

To: City Executive Board
Date: 7th December 2011
Report of: Head of People & Equalities

Title of Report: Approval of the Council's Draft Corporate Equalities Scheme 2012-2015.

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: A report requesting that the City Executive Board approve for implementation the revised Corporate Equality Scheme 2012-2015.

Key decision? No

Executive lead member: Councillor Bob Price

Policy Framework:

- Vibrant, sustainable economy
- Meeting housing needs
- Strong, Active Communities
- Cleaner, greener Oxford
- Efficient, Effective Council

Recommendation(s):

That the City Executive Board:

Approve the new Corporate Equality Scheme 2012-2015 for implementation.

Introduction

- 1.1 The Corporate Equality Scheme 2012 – 2015 (attached at appendix 1) is the Council's core statement on equalities & diversity; setting out our commitment to deliver a comprehensive agenda and to support our ambition to be a world-class city for everyone. It replaces and refreshes the 2008-2011 Corporate Equality Scheme.
- 1.2 The scheme establishes the actions to deliver our corporate equalities objectives and sets out how we will work towards ensuring equality of opportunity and access across the full range of services that we deliver.

- 1.3 The Corporate Equality Scheme will provide a comprehensive response to our legal obligations and public sector duties under the Equality Act 2010, but where possible we will go beyond these to advance equalities and foster good relations between communities and place the Council in a strong position to provide fully accessible services, guidance and advice for all our service users.
- 1.4 It summarises our achievements under the 2008-2011 equalities action plan and lays out a clear schedule of what we are aiming to do from 2012-2015.

Proposals

2.1 The Corporate Equality Scheme sets out:

- 2.1.1 How we will work towards promoting equality of opportunity and access across the full range of statutory services we are responsible for delivering;
- 2.1.2 How we will ensure that discrimination is challenged through the extended legislative protection offered by the new Equality Act 2010 in recognising key protected characteristics;
- 2.1.3 The responsibilities expected of our Elected Members, Chief Executive, Directors, Service Heads, managers, employees and strategic partners and the actions that we will take as an organization to ensure that we deliver high equalities standards as a public sector service provider; and
- 2.1.4 How Oxford City Council aims to be an employer of choice for local people, to increase the diversity of our workforce and a place where staff can achieve their full potential.

Level of risk

- 3.1 There is a low level of risk to service provision as the corporate equality objectives cover core statutory services and support the delivery of key measures within the Corporate Plan 2012-2015

Equalities impact

- 4.1 An Initial Equalities Impact Assessment is attached at appendix 2

Financial implications

- 5.1 There are no additional financial implications arising as a result of introducing a new Corporate Equalities Scheme.
- 5.2 The Council has an ambition to reduce the extent of inequality and to improve the lives of the most vulnerable members of our community and has protected core service budgets as part of the medium term financial strategy

Legal implications

- 6.1 The General Equality Duty has three aims. It requires the Council to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people from different protected groups
- 6.2 The specific duties announced by the Government in January 2011 came into force on 6 April 2011 and require the Council to set specific and measurable equality objectives and to publish information about their equality performance (covered by the Annual Workplace Equalities Report), no later than 31 January 2012 and at least annually thereafter
- 6.3 The Council must publish, by no later than 6 April 2012, equality objectives that are specific and measurable and that will help it further the aims of the general duties. These must be based on equality evidence and analysis and published at subsequent intervals of no greater than four years beginning with the date of the last publication
- 6.4 The Corporate Equality Scheme 2012-2015 meets the public sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) and specific duties as set out in regulations which came into force on 10 September 2011 as outlined in 6.1 - 6.3 above

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List of background papers:

Version number: 1.1

Appendix 1 – Corporate Equalities Scheme 2012 – 2015

Appendix 2 – Initial Equalities Impact Assessment