



REPORT TO: AUDIT & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE 21 OCTOBER 2009

SUBJECT: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

BY: CORPORATE POLICY UNIT MANAGER AND CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The Audit & Performance Committee is asked to note the position taken to manage the programme of equality impact assessments across the Council.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section H(12) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to formulating, supervising the implementation of and review as necessary the policies and practices of the Council in relation to its arrangements for promoting, fostering and maintaining equal opportunities.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Audit & Performance Committee is asked to note the position taken to manage the programme of equality impact assessments across the Council.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A report was submitted to Policy & Resources Committee on 22 September 2009 asking for approval regarding the management of the programme of equality impact assessments across the Council.
- 3.2 Equality impact assessments are required to be carried out on all policies and activities which may have an impact on equality groups. These are required to meet the duties associated with the Race, Disability and Gender Equality Acts.
- 3.3 Regular monitoring reports have been submitted on progress against meeting the previous programme. It has been acknowledged that procedural changes are required to enable the Council to manage this commitment and thereby improving performance.
- 3.4 These changes include identifying an annual programme of reviews with the timetable of reviews to be carried out each quarter. Departments are nearing completion to identifying these timescales and an overall programme is being compiled.

- 3.5 Further the Corporate Management Team (CMT) has agreed to re-establish a working group to oversee the progress against the impact assessment and the equalities agenda. This working group will report directly to CMT on progress to enable them to take action early on, if required.
- 3.6 In addition to the assessment of all relevant policies and activities the Council are required to carry out equality impact assessments on budget decisions. An equality impact assessment is required for any decisions regarding budgets, including budget cuts and service reductions. These must be assessed as part of the planning and decision-making process. There is a requirement to ensure that the impact of budget savings does not fall disproportionately on the more vulnerable and disadvantaged people. This does not mean that services cannot be cut for these groups however there is a need to justify decisions based on the understanding of the user groups.
- 3.7 The Policy & Resources Committee agreed this plan of action on 22 September 2009.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

The completion of equality impact assessments will assist the Council to achieve National Outcome 7 which states "We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society". In addition, the Council has made a commitment to develop a culture, which encourages both equal opportunities and the observance of equal opportunities. It will also seek to improve access to services by all sectors of the community.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Council has a legal duty to carry out equality impact assessments on policies, activities and budget decisions which could impact on equality groups. The risk of not meeting our duties is prosecution for non-compliance.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

There are no additional resources arising from this report.

(d) Consultations

The Chief Legal Officer has been consulted on this report and his comments have been incorporated. Departments are identifying their programme and timescales for impact assessments. Policy & Resources Committee agreed the plan of action on 22 September 2009.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 **The Corporate Management Team have reviewed the position and are implementing procedural changes in an effort to improve performance**

while gaining support from the services to manage the programme of equality impact assessments.

Author of Report: Fiona Simpson, Equal Opportunities Officer

Background Papers:

Ref:

pp Signature: Alastair Keddie

Date : 13/10/09

Designation: Chief Executive

Name: Alastair Keddie