

COMMITTEE:	CABINET
DATE:	7th NOVEMBER 2002
SUBJECT:	COMPREHENSIVE EQUALITY POLICY
REPORT OF:	CORPORATE PROJECTS MANAGER
Ward(s):	ALL
Purpose:	To present the proposed Comprehensive Equality Policy to Cabinet
Contact:	Monica Elsen, Corporate Projects Manager, Telephone 01323 415265 or internally on extension 5265.
Recommendations:	Cabinet to approve the Policy

1.0	<u>Background</u>
1.1	In October 2001 the new Equality Standard for local government was introduced. In April 2002 it became the corporate health BVI 2, replacing the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) indicators. Also the Race Relations Act 1976 was amended in 2000, placing a general duty on all local authorities to have a Race Equality Scheme in place by 31 st May 2002. Eastbourne Borough Council approved its Race Equality Scheme (RES) at full Council on 24 th April 2002, well within the deadline.
1.2	In order to ascertain whether the Council was in a position to successfully implement current and pending legislation, a Best Value Review (BVR) of Equalities was held. The outcome of the review was presented to Scrutiny Committee on 10 th June, and to Cabinet on 1 st July. The Best Value improvement plan was approved by full Council on 24 th July.

1.3	Both documents contain action plans that commit the Council to progress through both its RES and each of the five levels of the Equality Standard in order to promote equality of opportunity in regard to race, gender and disability.
2.0	<u>The Comprehensive Equality Policy</u>
2.1	The Equality Standard has a series of five levels. Every local authority should systematically work through each level. In order to achieve the policy and planning stage of level 1 every local authority should have in place a Comprehensive Equality Policy.
2.2	The Council in approving the action plans contained within the BVR of Equalities and the RES, has shown its commitment to work systematically through all five levels. Both documents will be appended to and form part of the Policy.
2.3	The Comprehensive Equality Policy has expanded the range of equality categories set out in the Standard (race, gender and disability) to include religion and belief, martial status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and persons with dependants and persons without.
2.4	The reason for expanding equality categories is to accommodate for future legislation and avoid having to repeat equality reviews again and again for different categories.
2.5	<p>Future legislation includes:</p> <p>Race and Sexual Orientation mid 2003</p> <p>Religion and belief December 2003</p> <p>Disability October 2004</p> <p>Age Discrimination December 2006</p>
3.0	<u>Consultation</u>

3.1	<p>Consultation has already taken place during the BVR of Equalities and in drafting the Council's RES. These two documents form the major part of the proposed Comprehensive Equality Policy and as such a decision was made not to undertake further consultation as this would be duplicating work. However, EAVS and Sompriti have been made aware of the expanded equality categories and both welcome and support this initiative.</p>
4.0	<p><u>Implications</u></p>
4.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The Council is committed to establishing a corporate budget to cover equality initiatives. A bid will be presented through the Council's budgetary process.</p>
4.2	<p><u>Equality</u></p> <p>The proposed Comprehensive Equality Policy strengthens the Council's commitment to progress the equality agenda and achieve its ambition for Eastbourne to become an inclusive society.</p>
5.0	<p><u>Summary</u></p>
5.1	<p>Under the Equality Standard for local government Corporate Health BVI 2, there is a requirement to produce a Comprehensive Equality Policy to show local authority policy and planning commitment at level 1 of the Standard. The Policy is attached as an appendix to this report.</p>
<p>Monica Elsen</p> <p>Corporate Projects Manager</p>	

Background Papers:

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

The Council's Race Equality Scheme

Best Value Review of Equalities

The Equality Standard for local government

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.

me/p&s/Equality/Comp Eq Plan/Cabinet Report Eq Policy