

CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Consultation responses have been received from 19 different sources. Many of the presentational comments and suggested changes have been included.

Other responses are not shown here as they are either observations or questions not specifically relating to the publication of the Race Equality Scheme but many of which will need to be addressed as practical outcomes arising from the Scheme and its application within the Authority. All those who responded during the consultation period have received a written response from the Equality and Diversity Section.

Race Equality Scheme 2006/2009

Subject Area	Quantity of Comments	Summary of Comments	Authority Response
Presentation al/ Grammatical	88	A number of consultees pointed out errors, grammatical issues or suggested improved wording or presentational improvements.	Almost all of these were agreed and amendments were made to improve the document in the light of the consultees' suggestions.
	19	UNISON welcomed the Scheme, but were disappointed that they were not more involved in its production. They felt the consultation period was restricted and the organisation may not derive maximum benefit from the exercise.	The comment is acknowledged and ideally the Authority would have consulted for longer and not in the month of August. However the requirement was place upon the Authority by the Commission for Racial Equality who set a three month deadline to draft, consult and produce a compliant Scheme. It is a "living" document and as such can be added to and amended throughout and up to the production of the next Scheme.
		<p>Page 18 - Quote 'A full review with the relevant stakeholders of all functions and policies has been undertakenon race equality.'</p> <p>B&EMM are a stakeholder and we have not been consulted. Where is the evidence of this review?</p> <p>Quote' Formal Consultation.'</p> <p>Will all groups that have been consulted be listed or just the fact that there has been a formal consultation?</p> <p>We suggest that all groups are listed who</p>	<p>The stakeholders were determined as being the department or section managers in the first instance. The consultation period has given both internal and external groups and individuals the opportunity to comment and review.</p> <p>Key Area 4 details what we will publish on completion of consultation; this is in accordance with the Statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality. Anyone who responds to consultation will receive feedback and a copy of the policy to be implemented.</p>

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Consultation	1	<p>provide consultation. These groups should also be sent annual review audit information.</p> <p>Page 22 - Where is the evidence of consultation, based on internal and external groups identified?</p> <p>State you are in process of collating information on community links for public consultation. This should have been done in RES Review of 2005. This must be done NOW.</p> <p>State how authority will consult and assess impact of policies – no evidence of any form of consultation to date?</p> <p>In addition to knowing who you might consult with I would like to know what you are going to consult on, how you have recognised potential barriers i.e. prejudice, physical, cultural, financial.</p> <p>How do you draw from good practice in the area of consulting with minority groups?</p>	<p>Equality and Diversity files for this RES; paper to the Fire Authority on 25th September 2006, paper to Corporate Board on 1st August 2006.</p> <p>The details of exactly who we consulted will be held in the Equality and Diversity section.</p> <p>This was initially done to inform the RES consultation; it is however in the Partnerships Officers Departments action plan for 2006/2007.</p> <p>Consultation has occurred on this scheme, the previous scheme, IRMP. We have not had any EIAs which needed to go to full assessment and consultation yet.</p> <p>What we will consult are the policies or functions undergoing a full EIA, in relation to this Scheme. Other consultation is also engaged in – in relation to the IRMS.</p> <p>Through reports such as 'Engaging Ethnic Minority Communities' by the Government Communications Network and research and discussion with other services and authorities.</p>
EIA Procurement		<p>The Procurement policy has recently been reviewed and republished. This policy does not mention race equality or the RRAA. There is also no information within the</p>	<p>The policy was reviewed prior to this scheme going out on consultation. Routine Notice 138/2006 details the information on EIAs which must be included in Standing Orders. However, the policy will still be reviewed again</p>

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EIA Schedule Appendix A		<p>Extended Health screening/routine medicals – ‘Low’ Relevance – Many diseases such as diabetes; prostate cancer proven to affect BME in high percentages; this needs to be taken account of in ‘High’ Relevance by health and welfare.</p> <p>Youth training – ‘Medium’ – IE Young Fire Fighters take up by BME low/High impact on BME apparent.</p> <p>Child Protection Policy – ‘Low’ – Victoria Crombie Inquiry etc highlight cultural issues that may have effect on how child protection policy is implemented.</p> <p>Page 3 – Re-employment of uniformed personnel following retirement – New Policy – Impact assessment should have been completed on implementation; not as scheduled for 2nd year.</p> <p>Page 3 – There is no Promotions procedure identified in the functions and policies deemed relevant. How was it determined that this policy is not relevant (If that is the case).</p> <p>The document places the policy for working with the Princes Trust as high. This is an area, due to our chosen method of working, whereby we have little control of the make of the groups of young people we work with.</p>	<p>As above.</p> <p>This standing order does not refer to the Young Firefighters but to delivery of a course to approved youth organisations.</p> <p>Policy to be redesignated as Medium in light of your response.</p> <p>EIAs were not being used at the time this policy was introduced. It will be assessed in year 2.</p> <p>We do not have a Promotions standing order, however this function of Personnel will be included in the EIA schedule (Appendix A).</p> <p>Redesignated as low - year 3 based on your comments.</p>

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EIA Schedule Appendix A	3	They are teams which are recruited by the Princes Trust Delivery Partners (mainly local colleges) and are recruited in line with the Princes Trust policies.	
		The Young Firefighters Association is missing from the list	This function has been added to the EIA schedule (Appendix A).
		Junior Firesetter Tutoring is missing from the list despite a conversation with the Head of Fairness and Equality (the conversation probably took place too late to influence this document)	As above.
Legislation		Not sure if this is a direct lift from the legislation, but it seems a bit odd to have 4 principles, when in reality they are only 3. The 'complementary' principle only relates to ensuring that all the other 3 are complied with.	The Statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality states: "Guiding Principles – four principles should govern public authorities efforts...obligatory, relevant, proportionate and complimentary"
		UNISON understands that it would be compatible with current legislation for the organisation to make its position known with regard to the possession of racist views and/or the membership of far right groups ie actively discouraging such applicants.	This is an area for exploration via the Internal Equalities Group and the Lead Member for Equality and Diversity. This comment will be forwarded to them.
		Not happy with the pre-assumption under the heading of performance appraisals that there are those that 'benefit or suffer' as a result	This is a direct quote from the legislation which requires us to monitor "employees who benefit or suffer detriment from performance appraisals".

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Legislation Review	2	<p>This Scheme should be reviewed quarterly initially for year 1. Thereafter annually. Your review needs to be in time for next CRE Statutory review- May 2008.</p> <p>Scheme is named 2006 – 2009; Next year for CRE 3 yearly Review is 2008. There is no commitment for this review within scheme, and no commitment within action plan for this review (Including proposed policies)</p>	<p>The Scheme states that quarterly update reports will be presented for scrutiny throughout the life of the Scheme.</p> <p>Steps have been put into place regarding scrutiny particularly in relation to placing equality onto the agenda for Corporate Board and the Fire Authority.</p> <p>Agreed (statutory review date) and scheme amended.</p>
Legislation Partnerships		<p>Partnerships do come under terms of Race Equality Duty, if we are involved and form part of that partnership – we should ensure that partnerships have race equality strategy built into them.</p>	<p>Only those Public Authorities listed in the Statutory Code of Practise on the Duty to Promote Race Equality are bound by this duty (points 2.11; 2.12 and 2.13). Therefore unless our partner is included in that list they do not have to have a race equality scheme.</p>
Core Values	2	<p>Page 9 - Quote ‘We value Service To The Community by: Working with all groups to reduce risks.’</p> <p>Where is the evidence for this statement and what groups have or are being worked with?</p> <p>Reference is made to ‘considering criticism thoughtfully...learning from our experience’. B&EMM advise that this is not their experience when working at varying levels of the organisation and asked for evidence to support this statement.</p>	<p>This a core value that we have adopted and one which will be progressed though the Integrated Risk Management Planning and targeting process.</p> <p>This is a core value and further work will be undertaken to embed it within the organisation. PRINCE 2 project methodology contains a “lessons learned report” so all projects run through the Programme Office have a very structured approach. In the current very considered approach to the new shift patterns, officers have shown they have learned from previous experiences.</p>

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Content / Wording in relation to Core Values	1	<p>Quote 'These core values are relevant to the West Midlands because poverty and disadvantage in many of the areas we are responsible for raises the incidence of fires.... The link with race equality in West Midlands is through the interrelation of race, disadvantage and increased fire risk.'</p> <p>This statement seems to imply that poverty and disadvantage are somehow linked with race, and the diverse communities of the West Midlands.</p>	Acknowledged, and the paragraph has been more appropriately worded.
Content / Wording in relation to CPA	1	<p>UNISON is disappointed in the lack of ambition demonstrated in aspiring only to maintain a <i>good</i> rating. Given that the recent ODPM Select Committee report on diversity has recommended that Fire Authorities can only be awarded an excellent rating if they perform well in equality and diversity (but by definition, still be able to attain a <i>good</i> rating), does not convince UNISON – and therefore, will not convince others - that there is any serious intention to improve in this area.</p>	Paragraph has been amended to demonstrate that ultimately we aspire to be an excellent performing authority.
Content / Wording in relation to Equality Standard for Local Government	2	<p>Set out in greater detail the levels and specific targets detailed in the Equality Standard including timescales for each level.</p>	Detailed information is not included in the scheme as there is limited space and a question of added value. However it does provide some information on an area that has a direct link into the scheme and is a tool that will enable us to monitor and manage race equality.

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Leadership / Scrutiny	7	<p>UNISON felt that to generate more confidence in the commitment of the Authority to the Scheme the wording regarding the role of the Lead Member for Equality and Diversity should be revised to show the role as leading, shaping, influencing policy and monitoring action and outcomes.</p> <p>Page 14 – Scrutiny – ‘Appropriate structures are in place to monitor RES’. Corporate board and Fire Authority have failed, to date to monitor progress of RES. Therefore we need to review the scrutiny. Last scheme states External audit; annual reviews; summaries. All of which have not happened. Need new form of scrutiny.</p> <p>Quote ‘The Scheme will be externally reviewed.’ By whom? Suggest Equality forum to advise on community and internal initiatives to promote race equality through RES.</p> <p>This Race Equality Scheme review does not put in place the scrutiny that is required to drive this scheme to where it needs to be. From this ‘review’ it is clear that there has been very done in the area of Race equality in the West Midlands are over the last 4 years since the RES 2002 existed. This is either due to lack of recording or lack of commitment.</p>	<p>The wording will be amended to more accurately reflect the active involvement of the Lead Member for Equality and Diversity.</p> <p>The scheme will be scrutinised by the Internal Equalities Group, Corporate Board and the Authority.</p> <p>The scheme provides detail of 5 external scrutiny mechanisms – CPA, Equality Standard for Local Government, BVPI's, Full Equality Impact Assessments and the IRMS.</p> <p>Review of the scheme is detailed in the introduction under the ‘scrutiny’ section.</p>

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Informal decisions / custom and practice	5	<p>Need immediate audit of all customs and practices. They need to be identified and impact assessed. If they are legitimate they should become written policies.</p> <p>Quote 'It is recognised that unwritten policies are less open to inspection and review.'</p> <p>Unwritten policies are not open to 'any' form of inspection and so how can they be open to any form of review?'</p> <p>Page 24 - Quote ' Monitoring our policies.....it also enables us to review custom and practise.'</p> <p>How is monitoring undertaken and can custom and practice be reviewed?</p>	<p>This is an issue that will be raised with the internal equalities group.</p> <p>Corporate Board minutes 1/8/06 item 6 address the issue of ensuring that management decisions are recorded.</p> <p>The internal equalities group will consider the issue of custom and practice.</p>
Publication/ Accessibility	16	<p>Executive summaries – Available on website? Where? Where else will these be made available? Libraries, website and Fire Stations are not enough. There is no evidence of any thought or assessment of where information should be made available. No evidence of any form of consultation in order to determine this.</p> <p>There is no commitment to publication; only to corporate board and on internet. The specific duty clearly states that this information must be publicly accessible, and diversely accessible. These forms of</p>	<p>The full RES will be available on the Internet and Intranet, copies will be sent to all sections, departments and stations and also to our consultees including the Commission for Race Equality and Race Equality Councils in the West Midlands.</p> <p>Executive summaries will be sent to every current and new employee, and all service locations and libraries.</p>

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Publication / Accessibility	15	<p>publication alone are unacceptable.</p> <p>Quote 'On completion of the full EIA.....an executive summary of which will be published on our website.' Why not publish the full report? This should be the one place where full information is available.</p> <p>Page 29 – Quote - Hard copies of scheme to be sent to employees and internal intranet access to assessments; consultation; and monitoring. The consultation monitoring and assessment information should be published (audited) annually and that information sent out to all departments/section as progress report. This should also be sent out to all stakeholders and partners consultees for scrutiny. Should not only be scheme that is sent out.</p> <p>Making RES available on <u>request</u> in other community relevant languages is unacceptable on its own.</p>	<p>The full report will be published on our website.</p> <p>The RES states “Internal publication of the information will be via the intranet...and a hard copy of the scheme will be sent to each Section and Department”. Key Area 4 states “the monitoring summaries will be published annually and the results of any assessments and consultations (on their completion) will also be published on the website”. Key Area 4 relates to “arrangements for publishing the results of assessments and consultations” only.</p>
Monitoring / Collection of Data		<p>Page 25 - Quote 'Home fire safety Checks.' How are these being monitored or is this just data gathering. For example do we know how many homes that have had a HFSC done are from ethnic minorities?</p>	<p>The executive summary will be made available on request in 14 languages other than English and in other formats such as Braille and large print. We are also able to use the Community Advocates to provide a verbal translation should this be required.</p> <p>Data is being gathered and monitoring based on ethnicity of householders will be reported upon quarterly by the end of this year (20060, to the Internal Equalities Group, Corporate Board and the Fire Authority.</p>

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Monitoring / Collection of data	4	<p>Quote 'We intend to research the feasibility of further data capture on.....and implement where possible, an appropriate system.'</p> <p>Knowing the ethnicity of persons making complaints or indeed compliments is or indeed should be an important part of any race equality scheme and should not be left as something that 'we will try to do.'</p> <p>Quote ' The areas responsible for data collation will provide the equality and diversity team with quarterly updates.....the report will recommend a full EIA.'</p> <p>This whole section implies that the only monitoring that will be done is of the initial EIA.</p> <p>The term 'urgently' means nothing. This needs to be accompanied by a definite timescale.</p>	<p>Wording has been amended to state that we will implement a system for monitoring ethnicity of those using the CCC system.</p> <p>This section relates to data collection of the areas identified in the previous table not to initial EIAs.</p> <p>The timescale has been amended to: "commence within 3 months".</p>
Customer Care Charter		<p>The accessibility of the Charter was raised with suggestion it should be made more widely available, have language options and be made available by more means than electronic.</p> <p>Page 30 - Quote 'We have published our Customer Care Charter.'</p> <p>What and where can this be found? Is must be considered that if we are inside the</p>	<p>Agreed. This is already covered in the Administration Department Action Plan and will be discussed with the Public Relations Officer.</p> <p>Charter can be found on the Intranet, Internet, in a folder on all fire stations, on leaflets on all fire stations and has been widely distributed to libraries in the West Midlands.</p>

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Customer Care Charter	2	<p>organisation and are not aware of this Charter then the access to those outside the organisation must be very limited.</p> <p>The 'Customer Charter' does provide information on the service, but not the service we provide, i.e fires, inspections, advice, HFSC's, Young Firefighters, Fire-setter counselling etc therefore those individuals from minority groups can not really identify whether they are getting a lesser service because they are not informed of the services we provide as indicated in the second paragraph.</p>	<p>The Charter is currently being revised; points raised will be forwarded to the Public Relations Officer for consideration.</p> <p>This issue will be raised with the Internal Equalities Group for consideration and reporting on.</p> <p>These are areas that will be reviewed by the Internal Equalities Group.</p>
Training IPDR		<p>Page 35 – Training needs are identified through annual compulsory IPDRs. Employment monitoring states that only 277 staff completed IPDR in a 12 month period. If training is allocated through IPDR, therefore development is subject to training. Your employment monitoring stated – Only 12 of your BME staff completed IPDR.</p>	
Training in relation to Legislation		<p>This is an area that must be targeted. Either managers are not completing IPDRs correctly, or your process is having a detrimental impact on BME's as they are not completing IPDRs and will therefore be unlikely to gain promotion at the same rate as white staff.</p>	

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Training Centre / training courses	3	<p>Page 36 – Quote - You suggest training courses such as customer services and community fire safety, that could have implications for race relations. All courses should be reviewed appropriately to immediately determine their relevance to the RRAA. Also how elements of general duties can be introduced.</p> <p>Mentors or coaches should be allocated to all trainees when they enter the training process.</p> <p>Training Centre needs to be identified as a function and broken down into policies and procedures. These should all then be impact assessed, especially the customs and practices and the procedures for handling discipline.</p>	<p>Paragraph amended to include all courses.</p> <p>This issue will be raised via the Internal Equalities Group for consideration and reporting on.</p> <p>The functions of Operational Training, Phase 1 Training, Competency Based Training, Commercial and Industrial Training and Technical Rescue are all identified in Appendix A of the Scheme as needing to undergo an Equality Impact Assessment.</p>
Procurement	8	<p>Page 38 - Quote ‘We will seek to encourage individuals.....to tender to compete for contracts.’ How will this being done?</p> <p>‘Review Information requested from contractors.....’</p>	<p>Identification of this will be via the statement in the scheme “we will review how we approach and publish opportunities for tendering, to ensure that they reach as diverse an audience as possible”.</p> <p>In complying with the Procurement Procedure 1/8 the Authority will where appropriate target suppliers including ethnic minority suppliers using suitable websites. Use of such technology will also support the Authorities Environmental Policy and our electronic service delivery policy.</p> <p>Processes will be put in place to ensure that our standard contract documentation for quotations and</p>

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Employment Monitoring Data	17	<p>It is not immediately apparent which sector of contractors or suppliers is being referred to</p> <p>‘Design and implement a monitoring process.....’ First we need to identify and agree which suppliers we would monitor. . There are a range of areas where we should be monitoring our key suppliers including Health and Safety performance, insurance levels, compliance with minimum wage, age discrimination etc. This action should be prioritised based on risk to the organisation. To do this justice the timeline should be end December 08 to allow a proper supplier management system to be designed.</p> <p>Page 40 Key Area 8 Employment Data UNISON supports a target of 16% of staff from BME groups across the organisation, but recognises this can be achieved through recruitment to non uniformed low paid roles. We consider that specific targets set at an equal or higher level should be established for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Uniformed/Firefighter roles b) Management positions 	<p>tenders are fully compliant. Where appropriate specifications for orders, quotations and tenders will similarly be reviewed. We will review goods, works and services contracts and the standard terms and conditions they include. Equally we will look at local terms and conditions and where appropriate contract specifications.</p> <p>Equality and Diversity Officers will work with the Procurement Officer to design a monitoring system so that by the end of December 2008 we will have a proper supplier management system.</p> <p>Sentence amended to read separately for Uniformed and Support Staff.</p> <p>Already set at 16% Already identified in the scheme “We also have a target</p>

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Employment Monitoring Data	2	<p>c) Any other roles which have strategic significance within the organisation and can influence further improvement in race equality.</p> <p>Applications for employment – There is no mention or evidence of analysis of this information, or it influencing any employment practices.</p> <p>Training – This is monitored, and there is a low number of BME applying for training. What is to be done about this? Performance appraisals are not being adequately monitored or reported. We need urgent definite timescale for this system.</p> <p>Application for promotion – you stated that you will be updating your monitoring systems in 6 months so why is there not a timescale for the gathering of this information?</p> <p>Within the Personnel, Performance and Planning section of the action plan. No mention is made of capturing and providing data in relation to grievances raised and the outcomes of those grievances.</p>	<p>of 2.08% for 2006/2007 in relation to the number of ethnic minority staff in senior management”.</p> <p>Recruitment analyse the applications and have introduced positive action measures to address issues identified.</p> <p>This area will be raised with the Internal Equalities Group.</p> <p>Timescale amended.</p> <p>Amended.</p> <p>Capturing grievance data is the responsibility of the Equality and Diversity section and is included in their action plan.</p>
Exit Interviews		<p>Employees in post and leavers There is no mention of exit interviews. Are these taking place? If not why not? There is no evidence of these figures influencing any employment practices.</p>	<p>Personnel send a form to every leaver and offer them the opportunity of an exit interview. A policy is being produced by the Personnel, Policy and Planning section.</p>

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Recruitment	5	<p>There is no mention of positive action procedures under your recruitment procedure; is there a positive action procedure? Where is it? What is it? When will it be impact assessed? Why is it not part of policies and functions that are deemed relevant?</p> <p>The organisation should also refer to the recruitment and selection processes that assess commitment to equality and identify views and behaviours that are incompatible with those of the organisation.</p>	<p>Positive Action is part of the recruitment procedure standing order and will therefore be assessed with that, in Year 1 (2006/2007).</p> <p>This is an area for exploration via the group being set up by the Recruitment Officer, the comment will be forwarded to them.</p>
Generic Scheme	1	<p>Whilst the document is headed 'Race Equality Scheme' it makes many mentions of the EIA which covers six strands of equality. A 'scheme' for sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief and age, each of which are of equal importance would result in a very similar document with much repetition. I do not understand why a generic 'Equality Scheme' was not produced to cover all aspects of equality.</p>	<p>We are legally bound to produce a Race Equality Scheme and in future to produce a disability and also a gender equality scheme. A generic document was considered however there is concern over dilution of the issues, the size of the document and the fact that it might not do each area full justice.</p>