

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 13 NOVEMBER 2008

GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN (2007 – 2010) - FIRST YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the actions taken over the past year to implement the Gender Equality Action Plan 2007 – 2010 and to request the Committee to approve that the progress report should be published on the Council website and any other appropriate media.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Gender Equality Duty came into force on 6 April 2007 requiring all public bodies to eliminate sex discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. The Duty also requires all public authorities to publish a Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan every three years and to report annually on progress on the Action Plan.
- 2.2 On 28 June 2007, the Committee considered and approved a 3-year Gender Equality Scheme *including* the Education Service Gender Equality Scheme for 2007 – 2010 (item 6).
- 2.3 This report and appendices detail progress on implementation of the 2007 - 2010 Action Plan over the past year and further work programmed for the coming year.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee note progress made implementing the Gender Scheme Action Plan 2007 – 2010 and to approve that the progress report should be published for the general public as well as for employees.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 Aberdeenshire Council is committed to the following gender equality objectives, to:
- 4.1.1 ensure that the services we provide are free from direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender and promote equal opportunities for men and women and boys and girls
- 4.1.2 ensure that the way we work encourages both women and men to seek election as Aberdeenshire councillors
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- 4.1.3 identify what our staff want from their career with the Council and enable them to achieve that wherever possible regardless of their gender
- 4.1.4 identify and break down any barriers within the Council that create occupational segregation on the basis of gender between our staff
- 4.1.5 have a culture within the Council that supports the achievement of these objectives
- and
- 4.1.6 take positive action where necessary to achieve these objectives
- 4.2 A detailed progress report showing the actions taken during the past year, towards achieving the above objectives is attached as Appendix 1. Some of the key areas of progress are listed below:
- 4.2.1 an Equal Pay Statement was agreed by the P&R Committee in September 2007, and an Action Plan later developed to achieve the goals of the Equal Pay Statement
- 4.2.2 increased effort to mainstream gender equality into our functions, policy development and community planning processes. For example, a review of our customer policies and practices and a major review of personnel policies and employee monitoring form which now captures wider information about staff including caring responsibilities.
- 4.2.3 revised and simplified multi equality impact assessment process and toolkit comprising 3 separate parts/stages namely:
- screening & prioritising policies and functions
 - Partial multi equality impact assessment, and
 - Full multi equality impact assessment stages
- 4.2.4 successful completion of the 6th chrysalis programme for women and a review of staff development programmes with a range of more flexible delivery options introduced to cater for staff with different working circumstances.
- 4.2.5 a “gender buster” pilot survey jointly undertaken by the Transportation & Infrastructure and Planning & Environmental Services to identify any possible causes of gender occupational segregation within the two Services.

5 Area, Policy and Sustainability Implications

- 5.1 The Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan apply to each Area of the Council, conform with legislation and the Council’s equal opportunities policy. Effective implementation of the Scheme and Action Plan will contribute positively towards fulfilling the gender duty and to achieving the Council’s vision of “helping to create and sustain the best quality of life for all ...” and supporting a diverse culture.

6 Staffing and Financial Implications

6.1 There are no additional staffing or financial requirements as a result of this report

7 Consultation

7.1 The Director of Law and Administration and members of the officer corporate equalities group have been consulted on this report.

8 Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the actions taken to implement the gender equality action plan 2007 – 2010, the work still to be undertaken for 2008 - 2010 and adopt the report for publication.

Alan Campbell
Chief Executive

Report prepared by: Mercy Yaor, Corporate Policy Officer - Equalities.
Date: 03 November 2008.