

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL – 25 APRIL 2013

EQUALITIES MAINSTREAMING & OUTCOMES REPORT

1 Recommendations

The Council is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the progress made to date towards integrating equality into the work of the Council.**
- 1.2 Approve, for publication, the Council's obligations and commitments as detailed in the Equalities Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report.**
- 1.3 Agree to review six monthly updates on the Council's progress in working towards meeting its equality obligations and request a full report in April 2015.**

2 Background / Discussion

- 2.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty is a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 which brings together nine protected characteristics in one legislative entity.
- 2.2 There are three fundamental elements to the general duty whereby the Council must give 'due regard' to (or consciously consider), in the exercise of its functions, the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 2.3 Furthermore the Scottish Government passed the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, which came into force in May 2012. This was the Government's approach to support the better performance of the general duty by listed public bodies; these include Local Authorities, Local Education Authorities and Licensing Boards. These duties cover requirements to:
 - Assess and review policies and practices.
 - Gather and use employee information.
 - Report and publish gender pay gap information.
 - Publish an equal pay statement.
 - Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement.
 - Publish in an accessible manner.
 - Publish a report on mainstreaming the equality duty (by 30 April 2013). The Mainstreaming report can be found [here](#). The appendices to the Mainstreaming report can be found [here](#).

- Publish equality outcomes and report on progress – these must be published every four years with progress on meeting the outcomes being published every two years. The Equality Outcomes can be found at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 2.4 The purpose of the Mainstreaming report (to be published by 30 April 2013, and at intervals of no more than two years) is to provide an update on progress against the requirements set out in the general duty – to integrate equality across all council functions in day to day activities whereby the council takes account of equality in everything it does as an employer; in budget setting and policy development processes; when planning or providing services; and reports on making equality integral to the council’s activities. Additionally a fresh set of Equality Outcomes require to be published within 4 years of each previous set.
- 2.5 In addition to the Mainstreaming and Outcomes report the council is required to evidence its commitment to equalities in a variety of ways, one of which is via Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to ensure equality forms part of the decision making process at committees and council meetings. As briefings have been provided and information made available on Arcadia it is anticipated that the number, and indeed quality, of EIAs will increase following a period of transition.
- 2.6 As a lead employer across Aberdeenshire, the Council aims to reflect the diversity of the community it serves. The Equalities Mainstreaming & Outcomes report and Appendices includes available employment data which will be built upon in future years.
- 2.7 As the equality duties apply to Education Authorities as separate ‘listed Bodies’. The Equality & Human Rights Commission have advised that the Education reports and outcomes can be published jointly provided they can be distinguished from those of the Council.
- 2.8 Whilst the Equalities Mainstreaming & Outcomes report sets out the Council’s progress to date there is a considerable commitment to build on and improve its approach to ensure equality for all with protected characteristics. This will be evidenced in future reports.
- 2.9 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Corporate Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments have been incorporated.

3 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Corporate Equalities Group recognised that additional resources were required to support the Project Officer (Equalities) and the Equalities Officer (both of whom have recently been seconded into post). Therefore, to improve equalities mainstreaming a Project Coordinator and Project Assistant were recently recruited from within existing resources on a fixed term basis.
- 3.2 Beyond the additional resource previously approved there are no financial implications.

3.3 An equality impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. It is included as Appendix 1 to this report. A number of positive impacts have been identified. The report's purpose is to demonstrate the Council's commitment to integrating and embedding equalities. The impacts identified are set out in the main body of the report and its appendices. The measures and outcomes referred to will contribute to mitigating the issues identified through the evidence gathering process.

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