

GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor N Williams
LEAD OFFICER: Martin Jepson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services
REPORT AUTHOR: Hilary Mitchell and Martin Jepson

Summary and Recommendation:	Proposes a revised Gender Equality Scheme be adopted by the Council.
Recommendation:	That the draft revised Gender Equality Scheme (provided separately) be adopted by the Council.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Council adopted a revised Gender Equality Scheme in 2006. It is a statutory requirement that councils review and revise their Gender Equality Schemes every three years.

For clarification all local authorities have the following statutory duties:-

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex
- To promote equality of opportunity between women and men.

2. PROPOSED SCHEME

2.1 Advice and guidance has been provided from the North West Employers Organisation and from other sources of expertise and good practice in compiling this document. Consultation has taken place within Copeland Borough Council and it is intended to seek additional contributions from external stakeholders.

2.2 The Scheme proposes a number of actions including

- Consult stakeholders and take account of feedback in gender equality objectives
- Gather and use information (workforce and community profiling) in review of policies and practices
- Ensure Crime and Disorder Strategies focus on combating violent crimes against women
- Provide information to ensure that victims of violence against women can find appropriate help
- Revise and review Equality Impact Assessments and implement actions in EIA action plans

➤ Report on progress annually and review scheme triennially

- 2.3 Copeland Borough Council is addressing the issue of domestic violence in the Borough working with its partners across Cumbria. Domestic Violence is a key priority for both the Cumbria Strategic Partnership and the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership. In particular the Copeland Strategic Housing Management Service is engaged in ensuring that victims of crime against women are able to gain safety and support from a range of agencies working together.
- 2.4 As the recent Pay and Grading Review has effectively allowed the Council to equality audit all its posts, we are able to be reasonably sure that any gender pay gap is minimised. This is a particular priority of the Gender Equality Scheme.
- 2.5 It is considered therefore that the actions proposed form a realistic basis for an effective Gender Equality Scheme and it is recommended that the draft Scheme be adopted by the Council.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 No specific additional expenditure beyond items already within budget as proposed through the Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan.

List of Appendices: draft Gender Equality Scheme (to follow).

List of Background Documents: Overview of the Gender Equality Duty (Equal Opportunities Commission February 2007)

List of Consultees: Cllr N Williams; Cllr E. Woodburn; Corporate Team; Managers including HR Manager; Strategic Housing Manager.