

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 3 November 2009
Report of: Russ Glennon Head of Policy and Performance
Subject/Title: Interim Single Equality Scheme 2009 - 2010
Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Brown

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report introduces Cabinet to the Interim Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2009 – 2010.

2.0 Decision Requested

- 2.1 Cabinet are recommended to approve the Interim Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2009 – 2010.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 At the CMT meeting held on 7th July 2009 Management Team authorised the development of an Interim Single Equality Scheme to set out the Council's overall commitment to equality and diversity. The attached Scheme and Action Plan sets out the council's approach to equality and diversity in Cheshire East and how we will manage, plan and mainstream equality and diversity in our day to day work. It is the 'umbrella' document for our statutory and non-statutory action plans.
- 3.2 The information and intelligence used to produce the interim scheme builds on the work of previous authorities and includes the views and comments of a range of stakeholders. We have reviewed what we did in the past and thought we could do things better for the future. The Research and Intelligence Team prepared an equality profile of the Borough to inform the development of the Scheme and the ethos of understanding our communities and mapping issues relating to equal access and inclusion was the basis for our action plan. We are a new organisation and we want to have a greater understanding of the way people live in, work in and visit our Borough, we need to understand the issues of disadvantage and how these impact on people so we can do more to make things fairer.

3.3 Equality Framework for Local Government

The Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) has been revised to take account of feedback from local authorities, the challenges and opportunities introduced by the local government white paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities', and the new performance and assessment framework. It is replaced, from April 2009, by a new Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). This provides a simpler approach that reduces the amount of process and introduces a more outcome focused method. It is intended to be proportional and relevant to the needs and circumstances of each authority. It integrates the public duties on race, disability and gender and provides a common performance framework for compliance. Three levels of achievement replace the five in the Equality Standard: 'developing', 'achieving' and 'excellent'. Progress will be measured by self assessment supported by peer review.

The framework is built around five performance areas:

- Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A modern and diverse workforce

Use of the framework will enable local authorities and their Local Strategic Partners to identify and analyse equality priorities for inclusion in their Local Area Agreements (LAAs). The framework also complements the new performance assessment framework – the CAA. It allows authorities to 'migrate' their achievements under the original Equality Standard.

3.4 Migrating achievements from the Equality Standard to the Equality Framework

Authorities that have reached levels 1 and 2 will be treated as 'developing'. Those at level 3 will be treated as 'achieving'. Those at level 4 will be classified as 'moving towards excellence' and those at level 5 as 'excellent'.

Performance by predecessor councils indicates that Cheshire East Council lies between 'developing' and 'achieving'. A goal to be an 'achieving' council, working towards 'excellence' has been incorporated in the interim Single Equality Scheme and will also be in the three-year Single Equality Scheme, 2010 -2013. This will support action planning over the period to move the council to its target level.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 All

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

6.1 No implications for climate change

6.2 Policy implications for health are recognised within the Interim Single Equality Scheme. The Scheme will support the addressing of health inequalities

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

7.1 None

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

8.1 Cost of purchase of on line Equality and Diversity training.

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

9.1 As detailed in the Report the Interim Single Equality Scheme will cover the Council's statutory duties and responsibilities under current equality legislation.

10.0 Risk Management

10.1 The Council will not meet its statutory duties and responsibilities contained in equality legislation if the Interim Single Equality Scheme is not approved

11.0 Background and Options

11.1 The Scheme covers our statutory equality duties in relation to race, disability and gender and our non-statutory duties in relation to age, sexual orientation and religion/belief. While there is no statutory requirement to meet general and specific duties in these areas, broadening our approach to all six recognised equality strands illustrates our commitment to inclusion for all, and puts us in a good and realistic position for expected changes in national equalities legislation. A Single Equality Scheme covering the six equality strands is likely to become a legislative requirement once the 2009 Equality Bill passes in legislation. The Interim Scheme covers the period 2009-2010

and will inform a Single Equality Scheme which is being prepared and will cover a three year period from 2010 to 2013.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

12.1

13.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: Carol Haydon

Designation: Interim Head of Policy and Strategy

Tel No: 01625 504101

Email: carol.haydon@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix A Interim Single Equality Scheme

Appendix B Action Plan