

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 10<sup>th</sup> January 2013

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Policy and Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Resources

**SUBJECT:** Draft Single Equality Scheme 2013 to 2015

**WARDS:** All

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The previous Single Equality Scheme expired at the end of the 2012 calendar year. This report informs the Policy and Performance Board about the draft revised Single Equality Scheme for 2013 to 2015.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that:**

**2.1 The Policy and Performance Board notes the contents of the draft Single Equality Scheme for 2013 to 2015; and**

**2.2 The Policy and Performance Board agrees that the draft Scheme be submitted to Executive Board for final approval.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The previous Single Equality for 2009 – 2012 expired at the end of the 2012 calendar year.

3.2 Whilst the Equality Act 2010 does not impose a legislative duty on public sector organisations to produce an Equality Scheme it is considered good practice nationally to have an up to date scheme in place.

3.3 The Scheme proposed is a Single Equality Scheme, that is to say it conveys the Council's commitment to all the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

3.4 Since the approval of the previous scheme in 2009 there have been a number of important legislative changes, the main ones being the Equality Act 2010 and later the Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force in October 2011. The proposed scheme now incorporates all these changes.

3.5 In addition, since the inception of the previous scheme, the Council undertook a survey of the whole workforce and an extensive workforce profile was produced. For the first time this contains information about all the employee's characteristics, where volunteered by the individual, and has been summarised and subject to in-depth analysis. As well as being used as a basis for the

people plan 2012 – 2015 this information had to be collected and published, in January 2012, and must be updated annually in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. It is also published within the Single Equality Scheme 2012 to 2015. The details will be updated by each staff member annually to allow publication in accordance with the Duty.

- 3.6 The proposed scheme also includes the Council's agreed Equality Objectives, which were approved by Executive Board on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012. Agreement and annual publication were also a requirement of the Equality Duty. In order to continue compliance the Council must publish progress towards its objectives in April every year.
- 3.7 The proposed draft Scheme is designed to be a living document in as much as the sections illustrating Halton's demographic information, the workforce profile and information about equality objectives can be updated annually and thereby contained in one document. If possible the scheme will contain a section, also updated annually, which describes other examples of the Council's equality and diversity activities and achievements during that year. In this way the Council will always have an up to date Scheme on the Intranet and Internet.
- 3.8 The draft has been approved by the Corporate Equality and Diversity Group and a consultation exercise has been undertaken with partners from the Halton Strategic Partnership Equality, Engagement and Cohesion (EEC) Group and Council staff.
- 3.9 Until final approval it is proposed that the document is posted on the Council's web site as a draft version in January 2013.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The proposed Single Equality Scheme is designed to be the Councils overarching strategy document which embraces its vision, commitment, policies and practices for equality and diversity.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None identified.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

None identified.

##### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

In conjunction with the People Plan 2012 – 2015 the Scheme promotes equality of opportunity, including in employment.

##### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

The proposed scheme will be relevant when responsibility for public health transfers to the Council.

**6.4 A Safer Halton**

The scheme and its objectives support the Councils activities in dealing with hate crime and inequalities in personal safety.

**6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None identified.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Publication of an updated Single Equality Scheme illustrates the Council's ongoing commitment to embracing the principles of equality and diversity and mainstreaming equality in all its activities.

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

| <b>Document</b>                          | <b>Place of Inspection</b>                   | <b>Contact Officer</b> |
|--|--|------------------------|
| Draft Single Equality Scheme 2013 - 2015 | Policy and Development<br>Municipal Building | Les Unsworth<br>168799 |