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16 June 2014

S U M M O N S

MEETING: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE: 24 June 2014
TIME: 6.00 pm
PLACE: Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Gosport
Democratic Services contact: Vicki Stone

LINDA EDWARDS
BOROUGH SOLICITOR

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Councillor Forder (Chairman)
Councillor Gill (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Beavis	Councillor Geddes
Councillor Mrs Cully	Councillor Hazel
Councillor Farr	Councillor Hylands
Councillor Mrs Forder	Councillor Jessop
Councillor Foster-Reed	Councillor Scard

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

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If you require any of the services detailed above please ring the Direct Line for the Democratic Services Officer listed on the Summons (first page).

NOTE: Please note that mobile phones should be switched off for the duration of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members present are reminded to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter, any disclosable personal interest in any item(s) being considered at this meeting.

3. MINUTES

To confirm the Minutes of the extraordinary Committee meeting held on 31 March 2014 and the Committee meeting held on 5 June 2014 (attached).

4. REPORTS TO BE RECEIVED

- (i) SINGLE EQUALITY BILL

5. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

A) REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

To consider any requests for scrutiny received by the Borough Solicitor. A copy of the Scrutiny Work Plan Prioritisation Aid is attached.

- *Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places*

B) WORK PROGRAMME

To consider the work programme (attached) for the Committee and any suggestions from Members for issues to be scrutinised.

C) OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WAS HELD ON 31 MARCH 2014**

Councillors Allen, Mrs Cully(Chairman)(P),Farr(Vice Chairman)(P),Foster-Reed, Geddes, Gill (P),
Hylands(P),Jacobs,(P)Jessop(P),Mrs Morgan, Kimber (P),Scard(P)

24. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillors Allen, Mrs Morgan and Geddes

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

26. REPORTS RECEIVED

(i) BUS SERVICES IN THE BOROUGH

Consideration was given to a presentation by Mr Richard Strong and Mrs Suzanne Pepper of the Gosport Older Person's Forum regarding bus services in the Borough.

Members of the Committee were advised that the Gosport Older Persons Forum was an independent group of Gosport residents over the age of 55, providing information for older people, consulting with older people on issues that may affect them and campaigning on behalf of older people.

The background to the Forum's concerns, along with the principle findings and observations of the current bus service situations and potential future trends were discussed.

A map provided by First Bus was circulated to Members of the Committee detailing historical changes in bus services in Gosport between 1994 -2014.

Following a bus user survey conducted by Hampshire County Council in 2013 inviting Gosport residents to indicate the type of services they required, a limited number of responses (49) had been received. The survey results found that there were several losses of links between residential areas, shops and services, which included a reduced service frequency in Clayhall, Alverstoke, Stokes Bay, Bridgemary, the A32, Elson, Peel Common and Speedfields Park.

A consultation review by Hampshire County Council was currently taking place to look at subsidised bus and community transport services which received financial support from the County Council. The review will end on 31 May 2014 and it was suggested that individual Members respond to the consultation.

It was suggested that a Bus Service Policy be implemented to improve bus services in the Borough with investigations into using Section 106 payments and other subsidy schemes.

Clarification was sought on the Environmental Impact Assessments being carried out by First Bus when bus service routes were changed.

Concerns were raised that bus ticket data was not being accurately recorded at specific stops and that subsequently it was not providing a true reflection of bus service usage in the Borough.

Mr David Jenkinson, Vice Principal of St Vincent College was invited to address the Committee, he advised that up to 1,000 16-19 year old students and 1,500 adults attended the College.

Mr Jenkinson advised the Committee that there were local concerns regarding bus provisions in Gosport. In particular, the withdrawal of the 9A Service with numerous complaints being received from parents regarding the detrimental impact the changes had on both students and staff at St Vincent College that rely on public transport to travel to and from college every day.

Mr Jenkinson further advised that students living in certain areas of Gosport were now subjected to either very long walks to find a bus service which stops nearby to the college (often having to transfer buses) or were finding that the reduced services meant they had to catch buses which drop them off at the college over an hour before it opens or collects them an hour after it closes, which was a safeguarding concern for the college.

Whilst it was appreciated that First Bus must make strategic decisions regarding its services, it was felt they were clearly having a negative impact on the wider Gosport community and that alternative methods of transportation were being investigated by St Vincent College to address issues for its students and staff.

Members of the Committee thanked the Gosport Older Persons Forum and Mr Jenkinson for their presentations. It was recognised that further investigation was required to address concerns in the forthcoming Municipal Year.

It was agreed that the Chief Executive be requested to respond to the current consultation by HCC on public transport reflecting the concerns raised at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) A scoping of bus services take place at the next Committee meeting in June 2014 and;
- b) The Chief Executive be requested to respond to the current consultation by HCC on public transport reflecting the concerns raised at the meeting.

(ii) TEXTILE RECYCLING

Consideration was given to a report from Councillor Kimber. Members of the Committee were advised that the steering group comprising Councillors Kimber, Jessop, Hylands and Mrs Cully had met with Charity representatives on the 20th February 2014 to discuss the implications of the proposed textile recycling scheme.

The Working Group concluded that the benefits of joining the framework were outweighed by the disadvantage it would cause to charities currently using Gosport Borough Council sites and that residents of the Borough should be given the choice to which charity they wished to donate.

Members expressed their gratitude towards Councillor Kimber for all his hard work and dedication to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and wished him well in his forthcoming retirement.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to the Community Board that Gosport Borough Council:

- a) do not enter the Framework set up by Fareham Borough Council at this time and retain the status quo; and
- b) the charities interviewed be advised to engage and discuss mutual benefits in combining textile operations.

27. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

The Meeting concluded at 7.37pm

CHAIRMAN

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
5 June 2014

A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WAS HELD ON 5 JUNE 2014

Councillor Beavis (P), Councillors Mrs Cully (P), Farr (P), Mrs Forder (P), Forder (P), Foster-Reed (P), Geddes (P), Gill (P), Hazel (P), Hylands (P), Jessop (P), and Scard (P).

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Forder be appointed as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Gill be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

The chairman requested that the cycle of meetings be amended.

The meeting concluded at 5.49pm

CHAIRMAN

GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24th June 2014

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

TITLE: SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT

AUTHOR: HEAD OF CORPORATE POLICY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

1.0 PURPOSE:

To report progress of the final year of the Council's Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan and to outline changes made to maintain compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirements.

2.0 BACKGROUND:

- 2.1 The Council adopted a Single Equality Scheme (SES) in 2011 to reflect its commitment to the new provisions of the Equality Act 2010. This was a three-year scheme and action plan monitored by the Council's Equality & Diversity Steering Group (EDSG) which made an annual equalities report to Council Management Team and to this Committee. This scheme expired at the end of March 2014. A final progress report of the 2013-14 actions of the SES is attached as Appendix A.
- 2.2 Prior to the expiry of the SES, EDSG reviewed it along with the other equality information the Council publishes in light of the latest Review of the PSED undertaken by the Government Equalities Office (GEO) published in September 2013.
- 2.3 This report suggested the ambiguity of PSED guidance issued by the Equality & Human Rights Commission led some authorities to "over-compliance" to avoid legal risk and others to "under-compliance" because they could not understand what was required.
- 2.4 The Review suggests a more proportionate "middle" approach appropriate to the size, resources and capacity of the organisation is appropriate if this approach is underlined with good equalities infrastructure e.g. relevant equality and diversity training, robust

assessment processes for understanding equality impacts on different people, dissemination of good practices, etc.

- 2.5 This report proposes some updates to and simplification of the equality information the Council will publish in 2014 as the result of conclusions drawn from this Review.

3.0 REPORT:

- 3.1 As an alternative to renewing a scheme which has largely become outdated, and given that a Single Equality Scheme is not a legal requirement, EDSG proposed replacing it with a Statement of Commitment to Equality & Diversity which confirms more succinctly the Council's commitment to the general and specific duties of the PSED. The new Statement of Commitment is attached as Appendix B.
- 3.2 No action plan is attached to the Statement as EDSG felt the Council's performance on equality and diversity is already adequately monitored through several means. These include:
- annual equality in employment reports made to EDSG by the Head of Personnel;
 - quarterly progress reports on local equality performance indicators and corporate equality objectives and actions made by the Principal Corporate Policy Officer;
 - regular meetings of EDSG which share and develop corporate good practices across service units; and
 - Section and Unit meetings where equal opportunities is a standard agenda item.
- 3.3 An Annual Equality & Diversity Report will still be made to CMT and to this Committee evidencing how the Council is maintaining compliance to the PSED and good equality and diversity practices.
- 3.4 The PSED is supported by specific duties which require public bodies to:
1. Publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty at least annually.
 2. Set and publish at least one measurable equality objective at least every four years which will further the three aims of the Equality Duty.
- 3.5 EDSG and Personnel annually review the equality information the Council already collects and publishes and considers what would present sufficient evidence of its adherence to the Equality Duty regarding employees and service users.
- 3.6 Utilising information already collected should meet the minimum requirements and not impose additional resource or other data collection

costs to the Council.

- 3.7 EDSG has reviewed the existing three Corporate Equality Objectives established in 2012 and recommended maintaining all of them with noted updates. No additional corporate objectives were identified by Sections and Units when asked. A progress update on each of the objectives plus new milestones for 2014 is attached as Appendix C.

4.0 CONCLUSION:

- 4.1 The changes and progress reports outlined in Section 3 of this report and attached as Appendices A, B and C should provide a sufficient and proportionate response to the statutory requirements of the PSED. They also reflect the Council's continued commitment to maintaining robust equality and diversity practices for its employees and customers.

Supporting Information

Financial implications:	None
Legal implications:	None
Risk Assessment:	An equality scheme is not a statutory requirement. However, compliance with all anti-discrimination legislation is required and failure to comply could invite possible enforcement action from the EHRC or legal challenges from groups and individuals against the Council on equality grounds.
Background papers including previous reports:	The Single Equality Scheme 2011-2014, adopted May 2011; The 2011-2014 Single Equality Scheme, revised May 2012
Enclosures/Appendices:	Appendix A: The Single Equality Scheme 2011-14 Action Plan, updated May 2014 Appendix B: Statement of Commitment to Equality & Diversity 2014 Appendix C: Corporate Equality Objectives Updated 2014
Contact name & tel. no.	Julie Petty, 023 9254 5381

Single Equality Scheme Action Plan 2013-14

Key Abbreviations	
CMT – Council Management Team	EDSG – Equality and Diversity Steering Group
O&S – Overview and Scrutiny	GAG – Gosport Access Group
HIOWLA – Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Authorities	GVA – Gosport Voluntary Action
PRENO – Portsmouth Race Equality Network	LDG – Learning and Development Group
CPCS – Corporate Policy and Community Safety Section	C3 – Customer Care and Communication
CSP – Community Safety Partnership	BME - Black and Minority Ethnic
EIA- Equality Impact Assessment	PB- Participatory Budgeting

Progress noted to Scheme End March 2014

Priority 1: Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of customers				
Action	How will it be measured	By Whom	By When	Comments
1.c. Section Heads review their equality monitoring practices annually to ensure compliance to Council Equality Monitoring Framework	Percentage completion rate of compliance statements	Section Heads	12-11✓ 12-12✓ 12-13✓	18/19 or 94.7% reviews completed, one review no longer required as covered under shared service with Fareham (Env. Health)
1.d. Section Lead officers complete EIAs assigned to them for new and existing policies, strategies	EIA completion rate monitored by CPPS as part of quarterly review	EDSG	03-12✓ 03-13✓ 03-14✓	9 out of 18 completed at end March 14, 5 deferred to 2014-15 schedule, the rest are progressing.

and functions in line with the corporate timeline.				
1.g. Liaise with local BME groups and forums to discuss new trends or needs of local BME populations and how to address them	Record of contact and any actions identified for action plan	CPPS	09-11✓ 09-12✓ 09-13✓	BME trends and needs checked via members of the Gosport BME Wellbeing Network which meets 3x per year and includes voluntary and public service providers and Fareham and Gosport Multicultural Society.
1.h. Annually report on the progress of this scheme to CMT and O&S Committee	Submission of annual report	CPPS	CMT: 06-12✓ 05-13✓ O&S: 07-12✓ 06-13✓	Annual report from EDSG with Scheme progress provided at CMT on 21-5-13, O&S Committee Report provided 11-6-13.
1.i Promote Hampshire HUB internally and with partners to assist them in accessing relevant data about the Borough and its population	Updates on HUB progress provided to CMT for cascading to staff	CPPS	12-12 Council formally joined County Data Hub partnership. 12-13 HCC Hub prototype in use and priority data sets being loaded.	HUB expected to be fully operational by end 2014
Priority 2: Valuing its workforce, providing equal opportunities in its employment practices and promoting fair employment practices in the Borough				
Action	How will it be	By whom	By when	Comments

	measured			
2.a. Review staff e-learning equality and diversity modules annually to ensure they reflect current legislation	Annual checkpoint with Cylix to ensure modules reflect current legislative additions or changes	IT Training Officer in liaison with Head of Personnel, EDSG and e-learning contract provider	09-11✓ 09-12✓ 09-13✓	E-learning modules updated to reflect any new Equality Act requirements.
2.b. All Council staff to refresh their equality and diversity training at least every three years through completion of e-learning modules	Quarterly IT training reports on staff completion by unit	Personnel and IT Training Officer	Quarterly updates via EDSG	All staff due to refresh their equality training in 2013 completed this requirement.
2.c. All new Council staff to complete their e-learning equality and diversity modules within the first three months of their employment	Quarterly personnel IT Training Officer reports	Personnel IT Training Officer reports	Quarterly updates via EDSG	All new starters completed their training within the first three months of their employment.
2.d. Develop in-house training tools to assist staff in applying their understanding of equality and diversity issues to real life work situations	No. of training aids developed, record of implementation means, feedback from users	EDSG with input from LDG and C3 Groups	Quarterly updates via EDSG Annual report to CMT: 06-11✓ 06-12✓ 06-13✓	Ongoing- updated equality info and case studies circulated to section heads and posted on Infonet as staff resources.
2.e. Collect post-contract monitoring data from contractors	No. of annual reviews held with contractors, no. of reviews of	The Contracts Core Group	06-12✓ 06-13✓	Ongoing-E & D policies of Streetscene contractors reviewed,

and review annually to assess compliance with the Council's equalities standards	monitoring data completed			diversity of Housing contractor workforce monitored, customer compliments and complaints monitored as part of all contracts.
2.f. Complete analysis by gender, ethnicity, and disability of applicants for each post and appointments made	Annual report to EDSG/CMT and part of quarterly review of local indicators	Personnel	09-11✓ 09-12✓ 09-13✓	Personnel equalities report presented at EDSG on 11-9-13. No issues identified.
2.g. Research the use of possible positive actions, if required, in recruitment and training to encourage consideration of all career paths without bias		Personnel in liaison with Unison and CMT	11-11✓ 11-12✓ 11-13✓	No positive action identified as necessary in 2011, 2012, 2013 but maintained under review for 2014.
2.h. Collect data to assess the number of employees who are disabled, from a BME group, age ranges, analysis of posts by gender and those occupying senior posts	Reviewed annually as part of local indicators, and three yearly via equal pay audit	Head of Personnel	09-11✓ 09-12✓ 09-13✓	Equal pay audit completed and data reviewed quarterly. No issues identified.
2.i. Analyse workforce data for any equality	Review by EDSG	Head of Personnel	09-11✓ 09-12✓	No issues requiring action identified either

issues, identify actions needed or make recommendations to EDSG for ways of addressing issues identified			09-13✓	by analysis/monitoring or through staff survey. Monitoring continues.
2.k. Complete of an equal pay audit every three years. Analysis of results including comparison with previous years to assess actions needed to address	Completion of audit	Personnel Officer in consultation with Unison Branch Secretary	9-11 Audit✓ 12-11 Analysis ✓	Audit and analysis completed; no equal pay issues identified.
Priority 3: Working with partners to tackle inequalities, disadvantage and discrimination in the Borough				
Action	How will it be measured	By Whom	By When	Comments
3.a. Provide guidance to local businesses and service providers on disability access issues and requirements	No. of visits to local businesses to provide access advice	Access Officer with GAG	6 monthly updates	Shared Access Officer with Fareham retired end March, number of site visits in last 6 mo. unknown. GAG members continue to monitor accessibility of local businesses and advise them on ways to improve as needed.
3.b. Publish a local directory of domestic violence information and support services	Information updates by members of the Fareham and Gosport Domestic Abuse	Community Safety Team updates information every 6 months	12-11✓ 12-12✓ 12-13✓	GBC website links to information and guidance about local domestic abuse

and support on web site and keep it updated	Forum. 6 monthly web updates completed by Community Safety team.			services and supports. Community Safety team leader oversees quarterly updates are completed.
3.c. Improve understanding of particular issues Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people may encounter in accessing local services	Feedback from BME people via community networks, local service delivery providers, customer contact, consultation results. and HCC Community Development Officer engagement.	Gosport BME Wellbeing Network members, GBC officers	Ongoing	3 Network meetings held in 2013. Lots of information sharing, members of Fareham & Gosport Multicultural Society attending some meetings.
3.e. Update the Gosport Sustainability Profile for Gosport Partnership to ensure it reflects the most current demographic range of data for the Borough	Delivery of the annual update to Board	Officer support from Planning Policy and CPCS	9-11✓ 9-12✓ 9-13X	Update delayed due to other work priorities, expected update during 2014-15.
Priority 4: Supporting local citizen involvement and promoting good relations within and across communities				
Action	How will it be measured	By Whom	By When	Comments
4.a. Host an annual Compact and Community Forum conference for community and	Participation numbers and event feedback forms- 55 attended 2013 event.	CPPS in partnership with the Community Forum	11-11✓ 11-12✓ 11-13✓	Very positive feedback from 2013 event held in November at HMS Sultan. 55 people attended, representing

voluntary sector and statutory members.				36 different organisations.
4.b. Support National Volunteer Week by promoting local volunteering opportunities to staff and supporting annual community volunteer awards	Staff announcements promoting local volunteer vacancies and role of Volunteer Centre, hosting annual awards event	CPCS with Volunteer Centre staff	06-11✓ 06-12✓ 06-13✓	Event planned for 9 June at Town Hall. Successful Jubilee themed annual award event held last year at Thorngate Halls.
4.h. Undertake a review of participatory budgeting pilots and make recommendations for future use	Report to the CSP, and record of agreed actions	Head of Community Safety	06-11✓ 06-12✓ 06-13✓	Successful Participatory Budgeting event in October 2013 at Thorngate Halls
4.i. Develop and support neighbourhood forums.	Report to CSP	Head of Community Safety	06-11✓ 06-12✓ 06-13✓	Due to lack of resources, engagement opportunities are utilised at existing events and incorporated with Community Safety Plan 2011-2013.



**GOSPORT BOROUGH
COUNCIL'S**

**Commitment
To
Equality & Diversity**

Gosport Borough Council is committed to equal opportunities for all.

If you need this document in large print, on tape, on CD, in Braille or in other languages, please ask.

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May 2014

CONTENTS

Heading	Page no.
Commitment statement	4
1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 Purpose	4
3.0 Scope	5
4.0 What is covered under this Commitment	5
5.0 Designation of key responsibilities under this Commitment	5
6.0 Mainstreaming equalities and monitoring progress	7

COMMITMENT STATEMENT

Gosport Borough Council is committed to equal opportunities for all and recognises the value of diversity.

As both a service provider and employer, the Council aims to mainstream fairness and equality into every aspect of its services and employment practices and to remove barriers to ensure equal opportunity.

It aims to ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Under the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act'), local authorities have a general duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This general duty is supported by specific duties and, in summary, listed public authorities in England are required to: publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general duty, at least annually, and to prepare and publish one or more objectives, at least every four years to achieve any of the aims in the general equality duty. The information and objectives must be published in a manner that is accessible to the public.

2.0 PURPOSE

This Commitment sets out how the Council intends to meet its duties under the Act.

The Council had a Single Equality Scheme in effect from 1 April 2011 until 31 March 2014. This Statement of Commitment replaces the Single Equality Scheme and reflects the latest guidance of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Government's Equality Office on public sector compliance to the Act.

Compliance will be monitored by the Corporate Policy and Performance Section and progress reports will be provided to the Equality and Diversity Steering Group and to the Council Management Team.

3.0 SCOPE

This Commitment applies to all employees, workers, volunteers, self-employed and placements and will be reflected in arrangements with contractors. Members of the Council are required to comply with the Code of Conduct which covers equalities issues and by following this Commitment Members will be able to demonstrate compliance.

4.0 WHAT IS COVERED UNDER THIS COMMITMENT

4.1 Public Sector Equality Duty

The Act created a new single PSED which covers the protected characteristics of age, disability, sex, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Under the general duty public bodies must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- foster good relations between different groups.

The general duty is underpinned by a number of specific duties which provide a framework to help public bodies meet the general duty. Most public bodies such as local authorities must meet both the general duty and the specific duties.

5.0 DESIGNATION OF KEY RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THIS COMMITMENT

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is responsible for developing a leadership role in the Borough, promoting improved understanding of equality and diversity and ensuring this Commitment is implemented throughout Gosport Borough Council and regularly reviewed.

Council Management Team

Members of Council Management Team provide senior level support for equality and diversity and are responsible for ensuring adherence to this Commitment.

Section Heads

Section Heads have direct responsibility for the compliance of their service areas with this Commitment. They are required to provide an annual assessment of their section's service level equality objectives based on the results of customer feedback, consultations, EIAs and the assessment of compliance to the Equality Monitoring Framework.

They must ensure staff understand and meet the responsibilities contained in this Commitment, that staff receive all necessary training and support, identifying any particular needs, and that the Council's policies and procedures are complied with.

Employees

All employees of the Council have a responsibility to understand this Commitment and comply with its provisions in their working practice. Employees should also seek information and advice from their managers or the Equality and Diversity Steering Group on any aspect that requires clarification.

Volunteers/work experience/contractors

Council volunteers, work experience staff or those contracted by the Council for specific services have a responsibility to act in a fair and appropriate manner, in accordance with this Commitment and all other Council policies and procedures.

Elected Members

Members engage with the wider Gosport community to better understand local needs and issues and to provide leadership and support for this Commitment. As representatives of the Council, they have a responsibility to support and promote equal opportunities and practices in all aspects of their civic responsibilities.

Personnel

The Personnel section is responsible for ensuring all employment procedures and processes including recruitment, retention and training comply with current equal opportunity in employment legislation.

It plays a key role in ensuring training needs are appropriately met and delivery mechanisms put in place with respect to equality and diversity issues in employment.

The production, review and updating of relevant equality and diversity in employment policies is the responsibility of the Personnel section.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

It can request reports or additional information on any aspect of this Commitment in order to assess corporate compliance and good practice. An Annual Equality & Diversity Report will be made to the Committee.

Equality and Diversity Steering Group

This corporate group has representatives from every service unit and the Trade Union, Unison. It has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the

Council's equality and diversity work. It provides a forum for discussing equality issues and developing good equality practices across service units.

Learning and Development Group

This corporate group is responsible for identifying corporate training needs and developing appropriate responses.

6.0 MAINSTREAMING EQUALITIES AND MONITORING PROGRESS

Mainstreaming and monitoring of equality principles and practices throughout Council activities is achieved through a variety of means:

Partnerships and networks

Through active representation in many partnerships and networks, the Council seeks to improve its understanding of local issues and local needs. Engaging with other organisations through partnerships and networks provides valuable opportunities to share information and expertise to help identify and address community concerns.

The Council understands its role as part of the fabric of the local community rather than an entity outside of it. Regular consultation with and feedback from these partnerships, formal and informal networks, assists Council staff in assessing and monitoring services in relation to local equality issues and their impact on local people.

Personnel management and information systems

Personnel collects and monitors extensive information to ensure equality standards are maintained throughout the Council's employment processes. Profile information on the Council's workforce, including gender and ethnicity information, is routinely collected and monitored. The monitoring of its grading structure through the job evaluation scheme and Organisation Sub-Group, and commitment to a regular equal pay audit every two years, helps to ensure that pay and grading are applied fairly and consistently across the organisation.

Personal review and training assessment processes provide the means for monitoring equality of opportunity in the development of the Council's workforce.

Personal reviews

Personal reviews provide an opportunity for managers to discuss with staff areas for performance improvement with respect to customer care, service delivery and any aspect of this Commitment. Each member of staff has his/her own personal training plan that is reviewed annually to help identify training needs and allocate training resources. Refresher training on the personal review process is offered regularly to managers; all managers new to the Council are provided with training before undertaking the process. A range of training is available to staff from internal and external sources.

Team meetings

Equal Opportunities – “Employment and Service Delivery Issues” is a corporate standard item on all team meeting agendas and acts as a vehicle for raising and discussing equalities issues identified within teams. Managers can seek further information or guidance from the Personnel Section, Equality and Diversity Steering Group, Council Management Team or the Corporate Policy and Performance Section to address issues raised.

Equalities Monitoring Framework

This provides a corporate approach to equalities monitoring across Council service areas. It provides guidance to service areas for determining the type and degree of equalities monitoring to be applied. All section heads provide an initial assessment of compliance to the framework and an annual assessment of service level equality objectives based on the results of customer feedback, consultations, EIAs and the assessment of compliance itself. All actions undertaken to maintain compliance to the framework or achieve service level equality objectives are tracked through service improvement plans.

Compliments and complaints

Compliments and complaints received about services also help to identify the impact of good practices and any adverse impact of existing practices.

Gosport Borough Council responds to complaints from customers as quickly and as efficiently as possible and considers their suggestions for improvements. Its formal complaints procedure is detailed on the Council web site and available in different formats from the Town Hall.

The Council Management Team can review summary reports on complaints received by the Council with a focus on any related to equality and diversity issues. These are then reported to the Equality and Diversity Steering Group for further review and recommendations for corporate actions to address them.

The comprehensive Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy ensures that staff are aware of their responsibilities and the procedure which can be used for any complaints which may arise.

Procurement and funding relationships

The duty to promote equality applies to procurement. Where an external supplier carries out a function on the Council’s behalf, the Council recognises it remains responsible for meeting the duty. All contracted services and functions are assessed for relevance to the general duty and undergo the EIA process.

Contractors which currently or intend to supply goods or services on behalf of the Council must provide evidence that they have systems in place to ensure

equal access and treatment in their own employment practices and in the services they provide. The Council provides information to potential contractors on its equality commitments as part of its Invitation to Tender documentation and ensures these commitments are part of its Contractual Agreements.

Post-contract monitoring is undertaken to assess equality performance indicators, collate reports of any complaints from service users - including any related to harassment - and service audits to check on any problems in relation to the equalities in the specification.

Guides and toolkits

Current good equality practice is mainstreamed throughout the Council by the development of guidance notes and toolkits provided on the Council's Infonet and through induction packs to new members of staff.

Training

The Council delivers equality training to all staff through an Equality and Diversity e-learning programme. The training modules are updated every year to reflect new legislation and good practice and all staff are required to renew training every three years. New staff complete this training during their induction period. Training, awareness raising events and information are also delivered to staff and elected Members in a variety of ways.

Equality impact assessments

The Council has a corporate process for assessing the impact of its policies, strategies and functions on different groups. This assessment process is undertaken at the development stage for proposed new policies, strategies and functions or whenever a significant change is being considered to existing ones.

This process has been revised to specifically analyse how Council policies, strategies and functions further the three aims of the general Equality Duty. An initial assessment is completed and then reviewed by a sub-group of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group.

The review sub-group determines if the analysis and evidence provided are sufficient to reasonably assess the possible impact of the policy, strategy or function for each protected characteristic.

It can recommend gathering further evidence to assess impacts, recommend specific equality actions are undertaken to mitigate potential negative impacts on groups or to further the aims of the general duty, or recommend the policy, strategy or function be halted until a full assessment is undertaken. Actions from the assessment process form part of the Section Head's annual review of their service level equality objectives.

Gosport Borough Council is committed to equal opportunities for all.

If you need this document in large print, on tape, on CD, in Braille or in other languages, please ask.

Gosport Borough Council's Equality Objectives Progress Update

The Council's Equality Objectives support the three main aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty general duty. The general duty applies equally across Great Britain and commenced in April 2011. 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 from different groups; and
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

March 2014

Objective 1: Improve the experience of our customers when contacting and visiting the Town Hall, ensuring safe access to the building and fair access to information and services provided by the Council.

The refurbishment of the Town Hall Main Reception area was completed in January 2011. The changes implemented were based on previous customer feedback and recommendations from the Gosport Access Group and Disability Forum which has advised the Council on access needs of disabled people for many years.

Ongoing review and improvement of the Main Reception is coordinated by the Community and Customer Services team. Customer and staff feedback are collected and reviewed to ensure that the reception arrangements and general Town Hall arrangements meet customer needs. Progress will be measured by the improvements implemented based on this feedback.

2014 Review Findings:

- New multiple language posters are displayed to easily enable customers to identify the language they need to receive information in to Reception staff, who can then access the appropriate interpreting or translation service
- Implementation of telephone payments support by the Main Reception team in respect of high-demand services (Rent and Council Tax payments and Benefit Overpayments) has been successful

- Additional staffing has been provided to increase the overall efficiency of the Call Centre, and to maintain adequate cover to the Main Reception desk and Cashiers counter – thus reducing queuing times for customers who use each of these services
- Improved visual information in the Main Reception waiting area (implementation of a new noticeboard for customers, and expansion of the material displayed on the public information screen at the Cashiers counter - which promotes Council initiatives and events)
- Work has started to promote greater versatility within the two teams that embody 'Customer Services' (the Main Reception team and the Street-scene Admin team). This will be achieved via a training programme to facilitate multifunctional working in the Cashiers and Waste Management areas of the service, in order to reduce staffing pressures during 'pinch-point' periods
- Implementation of the 'Gosport Timeline' graphic to provide a visual interest point for customers using the waiting area
- 'General information' posters and signage has been tidied up to create a more professional appearance

All milestones set for this objective in 2012 and 2013 were met. One new milestone is recommended for 2014 under Objective 1:

2014 Objective 1 Milestone- Increase the number of services provided to the public at Main Reception to improve access to these services and reduce the need to contact Council services separately- end Dec 2014.

Objective 2: Improve the collection and use of equality monitoring information to inform service design and delivery to enhance equality of opportunity and understanding of needs of different groups.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG) is a corporate working group which has representatives from each unit and has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the Council's equality and diversity work.

In 2008 the Council adopted a corporate Equalities Monitoring Framework (EMF) which established a corporate understanding and approach to equalities, including guidance on monitoring protected characteristics and how monitoring should be applied in accordance with current equality legislation. EDSG reviews the EMF annually and circulates guidance to all Section and Unit Managers.

2014 Review findings:

Since 2009 Section Heads have completed an annual assessment of their section's current monitoring practices, assessed compliance to the EMF and identified any actions needed to improve their monitoring practices. Completion of this annual assessment is tracked and reviewed by EDSG.

EDSG believes this practice is now embedded good practice at Section level and no longer requires an annual review from each Section Head if there have been no significant changes to that section's purpose, functions or responsibilities. If there have been significant changes which may affect how it deals with staff or customers, then EDSG will review this and may still require an annual review of its equality monitoring practices and compliance to the EMF.

Objective 2 Milestones completed in 2013:

Milestone- Report to Council Management Team on results of Section Head survey with recommended actions and include in annual equalities report – end March 2013. A report was made to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 11/6/13 on the Single Equality Scheme and action plan progress.

Milestone- Implement actions identified from Section Head survey - end September 2013. Section Head reviews completed to assess compliance to EMF and need for any service level objectives by end Sept 2013.

Milestone- six monthly checkpoint of progress of section level and corporate actions and include in annual equalities report – end March 2014 18/19 reviews completed March 2014. One review deferred as that service area became a shared service with another local authority.

Two new Milestones are recommended for 2014 under Objective 2:

2014 Milestone 1 – EDSG to assess the need for any Section to continue annual assessment of compliance to EMF where appropriate – end September 2014.

2014 Milestone 2 – EDSG to check progress of service level equality objectives identified in 2013- end December 2014.

Objective 3: Improve public awareness of domestic abuse (DA) and reduce the number of DA incidents while fostering better partnership working to help ensure local DA services are accessible and available to all who need them.

With partners, this is being achieved through:

- sharing information and data with strategic partners to identify deprivation and disadvantage which can lead to inequality;
- coordinating local services and resources through effective partnership working.

Reducing Domestic Abuse (DA) is a priority for the Gosport Community Safety Partnership due to the increase in the recorded level of it over the past two years, the high levels in Gosport in comparison to other Hampshire Districts and the significant risk of harm to the victim as well as children and other family members affected by it.

Nationally, research finds that Domestic Abuse accounts for 16% of all violent crime and has more repeat victims than any other crime. One in four women and one in six men will be a victim of Domestic Abuse in their lifetime with women at greater risk of repeat victimisation and serious injury. There is recognised under reporting to the police when looking specifically at Domestic Abuse. The 2009 Domestic Abuse snapshot survey indicated that only 13.7% of all cases were recorded by the police.

2014 Review findings:

The Safer Community website is reviewed on a monthly basis and information in relation to Domestic Abuse services is updated accordingly. Gosport CSP ensures that the information on the Safer Gosport website reflects any campaigns being undertaken nationally, by Hampshire Constabulary or led by the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Forum.

High risk cases are referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process. Medium and low risk incidents are managed locally by the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and are monitored through the Community Tasking and Coordinating Group process. The Police are currently implementing training for Officers who will be trained to a higher level in Domestic Abuse investigations and will predominantly deal with medium and low risk victims.

Objective Milestones completed in 2013:

Milestone- Participate in Annual White Ribbon Campaign to promote awareness of Domestic Abuse and collect feedback from members of the public - November 2012 and 2013.

Event was held again at Dock Road, Asda in November 2013 involving agencies including GBC, Police, Fareham & Gosport Family Aid, Aurora New Dawn, and once again supported by Asda. The event provides a platform to signpost

Domestic Abuse services and engages with members of the public with what can be a highly emotive and difficult topic to discuss. The footfall at the Asda store is very high as well as being situated in a deprived area. However in 2014 we will scope holding the event in Tesco's, Rowner, for the same rationale.

Milestone- Monitor the source of referrals to the MARAC to ensure partner agencies are aware of and using MARAC for identified high-risk victims. Annual comparisons with previous years, using 2011 as baseline- end March 2013 and 2014.

There were 213 cases discussed at Fareham & Gosport's MARAC during 2012/2013, this compared to 2692 for the whole of Hampshire. Within Fareham & Gosport 73% of referrals came from the Police and 27% from partner agencies, this compared to 83% and 17% respectively for the whole of Hampshire.

Milestone- Collect annually the number of Domestic Violence offences recorded by the Police to assess level in comparison to previous years- end March 2013 and 2014.

There were 359 offences recorded for the 2013/2014 financial year. This is an increase of 19.6% (+59 offences) from the previous financial year (2012/2103).

These three milestones will be retained for 2014 for Objective 3.

GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 JUNE 2014

REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY

TITLE: REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

AUTHOR: BOROUGH SOLICITOR AND DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 PURPOSE:

1.1 For the Committee to consider a request to scrutinise the review of Polling Districts and Polling Places by producing draft proposals for consultation and recommending them to Full Council. The Committee were involved in the last review in 2011.

2.0 REPORT:

- 2.1 The Council is required by statute to divide its area into polling districts and polling places for the purpose of parliamentary elections and to keep them under review. The Council must complete this review by 31 January 2015.
- 2.2 The parliamentary constituency is divided into smaller areas known as polling districts within which polling places are designated. A polling place is the building or area within which polling stations are located. Whilst the Council determines polling districts and polling places, it is the (Acting) Returning Officer who determines the location of the polling station within each polling place. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district.
- 2.3 The Council has to publish notice of the review and consult the (Acting) Returning Officer and persons it thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons with different forms of disability, electors and members.
- 2.4 The (Acting) Returning Officer has to respond to the consultation and include information as to the location of existing or proposed polling stations within polling places. The Council has to publish this response.

- 2.5 Final proposals will be presented to Council and will then need to be published in accordance with the statutory procedure. The Electoral Registration Officer must implement any changes on publication of the Register of Electors following completion of the review.
- 2.6 The (Acting) Returning Officer conducts an informal review of the operation of polling stations after each election but there are only very limited options to move polling places due to the lack of suitable available buildings.
- 2.7 The proposed timetable for conducting the review is as follows:

Publication of notice of review	30 June 2014
Initial consultation with stakeholders	30 June -8 August 2014
Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider responses	10 September 2014
Publication of draft proposals	22 September – 31 October
Overview and Scrutiny to consider responses to draft proposals	10 December 2014
Council to approve final proposals	18December 2014
Publication of agreed changes	22 December 2014
Implementation of changes	1 January 2015
Register of Electors published	

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: WORK PROGRAMME

Work Area	Lead Member/Officer	Date to be reported to Committee
Single Equality Bill	Julie Petty	Annually: June 2014
Promotion of the Borough (Social Media) to be included on the next agenda	David Eland	March 2014
Chairman's Annual Report 2014/15	Chairman	Annually: Mar 2015
Housing Allocations Policy	Corinne Waterfield	December 2015
Grounds Maintenance Contract	Ian Lycett	September 2015
Vascular Surgery QA Hospital	Ian Lycett	September 2015
Review of Portchester Crematorium	Chairman	June 2015
Review Waste Policy changes	Steven Ricketts	September 2015
Work areas: <i>Review at each meeting</i>		