

<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 10</b>
<p><b>DATE OF MEETING:</b> 13th JANUARY 2010</p> <p><b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b> VAL GRANT, HEAD OF EQUALITIES</p> <p><b>SUBJECT:</b> SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME</p>	

**PURPOSE:** To give consideration to the priorities and actions set out in the Council's Single Equality Scheme

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Note the detail of the draft Single Equality Scheme attached and focus discussion on the key priorities set out in paragraphs(s) 5.7 on race; 6.12 on disabilities; 7.10 on gender; 8.12 – 8.14 on sexual orientation; 9.10 – 9.11 on age; and 10.11 on religion/faith/belief.
2. Endorse the revised draft Single Equality Scheme and the top ten equality priorities set out at paragraph 1.8
3. Agree to receive annual progress report on the actions and the difference Equality Impact Assessments have made to the improvement of service delivery.

**REPORT:**

1. The Council has a statutory duty to produce and publish a race equality scheme, a disability equality scheme and a gender equality scheme every three years and to meet the requirements of the equality regulations relating to religion, faith and belief; sexual orientation and age. The current Equality Scheme formally comes to an end in November 2009, although our intention is for it to remain in force until the end of March 2010. However, we need to consult further on and publish a revised three-year Single Equality Scheme for the period April 2010 to March 2013.
2. The Single Equality Scheme is the Council's principal strategy and planning document for meeting the general and specific equality duties required by legislation and to extend good practice to other groups not covered specifically by the equality duties. The Scheme describes how the Council will fulfil its legal obligations and the steps it will take to:

- Comply with the requirements of the specific and general duties
  - Promote equality in the workplace
  - Promote good employment practices
  - Build equality into how services are purchased or provided
  - Ensure engagement with stakeholders.
3. It is important that Luton focuses on its key equality priorities over the next three years. The ten key priorities set out at paragraph 1.8 have been developed based on the consultation that has already taken place with individual service users and representatives of the six equality strands within Luton's wider communities. The ten key priorities were further informed by the data that we have available on the different groups and communities in the town. A high-level summary of the consultation and the key data sets is given under the section for each of the equality strands. We also considered what it is feasible for the Council working with partners and communities to deliver over the coming years. Finally, we looked at the emerging priorities from the perspective of the six strands of equality (race, gender, disability, age, faith and belief, and sexual orientation) to check there was sufficient balance against the strands; and, that the ten key priorities led us clearly in the direction of partnership working.
4. The next step following consideration by Scrutiny Board on 4<sup>th</sup> January is to carry out further consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the trade unions before seeking Executive approval on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5. The Council has a statutory duty to set out its arrangements for implementing both the general and specific duties set out in the Race, Disability and Gender legislation and to publish its Equality Scheme. Failure to comply with any of the statutory duties could lead to enforcement actions by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. These implications were agreed by the Head of Legal Services on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2009.