

COMMITTEE:	Cabinet
DATE:	6 th February 2002
SUBJECT:	Corporate Equality Action Plan
REPORT OF:	Corporate Projects Manager
Ward(s):	All
Purpose:	To Present The Proposed Corporate Equality Plan To Cabinet
Contact:	Monica Elsen, Corporate Projects Manager, Telephone 01323 415265 or internally on extension 5265.
Recommendations:	Cabinet to approve the Plan

1.0	<u>Background</u>
1.1	The Equality Standard for Local Government has five levels of achievement and each level has four equality activity areas. The first level contains a policy and planning section that calls for the Council to have in place a Comprehensive Equality Policy and a Corporate Equality Plan. The Cabinet approved the Comprehensive Equality Policy in November 2002.

1.2	<p>The Equality Standard became a Best Value Performance Indication in April 2002 and local authorities will be expected to provide evidence of their progress. We will be audited against the following criteria:</p> <p>§ has the authority carried out a self-assessment review</p> <p>§ has evidence to support its findings</p> <p>§ does the evidence support the level claimed for the whole authority in all of the four equality activity areas</p>
2.0	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Corporate Equality Action Plan</u></p>
2.1	<p>The Plan details how the Council will achieve the commitments made in the Comprehensive Equality Policy. In its entirety it covers over 130 pages and for purposes of brevity Cabinet is receiving the main body of the Plan only. A copy of the full version is available for comment in the Members Room.</p>
2.2	<p>The Plan also outlines both general and specific equality training for Councillors, Corporate Management Team, Heads of Service and their teams, some of which has already been delivered.</p>
2.3	<p>The Plan provides information that will enable Heads of Service and their teams to better understand equality issues through conducting impact assessments of the service/policies/functions covered in the Council's Race Equality Scheme. The outcome of assessments will enable equality objectives and considerations to be incorporated into policy, service planning and service actions that will then form part of staff appraisals, training and development.</p>
2.4	<p>The Plan also sets out the composition of the Equality Steering Group and the internal Corporate Equality Planning Group and how each group will work towards mainstreaming equality.</p>

2.4	The main focus of the work to be carried out in regard to promoting equal opportunity will come from a local viewpoint. At the time of writing this report not all the relevant statistics of the Census 2001 have been published, such as ethnic population. These are due for publication in early 2003. Once published these figures will enable us to target our efforts appropriately and in line with local need.
2.5	The Plan covers many other aspects such as an explanation of equality categories and the legal definition of discrimination pertaining to race, sex and disability. New legislation covering religion and belief, sexual orientation and age will have the similar definitions, although age is likely to be more involved due to the complexity and scope of the subject.
3.0	<u>Next Steps</u>
3.1	The Plan forms part of the Corporate Service and Financial Plan 'A Place for Everyone', and also includes every service action under this corporate aim stated in divisional Service and Financial Plans. The next step will be to monitor progress against service targets on a departmental basis through Departmental Management Teams, and presenting quarterly monitoring reports to the Corporate Management Team and the Equality Action Planning Group. Progress will be reported in the Corporate Equality Report that will be published annually in the Best Value Performance Plan.
3.2	<u>Equality impact assessments due to be conducted in year 1 will be completed by May 2003. The outcome of these assessments and action taken will also form part of the annual Corporate Equality Report.</u>
3.3	<u>Examples of existing good practice within the Council in regard to social inclusion, access to services and consultation mechanisms, indeed any work that promotes equal opportunities will be shared and individual services will be encouraged to adopt good practice.</u>

3.4	<u>Sompriti, as detailed in the Race Equality Scheme, will be commissioned to undertake consultation with Black and minority ethnic (bme) groups in Eastbourne throughout 2003/04. During this year the Equality Action Planning Group will begin to build relationships and establish links with the bme community and it is hoped in 2004/05 that we will be able to conduct our own consultation/focus groups and gain purposeful feedback.</u>
3.5	<u>Progress made against the targets set out in the implementation plan of the Best Value Review of Equalities and the action plan of the Race Equality Scheme will be monitored and reported on via the Equality Action Planning Group.</u>
4.0	<u>Consultation</u>
4.1	<p>The Corporate Equality Action Plan is an internal document and therefore it has not been necessary to consult externally. However, members of the Equality Steering Group will receive a copy of the Plan for discussion.</p> <p>The local Unison Equality Officer has received a copy of this Plan for comment.</p>
5.0	<u>Implications</u>
5.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The Council is in the final stages of agreeing the Council budget for 2003/04.</p>
4.2	<p><u>Equality</u></p> <p>The proposed Corporate Equality Action Plan strengthens the Council's commitment to progress the equality agenda and achieve its ambition for Eastbourne to become an inclusive and cohesive society.</p>

4.3	<p><u>Human</u></p> <p>The Corporate Projects Manager will continue to manage and co-ordinate the implementation of the Council's equality agenda.</p> <p>Five officers have been designated as Departmental Equality Representatives and their role is to assist the Council mainstream equalities. With the approval of this Plan these officers will begin to receive training that will enable them to offer advice and support to their departmental colleagues.</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 Corporate Equality Plan to show local authority policy and planning commitment at level 1 of the Standard. The Plan is attached as an appendix to this report.</p>
<p>Monica Elsen</p> <p>Corporate Projects Manager</p>	
<p>Background Papers:</p> <p>The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:</p> <p>The Council's Race Equality Scheme</p> <p>Best Value Review of Equalities</p> <p>The Equality Standard for local government</p> <p>The Comprehensive Equality Policy</p> <p>CRE's Ethnic Monitoring – a guide for public authorities (non-statutory)</p> <p>Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 – Capacity building in local authorities</p> <p>(Employers Organisation/dialog Diversity in Action in Local Government)</p> <p>Audit Commission - Learning from Audit, Inspection and Research – Equality and Diversity</p> <p>Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice 'Rights of Access' – Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises</p> <p>Anti-discrimination Legislation – Race, Sex and Disability</p> <p>Disability Access Rights Advice Service – reference pack for advisers</p> <p>Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Website/Circulars</p> <p>To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.</p>	

me/p&s/Equality/Corp Eq Plan/Cabinet Report Corporate Equality Plan
