

Leicestershire County Council's

Single Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy 2010 – 2013

Promoting Respect and Fairness

CONSULTATION DRAFT (v0.6)

What is this document about?

This document, which we refer to as a strategy, shows what the County Council will do to make Leicestershire a place where people are treated with fairness and respect. It also shows how we (that is, the Council members and officers) will make Leicestershire a place where everyone can access high quality services that have been designed to meet their needs.

It explains how we will promote equality of opportunity, tackle discrimination and foster good relationships between different community groups. It also covers what we will do to support equality of opportunity within our workforce.

Who is this document for?

It is for all communities in Leicestershire – to show what we will do over the next three years to make the County a fairer place for everyone.

It is for Leicestershire County Council employees – to communicate that the equalities agenda is a priority of the Council and that it is **everyone's business**.

We welcome your views on this draft strategy. Please tell us what you think before the end of March 2010.



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Visit our website for electronic copies of this draft strategy –
http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/your_council/equality_and_diversity/equality_strategy_consultation.htm



**If you require a summary of this information in an alternative version such as large print, Braille, audiotape, or some help in understanding it in your language, please contact the Equality and Diversity Team:
Telephone - 0116 305 6029/7446
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Foreword

We are very pleased to introduce the County Council's *Single Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy*.

This strategy sets out what the Council will do over the next 3 years to make Leicestershire a place where people get along with each other and treat each other with dignity and respect.

At Leicestershire, we recognise that equality and diversity is a fundamental requirement in the delivery of the best services that meet the needs of individuals. We also recognise that it is essential to securing the employment of the best people.

This strategy covers inequality in terms of age, race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and human rights. It also covers inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage and recognises carers as a distinct group that may also experience inequality and discrimination.

Whilst we have focused in the past on improving the processes we have in place to take forward the equalities agenda, this new strategy also focuses on what we intend to do to improve outcomes for local people to bring about real and lasting change to people's lives.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us to develop this strategy. We have talked with a wide range of stakeholders to hear their views on what we should be focusing our efforts on. We have used what you have told us to develop our priorities for action over the next few years.

Cllr David Parsons

Leader

Cllr Mrs Lesley Pendleton

Lead Member for Equalities

John Sinnott

Chief Executive

Part 1 – Introduction

Welcome

Leicestershire County Council has agreed to produce a **Single Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy**, which will bring together and update our current disability, gender and race equality schemes and extend these to include equality priorities for age, lesbian, gay and bisexual, and religion and belief.

This strategy has been informed by lessons learnt through implementing the race, disability and gender equality schemes and our previous **Equality and Diversity Strategy**. It has also been developed in anticipation of the new elements proposed in the **Equality Bill**.

We are moving away from a process-driven framework to one that focuses on achieving positive outcomes for our service users, staff and citizens of Leicestershire.

As Chair of the Council's Equalities Board, I am looking forward to implementing this strategy. Whilst I realise that we have much more to do to make equality, diversity and human rights part of everything we do, I am in no doubt that we will achieve this objective.

Everyone has a part to play - our employees, our contractors, our citizens - in making Leicestershire a place where people get along well with each other, where difference is valued and where everyone treats each other with fairness and respect.

Please get in touch if you would like to comment on this strategy or find out more about what we're doing to make equality a reality for the people of Leicestershire.

Mick Connell

Director of Adults and Communities and Chair of the Equalities Board

What do 'equality', diversity' and Human rights really mean??

Equality

Equality of opportunity is essential in creating a fairer society where everyone has the same chance to fulfil their potential, to participate fully in the economic and social life of the community and have access to the services they need. This is backed by legislation designed to address unfair discrimination.

The council has produced its **Equality, Diversity and Stronger Communities charter**, which shows our commitment to equality, diversity and building stronger communities. You can view it on our website at: http://www.leics.gov.uk/equality_and_diversity

Equality of opportunity is summarised in terms of equal access, equal treatment and outcomes that meet the needs of the individual.

Diversity

Diversity is about recognising and valuing differences in their broadest sense. This means understanding how people's differences and similarities can be mobilised for the benefit of the individual, the organisation and society as a whole.

Human rights

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world. Human rights are based on core principles like dignity, fairness, equality, respect and autonomy. They are relevant to your day-to-day life and protect your freedom to control your own life, effectively take part in decisions made by public authorities that impact upon your rights and get fair and equal services from public authorities.

They help you to flourish and fulfil your potential through: being safe and protected from harm; being treated fairly and with dignity; living the life you choose; and taking an active part in your community and wider society.

Why are equality, diversity and human rights important to the County Council?

In addition to the clear moral case for equality outlined above, there is a strong business case for investing in equality, diversity and human rights. It will result in us designing and delivering services that people want to receive and can lead to greater employee productivity, creativity, innovation and flexibility.

There is also a legal case for equality and diversity. The current disability, gender and race equality related legislation impose both general and specific duties on all public authorities. The broad obligations of the race, gender and disability duties include:

- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Encouraging positive attitudes and good relations between differing communities
- Eliminating harassment and unlawful discrimination
- Developing and publishing race, disability and gender equality schemes and action plans in consultation with stakeholders
- Systematic equality impact assessments for all policy and service changes.

The **Single Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy** and its action plan will apply across the additional equality strands of age, religion and belief, and sexual orientation. These identify our aspirations for a better Leicestershire. The **Equality Bill** will make this law.

How does this strategy relate to other council strategies?

The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Area Agreement (LAA)/Comprehensive Area Agreement (CAA)

We aspire to a cohesive and inclusive Leicestershire where everyone has access to the same life opportunities is a priority for the **Leicestershire Together Partnership**.

The **Leicestershire Equalities Forum** – a group of equalities practitioners from across the sub-region - and the **Leicestershire Working Together Forum** – our external equalities scrutiny and challenge group - support the partnership to achieve its equality and diversity objectives.

There are a number of LAA and CAA performance indicators that are relevant to equality, diversity and community cohesion and this strategy will help to achieve them.

The Medium Term Corporate Strategy (MTCS) and Financial Strategy (MTFS)

The council's vision is to "We will listen to the views of Leicestershire people and, by working with them and our partner agencies, ensure they enjoy the quality of life which they expect: to live in a County and region which is safe, healthy, attractive and prosperous."

The MTCS identifies the council's priorities, set out within our 3 overall aims of improving quality of life for people, improving quality of life in communities and improving services so they are high quality and value for money. We will achieve these by:

- providing community leadership for the County
- focusing on the needs of service users
- working to promote equality and reduce disadvantage
- working in partnership to identify and exploit new opportunities for joint working for the benefit of Leicestershire people
- valuing and supporting a highly motivated and well trained workforce, and
- protecting and enhancing the environment of Leicestershire and take account of the needs of future generations.

The council is experiencing significant financial challenges which will have an impact on the employment opportunities we can offer as well as the services we provide. However, we remain committed to our equality and diversity priorities and we will ensure that we give proper consideration to the equality implications of all the decisions we make.

Corporate Change Programme

Our corporate change programme is all about better meeting the needs of the citizens we serve. Through our change programme we are improving the quality of, and increasing access to, the services we provide. Equality, diversity and human rights are intrinsic to the whole programme of change. The changes that we are making will ensure that we achieve positive outcomes for local people.

Departmental Service Plans

Equalities issues that need addressing at service level are included in departmental service plans. These will be identified through the engagement and involvement of the local community, equality impact assessments and through guidance issued by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

What have the reviews of our previous equality schemes and action plans told us?

Equalities legislation requires the Council to have race equality, gender equality and disability equality schemes. Each scheme has a different time frame and one advantage of a *Single Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy* is to bring together the issues and timeframes together. The disability, gender and race equality schemes have been regularly reviewed and updated and lessons learnt have been incorporated into this strategy.

Some of the positive outcomes we have achieved as a result of our previous equality schemes:

- We ran the BME Citizen's Jury in November 2005
- We have signed up to a national initiative that allows young people on the move, such as traveller and gypsy children or children from asylum seeker or refugee families, to return library materials to any library in the U.K
- We have increased the language stock available on our mobile libraries
- We have improved the access to public buildings – 88% of buildings now meet the accessibility requirements
- We have improved communications with disabled people – we have held a number of British Sign Language (BSL) taster sessions and provided deaf awareness training for staff
- We have increased the number of employees declaring a disability from 294 in 2006/7 to 419 in December 2009
- We have developed a **Mental Health Charter** and signed up to the **Mindful Employer** initiative
- In response to the results of workforce monitoring, we have put in place a number of positive action schemes for black and disabled employees
- At the end of 2007, the Council adopted and publicised the **Carers' Charter** which sets out the Council's commitment to support employees who are carers
- The target to increase the number of reported domestic violence incidents by 5% has been met following increased investment into awareness raising and co-ordination during 2008
- We have increased the number of males accessing library facilities - from 36% to 41.5% in the past year
- We have established a new **Older People's Network** that brings together representatives from local older groups across Leicestershire.
- We adopted the nationally recognised 'Hear by Right' standards. This means that we will actively involve children and young people in the decisions that affect their lives
- We launched our **Hate Incident Monitoring Project** in 2007, which records hate incidents for all equality groups, and this has now been adopted by Leicestershire schools

- We have put in place a mandatory programme of equality and diversity learning and development for employees and have provided innovative training for our elected members
- An equality and diversity communications plan is in place and a range of activities have been undertaken, including *Equality and Diversity Week*, to communicate key messages to our employees and other stakeholders
- We have developed equality and diversity performance indicators to measure the progress we are making
- We have a good reputation, both locally and regionally, for our work on the equalities and diversity agenda and were asked by the *East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership* to develop a best practice case study to promote what we have done and continue to do.

About the people of Leicestershire

In 2008, the estimated population of the County was 645,800. The population can be broken down by equality group to provide us with a better understanding of the people we serve.

Gender

There is an equal gender split between women and men in Leicestershire - 50.4% and 49.6% respectively. However, there are more females over the age of 75 (61.8%) than males (38.2%).

Race/Ethnicity

10% of the population are from black and minority ethnic groups, making Leicestershire an ethnically and culturally diverse county. This compares to 42% in the City. 11% of the population in Oadby and Wigston are Indian Asian compared to only 1% in North West Leicestershire district and Melton.

We have 2,800 overseas nationals registered for a National Insurance number in 2005/2006, an increase of 1,140 (69%) on 2004/2005, with countries of origin including Poland, India, China, Philippines, Slovak Republic, South Africa, Republic of Latvia, France, Czech Republic and the Republic of Lithuania.

Disability

In Leicestershire, it is estimated that there are 42,113 physically disabled people between the ages of 18 and 64 with a moderate or serious physical disability. However, disability refers to both physical and mental disabilities. Nationally, it is estimated that 1 in 5 people will be affected by mental health issues at some time in their life. In Leicestershire this equates to 130,000 out of 645,800 residents. Mental health issues can be either short or long term, the most common being depression.

15.5% of the population have a long-term limiting illness, which compares with 10.5% from the 1991 Census. It is recognised that this will represent a broad range of disabilities.

We have 2,781 children with **Statements of Special Educational Needs**, which

equates to 2.8% of the total school population . 54.8% of these children are supported in mainstream schools, which increases to 62.4% when including units attached to these schools.

Sexual Orientation

Whilst no specific data is available, a wide range of research suggests that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people constitute 5–7 percent of the total adult population. However, this size estimate is based on the findings of a number of different and disparate sources. Others using estimates of cohabiting same-sex couples have found much lower estimates, for example the Labour Force Survey finds just 0.2 per cent of UK households consist of same-sex couples. Collectively, a number of surveys point to an LGB population estimate of around 2.0–2.5 per cent when capture is based on general population samples and the question asked focuses on the identity dimension of sexual orientation. In Leicestershire this would equate to approximately 16,000 people. Few datasets hold information on sexuality and, with the rejection of inclusion in the 2011 census, it is likely to remain difficult strand to analyse in terms of inequalities despite more recent inclusion on local or specific consultations. Moreover , 'transgender' is frequently a category coat-tailed on to the sexual orientation question, even though trans people may be straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Faith and belief (including no religion or belief)

There is a wealth of diversity in the religions and beliefs followed by local people, which include Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan and Sikh faiths.

The 2001 census shows that 74% of Leicestershire residents were Christian and 11% all other religions. This compares to the City where 45% of Leicester residents were Christian, 15% Hindu, 11% Muslim, 4% Sikh, and 8% of other religions. 15% of Leicestershire residents stated that they had no religion. A quarter of our mixed heritage population have no religion, whilst 2% of the County population are Hindu, 1% Sikh and 1% Muslim.

Age

Leicestershire has a relatively high proportion of older people, with the largest growing group the over 75's. However, proportions vary by district; Charnwood district has higher proportions of working age residents and lower proportions of older people. Loughborough centre has a high proportion of 16-29 year olds influenced by the presence of university students in Higher Education. Oadby & Wigston district has a higher proportion of older people.

We have approximately 152, 300 children and young people aged 19 and under, representing 22.6% of the total population.

What is our approach to equality, diversity and human rights?

Where we are now and where we want to be

There is visible commitment to the equality and diversity agenda by staff, elected members and senior officers at the County Council, which is evidenced by 96% of staff

agreeing that equality and diversity is everybody's business in the 2008 staff survey. There is strong leadership of the agenda and structures are in place to ensure that every department understands their equalities challenges and are actively tackling them.

We are using the **Equalities Framework for Local Government** to help us embed the best equality and diversity practice.

The Framework is a tool that helps us to measure the progress we are making towards embedding excellent equality and diversity practice.

There are 3 levels of the Framework: Level 1 – Developing; Level 2 – Achieving; Level 3 = Excellent.

The Council is at the 'Achieving' level of the Framework and was awarded the **Equality Mark Certificate** in February 2009. Our aim is to become 'Excellent' by March 2011.

In order to achieve the 'Excellent' level, we need to ensure we can evidence best practice across the 5 themes of the **Equality Framework**, listed below:

Theme 1 – Knowing your community and equality mapping

Theme 2 – Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

Theme 3 – Community engagement and satisfaction

Theme 4 – Responsive services and customer care

Theme 5 – Modern and diverse workforce

We have met many of the requirements of the 'Excellent' level. However, there are some that we have not yet achieved and actions to address these will be included in our **Equalities Action Plan**.

Where we are performing well - the Top 10

- Equality issues relevant to their communities are embedded in strategic plans, LAAs and local delivery plans.
- The Council is measuring progress on equality outcomes, is able to disaggregate data on relevant performance indicators and can demonstrate real outcomes that have improved equality in services and employment.
- The Council identifies the changing nature of its communities and their expectations and then prioritises its activities and explains its decisions.
- The Council provides good customer care by ensuring that services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff, who are equipped to cater to particular needs of clients where necessary
- The Council uses equality impact assessments to review all major new changes in policy
- There are forums for all equality stakeholders to share experiences and evaluate the Council's progress
- All parts of the Council can show tangible progress towards achieving outcomes which address persistent inequalities
- The Council has implemented action for equal pay outcomes and demonstrates progress on under representation, flexible working, access to training and development and promotes an inclusive working culture based on respect
- It reviews its equality strategy and public duty equality schemes every three years and seeks innovative, improvement challenges

- Members and officers have a reputation for championing equality issues and the County Council works with all strategic partners and the third sector to achieve defined equality outcomes

Where we need to improve - the Top 10

- We need to gather good evidence of the equalities profile of the community and our services users, based on national, regional and local data and review this regularly
- We need to develop more outcome-focused objectives and targets, better recording the positive outcomes we have achieved
- We need to improve the satisfaction and perceptions indicators from all sections of the community through better communication with all of our residents
- We need to make sure that our engagement policies and practices properly involve people from all equality groups and that monitoring is in place to measure the progress we make with this
- We need to ensure that our Elected Members, employees at all levels, key stakeholders and community members have an understanding of equality issues and their relevance for the authority, and understand their own responsibilities
- We need to continue to improve representation, in terms of all 6 equality 'strands', at senior levels of the organisation so that it more fully reflects the community we serve
- We need to improve and better co-ordinate our approach to equality impact assessments (EIA's), and ensure that their quality continues to improve
- We need to continue to address the issue of lower success rates for certain groups when applying for jobs at the County Council and build capacity in the workforce (through, for example, **Positive Action** measures) in order that all staff have the opportunity to realise their potential and progress within the Council
- We need to continue to support our staff as they manage external contracts to ensure services delivered through others meets the needs of our diverse community, and to ensure that we can evidence increasing satisfaction of procured services by all equality groups
- We need to strengthen our work with partners in the public sector to promote equality and diversity, to agree a shared vision of equality, to benchmark our progress against that of others, and to develop and share good practice

Part 2 – What are our equality, diversity and human rights priorities?

Who we spoke to

We spoke to a wide range of Leicestershire citizens, Council employees and other organisations between 11th November 2009 and 6th January 2010.

We held workshops with the **Leicestershire Working Together Forum (LWT)**, our **Black Workers Group**, **Disabled Workers Group** and **LGBT Workers Group**.

Although all the equality strands are well represented on LWT - the Council's external equality scrutiny and challenge group which has 3 places on the **Leicestershire Together Board** - we engaged with a number of other organisations who it was felt would provide a major contribution to the revision of the **Equality and Diversity Strategy**. These were the **Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living**, **Mencap**, the **Leicester and Leicestershire Race Equality Council**, **LeicestHERday**, and **Age Concern Leicestershire**.

A questionnaire, which encouraged anyone with any interest in the equalities agenda to participate in the development of the new strategy, was also placed on the Council's website and intranet. The questionnaire formed the basis of the workshop discussions.

What you told us

You told us that we should be focusing on:

- making the information we produce much easier to understand
- working closely with other statutory organisations in the sub-region to progress the equalities agenda
- communicating more effectively with you – explain what we are doing well and be honest when things have gone wrong
- developing a better understanding of who is using our services and whether they really do meet people's needs
- achieving positive outcomes for everybody rather than processes
- improving representation within our workforce and Elected Members, which should reflect the make-up of the communities we serve
- using equality impact assessments more effectively to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged by the Council's decisions, particularly in the current financial situation
- improving the way we engage and involve you in the Council's decision-making processes
- ensuring our staff and Elected Members really do understand the equality and diversity agenda and what their roles and responsibilities are
- gathering better information about all communities in Leicestershire to improve service design and delivery
- actively tackling discrimination and harassment and provide support to those who experience this (e.g. domestic violence)

Part 3 – What are we doing to ensure equality, diversity and human rights is considered in everything we do?

Identifying which of our functions and policies are relevant to equality

The *Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000*, *Disability Discrimination Act 2005* and the *Equality Act 2006* all state that we must identify everything we do that is relevant to the duty to promote equality. This is called our ‘assessment of relevance’.

We produced an assessment of relevance in 2008 and Council departments review this as part of their annual business planning. The outcome of this exercise helps departments to prioritise areas for equality impact assessment (EIA) and to develop a three-year departmental timetable for their completion.

The most up-to-date list of our functions and assessment of these for their relevance to equalities is available on our website:

http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/your_council/equality_and_diversity/equalities_assessment_relevance.htm

The equality impact assessment (EIA) process

We need to be sure that what we do meets the needs of our communities. We need to be confident that the policies we develop do not disadvantage a particular group of people. We need to ensure that all of our services, in terms of their design and delivery, are fair and accessible to everyone and that there is equality of outcome for all.

We have developed a process that enables us to check everything that we do for its impact on equality and diversity. We have called this process an equality impact assessment or EIA. Our EIA process considers all strands of equality – age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation - as well as community cohesion.

An EIA will be carried out on:

- new functions, policies, procedures and services as they are developed;
- significantly altered functions, policies, procedures and services; and
- over time, on existing functions and policies.

We publish completed EIAs on our website:

http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/your_council/equality_and_diversity/equality_impact_assessments.htm

Employment monitoring

We collect and publish information on our website about the profile of our workforce in terms of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation on an annual basis.

This includes an analysis of pay grades, starters and leavers, grievance, disciplinary, harassment and bullying, training applications and training received, employees on career grades and undergoing probationary periods. We also report on the profile of job applicants and their success rates.

The data collected is used to check whether any equality group is being disadvantaged by any of the Council's employment policies or procedures. If the data shows that this is the case, we take steps, such as designing and implementing relevant *Positive Action* measures, to address the issue.

Employment monitoring information and analysis is available on our website:
http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/your_council/equality_and_diversity/equality_workforce_planning.htm

Equality and diversity learning and development for staff and elected members

The Council's **Equality and Diversity Learning and Development Plan** supports our objectives of promoting equality and diversity and tackling discrimination.

It contains opportunities for learning and professional development - covering all equality strands - for employees on the equalities duties to ensure they are aware of the Council's, and their own, responsibilities.

The plan places a duty on all employees to undertake some form of learning and development in relation to promoting equality and valuing diversity.

Our Elected Members also take their learning and development needs seriously and have actively engaged in equality and diversity training and activity. As well as having access to the courses developed for staff, they receive regular written briefings on equality through the **Members Information Service** and have participated in some innovative forum theatre style learning which tackled common stereotypes and persistent discrimination.

Training is provided to everyone who has been, or is going to be, involved in conducting an EIA. This training has been designed, and is being delivered, internally and is run on a rolling basis throughout the year.

We evaluate the overall equality and diversity learning and development programme on a yearly basis and, if there is evidence to show that the training needs to be changed, we take relevant action to ensure that this happens.

Ensuring equality and diversity is considered in procurement and commissioning

The **Sustainable Commissioning and Procurement Strategy 2009-2013** aims to ensure that the real long-term benefits from our commissioning and procurement activities are generated for the people of Leicestershire. We want to improve the quality of life for the people of Leicestershire and make Leicestershire the best possible place to live and work for everyone.

Ensuring that equalities and diversity considerations are embedded into the procurement process, taking the opportunity to secure relevant wider community benefits, and making sure that our suppliers comply with employment law (as well as ensuring that their employees receive the right training and have the right skills to do their job) are all key priorities for the Council.

The strategy confirms that:

- We will ensure that equality considerations are built into all stages of the procurement process

- We do business with suppliers who meet their obligations under equalities legislation
- We will conduct equality impact assessments for all our commissioning and procurement activities
- We will require suppliers to provide appropriate equalities monitoring information
- Where appropriate, we will include social clauses as special conditions in terms of the performance of a contract
- We will consider ethical sourcing issues as part of our normal procurement practice
- We will ensure that in the event that Council staff are transferred as a result of an outsourcing exercise that TUPE Regulations and the '**Best Value Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Workforce Matters**' are complied with, including subsequent monitoring
- We will continue to maintain the highest standards of safeguarding when commissioning services for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Performance Indicators for equality and diversity

We have identified a number of equality and diversity performance indicators which we have embedded into our corporate performance management process.

The indicators cover both employment and service delivery.

We report quarterly to the Equalities Board on progress made towards these indicators.

The Performance Indicators are available on our website: [TO INSERT LINK](#)

Arrangements for reviewing progress against the Single Equalities, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy

Decision-making and roles and responsibility

The **Single Equalities and Diversity Strategy** will be considered by the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) on 11th March 2010.

Once approved, the draft strategy will be presented to Cabinet on 6th April 2010 for consideration and approval. Once approved by Cabinet, the draft strategy will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 21st April 2010.

A report containing comments from the Scrutiny Committee and the final version of the strategy will return to Cabinet for approval on 4th May 2010 before being presented to Full Council on 19th May 2010 for agreement.

We will produce an annual report on our progress in meeting our duty to promote equality and diversity. The report will be submitted to the Equalities Board, Cabinet, and Scrutiny Committee and as appropriate to the Employment Committee.

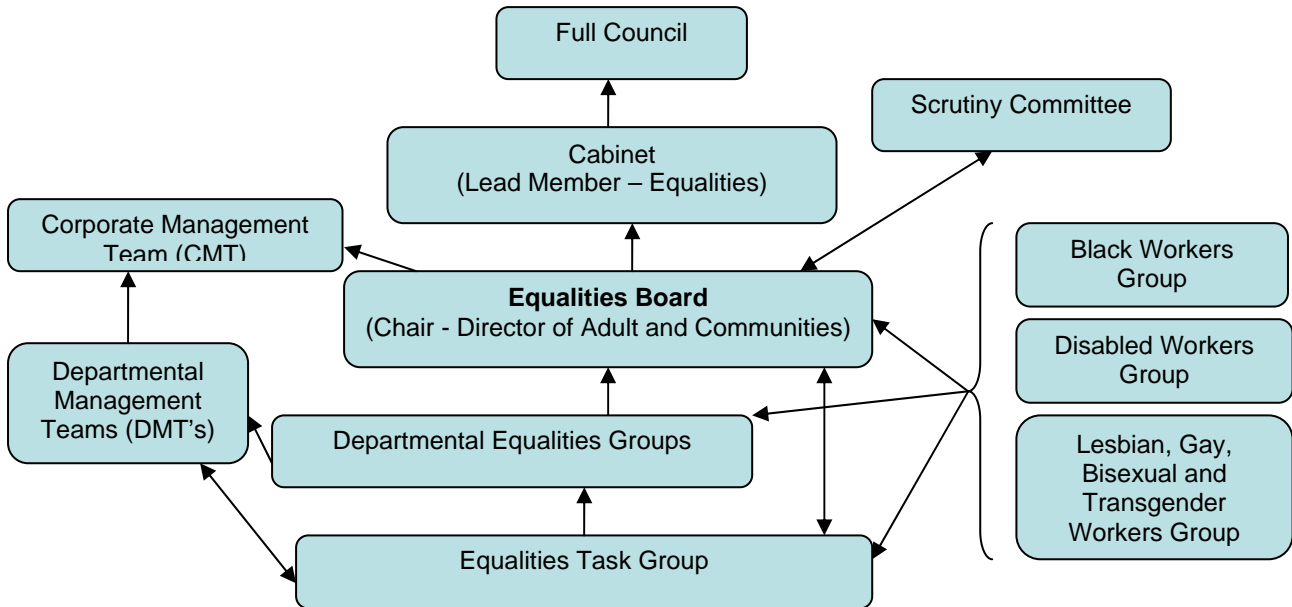
Responsibility for equality issues has been assigned to a named Cabinet Lead Member.

The Council's Corporate Management Team is responsible for the Council's **Single Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy** and is alerted to any under performance.

The Equalities Board is chaired by the Director of Adults and Communities and consists of the chairs from each departmental equality working group, other senior officers and representatives from each of the three established workers groups. The Board gives strategic direction and oversight to the delivery of the strategy.

The departmental equalities working groups are responsible for ensuring delivery of equalities actions at a service level. Departmental Management Teams receive regular reports for action.

Equalities reporting structure



The annual monitoring process

March - Service delivery plans agreed, incorporating actions from the **Equalities Action Plan** and service level equalities actions (from completed EIA's and outcomes of consultation exercises).

September - Annual consultation with equality groups and employees (including workers groups) on progress against strategy outcomes and to identify any new actions needed.

November - Interim review of the strategy by the Equalities Board, taking account of outcome of consultation with equality groups and employees.

February - Annual report produced on progress against the strategy to the Equalities Board and Lead Member for Equalities.

Equalities legislation

Legislation outlawing discrimination on the grounds of gender and race has been in force since the mid-1970s. More recently, legislation covering disability, religion or belief, age and sexual orientation has been introduced. This Corporate Equality Plan will help the authority to meet the requirements of current and future legislation on equality and diversity.

Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amended)

This gives an individual a right to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment, where the man and the woman are doing: like work; work rated as equivalent under an analytical job evaluation study; or work that is proved to be of equal value.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex. Sex discrimination is unlawful in employment, education, advertising or when providing housing, goods, services or facilities. It is unlawful to discriminate because someone is married, in employment or advertisements for jobs.

Race Relations Act 1976

The Act prohibits discrimination on racial grounds in the areas of employment, education, and the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Outlaws the discrimination of disabled people in employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services or the administration or management of premises.

The Human Rights Act 1998

Introduced in 2000, this legislation gives further effect in the UK to rights contained in the European Convention of Human Rights. This Act:

- makes it unlawful for a public body to breach Convention rights, unless an Act of Parliament meant it could not have acted differently
- allows cases to be dealt with in a UK court or tribunal; and
- requires all UK legislation to be given a meaning that complies with the Convention rights, if that is possible.

The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

The Act seeks to prevent sex discrimination relating to gender reassignment. It clarified the law for transsexual people in relation to equal pay and treatment in employment and training.

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

Places a statutory duty on all public bodies to promote equal opportunity, eliminate racial discrimination and promote good relations between different racial groups.

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulation 2003

The directive protects against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief in employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2003

The directive protects against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in employment, vocational training, promotion, and working conditions.

Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulation 2003

Introduced new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, new burden of proof requirements, continuing protection after employment ceases, new exemption for a determinate job requirement and the removal of certain other exemptions.

Civil Partnerships Act 2004

Provides legal recognition and parity of treatment for same-sex couples and married couples, including employment benefits and pension rights.

Gender Recognition Act 2004

The purpose of the Act is to provide transsexual people with legal recognition in their acquired gender. Legal recognition follows from the issue of a full gender recognition certificate by a gender recognition panel.

The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005

Introduces new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, explicitly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave, sets out the extent to which it is discriminatory to pay a woman less than she would otherwise have been paid due to pregnancy or maternity issues.

Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005

Introduces a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality for disabled people.

Employment Equality (Age) Regulation 2006

Protects against discrimination on grounds of age in employment and vocational training. Prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment and instructions to discriminate.

Equality Act 2006

Establishes a single *Commission for Equality and Human Rights* by 2007 that replaces the three existing commissions. Introduces a positive duty on public sector bodies to promote equality of opportunity between women and men and eliminate sex discrimination. Protects access discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in terms of access to good facilities and services.

Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

The Act seeks to stop people from intentionally using threatening words or behaviour to stir up hatred against somebody because of what they believe.

The Autism Act 2009

Awaits *UK Autism Strategy* and guidance from Secretary of State.

Universal Declaration on Human Rights

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The Declaration arose directly from the experience of the Second World War and represents the first global expression of rights to which all human beings are entitled. It consists of 30 articles which have been elaborated in subsequent international treaties, regional human rights instruments, national constitutions and laws.

European Convention on Human Rights

The *European Convention on Human Rights*, otherwise known as the *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, is a convention that was passed by the Council of Europe in 1950 in response to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which was drawn up by the United Nations (UN) in 1948. The aim of the convention is to give people who live in European states a list of civil and political rights which the member states of the *Council of Europe* believed every person in Europe should expect to have.

Human Rights Act 1998

The *Human Rights Act 1998* gives further legal effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the *European Convention on Human Rights*. These rights not only impact matters of life and death, they also affect the rights you have in your everyday life: what you can say and do, your beliefs, your right to a fair trial and other similar basic entitlements.

Forthcoming legislation:

The Equality Bill 2009

This Bill is currently making its way through Parliament and is currently (January 2010) being debated in the House of Lords. It aims to simplify and modernise discrimination law.

For more information, please contact us...

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