

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE Corporate Policy and Performance

DATE 25 November 2010

DIRECTOR Stewart Carruth

TITLE OF REPORT Aberdeen City Council Single Equality Scheme Annual Report

REPORT NUMBER: CG/10/190

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report seeks approval for the first annual report of the Council Single Equality Scheme for 2009 - 2012.

The annual report, incorporating the Race Equality Scheme and the Disability Equality Scheme, must be published by 30 November 2010.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Notes the progress made during the first year of the Single Equality Scheme.
2. Approves the Single Equality Scheme Annual Report 2010, and its publication by 30 November 2010.
3. Instructs Directors and Heads of Services to continue to implement and monitor the actions within the Action Plan.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Directors and Heads of Services have been involved in setting actions and so should therefore have identified resources to deliver on their actions within the Action Plans. Following completion of individual Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments there may be actions which will require resources to address any negative impact on equalities groups.

Resources are currently held within the Equalities Team, Customer Service and Performance, Corporate Governance, to deliver aspects of the action plan, and to support development work and training. Funding is also invested in the voluntary sector partner agencies to enable them to contribute to the Council's Single Equality Scheme and delivery on the Single Outcome Agreement. It is expected that we can support and deliver the actions detailed in the Action Plans within the current budget provision.

The Translation, Interpreting and Communication Support Service meets the demand for translation and interpreting to assist citizens access Council services. Joint working with public sector partners continues and we are exploring the opportunity to generate income from the service we provide to partners and others.

As it is currently framed the legislation would not allow a public authority to claim that it does not have enough resources to meet its statutory duties. The allocation and prioritization of existing resources will need to take this duty into account.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Chief Executive and Leader of the Council are ultimately responsible for ensuring that equalities legislation is implemented by the Council. Failing to comply with the legislation could lead to legal challenge and civil claims against the Council could be substantial. There is also the detrimental reputational impact on the organisation of adverse publicity.

The Equalities and Development Officers in Customer Service and Performance lead and support the policy for the Single Equality Scheme. Directors and Heads of Services execute delivery of the Action Plans. In addition, Directors have assigned Heads of Service to participate in the Equalities Action Network and to lead on equalities within their teams. Employees who experience discrimination, harassment or victimisation may under-perform, may be more prone to be involved in accidents at work and may require support.

It is crucial in the interests of public safety and community cohesion that equality is mainstreamed and addressed coherently and corporately across the public sector.

There are issues in relation to Gypsies/Travellers that are addressed through the Review of Policy on the Management of Unauthorised Gypsy/Traveller Encampments, in the Craigforth Research and included in the Action Plan.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Introduction

The Equalities legislation places a statutory duty on Aberdeen City Council to produce Disability, Gender and Race Equality Schemes. We must produce and publish an annual report on the Race Equality Scheme by 30 November 2010 and on the Disability Equality Scheme by 4 December 2010. We also have a duty to publish an annual report on the Gender Equality Scheme by 29 June 2011.

In preparation for the Single Equality Act we developed a Single Equality Scheme, which covers the existing statutory schemes for Disability, Gender and Race, and includes detail and action plans for Age, Faith/Religion/Belief and Sexual Orientation. This was launched in November 2009.

This Single Equality Scheme sets out how the Council will meet both the general and specific duties for these individual schemes under the respective acts. Progress reports on these actions are provided to the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee annually. This is the first annual report on the Scheme which has to be published no later than 30 November 2010.

We have consulted as widely as possible with officers, members, partners, and including representatives of disability organisations, and people with disabilities, as well as communities of interest groups and others on our progress on equalities. We set up a Progress and Achievement Group (PAG) to monitor and challenge progress made on the Council's Single Equality Scheme. This group is made up of stakeholders from the equality groups representing the different strands – age, disability, faith/religion/belief, gender including transgender, race including Gypsies/ Travellers and sexual orientation.

6. IMPACT

Aberdeen is a vibrant city with increasing expectation and needs by people with disabilities, among ethnic minority groups, by women and men, people with different sexual orientation, those of different faiths or religions and those with none, as well as our young and older people.

Aberdeen aspires to be a city that leads the way in tackling all forms of disadvantage and unfair discrimination and whose citizens will support and celebrate cultural diversity and have a commitment to social justice.

These aims and ambitions are key to developing a culture where equalities are mainstreamed and woven into the fabric of our organisation. The Council's Single Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Government recognises this concept and the outcomes articulated in the action plans will only be achieved where we promote equality and eliminate discrimination in all our functions.

The Single Equality Scheme underpins the Council's work towards delivering the Single Outcome Agreement. It forms part of the strategy to promote equal opportunities for equality groups, and will help to develop inclusive employment practices, access to services and encourage fuller participation in the community while securing best value for all.

The proposals within this report align with the Council's Corporate Equality Framework and contribute to promoting equal opportunities and to promoting good relations between all our citizens.

An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment was conducted on the Council's Single Equality Scheme. No negative impacts were identified.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Single Outcome Agreement - to identify priority outcomes for the people of Aberdeen and set out targets to maintain and improve those outcomes through specific

commitments made by the Scottish Government and Aberdeen's Community
Planning Partners.
Single Equality Scheme 2009-2012

Appendix. List of Equalities Acts.

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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Appendix

List of Equalities Acts

The Equality Act 2010

Age

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Disability

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Disability Discrimination Act 2005

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004

Faith/Religion/Belief

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

The Equality Act 2006

Gender

Equal Pay Acts 1970 and 1984

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

The Equality Act 2006

Race

Race Relations Act 1976

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

Sexual Orientation

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

Human Rights

The Human Rights Act 1998

Article 14