

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR AND EQUALITIES OFFICER TO THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
7 DECEMBER 2007

Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008/09 – 2010/11

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

- a) The Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and aims to deliver accessible services and employment opportunities which meet the needs of all residents and employees.
- b) To help it achieve this, it has just put together a list of key things that it will do over the next three years to make its services more accessible for residents and its employees.
- c) These areas for action are set out in the Council's **Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008/09 – 2010/11**. In accordance with legislation, the Scheme pays particular attention to the needs of disabled people, people from ethnic minorities¹ and women as they may find it more difficult to access local services.
- d) The areas for action have been identified via internal and external consultation and the analysis of Council performance data. They also take into account our relevant statutory duties.
- e) This report summarises the purpose, structure, development and future management of the Equality and Diversity Scheme. It also makes a recommendation for its adoption by the Council's Executive.
- f) The contact officers for this report are Katharine Doherty (Equalities Officer, 01235 520202) and Tim Sadler (Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer, 01235 520202).

2.0 Recommendations

That the Executive adopts the Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008/09 – 2010/11.

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

- a) This report relates to the objectives of the Council's vision.
- b) This report relates to the Council's corporate priorities to "improve and modernise access to services" and to "build our capacity through managerial and organisational development."
- c) This report relates to the Council's Equality in Employment policy as well as to any policy that determines the delivery of services on the basis of need.

¹ The race equality section of this Scheme consists of the Council's Race Equality Scheme which was adopted by the Council in March 2007 (prior to the development of this Scheme).
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4.0 **Background and Supporting Information**

- a) The Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and aims to deliver accessible services and employment opportunities which meet the needs of all residents and employees.
- b) We have produced our Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008/09 – 2010/11 to:
 - help us achieve this commitment and deliver our vision
 - meet our statutory duties (in particular, those arising from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006)
 - help us provide excellent customer service for everybody and an accessible and fair working environment for our employees and councillors. These outcomes will contribute towards the council achieving good value for money and high levels of customer and staff satisfaction
- c) Building on what we've already achieved, this Scheme states our overall commitment and approach to equal opportunities. It also sets out the things we will be doing to specifically promote disability, race² and gender equality (meeting our statutory duties to produce race, disability and gender equality schemes) A detailed three year corporate action plan outlines the timescales, responsibilities and other details for these areas for action.
- d) The scheme covers all of our service and employment functions as well as the partnerships we are involved in and the contractors who work on our behalf. All staff and councillors are responsible for delivering the commitments and actions in this document which will be met within existing resources and budgets.
- e) The beneficiaries of this Scheme will be Council staff, councillors and service users.
- f) To help us develop this Scheme, we have sought feedback from representative organisations, service users and Council employees³. We have also looked at performance data and the results of a corporate equalities audit we carried out in spring 2007.
- g) The draft Scheme was subject to a four week public consultation during October and November 2007 and any feedback received was taken into account as the document was finalised.
- h) The adopted Scheme will be published on the Council's website and intranet (hard copies will be available upon request). We will inform key stakeholders about its adoption and copies will be sent to all major contractors and strategic partners.
- i) In order for this Scheme to be effective, it needs to be managed as a working document. Therefore, the Equalities Officer will review this Scheme annually and report to councillors and senior managers on the progress we make against the action plan. It will be fully revised in three years time.

² The race equality section of this Scheme consists of the Council's Race Equality Scheme which was adopted by the Council in March 2007 (prior to the development of this Scheme).

³ Consultation on our Equality and Diversity Scheme did not include the section on Race Equality (it was subject to its own consultation prior to the development of this Scheme)

HELEN BISHOP
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

TIM SADLER
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

Background Papers

Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008/09 – 2010/11, attached.