

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:**           **CABINET**  
**DATE:**               **TUESDAY, 10 JULY 2012**  
**REPORT BY:**       **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**SUBJECT:**           **DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY POLICY**

### **1.00**   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

**1.01**   To present the draft Diversity and Equality Policy to Cabinet for approval before wider consultation with stakeholders, members of the public and employees.

### **2.00**   **BACKGROUND**

**2.01**   Members recognised the value of embracing diversity and equality in both employment and service delivery when Flintshire County Council's first Diversity and Equality Policy was produced in 2005. The Council is one of the largest employers in the area and the provider of essential services to all residents including the most vulnerable. The Diversity and Equality Policy demonstrates the Council's commitment to developing an inclusive workplace and high quality services which meet peoples' needs.

**2.02**   The Diversity and Equality Policy has now been updated in line with guidance from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission and incorporates changes in equality legislation brought in by the Equality Act 2010. The changes included in the Equality Act include the concepts of:

- Perceptive Discrimination;
- Associative Discrimination; and
- Third Party harassment

**2.03**   The Equality Act 2010 streamlined equality legislation and extended cover to the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

**2.04**   The Policy sets out the Council's commitment to valuing diversity, eliminating harassment and promoting equality in our work and services. This includes how we will ensure potential employees, employees, customers and other organisations who do, or want to do

business, with the Council are treated equitably regardless of their background.

**2.05** The Policy is one of the steps the Council is taking to place equality at the heart of the organisation. The Council has also:-

- Achieved the Two Ticks symbol “Positive about Disabled People”
- Joined the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme demonstrating the Council’s commitment to meeting the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees and customers.
- Nominated the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR and OD) as the Equality Champion at senior management team; ensuring links between equality and other strategic developments are promoted.

### **3.0 CONSIDERATIONS**

**3.01** The overall aim of the Diversity and Equality Policy is to:-

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- Promote equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations between diverse communities in the Council’s delivery of services, goods, works and facilities, provision of grants, in engagement with partners and communities in the county and employment policies and practices.

**3.02** The Policy identifies:-

- how customers, contractors and other organisations can expect to be treated by the Council when accessing services, applying for grants or placing tenders for contracts;
- responsibilities of contractors and organisations who tender for and provide goods, works, services and facilities on our behalf and the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- the rights and responsibilities of employees; and
- managers’ and supervisors’ responsibilities.

**3.03** Feedback from the Council’s Employee Networks, Corporate Management Team and other stakeholders has informed the revision of the Policy; further consultation now needs to take place with Trade Unions, managers, employees and members of the public. It is proposed that the following methods are used to consult with employees, members of the public and stakeholders:

- Employees
  - promotion of draft Policy on the intranet, Directorate monthly bulletins and staff conferences
  - draft policy circulated to Flintshire County Council

employee forums and Flintshire Joint Trade Union Committee (FJTUC)

- included as an agenda item at Team meetings
- Members of the public
  - draft Policy promoted through the Council's website
  - Policy and Performance Team attendance at meetings with key local community groups, for example, Flintshire Deaf Forum, Flintshire International Social Group, Flintshire Disability Forum, Strategic Equality plan Core group
  - draft Policy circulated to local networks and groups
- Stakeholders and Partners
  - draft policy circulated to Elected Members, Town and Community Councillors, Local Service Board Partners and regional groups representing people with protected characteristics

Consultation questions will be based around content and validity.

**3.04** Following the consultation exercises, a revised draft will be presented to Cabinet for approval before publication. The proposed time frame for consultation, reporting and publication is set out below:-

- consultation on the Policy during July – September 2012
- approval of final Policy and communication plan by January 2013
- communication and promotion of Policy February 2013 onwards

**3.05** Supplementary guidance will be provided with the Policy, which will include a glossary and examples of types of discrimination to support employees and managers with implementation.

**3.06** The new Policy by itself will not create long term organisational change unless there is commitment and understanding by both elected members and employees. Long term change will need to be underpinned by involvement and leadership by example.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**4.01** That the draft Diversity and Equality Policy be endorsed for consultation.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.01** There will be some costs to promote the consultation of this draft policy both internally and externally; these will be met from the Policy

and Performance Team budget.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

**6.01** Addressing equality and discrimination in service delivery and employment will have a positive impact on disadvantaged groups

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

**7.01** Limited hard copies of the Policy will be produced; the Policy will be emailed to contacts and respondents who will be encouraged to respond electronically. This will reduce the amount of paper used throughout the consultation process.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**8.01** A full equality impact assessment will be undertaken on this Policy. The aim of this Policy is to benefit all protected groups and other groups who may experience discrimination.

**8.02** The Policy will be circulated bilingually (English and Welsh) in hard copies and via email. It will be published on the website and alternative formats and other languages will be made available on request. The aim of this is to ensure that the Policy and consultation is accessible and inclusive to diverse groups.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

**9.01** Implementing and monitoring fair employment practices and involving and consulting employees will benefit both future and current employees

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

**10.01** Consultation is required as part of the equality impact assessment; this will include employees, stakeholders, members of the public and Trade Unions. Stakeholders will include people with different protected characteristics, groups representing the protected characteristics such as UNIQUE (representing the transgendered community) and partners.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

Trade Unions, Flintshire County Council employee networks, stakeholder groups and Corporate Management Team have been involved in the revision of the draft Policy.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985**  
**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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