

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting12th April 2007

1. Title of Item/Report

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet considered the draft 2nd edition of the Single Equality Scheme for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. It had been updated to meet the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination on the basis of gender and promote equality of opportunity between men and women. It was explained that the new duty would come into effect on the 6th April 2007 with the requirement to publish a Gender Equality Scheme by 30th April 2007.

The opportunity had also been taken to revisit and update the Council's response to the Race Equality Duty with an updated Race Equality Action Plan being included in the scheme. These had been developed following analysis of available consultation and workforce data. The Disability Equality Action Plan was approved by Cabinet last year and was included for information only.

The Council was required to develop and publish schemes and action plans under the Duties to promote Race, Gender and Disability Equality. The Single Equality Scheme and its associated action plans ensured the Council was meeting those duties.

Members noted that the scheme ensured the promotion of equality and diversity were firmly embedded at the heart of the Council's planning cycles with the equalities objectives being read through from the Council Plan, but also individual targets from the Race, Gender and Disability Action Plans being written into the appropriate service and business unit plans. This, coupled with the engagement of Heads of Service in the development of the three action plans ensured equalities targets and activities were at the heart of all council services. This was crucial for continuous service improvement and the forthcoming Corporate Assessment.

It was explained that there was a significant raft of legislation relating to equalities which were summarised on page 10 of the Scheme, with more

detailed discussion of recent key legislation included on pages 11 and 12. Equalities legislation was continually changing and developing with a number of new initiatives on the horizon. The equalities review had recently published its findings with the Discrimination Law Review Green Paper and Commission on Integration and Cohesion report being expected in the coming months. This coupled with the ongoing introduction of the Equality Act 2006 including new service regulations on sexual orientation, showed the scope of the agenda. The draft Single Equality Scheme had been prepared to anticipate as far as possible those new requirements and ensured the Council remained compliant with all equalities legislation.

Members were informed that Community consultation and engagement was crucial in the development of the single equality scheme. Not only was data collected from BVPI and Viewpoint surveys used to develop the Scheme and Action Plans bespoke consultation was also carried out with BME communities and disabled people. The ongoing involvement of the community in the review and monitoring of the Single Equality Scheme was crucial.

Consultation on the draft scheme had also been carried out with Trades Unions, all Members, with all Officers and the public having been able to offer comment on the draft scheme via the Council's website.

The scheme also outlined how equalities training would be developed and rolled out across the Council. Whilst equality training was already in the Member induction programme there was an ongoing need to deliver training to employees. With this in mind it was proposed to train all first, second and third tier officers, as well as 10% of all other employees by April 2008.

Consultation on the draft scheme had recently been completed and implications were currently being considered by Officers. This, coupled with the delayed publication of some central guidance required delegation of final amendments to the Assistant Chief Executive in conjunction with the appropriate Cabinet Member. Following this, the Scheme would be available on the Council's website in advance of 30th April, thus ensuring the Council met its statutory obligations.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1.the 2nd edition of the Single Equality Scheme is approved, subject to any necessary amendments resulting from ongoing consultation or further guidance.
- 2.any final amendments be approved via delegated responsibility to the

Assistant Chief Executive and relevant Cabinet Member.

3. Reasons for the Decision

This was the draft 2nd edition of the Single Equality Scheme for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. It had been updated to meet the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination on the basis of gender and promote equality of opportunity between men and women. The new duty came into effect on the 6th April 2007 with the requirement to publish a Gender Equality Scheme by 30th April 2007. This report ensured the Council was complying with this legal requirement.

The Council was required by law to develop and publish schemes and action plans under its Duty to promote Race, Gender and Disability Equality. The Single Equality Scheme and its associated action plans ensured the Council was meeting these duties.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not Applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight Friday 20th April 2007

Proper Officer
13 April 2007