

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

11 March 2005

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY PROGRESS REPORT

Background

1. At their meeting on 2nd December 2004, Standards Committee members resolved:
 - a. *To agree that the four main priorities from the Code of Ethical Governance should be:*
 - ◆ *The Members' Code of Conduct*
 - ◆ *The Equality and Diversity Strategy*
 - ◆ *The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy*
 - ◆ *Procedures for declaring interests, claiming expenses and offers/receipt of gifts and hospitality*
 - b. *To receive reports on the above priorities at the January and March meetings of the Committee.*
2. This report advises members what action has been taken with regard to the Council's Equality and Diversity strategy.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group

3. The council has established an Equality and Diversity Steering Committee. The chair of the committee is the Director of Adult and Community Services, and membership consists of senior officers from all the service departments and several central functions. The corporate standards manager is a member of the steering committee. At its most recent meeting on 3rd February 2005, the steering committee approved a draft Corporate Equality Plan. A copy of the draft plan is attached as Appendix 1.
4. The council will seek Cabinet approval of the draft plan in March 2005, and the plan will then go out to the community for consultation. In order for the consultation to be meaningful, sufficient time for full consultation, discussion and amendment is important, and the timetable for completion of the draft plan is therefore the end of September 2005. The final plan, as amended, will then go forward to Cabinet for approval in October 2005.

Interim action

5. Pending finalisation of the Corporate Equality Plan, other actions are being taken to strengthen the council's corporate approach to equality and diversity issues. All the departments are in the process of preparing their service plans for 2005-06. A new feature of this service planning, down to team level, is to include consideration in

team plans for promoting equality and diversity and minimising the negative impact of direct or indirect discrimination in service delivery and staffing matters.

6. The importance of promoting the corporate equalities agenda has been recognised, such that the Corporate Management Board will carry operational accountability for the implementation of the Corporate Equality Plan.

Recommendation

7. That committee members note the contents of this report and the draft Corporate Equality Plan, and receive a further report on progress in March 2006.

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Unpublished documents relied upon in the production of this report:	None
Environmental impact of the recommendations contained in this report:	None
Risks associated with the recommendations contained in this report:	None
Costs associated with the recommendation contained in this report:	None