

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Agenda Item 61

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Single Equality Scheme		
Date of Meeting:	15th December 2009		
Report of:	Director of Strategy & Governance		
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Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The Equalities & Inclusion Policy sets out policy and priorities for the next three years 2008-2011 and actions arising were set out in the Equality Scheme Action Plan.
- 1.2 The Equality Scheme Action Plan was based on the existing Race Equality Scheme 2006-2009, Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2010 and Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010.
- 1.3 The proposed Single Equality Scheme will replace the current schemes which are due for renewal thus addressing the statutory requirements, and incorporate actions to address the other equality strands and cross-cutting inequality and inclusion issues.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) That members review the draft Single Equality Scheme, attached as Appendix A and provide feedback to inform the final document
- b) That members approve the proposal for annual monitoring reporting as set out in paragraph 5 of this report

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The current legislative framework requires us to set out or responses to the general and specific duties on us as local authorities in relation to race, disability and gender – for example our arrangements for monitoring and assessing the equality impact of policies and services.
- 3.2 The Equalities Bill currently making its way through Parliament is intended to:

- create a general single public sector equality duty with Ministers able to impose specific duties on public authorities to require processes or outcomes that fulfil the duty;
- prohibit 'unjustifiable' age discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services and the exercise of public functions (including adult social care);
- create a new duty on local authorities to consider how their strategic decisions might help to reduce inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage; and
- The Bill also enables Ministers to require public authorities to report on equality issues (including pay).

3.3 In practice this should mean a more streamlined approach with all equalities strands being considered and more support for work which tackles multiple deprivation and discrimination

3.4 Our proposed Single Equality Scheme will put us in a good position to address the requirements of the new legislation and more effectively implement the Council's Equalities & Inclusion Policy which covers all equality and inclusion issues.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Our consultation pack was available on our website and publicised via the community and voluntary sector from 21st September until 13th November 2009. This was also sent to the unions and the minority staff forums.

4.2 A series of public consultation events were held on the 3rd, 5th and 29th October in partnership with the PCT and local hospitals' trust and a follow-up event of focus groups with BME, Disabled and Men's groups was held on 10th November to ensure that issues for these groups were included.

4.3 A public feedback session was held on Wednesday 2nd December with people who had attended the consultation events to feedback on how we will take their comments on board. The draft Single Equality Scheme highlights the headlines from their comments and more detailed issues have been raised with the service areas concerned.

5. DECISION MAKING & MONITORING

The final version of the Single Equality Scheme will go to Cabinet for approval on 11th February 2010 and will be reviewed annually. It is proposed that Overview & Scrutiny Commission receive the annual updates as part of the regular review reports in January 2011 and 2012.

6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

6.1 None directly in relation to this report as all costs to be met by existing budgets

Legal Implications:

6.2 Our statutory responsibilities in relation to equalities are directly addressed by the Equalities & Inclusion Policy and the new Single Equality Scheme.

Equalities Implications:

6.3 The equalities implications are directly addressed by the Equalities & Inclusion Policy and the new Single Equality Scheme.

Sustainability Implications:

6.4 None directly in relation to this report

Crime & Disorder Implications:

6.5 The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Partnership Community Safety Team are key contributors to equalities & inclusion work in the city and this will be reflected in the Single Equalities Scheme.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

6.6 The implications for risk are directly addressed by the Equalities & Inclusion Policy and the Single Equality Scheme.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

6.7 The Single Equality Scheme will be developed with input from all council Directorates.

