

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

Cabinet Member: Cllr Colin Slade
Responsible Officer Head of Communities & Governance, Amy Tregellas

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 approve the Single Equality Scheme together with the Equality Objective for 2016-17.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The Equality Objective reflects the Corporate Plan priority under Empowering our Community: To work with our partners to maximise the potential of all our citizens by tackling social disadvantage and deprivation.

Financial Implications: The Single Equality Scheme does not have any financial implications beyond those identified in individual service 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.

1.0 Introduction

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

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- c) 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 will be done.

1.3 Local authorities also have specific duties under the Act to publish Equality Information annually and 'Equality Objectives' at least every four years.

2.0 **Single Equality Scheme Action Plan**

- 2.1 Equality Information is being collated and will be available on the Mid Devon District Council website by 31 March. The Council's Equality Objective will be published as part of the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan.
- 2.2 The Single Equality Scheme has been partially revised to reflect current thinking and changes in legislation. The Single Equality Scheme tries to balance the Council's commitment to improve services to vulnerable individuals with our reducing capacity to meet those needs.
- 2.3 The Single Equality Scheme includes an Equality Action Plan (section 12), which shows what the Council will do in the coming year. In line with the current budgetary constraints, the action plan only includes those actions necessary to fulfil our statutory duties under the Act, together with the statutory 'Equality Objective'.

3.0 **Equality Objective**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council's 'Equality Objective' this year should 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. It is therefore recommended that the 'Equality Objective' should be:

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

- 3.2 Consultation has taken place with the Corporate Equality Group. Their comments have been incorporated into the Scheme.

Contact for more Information: Amy Tregellas, Head of Communities & Governance

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