

Equality Impact Assessment - Policies

Title of policy being assessed:	Draft Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy 2010 - 2013
Department and Section:	Chief Executive's Department – Policy and Partnerships
Names and roles of officers completing this assessment:	Sally Edwards – Policy Manager Equality and Diversity Shaun Cropper – Policy Officer Equality and Diversity
Contact Telephone Numbers:	0116 305 7446/6029
Date assessment completed:	February 2010

Defining the policy

1. Why is the policy necessary? What are its aims and objectives? What outcomes is the policy designed to achieve and for whom?

The strategy sets out the Council's commitment to:

- providing fair and inclusive services and employment opportunities for everyone in Leicestershire
- promoting and celebrating diversity
- promoting community cohesion
- promoting and embedding the six equality strands (and more) in everything it does
- meeting its legislative requirements and achieving the highest level of the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG)

Aims, objectives and outcomes

The strategy sets out how the Council will fulfil its commitment to equality, diversity and human rights. The aim of the policy is to show how the Council is embedding, and is continuing to work towards achieving, equality for all. It contains objectives to achieve positive outcomes for Leicestershire citizens. The policy also sets out the Council's approach to community cohesion.

2. How have these aims, objectives and outcomes been determined? What research and engagement/involvement/consultation has been undertaken/used to inform the design and delivery of the policy? How have needs based on race, gender, disability, age, religion/belief or sexual orientation been taken account of?

Key to the development of the draft Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy was engagement with representatives from each equality strand (including carers, children in care

and representatives from the gypsy and traveller community) through the Leicestershire Working Together Forum (LWT).

Additionally, meetings were held with a number of other key stakeholders not members of the LWT but who are working to address inequality and tackle discrimination at a local level.

In terms of staff involvement, the strategy was developed in close collaboration with our 3 workers groups and there was an opportunity for all employees to participate in its development by completing a questionnaire which was published on the Council's website and intranet.

These activities all played a fundamental part in the production of the strategy and agreement of the priorities for action it contains. These activities took place between October 2009 and January 2010.

In addition to the above, previously collected information and data was used to influence the strategy's focus, for example:

- previous Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and the current Equality and Diversity Strategy;
- outcomes from previous consultation exercises like the Black and Minority Ethnic and Disabled Persons Citizens Juries;
- consultation as part of the development of the previous equality schemes;
- workforce monitoring data, and
- local/national demographic data
- national guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission

The strategy has been circulated to everyone engaged in its development as part of the final consultation process, as well as making it widely available on the Council's website and intranet for other stakeholders.

3. (a) Who is responsible for implementing the policy? What processes, procedures and/or criterion will be critical to deliver the policy? Review these against the access needs that various equality groups of people have and consider if they result in barriers which prevent these groups of people from either finding out about the policy or benefiting from it? (See Section 6 for examples)

(b) Consider what barriers you can remove, whether reasonable adjustments may be necessary and how any unmet needs that you have identified can be addressed. For disabled people, as defined under the Disability Discrimination Act, this could mean treating them more favourably to ensure that there is equality of outcome.

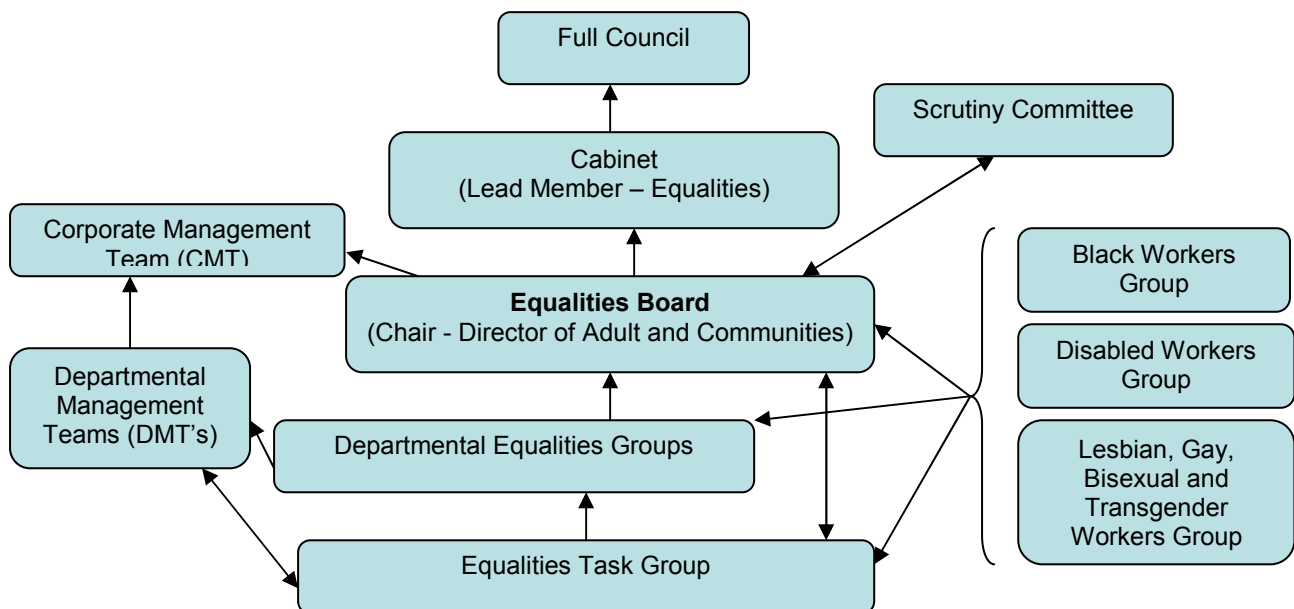
(c) When you are deciding priorities for action you will need to consider whether the barriers result in an adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal. These will constitute your top priority. The other priorities will be dependent on such issues as whether a group is particularly excluded or connected to the core business of the service, whether there are adjustments that would mean several groups benefit.

Ensure that the actions you identify are put into the attached equality improvement plan.

- a) Ensuring equality and promoting diversity is everybody's business, and therefore all employees, elected members and contractors of the Council are responsible for ensuring it is a key consideration in everything they do.

The Council has a well embedded equality and diversity structure, with a Lead Elected Member for Equalities and a corporate Equalities Board that works to ensure effective and co-ordinated action across the County Council to reduce disadvantages, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity, and promote diversity in terms of the people it serves, its workforce, the partners it works with and the services it delivers. Progress made towards achieving the aims, objectives and targets included in the Strategy will be monitored by the Board. The Board will also take action to ensure that the Strategy is implemented throughout the County Council.

Equalities reporting structure



The previous Race and Disability Equality Task Groups have been transformed into a new Single Equalities Task Group which has been designed to consider all equality strands. The Council also supports 3 effective and well respected workers groups.

- b) The strategy is aimed specifically at achieving fairer employment practices and more appropriate and accessible service design and delivery. However, it is recognised that positive outcomes are dependent upon the strategy's effective implementation.

One of the main barriers to the effective implementation of this strategy is cultural, behavioural and attitudinal. A range of training for employees and elected members and the provision of employment positive action measures are two ways of tackling this. Additionally, the promotion of positive messages and raising the profile of equalities and diversity across the authority – which are both identified as key priorities in the strategy – will also address this.

Another barrier is access to, and availability of, relevant information. For example, there is little local information on sexual orientation as the Council, and many other organisations,

have never collected equality monitoring information for this group. Although, as part of the implementation of this strategy, the Council will be required to record this, there is currently little or no local baseline data on which to establish meaningful targets. The Equalities Action will address this.

In terms of accessibility of the strategy itself, it aims to be inclusive in the way it is accessed by the community and copies will be available, upon request, in Braille, large print and on tape/CD. Whilst the strategy has been written in a way that is as jargon free and easy to understand as possible, an 'easy read' version will be produced. The strategy will also be available on the website and intranet for those preferring to access electronic versions. There will also be language interpretation (including British Sign Language (BSL) of the strategy, again this is upon request.

- c) Action Plans will be developed, in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders (including the employee groups), for each of the six equality 'strands'. These will be based on the priorities for action as detailed in the Strategy but will also take account of other issues that are raised.

4. What measures and methods have been designed to monitor the application of the policy, achievement of intended outcomes and identification of any unintended or adverse impact? How frequently will the monitoring be conducted and who will be made aware of the analysis and outcomes? List your answers below.

A report on the progress made towards achieving the aims, objectives and targets contained in the strategy and its associated Equalities Action Plan will be produced annually. It will be submitted to the Equalities Board, Cabinet and relevant Scrutiny body and to the Employment Committee.

In terms of external scrutiny of the strategy, The Leicestershire Working Together Forum (LWT) - a peer scrutiny group established to monitor the Council's progress towards achieving equality and promoting diversity, as well as overseeing the Council's progress towards achieving the highest levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government - will conduct this. The LWT reports to the Leicestershire Together Board.

In relation to the monitoring undertaken to evidence improving outcomes, this is measured in a variety of ways. For example, satisfaction levels, attainment, service take up, workforce monitoring data, staff survey, local and national Performance Indicators (PI's). The new Place Survey will also assist in the measurement of perceptions of the people of Leicestershire in relation to community cohesion and satisfaction with local services. Equality and diversity forms a key part of the Council's new Performance Management Framework.

5. Consider the answers given in questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 and assess whether the policy and its implementation results, or could result in adverse impact on or discrimination against different groups of people. If you consider that there is adverse impact or discrimination, or the potential for either, please outline below and state whether is it justifiable or legitimate and give your reasons for this.

The strategy aims to have a positive impact on all the equality 'strands' and indeed on all the

people of Leicestershire.

6. (a) If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.

(b) If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people. This arises out of the duty to promote good relations between people of different groups and is in keeping with the Council's approach to social cohesion. Also, the new PSA15 explicitly requires councils to address disadvantage across all six equality strands.

Ensure that these actions are listed in the attached equality improvement plan.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL COHESION OR PROMOTING GOOD RELATIONS
BETWEEN DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE**

- 7. Social cohesion is a priority for councils. Progress made towards building more cohesive, empowered and active communities is now being measured through national Performance Indicators. Essentially social cohesion is about promoting a sense of connection, trust and belonging both within and across communities and groups. Review all the actions and targets that you have identified as a result of this equality impact assessment to identify what social cohesion issues could arise, for example:**
- (a) Are there ways in which the policy development process could bring different groups of people together, for example to monitor its impact or develop its future shape?**
 - (b) Could the implementation of the policy result in different groups of people being brought together? Has the capacity of the policy to bring different groups together been fully utilised?**
 - (c) Does the implementation of the policy have the potential to lead to resentment between different groups of people? How can you compensate for perceptions of preferential or differential treatment? Are these implications or decisions being explained to those affected?**

 - (d) If the EIA improvement plan identifies addressing a gap in the service for a particular group of people, has this also addressed the potential for perceptions of preferential treatment for the group? (For example, if you give priority treatment to disabled people, how will you manage the negative attitudes that non-disabled people may develop as a result?)**
 - (e) How can the policy explicitly demonstrate the council's commitment to promote equality across race, gender, disability, age, religion/belief and the LGBT communities?**

List your answers below. Ensure that the actions you identify are put into the attached equality improvement plan.

As mentioned previously, the engagement and involvement of a wide range of stakeholders was a critical part of the strategy's development. Meetings were held with people from a range of nationalities and backgrounds – all with the common purpose of improving outcomes for all the people of Leicestershire.

The strategy's objective of achieving equality and promoting diversity are key components of creating community cohesion and fostering good community relationships. As the title of the strategy suggests, it is all about fairness and respect – irrespective of who you are or where you are from.

The development of the LWT Forum has achieved the aims of bringing people from a range of organisations - and interested individuals - together to work with the Council to improve what we do to ensure we understand and meet people's needs.

The strategy should not result in resentment of some people by others – by making our

employment practices and services more appropriate and accessible, we are improving life for everyone. However, there may be some groups of people who feel that the focus of this strategy is not on them and therefore feel somewhat alienated from it. This has been recognised and actions to alleviate this are being taken, for example the Council has a positive Communications Plan for equality and diversity which aims to increase knowledge and awareness of the issues and engender a higher level of understanding of the benefits of equality and diversity for everyone.

8. EQUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Please list all the equality objectives, actions and targets that result from the Equality Impact Assessment (continue on separate sheets as necessary). These now need to be included in the relevant service plan for mainstreaming and performance management purposes.

Equality Objective	Action	Target	Officer responsible	By when
Actions are undertaken to progress equality and diversity for all equality strands	Complete Equalities Action Plan and ensure that this includes actions for each of the equality strands	Equalities Action Plan produced	Sally Edwards (Policy Manager, Equality and Diversity)	End March 2010

1st Authorised signature (EIA Lead) **Date:**

2nd Authorised signature (Member of DMT) **Date:**

Once completed and authorised, please send a copy of this form to the Equality and Diversity Team in the Chief Executives Department.