



## POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20TH JANUARY 2009

**SUBJECT: GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise on the development and implementation of the Gender Equality Scheme within Caerphilly County Borough Council.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This is the first Gender Equality Scheme annual report for Caerphilly County Borough Council. The report gives an appraisal of the development of the Authority's Gender Equality Scheme and its implementation since the publication of the scheme in May 2007.
- 2.2 The Gender Equality Scheme sets out how the Authority will comply with the legislation governing Gender equality, which include: -
- Equal Pay Act 1970
  - Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amended 1986)
  - Equality Act 2006
- 2.3 Throughout 2007/08 the Authority has made considerable progress in terms of supporting and raising awareness of the Equalities agenda.
- 2.4 Equalities is supported within the Authority by a framework of working groups, which report into the Executive Equalities Group chaired by the Director of Corporate Services. Each sub group represents areas of each equality strand.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Gender Equality Scheme has links with a number of council policies and strategies: -
- All other Equalities policies
  - Recruitment and Selection
  - Community Strategy
  - Staff Training and Development
  - Customer Care

### 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 From 6 April 2007 the Equality Act 2006, which amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, places a statutory duty on all public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.
- 4.2 This includes their core functions of policy development, service design and delivery,

decision-making and employment, the exercise of statutory discretion, enforcement and any services and functions that have been contracted out.

4.3 This new duty puts the onus on each public authority to promote equality between women and men at work and through the delivery of services to create:

- Better informed decision-making and policy development.
- A clearer understanding of the needs of the service users.
- Better quality services, which meet, varied needs.
- More effective targeting of policy and resources.
- Better results and greater confidence in public services.
- A more effective use of talent in the workforce.

4.4 In order to progress the delivery of the general duty, there is also the following series of specific duties: -

- By 30th April 2007, prepare and publish a gender equality scheme that shows how the public authority will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives.
- Consider the need to include objectives to address the cause of any gender pay gap.
- Gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
- Consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.
- Assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality.
- Implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years.
- Report against the scheme every year and review at least every three years.

4.5 The Welsh Assembly Government has not yet adopted the above specific duties for public authorities in Wales, however the Council has decided to implement the specific duties, as outlined above in order to demonstrate compliance with the general duty. Caerphilly County Borough Council has made progress against a number of these duties however and the updated action plan reflects this.

4.6 The Gender Equality Scheme has been updated to include the new action plan and also incorporates some new information on Domestic Abuse, as requested by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. This information is already on-going work in Caerphilly county borough and so its inclusion does not alter the Scheme or the Council's commitments to Gender Equality in any way.

## **5. GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN**

5.1 In March 2007, the Authority implemented a framework for developing equalities within the authority. The framework is made up of an Executive Equality Group chaired by the Director of Corporate Services and four Sub Groups; Race, Gender, Language and Disability.

5.2 The chairs of each sub group are Heads of Service, one from each directorate within the Authority. These officers have been tasked by the Chief Executive and Directors to deliver equalities within the Authority in a consistent manner. Each chair is also a member of the Executive Equality Group.

5.3 The chair of the Gender Equality Sub Group is the Head of Procurement, Elizabeth Lucas.

5.4 The first task of the group was to review the current equality action plan and to provide documented evidence that Gender issues were being dealt with within the authority in a consistent manner.

- 5.5 The group is supported by the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Lyn Ackerman.
- 5.6 It was concluded by the group that the current action plan was outdated and unachievable, therefore in consultation with the Equality Commission and after internal discussions, the group revised the action plan, as attached in Appendix A.

## **6. GENDER EQUALITY DUTY - ANNUAL REPORT**

- 6.1 As detailed within the report the Gender Equality Group has revised the plan set out in 2007. Appendix B provides a summary of the actions within the plan, together with progress to date.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications to the annual report - any personnel implications are noted in the Gender Equality Scheme and have already been approved by Council.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications to the annual report - any financial implications are noted in the Gender Equality Scheme and have already been approved by Council.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That the progress to date on the 2006/07 equality action plan be noted.
- 9.2 That the revised equality action plan be noted and approved.

## **10. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To ensure Gender Equality Scheme is implemented within Caerphilly County Borough Council

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Monitoring of the implementation of the Gender Equality Scheme is required under the Equality Act 2006.

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Background Papers - Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010.

This is available by email for information or can be found on the council's website, on the Gender page of the Equalities section, which forms part of the wider Council and Democracy section)

Appendices:

Appendix A – Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan 2008

Appendix B

Appendix C