

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting20th May 2010

1. Title of Item/Report

Single Equality Scheme 4

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet considered a report that presented and requested approval for the fourth edition of the Council's Single Equality Scheme.

The scheme, which brings together the Council's Race, Gender and Disability Equality Action Plans ensures that the authority is fully compliant with the legal requirements and legislative duties of nine pieces of primary legislation and over 100 pieces of secondary legislation and guidance.

The scheme had been well received by a number of audiences, including Trades Unions and the IDeA and had proven to be a key driver behind the Council's significant progress in equality and diversity in recent years, culminating in the IDeA award of "Achieving" status in the new Equality Framework for Local Government.

The vast majority of the action plan objectives had now been achieved and the scheme was in need of updating to ensure it remained fit for purpose, particularly in light of the new Equality Act.

The fourth edition of the scheme was a more concise strategy driven by the introduction of a single action plan to consolidate the separate race, gender and disability equality action plans. This new action plan was shorter and sub-divided into three levels:

- Strategic development priorities – those issues which impact on all Council services and need to be considered by all Heads of Service
- Service development priorities – areas for action and improvement within individual service areas. Those actions had been identified by individual Heads of Service and linked closely to SIP priorities
- Operational priorities – small scale, or ongoing actions such as those identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process

Further detailed consideration had been given to consultation results,

inspection reports and best practice guidelines to identify key development areas for the Council.

The Service development priorities have been arrived at by Heads of Service and Heads of Performance following discussion with the Diversity Team. These were detailed in Service Improvement Plans for individual service areas so appeared only in summary form in the Single Equality Scheme. Operational priorities would arise through the ongoing Equality Impact Assessment processes of the Council and would be continually updated in the Single Equality Scheme on the Council's website. As had been the case with previous editions of the scheme, all actions would be monitored through the Council's usual performance management processes.

Cabinet noted that as the 4th edition of the Single Equality Scheme had been under preparation, the Equality Bill had been working its way through Parliament, culminating in its recent receipt of Royal Assent. This Scheme had been developed with the Equality Act in mind, although as many of the provisions in the Act required secondary legislation and none would come into force until October 2010 at the earliest, the scheme was still reflective of long standing legislation and best practice. As a result of this, it was proposed that the Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships monitored progress on the implementation of the Equalities Act and made any necessary amendments to the scheme in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Access and Communities. As such the Single Equality Scheme would continue to be a live strategy, easily amendable, to ensure the Council remained responsive to the ever changing communities it served.

RESOLVED that :-

1. the draft Single Equality Scheme be approved and any amendments be delegated to the Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships.
2. the Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships periodically review the scheme in line with the implementation of the Equalities Act and make any necessary amendments in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Access and Communities.

3. Reasons for the Decision

Approval of the 4th edition of the Single Equality Scheme would ensure the Council continued to meet its duties in relation to equality and diversity.

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
Not later than Midnight on Friday, 28 May 2010

Proper Officer
24 May 2010