



Report

Report number/reference: RMB/SGW	Date issued: 17th July 2008
Agenda Item: 13	Date of Meeting: 26th July 2008
This report is: For decision	Meeting Venue: SMBC, Sandwell
Report Status: To inform WMRMB of the recent publication of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-18 and its implications for WMRMB	

Report Title:

***Fire and Rescue Service
Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008 – 2018:
Equality Impact Assessments***

Report Author:

Steve Worrall
WMRMB Programme Manager

Circulated to:

- WMRMB

Please forward to:

Summary:

The **Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-18** was published in May 2008. The Strategy sets out several recommendations/obligations, one of which requires all proposals to the Regional Management Board to be equality impact assessed and appropriate action to be taken on the outcomes. No agreed process currently exists at a regional level to undertake equality impact assessments.

Recommendation(s):

WMRMB are requested to:

- Consider delegating the task of producing a WMRMB equality impact assessment process, that may applied to all future WMRMB reports, to either:
 - i) the WMRMB Resources Project Board, or
 - ii) a Fire and Rescue Authority from within the region.

For further information, please contact:

Steve Worrall
WMRMB Programme Manager



01743 260204
07967 465813
01743 260268
steve.worrall@shropshirefire.gov.uk

1. Background Details:

The Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-18 was published in May 2008 and as well as placing responsibilities upon individual Fire and Rescue Authorities it also imposes some actions/obligations upon Regional Management Boards (RMBs).

This Strategy will support the Fire and Rescue Service in tackling current inequalities, promoting equality, diversity and fairness, and establishing a culture of inclusion which enables the Service to meet the needs of all its diverse communities.

At regional level, the Strategy (Page 17) states that Fire and Rescue Authorities will need to work together through RMBs to support delivery of the Strategy's goals thus contributing to improved performance on equality and diversity in many ways including:

- Undertaking an annual progress review on equality and diversity across the region
- Requiring all proposals to the RMB to be equality impact assessed and appropriate action to be taken on the outcomes
- Ensuring all shared services such as training and procurement are equality impact assessed
- Supporting regional collaboration on national processes for recruitment, development and progression
- Co-ordinating collaboration on awareness campaigns, positive action and recruitment to reduce costs and reach the widest pool of talent
- Consulting and involving community groups and representative bodies
- Supporting the development and dissemination of good practice on community engagement and service delivery, and
- Co-ordinating and supporting regular peer review.

Whilst these goals/issues have been incorporated into the draft WMRMB Programme Plan 2008/09 it will be necessary to ensure that all future proposals and reports etc brought before WMRMB are equality impact assessed and appropriate action taken on the outcomes. Currently no agreed generic equality impact assessment process exists for the Fire and Rescue Service.

WMRMB are requested to consider delegating the task of producing a WMRMB equality impact assessment process, that may applied to all future WMRMB reports, to either the WMRMB Resources Project Board or a Fire and Rescue Authority from within the region.

2. Legal Implications:

As public bodies, all Fire and Rescue Authorities have both general and specific legal duties to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination for service users and employees (see the Strategy's Annex for key equalities legislation).

Although the specific duties require public authorities to conduct impact assessments for race, disability and gender it is good practice to assess for an adverse impact across all equality strands (i.e. to include Age, Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation). It is also good practice to monitor employment data across all equality strands, exceeding the statutory requirements of just Race, Disability and Gender.

3. Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. Background Papers:

- Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018

5. Attachments:

- Appendix: the *Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018*

Accessible at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/fire/pdf/equalitydiversitystrategy.pdf>
