Corporate Equality Strategy and Action Plan

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Representative Workforce 20

For further information on Leicester City Council's Equal Opportunities Policies, please contact:

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4 Foreword

This is an important document for Leicester City Council, its staff and their representatives, partner organisations, service users and ultimately the citizens of Leicester.

Our equality strategy is built on two themes, an equal opportunities statement setting out our beliefs and principles and an action plan which sets out how we will deliver on equal opportunities.

This strategy challenges us to show real improvements in the way that we deliver services and treat our customers and staff. Our success in implementing this strategy will be measured by the impact that we can make on the well being of Leicester, through outcomes such as delivering services that are accessible and relevant to the diverse needs of Leicester and having a workforce that is truly diverse and reflects the communities we serve.

The vision for Leicester set out in the Community Plan is one of a city with a "thriving and diverse society in which everyone is involved, and in which everyone can have a decent, happy and fulfilling life. A city with a strong economy, a healthy, caring and educated society, a safe and attractive environment and an improving quality of life – a sustainable city".

Leicester City Council has a proud record of commitment to equalities. This document builds on this and aims to move the council's commitment forward.

The context in which this is presented is important. Global turbulence and displacement, changing national and European legislation, policy shifts, all provide a need to review and refocus this longstanding commitment. In addition, we have set ourselves new and challenging targets, underpinned by an ambitious and exciting programme of reform including the Revitalising Neighbourhoods project. Leicester has undergone a transformation in recent times. Equal opportunity and social inclusion issues are vitally important if we want to ensure that all communities and organisations can truly benefit from and contribute to the changes, that are bringing long term and positive benefits for Leicester.

This new Equality Strategy and Action Plan represents a genuine desire and commitment to action. Success will require active contributions from elected members and all Directors of the council, along with our partners and friends.

The benefits of delivering the action plan will be tremendous, ensuring that our staff and their representatives, service users, partners and citizens experience increased satisfaction from the council and make Leicester an even better place to live and work in.

We hope you will be keen to play your full part.

Cllr.Abdul Osman - Cabinet Member (Human Resources and Equalities)

Ian McBride - Service Director (Human Resources and Equalities)

Rodney Green - Chief Executive

5 Equal Opportunities Statement

Leicester City Council is committed to equality of opportunity for all people regardless of age, colour, ethnic or national origin, class, religious belief, race, gender, disability, sexuality, marital status or trade union membership.

We aim to be responsive and open, and to demonstrate both quality and equality to our citizens, to our service users and to those who visit our city. It is our aim to ensure that people can fully participate in and benefit from the social, cultural, economic and decision making life of the city.

We know that certain groups, sections, and individuals in our society experience discrimination and unequal treatment. This may happen because our services and facilities are not appropriate or accessible. However, we want to make sure that we are doing everything we can to prevent this from happening, or if we do make mistakes, that we are able to put them right.

These aims are embodied in our CORE PRINCIPLES which are that we will:

- Put the needs of the public first and operate a fair, responsive and accountable local government
- Ensure equality of opportunity, and act promptly on any complaints of harassment and discrimination
- Promote diversity and social inclusion, in order to eradicate social exclusion, fight discrimination and poverty
- Work to create a sustainable and healthy environment
- Work with our partners in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to ensure the best outcomes for the people of Leicester
- Deliver accessible services, relevant to the needs of service users
- Consult and seek the views of our citizens, service users and potential customers on the quality and relevance of our services and keep them informed of outcomes and progress
- Monitor and review our policies and procedures from an equalities perspective
- Abide by our legal obligations and duties including, the Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and the Human Rights Act as well as all other related legislation and policy practice

- ♦ Ensure we deliver fair and equal recruitment policies and practices and are an employer of choice for our staff and potential staff
- Aim to have a workforce that represents the makeup of Leicester
- Provide a working environment that is safe, accessible, free from harassment and discrimination and one which values and respects individuals' identities and cultures
- Regularly consult our staff and listen to what they have to say
- Ensure that elected members and staff know and understand our equal opportunities policy and practice, and their individual responsibilities

7 Our Commitment

Equality is essential to building strong, inclusive communities. Our promise is to ensure that equality remains at the top of the agenda for Leicester. We believe that a strong commitment to equality is essential for the well being of Leicester. The challenge for our Equality Strategy is to be able to live up to and fully embrace the commitments already made in the Community Plan.

This Equality Strategy pledges the council to demonstrate both quality and equality to Leicester citizens, service users, our staff and to the people that visit our city.

What We will Do

Our Equal Opportunities Statement commits us to:

- Improving equalities practice at corporate, departmental and individual levels throughout the council
- Developing equalities objectives and target setting within all service delivery areas, that are measurable and lead to long term improvements
- Developing and promoting anti-discrimination policies and practices at all levels of the council and in our dealings with the public

Our Equality Action Plan aims to:

- ♦ Ensure that services are designed to manage diversity effectively by tackling inequality and social exclusion and promoting independence
- Ensure services are accessible, welcoming, caring and responsive to the needs of our diverse city and communities
- Ensure that as far as possible, we are enabling people to fully participate in consultation over the definition, planning and delivery of council services that affect them
- Ensure that we effectively work with our partners to pursue equality and diversity objectives across the public, voluntary and business sectors of the city
- Ensure that we respond quickly and effectively to legislation and national policy initiatives on anti-discrimination measures and practices
- Ensure that we effectively monitor how well we are achieving our goals to eradicate discrimination and anti-social behaviour from our city

Responsibility

The Cabinet Member for Equalities has the overall lead Member responsibility for the delivery of the Equality Action Plan, with other Cabinet Members having responsibility for reviewing and evaluating equalities as appropriate for their portfolios.

The corresponding Scrutiny Committees will have the responsibility for the scrutiny of the Plan and it's contents, and specific scrutiny of the objectives and performance, against those objectives, as befits their terms of reference.

The Service Director (Human Resources and Equalities) will take the lead responsibility for the overall management of the Corporate Equality Action Plan.

However, all Corporate Directors and Managers are expected to show commitment to ensuring the Equality Action Plan is implemented at every level. This commitment includes effectively monitoring and regularly reporting against performance targets, and planning for continuous improvement.

Community Plan & Working with Partners

Diversity is one of the key themes of Leicester's Community Plan. The plan was developed in consultation with people and organisations in Leicester. As a Key Partner in delivering the Community Plan the City Council is committed to promoting diversity and tackling inequality and social exclusion. The other five themes of the plan, Community Safety, Education, Health and Social Care, Environment and Jobs and Regeneration are also intrinsically bound up with equality issues. Implementing the Community Plan, together with the partners who helped to shape it is therefore an important equalities objective in itself. We will continue to support Leicester's Community Plan to ensure that we are making the improvements and dealing with the issues that are important for Leicester.

Leicester City Council will use it's Community Leadership role to promote and encourage partners to embrace equality principles. The **Leicester Partnership**, set up under the Government's Local Strategic Partnership initiative has incorporated a **Diversity Partnership** which takes a leading role, working with us, on strategic and policy issues.

Revitalising Neighbourhoods

The **Revitalising Neighbourhoods** project is the first major review of how the council operates since local government reorganisation in 1997. It seeks to build on the achievements the council has made since then, but also recognises there is more to be done. The Revitalising Neighbourhoods project seeks to support local decision making with a stronger emphasis on co-ordinating the way in which the council delivers services, speeding up and improving service delivery. Better co-ordinated environmental services, effective partnership working and community participation contribute to the health of the city and will help us to improve equality of service.

Monitoring and Evaluating Equality

We will ensure that our improvement plans address equalities issues in a tangible way that is open to the inspection and audit process by:

Challenging - whether the service meets the needs of all sections of the community **Comparing** - how well our services are performing from the point of view of all groups, against other service providers, over time

Consulting - effectively over services and ensuring that consultation is carried out in a non-discriminatory, inclusive way and is used to manage and promote equality and diversity

Compete - ensure that service providers meet equality objectives effectively

We will use and develop best value tools to measure and continuously improve our performance on equalities.

Our Equality Action Plan and the in-built monitoring it contains will allow us and others to assess how well we are doing in meeting our equality core objectives, principles and actions. Individual areas will be monitored accordingly by the service area managers. In addition the Council will make an assessment of its achievements against the **Equality Standard for Local Government**.

The Equality Standard is a key performance indicator for best value and we will be reporting our achievements through our Best Value Performance Plan.

In addition, there are a number of laws that place responsibilities on local authorities to ensure that they are taking steps to remove discriminatory practices and promote equality of opportunity.

The City Council aims to ensure that the lessons and recommendations from the **Stephen Lawrence Inquiry** are integral to the way in which we conduct our day to day business.

10 Race

The Race Relations Act requires that we take appropriate steps to promote race equality, eliminate unlawful race discrimination and promote good race relations between people of different racial backgrounds.

We also have to ensure that we implement a **Race Equality Policy** in our schools and educational institutions, as well as monitor progress. We publish a **Race Equality Scheme** covering all our services, monitor and review our actions, and let the public know how well we are doing in meeting our obligation under the Race Relations Act.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act places duties on us, which in practice mean that we must ensure that all of our services and premises are accessible to disabled people and do not discriminate. How well we are meeting our targets to provide accessible services will be monitored through our Best Value Performance Plan. Individual service performance will also be measured against the **Equality Standard for Local Government**.

Gender

Leicester City Council recognises and abides by it's duties under the **Sex Discrimination Act**, not to treat someone unfairly because of their gender. We will ensure that the needs of women as well as men, are taken into account when we provide services and develop policies. In addition, through regular monitoring, we aim to ensure that we improve services, remove unfair and discriminatory practices, and ensure that we do not discriminate on the basis of someone's gender.

Age, Religion and Sexuality

We will also ensure that we abide by our obligations under European Community laws, and in particular, Article 13 of the **Treaty of Amsterdam** which aims to eradicate all forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexuality.

11 Equality Action Plan

Our Equality Action Plan aims to:

- ♦ Incorporate a consultation and scrutiny element
- ♦ Incorporate an equal access to services element
- Ensure that we are an equal opportunities employer

The Action plan sets out how we intend to show what specific action we will be taking to put these aims into practice, how we will monitor our achievements and make improvements. The attached is a full list of action and indicators of performance. We will produce annual action plan based on agreed priorities emerging from evaluation of performance and progress.

The attached Action Plan covers specific areas.

Strategy and Planning
Customer Satisfaction and Complaints
Contracting and Procurement
Customer Access
Employment Practice

In addition, all service departments will be expected to ensure that the principles set out in the action plan and equality strategy are effectively planned into their own service specific plans and policies, and contribute to agreed annual action plans as appropriate.

Outcomes

In taking the actions and meeting our objectives which are set out in the following action plan, we will expect to achieve a number of outcomes which show real improvements over time.

These are that the people of Leicester will experience:

- Improved service provision which reflects the needs of our diverse city
- Better access to services and more accessible services
- A caring and responsive council which meets the demands of the communities we serve and our users, resulting in improved satisfaction across all areas, and a decrease in complaints
- A workforce that is representative of Leicester, and an improved employee profile, reflecting our commitment to diversity and equality, at all levels of the organisation, especially at the top levels of the councils

Monitoring

We will be monitoring services through setting equality targets in our Best Value Performance Plan. The Equality Standard for Local Government will provide a benchmark to show how well we are doing and how we are going to improve where any shortfalls are identified.

12 Strategy and Planning

Leadership, Working with Partners, Consultation, Performance Management and Best Value, Contracting and Procurement

| OBJECTIVE | LEAD |
|--|---|
| 1. Ensure equalities objectives are a key element of the council's Community Strategy | Chief Executive's Office |
| 2. Consult with communities over the setting, developing and monitoring of equalities objectives in all services | Chief Executive's Office Corporate Directors |
| 3. Ensure consultation about services, effectively seeks the views of all relevant members of the community | Corporate Directors |
| 4. Explicitly integrate equality into service delivery, best value planning and reviews | Chief Executive's Office Corporate Directors Departmental Equality Officers |
| 5. Work with partner agencies to achieve equalities objectives at a strategic and service delivery level | Chief Executive's Office |
| 6. Monitor consultation excercises to ensure they seek the views of relevant members of the community | Corporate Directors |

| ACTION | OUTPUT | OUTCOME & |
|--|--|--|
| AUTION | (Improvements by March 2005 or earlier) | PERFORMANCE MEASURE |
| Develop systems for monitoring action against Community Plan objectives | Systems in place by March 2003 Equalities objectives inform Community Plan | Improved Social & Environmental well being for people of Leicester. BVPI 1 – improving social environmental well being |
| Develop effective consultation mechanism | Consultation Toolkit established and available Active consultation arrangements in place | Improved Social & Environmental well being for people of Leicester. BVPI 1 – improving social environmental well being |
| Effective community consultation mechanism | All business plans to include equality targets | More responsive Council Services for people of Leicester. Random monitoring of 10% of Business Planning with 100% compliance against the output. |
| All Business Plans to include equality targets All service reviews to include equal opportunity objectives | Review of Business Planning Framework Equalities objectives mainstreamed into council service plans | More integrated Corporate Policies and Practice. BVPI 2 – Equality Standard Level 3 target achieved by 2005 |
| Develop effective partnership working | Partnership guidelines established and available. Jointly agreed equalities objectives mainstreamed into council service plans | Improved Local Partnership working BVPI 2 – Equality Standard Level 3 target achieved by 2005 |
| Departmental processes in place Equality Standards Audit undertaken annually - progress report and action plan reported to members | All service reviews to include equality objectives | Community Groups actively engaged and engaging in Council Business. BVPI 2 – Equality Standard Level 3/4 target. |

14 Strategy and Planning

| OBJECTIVE | LEAD |
|--|--|
| 7. Monitor Service take up and accessibility for all customers to include monitoring by ethnicity/race, gender, disability, age, and where appropriate sexuality and economic status and faith communities | Corporate Directors |
| 8. Ensure all council publicity, particularly about services is accessible and provided in: appropriate community languages and styles plain language in accessible formats including large print, tape and Braille as appropriate British Sign Language (BSL), using the appropriate interpreting and translating facilities | Chief Executive's Office (Communications Unit) Equality Officers Corporate Directors |
| 9. All services that are delivered on behalf of the council to reflect the council's Equal Opportunities Policy | Corporate Procurement Team. Resources,Access and Diversity Department |
| All contractors delivering services abide by the council's Procurement and Purchasing policy | Procurement Group (All Departments represented) |

| ACTION | OUTPUT (Improvements by March 2005 or earlier) | OUTCOME & PERFORMANCE MEASURE |
|---|--|--|
| Equality Standards Audit undertaken annually - progress report and action plan reported to members | Demonstrate consultation undertaken is built into service delivery and planning | Improved access to council services. Race Equality Scheme - impact assessments Undertaken BVPI 2 – Equality Standard Audit. |
| Production of comprehensive communications and accessible services policy | Demonstrate improved service delivery and customer satisfaction with accessibility to services | Improved access to council services. BVPI 2 – Equality Standard Audit. Race Equality Scheme – impact assessment undertaken |
| Development of procurement 'tool kit' which includes clauses that reflect the council's Equality Policy, including sample contract and equality questions Update all contracts clauses to meet with legal requirements under equality laws | Council obtains services which are consistant with the council's Equal Opportunities Policy. 100% of service providers and contractors meet the conditions established in the Procurement and Purchasing Policy. | Improved service delivery to local people and improved contracting and purchasing opportunities. 100% of service providers and contractors. BVPI 2 Equality Standard Audit. |
| Monitoring compliance with council's Procurement and Purchasing Policy. Monitoring usage of procurement toolkit. | | |

Improving Customer Care

Improving community and user satisfaction, understanding complaints

| OBJECTIVE | LEAD |
|---|---|
| 10. Monitor * customer satisfaction with council service | Resources,Access and Diversity Department |
| *include data on race/ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, age, economic status and where appropriate by other user group definition - e.g. parent/single parent, carer, governor | Corporate Directors Chief Executives Office |
| 11. Monitor satisfaction levels with the handling of all complaints by all customers (*as above) | Resources, Access and Diversity Department Departmental Representatives Corporate Directors Chief Executives Office |
| Ensure that the council's Complaints Policy includes a specific reference to complaints of discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic origin, gender, disability, sexuality, age and economic status | Resources, Access and Diversity Department Chief Executives Office |

| ACTION | OUTPUT (Improvements by March 2005 or earlier) | OUTCOME & PERFORMANCE MEASURE |
|--|---|--|
| Undertake regular resident surveys to Assess service satisfaction level Undertake annual Equality Standards Audit with progress report and action plan for improvement for each service area | Policy in place by March 2004 Improved customer satisfaction across all service and policy levels shown in monitoring data | Improved customer satisfaction. BVPI 3 – % of citizens satisfied with service. |
| Complaints Policy and Procedure | Improved customer satisfaction across all service and policy levels shown in monitoring data | Improved customer satisfaction. BVPI 4 – Customer satisfaction with the handling of complaints. |
| Review Corporate Complaints Policy Corporate Complaints Policy includes specific reference to complaints on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age and economic status. Improvements shown in monitoring of complaints, with specific improvements in reporting of complaints of racial incidents, BVPP targets. | Improved satisfaction rates with the handling of complaints reported in BVPP. | Improvements in customer satisfaction of complaints handling. Best Value Performance Plan Targets. |

Accessible Services Communications, Publicity and Customer Access

| OBJECTIVE | LEAD |
|--|--|
| 13. Ensure that all publicity concerning the council's complaints policy is available in accessible formats to all sections of the community | Resources, Access and Diversity Department |
| To provide improved and consistent access for disabled people to all council facilities services and premises | Chief Executive's Office Corporate Directors |
| 15. Work with partner agencies to ensure that we are effectively consulting disabled people | Chief Executive's Office Corporate Directors |

| ACTION | OUTPUT (Improvements by March 2005 or earlier) | OUTCOME & PERFORMANCE MEASURE |
|--|--|--|
| Corporate Complaints Policy produced in accessible formats | Corporate policy readily available | Improved customer satisfaction. % Customer awareness of complaints policy and procedure (see objective 10). |
| Develop and implement a programme of access improvements for disabled people to council facilities, services and premises. | Improved access to council facilities for disabled people. | Improved customer satisfaction. % disabled people satisfied with access to council facilities, services and premises (see objective 10). |
| Work with existing partnership arrangements such as Health Partnership Policy Board, Leicester Partnership, Diversity Partnership - to develop a consultative mechanism. | Improved consultation method in place. | Improved partner satisfaction. Level of satisfaction for partner agencies on Council consultation with disabled people. |

Representative Workforce

Good Employment
Practice, Training and
Development,
Anti-Discrimination
and Fair Pay

| OBJECTIVE | LEAD |
|---|---|
| 16. Improve the representation of under represented groups at all levels within the council | Resources Access and Diversity Department Corporate Director/ Departmental Personnel and Equality Officers |
| Make all employment arrangements and policies more effective in pursuing employment equality | Resources,Access and Diversity Department HRS (Human Resources Section) |
| 18. Ensure that managing diversity is recognised in the council's management and competency framework | Resources, Access and Diversity Department HRS (Human Resources Section) MDU (Management Development Unit) |

| ACTION | OUTPUT (Improvements by March 2005 or earlier) | OUTCOME & PERFORMANCE MEASURE |
|--|--|---|
| Action, at departmental level to tackle under representation of all groups but priority for Women/Black/Minority Ethnic and Disabled Employees at senior levels (PO3+) | Targets established to increase levels of under represented groups Increase levels of under represented groups across all departments at PO3+ and above | Employees who are broadly representative of local population and whose work is valued by then. BVPI 11, 11a, 11b, 16, 16b, 17, 17a |
| Learning and Development policy to improve access for under represented groups or employees | Improved learning and development opportunities for under represented groups | |
| Training and resources to improve access for under represented groups | Improved training and resources accessible to under represented groups | |
| Policy guidance and advice monitoring and evaluation of trends | Monitoring of trends shows improvements in employment equality trends across the organisation | Employees who are broadly representative of local population and whose work is valued by then. |
| Develop and implement a competency based approach for employee and management development, and recruitment and selection practice | Procedures to be in place by March 2003 | Employees who are broadly representative of local population and whose work is valued by then. Measurable improvements in managing diversity across the organisation. BVPI 11,11a, 11b, 16, 16b 17, 17a |

Representative Workforce

| OBJECTIVE | LEAD |
|---|---|
| 19. Focus available training and development resources on areas of main impact to achieve overall equality objectives | Resources, Access and Diversity Department MDU (Management Development Unit) Departmental Personnel/ Training Officer All Corporate Directors |
| 20. Effective handling and managing of harassment and discrimination | Resources, Access and Diversity Department Corporate Personnel Departmental Personnel Corporate Directors |
| 21. Ensure that we operate a fair Pay and Rewards Policy | Resources,Access and Diversity Department HRS (Human Resources Section) |

| ACTION | OUTPUT (Improvements by March 2005 or earlier) | OUTCOME & PERFORMANCE MEASURE |
|---|---|--|
| Incorporate management of diversity as a recognised senior management competency | Raised management and staff competencies for equality and social inclusion management | High level of competence in management of Diversity |
| Develop and implement departmental/ service specific equality training and development of officers | | High levels of return on Departmental investment levels in equality practice |
| Ensure regular updating of anti-discrimination legislation and policy issues | | High level of return in Corporate and departmental levels of investment in anti discrimination legislation |
| Ensure training provided includes Social Inclusion issues, particularly for, race and ethnic origin, gender, disability, sexuality, age and economic status and class | | and policy issues. Employees who are broadly representative of local population and whose work is valued by then. |
| | | Integration of social inclusion issues into Corporate and departmental training programme/syllabus |
| Review of policy to ensure that it is fully complies with objectives Revised monitoring procedure in place | Implementation of revised monitoring procedures in place by March 2003. | A workforce that advocates the council as a good quality employer and service provider. BVPI 174/175 |
| Conduct a Job Evaluation and Equal Pay Review To be completed in early | Council operates a fair job evaluation and equal pay policy | A workforce that advocates the council as a good quality employer and |

| 2003 | service provider. |
|------|---------------------|
| | BVPI 11a, BVPI 11b. |

section 4

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How we will monitor

The City Council will monitor and review it's policies and practices regularly to ensure that we are meeting our objectives and the priorities that we have set out in our action plan.

We will do this through our existing planning and performance processes – for example through setting targets in our business plans and the Best Value Performance Plan, which will be monitored against the Equality Standard for Local Government.

Review of the Corporate Equality Action Plan

We will review our Corporate Equality Action Plan at least every three years, and make changes to ensure that we are continuously improving service delivery and customer care.

Annual Action Plan will focus on priority taking to ensure that overall objectives are accured.

Want More Information?

If you want further information about our Equal Opportunity Policy and practice, or if you would like a copy of this document in a different format or language, please contact:

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