



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	22 March 2007
Report from:	Performance & Improvement Manager
Title of Report:	Equality Scheme – Gender Equality Duty
Agenda Item Number:	10

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present an action plan that will complement the current Equality Scheme action plan, and ensure that we address the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty. The gender duty action plan forms Appendix 1 of this report.
- 1.2 Local authorities are required by law to publish a Gender Equality Scheme by April 2006. Our existing, all-strand, Equality Scheme was approved by Council in November 2006, and has been incorporated into the revised Corporate Equality Plan, which was approved by Council in January 2007.
- 1.3 It is recommended that Council considers and approves the attached gender duty action plan.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 This action plan includes the requirement to consult employees, trade union representatives and the community on gender (and transgender) issues.
- 2.2 The action plan has been developed in consultation with the Equality and Diversity Working Group, and by partnership with the other district councils in County Durham, Durham County Council, Police, Fire & Rescue, and Durham University.
- 2.3 A wide range of consultation was undertaken on the development of the council's Equality Scheme, of which this action plan will be a part.

3. CORPORATE PLAN AND PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The council's equality scheme contributes to Priority 1 – Customer Excellence, by seeking to ensure that all people within our community get the services they need. The requirement for developing the equality scheme action plan arises from legislation. However the work can be seen as part and parcel of development of the councils overall Equality Plan for which there is a specific proposal within the Corporate Plan to achieve (Customer Excellence 3)

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications and Value for Money Statement

The actions arising from this scheme will largely be met from existing budgets. By involving employees, their representatives, and the community in the design and development of services, it should be possible to secure real service improvement, thereby contributing to the value for money position.

4.2 Legal

The existing all-strand equality scheme already addresses most of the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty 2007. This gender duty action plan is necessary to meet the requirement to consult with stakeholders.

4.3 Personnel

There are no personnel implications. Actions will be delivered by existing staff.

4.4 Other Services

It is envisaged that adoption of this equality scheme action plan will impact on all services across the council to some degree, in terms of different ways of working. This will be managed by the Equality and Diversity Working Group.

4.5 Diversity

This gender duty action plan will bolster the council's equality scheme which forms a core part of the council's suite of equality and diversity policies.

4.6 Risk

Key risks are set out in the equality scheme risk assessment which is a background paper to this report. The key risks associated with the equality scheme are:

- Conflicting priorities / lack of capacity, leading to non delivery of the actions within the scheme
- Failure to meet customer expectations, leading to loss of faith in the council and an unwillingness to engage.

- Failure to understand customer expectations, leading to the council delivering the wrong priorities

4.7 Crime and Disorder

There are no specific issues relating to crime and disorder in this gender duty action plan, however, the research and consultation actions will take crime and disorder issues in relation to gender into consideration.

4.8 Other Implications

Gender is a cross-cutting issue, and as such will affect all aspects of the council's service delivery, employees and Members.

5. BACKGROUND, POSITION STATEMENT AND OPTION APPRAISAL

5.1 The Gender Equality Duty has placed both general and specific duties upon local authorities to develop and publish a gender equality scheme by April 2007.

5.2 The Council already has an all-strand equality scheme in place, which forms an integral part of the Corporate Equality Plan. The equality scheme was approved by Council in November 2007, and the revised Corporate Equality Plan 2007 was approved by Council in January 2007.

5.3 The existing equality scheme already has an action plan attached to it. This gender duty action plan will supplement it, and will be monitored as a single document by the Equality and Diversity Working Group.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that Council approves the attached Gender Duty Action Plan, for inclusion in the council's approved Equality Scheme.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS / DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO

7.1 Corporate Equality Plan 2007

7.2 Corporate Plan 2006/2009

7.3 Community Engagement and Involvement Strategy May 2006

7.4 Risk Assessment

Julie Underwood
Performance and Improvement Manager
9 March 2007
Version: 1.0

Contact: 0191 387 2220, or julieunderwood@chester-le-street.gov.uk