

Update on the Progress of the Gender Equality Scheme

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Natalie Hill, Equality and Diversity Officer, on 01743 260236 or Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201.

1 Purpose of Report

This report makes the Committee aware of the progress of the Gender Equality Scheme and the proposed arrangements for adoption of the completed Scheme.

2 Recommendations

That the Human Resources Committee considers the proposal for the progression and publication of the Gender Equality Scheme on 30 April 2007, pending approval under the urgency procedures, and subsequent referral for final approval to the next meeting of the Fire Authority on 13 June 2007.

3 Background

It is a legal requirement for the Fire Authority to produce a Gender Equality Scheme (GES), which must be published by 30 April 2007. Due to the timings of the Human Resources Committee and the ongoing consultation process it is not possible to bring the draft scheme to the Committee before this date, although the format will follow that of the Race and Disability Equality Schemes already adopted.

4 Progress to Date

Officers have adopted the format of the Race and Disability Equality Schemes as a template for the Gender Equality Scheme. We have also adopted the focus group approach as best practice in its development. To that end we are conducting focus groups, where we will be able to get the views of staff and other stakeholders, which will help to inform us when creating our scheme.



We have offered consultees the opportunity to attend formal focus group meetings or to submit comments individually.

Invitations to attend one of our focus meetings have been sent out to several community groups throughout the County. We have also placed a press advertisement in the Shropshire Star, inviting people to come and take part in the development of our scheme. We have put information on our website and communicated internally to our employees using our internal newsletter, 'The Pink'.

When the focus group work has been completed the final draft of the GES can be created, this will then be put out to consultation through the normal procedure.

The draft GES as developed so far will be available for Members to view at the meeting.

5 Implementing the Gender Equality Scheme

When all of the comments received have been collated we shall use this information to determine what we should be changing in this organisation, and what our priorities are for action planning.

At this point some actions have already been created, which align to our current schemes and plans. These will be added to as the consultation process is completed.

6 Financial Implications

At this stage there are no financial implications anticipated as arising from the development of the Gender Equality Scheme, which could not be accommodated from within the proposed Equality and Diversity budget.

7 Legal Comment

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Order 2006 imposes a requirement on the Fire Authority to prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme, showing how it intends to fulfil its duty under section 76 (A)1 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and its duties under the Order. The Fire Authority must comply with the duties outlined in the Order and the Act. Further legal comment will be given once the Gender Equality Scheme has been finalised.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

On completion the Gender Equality Scheme will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment in accordance with the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 5 Part 2).



9 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

10 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.

Balanced 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	*

