

Cornwall Council

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date: **14 April 2010**

Title: **Corporate Equality and Diversity Framework**

Cabinet Member(s) **Leader of the Council**

Divisions Affected **All**

Relevant Overview And Scrutiny Committee:
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Key Decision: **N** Checklist Compliant: **Y**

Urgent Decision: **N** Implementation Date: **24 April 2010**

Author: **Donna Peverley** Role: **Senior Policy Officer**

Contact: **01872 322315 / dpeverley@cornwall.gov.uk**

Recommendation:

The Corporate Equality and Diversity Framework be endorsed and adopted.

Summary:

This report presents to the Cabinet the Corporate Equality and Diversity Framework which is an important part of the delivery of Equality and Diversity (E&D) practice within the Council. It sets out how the Council's approach to Equality and Diversity and Community Cohesion. This framework will help deliver improved customer service, organisational change and performance improvement within Cornwall Council.

Background:

Cornwall has a rich and unique heritage. It has its own language and 26%) of population considers itself Cornish.¹ The population growth in Cornwall is one of the faster growing areas in the UK. As life expectancy is increasing our population is getting older and more diverse.

Cornwall is becoming increasingly diverse. Some of this can be attributed to inward migration from the UK, but more recent increases are likely to

¹ Cornwall Quality of Life Survey 2007

Cornwall Council

be migrant workers from the new European Union states. The ONS population statistics by ethnic group (2007) show that there have been significant increases in particular ethnic groups in Cornwall especially around white other and mixed heritage population. ²

The Corporate Equality and Diversity Framework sets out Cornwall Council's commitment to promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and tackle social exclusion. In delivering against this framework our aim is to ensure that we protect and promote our Cornish heritage and culture.

Cornwall Council is subject Public Sector Equality Duties' (PSDs). This statutory duty places on the Council a series of legal obligations. The duties are the Race Equality duty, the Disability Equality duty and the Gender Equality duty.

The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) is the national assessment framework for local authorities. It was developed by the IDeA in 2007. The EFLG framework is based on three levels of achievement, '**developing**', '**achieving**' and '**excellent**'. Each level is explained in detail and the framework provides the building blocks for improving equality of opportunity and fairness for all. The framework can be found at <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=9491107>

The Corporate Equality and Diversity framework sets out how Cornwall Council's will deliver against our statutory Public Sector Equality Duties and how we intend to make progress against the EFLG. More importantly however, it sets out how Cornwall Council will embed our approach to Equality and Diversity across the Council.

Issues:

The Corporate Equality and Diversity Framework puts the customer and our staff at the heart of its delivery. Using Equality and Diversity principles we will continue to improve access to services for all parts of the community and improve and develop these services.

A strategic and coordinated approach to Equality and Diversity will ensure that the council is legally compliant with current equality legislation and that the organisation is a fair and equal one to work for, be a partner of, stakeholder and customer of.

For the Framework to be successful and deliver the improvements to access and service delivery that are necessary, we need to know about the community we serve. We are continuing to work on collecting

² The Office of National Statistics experimental population estimates are still in the testing phase and need to be treated with caution.

Cornwall Council

information, intelligence and knowledge about Cornwall and its population so that we better understand our local area, its heritage and the issues arising from it.

In developing the framework and the approach, it is essential that the Council is sensitive to the unique heritage and culture of Cornwall and to those people in our Community who describe their origin as Cornish. In practice this will include:

- Supporting the continued use and promotion of the Cornish Language
- Ensuring that we include Cornish in any monitoring and analysis of our population
- Making sure we actively support and develop Cornish heritage and culture
- Being sensitive to the impact of the above in any strategies, policies, functions and services we develop and implement

Analysis:

The Council has a legal duty to comply with the Equality legislation and is at risk of legal challenge if it fails in this regard.

There are significant and tangible benefits to staff, members, the community and users of the Council's services by supporting and adopting the Corporate Equality and Diversity framework. The framework will improve and support access to fair and equal services.

We looked carefully at the organisation and have developed a series of organisational values and commitments for staff and members to follow:

- Ensuring acceptable behaviour
- Responding to complaints and incidents in a positive and proactive way
- Providing access to services, facilities and information
- Recruiting and employing people fairly
- Meeting specific needs (i.e. Cornwall's rural needs)

The Framework also puts into place a robust commitment for using Equality Impact Assessments as a service improvement tool and improving community engagement.

For the first time with the Framework we are able to build on our current understanding of our community and taking very seriously this Council's

Cornwall Council

commitment to both Cornish language and collecting data for ethnic monitoring purposes:

The Equality and Diversity Framework is an evolving document and will be updated regularly. Initial consultation has taken place but further consultation will take place with a range of other groups over the coming months. In particular this will include community based groups such as Bernows Kernow, Diversity Network for Cornwall and Disability Cornwall.

Consultation:

The following organisations have been consulted and offered advice on the Corporate Equality and Diversity Framework

Corporate Leadership Team – Cornwall Council, the Equality and Human Rights Partnership - (made up of Inclusion Cornwall, Volunteer Cornwall, Diversity Network for Cornwall, NHS Cornwall and Isles of Scilly PCT, Devon and Cornwall Police), Equality and Diversity Steering group – Cornwall Council.

Conclusions:

The Corporate Equality and Diversity Framework is a tool for embedding and improving performance in Equality and Diversity. It will be used as a method of improving and monitoring progress in Equality and Diversity practice. The Framework enables us to improve the delivery of services to customers, understand how our community is made up and contribute to improved community cohesion whilst being able to value and celebrate Cornish identity and cultural heritage.

Supporting Documentation:

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Executive Summary

Background Papers

Corporate Framework for Equality and Diversity

Division Member(s) comments

Not Applicable.

Implications and Impacts

a) Cornwall Council Priorities:

Cornwall Council

Failure to embed effective Equality and Diversity practice following the Corporate Equality and Diversity framework within the Council will adversely impact on the Council's rating in Use of Resources and CAA.

b) Resource Implications:

This report accords with Cornwall Council's Budget.

(i) Financial and Value for Money:

There are no financial implications arising from this report

This report has been cleared by Cath Robinson, Head of Finance

(ii) Staffing

None.

(iii) Risk(s)

Risk Register Reference:	Ref or N/A	
Overall Risk Register Rating:	Amber	1-8 Low/Moderate (Green); 9-15 High Risk (Amber); 16-25 Extreme (Red)

(iv) Opportunity / Opportunities

There are significant and tangible benefits to staff, members communities and users of the Council's services through the organisation's compliance with the legislation and using the Corporate Equality and Diversity Framework in terms of improved organisations behaviour, access and non-exclusion.

(v) Legal

None.

This report has been cleared by Karen Jackson.

(vi) Property

None.

c) Equality and Diversity:

Cornwall Council

The Framework had undergone an Equality Impact Assessment and will have a positive impact on the community.

d) Children and Young People:

Improved Equality and Diversity practice will improve services to Children and Young People

e) Crime and Disorder:

Improved understanding of Equality and Diversity issues will help officers and partners understand better the issues facing those groups who are at risk of offending.

f) Partnerships:

This is a key area for Equality and Diversity - strong links are already in place with other statutory and voluntary sector partners.