

Individual Decisions

The attached reports will be taken as an
Individual Portfolio Member Decisions on:

29 November 2007

| Ref: | Title | Portfolio Member | Page No. |
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| ID1431 | Gender Equality Scheme | Cllr Webster | 1 |

Individual Decision

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Title of Report: | Gender Equality Scheme | | |
| Report to be considered by: | Councillor Emma Webster | on: | 29th November 2007 |
| Forward Plan Ref: | ID1431 | | |

Purpose of Report: To seek approval for the proposed WBC Gender Equality Scheme.

Recommended Action: To approve the proposed WBC Gender Equality Scheme.

Reason for decision to be taken: The Council has a statutory duty to produce a Gender Equality Scheme.

List of other options considered: No other options available

Key background documentation: WBC Gender Equality Scheme

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
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| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
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Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2006 introduced the Gender Equality Duty for the public sector. The Duty places a legal obligation on public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between men and women.
- 1.2 To help meet the Duty, local authorities have a specific duty to produce a Gender Equality Scheme, identifying gender equality goals and actions to meet them.
- 1.3 A draft Gender Equality Scheme was prepared in April 2007. An internal and external consultation exercise was undertaken, and the draft scheme was amended as a consequence of comments received.
- 1.4 The consultation period ended at the end of September 2007 and the Gender Equality Scheme is now ready for approval.
- 1.5 Once approved, the Scheme will be published on the West Berkshire Council website and overall progress will be monitored by the Corporate Equality Group, which consists of Senior Managers from each Directorate, who will in turn monitor their own Directorate's contribution to the Scheme through their own directorate level equality groups and Senior Management teams.
- 1.6 The Corporate Equality Group reports to the Chief Executive's Corporate Board and Council's Executive Committee. It provides bi-annual reports on the progress this Council is making in promoting equality. In future, one of the bi-annual reports will include the annual progress which has been made in meeting the Gender Equality Duty, and in particular the implementation of the Scheme's Action Plan
- 1.7 The Gender Equality Scheme will be reviewed every three years.

Appendices

Appendix One – Gender Equality Scheme 2007 - 2010

Implications

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Policy: | Links to the Council's Comprehensive Equality Policy |
| Financial: | None |
| Personnel: | None |
| Legal: | Statutory duty to produce a Gender Equality Scheme |
| Environmental: | None |
| Equalities: | Links to the Council's Comprehensive Equality Policy |

Partnering: On-going consultation with relevant external stakeholders

Property: None

Risk Management: Statutory requirement to produce a Gender Equality Scheme, therefore potential risks if a scheme is not produced

Community Safety: None

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council: Consultation was in two parts – the general consultation exercise running between April and September 2007 and individual consultation with relevant groups / individuals (eg: **Overview & Scrutiny Commission Chairman:** Leader of the Council, Policy Development Commission Chairman, Opposition Spokesperson and Trade Union)

Policy Development Commission Chairman:

Ward Members: Where appropriate, comments have been incorporated into the Gender Equality Scheme.

Opposition Spokesperson:

Local Stakeholders:

Officers Consulted:

Trade Union:

| Is this item subject to call-in. | Yes: x <input type="checkbox"/> | No: |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box: | | |
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position | | |
| Considered or reviewed by OSC or associated Task Groups within preceding 6 months | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Gender Equality Scheme 2007 – 2010

Version 7
Sept 2007

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1 About the Gender Equality Duty

- 1.1. The Equality Act 2006 introduced the Gender Equality Duty for the public sector. The Gender Equality Duty has two parts to it: - the “General Duty”; and the “Specific Duty”.
- 1.2. The General Duty places a legal duty on public authorities, including local authorities to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
 - promote equality of opportunity between men and women
- 1.3. To help meet the General Duty, local authorities have a Specific Duty to:
 - produce a Gender Equality Scheme identifying its gender equality goals and actions to meet them, in consultation with employers and other stakeholders
 - monitor and review progress
 - review the Scheme every three years
 - develop, publish and regularly review an equal pay policy, including measures to address promotion, development and occupational segregation
 - conduct and publish gender impact assessments of all major policy developments, and publish its criteria for conducting such impact assessments

2 The Purpose of the Gender Equality Scheme

- 2.1 The purpose of the Gender Equality Scheme (GES) is to:
 - show how the Council will seek to mainstream gender equality in carrying out all aspects of its functions, including as an employer and as a service provider and commissioner of services;
 - clearly identify our gender equality objectives and the actions we will take to achieve them. The actions will tackle areas of gender inequality and/or discrimination and also include actions to positively promote equality of opportunity between women, men, trans men and trans women;
 - provide a mechanism to enable the Council to meet its legal duties and to ensure a programme of continuous improvement with the aim of making gender equality a reality for both West Berkshire Council employees and our service users;
- 2.1 This Scheme has been developed in line with the Council’s Comprehensive Equality Policy, which states the Council’s commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for all and the fact we will continue to tackle all forms of illegal

discrimination. The Gender Equality Scheme seeks to compliment the values and priorities set out in the Council Plan 2001 – 2011.

3 Gender Differences in the Context of West Berkshire

3.1 Below are some facts about women and men living in West Berkshire, based on figures from the 2001 Census.

- Of the resident population of West Berkshire, 49.63% are men and 50.37% are women.
- 83% of males aged between 16 and 74 are economically active.
- 67.6% of females aged 16-74 are economically active.
- 2.92% of males aged 16-74 are economically active and work part time.
- 22.11% of females are economically active and work part time.
- 61.63% of males aged 16-74 are economically active and work in full time employment.
- 36.07% of females aged 16-74 are economically active and work in full time employment.
- 14.41% of males aged 16-74 are economically active and are self-employed.
- 5.58% of females aged 16-74 are economically active and are self-employed.
- 0.49% of males aged 16-74 are economically inactive and are looking after home / family.
- 12% of females aged 16-74 are economically inactive and are looking after home / family.
- 12.33% of lone parents are male.
- 87.67% of lone parents are female.

3.2 From the statistics above it is clear that, despite the relatively equal numbers of men and women living in West Berkshire, there are significant differences in their working patterns and family responsibilities. For example, out of those people defined as economically active, less than 3% of men work part-time whereas over 20% of women work part-time. A far greater number of economically active men are self-employed as compared to economically active women.

4 Linking our Gender Equality Scheme to Corporate Priorities

4.1 In order to effectively carry out its various functions, the Council produces a wide number of plans, setting out priority areas for action. However, the

Council has one over-arching plan, known as the Council Plan, which sets out our values, key priorities for the medium term and desired outcomes. All other plans, including this Gender Equality Scheme, should compliment the Council Plan 2007 – 2011.

- 4.2 The values which the Council has adopted, and set out in its Council Plan, are respect in all relationships; integrity in everything we do; and ambition to deliver continuous improvement. We believe that all three of these values underpin our commitment to equality.
- 4.3 Within our Council Plan we have also set out sixteen desired outcomes, some of which are particularly linked to our desire to promote equality of opportunity for all and tackle unfair discrimination.
- 4.4 There are several identified outcomes that relate to service provision and gender equality. For example, one desired outcome is entitled ‘ Including Everyone’ which considers the diversity across the District and identifies particular actions to promote greater social inclusion. Another desired outcome is entitled ‘Promoting Independence’ which takes into account the fact that we are living longer and have greater long term care needs, some of which can be gender specific. Another desired outcome is entitled “Protecting Vulnerable People” which addresses our responsibility to safeguard vulnerable people, be they men or women, and how best we can work with agencies to ensure safeguarding measures are effective and take account of any gender specific needs.
- 4.4 A further identified outcome, entitled “Effective People” relates to our own employment practices and the need to ensure we have a highly motivated workforce, in which equality of opportunity is positively promoted and all forms of unjustified discrimination prohibited.
- 4.5. The Council also works with a wide range of partners, through the local strategic partnership, known as West Berkshire Partnership. The Partnership works to promote a sustainable community and has set out a shared vision for the District :

‘To ensure that people in West Berkshire are able to enjoy a high quality of life by having equal access to services, a safe and healthy environment to live in and prosperity through a range of meaningful job opportunities’.

The Partnership’s shared vision is supported by five community aims for:

- Children and Young People
- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Safer, Stronger and Sustainable Communities
- Economic Development and Enterprise
- Housing and the Environment

- 4.6 West Berkshire Council, as a key member of the West Berkshire Partnership, will seek to encourage other partners to actively promote gender equality and to learn from this particularly scheme.

5 Access to West Berkshire Council Services

Achieving gender equality through service delivery

- 5.1 As indicated by our Comprehensive Equality Policy, equality and diversity are viewed as central to the effective development and delivery of our services. In order to ensure that services are accessible to both women and men the Council will:
- monitor our customers' satisfaction by gender
 - Assess the provision of services or planned services to identify whether there is any differential impact on either men or women and, if so, where this could be an adverse impact to take remedial action
 - Take other positive action to address any inequality, disadvantage, prejudice or discrimination
 - Encourage women and/or men to use our services where evidence shows that either gender have a low level of take up of particular services.
- 5.2 All actions taken to achieve the above, will be recorded and information published in the annual GES progress report.

Developing a Service Unit Action Plan

- 5.3 Service units will identify their key priority areas in terms of promoting gender equality, and, where applicable, these will feed into the Gender Equality Action Plan. Following the initial publication of this Scheme, future identification of gender equality priorities by service units will become part of the regular annual service unit impact assessment process.

6 Improving Diversity and Increasing Representation in the Workplace

Breaking down gender stereotypes

- 6.1 Currently 76% of the Council's workforce is female. However, the balance between male and female employees varies according to the service area. The service areas where women have less representation are those with the greatest number of technical / engineering based occupations. For example, 39% of the workforce in ICT are female, and 23% of the workforce in Highways and Transport are female. Conversely, 89% of the workforce in Education services are female, and 93% of the workforce in the Older People's service are female.

- 6.2 These trends reflect the trends in wider society where females and males are likely to work in areas that are considered to be stereotypical. For example, 97% of trainees entering into early years care and education are female, whereas 98% of trainees entering construction, the motor industry and plumbing are male.
- 6.3 The Council will consider ways of promoting non-traditional roles for men and women. For example, we will work more closely with local schools and colleges to promote the idea that girls and boys can do jobs traditionally dominated by men or women, promoting positive gender role models, such as female engineers or male care workers, and considering the approach to recruitment literature and recruitment advertising.

Part Time Working Opportunities

- 6.4 Currently 51% of the Council's female workforce is part-time, which represents 39% of the total workforce. Of the male workforce, 16% is part-time, which represents 4% of the total workforce.
- 6.5 The Council is committed to ensuring flexible working opportunities are available to all and will review the current flexible working arrangements and review the promotion of flexible working opportunities for both current and potential employees.

Training Employees on Equality and Diversity

- 6.6 Training for the challenge of delivering equality is included with the Council's corporate training plan. The purpose is to provide managers and employees with the skills and knowledge to ensure that equality becomes part of our day-to-day activities.
- 6.7 The Corporate 'Valuing Diversity' course will be reviewed to ensure gender equality issues are included, and other corporate training sessions will be reviewed to ensure, where appropriate, gender equality issues are included.

Senior Management Opportunities

- 6.8 Currently, 47% of the top 5% of earners in West Berkshire Council are female. The Council is committed to ensuring the gender balance at senior management level is maintained and will promote 'Women in Management' development opportunities

Equal pay Audit

- 6.9 The Council is committed to carrying out an equal pay review. We have a legal obligation to comply with the Equal Pay Act and we are also committed under the terms of the National Agreement.
- 6.10 The review will identify and inform us of the possible risks and our responsibilities relating to Equal Pay. It also will help us to ensure we have pay structures which are fair and therefore greatly reduce the likelihood of pay gaps

between jobs of equal value.

- 6.11 Relevant trade unions, including UNISON and GMB, will be involved throughout the review, in order that all aspects of equal pay are properly examined, and that the review is carried out with the agreement and support.
- 6.12 In order to fulfil our commitment to carrying out the gender equality pay review we will:
- Undertake an equal pay audit every three years.
 - Introduce a consistent approach to decision making on pay across the Council, so that inconsistencies and anomalies are reduced or eradicated.

7 Equality Impact Assessments

- 7.1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a way of assessing whether a current or proposed policy, procedure, practice or even service unit has, or is like to have, a differential impact on one particular group and, if so, whether this could be an adverse impact. EIA's are important mechanisms for identifying barriers and addressing inequalities.
- 7.2 Adverse impacts may result from not taking into account the needs of women or men, black and ethnic minority groups, disabled people, people's religion or belief, sexual orientation or age. Therefore effective EIA's require service units to regularly gather evidence through consultation and monitoring.
- 7.3 Within the last year, West Berkshire Council has developed a comprehensive and systematic approach to impact assessments, which has been incorporated into our performance management system. Significantly, all service units are required to conduct annual service unit EIA's, in advance of finalising their Service Plans. In line with our comprehensive equality policy, service units are required to consider all six strands of equality, including gender, when carrying out their impact assessments. In addition to annual service unit impact assessments, the Council requires impact assessments to be carried out on all new or revised plans. Further information about these impact assessments are set out under the [equality and diversity page](#) on our website.
- 7.4 The evidence gathered through impact assessments will help to identify specific gender equality objectives and, as required by the Local Government Equality Standard, these objectives will be translated into specific actions and targets which will be incorporated into service plans, and where appropriate, will also inform this Scheme's action plan.
- 7.5 The process will be monitored at both service and corporate level to ensure a continuous cycle of assessment and improvement leading to greater gender equality.

7.6 Guidance provided to managers responsible for undertaking EIA's has been provided and will continue to be reviewed and further training will be given if necessary.

8 Implementing, Monitoring and Reporting

- 8.1. All Council Service Units will have a responsibility to support the implementation of this Scheme and contribute to the development of the Scheme's Action Plan, as issues are identified through the ongoing monitoring of services and consultation with stakeholders. Actions will be allocated to particular Service Units who will be accountable for implementation.
- 8.2 Overall progress of the Scheme will be monitored by the Corporate Equality Group, which consists of Senior Managers from each Directorate, who will in turn monitor their own Directorate's contribution to the Scheme through their own directorate level equality groups and their Senior Management Teams.
- 8.3 The Corporate Equality Group reports to the Chief Executive's Corporate Board and Council's Executive Committee. It provides bi-annual reports on the progress this Council is making in promoting equality. In future, one of the bi-annual reports will include the annual progress which has been made in meeting the Gender Equality Duty, and in particular the implementation of the Scheme's Action Plan
- 8.4 The Gender Equality Scheme will be reviewed every three years.

9 Consultation and Engagement

- 9.1. To ensure the actions within this Scheme reflect the views of our employees and stakeholders, a full consultation exercise was undertaken, between April 2007 and September 2007.
- 9.2 Although there were no responses to the consultation exercise from external sources, responses were received from Council staff, who were invited to complete a consultation questionnaire.
- 9.3 The responses were as follows :

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|---|
| 72% of respondents considered Gender inequality still exists in this country today and was either widespread or exists in some ways |
| 94% of respondents felt men and women in this country are affected by stereotypes. |
| 75% of respondents felt awareness-raising would help combat some of these stereotypical images. |

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| 97% of respondents said there were no jobs in West Berkshire Council they had not applied for because of stereotyping. |
| 80% of respondents replied they had never experienced discrimination, harassment or felt they had been treated unfairly because of their gender, while working for West Berkshire Council. |
| 83% of respondents felt they would either probably complain or possibly complain if they felt they had been treated unfairly at West Berkshire Council because of their gender. |
| 72% of respondents said they had not been treated differently at work because of their gender. |

- 9.3 In addition, respondents were asked to identify key gender equality issues they felt West Berkshire Council should address and these, together with the general responses detailed above, have been taken into account when developing the Action Plan.
- 9.4 In 2007, West Berkshire Council also undertook an Employee Attitude Survey and, where relevant, the results from this survey have been analysed and taken into account when developing the Gender Equality Action Plan. For example, 70% of women respondents and 70% of male respondents felt they would like the opportunity for home-working for part of the week and a review of flexible working options has been included in the Action Plan.
- 9.5 However, this Scheme's Action Plan will continue to be updated and therefore the Council will welcome further engagement from our stakeholders on this subject. Comments on the scheme or the attached action plan should be sent to:

Joanna Richardson
Policy Executive (Equality and Diversity)
West Berkshire Council
Market Street
Newbury
RG14 5LD
Direct Line: 01635 519441

Email: jrichardson@westberks.gov.uk

| Appendix | | Gender Equality Scheme 2007- 2010 | | |
|---|---|--|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Action | Outcome | Performance Measure | Responsibility | Target Date |
| Promote access to 'Women in Management' activities – eg: Springboard activities, SOLACE women-only activities | Increased opportunity for management development for women | % increase in numbers of women taking up management development opportunities | Head of Human Resources | March 2009 |
| Consider ways of promoting 'non-traditional' roles to men / women | An increase in the number of men / women applying for non-traditional roles. | % of males and females applying for a range of different occupations. | Head of Human Resources | March 2009 |
| Review Council's flexible working options and review the promotion of flexible working options, for both potential and existing employees and increase awareness that flexible working options are available to both men and women. | Increased awareness and take up of flexible working options. Increased number of applicants to job vacancies | Increased number of applicants for vacancies, from both men and women. Increased number of employees taking up flexible working options | Head of Human Resources | March 2008 |

| Appendix | | Gender Equality Scheme 2007- 2010 | | |
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| Action | Outcome | Performance Measure | Responsibility | Target Date |
| Identify the specific equality issues for trans men and trans women | Increased awareness of the needs of trans men and trans women | Relevant employment policies address the needs of trans men and trans women | Head of Human Resources | Ongoing, as policies are developed |
| Ensure gender equality issues are included in the Equality and Diversity courses and other relevant Corporate Training activities | Staff have a good understanding of how gender equality impacts on service delivery and employment, and understand their individual responsibilities | Equality and Diversity training courses, and other relevant training activities, include a gender component | Head of Human Resources | March 2008 |
| Service areas to identify key action points, where applicable | Service based action points added to the Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan | Increased access to services for men / women | Heads of Service | Ongoing |
| Carry out an equal pay audit | Pay differences between women and men in respect of work of the same or equal value have been identified and where necessary remedial measures are put in place to correct differences. | Production of report and recommendations / action plan | Head of Human Resources | TBC |
| Development of Equal Pay Action Plan | Implementation of the outcome of the Equal Pay Review | Production of action plans | Head of Human Resources | TBC |

| Appendix | | Gender Equality Scheme 2007- 2010 | | |
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| Action | Outcome | Performance Measure | Responsibility | Target Date |
| Service areas carry out annual equality impact assessments | Identify adverse impact for women and men in respect of provision of services and employment | Number of Equality Impact assessments completed in a 12 month period | Heads of Service | Ongoing |
| Service plans to include gender-specific objectives and targets | Meaningful gender equality objectives and targets in respect of service delivery and employment have been set and work started to achieve them. | Objectives and targets included in service plans | Heads of Service | Ongoing |
| Bring together information on gender specific services and choices, towards a gender equality plan across the directorate | Increased understanding of service provision in relation to gender | Development of gender Equality Plan across the directorate | Head of Housing and Performance | TBC |
| Consider developing a career pathway for social workers that promotes gender equality | Balanced representation of men and women in social work | % of males and females in social work | Head of Children's Services | End March 2008 |

| Appendix Gender Equality Scheme 2007- 2010 | | | | |
|--|---|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Action | Outcome | Performance Measure | Responsibility | Target Date |
| Continue to support Berkshire Women's Aid and the development of improved integrated working | Ensure women who suffer proportionately more domestic violence are effectively supported where they have had to leave their homes with dependent children | Integrated services in place and referral processes established with BWA | Head of Children's Services | End March 2008 |
| Audit material available for working with young people to achieve change and ensure gender (and other equality strands) are taken into consideration. | Ensure that children are being provided social care services equitably and fairly according to reliable, assessed need. | % of service users by gender (and other equality strands) are measured and monitored. At least 50 case audits completed and overall findings considered | Head of Children's Services | September 2008 |
| To obtain additional funding to develop the Citizen's Panel and further actions to consult with hard to reach groups, including men and women | Access to a panel representing a range of groups, including hard to reach groups, for consultation purposes. | A representative Citizen's Panel in place | Head of Policy and Communication | Nov 2007 |