

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

Cabinet Member: Cllr Colin Slade
Responsible Officer: Catherine Yandle, Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security

Reason for Report: To remind Members of the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010, and to seek Members' approval for the revised Single Equality Scheme and Equality Objective.

RECOMMENDATION(S): That Members recommend to Cabinet that they approve the Single Equality Scheme together with the Equality Objective for 2018-19.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The Equality Objective reflects the Corporate Plan aims under the Community priority.

Financial Implications: The Single Equality Scheme does not have any financial implications itself beyond those identified in individual service's equality impact assessments.

Legal Implications: Not complying with the Council's statutory duties with regard to equality could open the Council to legal challenge.

Risk Assessment: Approving the Single Equality Scheme and Equality Objective reduces the risk of legal challenge.

Equality Impact Assessment: Equality issues are the subject of this report.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 local authorities have a duty to have 'due regard' to:

Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;

Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and

Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

1.2 The way a local authority shows it has 'due regard' is by evidencing how equality is considered as part of its decision-making processes. The Single Equality Scheme indicates how this should be done. (Appendix B attached with tracked changes from when it was approved last year).

- 1.3 Case law over the last few years has clarified that considerations of equality should not only be placed at the centre of policy development but that bodies subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty, of which we are one, must apply this duty to the carrying out of any functions of a public body not just statutory functions.
- 1.4 Local authorities also have specific duties under the Act to publish Equality Information annually and 'Equality Objectives' at least every four years. The Equality Information is available on the Mid Devon District Council website Equality pages. (Attached Appendix A)

2.0 **Equality Objective**

- 2.1 The Council's 'Equality Objective' set 3 years ago was to focus on the training needs of staff and members, to ensure they have the right knowledge and tools to fulfil their responsibilities under the Act:

"To ensure all staff and members of the Council receive the appropriate level of training on equality issues."

- 2.2 Equality and diversity training was rolled out to staff, managers and Members throughout 2017-18 and this will be followed up to ensure we continue to achieve this objective going forward.
- 2.3 Templates for reports and Equality Impact Assessments have also been reviewed and reinforced. An Internal Audit into this area had a main recommendation; that the Corporate Equalities Group was revived, that is one of the reasons for setting this as the Equality objective for 2018-19.
- 2.4 With the Committee's approval the Equality Objective for 2018-19 will be to review the work of, and work towards the revival of, the Corporate Equalities Group.

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Circulation of the Report: Members of Community PDG, Cllr Slade, Leadership Team