

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET - 18 JUNE 2008

GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME – PROGRESS REPORT

Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with a progress report on the Gender Equality Scheme.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the meeting on 21 June 2007 Council approved the Council's Gender Equality Scheme which outlined the Council's framework for meeting its obligations under the Equality Bill 2006.
- 2.2 Under the legislation the Council has placed on it General and Specific Duties. The purpose of these duties is to put in place a framework for the Council to carry out its functions more effectively and to tackle discrimination and its causes in a proactive way.
- 2.3 The Council must, on an annual basis, publish a report containing a summary of:
- The steps it has taken to fulfil its gender equality duty (the action plan);
 - what the Council has done to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, taking active steps to comply with both the Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Pay Act and promote equality of opportunity;
- 2.4 This report provides information on the matters identified in section 2.3 above.

3. PROGRESS

3.1 Action Plans

- 3.1.1 The Action Plan agreed previously is contained in Appendix 1 of the attached Gender Equality Scheme and progress against each of the actions is noted.

3.1.2 In addition to developing a revised Corporate Action Plan, each Departmental/Service have developed individual Equality Action Plans including gender. These Action Plans were presented to Cabinet in December 2007.

3.1.3 Eliminate Discrimination and Promote Equality

The development of Department/Service Action Plans will ensure that the Council takes steps to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in all areas of its activities and will allow these steps to be mainstreamed into overall Departmental Service Plans. However, specifically in 2007-2008 a number of actions have been taken, namely:

Gender Network: Over the next few months the development of a Gender Network will assist the Council in engaging with the community. It is proposed that the Network will act as the main consultation body in progressing the gender equality duty.

Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme: The Council subscribed to Stonewall Scotland's Diversity Champions Programme in May 2008. The Diversity Champions programme is a good practice forum which employers can work with Stonewall, and each other, to promote lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in the workplace. The Programme is still to be launched officially within the Council.

Departmental Equalities Group: The development of Departmental Equality Groups will allow information to be disseminated into all service areas and assist in mainstreaming the equalities agenda

Domestic Abuse: In 2005 the East Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Forum as with all other local authorities in Scotland produced their Strategy for 2005-2008. At present the strategy is being evaluated and a report will be published, however some of the achievements to date have been:

- The implementation of a two poster campaign to raise awareness of domestic abuse and provide information on agencies that can help
- Developed and implemented a pilot abuse prevention programme with local pre-5 establishment involving children, parents and pre-2 staff. This programme is presently evaluated
- A website for the East Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Forum which can be viewed at www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/ess/socialwork/DVForum/default.asp

- A programme of preventative materials available to agencies to work with young men was developed and is presently being evaluated.
- A multi-agency training strategy was developed and is presently being delivered to highlight the issues and impact of Domestic Abuse

3.3 Information Gathering

The Council is taking steps through Department/Service Unit Action Plans to ensure appropriate information is gathered in respect of all equality strands. This will be conducted through customer survey returns, community consultation, forums, monitoring forms etc.

3.4 Actions Taken as a Result on the Information Gathering

The information collated through the mechanisms highlighted in 3.3 will be used to inform future actions.

4. POLICY AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The approval of the progress Gender Scheme and its related Action Plan will enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations and its policy objectives in relation to the promotion of equality for all its citizens.

5. COMMUNITY PLAN

- 5.1 The progress Gender Equality Scheme will contribute to the achievement of all of the Community Plan Themes.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising at this time. Any future financial implications arising from action taken under the Gender Equality Scheme and related Action Plan will require to be considered in accordance with the Council's agreed budgetary arrangements either from departmental budgets or by specific consideration by Cabinet.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Cabinet is recommended to approve the Progress Gender Equality Report.

**Depute Chief Executive/
Executive Director of Corporate Support
June 2008**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

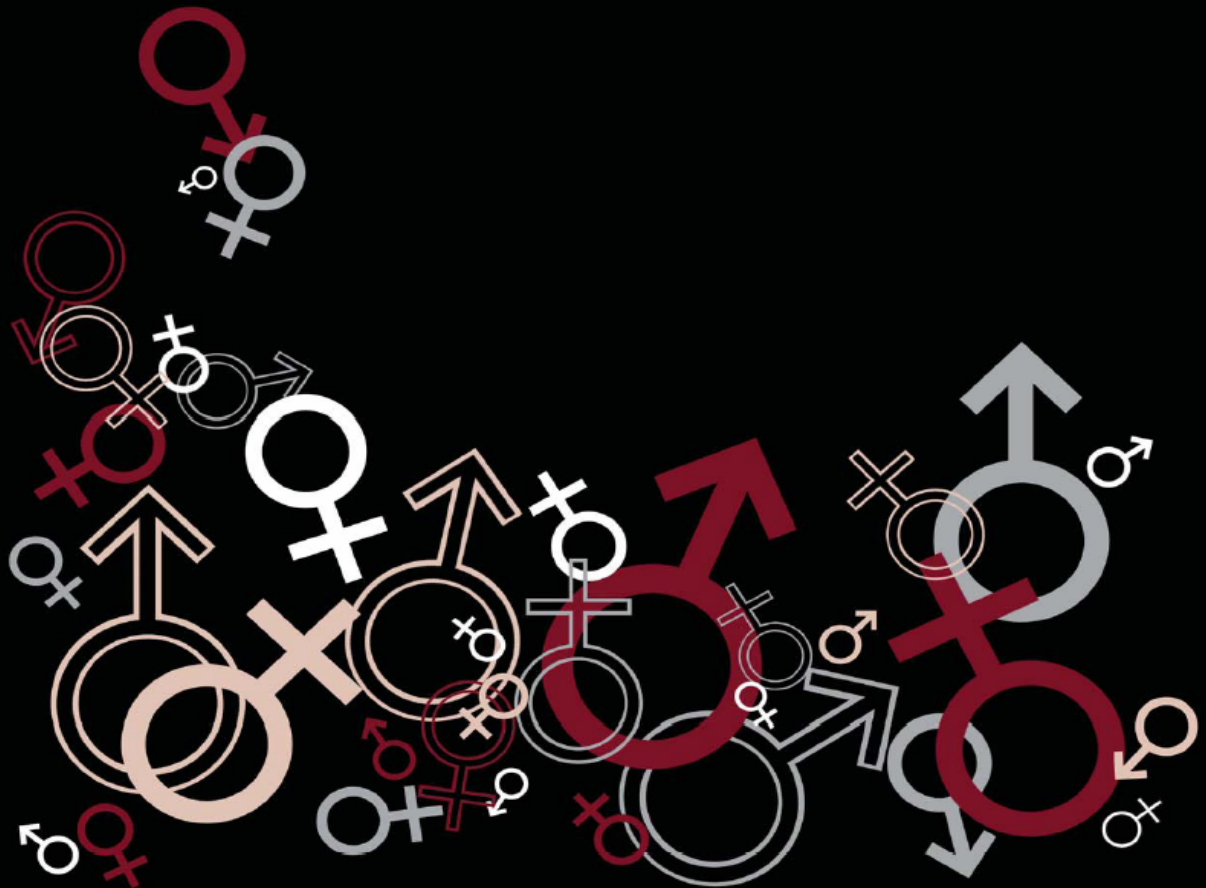
1. Gender Equality Scheme – Report by Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support to Policy & Resources Committee – 21 June 2007



EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Gender Equality Scheme

Annual Report 2008



Draft

Forward

This is East Ayrshire Council's Progress Report, for the period up to May 2008, covering the progress on the Council's first Gender Equality Scheme.

This report draws attention to some of the specific actions that have been undertaken in the last year.

This year we have developed a new Gender Equality Network and a partnership with Stonewall Scotland to deliver their Diversity Champions programme. Both initiatives will give us a firm foundation on which to develop our services and meet the needs of gender groups in the future however, we acknowledge that there is always more to be done.

As a service provider and employer East Ayrshire Council is committed to meeting its statutory responsibilities. In order to achieve this we will continue to challenge the way we provide services, develop policies and employ people to ensure that all the people in East Ayrshire are treated fairly.

Action Plan Progress

A Corporate Action Plan has been developed to support the Gender Equality Scheme, which has been updated and attached at Appendix 1. In addition, each service completed an equality action plan listing key responsibilities, timescales and tasks to be achieved. Below are some of the key achievements over the last year against each of the Objectives identified in the Action Plan. Actions are highlighted to meet the challenges that remain.

Objective

Accessible Services: Improving access of information and services within East Ayrshire

Corporate Developments

- Commitment to use positive images of women in non traditional roles in all our publications.
- Development of new Equality Structure incorporating Four Equality Networks covering Race, Disability, Gender and Older People to support a newly formed Equality Forum. This allows issues to be raised locally and formally. It is envisaged that the newly formed Network will work closely with the Council in developing our Equality Objectives in the future.
- The new structure also ensures Equality representation in all Community Planning Forums.
- A new Service Planning template has been developed and piloted within one Council Service. The template includes a need to address all equalities issues when producing the Plan for the coming financial year. The new process will be rolled out across the Council during 2008.

Neighbourhood Services

- Equality & Diversity objectives & standards were incorporated into the Housing Business Plan in 2007; this will be monitored and will highlight any issues affecting women and men.
- Housing have committed to support in the ongoing development of East Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Forum.

- The establishment of the Gender Network will allow all services providers within the Department to have a meaningful dialogue with all members of the community on the issues affecting access to services.

Corporate Support

- Work is near completion on the East Ayrshire Community Planning Single Outcome Agreement – 2008/09 (SOA) appropriate outcomes tackling inequalities for men and women are contained within the new SOA.
- The newly formed Equalities Forum will participate fully in the new Community Planning Forums. Equality Forum members attended a 'Working Together, Learning Together' event on the 1 and 3 April to set Local Community Planning Forum priorities.
- The training course on Equality & Diversity was updated to incorporate changes in gender equality legislation.
- An affiliation with Stonewall Scotland was taken out in April 2008; a programme of works is being developed with Stonewall to ensure the Council promotes lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in the workplace
- The development of a Gender Network will open up dialogue around gender issues and will improve access to council vacancies.

Finance & Asset Management

- Design of new 'Top of the Town' office development has incorporate latest lighting standards.
- New Service Plans will incorporate a review of Gender issues from previous year and actions required in delivering services for the following year.
- CCTV installation and concomitant lighting upgrades, based on assessments of risk and also general health and safety, contribute to the increased safety for all staff and service users in Public Spaces.

Educational & Social Services

- Appropriate mechanisms are now in place to record complaints on gender discrimination within schools.
- Mechanisms are in place to audit and report gender discrimination as they arise within the school session.

- Community Learning and Development have Service Level Agreements in place to ensure that partners are aware of their equalities responsibilities and take appropriate actions in relation to their projects.
- The need to develop an information strategy has been identified through the annual EFQM assessment. The importance of gender equality will be reflected in the objectives of this strategy.

Objective

Staffing – Training & Monitoring

Corporate Developments

- Equality Training with a focus on Gender Equality Training has been delivered to most of the Elected Members and the Extended Management Team. A final session to include members who were unable to attend will take place by the end of August 2008.
- The development of a web based training package for all employees will raise the awareness of gender equality, this will be delivered over an 18 month period from July 2007 onwards.
- Quarterly monitoring and analysis of all employee training is available on the Council Intranet and Website.
- Equality & Diversity is a standing agenda item on all team meetings within service areas. This allows employees to raise any issues regarding the equality agenda i.e. race, gender, disability etc.

Neighbourhood Services

- Corporate Equalities training has been delivered to the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services and all the Heads of Service
- Gender Equalities information has been incorporated into staff induction folders within each service area
- Equalities is a standing item on all team meeting agendas and gender issues can be raised in that context

Corporate Support

- Gender issues can be raised at all team meeting under the banner of equalities.
- Gender information has been incorporated to induction folders within each service area.
- Corporate Equalities training delivered to the Executive Director of Corporate Support and Heads of Service.
- Equal opportunities monitoring of all courses takes place quarterly to ensure courses are delivered equitably and to identify gaps and inconsistencies of take up.

Finance & Asset Management

- Equalities - including gender issues – are a standing item on all Team and Departmental team meetings.
- Corporate Equalities training has been delivered to the Executive Head of Finance & Asset Management.
- Departmental Equalities Group set up to monitor progress against Equalities issues, including gender.
- Introduction of new Service planning process will require a detailed monitoring at an operational level of all gender issues.

Education & Social Services

- Equalities training has taken place within youth work, and a tutor training course has been further developed. Discussions have taken place with LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual communities) to carry out workshops with youth workers and volunteers.
- A Community Learning & Development staff seminar was developed in May 2008 by LGBT Youth to highlight issues affecting LGBT young people.
- Corporate Equalities training delivered to the Executive Director of Education & Social Services and Heads of Service.

Objective

Improving Community Consultation, Involvement & Capacity Building

Corporate Developments

- The development of 4 Equality Networks and an Equality Forum will increase the profile of the equalities agenda (including gender) locally and throughout the local community planning forums.

Neighbourhood Services

- All service areas within Neighbourhood will actively promote the participation of the gender network in policy and service design once the networks are confident of their role.
- A questionnaire has been developed for use in all consultations. This will allow information to be analysed to ensure equal access to information and to highlight gaps that can be addressed.
- A Men's Health Lifestyle Development Officer delivers targeted initiatives to address health inequalities.
- A specialised Health promotion programme has been developed to encourage teenage girls to access services.

Corporate Support

- Involvement of groups who wish to access council grants is supported through training courses, in order to increase the capacity and involvement of groups needing funding.
- All community representatives on the Community Planning Board, and members of Community Federations, are notified of training opportunities on a regular basis.
- The Residents' survey questionnaire has been revised in order that equalities questions, (including gender based questions) can be incorporated.

Finance & Asset Management

- A feedback questionnaire is included in the annual Public Performance Report which is delivered to every household in East Ayrshire. This includes questions as to respondents' gender and age, with analysis of returns subsequently reported to the Council's Corporate Management Team.
- The Development of the Equalities Networks will ensure ongoing community consultation.

Education & Social Services

- Activities supported and run by the Education & Social Services Department, Community Learning & Development Service, are continuously audited to ensure gender equality is promoted.
- In the past year Community Learning & Development have worked with 13 groups and through this process have ensured that support given is monitored to identify any gaps in the promotion of equality of opportunity and raise awareness of issues regarding gender.

Objective

Gathering & Utilising Information

The arrangements for the gathering and monitoring of equalities information are currently being reviewed. This will allow improved analysis and better identification of areas for service improvement.

Objective

Consultation with Service Users/Groups

The development of the Gender Network will ensure that the Council has mechanisms in place to consult with residents focusing on the Gender Duty.

Support from LGBT and Stonewall Scotland will allow the Council to explore and develop consultation mechanisms with the LGBT Community who traditionally have had no formal structures of engagement. It is proposed to further develop consultations structures throughout 2008/09.

Domestic Abuse

In 2005, the East Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Forum produced a Domestic Abuse Strategy 2005-2008. The success of the strategy is currently being evaluated, and in due course a report will be published; however some of the achievements to date have been:

- The implementation of a two poster campaign to raise awareness of domestic abuse and provide information on agencies that can help.
- The development and implementation of an abuse prevention pilot with local pre-5 establishments, this involved children, parents and pre-2 staff. This programme is presently being evaluated.
- The development of a website for the East Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Forum which can be viewed at:
<http://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/ess/socialwork/DVForum/default.asp>
- A programme of preventative domestic abuse materials was developed and is available to agencies who work with young men. This is currently being evaluated.
- A multi-agency training strategy was developed and is presently being delivered to highlight the issues and impact of Domestic Abuse.

Equal Pay

In September 2007, and in accordance with legislation, the Council produced an Equal Pay Statement which set out our actions in addressing promotion, development and occupational segregation.

In the past year we have monitored our workforce ratio and analysed trends to develop new structures to tackle inequality within the workforce. We recognise there will be no one solution to tackling occupational segregation and we will work with our partners to develop new strategies to take this work forward.

We are developing mechanisms to monitor and record the up take and effectiveness of our Work Life Balance Programme to ensure that they remain effective and relevant and that they are amended appropriately where evidence and experience suggests that amendments are required.

Priorities for the coming year

The main priorities for the coming year are contained within the service specific equality action plans. The main focus of which will be:

Corporate Priorities

- The development of a web based equalities training package for all employees. The aim of the training is to raise an awareness of the equalities agenda; it is proposed to roll out the programme throughout 2008/09.
- The development of a streamlined equalities monitoring form to gather information
- The development of an equalities training programme for 4th tier managers will incorporate gender equality to ensure that equalities information is disseminated through the workforce, and to contribute to the mainstreaming of the equalities agenda.

Neighbourhood Services

- Improving access to information and services
- A review of departmental consultation arrangements
- Develop of a range of 'issue based' projects that use the arts as an empowering tool
- Identify and implement service improvements arising from satisfaction surveys
- Review gender information currently held to assist improved service delivery

Corporate Support

- Corporate Induction training revised on an annual cycle to ensure emerging trends are incorporated, including updated information on gender equality.
- Development of 'Women into Management' courses.
- Discuss and seek views of trainees within the Skills Training Unit to ascertain perceptions of training programmes.

- Delivery of Skill seekers, Modern Apprenticeship and Get Ready for Work programmes to incorporate gender equality components.
- Improve the coverage of equality issues in Personnel Services publications.
- Consultation to take place with relevant community groups to improve Council's recruitment and selection process - 2008/2009.
- To actively promote the participation of relevant community groups and the Gender Network in the development of appropriate employment related Personnel Policies.

Finance & Asset Management

- Review of all Finance and Asset Management services to take place in order to identify gender-based barriers.
- Review and improve reporting of gender issues to stakeholders.
- Ensure appropriate awareness training on Equalities agenda, including gender, rolled out to staff in Finance and Asset Management division.

Education & Social Services

- Tracking of educational attainment for all children and young people, this statistical analysis takes place annually.
- Audit and report on gender equality access in the curriculum.
- Audit of all curricular material to ensure consistency with issues of gender equality.
- Every educational establishment to report on gender equality as part of their annual standards and quality report.
- Development of a youth charter with the assistance of LGBT.
- Review of Social Work Complaints procedure to ensure compliance with gender equality.
- Development of training materials within Social Work to ensure gender issues are explored and developed.

June 2008

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Appendix 1



East Ayrshire Council

Gender Equality Scheme

Objectives

Progress 2008

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1. Developing the Scheme

Purpose: To mainstream compliance with our duty to promote equality of opportunity for all by ensuring gender equality is mainstreamed into all policies, functions and procedures of the council

Objective	Action	Outcome	Timescales	Progress
To implement the Gender Equality Scheme	Prepare service action plan to review functions, policies and procedures, and all other elements of the scheme	Completion of action plans	Ongoing from March 2007	Service Action Plans prepared. A new Equality Impact Assessment toolkit has been developed and will be rolled out with training provided.
Identification of managers' responsibility regarding the implementation of the Gender Equality Scheme	The requirement to promote gender equality as part of generic managers' competencies	Increased emphasis given to gender within all decision making across the council		Managers within Services have been identified.
To provide assistance in the implementation of the scheme at a corporate level	Guideline and advice to be developed and disseminated via the Equalities Strategy Group	Increased awareness of gender equality and implementation of the Gender Equality Scheme	By February 2008	Departmental Equality Groups have been established. These Groups will ensure information is disseminated throughout service areas.
Raise the standard of Gender Equality across the Council	The Scheme will be reviewed every 3 years	Revised Scheme Continued updates to the scheme	Annual assessment with full review in 2010	Annual review has been carried out.
To raise public awareness of the scheme	Scheme made available via the Council's website and summary information published via the Council's publication	Increased awareness of the Council's commitment to eliminate discrimination	Ongoing from March 2007	The Scheme has been made available on the Council's Intranet and Website. Hard copies are available in schools, libraries and local offices. Different formats available on request.

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2. Employment Duties – monitoring employment and supporting employees				
Purpose: Information from monitoring will be used to develop schemes.				
Objective	Action	Outcome	Timescale	Progress
To produce an Equal Pay Policy	Develop & publish a policy on developing equal pay arrangements between men and women – including measures to promote equal pay, ensure fair development opportunities and tackle occupational segregation	A fair Equal Pay policy is developed	September 2007	Completed in September 2007. Available on the Council's Intranet and Website.
To monitor employment annually	Create annual reporting and dissemination of monitoring information	Produce annual employment trends and develop action plans arising from trend analysis	Annual assessment and reporting	Reports completed on a quarterly cycle and posted on the Council's Intranet and Website.
To eliminate any possible discrimination in the workforce	Augment existing monitoring practices by including: Training applications Harassment and discrimination complaints Grievances Disciplinary proceedings Exit Interviews	A greater take up of service satisfaction with the service provided	Ongoing from May 2007	As above.

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2. Employment Duties – monitoring employment and supporting employees				
Purpose: Information from monitoring will be used to develop schemes.				
Objective	Action	Outcome	Timescale	Progress
Review the following high-priority policies under the EIA procedure including consultations with all levels of staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruitment• Managing leave for parent and carers• Paternity/Maternity support leave including parenting• Adoption• Managing pregnancy and return from maternity leave• Grievance and disciplinary procedure• Retirement	Review the functions and policies Qualitative research identifies likely impact on gender equality	Impact of council policy identified and results fed into policy revision Ongoing improvement of councils gender equality activity	From September 2007 onwards	A new Equality Impact Assessment tool was produced in April 2008. A training programme has been developed to support those carrying out assessments.

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3. Identifying Relevant Functions and Policies – Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies

Purpose: To give appropriate priority to the promotion of gender equality when carrying out function and policies

Objective	Action	Outcome	Timescale	Progress
To meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2006	Review all functions and policies of the Council according to our duty to promote gender equality	All functions and policies reviewed as per the Scheme	From August 2007	A new Equality Impact Assessment tool was produced in April 2008. A training programme has been developed to support those carrying out assessments.
To assess the likely impact of proposed policies on promotion of gender equality	Services undertaken Impact Assessment	Qualitative research is provided to identify likely and existing impact on gender equality	Annual assessment reporting	As above.
To monitor adverse impacts	Annual monitoring of adverse impacts identified in gender equality impact assessment and other feedback mechanisms (Equality Strategy Group, Women's Forum, employees)	Collection of adverse impact information considered by each service across the council Annual monitoring report	Annual assessment and reporting	As above.

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4. Monitoring council policies for adverse impact				
Purpose: To build gender equality into the policy-making process and to make that process clear open and inclusive				
Objective	Action	Outcome	Timescales	Progress
To assess the likely impact or proposed policies on the promotion of gender duty	Services undertake gender equality impact assessments Qualitative research identifies likely impact on gender	Impact of policy identified and results fed into policy revision	Annual assessment and reporting	A new Equality Impact Assessment tool was produced in April 2008. A training programme has been developed to support those carrying out assessments.
To support ongoing additions and improvements to policies	Develop guidelines for drawing out gender equality issues as part of the impact assessments	Guidelines developed and training available	By September 2007	As above.
To monitor annually adverse impacts identified in Gender Equality Impacts Assessments	Adverse impact information considered by each service across the authority	Ongoing improvement of council gender equality activity	Annual assessment and reporting	As above.

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5. Assessing, Consulting and Involving

Purpose: To ensure compliance with our duty to not only consult but involve people in the development of the scheme

Objective	Action	Outcome	Timescales	Progress
To meet the specific duty of the Gender Duty	Establish a forum for women and men from different backgrounds to ensure meaningful involvement of the Gender Duty	Women and men are involved throughout the process	Ongoing from March 2007	A Gender Network has proven difficult to establish. Several attempts were made to engage in the establishment of a Gender Network similar to the newly formed Elderly, BME and Disability Network. It has now been agreed to pursue this through identified individual members of the community.
To ensure meaningful involvement with appropriate support mechanisms with a cross section of people	Establish a timetable of meetings Ensure different methods of involvement are used such as direct mailing, e-mailing, meetings etc.	Structures are in place for planned consultation and involvement Men and women are represented at all levels in the decision making process	Ongoing from March 2007	As above.
Ensure that guidance is in place for Managers	To provide guidance to managers on the Gender Duty	Managers are equipped to support employees	September 2007	The Scheme was published in line with the Statutory Deadline. Training has been delivered to the Extended Management Team and will be rolled out to other managers during the year.

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6. Communicating the results of assessment, consultation and monitoring

Purpose: To ensure that monitoring, assessment and consultation activities, and their results are clear and plain to our customers and employees

Objective	Action	Outcome	Timescales	Progress
To identify arrangements for publishing results and monitoring	Results published using a variety of media and formats: interne, intranet, special reports and newsletters	Publicly available record Of progress	By June 2009	Information is published through the Council's Intranet and Website. Hard copies of information are made available through local offices and libraries. It is proposed to work with the Gender Network to review and where necessary develop new methods of distribution over 2008/2009.
To develop accessible communication channels	The identification of appropriate communication channels for different community groups and employees through various consultations mechanisms	Maintenance and development of communication channels between the public and the council	Ongoing from August 2007	As above.
To monitor user satisfaction	Monitoring of representative on effectiveness of communication channels and accessibility of information	Increased accessibility of information across the council	Annual assessment and monitoring	As above.

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