

APPENDIX A

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY

We are here to serve everyone who lives, works or visits the town. We will always strive for greater fairness and equality of opportunity for everyone. This is fundamental to achieving our policy objectives.

This booklet sets out our equal opportunities policy and strategy. We can produce it in a range of languages, styles and formats.

If you would like any further information, please contact Shahzad Choudhry (Equalities and Diversity Officer) on 01438 242581.

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Stevenage Borough Council Equality Action Plan 2005 – 2006

Foreword

Foreword to be cleared by Leader of the Council Brian Hall and Chief Executive Ian Paske before the document is produced for the public.

The Council's Policy Statement on Equal Opportunities

Equalities – our ambitions

Stevenage Borough Council is committed to equality of opportunity for all people regardless of age, colour, ethnic or national origin, class, religious belief, race, gender, disability, sexuality, marital status or trade union membership.

Valuing equality and diversity is an integral part of our aim to create a town we can all be proud of, a town in which people want to live, work, invest, do business and visit.

We have selected the ambition of a fair and inclusive community as one of our main ambitions to drive improvements in areas that research showed as being most important to local people. To deliver on this ambition we have identified equality and diversity as a priority that will be focussed on in order to achieve this ambition.

We aim to be fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory in carrying out all our responsibilities. We value the diversity of the communities who live in Stevenage and of our work force. We are committed to ensuring that our delivery of services and employment practices reflect the highest possible equality standards.

Our commitment to equalities

We are committed to delivering a programme of action that covers our role as a provider of services, as an employer and more generally as the leader of our community. We will monitor progress in delivering our action plans.

Everyone who works for the Council will be expected to carry out their duties with due regard to this equal opportunities policy and strategy.

We will ensure:

- That we do not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability or impairment, gender, HIV status, marital status, nationality, national origin, race, religious belief, responsibility for dependents, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, trade union membership, or any conditions which cannot be shown to be justifiable

- That records of gender, ethnic origin and disabilities of all those seeking services from or employment with the Council will be collected, maintained and monitored; the records maintained will not be made public and will only be used for monitoring purposes within the Council. Conditions under the Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information 2005 are adhered to.
- That when employing contractors and other agencies to undertake work for and on behalf of the Council regard will be paid to the Council's equality policies and general guidelines as set out in the Council's Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- That when awarding grants to voluntary organisations, we will ensure that recipients clearly demonstrate their commitment to equal opportunities policies and provide evidence of implementation of such policies.
- That the Council's workforce is consulted with regard to the promotion and development of the Council's equal opportunities policies and objectives and are aware of their responsibilities to promote and implement the Council's policies.
- That each service unit develops, reviews and monitors detailed equalities actions within their service plans to ensure that the Council's policy is adhered to and nominates an appropriate officer to co-ordinate equality issues.
- That information is widely available, including translations, larger print and on tape as appropriate.
- That improved physical access to Council premises for people with disabilities is given a high priority
- All committees give formal consideration to the equal opportunities implications for the policy decisions they take.

This policy statement will inform all decisions taken by the Council and all actions by its employees.

As an employer

As one of the largest employers in the Borough, we will:

- Demonstrate our commitment to equality in all aspects of employment, including recruitment, retention, career development, training, promotion and well-being;
- Take positive action with a view to ensuring that our workforce at all levels reflects the communities it serves;

- Inform all employees of this policy and of their rights to protection from discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
- Continue to review our recruitment, selection, promotion and other human resources practices to make sure that they positively respond to the demands of the equal opportunities policy;
- Create a supportive working environment where all employees work free from discrimination and harassment;
- Treat failure to comply with this policy as a disciplinary offence.

As a provider of services

We provide services both directly and by working with other organisations and we will promote equality of opportunity for all those who live, work or visit the borough by:

- Providing accessible information about services available;
- Delivering services in ways which are appropriate to local needs and, whenever possible, removing barriers which may deny access;
- Using our powers to ensure that organisations providing services on the Council's behalf operate in accordance with the aims of this policy;

As a community leader

We will take a positive lead on promoting equality of opportunity in our community by:

- Promoting good relationships between members of the community including those who might potentially suffer discrimination;
- Monitoring policies and procedures to assess their effectiveness in achieving our aims and use audit and scrutiny processes to assess performance;
- Regularly reviewing our policy and procedures to make sure that they comply with legislation and good practice;
- Consulting internally and externally on people's perception of the Council's approach to equality and diversity;
- Working with our partners in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to ensure the best outcomes for the people of Stevenage.

Accountability

The Executive has collective Member responsibility for the delivery of the Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan. An Executive Councillor has been appointed to 'champion' equalities and ensure that equality and diversity is treated as a corporate priority.

The corresponding Scrutiny and Review Panels are responsible for scrutinising the Strategy and Action Plan under the overall aegis of the Scrutiny Overview Committee.

The Strategic Management Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Equality and Diversity Action Plan is delivered. An Equalities Board led by the Head of Community Development has been established and is responsible for the overall management of the Strategy and Action Plan.

Strategic Directors and their Heads of Service/First Reports are responsible for ensuring its implementation in practice and for monitoring its performance.

The success of this strategy can only be measured by action by delivering real improvements and not by what we say we are going to do.

Introduction

In a just society, everyone should get an equal chance to learn, work, and live free from discrimination and prejudice. Discrimination against any person or group cannot be justified. Indeed, it is illegal.

Our Ambitions are the guiding values under which we operate:

- Community Leadership
- The Regeneration of Stevenage
- Good Housing for All
- Transformed Council Services

The diversity of the people of Stevenage is a vital asset. When it comes to delivering services, or recruiting and managing our employees, we will not discriminate against people on the basis of:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- HIV status
- Race
- Religious belief
- Sexuality

This will also apply to companies who are contracted to supply goods or services to the Council.

This document is a statement of our commitment to challenging inequality, discrimination and disadvantage, both as a provider of a vast range of services for local people, and as one of the biggest employers in the town.

It sets out how we will shape our services and employment practices, and the action we will take over the next few years. Our plans have been updated to take into account the government's targets for Best Value, implementing the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equality Standard for Local Government together with the recommendations of the McPherson report.

Equality of Opportunity is at the heart of everything the council does. All our policies, service plans, practices and procedures will reflect and incorporate this objective.

Stevenage Borough Council recognises that:

- We need to put the needs of the public first and provide fair, responsive and accountable local government;
- Our citizens, customers and service users will have a diverse range of needs and our services need to reflect this;
- Our work force should be appointed in a non-discriminatory way. We aim to reflect our communities and customer/service users at all levels of responsibility;
- Those who receive our services are best placed to inform us about how well we do our job and how it can be done better. Consultation with all our customers and communities is a core part of our approach to equality and diversity;
- Our performance requires regular monitoring and review, to ensure that our services are provided fairly and that our employment practices are non-discriminatory;
- We need to abide by our legal obligations and duties including the Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Acts, Disability Discrimination Act and the Human Rights Act as well as all other related legislation;
- Elected members and staff need to know and understand our equality and diversity policy and practice and their individual responsibilities.

Community Leadership

Stevenage is different to its neighbouring districts. It is a medium sized town of 80,000 people set in a relatively wealthy, semi-rural county, but unlike most other Hertfordshire districts, Stevenage has the kind of needs and problems usually associated with large urban areas. There is a danger that the different needs of the Stevenage community are overlooked when presented to national, regional and county-level decision makers. The Stevenage Community Strategy document highlights the demographic breakdown of the town. The council in its role as a community leader intends to:

- Promote good relationships between members of the community including those who might potentially suffer discrimination;
- Regularly review our policy and procedures to make sure that they comply with legislation and good practice;
- Work with our partners in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to ensure the best outcomes for the people of Stevenage;

- Work in partnership with all sections of the community;
- Encourage and support people to actively participate in community life;
- Celebrate the wide variety of lifestyles and cultures in the borough;
- Encourage others to adopt this commitment;
- Work with others to provide an environment free from harassment and violence.

Equal Opportunity in Employment

Stevenage Borough Council is committed to the equal treatment of employees and job applicants. We will aim to make sure our recruitment and selection procedures are non-discriminatory; we want to employ the best people to deliver our services. As a major employer in the borough, we will recruit a workforce that, at all levels of the organisation, reflects the borough's diversity.

We will monitor, regularly and comprehensively the outcomes of all our recruitment decisions, positive action measures and training opportunities. In this way we will ensure continuous improvement.

As an employer the Council aims to:

- Practice fair treatment in all employment practices, including recruitment and selection, training, promotion, redundancy, dismissal, pay and other conditions of employment;
- Monitor the make-up of our work force and of people who apply for jobs to ensure that our systems are fair, and that our work force reflects the local population;
- Provide a working environment that is safe, accessible, free from harassment and discrimination and one which values and respects individuals identities and cultures;
- Consult our staff and listen to what they have to say;
- Publicise our approach and policy on equality in employment to job applicants, staff, Members of the Council and those carrying out work on behalf of the organisation.

The Corporate Equalities Board will review progress regularly and report progress to the Strategic Management Board and to Members.

All key stakeholders will be informed of the equal opportunities policy by ensuring that:

- All sections of the community and the Council's workforce are fully informed of any job opportunities within the Council and are encouraged to apply;
- The criteria for selection and progression are determined solely on the basis of the requirements of the job;
- People are selected and appointed solely on the basis of their competence, relevant experience, qualifications and skills;
- All members of the selection and interviewing panels are 'fair selection' trained and are able to demonstrate an understanding of the Council's equalities policy.

We will further promote equalities in employment through:

- Training and Development
- Positive Action
- Retention
- Dismissals and Redundancies
- Discipline
- Grievance
- The Working Environment
- Employment Monitoring
- Equal Pay
- Reasonable Adjustment

Equal Opportunity in Service Delivery

We believe that the diversity of the local community is a major strength, which helps to contribute to the social and economic prosperity of the town. We believe that all members of the community have a right to equality of opportunity in the way they are treated and the services they receive.

We will ensure that no service user is subjected to discrimination in the delivery of any of our services. In addition we will promote equality, diversity and social inclusion amongst other public sector providers and partners in the services they provide.

Service Delivery Commitments

We aim to:

- Provide services to all sections of the community according to people's needs, without prejudice or bias;
- Ensure everyone has easy access to all our services and facilities;
- Monitor and review services to make sure they do not discriminate;
- Act promptly on any complaints about our services;
- Ensure all sections of the community are included in our consultation processes;
- Provide clear information about council services in a variety of formats on demand such as: large print, taped information or material translated in appropriate languages;
- Work to ensure that our staff and elected members understand and are sensitive to the various needs of citizens, customers and other service users;
- Make our buildings accessible to people with disabilities;
- Consult internally and externally on people's perception of the Council's approach to equality and diversity;
- Monitor policies and procedures to assess their effectiveness in achieving our aims and use audit and scrutiny processes to assess our performance;
- Using its powers to ensure that organisations providing services on the Council's behalf operate in accordance with the aims of this policy.

We also recognise that low income can be a barrier to equality of opportunity and we are therefore committed to promoting diversity and social inclusion in order to eradicate social exclusion, fight discrimination and poverty.

Target Groups

We are here to serve everyone who lives, works or visits the town. We will always strive for greater fairness and equality of opportunity for everyone. This is fundamental to achieving our policy objectives.

➤ **Age Discrimination**

Age discrimination can affect both young and older people, particularly in employment. We will make sure that applicants for jobs are selected on the basis of their competence, relevant experience, qualifications, and skills.

The Council takes positive action in actively participating in National Employment Schemes for young persons and women and therefore selection be age related as well as on the basis of competence, relevant experience, qualifications and skills.

➤ **Disabled People**

One of our main objectives is to ensure that access to goods, facilities, services and job opportunities meet the legal standard.

We will:

- Develop a strategy to support the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act;
- Promote and support equality action in all Council service units;
- Work with local community groups to develop effective consultation to give disabled people more input into the Council's planning and decision-making;
- Develop effective communication networks with local groups to raise awareness of the opportunities available;
- Promote disability issues throughout the Council, celebrate the International Day of Disabled People each year and support local groups to organise disability awareness events;
- Make reasonable adjustments in relation to employment, facilities, procedures and practices so that disabled people are not discriminated against on the basis of their impairment except where the Council has to comply with its statutory obligations as detailed in the Council's Managing Organisational Change Policy;
- Identify barriers to access, and where possible make the necessary improvements to public buildings.

➤ **Ethnic Minority Groups**

There is an ever-present danger of discrimination against people, either in our workplace or the community we serve, because of their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality or citizenship. We are committed to challenging all forms of racial discrimination. The Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations

(Amendment) Act 2000 prohibit discrimination on individuals based on their race.

We will:

- Develop policies, procedures and practices that give people fair and equal access to Council services and employment opportunities;
- Seek to ensure that the services we provide are appropriate to the needs of the multi-ethnic community we serve; we will monitor and review service provision regularly;
- Take measures to redress where groups are under-represented in Stevenage Council, including the targeted recruitment of ethnic minorities, development programmes and other legally permissible initiatives;
- Develop partnerships with other organisations to address the needs of Black, Asian, Irish and other ethnic minority groups;
- Collate information and data on socially excluded groups in the town to get a more comprehensive profile of social need and to identify priority areas for action.

➤ ***Gender Reassignment***

Gender reassignment is the process, undertaken under medical supervision, to reassign a person's sex by changing physiological or other characteristics. It includes any part of this process.

The regulations, made under the European Communities Act, extend the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to cover discrimination in employment and vocational training on grounds of gender reassignment. They give a wide definition of 'gender reassignment' that provides protection against discrimination by employers at all stages of the gender reassignment process, including where an individual indicates an intention to start gender reassignment.

There is no definition of when sex changes, nor is there any test for when the process can be regarded as complete. This may create problems in determining the scope of genuine occupational qualifications exemptions. But the regulations do provide for leave of absence in the same way as for sickness or injury.

The Council will ensure that all policies and procedures are intended to reflect these new regulations, so that no discrimination takes place either in employment or service delivery.

➤ ***HIV Status***

Continued employment can make a significant contribution to the well-being of employees who are HIV positive. We will take steps to enable such employees to continue working where possible.

We will also seek to ensure that our services are accessible and appropriate to all residents who live with HIV and take full account of their particular needs and requirements.

➤ ***Lesbians and Gay Men***

Many lesbians and gay men face discrimination because of their sexuality. They may also face other forms of discrimination, because of their ethnicity, disability or gender.

We will ensure that lesbian and gay employees work in an environment free from discrimination and harassment. We recognise there are various issues of concern to lesbians and gay men, and we will seek to address these through consultation.

We are committed to improving the quality of life of all lesbians and gay men in the Borough and will be revising our policies and procedures to reflect this commitment throughout all the Council's activities.

Lesbian and gay employees may experience victimisation or harassment at work. The Council aims to ensure that the workplace is free from discrimination and harassment. We will act promptly if any such incidents occur. It is a disciplinary offence for a council employee to harass or victimise another.

➤ ***Religious Belief***

We uphold and respect the right of our employees and individuals and groups within the community to practise their religious beliefs.

Where employees or members of the community have particular religious needs, we will take all reasonable and practicable steps to accommodate them.

➤ ***Women***

Discrimination against women often occurs because of their gender, responsibilities for children, their marital or their economic status. This can exclude them from equal access to goods, services or employment opportunities. But women are not a homogenous group; many face other forms of discrimination, due, for example, to their ethnicity or sexuality.

We are committed to improving the quality of life of all women in the borough and we will develop policies, procedures and practices which benefit women employees and service users alike.

As a major employer, we will:

- Ensure that access to employment, promotion and training opportunities do not discriminate against women
- Where it is legally permissible, target job opportunities for women where they are underrepresented in the organisation
- Ensure our employment policies, procedures and practices take particular account of the needs of women employees with childcare responsibilities, together with those in low pay, part-time and administrative positions.

It is in the best interests of the Council and the local community we serve to retain the services of trained and experienced staff. This particularly applies to women taking maternity leave, or time off to care for children or dependants. Under such circumstances the Council will be supportive and flexible.

We will lead and support campaigns for women's rights. Women's experiences and perspectives will be reflected in the strategic development of the Council's policies, procedures and practices.

We are committed to working in partnership and networking with other agencies on matters of gender policy development and service improvement. We will support and initiate projects and research that address inequalities.

Strategy for Implementation

Responsibility for the policy and its implementation

The principal responsibility for achieving change lies with Members and Strategic Directors. It will involve the participation of all employees.

The Chief Executive and Strategic Directors will be responsible for implementing the policy and monitoring progress across the authority. The Equalities Board

All Strategic Directors and all employees with management or supervisory responsibilities will be responsible at service level and local level for implementing, monitoring and actively promoting this policy.

All Council employees are responsible for putting the policy into practice. They must adhere to it as part of their conditions of service. Any failure to do so will be considered in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedures.

Employees must not:

- Discriminate against anyone
- Persuade another employee to discriminate
- Harass or abuse other employees or members of the public – for any reason

We will tell all job applicants, employees and service users about this policy and make sure everyone understands their responsibilities. We will also provide training and guidance, particularly for Human Resources staff, line managers and supervisors on how to support other staff in implementing.

We will monitor and review all our selection procedures regularly. We will change them if we think they discriminate against anyone.

We will take positive action to redress current imbalances, through recruitment, career development and training.

Future Action Plan

Future actions will include:

- The regular evaluation of all relevant policy procedures and practices; if they are found to be discriminatory in any way, we will change them;
- Developing equality action plans as part of our Best Value reviews;
- Introducing equality monitoring and evaluation across all services;
- Ensuring all employees and job applicants know about our equal opportunities policy; taking appropriate action against anyone in breach of the policy;
- Challenging all forms of discrimination and harassment wherever it occurs;
- Creating an environment where all employees can work free from discrimination and harassment;
- Setting up robust arrangements for the effective reporting and evaluation of the impact of personnel decisions on all under-represented groups;
- Conducting independent surveys of staff about the impact of Council policies and areas of concern in relation to discrimination and establish staff support groups where required (linked to staff attitude survey);
- Organising a programme of development opportunities to help employees, particularly those from under-represented groups, advance their careers;

- Raise awareness through staff training/development;
- Improving the take-up of discounts, concessions and grants by low income families;
- Improving access to services by, for example, making reasonable adjustments;
- Consulting disadvantaged groups and communities about their concerns, needs and priorities;
- Monitoring service usage and take-up across all services to inform service planning and development;
- Ensuring the Best Value process considers accessibility and appropriateness of services to disadvantaged groups;
- Reviewing all policies and procedures in the light of the recommendations arising from the Stephen Lawrence inquiry;
- Improving access to council services.

Role of the Trade Unions

Trade Unions represent members on issues within the Council on:

- Policy, collective and individual grievances through local negotiating and bargaining structures within the Council;
- Provide support and advice;
- Work to improve pay and conditions, health and safety, stress, bullying at work, improvements to training and development;
- Encourage members to take an active role within the workplace through the trade union movements training and education initiatives; actively encourage members to join and become involved from all sections of the workplace such as BME, Women, disabled, Gay and Lesbian groups.

The successful promotion of equal opportunities involves the support and participation of staff and their trade unions.

The Council will consult and seek to reach agreement about the policy's content with all the recognised trade unions.

Local Government Equality Standard

The Equality Standard for local Government is a tool to enable local authorities to mainstream gender, race and disability into policy and practice at all levels. The Standard was developed by the three equality commissions:

- Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)
- Disability Rights Commission (DRC)
- Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and the Employer's Organisation.

The Standard provides a common framework for mainstreaming equality, which can be used for addressing all disadvantaged groups. Through a system of five levels, which covers all aspects of policymaking, service delivery and employment, the Equality Standard aims to help authorities develop a systematic approach to equality issues.

Four Performance Areas:

- Leadership and Corporate Commitment
- Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny
- Service Delivery and Customer Care
- Employment and Training

Five Levels of Attainment

Level 1: Commitment to comprehensive equality policy

Level 2: Assessment and consultation

Level 3: Setting equality objectives and targets

Level 4: Information systems and monitoring against targets

Level 5: Achieving and reviewing outcomes

The Council's current performance – level 1 of the Equality Standard

We are working towards achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard by March 2006

Equalities Project Delivery Structure – who does what?

Equalities Project Team – This group will oversee the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan. It consists of officers and a trade union representative, and currently meets on a weekly basis.

SMB (Strategic Management Board) and PMB (Programme Management Board) – the Equalities Project Team will provide regular feedback for Strategic Directors as part of the Community Leadership Programme, and where appropriate, escalate any issues that arise to SMB/PMB.

Executive – If a key decision is required regarding the Equalities Project, a report will be sent to Executive.

Equalities Champion Group - The group will provide the main link across the service units and Equalities Project Team in respect of the co-ordination, formulation, implementation, evaluation, monitoring and review of equality actions within Service Plans. The lead officer and frequency of operation is currently being determined.

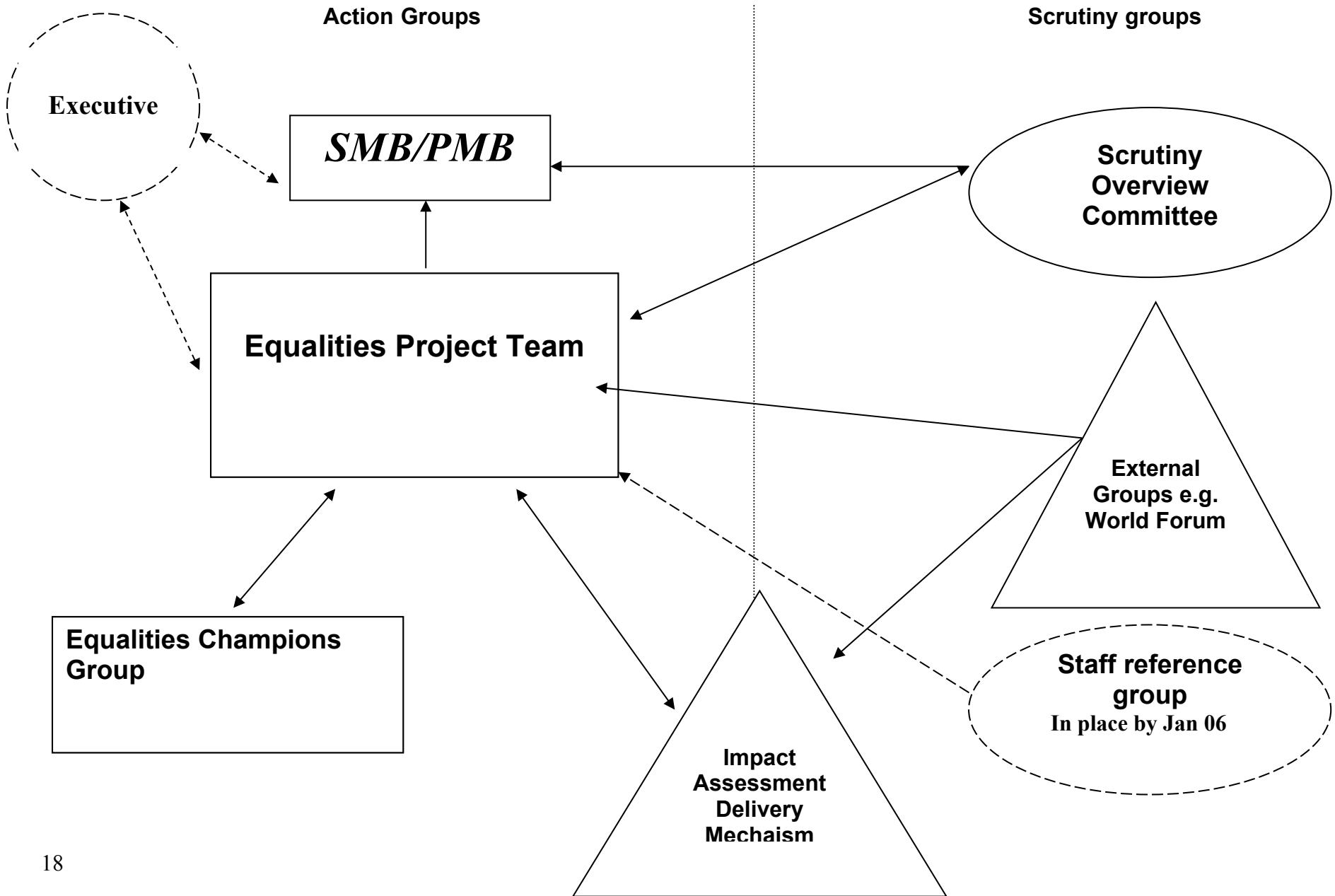
Impact Assessment Delivery Mechanism – Although there will be a consistent approach to carrying out Impact Assessments, the arrangements will vary locally, depending on the service delivery unit. Whichever delivery mechanism is deployed, measures to support the impact assessment process (e.g. staff expertise) and ‘critical friends’ (e.g. external consultation) will be incorporated into this.

Scrutiny Overview Committee – The groups’ work programme will incorporate monitoring the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan.

External Groups – These will form part of the Impact Assessment Delivery Mechanism, offering a ‘challenge’ perspective and constructive criticism to policies and services.

Staff Reference Group – This officer group will have relatively informal terms of reference, and will provide the Equalities Project Team with a grass-roots view of equality and diversity issues.

Equalities Project Delivery Structure



How we will monitor

We will monitor and review our policies and practices regularly to ensure that we are meeting our objectives against the priorities that we have set out in our action plan.

We will do this through our existing planning and performance processes – for example through setting targets in our Service Plans and the Best Value Performance Plan.

The Equality Standard for Local Government will provide a benchmark to show how well we are doing and how we are going to improve where any shortfalls are identified.

Review of the Corporate Equality Action Plan

We will review our Corporate Equality Action Plan annually, and make changes to ensure that we are continuously improving service delivery and customer care.

We will formally review equality work annually including progress on the delivery of the Race Equality Scheme (RES). The annual review will be reported to the Council's Executive and on to the appropriate Scrutiny and Review Panels.

Performance Measures

We are required to report on our performance against a number of Equality performance indicators that have been set nationally. These are detailed in an appendix at the end of this document.

In addition to this, we will develop appropriate local performance indicators.

Want More Information?

If you want further information about our Equal Opportunity Policy and practice, or if you would like a copy of this document in a different format or language, please contact:

Shahzad Choudhry
Equalities and Diversity Officer
Stevenage Borough Council;
Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
Herts SG1 1HN

Tel: (01438) 242581

Minicom:

Fax: (01438) 242827

Email: shahzad.choudhry@stevenage.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Legislation, Legal Definitions and Good Practice

This policy statement complements our Race Equality Scheme, which forms an integral part of this policy. We will also follow European Union directives on equal treatment, equal pay, advice on good practice, Codes of Practice and non-discriminatory legislation. These include:

- The Code of Practice on Equal Pay and guidance on carrying out Pay Audits
- The Code of Practice on Sex Discrimination
- The Code of Practice for the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment (CRE)
- CRE Codes of Practice in rented and non-rented housing
- The Codes of Practice for rights of access to goods, facilities and premises
- The Code of Practice on the elimination of discrimination in the field of employment against disabled people or persons who have had a disability
- The Code of Practice in respect of the Race Relations Amendment Act
- The Code of Practice on race equality and procurement arrangements.

Equality Policy and Procedures

A number of policies and practices have been developed that relate to this equality policy and approach and should be read in conjunction with it. These include:

- Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Monitoring arrangements
- Training
- Disability arrangements
- Recruitment and Selection
- Flexible working arrangements

NON-DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 says that disability is 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a persons ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. It brings in new laws and measures aimed at ending the discrimination which many disabled people face. It gives disabled people new rights in the areas of employment, obtaining goods and services and buying or renting land or property.

Less favourable treatment

Less favourable treatment occurs when a disabled person is treated, because of a disability, in an inferior or discriminatory way. For example, discrimination through less favourable treatment could occur if two people with equal experience, qualifications and aptitudes were being considered for a job and one was rejected on the grounds of being a wheelchair user and, as such, judged likely to cause access problems in a building.

Reasonable Adjustment

A reasonable adjustment is any action which is taken to overcome disadvantages experienced by a person as a result of having a disability. Disadvantages may be caused by 'physical features' or by 'arrangements' and employers are required to take such steps as it is reasonable for them to have to take in all the circumstances that prevent that disadvantage.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments applies to all areas of employment including terms and conditions of service, interview and induction arrangements, and the offering or refusal of opportunity for training, promotion, transfer, benefits or dismissal.

Service Providers

People who provide goods and services to the public are required to take reasonable measures to ensure that they are not discriminating against disabled people. Reasonable measures include the provision of equipment and other helpful items and the removal of physical obstructions so that a disabled person can use a facility or service.

People who sell or let property will have to ensure that they do not unreasonably discriminate against disabled people.

Race Relations Act 1976

The Race Relations Act 1976 makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of colour, race, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origin or to apply requirements or conditions, which are disadvantageous to people of a particular racial group, and which, cannot be justified on non-racial grounds.

It covers:

- All aspects of employment, including advertising and other recruitment methods; selection processes for jobs; promotion; transfers; secondment; access to training; performance appraisals; terms and conditions of employment; access to benefits; facilities and services for employees;

operation of grievance disputes and disciplinary procedures and working requirements or arrangements.

- The provision of goods, facilities or services to the public.

McPherson Report

The Race Relations (*Amendment*) Act 2000 (RRAA) emanated from the McPherson inquiry into the racist murder of the Black teenager, Stephen Lawrence. The government accepted all of the McPherson Inquiry recommendations and concluded that there was an urgent need to address issues of institutional racism.

The inquiry report was published in February 1999 and has seventy recommendations. Most of the recommendations were designed to be implemented by the Police. However, there are recommendations which impact on public institutions including local authorities as employers and service providers.

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

The Amendment Act strengthens the existing Race Relations Act 1976 by:

- Extending protection against racial discrimination in public authority functions not previously covered
- Placing a new enforceable positive duty on public authorities for non-discrimination, as well as actively promoting racial equality.

The basic provision of the 1976 Act otherwise remains unchanged.

The Amendment Act 2000 creates a new Section 71(1) which imposes a positive duty on local authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations when performing their functions. The effect of the general duty is to require local authorities to be proactive, to promote racial equality and prevent racial discrimination before it occurs.

The Article 13 Race Directive

In 1997, when the Treaty of Amsterdam amended the Treaty of Rome, the EU was granted for the first time an explicit legal basis to combat racism and ensure equal treatment. The Race Directive (2000/43/EC), emanating from the Treaty's Article 13, deals with discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin in a wide number of areas – from employment to social protection and accesses to goods and services.

General Occupational Qualifications (GOQs)

This is the term used for appointments made under Section 5(2)(d) of the Race Relations Act or Regulation 7 of the Employment Directive on Religion or Belief 2003.. It is used to recruit individuals from particular racial/religious groups where the post to be filled involves the provision of a service or the promotion of the welfare of individuals from that racial/religious group.

Positive Action

The Positive action provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976 are covered under Sections 37 and 38. They enable employers, training bodies, trade unions and employers associations to:

- Encourage applications for jobs or membership from a particular racial group (where this group is under-represented)
- Provide training to overcome/redress past inequalities in access to employment

Positive action is not the same as positive discrimination, which would be unlawful under the provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976. The measures are designed solely to give ethnic minorities a more equal chance, for example, when applying for employment opportunities; the selection process itself would continue to be conducted solely on the basis of relevant competencies, experience, qualifications and skills.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 are similar to the Race Relations Act 1976, and therefore are not covered in detail in this policy document.

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of sex or marital status, or to apply requirements or conditions which have a disproportionately disadvantageous effect on people of a particular sex or marital status where these cannot be justified. It also applies to discriminatory employment advertising and makes it unlawful to apply pressure to discriminate or to aid discrimination by another person.

The Act contains genuine occupational qualification and positive action provisions similar to those contained in the Race Relations Act 1976.

Discrimination

The Race Relations Act 1976 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 define two main types of discrimination: direct and indirect.

Direct discrimination is defined as treating a person less favourably than another on the grounds of their sex, marital status or racial or ethnic origin. Direct discrimination is nearly always intentional.

Indirect discrimination relates to a requirement or condition that is applicable to everyone and that as a result, adversely affects one sex or racial group significantly more than another (the requirement or condition not being justifiable on sex or racial grounds). Examples of indirect discrimination include recruiting only through word of mouth, recommendations by employees or their relatives where the workforce is drawn from one ethnic group, or applying requirements that are unrelated to the job, for example, educational, language or uniform.

Indirect discrimination is occasionally intentional but is more likely to be the unintended results of the application of 'taken for granted' rules.

The Gender Reassignment Regulations

This means a process which is undertaken under medical supervision for the purpose of reassigning a person's sex by changing physiological or other characteristics of sex, and includes any part of the process. The Gender Reassignment in employment and vocational training on the grounds of gender reassignment.

Local Government Act 1988

This Act sets out a framework within which local authorities can ensure that companies and other bodies applying for inclusion on select or approved lists, bidding for contracts and working under contract take reasonably necessary steps to comply with the Race Relations Act 1976 and the CRE Race Relations Code of Practice in Employment (1984).

The Children Act 1989

The Children Act 1989 places an obligation on social services departments to take account of a child's religion, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background, and the different ethnic groups to which children in need belong, when arranging day care, or encouraging people to be foster parents.

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

The Regulations makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation in employment and vocational training. This includes direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment. The

definition is orientation towards the same sex, the opposite sex or both sexes but excludes sexual practices.

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of religion or belief in employment and vocational training. This includes direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment. The definition is any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief.

Equal Pay Act 1970

The Equal Pay Act 1970 gives an individual a right to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment, where the man and the woman are doing:

- Like work
- Work rated as equivalent under an analytical job evaluation study or
- Work that is proved to be of equal value

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 sets out to help people who have been convicted of a criminal offence and who have since lived on the right side of the law. In general, a person convicted of a criminal offence and who receives a sentence of no more than 2½ years in prison, benefits from the Act if they are not convicted again during a specified period. This period is called the rehabilitation.

There are however, some occupations, which are exempt from this Act under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975. Examples include Chartered Accountants, Solicitors and Medical Practitioners.

Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 is a law in force from 2 October 2000. It gives further effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms in the European Convention on Human Rights.

It makes it unlawful for public authorities to act in a way incompatible with the Conventions rights.

Articles of the Human Act:

Article 2 – Right to Life

Article 3 – Prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment

Article 4 – Prohibition of slavery
Article 5 – Right to liberty and Security
Article 6 – Right to fair trial
Article 7 – No punishment without law
Article 8 – Right to respect for private and family life
Article 9 – Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
Article 10 – Freedom of expression
Article 11 – Freedom of assembly and association
Article 12 – Right to marry
Article 14 – Prohibition of discrimination

The Act recognises three forms of discrimination.

1. **Direct Discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than another.
2. **Indirect Discrimination** is where a condition is applied to everyone, but in practice forms a greater obstacle to one group than another and which cannot be justified in the circumstances.
3. **Victimisation** is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a personal dislike or because they have brought proceedings, even evidence, or complained about the behaviour of someone who has been harassing or discriminating against them.

Future Legislation

Future discriminative legislations includes:

- **Age – October 2006**

Makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of age in relation to employment and vocational training.

APPENDIX 2

Glossary of Terms

Equal Opportunity Policy

Is the term used to describe level of commitment to ensure that discrimination is avoided in an organisation's structure, in its methods of selection, in its treatment of employees, in its service provision and in the decisions taken by those responsible for selection and management.

Definition of a racial group

A racial group is any group defined by reference to colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins. A person can be a member of more than one racial group.

Definition of racism

"Racism in general terms consists of conduct or words or practices which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. In its more subtle form it is as damaging as in its overt form." (Macpherson Report)

Institutionalised racism

"Institutionalised racism consists of the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racial stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people." (Macpherson Report)

Racist incident

"A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person." (Macpherson Report)

Discrimination

The Race Relations Act 1976 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 define two main types of discrimination: direct and indirect.

Direct discrimination is defined as treating a person less favourably than another on the grounds of their sex, marital status or racial or ethnic origin. Direct discrimination is nearly always intentional.

Indirect discrimination relates to a requirement or condition that is applicable to everyone and that as a result, adversely affects one sex or racial group significantly more than another (the requirement or condition not being justifiable on sex or racial grounds). Examples of indirect discrimination include recruiting only through word of mouth recommendations by employees or their relatives where the workforce is drawn from one ethnic group, or applying educational / language / uniform requirements unrelated to the job.

Indirect discrimination is occasionally intentional but is more likely to be the unintended results of the application of 'taken for granted' rules.

Less favourable treatment

Less favourable treatment occurs when a disabled person is treated, because of disability, in an inferior or discriminatory way.

For example *discrimination through less favourable treatment* could occur if two people with equal experience, qualifications and aptitudes were being considered for a job and one was rejected on the grounds of being a wheelchair user and, as such, judged to be likely to experience access problems in a building.

Reasonable adjustments

A *reasonable adjustment* is any action that is taken to overcome disadvantages experienced by a disabled person resulting from their disability.

Disadvantages may be caused by 'physical features' or by 'arrangements' and employers are required to take such steps as it is reasonable for them to have to take in all the circumstances that prevent that disadvantage.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments applies to all areas of employment including terms and conditions of service, interview and induction arrangements, and the offering or refusal of opportunity for training promotion, transfer, benefits or dismissal.

Positive action

Is the term used for measures taken under sections 37 and 38 of the Race Relation Act 1976 and sections 47 and 48 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. In broad terms, these enable employers, training bodies, trade unions and employers, associations to:

- Encourage applications for jobs or membership from people of a particular gender, racial or ethnic group
- Provide training to help fit them for particular work or posts where they have been disproportionately underrepresented at any time during the last twelve months

Genuine occupational qualification (GOQ)

Is a term used for appointments made under section 5(2) (d) of the Race Relation Act and Section 7(1). Broadly, it provides that in limited circumstances, racial origin or particular gender can be an acceptable qualification for a job. For example, individuals can be selected for a post on racial grounds, where the job involves providing personal services promoting the welfare of people from their particular racial group, and these services can most appropriately be provided by a member of that group.

GOQ as an exemption also appears in the Sex Discrimination Act and Regulation 7 of the Employment Directive on Religion/belief. It allows certain jobs to be reserved for men, or women or on religious grounds, only, on the grounds of privacy decency, employment in a private home, etc.

Equality record keeping and monitoring

Equality Record Keeping and Monitoring is the processes we use to collect, store and analyse data about people's ethnic background, gender, sexuality and disability to assist us in monitoring fair and effective service delivery. We will use the monitoring information to:

- Highlight possible inequalities
- Investigate the underlying causes; and
- Remove any unfairness or disadvantage

Monitoring is also a requirement under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and Sex Discrimination Act 1975.

Valuing diversity

There are three main strategies:

- Using a common equal opportunities framework to address the needs of vulnerable people
- The process of achieving service delivery is planned and systematic
- Promotion of fairness and equality is mainstream not peripheral; it is the responsibility of all managers and service providers

Gender reassignment

This is a process undertaken under medical supervision for the purpose of reassigning a person's sex, through changing the physiological or other characteristics of sex; it includes any part of such a process.

The Gender Reassignment Regulations covers discrimination in employment and vocational training on the grounds of gender reassignment

Social exclusion

This can be said to have three dimensions:

- Economic exclusion - from work and effective labour market participation
- Social exclusion - from social welfare rights and from social and cultural facilities
- Political exclusion - isolation from representation, involvement in decision-making and playing a role as a citizen

Equality Standard

The Equality Standard for local Government is a tool to enable local authorities to mainstream gender, race and disability into policy and practice at all levels. The Standard was developed by the three equality commissions (Commission for Racial Equality, Disability Rights Commission and Equal Opportunities Commission) and the Employer's Organisation. The Standard provides a common framework for mainstreaming equality, which can be used for addressing all disadvantaged groups. Through a system of five levels, which covers all aspects of policymaking, service delivery and employment, the Equality Standard aims to help authorities develop a systematic approach to equality issues.

Stevenage Borough Council Equality Action Plan – 2005/06

RESOURCES

Encourage a fair and inclusive community is a priority for the Council under the ambition for Community Leadership.

The resource implications to deliver the Equality and Diversity Strategy Action Plan are mostly associated with on-cost and capacity to deliver within current service plans and individual work plans. This will be achieved by mainstreaming equality and diversity activity across the council. The Council now has an Equality and Diversity Officer to advise, support and drive best practice in line with the strategy.

A limited budget of £22,439 is available to deliver specific initiatives during 2005/06. A sum of £7,000 will be required to deliver training/awareness to staff and members. £15,439 is required for publications... etc

If costs emerge to make improvements or carry out new initiatives as a result of the programme of service impact assessments then bids will need to be made as part of the forward planning process for 2006/07.

The translations policy adopted by the Council states that documents will be made available on request in alternative formats and languages. The take up so far has been fairly limited and no corporate budget has been earmarked for this service. The situation is being monitored and budget arrangements will be reviewed as necessary.

In order to ensure that we achieve the objective for 'equal physical access to buildings' there may be implications for the capital programme and budgets will need to be identified accordingly in future years.

LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE COMMITMENT

OUTCOME: Stevenage Borough Council is committed to driving the equalities and diversity agenda forward, and bringing equality into the mainstream of policy making within the council. There is an increased awareness of the Council's commitment to eliminate discrimination, and staff and members are aware of their responsibilities.

| OBJECTIVES | ACTIONS | RESPONSIBILITY | TIMESCALE |
|--|--|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Commitment to reviewing and changing the Council's approach to equalities through a comprehensive equality strategy and action plan. | Publish a revised Equality and Diversity Policy Statement and Strategy with an action plan. | Shaz Choudhry | July 2005 |
| | Produce the first Equality and Diversity Annual Review and report to Members (Executive and Scrutiny Overview). | Shaz Choudhry | July 2005 |
| Members and SMB to take responsibility for strategically driving and promoting the equality and diversity agenda. | Monitor the implementation of the equality strategy and assess the impact of the strategy and action plans. | Shaz Choudhry | On going |
| | Report progress regularly to Members through Scrutiny Overview and to strategic directors through Strategic Management Board (SMB/PMB). | Shaz Choudhry | |
| Develop equalities performance targets at corporate and service level | Set and monitor equalities BVPI targets in the Best Value Performance Plan and in the corporate Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action plan. | Shaz Choudhry | On going |
| | Establish local targets for equality and include in service action plans for monitoring | All Heads of Service/First Reports | |
| Service delivery units committed to contributing to the delivery of the equality strategy. | Incorporate equalities targets and actions in every Service Plan. | All Heads of Service/First Reports | |
| Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote good race relations between people of different racial backgrounds. | Deliver the Race Equality Scheme (RES) Action plan, review and produce an updated action plan for 2006 onwards. | Shaz Choudhry | On going |

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|---|---|--|--|
| Eliminate discrimination against disabled people. | Scope a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and take appropriate action in advance of legislation as national guidance becomes available. | Shaz Choudhry | On going |
| Ensure all written policies are in line with current legislation and codes of practise issued by the equality commissions | Monitor all corporate policies for compliance with legislation. | Shaz Choudhry | On going |
| Ensure there is a corporate commitment to carrying out a process of equality related impact assessments across the equality strands | Conduct equality impact assessment of existing and new policies and service delivery in compliance legislation. | Shaz Choudhry | November 2005 |
| Collate data as a baseline for measuring the Council's performance on equalities. | Produce equality monitoring reports as required for SMB and Members. | Shaz Choudhry | SMB/Executive deadlines |
| Member awareness of equality and diversity. | Organise Member briefings. | Marilyn Emerson | September 2005 |
| Promote the Council's commitment to equalities and raise awareness of equality and diversity both within the Council and the community. | <p>Ensure the corporate communications strategy is compliant with equality objectives/best practice.</p> <p>Display the corporate equalities policy statement in all Council buildings.</p> <p>Provide advice about the provision of equalities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters and leaflets • Media coverage – national, regional and local newspapers, TV, radio and trade press. • Chronicle magazine • Events | <p>Nicola Pellegrini</p> <p>Shaz Choudhry</p> <p>Nicola Pellegrini/Shaz Choudhry</p> | <p>On going</p> <p>August 2005</p> <p>On going</p> |

CONSULTATION, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY

OUTCOME STATEMENT: All our customers and communities, including hard-to-reach groups, are consulted on decisions that affect them. Successful engagement with these communities will raise their awareness of services provided by the Council, which in turn may also increase the take up of services by these groups. By using services, these communities will be better able to comment on what is provided. Everyone in the town has equal opportunity to participate and be involved in the decision making process.

Through consultation, the Council will have an increased understanding of the problems, needs and views of local communities, as well as the impact of strategies, policies, programmes and services. Through engaging with communities, the community are empowered to make decisions on issues that affect them or their environment.

| OBJECTIVES | ACTIONS | RESPONSIBILITY | TIMESCALE |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Ensure employee representatives, Stevenage World Forum and other external advisory groups are consulted and are aware of Council's commitment on equalities. | Circulate the corporate equality strategy and action plan to designated community, staff and stakeholder groups with a consultation timetable. | Shaz Choudhry | August 2005 |
| | Make the document available in an appropriate range of languages and formats upon request. | Shaz Choudhry | On going |
| Gain insight into service user's perspective through external challenge and consultation. | Consult community, staff and stakeholder groups on all aspects of equality policy. | Shaz Choudhry | On going |
| | Consult community, staff and stakeholder groups on each equalities impact assessment. | All Heads of Service/First Reports | Upon completion of impact assessments |
| Enhance community consultation at all levels, particularly amongst hard to reach groups. | Establish network of community consultants to work within marginalized communities. Review, develop and strengthen community | Shaz Choudhry | On going |

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| | forums/groups including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Forum • REACT • Women's Resource Centre • [Learning Disability] • Others..... | Tim Weetman | On going |
| Promote the Council's commitment to equalities through community events | Work with relevant communities, service areas and staff to develop events including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stevenage Day • Black History Month • Stevenage 60th Anniversary • LGBT Festivals • Asian women/mens network • Travellers/gypsies • Celebrate | Tim Weetman | On going |
| Ensure equalities is a key theme within the Community Strategy | Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment of the Community Strategy. | Jim Brown | November 2005 |
| Incorporate equality issues in local partnership arrangements | Ensure that the Stevenage Partnership reviews equality and inclusion as part of its response to its Partnership Review undertaken in early 2005. Include equalities in a Member led scrutiny of the Community Strategy and Stevenage Partnership (LSP). | Jim Brown Jim Brown | September 2005 On going |

SERVICE DELIVERY AND CUSTOMER CARE

OUTCOME STATEMENT: The delivery of Council services reflects the highest possible equality standards. This means that the Council will recognise and value difference, and aim to be fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory in carrying out all our responsibilities. We will aim to ensure that we provide fair and equal access to our services and to information about the Council.

| OBJECTIVES | ACTIONS | RESPONSIBILITY | TIMESCALE |
|--|---|---|---------------|
| Ensure that equalities is an integral part of service delivery and customer care. | Include equalities objectives in Customer Care standards and in Service Standards. | Jo Wilkinson All Heads of Service/First Reports | On going |
| Systematically review equality of service delivery and customer care through impact and needs/requirements assessment. | Monitor equality implications of all new policies and procedures. | Shaz Choudhry | On going |
| Prioritise functions and policies by potential impact to ensure high impact areas are addressed | Develop a prioritised three-year programme of Equality Impact Assessments. | Shaz Choudhry | July 2005 |
| | Undertake the following service assessments in 2005/06: | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Services Centre • Community Services • Estates • Grounds Maintenance • Housing Allocations • Play | Angela Gee Laurel Farrington Jonathan Angell John Crawley Debbie Rabot Graeme Buck | November 2005 |
| | Produce an Equality Impact Assessment model to assist managers in undertaking | Shaz Choudhry | |

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| | equalities impact assessments. | | |
| Compliance with new and existing legislation | Monitor all new and existing legislation and disseminate to Members, SMB and Service Delivery Units. | Shaz Choudhry | On going |
| Development of department/service level equality objectives and targets | Make specific commitments to equalities in Service Standards. Establish local targets for equality and include in service action plans for monitoring. Develop local equalities PIs linked to service impact assessments. | All Heads of Service/First Reports All Heads of Service/First Reports All Heads of Service/First Reports | |
| Ensure equal physical access to buildings | Complete a programme of access improvements for disabled people to council facilities, services and premises. Review compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) at community centres and deliver a programme of access improvements. Implement a programme of improvements at sheltered housing schemes following the recent survey of DDA requirements. | Keith Brown Keith Brown Jo Barrett | March 2006 March 2007 |
| Ensure that services provided by contractors/other agents of the Council are non-discriminatory and compliant with equalities legislation. | Undertake an equalities assessment of Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. | Zoe Harriss | September 2005 |
| Ensure consistency of the tendering processes across the Council. | Monitor compliance with equalities objectives as part of the contract management process. | All Heads of Service/First Reports | On going |

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| Assess the equality performance of contractors. | | | |
| Ensure that information about the Council and its services is available in appropriate formats. | Promote the availability of information in various formats at public access points. | Nicola Pellegrini | On going |
| | Assist in council information being available in other languages upon request. | Nicola Pellegrini | On going |
| | Offer interpreting services through Language Line and through a register of staff with specific language skills. | Angela Gee | On going |
| Ensure that the Council's web site meets current government and Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) guidelines. | Incorporate equalities best practice in the redesign of the Council's website as part of the Website Redevelopment Project. | Paul Tyler | October 2005 |
| Investigate reasons for low take up of services, restricted access and any evidence of dissatisfaction amongst disadvantaged groups arising from impact assessment results | Produce checklist using results of impact assessments to inform service equalities objectives. | Shaz Choudhry | Upon completion of impact assessments |
| Ensure equalities is an integral part of the council's complaints procedures. | Implement procedure for recording and investigating racial incidents (BV174/175). | Angela Gee | July/August 2005 |
| | Develop the procedure to cover all equalities considerations for implementation in 2005/06. | Shaz Choudhry | |

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

OUTCOME STATEMENT: We aim to ensure that our employment practices reflect the highest possible equality standards. This means that we recognise and value difference, and aim to be fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory in carrying out all our responsibilities. We will ensure that we have non-discriminatory employment practices. We will aim to ensure that our workforce reflects the diversity of the local community.

| OBJECTIVES | ACTIONS | RESPONSIBILITY | TIMESCALE |
|---|--|----------------|--------------|
| Fair employment and equal pay policy – review policy and procedure to ensure compliance with legislation, including that relating to race, gender, age, disability, sexuality, faith and belief aiming to implement best practice. Make all employment procedures consistent with current legislation and Employment Codes of Practice. | Undertake an equalities review of all new and existing HR policies and procedures, undertake impact assessments and offer training to all staff and managers on new regulations on employment. | D Williams | March 2006. |
| Fair system of pay and reward | Undertake an equal pay review linked to the new Job Evaluation scheme. | D Williams | March 2006. |
| Ensure that the workforce reflects the diversity of the local community through benchmarking. | Undertake an employment equality assessment of the local labour market. | D. Williams | October 2005 |
| Ensure commitment to adopting recruitment procedures which use non-discriminatory practices | Undertake a recruitment and selection equality impact assessment and implement an improvement plan based on the findings. | D Williams | On going |
| Monitor the workforce to ensure fairness and diversity. | Develop the Workforce information system and update to provide detailed reports relating to equality targets: recruitment, reasonable adjustments, training, development, retention, progression and equal pay Carry out an annual review of the workforce; | John Baucutt | On going |

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|--|--|--|---|
| | <p>data to be collected on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of employees and.... • By grade and salary • By ethnicity • By gender • By disability | John Baucutt | March 2006 |
| Monitor staff perceptions of equalities | <p>Review the 2004/05 staff survey and make recommendations to SMB of actions required.</p> <p>Undertake further investigation of equalities issues in the next staff survey.</p> <p>Use equality monitoring data to monitor the number of staff leaving employment and their reasons for leaving</p> | <p>Ian Cawthra</p> <p>Ian Cawthra</p> <p>Ian Cawthra</p> | <p>March 2005</p> <p>September 2006</p> <p>September 2005</p> |
| Improve employment prospects for disadvantaged groups through positive actions to address under representation in the workforce (mainly race, gender and disability) | <p>Investigate best practice from other authorities in the employment of disabled people and ensure it is put in place.</p> <p>Review compliance with the 'Double Tick' standard for employment of people with disabilities as part of the recruitment and selection equalities impact assessment.</p> | <p>D Williams</p> <p>D Williams</p> | <p>On going</p> <p>November 2005.</p> |
| Promote a work environment where equal value is given to all members of staff and opportunities are taken to overcome barriers to the aim of equal treatment | <p>Review work-life balance policies and implement recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job share • Flexible Working Hours Scheme • Paternity Leave and Maternity Support Leave Policy • Parental Leave | D Williams | November 2005. |

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|--|---|--|----------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption Leave • Maternity Leave • Special Leave • Carers Policy <p>Review harassment and grievance policies and implement recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment & Bullying Policy • Grievance Policy & Procedure • Disciplinary Policy & Procedure • Capability Policy & Procedure | D Williams | November 2005. |
| Ensure that all staff are trained to enable them to meet the needs of the public fairly and in a non-discriminatory way in line with corporate and service objectives. | Develop a training programme that is consistent with the training arrangements in the council's Race Equality Scheme (RES) and roll it out to all staff. | Ian Cawthra | September 2005 |
| Ensure that the values of equality and diversity are communicated to all staff. | Advise on effective internal communication, providing regular and up to date information on equalities using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link magazine • Intranet • Cascade briefings • Notice boards • Awareness sessions | Nicola Pellegrini Jo Wilkinson Shaz Choudhry | On going |