

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Equalities Self Assessment - Update

18 October 2011

Report of Head of Service and Corporate Performance Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To review progress against areas for improvement identified in the 2010/11 Equalities Self Assessment with respect to the Equality Framework for Local Government.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Consider the evidence and information submitted in the Council's Self Assessment against the Achieving Standard under the Equality Framework for Local Government, along with a progress update on identified areas for improvement.
- (2) Refer the Self Assessment and the progress review to the Executive for approval.

Introduction

- 1.1 At their meeting on 13 September 2011 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Council's approach to equalities and considered its performance and self assessment in relation to the Equality Framework for Local Government.
- 1.2 The committee commended the approach undertaken with regards to equalities and agreed that the aspiration to attain performance at the 'achieving level' was reflected in the self assessment document.
- 1.3 The committee noted that areas for improvement had been identified and that given equalities legislation had recently changed asked that a further review of areas for improvement was undertaken and a progress report brought to the committee.

- 1.4 This report presents that progress update and identifies ongoing areas for improvement that are included with the council's corporate equalities plan.

Details

- 2.1 This evidence based self-assessment of the council's equalities performance has been prepared by the Equality Corporate Steering Group. This is an officer only group and it is essential that the assessment is subject to an independent review and challenge by Members of the Council. The assessment was reviewed by the committee at their meeting on 13 September 2011 and this paper provides an update with regards to the areas for development and improvement.
- 2.2 Areas for development and improvement have been clearly highlighted in the self assessment and appendix 1 provides an overview of them with a current performance update. Areas for development and improvement are also reflected in the Council's corporate equalities plan (attached as appendix 2). This plan outlines actions that will be taken to address areas for improvement and also actions that meet local equalities priorities.
- 2.3 Together the Corporate Equalities Plan and the Equalities Self Assessment provide a full overview of the Council's planned equalities activities, both are subject to frequent performance monitoring and help deliver against the Council's strategic objectives.

Conclusion

- 3.1 Cherwell District Council has made significant progress delivering against the equalities agenda in recent years. The Council has reviewed its performance under the Equalities Scheme for Local Government and in relation to its own corporate equalities plan. The Council reports on its equalities performance quarterly through the performance management framework and annually through an updated self assessment. Opportunities for stakeholder consultation and overview and scrutiny of the work programme have also been sought to ensure the work is of high quality.
- 3.2 The Council remains committed to delivering high quality and accessible services and the equalities programme helps deliver against this objective. Areas for development are clearly identified and prioritised and progress tracked against them.

Implications

Financial:	None Comments checked by Karen Curtin, Head of Service 01295 221551
Legal:	The 2010 Equalities act places a number of duties upon local authorities, including the duty to undertake impact assessments with regards to policy and service decisions. Comments checked by Nigel Bell, Team Leader – Planning and Litigation 01295 221687
Risk Management:	The author of this report is responsible for the performance and risk management framework. The risk associated with failure to comply with Equalities legislation are three fold, legal issues, reputational issues and the failure to deliver good quality and accessible services. The work the council undertakes with regards to equalities aims to mitigate these risks and the self assessment is an important part of this process. Claire Taylor, Corporate Performance Manager, 01295 221563.

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

All

Executive Lead

Councillor Wood, Leader of the Council

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Areas for improvement – progress update October 2011
Appendix 2	Corporate Equalities Action Plan
Background Papers	
1. Cherwell District Council Equalities Self Assessment	
2. Cherwell District Council Equalities Policy and Scheme	
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