

WYFRA	PERSONNEL AND TRAINING COMMITTEE	11 July 2008	ITEM NO
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REPORT OF: Director of Human Resources

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To seek Members' approval for a Single Corporate Equality Scheme

RECOMMENDATION: To approve the Scheme

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT DETAILS

EMPEMPTION CATERGORY:

ACCESS CONTACT OFFICER: Mr M Redfearn
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS
OPENED TO INSPECTION:**

1. Background

- 1.1 Since we produced our first Race Equality Scheme in 2002 there have been a number of changes that affect equality and diversity in employment and the services we deliver to our community. The introduction of Legal Duties to promote disability and gender equality together with new laws for religion and belief, sexual orientation and age mean that Fire Authorities must promote equality and diversity. We must ensure that we do not discriminate when employing people and when providing services to the community.
- 1.2 The move towards a single Commission for all Equalities and Human Rights and the current Discrimination Law review by the Communities for Local Government (CLG) for a Single Equality Bill suggests that it is the right time to introduce a Single Corporate Equality Scheme.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2008 – 2011 sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) by making clear what the Government's expectations of FRS in the areas of:
- Prevention, Protection and Response
 - Resilience
 - Diversity and the Workplace
 - Governance and Improvement
- 2.2 The National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008 – 2018 challenges us to develop and improve our contribution in the following areas:
- Priority 1 Leadership and promoting Inclusion
 - Priority 2 Effective Service Delivery and Community Engagement
 - Priority 3 Employment and Training
 - Priority 4 Evaluation and Sharing Good Practice
 - Priority 5 Accountability
- 2.3 The reason for producing a Single Equality Scheme is to harmonise with the introduction of the new Equality and Human Rights Commission to replace the current three commissions for race, gender and disability and the Government's proposal on a Single Equality Bill. The Single Equality Scheme will also give us the opportunity to extend the best practice requirements in each of the existing schemes to religion and belief, sexual orientation and age.
- 2.4 It will also allow annual reporting for all the schemes to take place rather than the current three separate dates for the Race, Disability and Gender. The annual progress report for the Gender Equality Scheme is presented at agenda item 8.
- 2.5 All Directorates and internal stakeholders for the six strands have been consulted and feedback included in the Scheme. Once approved by the Members full consultation with the community and other agencies will take place.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

4 EQUALITIES AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This is an equality and Fairness report

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 To protect the public effectively through prevention and emergency response we must fully understand the needs of the diverse communities we serve. Valuing our staff and creating a culture of inclusion is key. This Corporate Equality Scheme will assist WYFRS in progressing our equality and diversity agenda.