

## FULL COUNCIL

12 OCTOBER 2011

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CENTRAL SERVICES

#### LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP – SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

##### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Council and seek approval of the draft Leicestershire District Councils' Equality and Diversity Partnership – Single Equality Scheme 2011 – 2014.

##### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members of the Council consider, comment and approve the Partnership Scheme.
- 2.2 Delegated authority be provided to the Equality and Diversity Partnership Manager in consultation with the Head of Central Services to consider and include as appropriate any comments received following external consultation.

##### KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Melton Borough Council has been working to a number of separate Equality and Diversity Policies since 2005. These were developed and implemented as required in line with equality legislation and were the Race Equality Scheme, Disability Equality Scheme and the Gender Equality Scheme.
- 3.2 With the introduction in October 2010 of the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty coming into force on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011, the previous equality and diversity schemes that the council worked to needed to be reviewed and refreshed to bring them into line with the new legislative requirements.
- 3.3 The draft scheme addresses all the current nine dimensions of equality:
- Age
  - Disability,
  - Gender/Sex,
  - Gender reassignment,
  - Marriage and Civil Partnership,
  - Maternity and Pregnancy,
  - Race/Ethnicity,
  - Religion/belief/non belief,
  - Sexual orientation.
- 3.4 Members of the The Council should note that though there is no longer a specific requirement within the current equality legislation to have a separate and distinct equality and diversity scheme/policy in place, there is a requirement for a local authority to prepare and publish its equality objectives and commitments by 6<sup>th</sup> April 2012\* and at least every four years thereafter.

3.5 Members will be aware that the council is a member of the Leicestershire District Councils Equality and Diversity Partnership (“Partnership”) and as such many of the equality objectives for delivery are being delivered jointly through partnership working.

3.6 It therefore seemed logical and efficient to produce a Partnership Single Equality Scheme. There are objectives detailed in the action plan which relate purely to Melton, whilst others which apply to all partners.

3.7 The draft scheme was considered by all partner members and their respective staff during July 2011 and comments received have been considered with the scheme being amended as appropriate.

3.8 The draft scheme is currently undergoing external consultation with local community groups and with groups sub – regionally. The external consultation is ending on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011. The outcome of this consultation is still being considered.

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

4.1 The council’s current equality schemes need updating and bringing into line with the requirements of the public sector equality duty and the new protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

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

5.1 The council has committed £8,000 to the “Partnership” for the period November 2010 to October 2011 and a proportionate amount until March 2012 to ensure the objectives detailed for Melton by the “Partnership” are delivered as required. Where objectives have been identified for delivery by other Melton services these costs will be need to be borne by them.

#### **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 There is a significant body of new equality legislation which is constantly changing that the Council is required to adhere to. The scheme and the associated action plan as it relates to Melton Borough Council will ensure that the council is complying with these requirements.

## 9.0 RISKS

- 9.1 There is a potential risk to the council if there is a failure to recognise the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and adhere to the specific duty implementation deadlines.

## 10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

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

## 11.0 CONSULTATION

- 11.1 The draft scheme has been produced as a result of consultation with officers of the council and other Partners. External consultation is currently undergoing and comments received will be considered and incorporated as appropriate.

## 12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

- 12.1 There will be a positive impact on all wards as a result of the implementation and delivery of the scheme.

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Contact Officer:	Chhaya McDonald. Equality and Diversity Manager for the Leicestershire District Council's Equality and Diversity Partnership
Date:	8 <sup>th</sup> September 2011
Appendices:	Leicestershire District Councils Equality and Diversity Partnership – Single equality Scheme
Background Papers:	Equality Act 2010 Equality and Human Rights Commission: A guide for public authorities Government Equalities Office: Public sector Equality Duty
Reference:	

6<sup>th</sup> April 2012\* this date is current as of 8<sup>th</sup> September 2011 and may change.