

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being))

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 7th September 2010, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) considered a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships, seeking the endorsement of a new Single Equality Scheme and outlining the progress made to date in respect of the Council's Corporate Equality Policy Action Plan. This report sets out the Panel's discussions.

2. COMMENTS

- 2.1 The Panel has been informed by the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy of the legislative background to the Corporate Equality Policy, together with details of the achievements made by the Council over the previous year in respect of the Action Plan. In noting progress against the 2009/10 Action Plan, attention has been drawn to the fact that of the 18 actions contained in the Plan, 12 have been completed and six are ongoing. The Panel has also been reminded that following external assessment the Council has attained Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.
- 2.2 With regard to residents' perceptions in relation the two outcomes and measures identified within the Policy, the Panel has drawn attention to the negative trend revealed against one of the measures compared with the previous year. Members have been requested to bear in mind that the measures are based on individuals' perceptions of all local public services and not just those provided by the District Council. These views were elicited through the Place Survey. The Panel has suggested that it might be useful to continue to test these measures through other means in future.
- 2.3 Members have been informed that, to date, 90% of services have been the subject of Equality Impact Assessments. The outstanding Assessments will be completed in the current year.
- 2.4 In response to a question raised by a Member concerning the financial support the Council provides to the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy has reported that decisions on this and other matters will be reached following the Government's comprehensive spending review announcement in the Autumn.
- 2.5 In discussing employees' attitudes towards equalities matters, Members have noted that training is provided to both employees and Members on equality and diversity. The Panel has discussed whether changes made as a result of current financial pressures might have an impact on the Council's equalities standards. In response, Members have been reminded that the Policy framework is driven by legislation and that the Council has a duty to tackle discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and encourage good community relations and that individual Officers are responsible for ensuring that they comply with their equalities responsibilities. The Action Plan will play



a key part in achieving these requirements. Furthermore, steps have been taken to embed equalities across the Council.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to consider the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Minutes and Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) on 7th September 2010.

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