

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 31 JANUARY 2007**GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME****REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****Purpose of Report**

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

Background

2. The Equality Act 2006 gives all local authorities general and specific duties to promote gender equality. The general duties are to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. Producing a Gender Equality Scheme is one of the specific duties. The Scheme has to be in place by 6 April 2007.

Consultation and Involvement

3. In its draft Code of Practice on the duty to promote gender equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission makes it clear that it sees the involvement of key stakeholders in the development of the Scheme as very important in strengthening its effectiveness. The draft has been prepared with the involvement of employees who attended the Council's LeicestHERday event in March 2006 to mark International Women's day.
4. The Scheme has been sent out for public consultation over a three-month period between November 2006 and January 2007. 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 organisations including those who work closely with women (and/or girls).
5. On 30 January 2007 workshops have been arranged, one in Loughborough, the other in Wigston, to ask people what they think of services and job opportunities being provided for men and women across Leicestershire.
6. The draft Scheme, and the invitation to comment on it, have been widely disseminated across the Council. Members have been informed through the Members Information Service. Employees have received information by email and through Newsline and consultation has taken place with the

Trade Unions, the Black Workers Group and the Disabled Workers Group.

7. The consultation period will be at its end on the date of the meeting of the Scrutiny Commission. A summary of responses received will be circulated to members prior to the meeting.

Timetable

8. Once all responses to the consultation have been analysed, and any amendments made, a final version of the Gender Equality Scheme will be considered by the Cabinet on 6 March 2007. Any comments from the Scrutiny Commission will be reported at that meeting at which the Cabinet will be asked to approve the Scheme for submission to the County Council at its meeting on 21 March 2007

Recommendation

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

Equal Opportunities Implications

10. The purpose of the Gender Equality Scheme is to show how the Council intends to mainstream gender equality in all areas of its work, and to set out priorities on how it intends to tackle gender inequality, eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity between women and men (including boys and girls).

Background papers

None

Appendices

Appendix A: Draft Gender Equality Scheme

Officers to Contact

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