

Report of: Caroline Bull, Chief Executive

Title: Equalities Policy - approval

Ward: all

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Key Decision: Yes

Lead Member: Cllr Dan Paskins

Scrutiny responsibility: Community

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board agrees to:

1. Recommend to Council that the attached Corporate Equalities Policy be approved as part of the Policy Framework.

1. Summary

As part of the improvement aim to reach Level 1 of the Equalities by March 2005, the Equalities Steering Group has drafted an Equalities Policy. At its meeting on 30th November 2004 Executive Board approved this policy for consultation. This consultation has now been completed and the comments received have been incorporated as appropriate into the Policy that is attached to this report.

Executive Board is now asked to recommend to Council that this Policy be adopted as part of the Policy Framework.

2. Council Vision and Strategic Aims

This policy fits with the Council's Vision and contributes to the strategic aims of improving dialogue and consultation, and making access to our services easy.

3. Background and context

Implementing the Equalities Standard was highlighted in our CPA report and achieving Level 1 by March 2005 is a target in our Improvement Plan.

The Equalities Steering Group drafted a Corporate Equalities Policy and has circulated it for consultation. The group has also established an action plan that outlines how the different aspects of the Equalities Standard will be progressed. This was circulated at the same time as the policy, as background information for the consultation process.

The comments received from the consultation process have been considered by the Steering Group and incorporated into the policy as appropriate.

4. Consultation

The following groups and individuals have been consulted during the formulation of this policy:

- Staff, via the intranet and core brief
- All elected members
- The Community Scrutiny Committee and Area Committees
- The following organisations:
 - ACCAN (African Caribbean Action Network)
 - African Caribbean Youth Project
 - African Community Link
 - Age Concern
 - Asian Health & Social Care Worker/ Asian Women's Helpline
 - Asian Cultural Association
 - Asylum Welcome
 - Bangladeshi Welfare Association
 - Caribbean Catholics in Oxford
 - Chinese Community Centre
 - Church of God of Prophecy
 - Ethnic Minority Business Service
 - Indian Union
 - International Women's Festival Committee
 - KEEN (Kids Enjoying Exercise Now)
 - Mental Health Matters
 - Muslim Welfare
 - Oxford Brookes African Union
 - Oxford Centre for Tamil Education and Arts
 - Oxford City Youth Council
 - Oxford Council for Disabled People
 - Oxford Council for Voluntary Action
 - Oxford Credit Union
 - Oxford Irish Society
 - Oxford Lesbian & Gay Community Centre
 - Oxford Mayalalee Club
 - Oxford Multi-Cultural Action Group
 - Oxford Pride
 - Oxford Race Equality Council
 - Oxford Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre
 - Oxford Women's Training Scheme

- Oxford Welfare Rights
- Oxfordshire Jewish Congregation
- Oxfordshire Women's Aid
- Parasol
- Refugee Resource
- Restore
- Riding for Disabled
- Terence Higgins Trust
- Udayan
- Unity
- Victim Support Oxon. & Bucks
- YWCA

5. Implications

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications from the adoption of the Policy. There may be financial implications if the authority fails to adopt and implement an equalities policy, as it may leave us vulnerable to tribunals and other claims.

5.2 Legal Implications

Not adopting a Corporate Equalities Policy would leave the council vulnerable to tribunals and other claims.

5.3 Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications from the adoption of the policy, although the implementation of the policy will require training to be made available to councillors, staff and stakeholders. This training can be provided in-house and is within existing resources.

6. Other possible means of achieving the objectives

To achieve the objective of meeting Level 1 of the Equalities Standard by March 2005 must have adopted an Equalities Policy. There are no other means of achieving the objective.

7. Recommendation

Executive Board is asked to recommend the attached draft Corporate Equalities Policy to Council for formal adoption under the Policy Framework.

8. Timetable

Following the agreement of Executive Board to recommend this Policy to Council for approval, Council will meet on 25th April when it should be formally adopted as part of the Policy Framework.

Appendices

The Corporate Equalities Policy

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY:

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Dan Paskins, Social Inclusion

Chief Executive: Caroline Bull

Legal and Democratic Services: Julie Thomlinson

Financial Management: Penny Gardner

Human Resources: Anne-Marie Scott

Background papers: None