

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	19 th July
Subject:	Comprehensive Equalities Scheme
Key Decision: (Executive-side only)	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Paul Najsarek, Director of People, Performance and Policy
Portfolio Holder:	Paul Osborn – Strategy and Business Support
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Comprehensive Equalities Scheme and Consultation Table

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report brings to the Cabinet’s attention the draft Comprehensive Equalities Scheme and the results of public consultation on the scheme. The Comprehensive Equality Scheme covers the Council’s approach to taking forward the six equality strands.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet approves the Comprehensive Equalities Scheme including the changes made to the consultation draft in response to the comments received and recommends to Council an amendment to the constitution to include Equality Schemes within Article 4.01, which specifies issues reserved to Council to determine.

REASON: To comply with the Council’s obligations under Equalities legislation.

SECTION 2 - REPORT

The Council has previously produced specific Equality Schemes in relation to Race Equality and Disability. New duties apply from this year in relation to Gender Equality. The advent of the new duties and the need to review the existing policies has prompted the production of a Comprehensive Equalities Scheme. This covers the three strands that have general duties and, in addition, the equality aspects of age, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

The Scheme provides a context within which the detailed requirements of the various duties will be addressed. It sets the framework for the Council's equalities approach that, together with the programme of equality impact assessments and other specific actions, will fulfil the Council's responsibilities as well as engendering a positive and holistic response to equalities issues.

The draft scheme was approved for consultation by the Corporate Management Team and the Community and Cultural Services portfolio holder in the last Municipal Year.

The Scheme was sent to every member of the Council, the Trades Unions and specific workers' groups, more than 50 voluntary and community organisations and was advertised on the Council's website. A special e-mail address was established to receive comments during the 8-week consultation period that closed on 18th June.

The comments received and a suggested response to each are set out in a consultation table attached to this report. The draft scheme, with tracked changes to reflect the amendments that it is suggested should be made to the scheme in response to the comments received is also attached.

The scope and reach of the Scheme is such that it would be appropriate for it to be approved by Council. At present, the constitution does not require Council approval for Equality Schemes and the delay that would be occasioned by delaying consideration until their next meeting in October would not be conducive to promoting equality. However, Cabinet could recommend an amendment to the constitution to include Equality Schemes within the list of issues reserved to Council to recognise the importance and impact of Equality issues for the future.

Legal implications

In relation to race, gender and equality the Council is legally required to publish an equality scheme. Regulations set out certain matters which must be included in such a scheme. Failure to publish such a scheme can lead to enforcement action by the relevant commission (the Disability Rights Commission, Equal Opportunities Commission or the Commission for Racial Equality).

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

Chief Finance Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name: Myfanwy Barrett..... Date: 9 th July 2007.....
Monitoring Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name: Jill Travers..... Date: 6 th July 2007.....

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact: Mike Howes, Service Manager, Policy and Partnerships, Ext 5637

Background Papers: Race Equality Scheme 2004
Draft Disability Equality Scheme 2007
Consultation responses

IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	YES
2.	Corporate Priorities	YES
3.	Manifesto Pledge Reference Number	