

Corporate Equality Plan

Proposed Project Brief

Purpose of the brief

The purpose of the brief is to

- o Define the scope, content and format of the Corporate Equality Plan
- o Set out the milestones for preparation of the Plan, consultation and implementation.
- o Link to other SDDC plans and strategies which promote equal opportunities and diversity

Background to the Corporate Equality Plan

The Council approved and adopted an Equality and Diversity Policy Statement on the 16th October 2003. This confirmed our commitment to equality and diversity issues, as an integral part of everything we undertake, based on the principles of quality, leadership and community involvement

A Race Equality Scheme was published in December 2003, to take account of the Council's general and specific duties under the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

In 2002, the Commission for Racial Equality, Equal Opportunities Commission, Disability Rights Commission, Employers' Organisation for Local Government, Dialog, and the Local Government Association produced and published the 'Equality Standard for Local Government'

Scope and Purpose of the Corporate Equality Plan

The Equality Standard was developed as a "tool" to enable local authorities to mainstream gender, race and disability into council policy and practice. However, the framework can, be extended to such other areas of possible discrimination such as age, sexuality and religious belief.

The Equality Standard builds on the principles of quality, leadership and community involvement and is designed to enable local authorities to assess their progress based on five levels:

- (i) commitment to a comprehensive equality policy;
- (ii) assessment and consultation;
- (iii) setting equality objectives and targets;
- (iv) information systems and monitoring against targets; and
- (v) achieving and reviewing outcomes.

Format of the Corporate Equality Plan

The Plan will cover the 3-year period from April 2004 to March 2007, and will be rolled forward annually. It will include the following sections which will discuss:-

- ⊗ **Introduction to Plan** - Purpose, contents, setting the scene in terms of the legal and policy frameworks, links to other Council plans and strategies which promote equal opportunities and diversity
- ⊗ **Where are we now?** – the Council's current position in terms of self assessment, access audits in relation to services provided and as an employer, resources, consultation, employment, complaints and dealing with harassment
- ⊗ **Where do we want to be?** – the Council's vision and achievement of its key aim to meet the objective of "*doing more to promote equality of opportunity and tackle social exclusion*" including mainstreaming equality and diversity issues.
- ⊗ **How are we going to get there?** Targets and milestones to help us achieve our aims, along with the expected outcomes at the end of the 3 years, providing guidance on any other factors to be considered, training needs, ICT provision and benchmarking
- ⊗ **Delivering our Plan** – publication of results of assessment and monitoring, ensuring public access to information and services, resources, partnership working, roles and responsibilities of Members, Staff and Equal Opportunities & Diversity Action Group
- ⊗ **Staying on Track** – arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the Plan and managing the risks associated with delivering the Plan

Arrangements for producing the Corporate Equality Plan

- ⊗ The Corporate Equality Plan will be developed via the corporate Equal Opportunities and Diversity Action Group. The work of this Group will be supported by additional staffing resources in the Policy and Regeneration Division, as identified in the recent restructuring proposals. The Member's "Equalities Champion" will provide additional support to the project.
- ⊗ Additional budgets to cover costs of printing and postage may have to be considered. However, it is anticipated that such costs can be met from existing budgets. The milestones for producing the Corporate Equality Plan are outlined in the table below:

| Milestone | Date |
|---|---------------------|
| Brief agreed by CMT /Committee | March 2004 |
| Information gathering | April – May 2004 |
| Draft Plan prepared and considered by EODAG / Committee | June 2004 |
| Draft Plan out for consultation | Late June 2004 |
| Amended Plan prepared and considered by EODAG / Committee | Early August 2004 |
| Implementation & Training | Late September 2004 |

- ⊗ A major consideration in the production of the Corporate Equalities Plan will be our approach to consultation which is outlined below.

Approach to Consultation

- ⊗ An essential part of developing the Corporate Equality Plan will be a structured approach to consultation with a wide range of formal and informal stakeholders and bodies throughout the District.,
- ⊗ A list of possible consultees could include, for example, Members, Managers, staff, Trade Unions, Parish Councils, residents, Partners (public, private and voluntary sector) and “Hard to Reach Groups”.
- ⊗ The aim is to ensure that everyone who is and maybe affected by the proposals has the opportunity to influence or make representations on the Plans contents from the outset
- ⊗ The consultation process will involve three phases
 - Phase 1 – raising awareness
 - Phase 2 – seeking views
 - Phase 3 – analysing responses and providing feedback
- ⊗ Each phase will have different aims and objectives and will require the use of different tools and techniques
- ⊗ Consultation programmes can be resource intensive, and it maybe necessary to set up a budget to cover costs of postage, printing etc.
- ⊗ The process could be linked to other consultation programmes which may help inform the Corporate Equality Plan. For example.
 - Links to the development of the Community Strategy, Housing Strategy etc.
 - Consultation will accord to the agreed Derbyshire Consultation Principles

