

# DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME 2006-09

## PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

CABINET

DATE: 12TH OCTOBER, 2006

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### Wards Affected

All wards.

### Purpose

To consider the proposed Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009.

### Key Decision

This not a key decision.

### Recommendations

THAT

- (a) the development of the Disability Equality Scheme be noted; and
- (b) the proposed Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan be approved.

### Reasons

1. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 requires organisations across the public sector to be proactive in ensuring that disabled people are treated fairly. However, this duty is not necessarily about changes to buildings or adjustments for individuals; it's all about including equality for disabled people into the culture of public authorities in practical and demonstrable ways.
2. The tool used to demonstrate how public sector bodies will achieve this duty is the Disability Equality Scheme (DES). Local Authorities have to produce a DES by December 2006 that shows they have considered the impact of their policies, practices and procedures on disabled people.
3. Herefordshire Council has had a DES since 2002, but this needs updating to take account of the new Duty to:
  - Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA
  - Eliminate harassment that is unlawful under the DDA
  - Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
  - Take steps to take account of disabled person's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other people

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Harriet Yellin, Diversity Officer, on (01432) 260216

## **Considerations**

1. The planned programme of consultation and involvement has been carried out on schedule. This includes a comprehensive public questionnaire, an employee survey, two public meetings and some smaller, targeted workshops.
2. There has been a four-week public consultation period on the draft DES, resulting in several amendments and additional actions.
3. The results of the surveys and feedback from the public meetings have determined the eight priorities of the DES.
4. The Action Plan aims to be challenging, aspirational and realistic. In developing the actions, we have tried to pick up on specific issues raised by individuals. Having an approved Action Plan will not preclude any additional activity in the next three years where a further need is identified.
5. A number of other organisations have contacted us, viewing our progress as best practice.

## **Risk Management**

It is a legal requirement to have a comprehensive DES in place by 5th December, 2006.

## **Alternative Options**

None.

## **Consultees**

Diversity Group, Disability Working Group, Disability Staff Group.

## **Appendix**

Disability Equality Scheme 2006-09 and Action Plan.

## **Background Papers**

None identified.