

**CORPORATE EQUALITY POLICY – ACTION PLAN PROGRESS
(Report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet of progress with the council's Corporate Equality Policy (CEP) Action Plan.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The CEP sets out the Council's aim and objectives for equality and the accompanying action plan sets out the corporate and directorate actions and targets. It is supported by three equality schemes (Race, Disability and Gender). The action plan combines activities which are compatible with the Council's achievement of Level 2 of the Equality Standard and the statutory requirements contained within the three equality schemes.
- 2.2 The CEP and action plan shows how the Council will translate its statutory responsibilities into objectives and actions in respect of equalities; in particular it takes account of:
- Equalities legislation relating to race, disability and gender
 - The achievement of Level 2 of the Equality Standard
- 2.3 Having achieved Level 2 and working towards Level 3 of the Equality Standard, the Council made a commitment to establish a timetable to assess the impact of all services in terms of equality. A three year timetable was adopted, those services with a more 'public facing' role were placed in years 1 and 2.
- 2.4 Training on how to conduct equality impact assessments took place during 2007 and 2008 and results from these assessments are set out in Appendix 3. Equality impact assessments are a statutory requirement and they are the primary method by which the Council can assess whether it is providing equal access to services in terms race, disability and gender. Many of the equality impact assessments have also considered sexuality, religious belief and age.

3. PROGRESS

- 3.1 The Corporate Equality Policy identified two outcomes and two measures that will tell us how successful we have been in terms of understanding the diverse needs of local people, that our services meet those needs and that they are provided in a fair and accessible way. These outcomes and measures are:

Outcome	Measure	2006/07	Target (2007/8)	Actual 2008/08	Target for 2008/09
That our services are provided in ways that meet diverse local needs	% of local people who believe that Council services meet their needs	* baseline not available	*75%	84%	85 %
That the Council is recognised for promoting equality and inclusion in communities	% of local people who believe that the Council promotes equality and inclusion in their community	64%	70%	83%	85%

- 3.2 The appended progress report covers:
- the achievement made against the actions and targets set in March 2007
 - an action plan for 2008/09
 - results from equality impact assessments conducted over the last 12 months.
 - revised timetable for equality impact assessments during 2008/09
- 3.3 The Corporate Equality Policy Action Plan contained 107 actions, of which:
- 76 have been fully completed
 - 26 are on-going
 - 2 have not been completed and will be taken forward into the new action plan
 - 3 actions have been deemed not required
- 3.4 Eight service areas were selected to undertake equality impact assessments during 2007/08 (Administration, Housing, Information Management Division, Environmental Health, Human Resources, Planning, Revenues and Benefits and Technical Services). Two services (Housing and Environmental Health) completed all of their impact assessments; the other 6 services completed some of their impact assessments. Those impact assessments not completed on time have been re-scheduled for completion during 2008/09. A full list of outcomes/actions arising out of completed equality impact assessments is contained in Appendix 3. A revised timetable for equality impact assessments during 2008/09 is set out in Appendix 4.

- 3.5 The Corporate Equality Steering Group (comprising officers from all three directorates plus an employee representative) is responsible for overseeing progress with the equality standard and equality impact assessments. Actions that come out of equality impact assessments will be delivered through individual services however, the steering group will look at all of the actions and co-ordinate activity to ensure there is no duplication of work. The steering group will also monitor the equality impact assessment timetable. Corporate themes arising out of equality impact assessments during 07/08 include monitoring, training and consultation.
- 3.6 A stage 1 (or initial assessment) equality impact assessment establishes how the policy or service meets different needs according to race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or age. It also examines whether there are any obvious barriers and if any improvements can be made. All of the equality impact assessments that have been conducted over the last 12 months needed only a stage 1 assessment, with the exception of Choice Based Lettings, which will proceed to a stage 2 assessment. A stage 2 assessment is required if any major barriers are identified in stage 1; this will entail a more detailed study; so far only 1 equality impact assessment will require a stage 2 assessment.
- 3.7 The Council has a statutory responsibility to report findings from progress made with the race, disability and gender equality schemes as set out in Appendix 1. Findings from equality impact assessments embrace race, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Cabinet is asked:
- to note progress made with the corporate equality policy action plan (Appendix 1)
 - endorse the new corporate equality action plan (Appendix 2)
 - to note the findings from equality impact assessments conducted during 2007/08 (Appendix 3)
 - endorse the revised equality impact assessment timetable set out in Appendix 4.

Background Papers

Corporate Equality Policy
Appendix 1 - Corporate Equality Policy - Action Plan Progress
Appendix 2 - Corporate Equality Policy – Action Plan 2008/09
Appendix 3 – findings from equality impact assessment 2007/08
Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment timetable (08/09)

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