

# Social Justice and Regeneration Committee

**SJR(2)-04- 06(p.4)**

<b>Date:</b>	Thursday 2 March 2006
<b>Time:</b>	9.30am to 12.30pm
<b>Venue:</b>	The National Assembly for Wales

## **Briefing Note : Welsh Fire and Rescue Services : Race Equality Schemes**

### **Background**

1.1 The three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales originally began drafting their Race Equality Schemes for 2005 – 2008 separately.

1.2 In response to the receipt of a draft press release from the Commission for Racial Equality, each service requested meetings independently to discuss the arrangements in place for monitoring staff under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. These meetings took place in June and July 2005.

1.3 From these meetings it became clear that the issues raised were relevant to all three Fire and Rescue Services. As a result it was agreed that the Commission for Racial Equality would provide joint feedback to the three services, not only on the employment duty under the Act, but also on their Race Equality Schemes for 2005 to 2008.

1.4 This feedback meeting took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

### **CRE feedback on the Race Equality Schemes**

2.1 The main thrust of the guidance given by the Commission for Racial Equality was that the documents should be much simpler and that each service was attempting to achieve too much with the result that the Commission for Racial Equality doubted whether the plans were in fact achievable.

2.2 The Commission for Racial Equality felt that the action plans included lacked specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic and timebound objectives.

2.3 The advice given with regard to objectives was that we needed to be much more focused, producing an achievable plan, which does not include aspirations that have limited resources to back them up.

### **Conclusions from meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October**

3.1 From the discussions at the meeting it became clear that the three services had each identified three significant areas to address, these being:-

3.2 The employment profiles of the Services with the huge predominance of White male employees.

3.3 The gaps in the employment monitoring data currently collected and submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and that required under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000,

3.4 The lack of minority ethnic monitoring collected at incidents, which if available would enable the services to highlight any specific requirements of individual communities.

3.5 It was agreed that these areas should form the focus of work for the three services in their Race Equality Schemes for 2005-2008. As a result the three Equalities Officers have drawn up project plans relating to a Diversity Impact Assessment of the services' Recruitment Processes and the expansion of both employment and Fire Data Report Form data collection.

3.6 In connection with the review of the Recruitment Processes both the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Water for Fish (authors of the new Written tests), have shown enthusiastic interest in receiving the results of our review. The information we obtain will help to identify any revisions to the tests which may be required and also inform similar reviews which may take place in England.