

## POLICY FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CENTRAL SERVICES

### ANNUAL REPORT ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

#### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Policy, Finance and Audit Committee on the progress made by the Council to embed Equality and Diversity within service and policy development and delivery, work undertaken to meet its public sector equality duty as required by equality legislation, but more importantly to deliver services which are accessible and meet the needs of Melton residents.

#### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Note the progress made between August 2011 to September 2012 in responding to the demands of the Equality Act 2010;**
- 2.2 **Note the Equality Peer assessment report at Appendix A and outcome of an 'Achieving' level status;**
- 2.3 **Note the equality and diversity action plan at Appendix B;**
- 2.4 **Note the disbandment of the 'Partnership' and the alternative resourcing arrangements as a result of this.**

#### 3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Preparation for the peer assessment saw a coordination and input of resources from across the Council to document the current state of play and evidence activities around the Equality and Diversity agenda.
- 3.2 Following an external peer review coordinated through the Local Government Association (LGA) Melton Borough Council was given the status of an 'Achieving' level council. The report from this process is attached at Appendix A for Members' consideration.
- 3.3 In line with the criteria set out for an 'Achieving' Council and as a result of the recommendations of the peer assessment report an action plan has been developed at Appendix B. This seeks to close off the gaps which remained against the 'Achieving' criteria as at the time of assessment.
- 3.3 A period of embedding into business as usual will follow the timescales for delivery of the outputs as outlined within the action plan.
- 3.4 The 'Partnership' has formally disbanded in 2012 leaving a gap in resourcing for Equality and Diversity in the Council. In this context officers have secured the consultancy support of the Equality and Diversity resource previously employed by

the 'Partnerships' lead authority, North West Leicestershire District Council. This support equates to circa 90 hours.

3.6 The intention is for this resource to deliver the activities required to close any of the gaps identified on assessment at the 'Achieving' level with follow up embedding of these activities in day to day operation out of scope.

3.7 Further internal resourcing options are being considered in order to meet the Council's on-going commitments to maintain the 'Achieving' Level status and meet its Equality and Diversity duty.

#### **4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 In order to ensure good corporate governance the council is required by legislation to ensure that in the exercise of its functions, it has paid due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and fosters good relations.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The councils annual budget associated to resourcing for Equality and Diversity is £8k.

#### **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

6.1 There are no specific legal implications aspects to this report. However, failure to comply with the public sector equality duties could result in the council facing a legal challenge and its reputation being damaged.

#### **7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY**

7.1 There are no specific community safety aspects to this report.

#### **8.0 EQUALITIES**

8.1 Good practise requires that regular equality and diversity progress reports are provided for scrutiny against agreed objectives for the council.

#### **9.0 RISKS**

9.1 There are no direct risks associated from this report.

#### **10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 There are no specific climate change implications relating to this report.

#### **11.0 CONSULTATION**

11.1 There has been no direct consultation with officers of the council or the communities of the borough. The delivery of the equality and diversity agenda is driven by equality legislation.

## 12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 There will be a positive impact on all wards as a result of the delivery of the equality and diversity agenda.

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Date: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2012

Appendices: Appendix A - Peer Review Report  
Appendix B - Action Plan

Background Papers: N/A

Reference: