
REPORT TO:	FINANCE & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 12
DATE OF MEETING:	12th JUNE 2008	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	LAKBIR BASI (5822)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT AND ACTION PLAN 2008/09	REF:
WARD (S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM05

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the priority actions outlined in this report to continue progress towards Level 3 of the National Equality Standard are approved.
- 1.2 That the separate Race, Disability and Gender Equality Actions plans are combined into a single Corporate Equality Action plan as shown in Appendix A.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To present an overview of the progress made in relation to the Council's Race, Disability and Gender Equality schemes.
- 2.2 To propose that in line with the adoption of a Corporate Equality & Fairness Scheme a single action plan is adopted, with priority actions, to monitor and deliver the Council's commitment towards equality and progress towards Level 3 of the National Equality Standard.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to promote race, disability and gender equality, under the provisions of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 respectively. To meet these provisions and comply with its 'general duties' as set out in the acts, the Council developed a Race Equality Scheme (RES) in 2003, a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) in 2006 and Gender Equality Scheme (GES) in 2007. The Schemes with action plans, detail how the Council's policies, functions and services impact on disability, gender and race equality and the actions the Council will take to promote equality. The legal duties require the Council to monitor and report on the Schemes annually.

- 3.2 The Council has formally reported on the action plan for the RES at the end of each year and continued to separately monitor the DES and GES actions plans. Following the adoption of a single Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme (CEFS) it is proposed to have a single Corporate Equality Action plan, and report annually on progress being made to this Committee.
- 3.3 To reflect this change, this report combines the progress made in promoting equalities and the progress made under the separate actions plans over the past twelve months to 31 March 2008. As noted above, the next annual report will be based on the single equality action plan developed for the Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme.

4.0 **Detail - Progress Made during 2007/08**

- 4.1 A detailed list of achievements against the action plans for disability, gender and race equality are available on the intranet use the following link; http://harvey/corporate/organisationaldevelopment/policy/equalities/Accv_Against_Plan_08. Summaries of the key achievements during 2007/08 include;

Achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government

- 4.2 Perhaps the most notable achievement during the year was achieving Level 2 of the National Equality Standard. This demonstrates the progress the Council has made and is a culmination of the work completed by a number of Officers within the Council and our key partners. A report on this was approved by this Committee at its meeting on 1st May 2008.

The Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme

- 4.3 A key step to achieving Level 2 was the development of the Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme. It brings the Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes into a single document and includes our equality plans for age, religion and sexual orientation. The development of the Scheme involved consultation with service users, partners and employees and was approved by this Committee on 27 March 2008.

Gender Equality Scheme (GES)

- 4.4 In line with our statutory duty, this Committee formally adopted the GES on 26 July 2007. The Scheme was developed through consultation and engagement with partners and stakeholders. Using one to one meetings, key information was also captured on the experiences of people using Council services. In response to consultation asking for more action to tackle domestic violence key actions included the appointment of a coordinator for victims of domestic violence and launching a sanctuary scheme for victims.

Values and Attitudes Group (V&A)

- 4.5 The V&A Group was formed so the Council could work in partnership with local organisations to address equality issues in the district. The role of the group is to advise the Council in the development of its plans, strategies and services. It also gives Group Members an opportunity to raise issues regarding Council plans, strategies and services and champion equalities within the wider community.
- 4.6 Group membership includes the Derbyshire Association for the Blind (DAB), the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), Derbyshire Friend, Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living (DCIL) Age Concern and South Derbyshire Travelling Lunch Club (Elderly).
- 4.7 The Council has provided ongoing support for the Group who have been a key partner with the development of our Gender Equality Scheme and Corporate Equality & Fairness Scheme.

Corporate Equality and Fairness Group (EFG)

- 4.8 The EFG is an internal Group made up of representatives from each Service as well as trades union representation. The Group monitors and promotes actions that enable the delivery of the equality and fairness agenda. During 2007/08, the role of the Group was significantly enhanced to take on responsibility for overseeing development of information and monitoring systems; and the corporate body for assessing the development of service level equality objectives and targets.

Equality Impact Risk Assessments (EIRA)

- 4.9 An EIRA is a structured way of looking at and examining the effects of new or existing policy, services or project on equality groups.
- 4.10 A framework for the completion of EIRA has been developed and agreed with both internal and external Groups listed above. This framework will ensure a consistent approach towards the completion of EIRA across all Council services.
- 4.11 Each Service has nominated at least one volunteer to be trained in completing EIRA. This training was completed in May 2008 with Housing and Organisational Development volunteered to pilot the completion of EIRA.

Equality Needs Risk Assessment

- 4.12 This involved identifying all Council policies and procedures and ranking them according to the level of their impact on equalities. This was completed in March 2008 and will support the work to assess the impact of our Policies through the completion of Equality Impact Risk Assessments.

5.0 Looking forward Action Plan 2008/09

- 5.1 The Equality and Fairness Action Plan has been developed to cover the period 2008/2011. A summary of the key actions to be delivered in 2008/09 are shown in the following table.

Corporate Equality & Fairness Scheme Key actions 2008/2009		
Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Ensure a cross service Team of employees has been trained to conduct Equality Impact Risk Assessments (EIRA)	Head of Org Development	31 May 2008
Complete pilot programmes of EIRA	Head of Housing & Head of Org Development	31 March 2009
Complete the development of a programme of EIRA for all services and begin conducting assessments in other service areas	Head of Org Development	30 October 2008
Develop a corporate programme of learning and training interventions for all employees in equalities issues	Head of Organisational Development	31 July 2008
Begin work on improving how we collect information and monitor our services in relation to equalities	All Service Heads	30 September 2008
Begin work on improving how we consult and engage with stakeholders concerning equalities issues	Head of Organisational Development	31 July 2008
Develop and provide a launch event for the Corporate Equalities and Fairness Scheme involving key partners.	Head of Organisational Development	30 June 2008

- 5.2 This plan will be revised to take into account the actions emerging from the first round of EIRA's in late 2008. These will be done on a risk basis with high risk policies addressed first and will be undertaken by appropriately trained officers. Outcomes from these reviews will go to the Value and Attitudes Group (VAG) and the Equality and Fairness Group (EFG) who will agree the key actions to be taken forward and incorporated into the action plan.
- 5.3 In addition work will be completed within the Organisational Development to identify any actions that are needed to ensure that the Council meets Level 3 of the National Equality Standard. This work will form the basis of our action plan and is attached to this report as Appendix A.
- 5.4 The Values and Attitudes Group and Equality and Fairness Group will monitor the progress against this action plan and promote the key messages within the Council and to the wider community.

6.0 **Financial Implications**

6.1 Any costs from the 2008/2009 Action Plan will be met from existing budgets.

7.0 **Corporate Implications**

7.1 The progress made during 2007/08 has ensured a significant improvement in the Council's equalities performance, most notably the achievement of Level 2 of the Equalities Standard for Local Government.

7.2 Within the Council's Corporate Plan 2008/11 a priority under the theme 'Higher Quality Services' is to Improve Customer Care and access to services. The Corporate Equality & Fairness Scheme and related action plan will enable the Council to deliver on this priority.

8.0 **Community Implications**

8.1 The implications for the community are that the Council enables fair and equal treatment for all members of the community in terms of service delivery and employment.

8.2 It will also promote the Council's community leadership role by recognising and valuing the different needs of the community.

9.0 **Conclusions**

9.1 The Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme ensures that the Council continues to play a key role in promoting equality and fairness across South Derbyshire and the annual report is an essential tool for raising awareness of our progress.

9.2 It is an achievement to reach Level 2 of the National Equality Standard but additional work is needed to sustain the momentum and continue our progress in this area.

10.0 **Background Papers**

10.1 The current Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme is available on the Council's internet and intranet sites with the following links: -

http://harvey/corporate/organisationaldevelopment/policy/equalities/Accv_Against_Pl_an_08/view?portal_status_message=Your%20changes%20have%20been%20saved

http://harvey/corporate/organisationaldevelopment/policy/equalities/Equality_and_Fairness

Appendix A – Corporate Equality & Fairness Scheme Action Plan

	Equality Standard Level 3	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
	Leadership & Corporate Commitment			
1.	Ensure consistency of Corporate Equality Scheme with statutory equality schemes	Ensure CE&FS is in line with current legislation	Head of Organisational Development	Achieved
2.	Develop a system and timetable for reporting the results of equality impact risk assessments	VAG and EFG to monitor progress of EIRA Priority list to be agreed with services Timetable developed and monitored	Head of Organisational Development	October 2008
3.	Ensure that all departments and service areas set targets based on equality objectives devised through completed impact assessments and participation of designated community, staff and stakeholder groups	Deliver training on EIRA and begin pilots. Rollout out EIRA to all service areas Setting equality objectives within individual service plans.	All Heads of Service	March 2010
4.	Equality objectives and targets for sexual orientation, age, religion and belief to be set by March 2009.	Set equality objectives within individual service plans.	All Heads of Service	March 2009
5.	Establish corporate guidelines for information gathering and equality monitoring	Establish a working group to develop guidelines. Working group to report to EFG	Equality & Fairness Group	September 2008
6.	Seek agreement on equality targets with designated community stakeholders and local partners.	Develop equality targets and seek agreement with V&A Group.	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
7.	Establish mechanisms for ensuring that equality targets are delivered by contractors through contract management	Develop targets and agree these with contractors.	Head of IT & Business Improvement	March 2009

	Equality Standard Level 3	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
	Leadership & Corporate Commitment cont:-			
8.	Ensure completion of equality action plans at department and service level incorporating performance indicators	Develop and promote local performance indicators within service plans.	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
9.	Adopt where appropriate national targets/performance indicators as prescribed by Government departments or by the Audit Commission	Any targets are incorporated within service plans.	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
10.	Implement systems for reviewing progress and revising the Corporate Equality Scheme and departmental action plans	Annual reporting and review on CEFS. Ensure service plans are aligned with CEFS	All Service Heads	March 2009
11.	Members and senior officers to endorse action plans as appropriate	Report progress on Corporate action plan to F&M Committee and Corporate Improvement Group. Progress monitored in service plans	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
12.	Link action planning to performance management and Best Value processes	Equality targets in Service plans to reflect with Corporate action plan. Review targets on an annual basis.	All Heads of Service	March 2009
13.	Ensure that action on achieving targets has started	Set targets following EIRA pilots and monitor progress against the targets.	Head of Housing/ Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
14.	Ensure that progress has been verified through self-assessment, scrutiny and audit and have been validated externally through an accredited assessor	Every Service area has completed EIRA. Self declare at Level 3 of the national Equality Standard and invite external assessors in to undertake scrutiny and audit of equalities performance.	All Heads of Service Head of Organisational Development	March 2010

	Equality Standard Level 3	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
	Community Engagement & Accountability			
1.	Develop a strategy for all designated community, staff and stakeholder groups to participate in the development of equality objectives, service design and employment practice	Develop and agree a mechanism for involving EFG, V&A Group in setting objectives, service design and employment practice.	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
2.	Make all service level and employment objectives and targets available for consultation and scrutiny	Services develop mechanisms to involve community, staff and stakeholders Actions detailed in Service Plans	All Service Heads	March 2010
3.	Make provision of language services appropriate to designated consultation and scrutiny groups	Ensure consultation involves all communities and language services are available to support this process	Head of Customer Services	Achieved
4.	Consultation is systematically built into equality impact risk assessment, self-assessment and the equality planning process	Develop mechanisms and agree a process with EFG, V&A Group	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
5.	Involve designated community, staff and stakeholder groups with scrutiny procedures	Develop mechanisms and agree a process with EFG, V&A Group	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
6.	Consultation on equality to be linked with the continuing development of community strategies	Ensure Community Strategies inform consultation on equalities. Produce a consultation checklist to ensure all aspects are taken into account All key stakeholders to be consulted.	Head of Organisational Development All Heads of Service	March 2009
7.	Publicise how, where and when action on targets will start	Publish action plans on Internet Consult with partners and other key stakeholders through V & A group.	All Heads of Service	April 2009

	Equality Standard Level 3	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
	Service delivery and customer care			
1.	Equality objectives and targets developed within each department/service area for race, gender and disability based on completed impact assessments	Service plans to incorporate equality actions and targets flowing from EIRA.	All Service Heads	April 2010
2.	Equality objectives and targets developed within each department/service area for sexual orientation, religion and belief and age by March 2009.	Service plans to incorporate equality actions and targets	All Service Heads	March 2009
3.	Service plans to specifically address the importance of barriers, accessibility and reasonable adjustment in the provision of services	Service plans to include objectives to promote disability equality	All Service Heads	April 2009
4.	Allocation of appropriate resources to achieve targets	Resources are made available to meet targets.	All Service Heads	April 2009
5.	Establish structures of responsibility at departmental and service level to progress action plans	Each service to monitor equality objectives and action plans Progress noted in Service Plans	All Service Heads	March 2009
6.	Set timetable within action plans for creating/adapting information and monitoring systems within service areas	Each service to begin developing monitoring and information systems to measure equalities performance.	All Service Heads In conjunction with EFG.	April 2009
7.	For agencies delivering services on behalf of the local authority, include within contracts a requirement to deliver an effective and appropriate service, fairly and without unlawful discrimination	Ensure provider of services are aware of the Council's equalities objectives and adhere to our Policies and Procedures Requirement detailed in formal contracts	All Service Heads	September 2008
8.	Establish monitoring of contracts to secure equal employment and equal service delivery targets	Work with contractors to develop targets in line with the Council's Equality and Fairness Scheme policies	All Service Heads	April 2009
9.	Start action on departmental and service area targets	Develop and set targets Monitoring progress in service plans	All Service Heads	April 2009

	Equality Standard Level 3	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
	Employment and Training			
1.	Set employment equality targets for recruitment, staff retention, work force profiles for race, gender and disability	Targets set following EIRA	Head of Organisational Development	September 2009
2.	Set employment equality targets for work force profiles for sexual orientation, religion or belief and age according to available data	Targets set following EIRA	Head of Organisational Development	September 2009
3.	Conduct an equal pay review and plan for equal pay adjustment	Complete Pay & Grading review Undertake Equal Pay Audit Equal Pay Policy suggests two yearly review	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
4.	Establish that policies and procedures associated with equality are part of staff handbook and are understood by staff	Revise Staff Handbook and raise staff awareness Included in induction training	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
5.	Establish a system of guidance and training on relevant equality issues to short-listing panels and interviewers	Review of recruitment and selection procedure complete Training provided for employees involved with the recruitment of staff	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
6.	Ensure that staff and members are aware of action plans and the implications for services and employment	Action plans and equalities implications are communicated to staff and reported to Committee	All Heads of Service	September 2009
7.	Provide training for managers on the implementation of the Standard with contractors and partners	Training provided to appropriate employees	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
8.	Appraise competency/behaviours to ensure that managers and staff are capable of implementing the Equality Standard, including the new strands of sexual orientation, religion or belief and age	Provide equality training Review completed as part of PDR Management competency framework.	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009

	Employment and Training cont:-			
9.	Provide training for all staff on the detailed implementation of the Equality Standard including action plans and updates on legal and other developments	Ensure adequate systems in place to raise awareness amongst staff. Information provided in Team briefs. Equality training provided	All Heads of Service	March 2009
10.	Ensure that Local Government Workforce Strategies address equality issues	Workforce planning to include targets to address equalities issues Development of People Strategy	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
11.	Build equality objectives and targets into management appraisal mechanisms	Incorporate within management competency framework Discuss at individual PDR's	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009
12.	Provide information and appropriate training on action plans to support scrutiny process	Train staff and Members Information provided to V & A Group and internal equalities group	Head of Organisational Development	September 2009
13.	Start action on all employment and pay targets	Ensure action plans in place Complete Pay & Grading review	Head of Organisational Development	March 2009