

**Warwickshire Police Authority – 28<sup>th</sup> July 2010**

**Report by the Lead Member for Diversity & Equality, Human Rights and Staff Development**

**Summary**

This report summarises the work of the Equalities, Diversity and Human Rights Panel over the last four months.

**Recommendation**

That the report be noted

**Section 1 – Diversity and Equality**

**Introduction**

Since my last summary report to the Police Authority in February 2010, the Equalities, Diversity and Human Rights Panel has met twice – in March and June. The Panel continues to enjoy a good working relationship with the Force.

In the past the Panel had concentrated on ensuring that the Force had in place the policies and action plans to police the County of Warwickshire fairly, equitably and in pursuance with the legal requirements, and to ascertain that there were effective processes for monitoring the way that these policies and action plans were carried out.

The Panel can assure the Authority that these measures are in now place and that for the most part they are working satisfactorily. The Panel is now in a position to address the need for the Authority as a whole to be adequately equipped to take the lead in meeting its responsibilities under the Human Rights Act and other equality and diversity legal obligations. This will be done under the auspices of the Governance Stream.

In taking this forward, the Panel will be informed by the APA's document – Human Rights Guidance for Police Authorities and both the Chair and the Policy Officer for member training and development will make sure that members receive the necessary training to equip them to meet these obligations.

Attendance at the meetings has been supported by both Authority members and representatives of the Force. The Authority, through this Panel, continues to monitor

adherence by the Force to the laws on equality and human rights. The healthy working relationship between the Force and the Authority has been maintained and through this relationship, the Diversity and Equality Panel makes suggestions for improvement in various areas and challenges constructively, when necessary.

We received with interest a number of reports from the Force, both verbal and written. These included stop and search, the Equality Standard, the Gender Equality Scheme and the Warwickshire Way.

I attended a number of meetings of the Force related to equalities and diversity including the re-launch of the Disability Network, Senior Women in Policing and the BME member network. I attended two Community Forums in Nuneaton and Rugby which were positive and well attended events and had meetings with the organisers of the African Caribbean Project in Leamington during which issues relating to black business people were raised. It is essential that the feedback from these and other meetings is translated into improved policing within these communities.

I continue to attend the meetings of the Stop and Search Steering Group. The Diversity Manager is working on the issue of disproportionality in two areas and there will a report on the findings and any action in due course. Proposed changes in the law governing Stop and Search have been “announced” but both the Authority and Force will carry according to the current policy until and when such changes are introduced.

I attended a number of regional meetings with the policy officers for the Regional People Policy Group to discuss some training for members on a regional basis. Two such events are in the pipeline and they will have the joint advantage of reducing training costs and allowing members the opportunities to share experiences and to learn from each other. Training for members on equality and human rights has been arranged for 1<sup>st</sup> October and one on CDRPs and the role of Authority members is to be finalised. I would like to take this opportunity to strongly commend this training to Members and to urge as large an attendance from this Authority as possible.

I also chaired a well attended meeting of the Regional Policy Group where a presentation on a Strategy for Collaboration between the four Authority/Force Areas, Warwickshire, West Mercia, West Midlands, and Staffordshire was given. It must be stressed that this strategy was not about merger in any way, but about areas of policing that are not specifically local and that can be dealt with on a regional basis. The objective is to reduce costs and increase efficiency.

Governance accountability and an implementation plan were at the time of the meeting being worked on. It was felt that the Regional Policy Group would have an important role to play in monitoring progress.

As well as the regional meetings, I attended the People’s Policy National Network (PPNN) at the APA offices in London. Among the issues discussed, and of relevance to the Panel was a presentation by Stephanie Robinson, Information Officer of New Scotland Yard and Chair of the National Trans Police Association. She gave vivid details of some of the issues facing vulnerable minorities in policing and stressed the importance of Authorities’ role in enabling people to feel confident to report the fact that they too can be/are victims of crime.

The Panel received progress reports on human rights and the Combined Equalities Scheme at its last two meetings. Good progress on the CES has been made but there is more work to do on equality impact assessments. All new policies approved by the Authority must be impact assessed and a procedure has been set up to facilitate this.

At our meeting in March we agreed that a good deal of work was required to enable the authority to meet the APA minimum standard. Whilst some progress has been made there is still some way to go. The Panel agreed that it should produce an annual report designed to give the Authority assurance that its human rights responsibilities are being met. A human rights policy has been drafted and the Panel recommends its approval by the Authority at its meeting on the 28 July.

The Panel will discuss the results of the HMIC/Audit Commission Inspection Report at its next meeting to start to address the issues raised, within the overall framework of the action plan agreed by the Authority.

It was pleasing to see Local Employment Targets being approved by the Authority at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2010. This was the result of a good deal of work by and discussion between the Authority and the Force.

The Authority can be assured that although the principles of equality and diversity are now firmly embedded throughout the Force and practiced, rigorous monitoring continues and where there seems to be any slippage or the need for any suggestions to be made, this is brought to the attention of the Force. The Panel can assure the Authority that in general, and without complacency, the current policies on Equality and Diversity are being observed and implemented against the Force's action plan. The Panel continues to support the Force in their development of initiatives designed to improve the ethos and working environment as well as to enhance performance in policing the community.

I have compiled a list of community organisations / groups, together with their organisers, and Members are most welcome to have a copy of this if they wish, for community engagement.

**Dorrette McAuslan**