

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Cohesion
2	Date:	19th June 2012
3	Title:	Single Equality Scheme Edition 2 All wards
4	Programme Area:	Resources Directorate

5. Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Members on changes to the Council's Single Equality Scheme and to seek endorsement for the second edition of the scheme.

6. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

6.1 Note and endorse the content of this report and the refreshed Single Equality Scheme.

7. Proposals and Details

A light touch review and refresh of the Council's Single Equality Scheme has recently been carried out, and the second edition is presented at Appendix 1. The review has been primarily to reflect legal changes following the introduction of the Public Sector Equality Duty (see section 10) to replace the former race, disability and gender equality duties, and to take account of organisational changes within the Council. Statistical information about the borough and the successes and good practice section have also been refreshed.

The Equality Statement and Policy incorporated within the scheme has similarly been updated to support the five new priorities in the Corporate Plan and the wider work to improve the social and economic well-being of the borough through our Rotherham One Town One Community initiatives.

The scheme still covers the following eight equality strands:

- age
- carers
- disability
- gender
- gender identity/trans
- race
- religion/belief
- sexuality

This corresponds to the "relevant protected characteristics" of the Equality Act (2010) - age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Act also specifically covers pregnancy and maternity; and marriage and civil partnerships for certain provisions. Carers of disabled people or older people are not a defined protected characteristic but they are protected from discrimination and harassment through provisions covering what is known as "discrimination by association".

Our broad overall equality priorities are to:

- Ensure services are accessible, responsive and appropriate for all our community.
- Remove barriers that prevent people from fulfilling their potential.
- Tackle and prevent discrimination, bullying, harassment and hate incidents experienced by people in relation to their protected characteristics.
- Build a strong and cohesive community where people from different backgrounds develop positive relationships.
- Be recognised as an employer of choice for people from all communities.

Rather than develop a new detailed action plan to underpin the scheme the focus will be directed towards mainstreaming equality more effectively within service and business plans. Performance measures and targets within existing high level plans and strategies need to be aligned to the protected characteristics, especially with regard to tackling inequality and reducing deprivation.

8. Finance

None arising directly from this report, although promoting and mainstreaming equality in all functions and activities will need the commitment of resources by the relevant service or Directorate.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Failure to implement the Public Sector Equality Duty means the Council will not be in legal compliance with the Equality Act (2010).

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Under the provisions of the Equality Act (2010) the Council has a general duty to promote equality covering nine “relevant protected characteristics” mentioned above. The duty requires the Council to be proactive in embedding equality in policies, commissioning, decisions and service delivery, and in then keeping them under review.

In summary the Council must to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- foster good relations between different groups - tackling prejudice and promoting understanding

Promoting equality for all communities in employment and in access to services supports the overall priorities in the Corporate Plan. Recording and analysing equality monitoring data will continue to be a vital tool for measuring progress in tackling inequality.

11. Background Papers

Rotherham MBC Corporate Plan

http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/5655/plan_on_a_page-june_2011

12. Contact

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