

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Deb Poole, Head of Business Transformation & Organisational Development
Ward(s) Affected	N/A
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To agree for recommendation to Council the new Equal Opportunity Policy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND to the Council

that the Equal Opportunity Policy attached at Appendix 1 be approved and adopted.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report; however, having an effective Equal Opportunity Policy will ensure that the Council has considered the impact of equalities issues on employees and the wider Council's role in supporting our employees. Any mitigation of issues will contribute towards keeping people in employment, maintaining skills within our organisation and reducing potential grievances.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Equal Opportunity Policy contributes to how we meet the Public Sector Equality Duty established in the Equality Act 2010.

It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and

- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- 3.3 The policy consolidates ongoing work around the Equality Act 2010 which included an extensive programme of workshops during 2013 and 2014, developed after the different parts of the Equality Act had come into legal effect. Further training and workshops will be scheduled from autumn 2015.
- 3.4 Union representatives have been consulted on the Policy and amendments have been made as a result.
- 3.5 The Policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner to comply with changes to the law or policy and practice. The Policy and any subsequent revisions will be subject to standard consultation processes with the aim of reaching agreement on the content of the Policy and commitment to abide by the Policy between :-
- Corporate Management Team
 - Staff and their representatives
 - The Council Executive

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.6 The Policy will help all parts of the Council, staff and Elected Members, in ensuring that we treat individuals equally and fairly in relation to recruitment and selection, training, promotion and career management and that these decisions are based solely on objective and job related criteria. All employees working for the Council will be bound by this policy. Managers will be required to ensure that they abide by the standards set out in this policy at all times and that all staff are made aware of their responsibilities under the policy. It should be noted however that there could be instances within specific service areas where a Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR) applies. These cases will be very rare and specialist advice must be sought in every such instance from HR.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.7 There are no customer implications arising directly from this report; however, ensuring that we treat employees equally and fairly could contribute to a positive perception of the Council amongst our customers. There is also a section on our commitment to equality which is relevant to how we treat our customers not only our role as an employer.
- 3.8 The Equal Opportunity Policy relates directly to how the Council approaches equality and diversity and will form overarching principles for how we engage with all aspects of employment and vocational training (including work experience). The Policy incorporates a specific Disability Policy, providing

direction and guidance around disability, where it is recognised that treating disabled people differently and more favourably may be justified in order to create an equal opportunity for that person compared to a non disabled person. The Policy also refers to the relevant exceptions and requirements relating to age. To ensure clarity, the Policy features an appendix regarding the Equality Act 2010 and provisions relating to Local Authority Members.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are no risk management implications arising directly from this report.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Draft Equal Opportunity Policy

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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