across ethnic groups, religion/faith and sexual orientation.
 - Equality monitoring data has been collated on volunteers in the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme and has been published on the Authority's website and in the annual report produced for wide distribution. The data has shown good representation in relation to disability, gender and ethnicity however nearly half of the volunteers are over 50 years of age. Targeting of younger age groups will be addressed in the next recruitment exercise undertaken in 2010.
 - Following a review, the Authority's consultation panel now consists of 94 individuals. The data shows good representation in respect of ethnicity, disability, religion/belief and sexual orientation however females and the younger age groups remain under-represented. Work is continuing to increase the membership of the Panel and all opportunities are taken to address this issue.

- Equality monitoring data has been collated in relation to the recruitment of the Engagement and Communications Officer and the Performance Analyst posts and the two Independent member recruitment exercised undertaken in 2008. This data has been published on the Authority's website.
- The Chairman of the Consultation and Communications Committee, Mr Greaves and the Deputy Chief Executive attended a 'Tell it to us Straight' event held at the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender Forum on 26 February 2009. As a result of discussions amendments will now be made to the Authority's Sexual Orientation Action Plan. These amendments will include consideration being given to publicity pictures used in Police Authority publications showing same sex families/couples, the use of TV screens in gay bars to convey a key message from the Police Authority, exploration of how the Police Authority can engage with young gay individuals, how all strands of diversity are addressed during ACPO officer recruitment and enhanced training for custody visitors regarding situations where a detainee may wish to make a complaint but feels vulnerable to do so. Twelve consultation questionnaires were completed by those attending the event.
- Approximately 1400 responses have been analysed from the council tax consultation questionnaire. The results to date have shown that due to the current distribution of responses it is not worthwhile to undertake comparative analysis of results by individual ethnicity or religion since none of the results yield any statistically significant conclusions. It is however evident that this methodology attracts a disproportionate response rate from older white males. Half year results will be presented to the Consultation and Communications Committee at its meeting on 2 July and consideration given to this methodology being incorporated in the 2010 programme.
- Following the completion of development interviews for members of the Authority a report on training for members was presented to the Authority at its meeting in May. The report outlined a training strategy which will include the delivery of equality and diversity training and how to undertake equality impact assessments. To date, Dr Chowdhury, Mr Greaves, Mrs Martin, Mr Prince, Mr Render and Mr Roper have all received training on equality impact assessments. The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive have also received this training and the Engagement and Communications Officer completed the training on 7 April 2009.
- Diversity training for independent custody visitors was delivered regionally on 4 October 2008.
- The Authority's Human Resources Committee received a presentation on the results of the Cultural Audit undertaken in the Constabulary on 26 February 2009. Members were informed that each department of the Force now had an action plan in place to address those issues arising from the audit and that each member of the Authority could ask their respective BCU and LPU Commanders for progress against their action plans to provide further scrutiny in this area.
- An equality impact assessment has been undertaken on the Authority's Council Tax Leaflet 2009/10. The assessment identified that the format of the leaflet in relation to colours of font and backgrounds may prove difficult for people with sight impairments. Further consultation on the format of this document will be undertaken at joint involvement events with disabled groups held during the year. The results from the assessment will be reported to the Publications Panel for consideration of amendments to the leaflet for 2010/2011.

- Members of the Authority continue to attend meetings of the Constabulary's Strategic Equality and Confidence Board and the Police Advisory Group for Racial Issues to monitor this area of work.
- A Disability Independent Advisory Group has been convened by the Constabulary and the Authority have become members of this group. This will provide a forum for further discussion on a wide range of disability issues and opportunities for multi-agency working.

Equality Impact Assessments

10. Equality impact assessments have been undertaken as follows:-

<u>Policy/Function</u>	<u>Committee</u>	<u>Committee Amendments</u>
Complaints and Discipline Guidance for Members	Professional Standards Committee	None
Forfeiture of Police Pensions Policy	Professional Standards Committee	New step incorporated to provide that the Committee deciding the issue should not be unrepresentative in terms of diversity.
Procedure for Dealing with Complaints Against ACPO officers	Professional Standards Committee	None
Consultation Programme	Consultation and Communications Committee	None

11. In addition an equality impact assessment has been undertaken on the Council Tax Leaflet. The initial assessment has identified that format of the leaflet in relation to colours of font and backgrounds may prove difficult for people with sight impairments. Further consultation will be undertaken with disability groups and the results reported to the Publications Panel later in the year to inform the production of the leaflet for 2010/11.
12. Further equality impact assessments will be considered by the Standards Committee at the meeting on 25 June. These relate to a protocol for handling complaints of member misconduct and a Monitoring Officer Protocol.

Financial Implications

13. Involvement and consultation events for the Authority's combined equality scheme may incur some costs however these are expected to minimal and will be contained within the consultation budget for 2009/10.

Recommendation

14. Members are RECOMMENDED to comment on the progress made during 2009/10 against the actions plans contained within the Authority's Equality Scheme.

Implications

Financial: None Legal: none. Diversity: throughout the report. Risk Management: The Authority need to evidence the 'outcomes' from its Equality Scheme to maintain public confidence in the service it provides.

Background Papers

- Action Plans within the Authority's Equality Scheme
- APA GEM 074/2009

Officer to Contact

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