

City of York Council DRAFT Single Corporate Equality Scheme

July 2008 to July 2009

Summary

This document outlines actions that the Council will take between July 2008 and July 2009, to help it ensure that it continues to be a fair and inclusive service provider and employer.

It updates previous schemes of actions that took place in the period 2005-2008.

This is a 12-month scheme (July 2008 to July 2009), to be followed by a three-year scheme (July 2009 to July 2012) that will take on board advances in best equality and inclusion practice and legislation expected to come into force after 1.4.2009.

The scheme has five key actions:

Action 1 - Update the corporate Equality Strategy and Schemes for the period July 2009 to July 2012, by July 2009.

Action 2 : Finalise a programme of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) of council key policies, strategies and practices by January 2009, and use these to put in place directorate equality schemes by July 2009.

Action 3: Develop a corporate approach to equality performance data collection, analysis and use - first phase by July 2009.

Action 4: Develop a corporate approach to robust community engagement by February 2009. Develop a community engagement strategy for Social Inclusion Working Group - first draft by November 2008.

Action 5: Develop and begin to deliver a rolling programme of corporate equality training and development for staff and councillors, by July 2009

It is expected that these actions will contribute to the following performance indicators which the Council (with its partners) shall use to measure progress with equality and inclusion in the city:

NI 1: % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.

NI 2: % of people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood.

NI 3: Civic participation in the local area.

NI 4: % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality.

NI 14: Reducing avoidable contact: Minimising the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value.

NI 140: Equal treatment by local services.

<p>Background to the Single Corporate Equality Scheme (SCES)</p>

This 12-month single Equality scheme builds on and updates the PRIDE IN OUR COMMUNITIES Equality Strategy for 2005-2008.

This scheme describes how the council proposes to deliver its own corporate equality objectives and meet its legal duties arising from current equality legislation. This scheme covers the period July 2008 to July 2009.

Where appropriate, the scheme will be complemented by service directorate schemes like the one currently in development in our Adult and Community Education services.

The overall aim of the scheme is to make service delivery and employment fairer for everyone by setting out our corporate approach and plans for promoting and embedding equality and Inclusion in everything the council does, either alone or with its partners and subcontractors.

To arrive at the scheme we have considered:

1. Feedback on equality and Inclusion issues provided by service users and staff from the equality strands
2. Advances in equality legislation, regarding gender, sexual orientation, age, and religion and belief issues in particular
3. The performance management framework for local government and Local Area Agreement which took effect on 1.4.2008.

The scheme precedes the council's next 3-year Corporate Equality Strategy and Schemes 2009-2012. This will be developed throughout the period of this scheme and will be based on:

1. The outcome of updated equality impact assessments of our key policies and strategies, which we expect to finish in winter 2008.
2. The refreshes of key council policies and plans in particular the Corporate Strategy, the Human Resources Strategy (the People Strategy), the Engagement Strategy and the Communications Strategy.
3. The results of staff and service user engagement and consultation.
4. Changes to the Local Government Equality Framework, live from 1.4.2009.
5. The expected Single Equality Act, if it becomes law by July 2009.

Equality and Inclusion : Definition

Equality and Inclusion are about delivering fair services and achieving equitable life and employment outcomes, whilst respecting diverse needs and aspirations.

There cannot be equality of opportunity or equitable outcomes, unless Inclusion is recognised, valued and supported.

A summary of the legal context

The council has a legal duty to have Gender, Disability and Race Equality Schemes in place under the following Acts:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RRAA)
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA)
- Equality Act 2006

These Acts place positive duties on all public bodies to promote race, disability and gender equality in everything that they do.

Below is a summary of the key points of these Acts.

Under the **RRAA 2000**, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and harassment;
- Promote equality of opportunity;
- Promote good relations between people of different races.

Under the **DDA 2005**, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Eliminate disability harassment;
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons;
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; and
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

Under the **Equality Act 2006**, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and harassment that is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act, and discrimination that is unlawful under the Equal Pay Act;
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

There is also legislation considering aspects of equality relating to age, religion and belief and sexual orientation. The relevant

legislation does not impose positive duties to promote equality and Inclusion in these areas, but it require us not to discriminate against people on these grounds. This applies both to employment and the provision of goods and services. Further the proposed Single Equality Act to be considered in next year's Parliament, is expected to place positive duties in lieu of age, religion and belief and sexual orientation. Therefore, we shall ensure that the following legislation is taken on board in this and subsequent Equality Schemes :

Employment Equality (Age) Regulation 2006:

Protects against discrimination on grounds of age in employment and vocational training. Prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment and instructions to discriminate.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2003

Protects against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in employment, vocational training, promotion, and working conditions

Civil Partnerships Act 2004

Provides legal recognition and parity of treatment for same-sex couples and married couples, including employment benefits and pension rights.

Gender Recognition Act 2004

Provides transsexual people with legal recognition in their acquired gender. Legal recognition follows from the issue of a full gender recognition certificate by a gender recognition panel.

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulation 2003

Protects against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief in employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions.

Equality Act 2006

Protects against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and religion and belief in terms of access to goods, facilities and services

What we have done so far

The PRIDE IN OUR COMMUNITIES Equality Strategy 2005-08 underpinned the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement, both now refreshed with effect from 1.6.2008. This ensured that key equality and Inclusion issues were considered and plans were made to deal with them at the highest level in the city.

At corporate level within the council we focused on:

1. building and developing equality governance and engagement mechanisms, through which to embed equality and Inclusion in our business. Annex 1 outlines current equality and Inclusion governance structures, their key milestones and future work-areas.
2. organising and delivering equality and Inclusion consultation and engagement events
3. developing and delivering equality and Inclusion training
4. developing a corporate approach to Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) leading to a programme of up-to-date EIAs of our key policies and plans, to be completed and signed-off by management teams by December 2008. These are listed in Annex 2
5. starting to develop a corporate approach to collecting analysing and using equalities data

Annex 3 outlines progress with equality and Inclusion so far at the corporate level.

At directorate and service level, we have had a number of successes and improvements which made equality a reality for local people. Below are some examples:

1. INCLUDING YOUNG PEOPLE: In our City Strategy directorate, York Training Centre was re-awarded the Matrix quality standard for Information, Advice and Guidance 2007/8. This award was made because staff at the centre have been assisting young people who have had negative education experiences, to make choices in their future career, guiding them into training and employment with positive results.

2. **MAKING FITNESS INCLUSIVE:** In our Learning Culture and Children's Services directorate, Oaklands leisure centre became the first leisure centre in the UK to achieve the 'Inclusive Fitness Mark'. This is a quality assurance scheme which sets high standards of accessibility for all users of sports facility. Oaklands leisure centre has developed new opportunities for people with disabilities to enjoy physical activity and achieve their sporting potential through specialist programmes and integrated activities. The centre also promotes sports as a tool to engage young people at risk of exclusion, providing targeted opportunities for under represented groups to take part in sport and physical activity.
3. **NARROWING THE PAY GAP:** Working with the unions we concluded the review of our pay and grading structures in April 2008. We expect a union ballot to take place by mid Summer 2008.

<p style="text-align: center;">Areas for corporate improvement identified by users and staff and how they will be dealt with</p>

Throughout the period July 2005 to July 2008, a number of engagement and consultation events with staff, users and partners took place. Areas for corporate equality and Inclusion improvement were identified as follows:

1. The council as an employer
 - i. Increase the number of women employed in senior management positions.
 - ii. Decrease pay differentials between male and female employees
 - iii. Review and extend the scope of equality compliant flexible working practices
 - iv. Consider how to improve the numbers and position of disabled employees and employees from different ethnic backgrounds

These will be taken on board in our corporate Human Resources Strategy called "The People Strategy" expected to be in place in early 2009.

2. The council as place-shaper and service deliverer

- i. Support a strong common voice for people with disabilities. This will be dealt with in the context of developing an engagement strategy for the Social Inclusion Working Group (see Action Plan below)
- ii. Consider the impact of changes in Black and minority ethnic population in terms of inclusion and community cohesion
- iii. Consider the needs of an increasingly ageing population (in which women outnumber men) in service planning and delivery, and its effect on intergenerational issues and community cohesion
- iv. Consider issues of sexual orientation and religion and belief for example in planning social, housing, and community safety services.

Items ii) iii) and iv) above, will be dealt with during the course of Equality Impact Assessments and directorate Equality Schemes (see Action Plan below)

<p style="text-align: center;">Our corporate equality and Inclusion action plan for the next 12 months</p>

Actions listed below will ensure that the corporate ethos, commitment and mechanisms are in place to support our service directorates to formulate and deliver directorate equality schemes and action plans.

Action 1 - Update the corporate Equality Strategy and Schemes for the period July 2009 to July 2012.

The refreshed Equality Strategy and Equality Scheme will be based on the outcome of our corporate Equality Impact Assessments (see Annex 2), with the engagement of staff and user groups from each of the six equality strands under the auspices of the council's Social Inclusion Working Group.

By: July 2009

Led by: Corporate Equalities and Inclusion Team

Action 2 : Undertake a programme of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) of council key policies, strategies and practices and use these to put in place service equality schemes.

We want to ensure that the council is meeting everyone's needs (residents, visitors, service users and employees) and that people who need our services most have access to them. To help us to do this we shall carry out a programme of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) of our key policies, strategies and procedures. The results of these Equality Impact Assessments will help us decide whether existing or proposed policies, procedures, practices or services affect (or may affect) people differently, and if so whether in an adverse way. This is on the grounds of gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion and belief and age. A summary of the results of the Equality Impact Assessments, with resulting actions to ensure that adverse effects are taken into consideration and dealt with, will be published on our internet and updated at regular intervals (yearly in most cases). They will also be used to put in place directorate and service level equality schemes.

By: Results of key EIAs published on our internet site, our corporate publications and our staff newsletter, by January 2009. 3 year Directorate/Service Equality Schemes published after July 2009.

Led by: Corporate Equality Leadership Group/ Directorate Equality Leads

Action 3: Develop a corporate approach to equality performance data collection, analysis and use.

The corporate equalities team working with the corporate Performance Officers Group (POG) will map existing equality data so as to establish a baseline position for equalities at a corporate level and in each directorate. Data collected and analysed will be used to measure and track progress with equality and Inclusion both at a corporate as well as at directorate level.

By: July 2009 (collecting and analysing data to establish baselines)

Led by: Corporate Equality Leadership Group and POG

Action 4: Develop a corporate approach to robust community engagement

Action to support users and staff from the six equality strands to engage in service planning and delivery and the development of inclusive employment practices, will take place at corporate and directorate level. This will be incorporated in the Corporate Engagement Strategy currently under development.

By: February 2009

Led by: Director for People and Improvement

In addition the **Social Inclusion Working Group** aims to develop its own Community Engagement Strategy. This is expected to support the developing gender and disability forums as well as the work of the well established race, age, religion and belief, and sexual orientation forums represented on the Group

By: November 2008 for 1st draft of the Strategy

Led by: Social Inclusion Working Group

Action 5: Develop and begin to deliver a rolling programme of corporate equality training and development for staff and councillors

The development of the CYC e-Learning Portal will help progress this significantly.

By: July 2009

Led by: Corporate HR, corporate Equalities and Inclusion Team, Democracy Services

<p>Performance indicators that will help us measure progress at the corporate and city level</p>

At the end of this Single Corporate Equality Scheme (July 2009), we shall measure corporate and city-wide progress with equality and inclusion using the set of national indicators below.

These have been selected because:

1. They will help the council meet its equality legal duties
2. Government recommends that they are used to measure overall local and national progress with equality Inclusion and customer care.
3. Meeting the requirements of these indicators will require the council and its partners to work together, thus embedding equality and Inclusion in all key public services in the city. Data collected in relation to targets set for these indicators, will be profiled in as many of the six equality strands as possible. The strands are gender, disability, race, age, religion and belief, and sexual orientation.

There is a plethora of service-related equality and Inclusion national and local indicators (such as “the extent to which older people are supported to live independently”). These will be used to measure and report progress with directorate/service Equality Schemes.

The corporate indicators are:

NI 1: % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.

Our target for 2008/9 is expected to be 82% of people who will reply to the local place (residents) survey. This indicator is included in our Local Area Agreement.

NI 2: % of people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood

This is a new indicator for which we have no current baselines. At the time of writing this scheme, we are still in discussions with partners and the government regarding setting a target, the data for which will be collected via the place (residents) survey.

NI 3: Civic participation in the local area. This means participation in local and city-wide decision-making structures such as ward committees, council committees etc. At the time of writing this scheme, targets for 2008/9 are being developed in consultation with key local partners and stakeholders.

NI 4: % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality. This indicator, which is in our Local Area Agreement, will measure the success of our, and our partners', engagement strategies and of local community involvement mechanisms such as ward committees.

At the time of writing this scheme, targets for 2008/9 and beyond are being developed in consultation with Local Area Agreement partners.

NI 14: Reducing avoidable contact: Minimising the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value.

The council is a key point of contact for citizens when they need or want to access public services which affect their quality of life. This indicator will tell us how we respond to all customers. Data collected will be disaggregated in the six equality strands to help us ensure that no barriers exist to access to services because of issues relating to gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, and religion and belief. At the time of writing this scheme, targets for 2008/9 are being developed in consultation with key local partners and stakeholders.

NI 140: Equal treatment by local services. This indicator will measure whether individuals are treated with dignity and respect by the council and other public services.

This is a new indicator and we currently have no baselines on which to set targets. Over 2008/9 we shall work with community representatives and our partners to gather baseline information on which to base future targets. Targets will be set for each of the equality strands and we shall be aiming for increases in improvements for each of the equality strands

Responsibility for the Single Corporate Equality Scheme

The council Executive and Council Management Team, guided by the Executive Member for Leisure, Culture and Social Inclusion as advised by the council's Social Inclusion Working Group will be responsible for the delivery of this scheme. They will be supported by:

1. The corporate Equality Leadership Group, led by the Corporate Equalities Champion
2. The Directorate Equalities Leads network, led by the Equality and Inclusion Manager

3. Directorate Equality networks and committees, led by Directorate Equality Leads
4. Staff Equality networks and committees
5. The corporate Equalities and Inclusion Team

In addition all employees and partner agencies have a role to play in helping us to meet our duty to promote equality and Inclusion.

Reviewing the Single Corporate Equality Scheme

This Single Corporate Equality Scheme will be reviewed in July 2009 at which time it will be subsumed in the refreshed Equality and Inclusion Strategy and Scheme 2009-2012.

Corporate Equality and Inclusion Team
July 2008