

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee : 30 September 2009

Subject: Disability Equality and Gender Equality Schemes – Final Report

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The report summarises the final report on the Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. The final report is attached.

2. Background

- 2.1 Equality legislation requires the Council to have Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. In August 2008 the Council agreed to amalgamate these schemes into a single Equality Scheme to commence at the end of the existing Disability Equality Scheme in November 2009. This involves winding up the current Gender Equality Scheme 2007-10 a year early. The single scheme will assimilate the Race Equality Scheme 2008-11 as it stands, and a separate annual report on this is being presented to Committee.
- 2.2 The final report on the disability and gender schemes has been considered and agreed by the Council's Equality and Diversity Working Group.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1 The report sets out the structures which have been created in the Council to develop and scrutinise equality work. These include the Equality and Diversity Working Group through which elected members contribute to equality work, and the Equality Liaison Group which provides the opportunity for Council services and community representatives to work together on equality issues.
- 3.2 The report then outlines processes which have addressed disability and gender equality. These include training in which the Council has developed a comprehensive approach but faces challenges because of the scale of the task, and employment, where the Council has seen significant development of its knowledge of the 'equality' profile of the Council's workforce.
- 3.3 The Council has continued to develop its relationship with the disabled community and has seen the results of this in the initiatives such as 'walking audits' and the agreement to explore the potential for a 'Shopmobility' Scheme at Clydebank Shopping Centre. There has been continued improvement in the accessibility of Council buildings, and the disabled community now appear to be much more concerned that the Council should address wider environmental issues such as ongoing maintenance of pavements.

3.4 The Council's approach to gender equality has coincided with the Scottish Government's recently stated priorities of tackling violence against women and gender segregation in employment. The Council has addressed violence against women through partnership working, direct support for victims of abuse, and through training in schools. In employment, the Council has achieved a high level of gender equality among senior officers and is developing approaches such as flexible working and childcare vouchers which support gender equality across the workforce.

3.5 The Council is required to have distinct equality schemes for its Education services and this is reflected in a separate section of the report. One of the most significant points is the reduction of 41% in the number of children educated outside mainstream schooling, including children with disabilities and mental health conditions.

3.6 The report concludes with a summary of the progress made in the two schemes, and of the work which will continue into the new single Equality Scheme.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no specific personnel issues raised by the report.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no specific financial issues raised by the report.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 No formal risk analysis has been carried out. The report contributes to the Council's continuing compliance with its statutory equality duties.

7. Conclusions & Officers' Recommendations

7.1 Committee is asked to note the progress made under the existing Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and to agree that this provides a sound basis for the forthcoming Equality Scheme 2009-12.

.....
David McMillan
Chief Executive
Date: 3 September 2009

Person to Contact: Lewis Morrison
Policy Officer - Disability & Access, Council Offices,
Garshake Road, Dumbarton
Tel: 01389 737201
Email: lewis.morrison@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendix: Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009 / Gender Equality
Scheme 2007-2010 - Final Report, September 2009

Background Papers: Disability Equality Scheme 2006-9
Disability Equality Scheme, Action Plan Review 2009
Gender Equality Scheme 2007-10
Gender Equality Scheme, Action Plan Review 2009

Wards Affected: All Wards