

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 12 NOVEMBER 2009

GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN (2007 – 2010) – SECOND YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the progress that has been made in implementing the Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan 2007 – 2010 during 2008/09, and to request Committee approval to publish the progress report on the Council website and any other appropriate media.

2 Background

- 2.1 In accordance with the Gender Equality Duty 2007, public authorities are required to produce and publish a Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan every three years, and report annually on progress. This report provides a review of the progress made to improve gender equality in Aberdeenshire.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Policy and Resources Committee discuss the progress made implementing the Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan, and approve publishing the report for both the general public and employees.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 The Action Plan from Aberdeenshire Council's Gender Equality Scheme 2007 – 2010 incorporates 21 actions, and the progress made on each action during the year is attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.2 One of the biggest challenges in implementing the action plan this year has been carrying out Multi Equality Impact Assessments of policies and functions. A number of policies have been assessed and there is a commitment to continue this across all council services.
- 4.3 Equalities training was provided for councillors in May 2009. This was attended by approximately half of all councillors, and feedback suggests that those who attended the session believed it to be worthwhile.
- 4.4 The Policy and Resources Committee approved an Employment Equality Policy in March 2009. The policy applies to all council employees, volunteers and contractors engaged to deliver council services both internally and externally, and protects employees against discrimination in terms and conditions of employment including pay and grading.
- 4.5 Monitoring gender information has led to male carers now receiving specific support provision.

4.6 Under the 'Changing Lives' policy, the change programme for social work services in Scotland, based on the 21st century review of social work, qualitative data is being gathered which will allow service users to design their own services, which in turn will help eliminate any potential discriminatory practice.

4.7 As the council is committed to producing a single equalities scheme covering all equalities groups, this will be the last separate report on the current gender equality scheme.

5 Area, Policy and Sustainability Implications

5.1 The Scheme and the action plan apply to all areas of Aberdeenshire, conform with legislation and the Council's equalities policy, and help to sustain healthy and balanced communities.

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 The Corporate Equalities Group, and the Section 95 Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer within Corporate Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report. Their comments have been incorporated.

8 Recommendations

The Committee are recommended to:-

- 1. Discuss the actions taken to implement the Gender Equality Action Plan 2007 – 2010**
- 2. Approve publishing the progress report on the website for both employees and the general public**

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Chief Executive

Report prepared by: Fiona MacKenzie, Corporate Policy Officer (Equalities)
20 August 2009