



**POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
25TH JANUARY 2011**

SUBJECT: DRAFT SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek endorsement from Members for this draft Single Equality Scheme, the Council's first integrated Equality policy.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council has for many years complied with its statutory Equality duties in terms of Gender, Disability, Race and the Welsh Language and has had individual schemes in place to demonstrate its commitment.
- 2.2 As many of these schemes have, or are due to, come to an end and with the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, which brings Age, Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation issues to broadly the same level as the other strands, it seemed the ideal opportunity to combine all the existing policies into one as opposed to creating a raft of new individual policies for each of the protected characteristics.
- 2.3 Further, the Welsh Assembly Government has recently completed a consultation on a Public Sector Equality Duty for Wales, which when introduced, will require public bodies to have a Single Equality Scheme in place.
- 2.4 One area to note is that the new Scheme does not commit the Council to any significant increase in provision over and above what was already in place, but brings everything being done already together in one place for the first time and ensures that the new requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 are covered.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Single Equality Scheme will replace a number of existing council policies, namely the Race Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme and Disability Equality Scheme and one operational document, namely the Linguistic Skills Strategy (but not currently the Welsh Language Scheme which remains until 2012).
- 3.2 Equalities is a crosscutting theme of the Community Strategy and impacts on every council policy that is aimed at the public.
- 3.3 The Single Equality Scheme has direct links with a number of other policies and strategies, both within the Council and in terms of various partnership working:-

- Community Strategy
- The Improvement Plan
- People Management Strategy
- The Regeneration Strategy

- The Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy
- 50+ Positive Action - action plan
- Safer Caerphilly County Borough action plan
- Safeguarding Children action plan
- Children and Young Peoples Partnership Plan
- The Living Environment Strategy
- Protection of Vulnerable Adults action plan
- Community Cohesion Plan

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 An Executive Summary of the Scheme is attached as Appendix 2 to this report. The full draft Single Equality Scheme is attached as Appendix 3.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications to this report as this new policy covers commitments and actions already being implemented as part of the current Equalities schemes being replaced as noted previously.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no immediate personnel implications, although this will need to be regularly reviewed in the future as work specified in the Scheme continues.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The draft policy was circulated extensively both internally and externally and the full list of consultees is shown as Appendix 1 at the end of this report.
- 7.2 32 responses were received by the consultation period closing date of 31st December 2010, and where possible, the comments and additional information received have been reflected in the amended draft policy being presented here
- 7.3 The key amendments resulting from the Consultation are as follows -
- Addition of explanatory matrix as a quick reference for discrimination.
 - Addition of Pregnancy and Maternity section
 - Addition of explanatory paragraphs in section 6 to outline the differences in legislation.
 - Multiple Discrimination section moved
 - Local examples removed from policy - to form a Good Practice Guide as a separate document to be published by April 2010.
 - Addition of Nationality Section
 - Terminology updated and made consistent across the scheme
 - General formatting and typos corrected.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Single Equality Scheme attached, be endorsed, and recommended to Cabinet as a single replacement policy for the current schemes as noted in 3.1.

9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The new policy will ensure that the Council complies with its statutory duties under the Equalities Act 2010 and continues to comply with preceding Equalities and Human Rights legislation.
- 9.2 The policy will also ensure that the Council complies with the Welsh Assembly Public Sector Equality Duty, due to be in place during 2011.

10. STATUTORY POWER

- 10.1 Local Government Act 2000, Equality Act 2010, Local Government (Wales) Measure 2010, Human Rights Act 1998.

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Appendices:

- Appendix 1 List of Consultees
Appendix 2 Single Equality Scheme Executive Summary
Appendix 3 Draft Single Equality Scheme (would members please retain their copies for Cabinet and Council)

Background Papers:

Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010
Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009
Race Equality Scheme 2009-2012
Linguistic Skills Strategy 2007
Welsh Language Scheme 2009-2012
(These are available electronically for information if requested)