

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## REPORT TO: CABINET

---

**Date of Meeting:** 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010

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

**Subject/Title:** Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme and Action Plan 2010-2013

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr D Brown Portfolio Holder Performance and Capacity

---

### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 This report introduces Cabinet to the Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme and Action Plan 2010 – 2013 and the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance.

### **2.0 Decision Requested**

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme and Action Plan 2010 – 2013 and the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance.

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 At the CMT meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009 Corporate Management Team authorised an Interim Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2009-10 to set out the Council's overall commitment to equality and inclusion.

A revised draft Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme was written and approved by CMT on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010. The Scheme was in draft form to allow us to consult widely with partners, voluntary, faith and community stakeholders, staff and citizens so that their views could also be reflected in our Scheme and Action Plan.

Although the consultation period did not result in a vast number of comments, the stakeholders who responded were experts in their areas and their feedback has helped to refine and strengthen the Scheme. Consultees felt that disability access to Council buildings, services and communications needed to be given higher priority so this area has been further enhanced in the Action Plan in light of this feedback. Following comments from specific disability interest groups some actions have been made more specific and relevant to this particular group. The Scheme has also been revised to encompass the

Council's corporate policy on equality and inclusion with commitment and responsibility identified for Council managers.

**Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme and Action Plan 2010-2013  
(Appendix A and B) Equality Impact Assessment Guidance  
(Appendix C)**

**Scheme Aims and Objectives**

The Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme (SEIS) is a public commitment showing how Cheshire East Council intends to meet the duties placed on it by equality legislation. The SEIS is relevant to all activities of the Council and to employees. Employees and Cheshire East citizens should all be afforded the opportunities to achieve their potential without prejudice or discrimination.

The Council has developed a singular approach to equality and inclusion, bringing together existing disability, race and gender equality agendas and aligned them with key legislative requirements, guidance and principles outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

The Scheme covers our statutory equality duties in relation to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion/belief, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnerships. We have also identified four additional groups: carers, transgender people, gypsies and travellers and socially and economically deprived people for specific action because these groups can often be forgotten or hidden.

The three year action plan will focus on seven areas:

- To have a modern and diverse workforce
- To foster community engagement and satisfaction
- To have a responsive service and excellent customer care
- To understand our communities
- To embed and promote equality within partnerships, procurement and commissioning
- To have an effective performance framework and demonstrate continuous improvement and leadership
- To attain the Equality Framework for Local Governments' (EFLG) "Achieving" level within the lifespan of this 2010 – 2013 Scheme

To assist Council Services in delivering responsive services and excellent customer care, new Equality Impact Assessment Guidance has been developed. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a way to make sure individuals and teams think carefully about the likely impact of policies or procedures, strategies, functions and services, to identify

any unmet needs, and to provide a basis for action to improve services where appropriate. The EIA guidance has been devised to reduce the burden on services by being as flexible and simple as possible

## **Resource Implications**

Services will be required to undertake EIA's on all strategies, policies functions and procedures. The EIA process has been developed to be part of the design of the policy, function or procedure and so should be more easily completed as part of the drafting process. The guidance uses a three page template and this is vastly reduced from the previous resource intense process that was used by some predecessor Councils. A one day in-house training course contained within the Corporate Training Directory is available to equip staff with the knowledge and skills needed to complete the EIA. Services will also need to review their workforce profile, current information shows that the Council's workforce is not representative of the Cheshire East community. Representation of people with disabilities and people from ethnic minority communities needs to be increased to achieve the Councils aim of having a modern and diverse workforce.

## **Conclusion**

Cheshire East Council's new equality framework is based on the principles that:

- "A more equal and inclusive society protects and promotes equality, real freedom and opportunity in a way where people can value and realise their potential.
- "A more equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be."
- "A more equal society does not constrain growth or prosperity. On the contrary, by focusing on those groups who experience persistent disadvantage because of factors beyond their control, a more equal society uses scarce resources efficiently, increases the level and quality of human capita, and creates more stability, all necessary to promote growth and prosperity"

Put simply it is about what we as a Council can do to create a fairer society and recognises that:

- Equality is an issue for us all
- We don't all start from the same place
- To create a fairer society we need to recognise different needs.

#### **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 Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme. The Scheme will support the addressing of health inequalities

#### **7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)**

7.1 None

#### **8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

8.1 As detailed in the Report the Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme 2010-13 will cover the Council's statutory duties and responsibilities under current equality legislation

#### **9.0 Risk Management**

9.1 The Council will not meet its statutory duties and responsibilities contained in equality legislation if the Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme 2010=13 is not approved

#### **10.0 Background and Options**

10.1 The comments and suggestions made by consultees have been considered and where appropriate incorporated into this revised Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme and Action Plan and Equality Impact Assessment Guidance.

#### **11.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues**

11.1 As detailed within the Report

## **12.0 Access to Information**

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

Name: Carol Haydon

Designation: Policy and Research Manager

Tel No: 01270 685867

Email: [carol.haydon@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:carol.haydon@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

## **Appendices**

Appendix A Single Equality and Inclusion Scheme 2010-13

Appendix B Action Plan 2010-13

Appendix C Equality Impact Assessment Guidance