

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Policy and Performance	Overview and Scrutiny	27 March 2007

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB GROUP EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To provide the overview and scrutiny committee with an overview of the work undertaken by the equality and diversity sub- group and to present the committee with suggested recommendations.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- Ensure equality of opportunity and life chances, ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organisation.

### RISK ISSUES

- The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy	✓	Information	
Reputation	✓	Regulatory/Legal	✓
Financial		Operational	
People	✓	Other	

- Failure to continue to properly embed equality and diversity across the authority, may impact upon the reputation of the authority. Equality and diversity is also critical to the revised Comprehensive Performance assessment Framework for District Councils. The recommendations set out in the report will have an operational impact on all Directorates. Equality and diversity outcomes will be key to the result of any future CPA assessment.
- The aims of the Sub Group**
  - To develop an understanding of how equality and diversity fits with CPA and how equality and diversity can act as a driver to excellence
  - To develop the Council's approach to engagement and consultation and the way in which this informs service delivery
  - To gain an understanding of the various tools and information systems we could use to drive our progress around equality and diversity

- To explore ways of addressing issues of urban and rural splits with In the Borough and the impact this has upon catering for different communities with differing needs
- To understand how we can establish satisfaction and service needs baselines across all of our communities
- To develop mechanisms to ensure that our work around equality and diversity is making a difference for those communities most at disadvantage
- To explore we go about achieving level three of the equality standard, given the capacity issues we face as a district Council
- Establish some real practical ideas which we can take forward to improve outcomes for our communities.
- Change the culture internally
- Develop mechanisms to make service areas accountable for their performance in delivering equitable opportunities and outcomes for all
- To find ways of mainstreaming equality principles into everyday work

## 6. **Summary of the approach**

Members of the sub group met independently of the Overview and scrutiny committee on four occasions. A presentation and general discussion of equality and diversity, the opportunities, current gaps took place at the first meeting, which informed future activity of the sub group.

The manager of the Council's Customer Services met with the group to explore the provisions made at the for meeting the needs of customers with differential needs at the One-Stop Shop and Contact Centre at the Union Street Offices.

The council's GIS officer attended a meeting to discuss the potential use of the Council's GIS software which enables information to be fed into the system to be represented graphically on digital mapping sources.

It was agreed that the system could be developed to provide demographic and deprivation information and identify the localities of particular community groups within the Borough. This information could be useful in determining the specific parts of the Borough to which resources and action should be targeted.

Members of the sub group visited Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to explore their approach to equality and diversity. Staffordshire Moorlands comprises a population of 94,000 within three distinctive market towns, urban fringe settlements and surrounding rural areas. The Council, which employed 309 full time staff, has a current 'good' CPA rating, but was aiming for excellence, and had achieved Level Three of the Equality Standard in March 2006 and so it was felt that we could take some useful lessons from their journey. The visit also involved the examination the operation of one Staffordshire Moorlands 'Rural Kiosks' as part of the visit.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Objective	Action	Timescale	Lead
<b>Leadership and commitment</b>			
Ensure that we have a comprehensive overview of our current position in terms of equality and diversity and the actions required to drive up performance	Conduct an equality audit as a starting point for driving up performance	April 2007	Policy and Performance
Ensure that a strategic overview of equality and diversity is maintained and the equality and diversity implications of decisions are fully explored and understood	Amend the Committee report template so that Equality and Diversity implications have to be outlined in standard reports in the same way as financial and human resources implications. Ensure that all reports are sent to Equality and Diversity lead for quality assurance and if necessary implications templates are completed. Also send reports to communications manager so that a proactive approach to communications around equality and diversity can be taken.	June 2007	Policy and Performance / Democratic Services
Clearly articulate to staff, members, and customers our equality and diversity principles.	Establish a set of diversity principles and promote them. Include in the induction pack for new employees and members.	April 2007	Policy and Performance
Inform our understanding of the needs of our Customers and Communities to drive forward our work around equality and diversity.	Undertake our own mini census and or Big Debate to provide additional baseline data so that we are able to understand and meet the needs of our communities	October 2007	Policy and Performance
Ensure that the needs of our customers and communities in Rural areas of the borough are fully accounted for in service design and delivery.	Include Rural and Urban considerations in Equality Impact Assessments – rural proof service delivery. For example the impact upon rural areas of planning policies which limit building on small areas of land.	April 2007	Policy and Performance
Ensure that all of our policies and procedures comply with Equality legislation and our diversity principles.	Undertake an Equality and Diversity Desk top exercise on policies and strategies	May 2007	Policy and Performance
Ensure that we take a partnership approach to addressing the issue raised by demographic change	Undertake partnership review of economic migration and an enquiry into how we collaboratively meet any identified needs.	June 2007	Policy and Performance
Ensure that accountability for driving forward the equalities	Establish an equality and diversity steering group (senior	April 2007	Policy and Performance

agenda across the authority is clearly established and a strategic approach to delivering equality is embedded across the authority.	officers) and equality and diversity working group- Equality Champions.		
<b>Consultation and Communication</b>			
Ensure that we use the proper tools to develop and understanding of the differential needs of our various communities.	Use GIS to map our communities according to a variety of socio-economic and demographic characteristic and use this to inform service provision. Provide all new members and staff with summary information.	May 2007	Policy and Performance / ICT
Ensure that the good work ongoing around equality and diversity is effectively captured and communicated and all staff, customers and members are aware of the provisions available for customers with specific needs.	Establish a mechanism to centrally collate information about the services provided for hard to reach groups and activity share this information with staff, councillors, customers and the community. Via the Loop?	June 2007	Policy and Performance
Ensure that adjustments made for customers who may experience language barriers when trying to access our services are fit for purpose.	Review the use of translating and interpreting services	June 2007	Policy and Performance
Gain a better understanding of the types of queries hard to reach/ hard to hear groups are approaching the Council with	Conduct a survey of customers attending the Youth and Community Service's surgeries at the One-Stop Shop, together with the nature of the enquiries	June 2007	Customer Services
Ensure that all staff and members are aware of the agencies operating within the borough who can help to progress equality and diversity outcomes for all of our communities	Compile a register of all details of Community Groups and partnerships in Chorley and work with the Chorley guardian to ensure that these are reflected in their publication.	June 2007	Leisure and Culture
Ensure that we address a gap in consultation forums and mechanisms to address our statutory duty around Gender Equality	Review our approach to consulting on Gender issues	July 2007	Policy and Performance
Ensure that the work of existing groups is actively communicated.	Activity publicise the work of the Asian Women's forum and work more effectively in partnership with the form to deliver improvements for target groups.	July 2007	Policy and performance
<b>Service provision</b>			
Inform a review of translation and interpreting services.	When people come into the one stop shop and use interpretation services monitor the take up of this service to inform our work around equality and diversity.	April 2007 Onwards	Customer Services
Ensure that customers accessing our services who do not speak	Signpost information for non-English speakers about English	April 2007 Onwards	Customer Services

English as a first language are made aware of the support services available	classes- partnership with Local College?		
Ensure that the licensing service is able to respond to service request from customers who do not speak English as a first language.	Give a copy of the Language Line leaflet to Licensing. The Council's Licensing Section could be encouraged to use the 'Language Line' facility in its dealings with customers	April 2007	Customer Services
Ensure that those who are licensed through the Council are able to fully meet the needs of customers with a disability.	Introduce specifically tailored training in licensing on the needs of customers with disabilities.	July 2007	Customer, Democratic and Legal Services
Ensure that we fully understand the needs of our customers and build a picture of where service delivery failure is disproportionate for particular groups or failing to meets the needs of various diverse groups.	Complaints Monitoring- monitor all complaints in line with the six strands of diversity and use this to inform service provision	April 2007	Policy and performance
Ensure that we offer the highest possible level of support to customers with particular needs with in the one stop shop.	Explore ways of ensuring the Customer Advisors within the one stop shop provide the optimum level of support to customers with particular needs, within resource limitations.	April 2007	Customer Services/ Policy and Performance
Ensure that customers who may be hard to reach or hard to hear are afforded with equitable access to our services, using advocate services as possible/ necessary.	Extend surgeries in One Stop Shop for Hard to Reach Groups- Age Concern/ Job Centre Plus. Explore possibility of working with partners (eg PCT to deliver services from the One Stop Shop).	April 2007 Onwards	Customer Services
Ensure that we fully understand the needs of our customers and build a picture of where service delivery failure is disproportionate for particular groups or failing to meets the needs of various diverse groups.	Ensure equality monitoring is included in all employee and customer feedback	August 2007	Policy and Performance
Ensure that we take a community leadership approach to actively address harassment and discrimination against equality target groups.	Extend remit of Multi Agency Diversity Incidents Panel to address hate incidents relating to all six strands of equality and diversity	April 2007	Policy and Performance
<b>Employment</b>			
Ensure that all staff are aware of and comply with statutory requirements around equality and diversity and are able to meet the needs of all of our customers.	Review our approach to equality and diversity training to ensure that it meets statutory requirements and the needs of our staff, customers and communities.	April 2007	Human Resources
Ensure that the Council as an employer is able to offer equitable employment opportunities and that our policies fully embed an equalities	Review the Council's suite of Human Resources policies amend and introduce new policies to further our equality objectives as an employer-	April 2007 Ongoing	Human Resources

approach.	possibly consider introducing a religious observances policy, time off for dependants policy, adoption policy.		
Ensure that staff have the skills necessary to enable us as a Council to properly engage with different groups within the Borough.	The personal specification for the new Customer Access Officer post with special responsibility for hard to reach groups could include a desirability for applicants to be able to speak one or more languages other than English.	April 2007	Human Resources/ Customer Services
Ensure that people from hard to reach groups are aware of vacancies within the Council as see Chorley as an equal right employer.	Advertise posts in a series of targeted publications – Stonewall, Carers UK, Disabled Go,	April 2007 Ongoing	Human Resources
<b>Member Involvement</b>			
Ensure that members receive equality and diversity training	Provide equality and diversity training for members. (Specifically tailored for chairs of diversity-targeted focus groups).	June 2007	Human Resources/ Policy and Performance
Ensure that members take every opportunity to engage with young people in the Borough	Gain a greater understanding of the ways in which members engage with young people and explore innovative ways of furthering this.	April 2007 Ongoing	Democratic Services

There are two outstanding issues which the sub group has not to date been able to fully address,

- **Access to services in Rural Areas**
- **Addressing satisfaction**

Further consideration will be given on an ongoing basis to how we tackle these issues as part of our bid to be recognised as an excellent Council.

## 8. CONCLUSION

It is clear that equality and diversity covers a broad ranging agenda, can incorporate Race, Disability, Gender, Age, Sexuality, Religion, elements of Community Cohesion and more- the remit is very comprehensive.

In its purest sense equality and diversity is about delivering equality of access, equality of quality and equality of outcome for all and ensuring that our diverse communities are valued and enabled to prosper. The recommendations outlined above set out the clearest ways in which we as a Council can achieve this using the tools at our disposal and learning from the journey that others have taken in embedding equality and diversity in their organisations. In delivering against equality and diversity objectives and ensuring that all of our customers are afforded equality of outcome and opportunity we will also be meeting many of the requirements of the CPA and embedding best practice across the organisation.

## COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

9. The director of Human resources approves the recommendations in the above report.

## COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

10. The report contains no direct financial implications.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

11. The recommendations at section seven be approved for implementation and monitoring.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

12. None