Equality and Diversity Scheme

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Foreword

Mole Valley District Council values the diversity of the communities it serves and we are committed to building strong, secure, self-reliant and self-confident communities, free from unlawful discrimination.

As a service provider we have a responsibility to ensure our residents get the best possible, accessible and equal opportunities to services; and as an employer that our employment practices are equitable and fair.

This Equality Scheme describes the Council’s objectives and actions we will take to achieve this. Our aim is that we will make real progress in ensuring equity in all areas of our service delivery.

Councillor Kate Horden
Portfolio Holder for Organisational Development
1. INTRODUCTION

This is the first time that we have produced a single equalities scheme. The aim of this is to provide a coordinated approach to our equality and diversity work whilst meeting our legislative duties. This scheme replaces our previous race, gender and disability schemes and the overall equalities strategy and follows the national trend to move towards a single equalities framework.

The scheme sets out:

- Our corporate approach to equalities and how we are working in line with the standards set out in the Equality Framework for Local Government
- How we will improve our knowledge of the diverse communities in Mole Valley and how this will inform our service planning and delivery.

The equality agenda now has seven distinct strands: age, disability, ethnicity, gender, trans gender, religion and belief and sexual orientation. Many of these issues are often inter-related and it is important to consider how the combination of these factors can lead to social exclusion.

By having a combined scheme there is a risk that any one strand could become diluted and is not given enough attention. This is something we are aware of; however we do feel that the benefits of a single scheme far outweigh the risks.

The benefits of developing a single scheme are:

- All of our equalities commitments are in one place, rather than currently having separate race, gender and disability schemes alongside a corporate diversity strategy
- The single scheme aims to make the equality and diversity agenda easier to understand, especially for officers and Members and will create more ownership of the agenda
- The new scheme will help continue to raise the profile of equality impact assessments and the range of issues they need to address, rather than just focusing on single strands
- The scheme will also highlight the overlapping issues in relation to the seven strands of diversity and provide us with a more flexible approach to our work. There are also more opportunities for the scheme to pick up on wider issues such as community cohesion, integration and social inclusion, community engagement and participation

What we mean by equality

Equality means treating everyone with equal dignity and worth, irrespective of particular characteristics such as their age, disability, gender, ethnicity, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. We recognise that people can experience inequality in terms of:

- Outcomes
- Access to services
- The degree of independence they have to make decisions affecting their lives
- Inequality of treatment, including in relation to employment, through discrimination or disadvantage imposed by other individuals, groups, institutions or systems
- Policies and practices which exhibit negative impact for some groups which causes them detriment when compared to the rest of the community
2. SETTING THE CONTEXT

We are keen to ensure that our equality and diversity work is a key part of our overall council strategy. This is why we have priorities in our Corporate Plan and every service area has considered their impact on equalities through the service planning process.

Our corporate priority in relation to equality and diversity is ‘Reaching Every Community’, which is focused on ‘making district wide improvements to enable more equitable access to services’. This scheme also links into wider council policies such as our workforce strategy and our sustainability policies. We are aware that no scheme on its own can address the wide variety of equality issues that exist; instead we recognise equality and diversity as a key theme that runs throughout our policies, plans and strategies.

As more authorities are now moving towards a single approach, it is crucial to consider the specific legislation that exists. There is a wide range of legislation that sets out a variety of legal requirements on public organisations. The relevant legislation is set out below:

- Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome
- Asylum and Immigration Act 1996
- Civil Partnership Act, 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005
- EEC Equal Pay Directive 1975
- EEC Equal Treatment Directive 1976
- Employment Equality Regulations for Age, Religion or Belief & Sexual Orientation.
- Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Equality Act 2006
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986
- Single Equality Act 2009 (subject to Parliamentary approval)
- Trade Union and Labour Relations Consolidation Act 1992
- Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993

A summary of the legislation surrounding each of the strands is set out below in order to set the context of the scheme.

The Legislative Framework

All public bodies have statutory equality duties in relation to race, disability and gender. These duties place a responsibility on public bodies like Mole Valley District Council to demonstrate they are taking action on race, disability and gender equality in policy making, service delivery and employment. We are required to take steps not just to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, but also to actively promote equality.
Under the equalities framework public bodies, including Mole Valley District Council, are required to deliver on two main duties: general and specific. The general duty sets out the main objectives of each of the equality duties, while the specific duties are steps that public bodies have to take to help them meet the general duties.

In the new Equality Bill, the statutory duties will be harmonised into one duty which will cover all seven strands of equalities i.e. race, disability, gender, trans gender, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

**The Disability Equality Duty**

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a duty on the public sector to demonstrate what it is doing to promote equality for disabled people. In order to understand the duty we need to consider what promoting equality for people with disabilities actually means.

> “Its about weaving equality for disabled people into the culture of public authorities in practical and demonstrated ways.”

Bert Massie, Chairman, Disability Rights Commission

This means that equality is considered and planned for from the start rather than trying to add it at the end. The duty acts as a tool for us to promote disability equality and focuses on the social model of disability, recognising that the ‘problems faced by disabled people are a direct result of oppressive social structures and attitudes. And that other people’s attitudes and behaviours are the biggest barriers that disabled people face’.

The Disability Discrimination Act states that when carrying out their functions, public authorities must have due regard to do the following:

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminate disability related harassment
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Take steps to meet disabled peoples needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment
- This applies to all of our functions and activities including employment, service delivery, budget setting, procurement and regulatory functions

**Defining Disability**

As part of this scheme it is important to consider what we mean by the term ‘people with disabilities’. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 defines a disabled person as:

> “Anyone who has or has had a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

For example this includes physical or mental impairments that affect for example: mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination, continence, ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects, speech, hearing or eyesight, memory or ability to learn and understand; ability to concentrate; perception of risk or physical danger is impaired. This is not an exhaustive list, but is intended to provide a guide to what the DDA defines as a disability.
The Social Model

In developing this document we have followed guidance from the Disability Rights Commission and focused on the social model of disability. This shifts the focus away from a person’s impairment(s) and towards removing the barriers that people with disabilities face in everyday life.

This contrasts with the medical model that views the impairment as the problem when in fact it is society’s failure to take into account people’s diverse needs. Discrimination and lack of equality of opportunity can then emerge as a result. The new legislation on disability equality means that organisations must recognise the social model of disability and work to overcome social barriers. We have adopted this model and used it to help prepare this scheme.

The Gender Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2006 introduced a Gender Equality Duty, which placed a general duty on the public sector, to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between men, women and people undergoing gender re-assignment and eliminate sex discrimination
- Have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment against men, women and people undergoing gender re-assignment in the fields of employment, vocational training and in the provision of goods and services

And specific duties to:

- Produce a Gender Equality Scheme and set out gender equality objectives and actions to meet them
- Monitor and review our progress
- Review the scheme every three years
- Develop, publish and regularly review an equal pay policy
- Conduct and publish gender equality impact assessments

In addition to the positive duty that was placed on us, the Equality Act 2006 also:

- Enabled provision to be made for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, education, the use and disposal of premises and the exercise of public functions.

Gender discrimination

The Sex Discrimination Act and the Gender Re-assignment Regulations 2004 prohibit discrimination against men, women and transgender individuals in terms of:

- Direct discrimination – less favourable treatment because of a persons’ gender
- Indirect discrimination – where the rules apply to everyone but disproportionately affect a certain group
- Victimization – of someone who has complained of gender discrimination or harassment related to gender
- Sexual harassment
In order to eliminate these different types of discrimination, it is essential that we promote equality between men and women and work towards changing any discriminatory attitudes or practices that exist.

The Race Equality Duty

Following the Macpherson enquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence, the Government introduced the Race Relations (Amendment) Act in 2000. This Act strengthened previous legislation and placed new duties on all public authorities. These new duties are designed to make sure that public authorities promote race equality and that employment and services (including those that are provided for them through other organisations) are fair and accessible for everyone.

The Act places three general duties on us to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good race relations between people of different racial groups

It also gives us a number of specific duties:

- Identifying functions and policies that have significant impact on equality and diversity
- Monitoring the outcomes of existing policies from an equality and diversity perspective
- To ensure that assessment and consultation is comprehensive and addresses key equality strands
- Publication of monitoring results so that the whole community can see the findings
- Improving the equality of access to information and services
- Effective and relevant equality and diversity training
- Addressing key employment and human resources policies and practices to ensure that equality and diversity commitment and legal responsibilities are met.

Age

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 apply to employment and vocational training, and prohibit unjustified direct and indirect age discrimination, as well as harassment and victimisation on grounds of age.

In addition to such legislation addressed through our human resources policies, we also need to particularly consider how age is a fundamental factor that affects people’s life experiences. In Mole Valley we have an ageing population and also a higher than average number of older people. This means there is not only a demand for services to meet the needs of these groups, but due to the rural nature of the district, many older people face social isolation and can feel cut off from the wider community.

Age as a strand of diversity also needs to consider young people who can often feel socially excluded and marginalised within their communities. This means that we need to engage with young people to empower them to participate in their local communities.

Sexual Orientation

As a result of the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, it is unlawful to discriminate against an employee on grounds of their sexual orientation. These regulations prevent the indirect and direct discrimination as well as harassment and victimisation of an individual.
This strand of equalities considers gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender as factors that can influence the ways individuals are treated in society. Nationally the government estimate that around 5% of the population* are lesbian, gay or bisexual. We do not have any local figures for the district as no national census has requested data on sexual orientation. It is acknowledged that people who are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender are the most reluctant group of people to disclose their sexual orientation to others as they fear harassment or discrimination. Although we have very limited information about these groups in Mole Valley it is vital to consider such issues in a sensitive manner.

*Government estimates as referenced by Stonewall

**Religion and Belief**

As a result of the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, it is unlawful to discriminate against an employee on grounds of their religion or belief. These regulations prevent the indirect and direct discrimination as well as harassment and victimisation of an individual.

In the wider community we need to consider faith and often its relation to race as an important aspect of our equalities work. It is also important to promote the positive impact that faith groups can have on local communities. This includes opportunities to create face to face dialogue which supports a greater understanding of shared values, appreciation of distinctiveness and for side by side collaborative social action.*

*Face to Face and Side by Side Publication 2008

**Human Rights Issues**

The Human Rights Act came in to force in October 2000 with the main intention being to create a human rights culture in public services. Section 6 of the Human Rights Act makes it unlawful for a public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with a Convention right. This means that we must ensure everyone can enjoy their basic human rights (such as right to life and not being treated in a degrading or inhuman manner) and ensure our policies or services do not have a negative impact in this way.

Human rights are about recognising that every person is of equal value and that we all have basic human rights that must be upheld. Human rights are therefore about ensuring fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy for everyone.

**The Local Government Equality Framework**

The Local Government Equality Framework replaced the Equality Standard for Local Government. The framework is simple and is more relevant to the way local authorities now work. Local authorities can use the framework as an improvement tool to help design their work on equality and diversity.

There are three levels of achievement within the framework: *developing, achieving and excellent*. Mole Valley is currently at a “developing” level. The main themes of the current Framework are covered within this scheme and the equalities action plan is designed to ensure we progress through the framework to become a solid “developing” authority by March 2010 and “achieving” by March 2011.

We will review and develop our work against the Equality Framework criteria in relation to:
• Knowing our communities and equality mapping
• Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
• Community engagement and satisfaction
• Responsive services and customer care
• A modern and diverse workforce
3. DIVERSITY IN MOLE VALLEY

Diversity is all about recognising and valuing difference, so it is important to ask what makes Mole Valley unique. Although we do not have a large number of different ethnic minority communities in Mole Valley (currently 2.6% of the population) these communities are still important and additionally there are many other factors that make our communities diverse. These include:

- A growing population - a total population* of 81,200 people; 51.5% who are female and 48.5% who are male. There are also a large number of families who settle here (in November 2004, there were 17,021 households in Mole Valley that had dependent children aged 0 – 18 living with them)

- An ageing population and a higher than average number of elderly people in the district; 25.5% of the population are 65 and over, compared to the UK average of 21.1%. It is estimated that in the period between 2004 and 2026 there could be an increase in this aspect of our population of 36%; which equates to 5,700 people

- The 2.6% of the Mole Valley population that is non white is made up as set out below (based on the 2001 Census):
  - Asian/British Asian – 0.9%
  - Black or Black British – 0.2%
  - Chinese or other ethnic group – 0.6%
  - Mixed Race – 0.8%

  NB: The percentages above total 2.5% due to the rounding of figures.

- The general affluence of the area and the relatively small areas of deprivation that exist in North Leatherhead and the Links area south of Dorking, including Chart Downs, Goodwyns, Rough Rew and North Holmwood

- Lack of transport, rural isolation and social exclusion of community groups due to the geographical size of the area and the distinct contrast between rural and urban settlements. Access to services can be a real issue for residents, and can lead to young people feeling particularly cut off from the wider community

- The impact of this gap is exacerbated by the fact that whilst there is a high level of car ownership in Mole Valley, 13% of households do not own a car. In the rural wards the proportion of households without a car ranges from 6.1% (Okewood ward) to 14.3% (Beare Green and Holmwoods wards). In the areas of North Leatherhead and Dorking, levels of households without a car rise to 20%

- Health Profiles show that in general terms residents of Mole Valley enjoy higher than average levels of health, although we are aware that in our priority areas of North Leatherhead and Links there are lower levels of health outcome. Mole Valley is also below the national average for the number of children who are physically active

- The 2007 Mole Valley Housing Needs Survey showed that 14.5% of households had somebody living there who had a disability. This was almost 4,800 people. Over 60% of these people were aged over 65 and 18% were under 18

- 75.4% of respondents to the 2001 Census said that their religion was Christian; 15.6% said they had no religion.; 2.9% of the population said that they were of other religions
To tackle any issues facing our communities we need to look at how we can address them through our service delivery and by working with others. In order to deliver quality services we need to ensure we are both efficient and effective by providing value for money and looking at the needs of all of our community groups.

* National Statistics Mid Year Population Estimate ONS
4. OUR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

Mole Valley District Council is committed to equality of opportunity in service delivery and employment. This single equality scheme is part of our approach to address equality and diversity in Mole Valley.

We want to continue to mainstream our approach to equality and diversity into our service planning and delivery activities; and most importantly to recognise and value the diversity of the district’s communities in our work.

Not only do we aim to carry out all of our legislative duties but we also want to ensure that we are doing our upmost to ensure fairness, equality and improved services for all our communities. This means that we will not discriminate, in the delivery of services to our community, in relation to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or belief. We recognise that everyone is different but this does not mean that people should be disadvantaged as a result.

We will also work towards our equality objectives so that we can actively promote equality for all of our residents and address any issues that exist.

No one person is the same, and by recognising this and embracing differences, we can start to look at the specific needs of individuals and social groups. This scheme is about treating people fairly and recognising their differences. This works at three levels:

- Internally - how we work throughout all of our personnel policies and our attitudes and differences in the work place
- Community relations - how we engage with and understand the needs of our communities
- Service delivery – taking into account differences by providing a choice of services and responding to a range of needs

This scheme is comprehensive and applies to both our internal and external operations. It covers all aspects of our work and applies to officers, councillors, partner organisations, contractors and anyone we are working with. It states our position as an organisation and our high-level commitment to recognising and promoting equality and diversity.

The Council's overall Equalities objectives are to seek to:

- Create cohesive communities
- Ensure that all residents benefit from Council services
- Ensure that all residents have the opportunity to get involved in decision making
- Be a fair employer

In addition to this, we also have the following specific objectives in relation to our main legislative duties:

**Disability Equality objectives**
- We will promote equality for people with disabilities
- We will ensure that people with disabilities can access our services
- We will support people with disabilities so they can achieve involvement in social life

**Gender Equality objectives**
- We will achieve gender equality through service delivery and improve our understanding of our employee and customer needs in relation to gender
• We will achieve gender equality in employment practice

Race Equality objectives (as defined in the Race Relations Act)
• We will promote equality of opportunity
• We will promote good race relations between people of different ethnic and cultural groups

Equality Objectives in relation to age, religion and belief and sexual orientation
• We will ensure our services do not discriminate on the grounds of age, religion and belief and sexual orientation
5. **WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO FAR**

Considering and planning for the needs of diverse groups is nothing new to us, and this is reflected in the services we provide. Some specific examples of where equality and diversity has become part of our work includes:

- Long standing equal opportunities policies
- Gender, race and disability schemes have been in place since 2006 as part of an over arching equalities strategy
- Disabled Facilities grants for disabled adaptations in dwellings
- Welfare and benefits advice
- Involving young people in consultation and democracy
- Housing advice and assistance and prevention of homelessness
- Providing security equipment to vulnerable residents including those with physical and mental disabilities, those at risk of domestic abuse and elderly residents through our home security scheme
- Using the two tick symbol to positively encourage job applications from people with disabilities
- A Mole Valley Grants scheme to support a wide range of community projects
- An assisted waste and recycling collection service for people with disabilities
- Bus passes for people with disabilities
- Providing more disabled parking than the minimum requirement to reflect the profile of our community.
- Introducing a Mole Valley disabled badge scheme for people with some form of disability but who do not qualify for the blue badge
- Providing grants which enable older people to access funding for heating insulation

Over the last year some of our equality and diversity initiatives included:

- Establishing a cross-departmental Equalities and Diversity Working Group, with lead representatives from each Service area and an Equalities and Diversity Board with senior Manager and Member involvement
- Introducing equal opportunities 'pre screening' arrangements so that all reports to Council, Executive and Committee's are impact assessed
- All Service Agreements include a statement about how they contribute towards achieving equalities and diversity objectives
- Completion of equality impact assessments of the Core Strategy Development Plan document and the draft East Surrey Housing Strategy
- Establishing corporate protocols for completing Equality Impact Assessments
- Equality impact assessment training sessions for members of the Equalities and Diversity Working Group
6. **HOW WE WILL DELIVER OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES**

This section sets out our approach to incorporating equality and diversity as part of our work in order to meet our equality objectives. This builds on our legal requirements and also embraces all seven strands of equalities. It also contributes towards achieving our objectives within our ‘Reaching Every Community’ priority to ensure that we deliver services in a fair and equitable manner.

Given Mole Valley District Council’s commitment to achieve progress through the Equality Framework for Local Government, we have designed our scheme to take account of the Equality Framework and set key strategic objectives which reflect this standard.

We are using the themes of the Local Government Equality Framework, set out below, as the mechanism to achieve our corporate objectives for equality and diversity:

- Knowing our Communities
- Place Shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitments
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A modern and diverse workforce

The statements below define the commitments we as a council are setting through this scheme:

- **Knowing our communities**
  - We are developing plans to gather evidence on the profile of the community, the extent of inequality and disadvantage and to identify priorities
  - Systems are being developed across the council to collect and analyse information about the needs and aspirations of the community
  - We will introduce plans to share, collect and use equality information with our partners

- **Place Shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitments**
  - The Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and partners have committed publicly to improving equality outcomes
  - Key plans, strategies and partnership agreements will be reviewed with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) through the equality impact assessment programme to deliver locally identified equality outcomes
  - A corporately prioritised programme of Equality Impact Assessments are in place
  - Corporate and service level structures are in place to ensure delivery and review of the equalities agenda
  - Internal, external and partnership communications strategies will be designed to promote good relations across all communities
  - Procurement and commissioning frameworks and processes take account of the differing needs of users and citizens
  - Work is in place to improve participation of under-represented groups in civic and public life in particular people with disabilities

- **Community engagement and satisfaction**
  - Inclusive community engagement structures will be developed throughout the authority and with partners
  - The Council consults and involves all its communities including disabled people on an ongoing basis as appropriate
- The Council will seek to involve vulnerable and marginalised groups to ensure their views are taken into account

- **Responsive services and customer care**
  - Services will ensure that local communities are consulted and or engaged with appropriately about service planning and delivery
  - Equality Impact Assessments involve appropriate community and/or stakeholder groups and all are made public via our website
  - All commissioning and procurement processes take account of equality issues
  - Contracts include a requirement to deliver an effective and appropriate service fairly and equitably
  - Structures are in place to ensure that equality outcomes are integrated into service objectives and targets
  - Measures are in place to ensure the service needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups are identified, and that customers and residents are treated with dignity and respect
  - Mechanisms are in place to ensure that human rights considerations are identified when planning services
  - The Council is developing systems to collect, analyse and measure data on how all sections of the community are able to access services

- **A modern and diverse workforce**
  - The Council’s workforce strategy takes account of equality issues
  - The Council understands its local labour market and the barriers equality groups face and the impact this has on a diverse workforce
  - All employment procedures comply with equality legislation and codes of practice
  - The Council has a prioritised programme of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) on all major and new employment policies
  - The Council has made a commitment to equal pay and has carried out an equal pay review
  - The Council carries out training needs assessment of the development needed to deliver equality outcomes
  - Structures are in place to identify, prevent and deal effectively with harassment and bullying in the workplace
  - Equality issues are integrated into the appraisal systems
  - A range of inclusive structures are in place to engage and involve staff before priorities are set
7. **KEY EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACTIVITY AND PRIORITY**

**Equality Mapping of Mole Valley DC**

The Council already has a good understanding of the make up of the Mole Valley community through the use of Census data and other information produced both nationally, such as by the Office for National Statistics, and locally, through the Council’s own Planning Policy Team. However, it is recognised that there are opportunities to develop our community profile.

We have invested in Mosaic software, and that, together with our Geographical Information System (GIS) packages, will improve user information from our customers and applicants for services. Through this mapping, the Council will be able to develop smarter ways of engaging with our communities and delivering improved value for money in the way in which our services are targeted.

**Leadership Commitment to Equality and Diversity**

The Council has clearly demonstrated its commitment to achieving improvements in its approach to equalities and diversity as it is a key facet of the ‘Reaching Every Community’ priority.

This equality scheme will be taken to the Council’s Executive for approval and progress will be monitored annually by the Scrutiny and Audit Committee.

The Council’s Member Development Programme includes mandatory training for Councillors on equality and diversity. The Member Development Programme has been agreed by the leaders of all groups on the Council and is a strong indication of the leadership commitment to equalities and diversity.

**Consultation and involvement**

Consultation is an invaluable resource to involve the community in our work and get feedback on our services. As well as specific research about key services we also have a variety of information about how our communities feel about their area and the services we provide. The majority of our plans, strategies and policy decisions are based on consultation including the Place Survey, general satisfaction surveys, and community plan consultations to name but a few. We are also starting to use new customer insight tools like MOSAIC, which enables us to have a greater understanding of our communities and can tailor our services to their needs.

**Partnerships**

Through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), we specifically focus on improving the quality of people’s lives in North Leatherhead and the Links area of Chart Downs, Goodwyns, Rough Rew, North Holmwood areas of South Dorking. The LSP is key to delivering our equalities and diversity objectives.

**Monitoring the Equality Profile of our services**

Monitoring is a central aspect of equality and diversity work and is a vital section of this scheme as it sets out how and why we will monitor our services.
Legislation requires us to monitor services in relation to race, gender and disability. This is set out within the various duties we have under the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and the Gender Equality Duty.

This legislation does not set out the specific ways in which we must monitor services, but it requires us to ensure that no discrimination exists within the services we provide and that we must ensure equal access to our services. To establish this, we need to know more about the customers that use our services to ensure there are no existing barriers affecting accessibility.

The main purpose of monitoring is to assist with impact assessments and ensure that no discrimination takes place. Monitoring provides us with more information about our customers so we can ensure our services are having the best possible impact.

Monitoring information will also help us to plan future services as well as shaping existing ones.

Sometimes monitoring can be perceived as being an intrusive process for customers so we need to make it clear to them why we are asking personal questions. This is where communications play a key role, as customers need to be informed that we need the information to ensure they are being treated fairly. Case studies from other authorities show that monitoring can reveal services that have an adverse impact e.g. a particular service is not as good for one social group as another or one particular group may be less likely to use a particular service. Unless we have monitoring information we cannot take action to deal with any adverse impact of services.

We will use impact assessments to establish gaps in information we have about our customers whilst building on existing monitoring systems we have in place and developing our customer insight tools. This will include identifying high-risk areas where additional monitoring is required.

Examples of current monitoring in services include:

- Customer consultation – examples include waste consultation, the Place Survey and park consultations
- Feedback forms - evaluation of events and activities
- Application forms for jobs

**Equality Impact Assessments**

An equality impact assessment is a way of assessing and consulting on the effect a policy, project or service is likely to have on community groups. This also includes monitoring a policy, project or service once it’s been implemented or delivered to find out how well it is working.

We currently assess our policies, project and services in two different ways. First, all reports are screened before they go to Executive or Council. This means that implications of the policy, project or service are considered in relation to our priorities and the impact they will have on our communities. Our guidance on screening has been developed in line with national best practise and the outcome of such those screens will show whether a full impact assessment is required.
The second aspect of our assessment activities takes place through completing retrospective assessments of our policies, projects and services as set out in our corporate impact assessment timetable.

This is where the impact of services is looked at including issues such as:

- Do we have adequate information about the impact of our services?
- What consultation have we conducted to ensure they are meeting residents’ needs?
- Have any complaints arisen where we can take action or learn from?
- How can we ensure our services are not having an adverse impact or resulting in any discrimination?
- How can the policy, project or service be developed so that it will help us deliver our equality duties?

The actions arising from impact assessments will then be embedded in our annual service agreements and enable us to develop service level equality objectives and targets.

We are also keen to ensure our impact assessments take into account wider equality issues that are often inter-linked to the equality strands. For this reason our impact assessment pro-forma document contains additional non-statutory questions regarding wider factors including rural/urban issues.

By introducing new monitoring arrangements we will also have more information available to help us carry out impact assessments.

**Identifying relevant policies, projects and services**

In accordance with the legislation we have identified relevant policies, projects and services (also known as functions) of our organisation that are relevant to our diversity work and set these out within a corporate impact assessment timetable (Appendix 1). This process enables us to establish which ones are most relevant to our diversity work and specifically which ones are key to ensure they do not discriminate and that they also promote equality of opportunity and diversity.

**Member involvement and our equalities group**

In order to mainstream diversity through all service departments with the Equalities and Diversity Working Group is driving the process. In order to respond to new issues as they emerge, the Working Group meets at least every two months to provide a springboard for equality issues.

An Equalities and Diversity Board, which is chaired by Councillor Kate Horden as the Portfolio Holder who is responsible for equality issues, oversees the Council's work in this area.

**Equality and diversity performance management arrangements**

We will monitor progress as part of our quarterly performance reports including both equality actions as well as performance indicators. We will publish an annual equalities update to provide a snapshot of our work over a year and this will be made available on our website. This scheme will also be updated in light of our progress and any key organisational changes that occur. Actions arising from impact assessments will not only be embedded and monitored through service plans, key equality actions including those from this scheme will be also monitored by our Equalities and Diversity Working Group.
Service delivery and customer care

We are committed to providing high standards of service delivery and customer care and the Council’s Customer Service Charter sets out the standards of care that customers can expect from us and how they will be treated.

The Council already shapes a number of its services so that they are provided in an accessible manner. Some examples include:

- Offering a translation service to help customers for whom English is not their first language
- Mole Valley Youth Voice, our youth council, providing an opportunity for young people to contribute to shaping the future for Mole Valley
- Working with Mole Valley Housing Association to provide an outreach Benefits service by using their mobile office
- Offering specific services for older or disabled people such as our day centres and telecare service
- Making all of our publications available in a range of alternative languages and formats

Reporting procedures

It is important to us that any incident of harassment or discrimination be reported to us. If the incident is in relation to our services then we will respond to it. If it is not directly in relation to our services or our organisation we will offer advice to residents about how to deal with the incident or signpost to relevant organisation(s).

Reports can be made directly to the Council offices in Dorking or at Leatherhead Help Shop. Alternatively this can be done by email, telephone or through our complaints process. Every report received will be treated sensitively and notification to other organisations and bodies will be made as required.

Staff employment and training

We are committed to providing fair employment and equal opportunities. Equality and diversity is an embedded theme within our human resources related matters. Our commitment to fair employment is referenced within workforce strategy.

Monitoring takes place as part of our overall recruitment processes. This involves monitoring information and statistics regarding the profile of applicants entering into the recruitment process.

We are committed to developing our employees and providing equal access to both training and development opportunities. By developing our staff, this has a positive impact on our services and performance.

Training is a key part of our approach to diversity. We will run an annual training programme including diversity training for our staff and councillors. This aims to address diversity issues and raise awareness. Our diversity training incorporates links to our equality objectives and details set out in this policy.

It is important that we consider diversity issues not only within our own staff, but also in relation to our partners and key contractors. Staff who are involved in procurement and contracting related activities are required to consider diversity issues.
Similarly, all partners, contractors and consultants are required to comply with our policies, contract procedure rules and financial regulations where appropriate.

Specific areas of priority include:
- Completing Equal Pay audits and implementing the outcomes
- Tackling Harassment and Bullying in the workplace and in council premises
- Equality and Diversity Training needs assessment and training delivery
- Ensuring equality priorities are included in the staff Appraisal process
- Developing inclusive structures to promote staff representation
8. CORPORATE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

The action plan below sets out key actions for us in relation to equality and diversity over the next few years. In addition to this our service agreements will contain more specific actions in relation to equality groups and our equality objectives. These will also incorporate new actions arising from the impact assessment process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>When by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowing our communities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop proportionate and appropriate customer monitoring arrangements</td>
<td>All Services</td>
<td>July 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to address relevant equality strands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing arrangements to share equality information with key partners</td>
<td>Local Strategic Partnership</td>
<td>July 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review progress against the equality standard and aim to be a strong ‘Developing’ authority</td>
<td>Policy Team</td>
<td>March 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the Equalities and Diversity Working Group</td>
<td>Policy Team</td>
<td>April 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include a diversity monitoring report as part of the Council’s annual report</td>
<td>Policy Team</td>
<td>June 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that the Corporate Communications Strategy is designed to promote good relations across all communities</td>
<td>Communications Unit</td>
<td>June 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the communications strategy, develop a corporate approach to community engagement and involvement</td>
<td>Communications Unit</td>
<td>June 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement and satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote diversity issues through internal and external communications</td>
<td>Communications Unit</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve diverse groups in service planning</td>
<td>All service areas</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with the LSP so that joint objectives on equality and diversity are jointly tackled, with partners working towards a shared agenda</td>
<td>Local Strategic Partnership</td>
<td>May 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>When by</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Responsive services and customer care</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct equality pre-screening of all reports to Council, Executive and Committees</td>
<td>Policy Team</td>
<td>As required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct an annual impact assessment of the Council Budget and strategy</td>
<td>Strategic Management Team</td>
<td>December 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and deliver corporate impact assessment timetable</td>
<td>Equalities and Diversity Working Group</td>
<td>March 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review procurement arrangements and link with Equality and Diversity.</td>
<td>Policy Team</td>
<td>June 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embed specific equality and diversity actions in our annual service plans as well as actions from impact assessments to help shape future service developments</td>
<td>Strategic Management Team</td>
<td>October 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop the website to meet best practice standards on equality</td>
<td>Communications Team</td>
<td>TBC 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A modern and diverse workforce</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide equality and diversity training for officers</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide equality and diversity training for Members</td>
<td>Democratic Services</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with Staff Side so that they are confident in their ability to represent all groups within the Council’s workforce</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>June 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop arrangements to ensure that equalities issues are addressed through the appraisal programme</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>November 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX
Draft Equality Impact Assessment Time Table

This draft Equality Impact Assessment Timetable is based on several key factors:

- Sharing the focus of EqIAs in any given year across each service area in the 3 year programme
- Tackling EqIAs at times when policies and or strategies are being reviewed anyway. (amendments may be necessary here)
- Developing initial EqIA which will have strong Equality and Diversity relevance for MVDC
- Defining the specific nature of the EqIA will be necessary at the commencement of each EqIA on the programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services, Policies and projects by service area</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Customer Services and Partnerships</strong></td>
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<td>Communications and Website</td>
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<td>Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Customer Services Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract Monitoring (Leatherhead Leisure Centre and Dorking Sports Centre)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dorking Halls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leisure, Arts &amp; Youth Development</td>
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<td>Local Strategic Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Democratic Services</strong></td>
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<td>Member Development, Committee Administration &amp; Electoral Administration</td>
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<td>Corporate Plan</td>
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<td>Emergency Planning</td>
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<td>Equalities Scheme</td>
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<td>Legal Enforcement &amp; Data Protection/FOI</td>
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<td>Performance and Risk Management</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Environment</strong></td>
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<td>Abandoned Cars, Fly tipping</td>
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<td>Car Park Management</td>
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<td>Depot Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graffiti</td>
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<td>Parks, Open Spaces and Allotments</td>
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<td>Public Toilets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refuse and Recycling Collection</td>
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<td>Street Cleaning</td>
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<td><strong>Finance and Assets</strong></td>
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<td>Asset Management Plan / Property Management</td>
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<td>Corporate Fraud</td>
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<td>Council tax collection</td>
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<td>Medium Term Financial Plan</td>
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<td>Organisational Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Process Review</td>
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<td>Human Resources &amp; HR Policies</td>
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<td>Facilities Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workforce Strategy</td>
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<td><strong>Planning</strong></td>
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<td>Land Allocation</td>
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<td>Dorking Town Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development Control</td>
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<td>Economic Development</td>
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<td>Land Charges</td>
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<td>Planning Conservation</td>
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<td><strong>Wellbeing</strong></td>
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<td>Air Pollution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contaminated land</td>
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<td>Homelessness, Housing Advice and Options</td>
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<td>Temporary accommodation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Allocations Policy and Mole Valley Home Choice (East Surrey Home Choice was completed in 2008)</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Surrey Housing Strategy</td>
<td>X Done</td>
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<td>Environmental Health – pest control, nuisance, water supplies testing, animal issues etc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gypsy and traveller site management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Safety and Food Hygiene</td>
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<td>Improvement grants</td>
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<td>Licensing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telecare Services including Community Transport and Day Centres</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>