

Shropshire Partnership Equalities Forum

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Louise McKenzie, Assistant Chief Officer, on 01743 260201.

1 Purpose of Report

To inform the Human Resources Committee of the progress to date on this group, as requested by the Fire Authority

2 Recommendations

That the Committee note the content of the report.

3 Background

In February 2006 the Fire Authority authorised funding to this group of £5,000 for 2006/07. An update report was provided to Human Resources Committee in November 2006 and this report is a further update.

4 Progress on the Group

Shropshire Partnership Equalities Forum has held many meetings. Most recently they celebrated the work of the Equalities Awards, whereby groups have received funding towards events such as 'rock against racism'. They also reported on the hate crime launch and campaign, where Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service participated by putting signs on vehicles and handing out leaflets.

The Forum is encouraging a change of direction to move deeper into equality and diversity, and try to get members of the meetings to start to run the group for itself. They recently held a meeting on migrant workers with partnership agencies. Other groups also run alongside the Equalities Forum, for example the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) group which promoted activities, such as the Gay history month exhibition and readings.



On 4 May 2007 the Equalities Forum had a visit from the Commission for Equality and Human Rights to see what is happening in the area. The Commission was very impressed with what the Forum has been doing and wants to come to the next Equalities Forum meeting.

More information is appended for Members' information

5 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6 Legal Comment

The Authority is subject to the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2005. These Regulations include provision for equal treatment between persons, irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, in the areas of employment (and related matters), social protection, social advantage, education and access to and supply of, goods and services which are available to the public.

The Equality Act 2006 which received Royal Assent on 15 February will establish a statutory basis for a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR). The new commission will bring together the work of the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission and will have responsibility for the new equality areas of age, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The new commission is expected to be established in October 2007.

7 Equality Impact Assessment

This report does not require an equality impact assessment, as it is purely an update on progress and for information only.

8 Appendix

Equality Forum Work Programme & Way Forward 2007/08

9 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.



Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balance Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*





**Shropshire Partnership Equalities
Forum**

DATE OF MEETING: 6 March 2007

Item name: Equality Forum Work Programme & Way Forward 2007/8

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Recommendations

- 1. We celebrate the success of Diversity & Equality work so far and thank all who have contributed.**
- 2. Agree the restatement of the budget and arrangements for the D&E Awards.**
- 3. Agree the prospective events programme for 2007- 2008**
- 4. Agree to work jointly to deepen engagement and activity to make our work on Equality even more successful**
- 5. We will only e mail circulated news of events if you want it - we will notify you with a short e mail instead**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. A report on progress (2005-2006) went to the Shropshire Partnership Public Service Board (4 September 2006) and Management Group (25 September 2006).
- 1.2. The main work programme in the autumn of 2006 and early 2007 has been to:
 - Launch (15 November 2006) and carry forward the Hate Crime Campaign.
 - Celebrate success of the Forum & Diversity Equality Awards (Equality Forum 11 December 2006)
 - To plan and hold the Dignity & Difference roundtable and vigil (26 January 2007)
 - To work with the LBGT group to organise the LBGT History Month including (1) talk & reading at Shrewsbury Library (postponed due to snow), shop window exhibition (Wild Thyme, Shrewsbury and Celluloid Closet (film) 25 February.
 - Other activity including the re-organisation of the PCT Race Equality Group into a broad based PCT Equality & Human Rights Group, Contributing to the West Midlands Ethnic Business Forum, A D&E Awards Appraisal Group, etc.

- 1.3. Based on the experience of the Equality Forum, work programme and Diversity and Equality Awards 2005 -2006 thought has been given to the best way to take forward work during 2007 and into 2008.

2. Budget and Work Programme for 2007- 2008

- 2.1. As agreed by the PSB and Management Group and reported to the Equality Forum the D&E Budget has been carried forward from unspent monies (2005-2006) less expenditure on the Diversity & Equality Awards (£13,374) and the Hate Crime Campaign (£9,000). No extra council resources are available in 2006-2007 due to the grant being vired to the Western Market Housing Group for work on the high priority of Affordable Housing.
- 2.2. The expected budget for 2007/8. Items marked with an asterix * are nominal budgets and may be vired during the year between headings to support the work programme:

1.	Diversity & Equality Awards	£15,000
2.	Continuation of the Hate Crime Campaign	£5,000
3.	Operation of the Equalities Forum and further engagement with D&E and BME groups	£10,000*
4.	Supporting events and festivals to grow cohesion	£7,500*
5.	Dignity & Difference events (expenditure)	£ 500
6.	Implement a cross partner awareness programme	£ 3000*
7.	Improving communications (web, news etc.)	£3,000*
	Total	£ 45,000

3. The Diversity and Equality Awards

- 3.1. The Awards have proved a highly successful element of our work programme for Diversity and Equality with 20 grants awarded and expenditure to date £ 13,374+
- 3.2. An analysis of Awards to date shows the following breakdown:

1. Geographic	SABC	SSDC	NSDC
	4	5	2
	Oswestry	Bridgnorth	
	0	0	
2. Groups	SAAR	LBGT	Trans
	2	3	2
3. Issues	Disability	Alcohol	Asian
	1	1	2
	Women	BME	Youth
	1	1	1

- 3.3. This analysis shows that while there has been a good spread of awards some districts/boroughs are receiving a higher number of awards/activity

and some communities (engaged in an active programme of activities) have also received a higher number of awards.

- 3.4. We wish in 2007- 2008 to broaden the spread of awards and continue to encourage first applications from new and emerging communities.

4. Dealing with Projects & Groups who have already received 2/3 Awards

- 4.1 Due to a range of successful activity over the last year a number of projects including SAAR, LGBT and Transgender, have applied for 2/3 awards and may wish to apply to support future activity.
- 4.2 We do not wish to reduce the range of activity carried out by such groups, however, we wish to keep the emphasis of the Awards on new activity and fostering, widening and deepening engagement including with groups and communities who are new or who have yet to become active.
- 4.3 For this reason it is suggested that a new way forward be adopted for active groups with a record of Awards:

1.	Applications to be submitted in the normal way to the D&E Awards programme for appraisal but possibly funded from other areas of the work programme (e.g. events and festivals)
2.	Alerting active groups to alternative sources of funding for D&E work – this will require research and the holding of a “D&E Funding Fair” with the technical assistance of the SCC Economic Regeneration team.

5. Continuing the Hate Crime Campaign (LAA Target)

- 5.1. The Hate Crime Campaign was very successfully launched through joint events on and around the 15 November.

- 5.2. The events at Shirehall included:

- Publicity and pop up posters with the “*We won’t tolerate it*” message
- Speeches from Carolyn Downs (CE - SCC) and Paul West, Chief Constable SCC.
- Balloons, pens, window and car stickers, leaflets, etc.
- The “Theatre In” company (visiting Shirehall, Sixth Form College and Sundorne School).
- Training for front line staff at Reporting Points
- Hate Crime Protocol and reporting form
- Attendance from partners e.g. the Fire & Rescue service and most groups from the Equalities Forum
- Audio visual display in Shrewsbury Market Square
- Press publicity and radio interviews
- Fire service outreach to Supermarkets etc.
- A monitoring and review process.

- 5.3. The Hate Crime working group met on the 10th January to review further work:

- Training and further contact with Housing Associations including Severnside and South Shropshire Housing Association.
- Discussion with the PCT about monitoring arrangements

- Ongoing support for Districts, Boroughs and Partners monitoring Hate Crime
- 5.4. The suggested way forward for the Hate Crime Campaign has been developed with the help of Mat James (SCC Communications) and includes:
- Keeping Hate Crime on the media agenda and in front of the public.
 - Continuing support for reporting sites & local areas.
 - Signing up a key business in each area to support the Hate Crime protocol and develop a group of local businesses joining action on Hate Crime.
 - Developing work with Shropshire schools as part of the Personal Social Health issues in Key Stage 3 through lessons around hate crime, school campaigns, using art, music and media and holding events between schools.
 - Holding a Hate Crime event in 2007 or as part of an other D&E event

6. A Suggested Programme for Events in 2007/8

- 6.1. In 2005-2006 we have started to set a programme of highly successful events celebrating Diversity and Equality. These were circulated in the work programme and are well known to members of the Forum.
- 6.2. We wish to continue this into 2007- 2008 and re-hold a number of successful events as well as encouraging new events and the engagement of new communities.
- 6.3. The suggested programme (so far for 2007-2008) is:
- Dignity & Difference Roundtable & Vigil 26 January (held)
 - LGBT History Month – Shrewsbury Library talk and readings (30 March), Celluloid Closet film (25 February) and Wild Thyme exhibition.
 - Trans Gender Awareness event (Wolverhampton 29 March)
 - SAAR Rock Against Racism concert etc. at Market Square and Belmont Arts Centre (26 May)
 - LGBT Second Film Festival (Autumn 2007)
 - European Year of Equality event (possibly a day event covering slavery and the second Hate Crime event)
 - A Conference/Seminar on migrant worker issues with partners e.g. Advantage West Midlands, Learning & Skills Council, West Mercia Police and the Primary Care Trust etc.
 - A Funding Fair to introduce equality groups to available funding programmes and opportunities e.g. Lottery, Trusts & Foundations, Grant finder etc. (with the Regeneration Team).
 - Other events (*please let us have your dates and ideas*)

7. Deepening Engagement with Diversity & Equality Communities

- 7.1. We feel that although last year was successful it relied on too few groups and communities and a small group of people.

- 7.2. This is not to say that other communities and groups did not hold events & activities but perhaps these did not receive sufficient publicity, networking or profile and were not sufficiently linked to the Equality Forum.
- 7.3. We need to deepen engagement for a number of reasons to:

- Make the Equality Forum more successful
- Deliver our work programme more successfully
- Hold more successful events with larger engagement
- Greatly deepen the BME Booster Sample Survey
- Involve all groups & communities actively
- Involve new communities in Shropshire
- To find new and representative leadership for the Forum
- To reduce reliance on SCC/SP staff and the “usual faces”
- To maximise the Hate Crime Campaign
- To encourage all groups and communities to develop and share an action plan for activity in 2007-2008

8. A Suggested List of Groups and Communities that we need to engage

- 8.1. There is already reasonably successful engagement with a number of groups and communities including the SAAR, LGBT and Transgender groups.
- 8.2. A number of other groups are emerging or need to be contacted and more successfully engaged. We need to discuss how this is to be done and the sharing of responsibility. We have preliminary contact with some groups and communities.
- 8.3. We need to decide if these are the right communities to engage:

Disability communities	Established & new migrant communities
BME Network	Jewish community
Asian & Moslem Community	Gypsy and traveller community
Bangladeshi Welfare Association	Chinese community
Mental Health Community	Older members of communities
Younger members of communities	BME or D&E groups in custody or in the community
Equality communities on Shropshire's Borders	Equality champions from Councils
Equality champions from partners	Others?

9. Changing Arrangements for the Equality Forum

- 9.1. The Equality Forum has regular attendance from some 30-40 at recent meetings but has a network membership of over 100 - some who we contact but rarely see. We need to look at how we can grow engagement so meetings are representative, challenging and are a successful voice for communities together. This raises the questions of what **do we** mean by community cohesion and how do we respond to the new challenges posed by national discussion and the newly formed joint Equalities Commission.
- 9.2. We circulated a questionnaire for views in 2006 but need to re-examine this issue. We know that a number of you have ideas and we set out below a number of possible ways forward for discussion:

- Varying the times of meetings e.g. holding some evening meetings?
- Varying the location & geographical spread of meetings and using partner and less formal venues locations?
- Leadership of Forum Agenda's by non SCC/SP staff?
- Having less formal meetings?
- Holding more discussion or workshop meetings?
- Having social meetings, parties, fairs, exhibitions, visits?
- Creating an Equality Forum steering group to plan and deal with detail?

10. Moving Equality Activity Across Shropshire

- 10.1 Much of the Equality activity so far has been events held at Shirehall or in Shrewsbury. We are very grateful to officers and the Shrewsbury community for this support.
- 10.2 In addition other areas have fostered activity e.g. the Craven Arms, Runga Rung event and activities in South Shropshire.
- 10.3 Although D&E work will continue in these areas we need now to look wider and carry Equality activity across Shropshire and to other towns and areas where perhaps there has been little activity so far.
- 10.4 We need to discuss how and where and what indicators do we have of where we may need to target effort.