

**Subject:** Equalities & Inclusion Policy  
**Date of Meeting:** 18<sup>th</sup> September 2008  
**Report of:** Director of Strategy & Governance  
**Contact Officer:** Name: Mary Evans – Tel: 29-1577  
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Inclusion  
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**Key Decision:** Yes Forward Plan No CAB 2363  
**Wards Affected:** All

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 The Council's Inclusive Council Policy 2004-2007 set the policy framework and priorities for equalities work in the City Council. This new Equalities & Inclusion Policy builds on our achievements and sets out policy and priorities for the next three years 2008-2011.
- 1.2 The new Equality Scheme Action Plan pulls together outstanding actions from our existing Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008, Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009 and Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010 into a single plan. This enables us to broaden our actions to include the other equalities strands of sexual orientation, age and religion/belief and address all equalities issues and issues of poverty and deprivation in a more systematic and strategic way. The Equality Scheme Action Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure progress is made and to build in new actions as appropriate.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the that Cabinet approve the new Equalities & Inclusion Policy and Equality Scheme Action Plan

**3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- 3.1 The Council has clear statutory responsibilities to address issues of discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. The existing three Equalities Schemes address these responsibilities in relation to Race, Disability and Gender. They are however all subject to annual review and specific issues have been highlighted by Internal Audit and the Equalities Forum that the new Equalities & Inclusion Policy seeks to address. Most notably this means an inclusion of mental health issues and of actions to tackle harassment of disabled people.

- 3.2 The Reducing Inequality Review undertaken in 2007 highlights the issue of continuing deprivation within the city and specific issues in relation to data quality, mental health and worklessness. These issues cannot be tackled by the Council working in isolation and the new Equalities & Inclusion Policy seeks to support the continuation and extension of effective partnership working to address them.
- 3.3 The national picture has been changing with the creation of the Equalities & Human Rights Commission and the move towards a Single Equality Act. This new Equalities & Inclusion Policy and Equality Scheme Action Plan puts the City Council in a better position to respond to these changes by providing a single Equality Scheme Action Plan which can incorporate all equalities strands as well as issues of poverty and deprivation.
- 3.4 In the past we produced an annual report, called the Performance Plan, this report contained performance against the best value performance indicators (BVPIs). Under the new performance management arrangements there is no longer a requirement to report the BVPIs. In future we are proposing to produce an annual report that will review progress against the outcomes in the Local Area Agreement and the Corporate Plan.
- 3.5 This year (08/09) is subject to transitional arrangements. Following consultation last year carried out by the Audit Commission (AC) with local authorities and other public sector bodies, the new National Indicator Set has been published. This set of indicators will represent the indicators assessed as part of the CAA in future years, with particular focus on the 35 measures that have been selected as improvement priorities for Brighton & Hove in the new Local Area Agreement.

#### **4. CONSULTATION:**

- 4.1 Consultation events were held with members and community representatives on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2007 and 15<sup>th</sup> January 2008. The draft policy was taken to Equalities Forum on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2007 and 11<sup>th</sup> February 2008.
- 4.2 Equalities Steering Group have provided feedback on the policy which has been incorporated as far as possible into this final draft and the Equality Scheme Action Plan has been jointly produced with them.
- 4.3 The Equalities & Inclusion Policy and Equality Scheme Action Plan are scheduled for Cabinet decision on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2008 and Council on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2008. It went to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2008 and a response report is being prepared for the Cabinet meeting.

**5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

5.1 Financial Implications:

None

5.2 Legal Implications:

None

5.3 Equalities Implications:

Contained in body of the report.

5.4 Sustainability Implications:

None

5.5 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

None

5.6 Crime & Disorder Implications:

None

5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

Contained in body of the report.

**6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

None

**7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 The policy is designed to meet the council's regulatory and legal responsibilities in relation to equalities.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Equalities & Inclusion Policy 2008-2011
2. Equalities Scheme Action Plan

### **Documents In Members' Rooms**

None

### **Background Documents**

None