

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 5 MARCH 2009

DRAFT DISABILITY EQUALITY ACTION PLAN (2006-2009) - SECOND YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Committee of progress made during 2008 towards the implementation of the Council's Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan (2006 -2009), and the priorities identified for 2009 to ensure successful implementation of the Scheme. It is also a requirement of the law that the Council reports annually on progress in implementing the Disability Equality Scheme.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Disability Equality Duty came into force in December 2006. The new law requires all public bodies to eliminate discrimination and harassment of disabled people on the grounds of their disability; promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; encourage the participation of disabled people in public life; and take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.
- 2.2 The Duty also requires all public authorities to publish a Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan every three years and to report annually on progress on the Action Plan.
- 2.3 This report and the appendices summarise progress made during 2008 towards implementing the Disability Equality Action Plan (2006 -2009) as well as the priorities for further action during 2009.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee note and comment on progress made during 2008 towards implementing the Disability Scheme Action Plan 2006 – 2009 and the priority areas of work identified for 2009.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 Committee approved the Council's Disability Equality Scheme (2006 -2009) at their meeting of 20 September 2007 (Item 4). The late completion date of September 2007, as opposed to the statutory date of December 2006, was necessitated partly by the need to fully involve local disabled people in the development of the Scheme and by the stringent criteria imposed on the Council by the then Disability Rights Commission.
- 4.2 Following completion of the Scheme in 2007, a Disability Equality Scheme Monitoring Group (DEG) was formed. The Group comprises representatives

of local disabled people from the North and South of Aberdeenshire, a representative of the Employee Disability Forum and a cross section of policy, management and personnel officers. The DEG considers four-monthly progress reports from services on their respective Action Plans.

- 4.3 An interim progress report on the Disability Action Plan (2006-2009) was published on the Council website in January 2008 to meet the requirement of the disability equality legislation. This is the first progress report to come before the Committee.
- 4.4 A summary of achievements for 2008 and priorities for 2009 is presented in Appendix 1.
- 4.5 The law requires Education Authorities to produce a separate Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan. The annual progress report regarding our Education, Leisure & Learning Service is attached as Appendix 2.
- 4.6 A detailed progress report covering all actions contained within the Disability Equality Action Plan has been placed in each of the political group rooms. The detailed action plan will also be made available on the council website.

5 Area, Policy and Sustainability Implications

- 5.1 The Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan applies to each Area of the Council; it conforms to the Disability Equality legislation and the Council's equal opportunities policy. Effective implementation of the Scheme and Action Plan will contribute positively towards fulfilling the Disability Duty and achieving the Council's vision of "helping to create and sustain the best quality of life for all ..." and supporting a diverse culture.

6 Staffing and Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no additional staffing or financial requirements as a result of this report

7 Consultations

- 7.1 All Council Services have contributed to this report. The Director of Law and Administration and members of the officer Corporate Equalities Group and the Disability Equality Scheme Monitoring group have been consulted on this report.

8 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the review documentation attached and**
- 2. Comment on progress made towards implementing the Disability Scheme Action Plan (2006 – 2009) and the proposed priorities for 2009.**

Item:

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Colin Mackenzie
Chief Executive

Report prepared by:
Mercy Yaor, Corporate Policy Officer - Equalities.
Date: 13 February 2009.