



REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA:

Date of Meeting: 20th November 2006

Public

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan:

Yes

Outside Policy Framework

Title: **DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**

Report of: **Head of Policy and Performance**

Report reference: **PPP53/06**

Summary:

The report outlines the response to consultation on the draft scheme and presents the amended Disability Equality Scheme for approval. In addition, the report presents a Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan, which will need to be monitored and reported as part of the Corporate Equality Plan, which will be presented to the Executive in January 2007.

Recommendations:

The Executive is asked to approve the amended Disability Equality Scheme and refer to Council for formal adoption and to note the content of the Disability Action Plan.

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

The Council must approve a Disability Equality Scheme by the 4th December 2006. A draft was presented to October 's Executive meeting and which has been the subject of consultation with a number of external stakeholder agencies, other local authorities, staff and the Carlisle Access Group.

The Disability Equality Scheme presented for the Executive's approval has been amended where appropriate to take these comments into account. (The scheme for approval will be circulated prior to the meeting on the 16th November 2006.)

This scheme represents a first step in the Council's thinking and planning for meeting our duty to promote disability equality. Action in the plan will move the Council closer to understanding what it needs to do to be proactive in promoting disability equality. These actions need to be continually reviewed to ensure we meet emerging needs and challenges.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Consultation to Date – copies of the scheme have been posted out to the stakeholder agencies listed in Appendix 1 with a closing date for comment of the 16th November 2006. Any comments received will be tabled on the day of the meeting along with those of Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee that meets on the 16th November.

In addition, discussion with the Carlisle Access Group has highlighted a number of service issues that will be used to prioritise service areas for Equality Impact Assessment.

- 2.2 Consultation proposed – continuing consultation will take place over the life of the scheme with both the Carlisle Access Group on service level issues and with the Cumbria Disability Network on strategic and corporate issues. In addition, officers will seek to identify improved monitoring of existing services.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is recommended to approve the Disability Equality Scheme.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To meet the specific requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – it is important to recognise that this will have resource implications across the Council. The responsibility for the implementation of the scheme should be mainstreamed across all Directorates through service plans, team plans and individual work objectives.
- Financial – training requirements, consultation and monitoring for impact assessment and gap analysis will need to be considered at both corporate service level.
- Legal – The Council must publish a Disability Equality Scheme ("Scheme") by 4 December 2006. The Scheme must show how we intend to fulfil our section 49A(1) duty (promotion of equality, elimination of discrimination/harassment, promotion of positive attitudes etc) and its duties under these Regulations.

The regulations require that the Council involve in the development of the Scheme, disabled people who appear to us to have an interest in the way we carry out our functions.

The Scheme must include the elements specified in Section 1 of this Report and also detail the steps which the Council proposes to take towards the fulfilment of its section 49A(1) duty; the Council's arrangements for gathering information on the effect of our policies and practices on disabled persons and in particular the arrangements for gathering information on their effect on the recruitment, development and retention of our disabled employees; the extent to which the services we provide and those other functions we perform take account of the needs of disabled persons; and our arrangements for making use of such information to assist us in the performance of our section 49A(1) duty.

The Scheme should also provide for the manner in which we review its effectiveness and the preparation of subsequent schemes.

- Corporate – as above.
- Risk Management – the need to carry out impact assessment is in itself a form of risk assessment. The adoption and publication of a Disability Equality

Scheme is a statutory requirement. Failure to comply with this specific requirement could result in enforcement action by the Disability Rights Commission.

- Equality Issues – the scheme is focussed on the disability equality strand and will form part of the Council's Comprehensive Equality Policy when adopted.
- Environmental – none.
- Crime and Disorder – none.
- Impact on Customers – the purpose of the Disability Equality Scheme is make our services accessible and inclusive – this has benefits for all of our customers.

Appendix 1 – Stakeholder agencies circulated

Action for Blind People
Age Concern
Alzheimer's Society Carlisle
Suite 1, Belle Vue Business Centre
British Heart Foundation (Northern)
Cardiac Rehabilitation Action Group
Carlisle & District Remap
Carlisle & Eden Deaf Children's Society
Carlisle Carers Association
Carlisle Mencap
Carlisle Mind
Carlisle People First Ltd
Carlisle Play for All
Carlisle Shopmobility
9 Brunswick Street
Carlisle Talking Newspapers
Logic House
Cumbria Deaf Association
Disability Association Carlisle & Eden (DACE)
Down's Syndrome Association
Epilepsy Support Group
Friends of Orton Lea
Glenmore Trust
Headway North Cumbria
Making Space (Carers Group)
Motor Neurone Disease Association
Multiple Sclerosis (Carlisle)
North Cumbria Dyslexia Association
Parkinson's Disease Society (Carlisle Branch)
Rukba (Royal UK Beneficent Association)
Say It Service