

Report of	Meeting	Date
Head of Corporate and Policy Services	Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel	7 September 2005

## **REVIEW OF RACE EQUALITY SCHEME AND CORPORATE EQUALITIES PLAN**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To inform Members of progress made by Chorley Borough Council towards the objectives set out in the Corporate Equalities Plan, since the update given at the Panel meeting of 6 July 2005. To inform Members of the review recently undertaken of the relevance of Council services to race, gender and disability.

### **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

2. This report addresses issues concerning our priority of investing in our customers.

### **RISK ISSUES**

3. The report contains no risk issues for consideration by Members.

### **SUMMARY OF PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS THE ACTIONS OUTLINED IN CHORLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CORPORATE EQUALITIES PLAN**

4. Development of an Equality Access Framework

Outcome: To assess current performance and policies for impact assessment, as per RES.

An update of the relevance review in relation to the services Chorley Borough Council provides has recently been undertaken and published on the website.

The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Framework was revised following comments received after the April/May 2005 training delivered to Senior and Middle Managers, and was published in July 2005. Further training sessions are being held in September/October 2005 for any Managers who are new to the authority, or who missed the earlier training, plus any of their staff who will assist them in the assessment process.

The first EqIA has been carried out in Planning Policy, on the Statement of Community Involvement. A meeting is to be held in September 2005 with the consultant employed to deliver the training, in order to explore the completed EqIA, and ensure that we are following the process correctly.

5. Housing Issues

Outcome: Issue addressed as part of Best Value Review.

Some headway has been made into monitoring ethnicity since the Orchard system was installed, and a tenant profile is currently being put together.

6. Training for Staff and Elected Members

Outcome: Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to equalities and how they can contribute to the Council's aims and Objectives.

Training events on general awareness of equality and diversity are being rolled out corporately for staff during August and September 2005. Separate sessions for Councillors are being planned for September/October 2005.

7. Recruitment, employment and retention issues

Outcome: Examination of any areas where there can be improvement in the way that the Council operates these policies.

An Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy has recently been introduced. In addition, the authority has introduced a Young Persons Development Scheme to assist in reflecting the community greater through a more diverse workforce.

8. Extension to Chorley Cemetery

Outcome: Ensure that Burial services meet the needs of the Black and Ethnic Minority community.

Since the report of 6 July 2005, the following works have been carried out at the Cemetery:

- Paths in phase one are complete to finished stone level.
- Landscaping and seeding is complete to areas that have been disturbed by the works.
- Construction of the platform will be underway before the end of August 2005.
- Consultation has started for changes to existing cemetery rules.
- To prevent vandalism, there has been a change of specification for the cabin to metal, and prices are being requested for its supply.

9. Community Development

Outcome: Developing the capacity of ethnic groups

We are working in partnership with Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust to audit, and then develop, the capacity of the ethnic minority community.

10. Benefits Service

Outcome: Ensuring Equality of Access to the Service.

In April 2005, the Benefits team used information supplied by the Pension Service to identify pensioners who are in receipt of Guaranteed Credit, but who were not in receipt of Council Tax Benefit or Housing Benefit. 228 were contacted, and 71 responded – the result being their Council Tax bill reduced. This work was supported by a piece in the local press.

In June 2005, information was sent to registered child care providers to encourage Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims amongst working parents who, in some circumstances, have the charges they pay for child care deducted from the income used in the calculation of benefit. This work will also be supported by an advert in the next edition of Chorley Borough News.

Community groups and tenants' associations have been contacted and there was an initial presentation in Heath Charnock week commencing 15 August 2005, with others planned for September 2005.

In addition to the monthly telephone survey of 1% of customers (in which they are asked how accessible they found the offices and service), Benefits staff attend quarterly meetings attended by Housing Associations, Job Centre Plus, Citizens Advice Bureau and Welfare Rights, to ensure that customers obtain access to the benefits service.

#### 11. Leisure and Culture

Outcome: Develop monitoring systems for participation levels of different groups; discover problems that may prevent participation.

An adult disability sports club has been established at All Seasons Leisure Centre. This follows the hugely successful disability sports club for young people – the Chorley Wildcats. All Seasons Leisure Centre is bidding to be accredited as an Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) centre – one of a few in the North West.

#### 12. Other Actions

There is no further update on the progress reported on 6 July 2005 with respect to the following actions:

- Complaints procedure to monitor disability, ethnicity and gender of complainant - Outcome: Identify areas of poor service provision for those user groups.
- General Access to Services - Outcome: Results of monitoring via service plans.
- Racist Incidents - Outcome: Ensure reporting of Racist Incidents is user friendly and confidence in support is achieved.

### **UPDATE OF THE RELEVANCE REVIEW 2005**

13. An update of the Equality Scheme Relevance Review in relation to the services Chorley Borough Council provides has recently been undertaken and published on the website. It will also be included in the Race Equality Scheme, to be updated by January 2006. A copy of the relevance review is attached with this report.

From the Equality Scheme Relevance Review 1 June 2005 to 31 May 2008, a list has been drawn up to prioritise the functions/policies contained therein for review, via an Equality Impact Assessment. A copy of the list, together with the criteria for prioritisation, is attached with this report.

Members are requested to consider the list and inform the Head of Corporate and Policy Services if there is anything therein with which they do not agree. This list is also being sent for consultation to Service Heads, the Corporate Diversity Group, the Chorley Partnership, the Disability Forum, the Asian Women's Forum, the Muslim Welfare Society and the Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee for feedback by 30 September 2005.

## COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

14. HR support the work being carried out in relation to the Race Equality Scheme and Corporate Equalities Plan.

## COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

15. This report does not raise any new financial considerations beyond those already agreed by the Council, and included in current budgeting projections.

## RECOMMENDATION(S)

16. Members are invited to comment on the report.

TIM RIGNALL  
HEAD OF CORPORATE AND POLICY SERVICES

<b>Background Papers</b>			
<b>Document</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>File</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>
Corporate Equalities Plan, incorporating the Race Equality Scheme	January 2003	-	Intranet address: <a href="http://www2.intranet.chorley.gov.uk/section.asp?catid=12172&amp;docid=14038">http://www2.intranet.chorley.gov.uk/section.asp?catid=12172&amp;docid=14038</a>
Chorley Borough Council Equality Scheme Relevance Review 1 June 2005 to 31 May 2008 (DRAFT)	August 2005	-	Internet address: <a href="http://www2.intranet.chorley.gov.uk/section.asp?catid=12172&amp;docid=14038">http://www2.intranet.chorley.gov.uk/section.asp?catid=12172&amp;docid=14038</a>
Chorley Borough Council Draft Timetable of Equality Scheme Functions/Policies for Review 1 June 2005 to 31 May 2008 (DRAFT)	August 2005	Filed electronically in the Corporate and Policy Services Diversity file	Corporate and Policy Services

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
Tim Rignall	5140	19/08/05	Report on RES Update August 05