

SUFFOLK POLICE AUTHORITY

EC08/25

REPORT TO: ENGAGING COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

DATE: 4 JULY 2008

TITLE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY – EQUALITY
IMPACT ASSESSMENT

AUTHORSHIP: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHIEF CONSTABLE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

1. The Authority has statutory duties to assess which of its functions and policies are relevant to the general duty to promote race, disability and gender equality and to carry out equality impact assessments of those policies.
2. Impact assessment is a systematic way of establishing whether a policy, procedure or activity affects all groups equally across all strands of diversity. It helps an organisation to identify actual and potential inequalities and to take appropriate remedial action.
3. The Authority has identified those of its policies/activities that will be subject to equality impact assessment across all strands of diversity over the three year period of its Single Equality Scheme 2008-2011.
4. This paper presents the outcomes of the initial screening of the joint Police Authority/Constabulary Community Engagement Strategy approved last year.
5. There are no significant service or financial implications arising directly from this report.
6. In its Single Equality Scheme, the Authority sets out its commitment to meeting its statutory obligations in relation to diversity. Failure to meet these statutory responsibilities has previously been assessed as low risk and there is no specific entry in the Authority's Risk Register for Diversity. There are no issues arising from this report that suggest the need to change that assessment.

Originator: Barry Bailey, Head of Business Management
Telephone No: 01473 782772
E-mail: barry.bailey@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

Originator: Gary Kitching, Assistant Chief Constable
Telephone No: 01473 782701
E-mail: gary.kitching@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation 1

To approve the initial equality impact assessment of the Community Engagement Strategy (Appendix A).

Recommendation 2

To consider, in due course, the need for a further equality impact assessment of the Community Engagement Strategy in the light of the outcomes of the 2008/2009 delivery programme consultation activities.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

ADDITIONAL PAPERS:

1. The Police Authority Single Equality Scheme 2008-2011.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Authority has statutory duties to assess which of its functions and policies are relevant to the general duty to promote race, disability and gender equality and to carry out equality impact assessments of those policies.
- 1.2 Impact assessment is a systematic way of establishing whether a policy, procedure or activity affects all groups equally across all strands of diversity. It helps an organisation to identify actual and potential inequalities and to take appropriate remedial action.
- 1.3 At its meeting last September, the full Authority, on the recommendation of the Diversity Working Group, approved the policies/activities listed below that will be subject to equality impact assessment across all strands of diversity over the three year period of its Single Equality Scheme 2008-2011:-
 - Consultation Strategy (Community Engagement Strategy);
 - Communications and Media Strategy;
 - Equal Opportunities/Diversity Strategy;
 - Training Strategy;
 - Independent Custody Visitors Scheme;
 - Member Appointments;
 - Chief Officer Appointments.
- 1.4 The Authority also agreed to adopt the Association of Police Authorities' (APA) guidance and framework for Equality Impact Assessments. This involves an initial screening of a policy/activity based on existing information, knowledge and data. If there were evidence of unjustified adverse impact or insufficient information to reach clear conclusions, a full impact assessment would be carried out based on further research and appropriate consultation.
- 1.5 This paper presents the outcomes of the initial screening of the joint Police Authority/Constabulary Community Engagement Strategy approved last year.

2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY – INITIAL SCREENING

- 2.1 Appendix A is the completed initial screening pro forma in respect of the Community Engagement Strategy.
- 2.2 The Strategy sets out the Authority's and Constabulary's commitment for effective engagement with the communities of Suffolk including community groups, the business community, young people and people who share an identity, for example because of their ethnicity, age, disability, gender or sexual orientation.
- 2.3 However, it is the delivery programmes for the consultation activities and survey methods which will demonstrate the effectiveness of the Strategy and whether there is adverse impact on any of the strands of diversity.

- 2.4 In particular, the initial screening looked at the existing methods of gathering information through public surveys, e.g. the Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) for user satisfaction surveys of victims of crime and the Public Survey of residents' views of Suffolk Police.
- 2.5 The assessment identified specific areas where it is considered that existing surveys have a differential impact due to race, gender, disability, sexual orientation and age (see items 8-12 of Appendix A).
- 2.6 The draft assessment was discussed at the Diversity Working Group meeting on 8 April and it was concluded that the adverse impact identified could be justified for the reasons stated. The Group was of the view that a full impact assessment was not necessary at this stage and agreed that the assessment be submitted to the Engaging Communities Committee for consideration and approval.
- 2.7 However, it is only in the fullness of time once delivery programmes have been implemented and outcomes analysed, that the success of the Community Engagement Strategy in reaching all sections of the community can be properly assessed.
- 2.8 The Committee will be aware that the Consultation Working Group on 13 June received a provisional action plan of the various consultation activities to be undertaken by the Performance Management Team in the current year. The programme would cover young people, hard to hear groups and the business community, as well as the ongoing public survey, victim surveys and engagement through Suffolk Speaks.
- 2.9 Arising from the Committee's monitoring of the outcomes of these various consultation activities, there may be a need for a further equality impact assessment of the Strategy to be carried out in due course.

3 SERVICE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no significant service or financial applications arising directly from this report.

4 RISK

- 4.1 The Authority has statutory duties to carry out equality impact assessments on policies and procedures it has identified as having relevance to the general duties to promote race, disability and gender equality. The Authority's Single Equality Scheme sets out the arrangements for meeting these and other statutory obligations in relation to diversity.
- 4.2 Failure to meet these statutory requirements has previously been assessed as low risk and there is no specific entry in the Authority's Risk Register for Diversity. There are no issues arising from this report that suggest the need to change that assessment.

5 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendation 1

To approve the initial equality impact assessment of the Community Engagement Strategy (Appendix A).

Recommendation 2

To consider the need for a further equality impact assessment of the Community Engagement Strategy in the light of the outcomes of the 2008/09 delivery programme consultation activities.