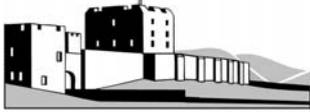


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COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 31st August 2006

Title: CORPORATE EQUALITY PLAN

Report of: Head of Policy and Performance Services

Report reference: PPP 40/06

Summary:

This report presents a Corporate Equality Plan comprising those tasks that the City Council needs to complete to achieve level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and its statutory duties in relation to equality and diversity. It replaces the Equality and Diversity Project Plan presented to this committee in February 2006.

Recommendations:

The Corporate Equality Plan is brought to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee because this will become the basis of the committee's monitoring role. It therefore needs to be sure that:

- Outstanding tasks from the Equality and Diversity Project Plan have been carried over;
- The content of the proposed plan meets the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government and the recommendations of the DIALOG report; and
- The format will provide an effective monitoring format for the Council.

Contact Officer: Jennifer Williams/Lesley Dixon

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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

Why a Corporate Equality Plan?

Report SP.17/06 to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 8th June 2006 recommended that the Equality and Diversity Project Plan presented in February 2006 be redefined a Corporate Equality Plan. The Comprehensive Equality Policy (when adopted) and a supporting Corporate Equality Plan are key requirements of level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG). In addition, DIALOG's report presented to the committee in June also recommended that this should happen.

The ESLG guidance requires that the Corporate Equality Plan should have three main elements:

- A consultation and scrutiny element;
- An equal access to service element; and
- An equal employment and pay element.

Appendix 1 to the report provides members with an extract from the Equality Standard to enable you cross check the content of the proposed Corporate Equality Plan. The Council's Corporate Equality Plan should be consistent with these requirements. In addition, the plan should cover all those things that the Council needs to do to meet locally identified needs. As consultation activity and service monitoring increases then it will become easier to monitor against identified local needs. Members need ensure that activity in these areas is taking place.

The proposed plan also includes a fourth element covering corporate management and leadership because in Carlisle there remain a number of tasks that need to be completed at corporate level. As the Council's approach becomes better developed more activity will be seen at service level. Service level activity is a key aspect of the standard for level 3, so members should push to see greater activity here as the Plan is developed and reviewed. It is as a service provider and employer that the real benefits of the Council's equality and diversity work will be felt.

The content of the proposed plan includes activities that officers consider are necessary to achieve level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and without this level of activity it will not be possible to meet the requirements. Whilst at level 2 there is little external verification of the level achieved, other than the evidence requirements of the BVPI regime, the new standard requires that reporting at level 3 will be externally checked. It is important therefore that the Council adopts a process for formally recording its activities at each level of the standard. The proposed plan provides a useful mechanism for carrying out this monitoring.

In addition to monitoring by O&S the plan will be reviewed by the Corporate Equality Group. Because it is an evolving plan it will be subject to review and update regularly. A first review of the plan will be needed once the Comprehensive Equality Policy is adopted and the new standard is published.

Were all the tasks in the Equality and Diversity Project Plan completed?

The Corporate Equality Plan carries over those tasks from the February 2006 project plan that remain outstanding and includes action identified as necessary in the DIALOG report. A copy of the February report is attached for information, appendix 2.

Activity around the completion of the Impact Assessment Pilot continues though progress is slower than anticipated because it takes time to develop the necessary relationships to carry out the consultation aspects effectively. Several of the tasks from section A of (the February plan were completed (A1, A2, A3, A4). The outstanding tasks in relation to consultation are now included in the consultation and scrutiny element of the new plan.

Work to prepare a list or schedule of all the Council's functions (section B of the February plan) is progressing and is on schedule to be completed by October 2006.

Work to complete a Disability Equality Scheme should pick up pace in September to ensure the adoption of a scheme by the deadline in December 2006. A briefing note for members has been provided and circulated. The outstanding tasks C2, C3 and C4 have been carried over into the Corporate Equality Plan.

Tasks D1 to D7 in relation to the adoption of a Comprehensive Equality Policy have been completed and preparations are in hand to progress consultation on the proposed policy. Further work to progress this is included in the corporate commitment and leadership theme of the Corporate Equality Plan.

All of the tasks in section E of the February plan, in relation to the equality standard itself, were completed and a new set of activities included in the Corporate Equality Plan. As identified earlier in the report all of the tasks included in the plan will assist the Council meet the requirements of the standard.

In terms of section F of the February plan (communication barriers) only task F3 remains outstanding, it has been included in the Access to Service element of the new plan.

Recommendations

The Corporate Equality Plan is brought to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee because this will become the basis of the committee's monitoring role. It therefore needs to be sure that:

- Outstanding tasks from the Equality and Diversity Project Plan have been carried over;
- The content of the proposed plan meets the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government and the recommendations of the DIALOG report; and
- The format will provide an effective monitoring format for the Council.

Corporate Equality Plan, August 2006

PROJECT DETAILS					
Work Programme:	To ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations under all relevant Equalities & Diversity legislation			Statutory:	Yes
Work description:	To enable the Council to meet its existing race equality duties and the disability equality duties (2006) and gender equality duty (2007), and To ensure the Council meets its targets for the Local Government Equality Standard BV2a and the Duty to promote Race Equality BV2b.				
Responsible Officer:	Lesley Dixon/Jennifer Williams				
Start date:	Now	Planned end date:	March 2007/08	Latest end date:	March 2007/08

Corporate Commitment and Leadership					
Key Work Stream/Area	Target Date	New Target Date	Who?	Level of ESLG	Resources/ Support required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A1. Agree approach to inclusion of Race Equality Scheme, Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme as part of comprehensive policy. Discuss implications of Comprehensive Equality Policy with service heads – looking at what will be required in their service areas. Embark on consultation with stakeholders, community groups and representatives – pursue consultation day along the lines suggested by Trinity, look possibility of a staff focus group and seek views of Trade Unions. 	Sep 2006		CEG	1.1.1	Officer time
	Dec 2006		CEG/ LD	2.1.1	Officer time
	Oct 2006 to Jan 2007		LD/JW		Trinity/budget requirement for venues/refreshments/p ublicity/facilitators

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A2. Update Race Equality Scheme- • Schedule of Council functions, policies and activities – work ongoing; • Assess impact on duties to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination; • Agree programme of Impact Assessments based upon outcomes of above – 3 year rolling programme; • Advice to service units on how this should be carried out – guidance notes and training; • Develop current contact with BME groups by establishing a regular formal reference group. This task has begun but will take time to develop. 	<p>April 2006 Oct 2006</p> <p>Oct 2006</p> <p>Jan-Mar 2007</p> <p>?</p>	<p>Oct 2006</p>	<p>JW/ PC CEG</p> <p>CEG</p> <p>CEG/ LD/JW</p> <p>SD/RB</p>	<p>Level 2 and aspects of level 3</p> <p>2/3</p> <p>2/3</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Community development</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A3. Complete Impact Assessment pilot- • Report to CEG on learning from pilot and implications for Council; • Identify an approach to EIA/INRA for roll out across Council, include screening exercise for Children’s Services; • Discuss training needs and identify a budget and programme. 	<p>Oct 2006</p> <p>Nov-Dec 2006</p> <p>Jan 2007</p>		<p>Trinity/ LD</p> <p>CEG</p> <p>CEG/ JMT</p>		<p>John Egan – Children’s Act lead for Council.</p> <p>Budget required</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A4. Disability Equality Scheme • Identify a joint agency-working group to develop a joint scheme. • Further develop contacts with community groups and representatives – set up consultation day. • Prepare and agree content of Disability Equality Scheme. • Scheme implementation. • Presentations to Management Briefings and SMT. 	<p>4/12/06</p> <p>Oct 2006</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Sep – Nov 2006</p> <p>Jan 2007</p>		<p>LD</p> <p>LD</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p>	<p>This work will have budgetary implications – publicity, translation, and consultation.</p> <p>Officer time.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A5. Gender Equality Scheme • Agree content and timetable for preparation – awaiting guidance. 	<p>Apr 07</p>		<p>JW</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A6. Corporate Equality Group • Agree roles and responsibilities. • Establish timetable for meetings. • Identify training needs for CEG members. • Discussion and proposals for funding the Council's improvement work in this area. 	<p>Oct 2006</p> <p>Oct 06</p> <p>Ongoing</p>			<p>2</p>	<p>Officer and member time.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A7. Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) (BV2a and BV2b) • Brief service heads and councillors on content of ESLG – discussion of most effective way of ensuring that there is increased awareness of the role of the standard. • Establish (and co-ordinate if necessary) a countywide ESLG Steering Group – role to identify approaches to self-assessment/ carry out joint awareness training/ work co-operatively to ensure requirements of standard are met. • Discussion of what compliance with requirements of the ESLG means for Carlisle City Council – ie. What we need to do to be compliant. • Discuss and agree an approach to self-assessment against the standard – perhaps as part of performance management framework/quarterly reporting. • Agree timetable for completion of requirements of level 2 of the ESLG and review targets each year. • Review CEP in the light of changes to the ESLG –due end of year. 	<p>Level 2 2006/07 2007/08</p> <p>Level 3 2008/09</p>		<p>LD/JW</p> <p>CEG</p> <p>CEG</p> <p>Agreed</p>		<p>Maybe a training requirement –external resources.</p> <p>Officer time and travel expenses</p> <p>Officer time</p> <p>Officer time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A8. Service monitoring and data collection • Look at mechanisms for service monitoring and use of the data collected/ include the Diversity Profile. • Identify corporate and service level equality objectives and targets – what are we trying to do and how will we know we are on target/ completed?- for inclusion in service plans. 	<p>May 2007</p>			<p>2</p> <p>2</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A9. Communication issues • Agree corporate approach to translation services to include access to BSL interpreters. • Examine opportunities to provide leaflets and other communication materials with other public sector agencies. • Prepare and publish an equalities page fro the web site. 	<p>Oct 2006</p> <p>March 2007</p> <p>June 2006</p>	<p>Sep 2006</p>	<p>SMT/ JW/ Comms</p> <p>LD</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Officer time. Budget required to fund translation and leaflets.</p>

Consultation and Scrutiny

Key Work Stream/Area	Target Date	New Target Date	Who?	Level of ESLG	Resources/ Support required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B1. Identify and approve an approach to consultation and involvement of minority groups within the community. • Identify groups and stakeholders. • Agree an approach to consultation and involvement – an outline approach will be developed but this should be evolving as we learn more about what works and what doesn't. • Pursue with Trinity a consultation day. • Develop existing contact with BME groups by establishing a formal reference group. • Ensure ongoing liaison with other local agencies regarding consultation. • Identify consultation requirements of EIA/INRA – in discussion with service heads. • Identify a budget for this work – either at service level or corporately. 	Sep 2006 Dec 2006		LD	Work in this area contributes to level 2.	This aspect of the work has significant budgetary requirements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B2. Corporate Equality Group • Agree stakeholder involvement in this group – will benefit Council as new ESLG is introduced. • Ensure Council's equality objectives, when agreed, are incorporated into all contractual and partnership arrangements – look at where and what is needed? How can this be linked to Partnership Register and Audit's Schedule of contracts? • Review content/input to equality content of Community Plan/Corporate Plan. 	Oct 2006 Aug 2007 Oct 2006 – April 2006		CEG	2/3	Linked to LSP timetables.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B3. Corporate Equality Plan • Circulate the plan to designated community, staff and stakeholders. • Agree monitoring role of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and frequency of reporting. • Agree timetable for consultation and reporting to committee. • Publish in a range of formats alongside Corporate Equality Policy. • Review draft plan in light of adoption of policy. 	<p>Oct 2006 Oct 2006 Dec 06 Dec 06 2007</p>		<p>LD/JW O&S/ MB</p>		<p>Timetable and mechanism for monitoring to be agreed with O&S.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B4. Diversity Profile • Complete with information on service take-up by ward and group. • Complete analysis of staff consultation in terms of equalities – i.e. what issues arise from the literal comments that were made. Consider implications. 	<p>May 2007 onward when service monitoring in place</p>			<p>2/3</p>	<p>Officer time</p>

C. Access to Services

Key Work Stream/Area	Target Date	New Target Date	Who?	Level of ESLG	Resources/ Support required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C1. Translation services • Agree an approach to translation and interpreting, including pilot BSL project for deaf people. • Examine opportunities for providing leaflets and other communication materials with other public sector agencies. • Work to establish Equalities web page – links to database of translators. 	Oct 2006		LD	2	£500.00/Cumbria Deaf Association
	March 2007		JW/Comms	2	Budget for printing and design required.
	Sep 06		LD	2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C2. Equality Impact Assessment • Identify a programme of EIA/INRA following completion of schedule of Council functions, policies and practices. • Identify equality objectives/targets for services – perhaps as part of service planning to enable them to be incorporated into Service Plans. 	Oct 06		LD/JW/PC	2	
	When plans produced		Service heads/CEG	2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C3. Harassment/Hate Crime • Ensure mechanisms for responding to harassment on grounds of race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief are in place. • Improve awareness of reporting mechanisms 	Dec 06		PC/SO'	2	Publicity material
	Dec 06		K LD/JW	2	

D. Equal Employment and Pay

Key Work Stream/Area	Target Date	New Target Date	Who?	Level of ESLG	Resources/ Support required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D1. Develop fair employment and equal pay policy element for this plan- how should it look – what should be included? 	March 2007		JC	2	None as is part of PWS project – work is already resourced and scheduled
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D2. Employment equality assessment of local labour market – can we do this in partnership with other local authorities? Have we done it already? 	?		?	2	PPP is not resourced for this. Have Economic Develop not done this already?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D3. Workforce profiling and equal pay review 	March 2007		DW JC	2	None as is part of PWS project – work is already resourced and scheduled
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D4. Adopt procedures to ensure that publicity for vacancies doesn't unfairly restrict the range of applicants Produce a standard range of application forms and job descriptions that are clear and explicit 	In place March 2007		JC JC SJ	2	No additional None as is part of PWS project – work is already resourced and scheduled

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D5. Review personnel information systems for monitoring suitability including those supporting the Council's statutory ethnic monitoring duties 		June 2007	JC NM	2	None as is part of ERBS project – work is already resourced and scheduled
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D6. Make all employment procedures consistent with current legislation and relevant codes of practice. 	March 2007	March 2008	JC	2	Earlier date only achievable if extra resources are made available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D7. Develop a programme of equal opportunities training to support Corporate Equalities Plan and service objectives. 		August 2007	DW	2	Programme underway

A comprehensive equality policy

A comprehensive equality policy should contain at least the following elements:

- Clear equality objectives
- Explicit recognition of all current statutory equality duties and a commitment to meet them
- Commitment to improve equality practice with regard, at least, to disability, gender and race at both corporate and departmental level
- Earmarking of specific resources for improving equality practice
- Commitment to provide services fairly to all sections of the community
- Commitment to identify groups within the community whose needs/requirements are less well met by council services than those of other groups
- Commitment to community and workforce profiling
- Commitment to monitor service delivery and usage
- Commitment to equality action planning and equality target setting within all departments and service areas
- Clear lines of responsibility for undertaking the action set out in the policy
- Commitment to systematic consultation
- Commitment to a fair recruitment, fair employment and equal pay policy
- Commitment to monitor recruitment, promotion, training opportunities and take up, pay, grievances and exit from employment
- Commitment to monitor progress and revise targets in all areas of action
- Self-assessment, audit and scrutiny using national and locally developed performance indicators

A corporate equality plan (CEP)

The corporate equality plan should translate the intentions of the local authority, as expressed in the comprehensive equality policy, into a detailed plan that will:

- Motivate councillors, staff and the local community
- Provide the direction for policy initiatives
- Provide leadership and accountability
- Co-ordinate the activity of individuals and departments
- Provide a structure for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of equalities
- Develop self-assessment and audit procedures

It should provide:

- A timetable for impact and needs/requirements assessments
- An overview of setting equality objectives, targets and action plans
- A timetable for moving through levels
- Oversight of target review process
- The corporate equality review/assessment as part of a regular cycle of equality planning
- A clear system of accountability for the implementation of the plan
- Self-assessment framework for departments/service areas
- The CEP should either include the statutory Race Equality Scheme or set out in detail how it links with the Scheme. If it includes the RES the latter must be readily identifiable, distinct and amenable to external inspection

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- Setting equality criteria for partnerships (where appropriate)

Equal employment and pay element

The equal employment element should be developed in conjunction with department(s) responsible for employment and pay and should include:

- A Local Labour Market Area assessment
- An Equal Pay review
- A Fair Employment policy
- Action planning: setting equal employment objectives and targets
- Setting up employment and pay monitoring and reporting systems
- Setting equality criteria for external contractors

Equalities and Diversity Project Plan, February 2006

PROJECT DETAILS					
Work Programme:	To ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations under all relevant Equalities & Diversity legislation			Statutory:	Yes
Work description:	To enable the Council to meet its existing race equality duties and the disability equality duties (2006) and gender equality duty (2007), and To ensure the Council meets its targets for the Local Government Equality Standard BV2a and the Duty to promote Race Equality BV2b.				
Responsible Officer:	Lesley Dixon				
Start date:	Ongoing	Planned end date(s):	To be negotiated for various areas of activity	Latest end date:	Continuous responsibility

Key Milestones				
Activity	Target Date	Revised Target Date	Who?	Resources/ Support required
A. Impact Assessment Pilot				
1. Identify secondary screening questions for consultation with community groups and community representatives.				
2. Discuss how and when the consultation will take place.				
3. Develop current contact with BME groups by establishing a regular formal reference group.	Sept 2006		Community Development	
3. Draft questionnaire and agree format with Trinity.				
4. Meeting with Pilot Group to discuss learning so far. Issue paper prepared.				
5. Identify mechanism for improved monitoring take-up of services.				
6. Identify how Children's screening can be included.				

Activity	Target Date	Revised Target Date	Who?	Resources/ Support required
B. Race Equality Scheme				
1. Schedule of Council functions, policies and activities.				
2. Assess impact on diversity duties – race, disability, gender, age, etc.				
3. Prioritise for impact assessment – identify a three-year rolling programme.				
4. Identify how much is spent on equalities and identify as separate corporate budget.				
C. Disability Equality Scheme				
1. Briefing note on responsibilities and implications.				
2. Identify a joint agency working group to develop scheme				
3. Develop contacts with community groups and representatives.				
D. Comprehensive Equality Policy				
1. Collect copies of policies from elsewhere.				
2. Prepare draft for Carlisle City Council.				
3. Look at implications with SMT				
4. Discuss with community groups and representatives.				
5. Report to Community O&S				
6. Report to Executive.				
7. Report to Council.				
8. Discussions with Directorates about implications on service areas.				
E. Local Government Equality Standard (BV 2a and 2b)				
1. Analysis of staff consultation questionnaire from equalities perspective.				
2. Conference 270406 re. Changes to standard and implications.				
3. Audit of current performance – initial audit				Application for support from ODPM Diversity in the Districts programme. Notification awaited.

Activity	Target Date	Revised Target Date	Who?	Resources/ Support required
4. Report on findings				
5. Development of an equality action plan that will identify action required to move through the levels of the standard.				Application for support from ODPM Diversity in the Districts programme. Notification awaited.
6. Programme of equality awareness training for all of the Council's employees.				
F. Communication barriers				
1. Identify a corporate approach to translation services to include access to BSL interpreters.				
2. Co-ordinate a countywide database of translation services.				
3. Examine opportunities to provide leaflets and other communication materials with other public sector agencies.				
4. Review the Council's equality webpage.				

RISK MANAGEMENT					
Date identified	Risk description	Probability	Impact	Action(s) to manage risk	Action owner
Overall risk assessment:					