



## Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee

### Briefing Paper

Report of: Equality & Diversity Officer  
Date: Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009  
Open

## Equality and Diversity Update

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 The report details the current programme of work to support the delivery of the Council's Single Equality Scheme which was adopted by Council in 2008.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Council's Single Equality Scheme sets out how the Council is going to meet legislative requirements.
- 2.2 Members will be aware that Equality and Diversity is currently at the forefront of legislative change, the most recent development being the updated Equalities Bill which was released for scrutiny in June 2009.
- 2.3 However key to the delivery of the Council's Single Equality Scheme is compliance with the new Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) which came into effect in April 2009 and replaced the Equality Standards for Local Government (ESLG).
- 2.4 To support the delivery of the Single Equalities Scheme and associated work the Council is part of the Being Different Together (BDT) project in partnership with all other councils in Worcestershire and led by Worcestershire County Council. Funding has been obtained through West Midlands Regional Efficiency Partnership for the BDT project over a two year period ending in December 2009.

### 3. Programme of Work

Work being progressed for delivery of the Council's Single Equality Scheme includes:

- 3.1 Internal Equality Monitoring was undertaken in August in order to update council records and ensure compliance with new discrimination legislation. A key issue is how the council ensures buy-in from employees and gains 100% response rates in future.

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- 3.2 Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA). There is a programme of training in place for managers in order that the EqIAs are carried out according to Improvement and Development Agency guidance and the council has a useful document which can be used in order to improve service. Completed EqIA's will be published on the website.
- 3.3 Timescales. Wyre Forest District Council will be peer assessed on the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) in March 2010 which means embedding the equality & diversity action plan must be a key priority from now on.
- 3.4 Equality and Diversity Training for all employees will be rolled out across the Council. Steps have recently been taken through the work of the Being Different Together Group in tendering for the design of this training with recommendations from HR and Training managers across the County.
- 3.5 Community Engagement is an area of focus for the Comprehensive Area Assessment and is also an essential part of the EFLG. The Council needs to undertake further work to strengthen its community engagement arrangements with 'harder to reach' sectors of the community.

### **4. Options**

- 4.1 To note the work on delivering the Single Equalities Scheme to date and to receive further progress updates on a quarterly basis.
- 4.2 To ensure we implement and adhere to our Single Equalities Scheme in view of assessments under EFLG and CAA.
- 4.3 To continue to work closely with Worcestershire County Council for the needs of all our communities.

### **5. Relevant Council Policies/Strategies**

- 5.1 Single equality Scheme 2008 - 2011
- 5.2 Equality and Diversity Policy

### **6. Wards affected**

- 6.1 All.

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