
REPORT TO:	FINANCE & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 9
DATE OF MEETING:	29TH APRIL 2010	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	MARTIN GUEST Martin.guest@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	CORPORATE EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS SCHEME 2009-2010 – ANNUAL REPORT	REF:
WARD (S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM05

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 To review the key achievements and outcomes of the Council's Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme for the year ending March 2010 and then approve the actions listed in **Appendix A** to continue to progress under the revised National Equality framework.
- 1.2 That the Committee accepts and acknowledges the award of the 'Achieving' status under the New Equality Framework for Local Government following the recent external peer assessment.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To report the progress made on the Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme during 2009/10 and to receive a refreshed Action Plan for 2010/11. A copy of the Action Plan for 2010/11 is attached at appendix A.
- 2.2 To inform Members that following an external assessment completed by the Improvement and Development Agency (IdeA) that the Council has met a Corporate Plan target and reached the award of the 'Achieving' status under the revised National Equality framework.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Council published its Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme in April 2008. This single Scheme brought together the already published Disability, Gender and Race Equality schemes and included plans to tackle discrimination and harassment on the basis of age, religion or belief and sexual orientation in both employment and services.

- 3.2 This revised Scheme was developed following extensive consultation with our employees, service users, partners and other stakeholders. A key change was renaming our Scheme to include the word 'fairness'. This reflected feedback from the people we consulted who considered that this presented a clearer intention on our part to treating people fairly in everything we do as a service provider, employer and leader of the community.
- 3.3 The Council first adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government in October 2003 as a framework to help with the consistent introduction of equalities and fairness in the way we provide services and employ people. The Equality Standard was developed to help Councils achieve and maintain high standards of equality in employment and service delivery.
- 3.4 The Standard had 5 levels of achievement and in December 2007 the Council was at level 1. It became a clear priority for the newly formed Organisational Development Unit to achieve level 2 of the standard by March 2008 (which was duly achieved) and with a further target of reaching level 3 by March 2010. This also complied with the wider CAA targets for Derbyshire.
- 3.5 In March 2009, a revised National Equality framework was introduced. This changed the previous 5 levels of Equality standards down to 3. The Council was then working towards 'Achieving' status under the revised National Framework. This level determined that the Council had a robust approach to assessing needs/requirements and consulting with stakeholders on equality issues (comparable to level 3 under the old framework).
- 3.6 To reach 'Achieving' status an external assessment was organised by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and carried out by its trained peers. This was completed on 3rd and 4th February 2010 with a number of Officers, Elected Members and external partners interviewed as part of the assessment.
- 3.7 The outcome of the assessment was that the Peers confirmed the Council had reached 'Achieving' status. A number of strengths in the Council's approach to Equalities work were identified along with other areas for consideration. These have been considered in the revision of the Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme and Action Plan for 2010/11.

4.0 Progress made during 2009/010

- 4.1 A summary list of achievements against the action plan for the Corporate Equality and Fairness scheme are contained at Appendix B. Outlined below are some of the key outcomes achieved during 2009/10.

Priority Actions

- 4.2 Several priority actions were identified when progress was reported last year and a brief overview is given:

Priority Actions 2009/2010			
No	Action	Responsible Head of Service	Achievement to 31 March 2010
1.	To reach 'Achieving' status under the National Equality Framework.	Head of Organisational Development	Self assessment completed and submitted. Peer assessment in February 2010 with formal recognition of 'Achieving' status awarded.
2.	Revise equality awareness training to include details about new Equality Framework and Equality Bill.	Head of Organisational Development	Programme reviewed and 16 sessions have been completed for employees within the Council.
3.	Equality Impact Risk Assessments (EIRA) are used as part of the process of setting equality objectives.	All Heads of Service	Equalities targets are integrated into service plans with clear targets and performance measures. In addition a review of the framework for completing (EIRA) was undertaken.
4.	Agree with services a reporting timetable for equalities data collected for services.	Head of Organisational Development	Corporate guidance has been issued regarding the collection and monitoring of equalities data. This is reported to and reviewed by the Equality and Fairness Group.
5.	Analyse workforce profile data of the Council and population data for South Derbyshire District	Head of Organisational Development	Completed with a report published on the Council's internet site. This will be updated annually.
6.	All contractors are made aware of the Council's Equality and Fairness policies and procedures	Head of IT and Business Improvement	Procurement Strategy has been revised to ensure that equalities issues are taken into account when procuring goods and services.

Meeting the Achieving Status

- 4.3 A Corporate Plan objective was to reach 'Achieving' status under the National Equality Framework by March 2010. This Committee at its meeting on 10th September 2010 received a report on the actions that would be taken to reach this target.
- 4.4 The assessment process included the completion of a self assessment followed by a Diversity Peer Challenge by trained independent assessors selected by the IdeA.

Self assessment

- 4.5 This provided the opportunity for the Council to demonstrate that it had reached the required standards to be recognised at the 'Achieving' status. Evidence was collated against the different performance measures that were required and a number of case studies included demonstrating the work of the Council.

Diversity Peer Challenge

- 4.6 Arrangements were made with the IdeA to complete a peer challenge over the 3rd and 4th February 2010. The independent Team selected by the IdeA included an Elected Member and Officer representatives. The Team then interviewed the Leader, the Council's Equality Member Champion, Officers from the Council, representatives from the community and other partners and stakeholders.
- 4.7 The purpose of this Peer Challenge was to ensure that the standards under the National Framework were being met and that the evidence presented in the self assessment was a reflection on the work undertaken within the Council.
- 4.8 A robust and thorough Peer Challenge was completed and the decision made was that the Council had reached 'Achieving' status. Within the report a number of strengths were recognised against the 5 themes that the Council was assessed against. A summary under each theme is given below;

Theme – Knowing your communities and equalities mapping

'Positive involvement of voluntary and community representatives.'

Theme – Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

'There is strong leadership supporting and addressing the needs of the areas diverse communities.'

Theme – Community engagement and satisfaction

'Consultation informs and influences policies, priorities and services.'

Theme – Responsive services and customer care

'Equality Impact Assessments are adding value.'

Theme – Modern and diverse workforce

'There are initiatives across the Council to diversify the workforce and to career develop under represented groups.'

- 4.9 The representatives from the IDEa also made reference to the work that was completed in the Council's Self Assessment. The document presented was recognised as an 'exemplar' and 'a model for others to follow'. It provided a concise and accurate representation of the progress made by the Council over the last three years. A copy of this document is available on the intranet using this link

<http://harvey/corporate/organisationaldevelopment/policy/equalities/Diversity%20IDeA%20Peer%20Inspection/Equality%20Framework%20Self-Assessment>. This self assessment describes the journey that the Council has made on equalities issues and the outcomes achieved. It also provides a concise summary of our achievements and outcomes.

- 4.10 The Council had received comments in past external assessments concerning the slow progress made on equalities issues and in particular the position reached under the National Equality Framework. It is therefore pleasing to report that the focus provided over the past couple of years has enabled the Council's work to be formally recognised and acknowledged.

Maintaining progress against the Equality Framework

- 4.11 It is important to maintain progress with the Council's approach to Equalities and the action plan for 2010/11 is mainly built around comments received from the IDeA peer assessment. This will enable a clear focus on the issues that need to be addressed and for appropriate resources to be allocated.

- 4.12 An action plan for 2010/11 is shown in Appendix A and a brief summary is given below;

- Ensuring that there is a consistent approach towards the gathering of equalities monitoring data
- Providing ongoing training for employees and Elected Members on Equality issues.
- Continuing with the Equality Impact Risk Assessment programme across the Council and implement actions to address any areas of risk.
- Review and refresh the Corporate Equality & Fairness Scheme.
- Work with the local partners, CVS and Derbyshire County Council in the development of a local plan to address community cohesion.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are likely to be financial implications associated with a number of the actions set out in the Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme (training for example), however, these will be contained within existing budgets.

6.0 Corporate Implications

- 6.1 The Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme sets down the Council's approach and will underpin all the key priorities within the Corporate Plan.
- 6.2 Ensuring fair and equal treatment both in employment and services is a fundamental right for people and the Council accepts its responsibility both as an employer and community leader.
- 6.3 Information, training and advice to support the implementation of the Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme will be provided by Organisational Development.

7.0 **Community Implications**

- 7.1 Having fair and equal access to services based on an assessment of need and proportionality has to be provided to members of the community. The Council has to understand and recognise the diversity within the community and appreciate why and how differences or needs can be best served.
- 7.2 Having actively engaged key stakeholders with the development of the Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme, publicising our progress and achievements is important. This will be done through established networks already in place such as the Value & Attitudes Group, chaired by Councillor Patten, as well as working with partner organisations such as the CVS and Derbyshire County Council.

8.0 **Conclusion**

- 8.1 The Council continues to make positive progress in line with the Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme and will put in place our plans to ensure we treat everyone fairly regardless of gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The Scheme will set out how we intend to tackle unfair discrimination, harassment and promote equality of opportunity for everyone. The Scheme will form the basis of our programme of promoting equity, fairness and diversity across the organisation and the wider community.

9.0 **Background papers**

National Equality Framework for Local Government:

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=9491107>

Appendix A

Corporate Equality & Fairness Scheme Action Plan 2010/11

No.	Action	Target	Timescale	Responsibility
1.0	Review of the monitoring guidance to be completed with refreshed guidance based on best practice. Ongoing review and audit throughout year to ensure this is being adhered to.	To ensure that there is robust evidence gathering across all the equality strands. To ensure the language used in the guidance is clear, meets best practice guidance and states why the organisation collects the data and what it does with it.	March 2011	Head of Organisational Development
2.0	To extend and develop the use of equality monitoring across the range of Council services.	Working with the internal and external Equality groups, to review Equality information on services and identify any areas for actions to improve access and service delivery as appropriate	March 2011	All heads of Service
3.0	To refresh the Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme.	To complete a review of the Scheme and ensure that it is clear on how it contributes to the high level outcomes in the Council's Corporate Plan and the South Derbyshire Sustainable Community Strategy.	May 2010	Head of Organisational Development
4.0	To promote and celebrate the work of the Council and its partners for the deliver of services across the district.	To communicate the range of activities being undertaken in the District as part of a sustained campaign with the South Derbyshire Partnership and SDCVS.	March 2011	Head of Organisational Development Head of Leisure and Community Development
5.0	Work with SDCVS and Derbyshire County Council through the South Derbyshire Partnership to develop a local plan to address community cohesion	To use the Derbyshire Community Cohesion Strategy as the baseline to develop a local plan for South Derbyshire	March 2011	Corporate Policy & Communications Manager Head of Organisational Development

6.0	To continue with the programme of Equality Impact Risk Assessments	To provide refresher training and build capacity across the Council to undertake EIRA. To complete an EIRA on all Policies and Procedures over the next 2 years and then implement any actions.	September 2010 March 2012	Head of Organisational Development
7.0	To provide a range of training activities that raise awareness of the Council's responsibilities to provide fair and accessible services	All new employees receive training as part of induction programme. Rolling programme of Equality training provided for employees and Elected members.	March 2011 March 2011	Head of Organisational Development
8.0	To work with and monitor the performance of Contractors working for the Council in relation to Equalities issues.	Establish monitoring of contracts to ensure that Equality targets and standards are being achieved or action is taken to address areas of concern.	March 2011	Head of IT & Business Improvement
9.0	To produce an Annual Workforce Profile	The Profile is produced and used to set employment equality targets and the identification of areas of under-representation with action then considered as part of Workforce Development Strategy	Sept 2010	Head of Organisational Development

Appendix B Achievements/Outcome around Equality and Fairness

1.0 Consult and involve service users, employees and other organisations in our work on equality and fairness.

Achievement to 31 March 2010	Responsible Head of Service
We supported the National Interfaith week with a drop in session held at the Civic Offices with South Derbyshire CVS	Head of Organisational Development
A Youth Needs Survey was conducted that enabled new services to be delivered such as the mobile climbing wall and dance project.	Head of Leisure & Community Development
To improve local accessibility, the Council worked with other agencies to commence a rural accessibility study to assess the Housing provision in rural parishes.	Head of Planning

2.0 Provide services that are inclusive, responsive and accessible to everyone.

Achievement to 31 March 2010	Responsible Head of Service
Working with the South Derbyshire CVS a 'What's in it for my community' event at Sharpe's Pottery was held. A range of groups, including mental health and disability groups attended this event.	Head of Leisure & Community Development
A corporate framework has been established to gather monitoring information across the six strands of equality in relation to the services provided by the Council and their potential equality impact on the Community.	Head of Organisational Development
The Council has taken a lead role in a number of cultural/arts initiatives for the Community aimed at promoting community cohesion and good relations. This has included Liberation Day, Breath of Fresh Air, Swadfest and the Festival of Leisure	Head of Leisure & Community Development

3.0 Tackling harassment and victimisation

Achievement to 31 March 2010	Responsible Head of Service
Continued to provide training on the Hate Incidents Reporting Procedure to employees and Elected Members.	Head of Organisational Development
Support is provided through employment policies and procedures for staff to raise any concerns in a confidential matter and also to obtain external professional support if required.	Head of Organisational Development

4.0 Make sure that equality and fairness is central to our decisions about policies and services

Achievement to 31 March 2010	Responsible Head of Service
Continued with a programme of Equality Impact Risk Assessments across Services within the Council resulting in changes to ensure better equality outcomes. An example of this was changes to the Housing Allocation Policy.	All Heads of Service
The Council has successfully been accredited with 'Achieving' status under the National Equality Framework.	Head of Organisational Development

5.0 Promote positive images of the varied roles played by people in our community

Achievement to 31 March 2010	Responsible Head of Service
Continue to promote the achievements of Disabled Sports people is included in the South Derbyshire Sports Award evening.	Head of Leisure & Community Development
The Council has a Member Equalities Champion. This role chairs the Values and Attitudes Group that brings together a number of different community groups representing different sections of the Community	Head of Organisational Development

6.0 Reduce Inequality within our workforce

Achievement to 31 March 2010	Responsible Head of Service
The Council has successfully retained the Two Ticks disability symbol.	Head of Organisational Development
As part of the Council's Workforce Development Strategy, actions have included the promotion of Modern Apprenticeships, signing the national Skills Pledge and continued work on the Pay & Grading review.	Head of Organisational Development
Continued the Leadership and Management Development Programme that includes a First Line Managers course for new or aspiring managers.	Head of Organisational Development

7.0 Improve awareness of equality issues within our organisation

Achievement to 31 March 2010	Responsible Head of Service
The Council's Values that includes 'Treat People Fairly' have been communicated on a regular basis across the Council through promotional material.	Head of Organisational Development
Equality and Fairness training is provided for all staff and Elected Members.	Head of Organisational Development
Promoted the actions under the Corporate Equality and Fairness through the Annual report, Equality Action Plan leaflet and in the staff magazine 'better'.	Head of Organisational Development

8.0 Make sure when we buy goods and services and when we work with other organisations, we make a positive contribution to equality

Achievement to 31 March 2010	Responsible Head of Service
The Council communicates its commitment to Equality and Fairness through a range of Service Level Agreements with a range of voluntary sector organisation such as South Derbyshire CAB, Sharpes Pottery and People Express.	Head of Leisure & Community Development
Our commitment to equality and fairness is clearly stated in our Procurement Strategy 2009/12.	Head of IT Business Improvement