
REPORT TO:	Council	AGENDA ITEM: 21
DATE OF MEETING:	Thursday 19 April 2007	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Deputy Chief Executive	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Mike Greenway (ext 8705)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	DEVELOPING A GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME	REF: MG
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 Recommendation

1.1 It is recommended that:

- i). Council endorses the process taken to date to develop the Council's Gender Equality Scheme,
- ii). Authority be given to the Deputy Chief Executive to agree in conjunction with the Leader of the Council, the draft GES for further consultation and the arrangements for this in order to develop a final scheme for approval and adoption,
- iii). The Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to make available the draft GES for further consultation on the Council's website and at the Civic Offices, by the 30 April 2007 to meet the requirements of the statutory code of practice, and
- iv). Following the consultation on the draft, the final GES be presented for approval and adoption as set out below.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To set out proposals with regards to developing the Council's Gender Equality Scheme.

3.0 Background

3.1 Public sector authorities were given a statutory 'general' duty (the duty) from 6 April 2007, to promote equality of opportunity between men and women and eliminate harassment and discrimination to people regardless of their gender. The duty is set out in the Equalities Act 2006 (the act).

3.3 Public authorities must publish their arrangements and proposals for fulfilling the duty and specific duties as referred to above, through a Gender Equality Scheme (GES).

4.0 Gender Equality Scheme (GES)

- 4.1 To enable authorities to respond to the requirements of the act and produce a GES, a statutory code of practice has been put in place.
- 4.2 Key to the process of developing a GES is the engagement of stakeholders to ensure such a scheme is based on relevant issues and that the action plan addresses the areas people feel are a priority.
- 4.3 Public authorities are required to publish their GES widely by 30 April 2007.
- 4.4 A GES with its action plan is expected to cover a 3-year period.

5.0 Developing the draft GES

- 5.1 The methodology adopted for developing the draft GES is the same as that used to develop the Disabilities Equality scheme.
- 5.2 Initial consultation has been undertaken with individuals and representatives of groups on a one-to-one basis. The list of stakeholders taking part is attached at appendix 1.
- 5.3 The one-to-one meetings concentrated on identifying the issues people believe the Council needs to address and influence in terms of its activities and responsibilities as an employer, a service provider and a leader of the communities of South Derbyshire.
- 5.4 This first round of consultation has informed the development of the draft scheme's action plan and from the issues arising seven thematic areas have emerged: -
 - 1. The Council as an employer
 - 2. Promoting a positive image
 - 3. Inclusive, responsive and accessible services
 - 4. Participation in the life of the community
 - 5. Partnerships and procurement
 - 6. Consultation and engagement
 - 7. Process and management issues

In the scheme's action plan, a series of proposed actions will be set out aligned to the above themes, that will contribute to the Council meeting the general and specific duties set out in the act and the code of practice.

- 5.5 The individual chapters of the draft GES are following the same format as that of the Disabilities scheme, these being: -

Section 1:	Introduction to the Scheme
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Section 2	Setting the Scene
Section 3	The Council's commitment to Equality of Opportunity
Section 4	Involving People
Section 5	Working for the Council
Section 6	Impact Assessments
Section 7	Gender Equality objectives and the Action Plan
Section 8	Collecting and Using Information
Section 9	Reviewing the Scheme
Section 10	Publishing the Scheme
Section 11	Making comments

- 5.6 The draft GES is being prepared and will be made available to all members once the consultation process has been completed, including discussion with the Council's Equalities & Diversity champion.

6.0 Proposed arrangements for completing the development of the GES

- 6.1 The timeframe for developing the GES is extremely restricted, however it is felt important that a second round of consultation is undertaken to ensure that the scheme is fully reflective of stakeholder's views and aspirations. With this in mind, it is proposed that authorisation be given to the Deputy Chief Executive to agree the version of the draft GES for this second consultation and the arrangements for undertaking this exercise.
- 6.2 In order to meet the requirement for publishing a GES (30 April 2007), it is proposed that the draft GES for further consultation (agreed as set out in 6.1 above) be included on the Council's website and made available at the Civic Offices in readiness for this date. It will also be sent out to the external stakeholders at appendix 1.
- 6.3 On completion of the second consultation, a final draft of the GES together with a summary of all consultation response will be presented to the Council meeting in July for formal adoption.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. However specific financial and resource implications may need to be considered in the future by the relevant policy committees on individual issues as they arise.

8.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The GES will guide the Council's work in putting the necessary arrangements and processes in place to help it promote equality of opportunity between men and women and eliminate harassment and discrimination to people regardless of their gender.
- 7.2 The GES will be a key component of this Council's programme of developing a Corporate Equalities Plan and progressing the implementation of the Local Government Equalities Standard.

APPENDIX 1 – List of stakeholders engaged in the development of the GES

External

- Age Concern (Collingwood Day Centre)
- Derbyshire Friend (LGBT support service)
- Business Link East Midlands
- South Derbyshire Council for Voluntary Services
- Citizens' Advice Bureau
- Learning & Skills Council (Derbyshire)
- Derbyshire County Primary Care Trust
- Trident Housing Association
- Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living
- Values & Attitudes Group

Internal

- Head of Human Resources
- Head of Revenues
- Housing Operations Manager
- Customer Services team
- Sport & Youth Development team
- Safer South Derbyshire Partnership
- Joint Negotiating Group (Management and Trades Unions)
- Equal Opportunities & Diversity Action Group