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SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 30 AUGUST 2006

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose of Report

1. To present the draft Disability Equality Scheme for comment by the Scrutiny Commission.

Background

2. The new Disability Discrimination Act 2005 gives all local authorities 'general' and 'specific' duties to promote disability equality. Producing a Disability Equality Scheme is one of the 'specific duties' of the new Act. The legislative requirement is to have the Scheme in place by 4 December 2006.
3. The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has made it clear that they see the involvement process as one of the most important elements in producing the Scheme.
4. As a first step towards involving disabled people, the Council consulted its disabled employees at an event during September 2005. The DRC also participated in the event. The DRC has since remarked that they were impressed with the event and have subsequently used it as an example of good practice in involving disabled people.

Consultation and Involvement

5. The Scheme has been sent out for public consultation over a four month period between April and August 2006. Copies were distributed to all Libraries and Service Shops. It has been circulated to organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors based in and/or providing services in Leicestershire.
6. All known disability organisations serving the county were sent copies of the Scheme with an invitation to discuss ways of involving disabled people more directly. As a result, a number of meetings and workshops have

been run with those groups and organisations that have expressed an interest.

7. A copy of the Scheme, and a questionnaire to use to make comments, have been available on the County Council's website. The publication of the draft Scheme was widely reported in local media.

Timetable

8. Once all responses to the consultation have been analysed and any amendments made, a final version of the Disability Equality Scheme will be considered by Cabinet on 3 October 2006. Any comments from the Scrutiny Commission on the draft Scheme will be reported to Cabinet at that meeting.

Recommendation

9. The Scrutiny Commission is asked to comment on the Scheme

Equal Opportunities Implications

10. The Disability Equality Scheme's purpose is to ensure that the County Council fulfils its general and specific duties under the 2005 Disability Discrimination Act. The specific duty to produce the Scheme will help deliver the general duty to:

- (a) promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- (b) eliminate discrimination which is unlawful under the Act
- (c) eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
- (d) promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- (e) encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- (f) take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities even where this involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people

Background papers

None

Appendices

Appendix A: Draft Disability Equality Scheme

Officers to Contact

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