

**Report to: Governance Select
Committee**

Date of meeting: 6 October 2015



Portfolio: Governance and Development Management (Councillor J. Philip)

Subject: Annual Equality Information Report 2015

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Select Committee review the Equality Information Report for 2015.

Executive Summary:

The Equality Act 2010 requires that authorities subject to the public sector equality duty publish equality information annually to demonstrate compliance with the duty. The Council published its last equality information report in July 2014, and the 2015 report sets out the progress made since then to improve the Council's services and employment practices for people with protected characteristics.

The Council's progress against the public sector equality duty is monitored bi-annually by Management Board and overview and scrutiny to ensure compliance and drive improvement in performance.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The broad purpose of the public sector equality requires that the Council integrates a consideration of equality and good relations into its day-to-day business. It must consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and fairness, and reflect equality considerations into the design of policies and the delivery of services; and keep these issues under review.

The review and monitoring of performance against the equality duty helps the authority to comply with its legal requirement; and to provide services and employment practices which meet the diverse needs of its customers and employees.

Other Options for Action:

No other options are appropriate in this respect. Failure to monitor and review progress against the public sector equality duty and to consider corrective action where necessary, could mean that opportunities for improvement are lost.

Report:

1. The Equality Act 2010 requires that public bodies, including the Council, which are subject to the public sector equality duty, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between different groups, and
- (c) foster good relations between different groups.

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- (a) removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- (b) taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and
- (c) encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The equality duty covers: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnerships.

2. The broad purpose of the equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public bodies. Understanding how services affect different groups makes it more likely that the services have the intended effect and this can lead to greater equality and better outcomes. Organisations which provide services which meet the needs of their customers and workforce are likely to carry out their core business more efficiently and have a more productive workforce.

3. Public bodies are also subject to a specific duty which requires that they publish information at least annually demonstrating compliance with the equality duty. The Council last published information in July 2014 and the Equality Information Report 2015, attached at Appendix 1, sets out the work it has undertaken in the last 12 months to improve equality for its customers and employees.

4. The annual Equality Report translates technical action plans for the year into an accessible outcome led report setting out how people have actually benefited from the work undertaken. The report will be published on the Council's website alongside other equality information.

5. Work to take forward the Council's equality duty is coordinated by the Corporate Equality working group and routinely monitored by Management Board and the Governance Select Committee bi-annually at quarters 2 and 4, with other specific reports as required. The Equality Information Report was reviewed by Management Board on 30 September 2015.

6. The Select Committee is requested to review the Equality Information Report for 2015.

Resource Implications:

Resource requirements for the production of the Equality Information Report 2015 have been met from existing resources within the Performance Improvement Unit.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There are no legal or governance implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Publishing this report will help the Council comply with the Equality Act 2010.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district. Relevant implications arising from initiatives set out in this report will have been identified by the responsible service director.

Consultation Undertaken:

The Equality Information Report has been reviewed by Management Board on 30 September 2015. Consultation required in connection with any of the initiatives set out in this report will have been identified by the responsible director.

Background Papers:

Equality Information reports for, 2012, 2013 and 2014 are available on the Council's website.

Impact Assessments:***Risk Management***

There are no risk management issues arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant issues arising from specific activities set out in this report will have been identified by the responsible service director.

Equality:

The production and publication of this report helps people interested in the work of the authority to see the progress being made to improve equality in its services and employment practices. There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant implications arising from activities set out in this report will have been identified by the responsible service director.