

CORPORATE EQUALITY SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT, 2014/15

<u>Report of the:</u>	Chief Executive
<u>Contact:</u>	Frances Rutter/ Adama Roberts
<u>Urgent Decision?(yes/no)</u>	No
<u>If yes, reason urgent decision required:</u>	N/A
<u>Annexes/Appendices (attached):</u>	<u>Annexe</u> - The Corporate Equality Scheme Action Plan (2014 to 2015)
<u>Other available papers (not attached):</u>	Wellbeing & Diversity Week 2014/15

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides an annual update on Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Corporate Equality Scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Notes

- (1) Scrutiny committee receives the Corporate Equality Scheme Action Plan update and identifies any areas of concern.**

1 Background

- 1.1 In April 2012, the Council adopted its Corporate Plan for 2012 to 2016. The Plan identified the Council's Key Priorities and Core Values for this period. One of the Core Values for the Corporate Plan 2012 to 2016 is Equalities and Diversity.
- Equality – We will use the Corporate Equality Scheme to ensure that we eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for all members of our community and our employees.*
- 1.2 The Equalities Act places a general and specific duty on public authorities to eliminate discrimination and foster positive relationships between the protected characteristics. In addition there is a moral duty to ensure that the Council continues to build upon Equalities and Diversity in the Borough and in the workplace.
- 1.3 The Council is responsible for providing efficient and effective services that are valued by all sections of the community. In order to do this, it needs to recognise and understand the needs of the different groups within the Borough and ensure that everyone has reasonable access to services, information and employment opportunities.
- 1.4 In addition the Council is committed to playing its full part in achieving continuous improvement to quality of life in all sections of the community.

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- 1.5 The Corporate Equality Scheme was approved and adopted by the Strategy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 27 September 2011. The Scheme sets out the context, approach and objectives, together with a structured programme for its implementation (the Action Plan)
- 1.6 The Corporate Equality Scheme is monitored and developed through the Action Plan (consisting of 55 actions, 52 have been achieved to date. 26 in 2012/13 and 13 in 2013/14 and 13 in 2014/15). The Corporate Equalities Scheme Action Plan is monitored by the Equalities Forum on a quarterly basis at its meeting. Action 47 of the Action Plan states that the "Annual Review of the Corporate Equality Scheme should be reported back to the Scrutiny Committee in the June committee cycle". This report provides an update on progress of the action plan to date.

2 Performance of the Corporate Equality Scheme Action Plan

- 2.1 Overall, there are 16 actions for the financial year 2014/15., Of the **16** actions, 13 been **achieved, three (3)** is Signed off.

The staff and resident Wellbeing & Diversity Event held in September 2014 was again a huge success. The event was held at the Hook Road Arena in partnership with Epsom & Ewell Rotary Club. The Council collaborated with the Epsom & Ewell Thai, Baha'i, Gypsy & Traveller communities as well as local organisations such as the Beat Project to make the event bigger and more successful. Due to lack of staffing resources, our Chief Executive has agreed to fund the Rotary Club of Epsom & Ewell to take on our Equalities Event as part of their Borough Fun Day.

3 The future of the Corporate Equality Scheme and Action Plan

- 3.1 The Corporate Equality Scheme as part of the Corporate Plan 2016/20 will be reviewed and updated annually in line with any National trends in Equalities, in particular changes to the Equalities Act 2010.
- 3.2 The April 2014 update of the Corporate Equality Action Plan was presented to the Equalities Forum on 26 March 2014. Equalities Forum members are given the opportunity to review actions identified by the Council to ensure they are fit for purpose and meets the needs of residents. The action plan for 2014/15 have been finalised and include ongoing actions that will continue to be monitored as part of our Corporate Equalities Scheme.

4 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Community Strategy

- 4.1 There are no implications for the Sustainable Community Strategy.

5 Financial and Manpower implications

- 5.1 There are no specific financial or manpower implications for the purpose of this report apart from staffing resources required to attend the forum meetings on a quarterly basis.
- 5.2 Officers are taking a pragmatic approach to ensure that the process does not become unduly bureaucratic, whilst ensuring that reasonable changes are considered where appropriate.
- 5.3 **Chief Financial Officer's comments:** none for the purposes of this report.

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6 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 6.1 The Corporate Equality Scheme and Action Plan ensure that the Council is taking steps to meet its statutory responsibilities in relation to equalities. More generally, it will ensure that its employment and service policies eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
- 6.2 There is the opportunity through the development and delivery of this Corporate Equality Scheme and Action Plan to secure equality for residents and employees.
- 6.3 ***Monitoring Officer's comments:*** none for the purposes of this report.

7 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 7.1 There are no particular community safety implications for the purpose of this report.

8 Partnerships

- 8.1 For successful development of the Corporate Equality Scheme it will involve continuous partnership working with the Equalities Forum to ensure that each of the 9 protected characteristics is engaged and heard by the Council.

9 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 The Corporate Equality Scheme and Action Plan will ensure that the Council meets its legal duties and removes any unreasonable barriers to accessing services or in relation to employment. It will mitigate against the Council not upholding its Equality & Diversity responsibilities to residents.
- 9.2 The effective implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan should enable the Council to manage potential risk and reduce the threat of challenge.

10 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 10.1 Progress against delivery of the Action Plan will be incorporated into the Council's quarterly performance management reports to Equalities Forum members and will be considered by the Council's Statutory Officers Group each quarter. It is also reported to the Strategy and Resources Committee. The yearend report is also submitted annually to the Scrutiny Committee. This will enable issues to be promptly identified and mitigating action taken as required.
- 10.2 The Committee is asked to receive, note, and comment on, the progress made in 2014/15.