

HAMBLETON

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Making life better

MAKING EQUALITY & DIVERSITY A REALITY

A single equality scheme 2008-10

**Improving quality of life for all by providing high quality
services to our communities and helping to deliver
community needs**

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INTRODUCTION

MAKING EQUALITY & DIVERSITY A REALITY

This single equality scheme sets out the Council's commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities for our staff and our community. We believe that equality and diversity is central to all our services. Our commitment is firmly embedded in our business planning processes such as the Authority's Corporate Plan and Business Plans.

To meet the expectations of our community we recognise the need to work with a wide range of partners. The Council has led the development of the Hambleton Strategic Partnership which has created its own vision for the district. This is:

“A Hambleton of sustainable, safe, healthy and prosperous communities where people feel part of their community and work together to improve quality of life for all and participate in decisions that affect them, which is welcoming, values diversity and supports the disadvantaged.”

Following on from this we have developed the following aim:

“Hambleton District Council, in its role as Community Leader, believes that equal opportunities should be placed at the heart of its service provision. The Council is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity. It will take positive action to ensure its workforce is representative of the community it serves and that its services are accessible to all its citizens.”

THE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Hambleton District Council values the diversity of the community that we serve. As an organisation we take a positive approach to serving and representing the whole community. We welcome and celebrate diversity and will actively work with our partners to meet the needs and aspirations of all parts of our community. In the roles that we play as a service provider, employer and community leader we aim to operate inclusively by reflecting, consulting and representing the people we serve.

- As a service provider our aim is to deliver high quality, accessible services that fairly, equitably and consistently meet the needs of all residents.
- As an employer we aim to ensure that all our staff are valued and that we are the employer of choice across all sections of the community
- As a community leader we aim to use our influence to persuade our partners, stakeholders and sub-contractors to adopt values and principles that are in accordance with this single equality scheme

MEETING THE LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

The Council is legally obliged to meet its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Equality Act 2006 and the Employment Equality Regulations for Age, Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation.

Specifically, the Council will address the following points:

- The elimination of unfair discrimination
- The promotion of equality of opportunity
- The promotion of positive attitudes and good relations between all groups

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR ACHIEVING EQUALITY

SERVICE DELIVERY:

We will ensure that the services the Council provides are:

- accessible;
- flexible and responsive to the needs of the community;

In addition we will:

- treat all users of our services equally and deal with all complaints fairly and consistently
- monitor all contracts to ensure contractors comply with the provisions of the law and the spirit of this scheme
- provide elected members and employees with relevant training opportunities
- establish systems to monitor our services and put in place plans to achieve continual improvement;

COMMUNITY COHESION

The Council will continue in its commitment to achieving equality for all those who live, work and visit Hambleton by: -

- ensuring that this policy complements and supports the Social Inclusion Strategy and its priorities;
- consulting widely within the community on the way in which services are planned and delivered;
- publishing the results of our consultations and monitoring to ensure that our citizens have access to the information provided.

EMPLOYMENT

The Council is committed to achieving equality and diversity in employment through the establishment of excellent employment practices.

All employees will: -

- have equality of opportunity in recruitment and selection, redundancy, retirement and redeployment, grievance and disciplinary procedures, performance appraisal, career development and training;
- be consulted on the way in which policies are developed and implemented;
- have any complaints fairly and properly investigated;
- receive training on equality and diversity to enable them to understand their responsibilities and expected standards of behaviour;

Also, the Council will:

- maintain and develop policies which are appropriate to the varying needs and work/life responsibilities of employees;
- take positive action to achieve a workforce which is representative of the community and implement effective monitoring procedures.

DEVELOPING, CO-ORDINATING & MONITORING

ACCESS AND DIVERSITY WORKSTREAM

This workstream will feedback to the Excellent Council Leadership Board.

The main responsibilities of the workstream are to:

- Develop policies and procedures to fulfil the aims and objectives of this single equality scheme
- Establish an Equality Impact Assessment Framework and ensure that appropriate guidance and training is in place
- Review policies and procedures to ensure they meet legislative requirements
- Put in place effective monitoring systems
- Report regularly to the Excellent Council Leadership Board on the outcome of monitoring and consultation
- Regularly monitor and review the Authority's performance against the relevant Performance Indicators
- Ensure the Council complies with the relevant legislation, regulations, codes of practice and government guidance in respect of equalities

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

The six strands of equality and diversity i.e. age, disability, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation will be referred to in this context as the "Equality Target Groups" (ETGs).

The Council will assess each service and policy at least every three years in relation to all the ETG's to assess its relevance to this scheme (high/medium/low)

Each service will then be assessed using the Council's Equality Impact Assessment Framework and Guidance.

MONITORING EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT

The Council recognises its duty under the legislation to monitor data in relation to its current and potential employees. It will record and monitor the ethnicity, gender and disability of all job applicants as well as current employees with respect to the following:

- grade
- applications for and achieving promotion/revaluation of their post
- applications for and receipt of training
- bullying and harassment cases
- disciplinary cases
- grievance cases
- the outcome of exit interviews

MONITORING SERVICE DELIVERY

The Council recognises the importance of measuring the effects of our policies and practices on all “Equality Target Groups”

The Council already monitors its functions, services and policies through, for example:

- Regular customer satisfaction surveys
- Comparisons with other local authorities and relevant organisations
- Other consultation through focus groups, public meetings etc.
- The complaints procedure

The Council recognises however, that it needs to develop its monitoring arrangements further to:

- Monitor the effects of policies on different groups in the Community
- Check whether there are any differences between groups
- Assess whether these differences have an adverse impact on a particular group

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME – ACTION PLAN

REF	AIM
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1.0 CORPORATE TARGETS - To ensure the Council meets the needs of a diverse community

1.1	Achieve Equality Standard - Level 3
1.2	Achieve Equality Standard - Level 4
1.3	Undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) on all Council policies and services
1.4	Review Corporate Theme Plan to ensure equality targets are included
1.5	Consult staff on draft Single Equality Action Plan
1.6	Report back on the Single Equality Scheme outcomes
1.7	Review Single Equality Scheme

2.0 EMPLOYMENT TARGETS

2.1	Set and monitor performance indicators to identify and address recruitment and selection inequality issues
2.2	Improve access to the Council's employment opportunities for all sections of the community
2.3	Take positive action to address any inequality related to employment
2.4	Raise awareness of key policies that support employment inequalities to staff

3.0 TRAINING TARGETS

3.1	Review and monitor external training delivery on equality to ensure that it covers all the Single Equality Scheme agendas (race, disability, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation)
3.2	Deliver Equalities Training Programme to all staff and Members
3.3	Monitor completion of mandatory equality training for all employees
3.4	Raise employees awareness of the access needs of disabled people to sport and leisure choices

REF	AIM
4.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TARGETS	
4.1	Review the Council's Consultation Strategy to address inequalities
4.2	Produce a corporate standard for consultation in the community
4.3	Monitor the satisfaction / take up levels of services as well as complaints in an equality context
4.4	Customer Services to report on complaints that include an equality issue to Heads of Service
4.5	Develop improved partnerships with external organisations to deliver equality targets
4.6	Establish links with the HSP to review and challenge implementation of the Equality Scheme
5.0 ACCESS TO SERVICES TARGETS	
5.1	Review service delivery to maintain / improve customer take up and satisfaction
5.2	Improve clarification on Council services and their availability
5.3	Improve clarity of Council publications
5.4	Improve physical access into Council buildings
5.5	Improve access to polling stations for all
5.6	Improve access to public toilets
5.7	Improve access to leisure opportunities for disabled people
5.8	Improve the use of disabled parking bays at all Council sites
5.9	Improve access to Disabled Facilities Grant
5.10	Improve disabled people's desire to recycle independently and dispose of waste appropriately
5.11	Improve the local environment to make people feel safer and reduce fear of crime
5.12	Improve taxi service for disabled people
5.13	Ensure external partners and organisations contracted to deliver HDC services are working to similar equality standards
5.14	Increase opportunities for local Social Enterprises to bid for Council contracts