



REPORT TO: SAFER AND STRONGER STRATEGIC GROUP, 21ST AUGUST 2008

SUBJECT: PROGRESS ON EQUALITIES

BY: CORPORATE POLICY UNIT MANAGER

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 The Safer and Stronger Strategic Group is asked to note the requirements for Partners with regard to equalities work.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 **The Safer and Stronger Strategic Group is asked to note the requirements for Partners with regard to equalities work.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Statutory Partners have duties to produce the Race Equality Scheme since November 2002, the Disability Equality Scheme since December 2006 and the Gender Equality Scheme since June 2007. All schemes need to be reviewed on a three yearly basis.

3.2 The similarities between the three equality duties are the need to:-

- Publish schemes and action plans
- Consult with equalities groups
- Impact assess all policies and functions
- Monitor
- Report on an annual basis

3.3 All the equalities schemes and action plans have been published. The actions within the action plans must be carried out within a three year timescale of being published. To date:-

3.4 An Equalities Forum for consultation purposes is in early stages of establishment. This includes local and national representative groups for all equality strands. There have been two meetings held to date. During the first meeting it was suggested that the Community Planning and Development

Manager and the Equal Opportunities Officer attend local groups and organisations to brief the clients and staff within the groups in order to encourage interest. Three groups have been briefed so far, with two more planned over the next few months.

3.5 Grampian Race Equality Council have recently carried out research and produced a report “Community Planning in the North East of Scotland: Action Talks Louder Than Words”. A briefing extracted from this report has been created specifically for Moray and has been circulated to Community Planning Partners (**Appendix 1**). The research was directed at the impact Community Planning is having locally on equality issues and the area’s diverse population.

3.6 An overall comment from the research is:

Overall, the research reveals both achievements of the CPPs (Community Planning Partnerships) in Moray in engaging effectively with the region’s diverse communities and also the barriers and challenges that must be addressed.

The research lays the foundations for continued constructive work in this area to ensure that Community Planning can continue to be instrumental in making a positive difference to our communities and people’s lives.

3.7 Equalities impact assessments carried out by statutory Partners on their policies and activities require formal consultation. This is to give consideration as to whether there is, or likely to be, a different impact whether direct or indirect on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age. The forum will be able to comment and make recommendations on Community Planning Partners assessments of existing and proposed policies and activities as required.

4 SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Community Plan/Theme Plans/Partner Plans

Community Planning should participate in a manner which encourages equal opportunities and, in particular, the observance of the equal opportunity requirements. The provision also relates to the duty of Best Value and to the power of local authorities to advance well-being.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Partners have a legal duty to address equality issues.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

There are no financial requirements arising from this report. The risk of not meeting our duties is prosecution for non-compliance. Commitment from managers and staff are required to meet these duties.

(d) Consultations

There have been no specific consultations on this report.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1** The Safer and Stronger Strategic Group is asked to note the requirements from Partners with regard to equalities work.

Author of Report: Fiona Simpson, Equal Opportunities Officer

Background Papers: