

Scrutiny Committee – 1st March 2011

9. Single Equality Scheme Progress Report

Executive Portfolio Holder: Jo Roundell Greene, Economic and Organisational Development
Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Strategic Director, Place and Performance
Assistant Director: Martin Woods Assistant Director Economy
Lead Officer: Jo Morgan, Community Cohesion Officer
Contact Details: jo.morgan@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935 462297)

Purpose of the Report

To report progress on the implementation of the Single Equalities Scheme Action Plan.
 To update on the implications of the Equality Act 2010 and our Public Sector Duties.

Public Interest

South Somerset District Council must produce an equality scheme by law, (until April 2011, we will then be required to produce equality objectives). This sets out how we will deliver and achieve our equality aims through key tasks in our action plan.

The Scrutiny Committee Task and Review Group will monitor and report on the progress of all actions within the scheme.

Action Required

- (1) The Scrutiny Task and Review Committee is requested to note and comment on progress of the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan.
- (2) To note that there will be key changes in our statutory duties following the implementation of the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duties.

Background

SSDC currently has a legal requirement to promote equality in relation to race, disability and gender.

The three year Single Equality Scheme identifies what SSDC will do to meet its general and specific statutory duties in relation to the Race Relations Amendments Act 2000, Disability Equality Duty, 2005, Gender Equality Duty, 2006, and Human Rights Bill, 2009 and other relevant legislation.

In carrying out its functions and duties, the council must have regard to:

- Eliminating all unlawful discrimination
- Promoting equal opportunities
- Promoting good relations between people from different groups regardless of gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

A Scrutiny Committee Task and Review Group reviewed the scheme in August 2010.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010, section 149, sets out the new Public Sector Equality Duties:

- General Duties
- Specific Duties

Compliance with the Duties is a legal obligation and should result in better informed decision making and policy outcomes.

The General Duty has three aims that in carrying out its functions and duties, the council must have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics

2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life

Under the Specific Duties we will be required to:

- **Publish Information – July 2011** Sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the General Equality Duty across its functions, includes:
 1. Workforce data
 2. Evidence of Equality Analysis that have been undertaken
 3. Details of data and evidence used
 4. Details of engagement undertaken
- **Prepare and publish equality objectives – April 2012** means developing objectives that will meet one or more aims of the General Equality Duty

Report Detail

Please see attached monitoring report from TEN

Financial Implications

There are none that cannot be met from existing resources.

Corporate Priority Implications

The Single Equality Scheme will contribute towards the following key target areas:-

Theme 4

4.16 Outcome: An empowered community where all people take part in shaping their neighbourhood.

Measured by: Increasing % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood. (NI 2)

41.7 Increase % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.

4.18 Increase perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration.

4.19 Increase civic participation in the local area.

Increase % of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

Consideration has been given to climate change implications, and there is limited impact. In relation to carbon emissions, within specific projects participants have been encouraged to share transport to event workshops. Electronic links via video are planned to increase access to information e.g. British Sign Language welcome and information videos on SSDC website. Community Link Workers provide phone translations/interpreting directly with customers, as well as holding surgeries in area offices. This will help support green miles.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The scheme has been equality impact assessed and has demonstrated no adverse or negative impacts. There was wide consultation on the scheme in relation to all equality strands. Any venues used to carry out the action plan are accessible. Actions within the scheme recommend the use of accessible fonts, sizes, images, etc within any documentation.

Background Papers: *For more information on the Public Sector Equality Duties: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-duties/new-public-sector-equality-duty-guidance/>*
