

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 MARCH 2010

#### REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE / DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

#### REACHING 'EXCELLENT' LEVEL OF THE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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#### 1. Executive Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the approach the Council will take in order to achieve 'excellent' level of the new Equality Framework for Local Government

#### 2. Background

2.1 The Council was awarded level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government during November 2009.

2.2 In order for Councils to be able to respond to new thinking on equality outcomes, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) has developed a new Equality Framework for Local Government. This has now replaced the original Equality Standard.

2.3 Instead of reaching Levels 1 to 5, Councils will now work towards three levels:

- Developing
- Achieving
- Excellent

2.4 Any Council already at level 1 or 2 of the original Standard will automatically migrate to 'Developing' status, and any Council already at level 3 will migrate to 'Achieving' status, etc.

2.5 Wirral Council has automatically migrated to 'Achieving' status of the new Framework, and will need to be assessed for 'Excellent' status by November 2011 or risk having 'Achieving' status removed. Therefore, a corporate action plan for reaching 'Excellent' status is currently being developed by the Corporate Equality and Diversity team **(please see Appendix A)**.

2.6 Detailed milestones are being identified by all departments and will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Corporate Equality and Diversity Team.

#### 4. The role of Scrutiny in reaching 'Excellent' level

4.1 The Equality Framework for Local Government highlights the need for effective scrutiny in the following areas:

- a. Is the Council meeting its equality objectives in partnership with others?

- b. Is the Council able to identify how communities are changing and the impact this may have on equality priorities?
- c. Can the Council demonstrate improvements and outcomes as a result of its Equality Scheme?
- d. Is the Council scrutinising its own and its partnerships' performance with regard to equality objectives and outcomes?
- e. Can the Council demonstrate that commissioned / procured services are delivering the Council's equality objectives?
- f. Are communities involved in the scrutiny process?
- g. Do Members and Senior Officers demonstrate personal leadership and understand the relevance of equality and cohesion to their local communities?
- h. Are equality impact assessments built into all aspects of decision-making, scrutiny and policy reviews?

## **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1 Committee members note the corporate action plan for reaching 'excellent' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government.
- 5.2 Committee members agree to further develop the scrutiny function to incorporate the criteria of the Equality Framework for Local Government.

**JIM. WILKIE  
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE / DIRECTOR  
OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

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## APPENDIX A

### ACHIEVING 'EXCELLENT' STATUS OF THE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

#### Corporate Action Plan April 2010 – November 2011

Performance Areas	Equality Outcomes	'Excellent' Objectives
<p><b>1 Knowing our communities and equality mapping</b></p>	<p>1.1. Council and LSP members know the composition of Wirral's communities and their changing needs</p> <p>1.2. Council and LSP members understand the differences between and within Wirral's communities</p> <p>1.3. Council and LSP members know where the gaps are for different community groups in health, education, community safety, access to work or training, etc.</p> <p>1.4. Council has gained a reputation among LSP members and the voluntary / community sector for championing equality issues</p> <p>1.5. Equality groups are integrally involved in community engagement programmes</p> <p>1.6. Equality issues are embedded in the Sustainable Communities Strategy, Local Development Plan, strategic plans and the Local Area Agreement</p>	<p>1.1.1 Local and national data is being used and shared among LSP partners to understand the make up of our communities. The data can be disaggregated and analysed at corporate and service levels. Equality objectives have been set following such analysis</p> <p>1.1.2 Councillors and Officers champion equality issues</p> <p>1.1.3 Council scrutinises and challenges its own performance on equality, as well as LSP performance</p> <p>1.1.4 Council and LSP have effective and innovative engagement programmes</p> <p>1.1.5 Sustainable Communities Strategy, Local Development Plan, strategic plans and the Local Area Agreement include the story or vision of equality</p> <p>1.1.6 Sustainable Communities Strategy, Local Development Plan, strategic plans and the Local Area Agreement are informed by the needs of different communities and clearly identify gaps</p> <p>1.1.7 Wirral residents' are</p>

		surveyed annually and a representative sample participate
<p><b>2 Place-shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment</b></p>	<p>2.1 Council is an exemplar of political and managerial leadership on equality issues</p> <p>2.2 Council is an exemplar of good practice for other councils and agencies</p> <p>2.3 Councillors and Officers understand the relevance of equality and cohesion to Wirral's communities</p> <p>2.4 Good performance is being recognised</p> <p>2.5 Council and LSP allocate and pool appropriate resources for achieving equality outcomes</p> <p>2.6 Improvements and outcomes can be demonstrated</p> <p>2.7 Strategic plans include actions identified via equality impact assessments</p> <p>2.8 Commissioned and procured services are delivering the Council's equality related objectives</p> <p>2.9 Council benchmarks itself against comparable others</p> <p>2.10 Improved participation rates of under-represented groups in civic and public life</p> <p>2.11 Council and LSP are addressing persistent inequalities and narrowing the gaps</p>	<p>2.1.1 Councillors and Officers ensure equality issues are integral to the Council's performance and strategic aims</p> <p>2.1.2 Corporate Equality Group membership to include 2<sup>nd</sup> tier officers responsible for services or performance</p> <p>2.1.3 Corporate Equality Group reports directly to COMT</p> <p>2.1.4 Departmental Equality Groups report directly to DMT's</p> <p>2.1.5 An LSP vision for equality is established</p> <p>2.1.6 A Borough wide Equality Scheme is established</p> <p>2.1.7 Council's single equality scheme is monitored by Councillors and Chief Officers</p> <p>2.1.8 Council and LSP equality priorities are set and owned by all, and monitored quarterly</p> <p>2.1.9 Community cohesion priorities are monitored by Councillors, Chief Officers and LSP members</p> <p>2.1.10 An equality impact assessment programme is in place, and completed assessments are published</p> <p>2.1.11 Council contractors are evaluated for good equality practices</p> <p>2.1.12 Council is sharing good practice across the public sector</p> <p>2.1.13 Equality is mainstreamed into the Council's PIMS to</p>

		ensure equality objectives do not sit apart from the core business
<b>3 Community Engagement and satisfaction</b>	<p>3.1 Communities of place and communities of interest are involved in decision making processes, service planning and workforce planning</p> <p>3.2 Local services give a voice to people who are vulnerable or are at risk of disadvantage / inequality</p> <p>3.3 Local services identify the potential of people who are vulnerable or are at risk of disadvantage / inequality</p> <p>3.4 Local services support people who are vulnerable or are at risk of disadvantage / inequality to achieve the levels of choice, autonomy and improved outcomes that other citizens enjoy</p> <p>3.5 All of Wirral's communities are involved, consulted and fed back to.</p> <p>3.6 All of Wirral's communities are satisfied that the Council and LSP have taken their views into account</p>	<p>3.1.1 Effective and efficient community engagement structures are in place</p> <p>3.1.2 Effective forums are in place to challenge, scrutinise and evaluate equality priorities</p> <p>3.1.3 Equality priorities are reviewed in light of changing / conflicting community needs and interests</p> <p>3.1.4 Participation rates among under-represented communities of place and interest improve</p> <p>3.1.5 Hate crimes across Wirral and across all communities are being dealt with effectively</p>
<b>4 Responsive services and customer care</b>	<p>4.1 Service provision remains a central function for the Council, whether provided directly, procured or commissioned</p> <p>4.2 Services need to be personalised to meet the needs of people with different backgrounds</p> <p>4.3 Services need to ensure fair access for all</p> <p>4.4 Council and LSP have a good knowledge and understanding of human rights</p> <p>4.5 Service level outcomes, objectives and goals meet the needs of target groups and those most vulnerable</p>	<p>4.1.1 A procurement equality evaluation tool has been implemented</p> <p>4.1.2 All communities are involved in service planning and delivery</p> <p>4.1.3 Council has excellent contract management in place to ensure contractors / providers are delivering on equality objectives</p> <p>4.1.4 Satisfaction levels among all communities with procured services improve</p> <p>4.1.5 Perceptions among all communities of</p>

	<p>4.6 More people believe that they have been treated fairly and believe their human rights have been respected</p>	<p>procured services improve</p> <p>4.1.6 DMT's monitor equality and cohesion objectives</p> <p>4.1.7 Services have been designed to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect</p>
<p><b>5 A modern and diverse workforce</b></p>	<p>5.1 Council understands that to deliver responsive, personalised services depends on the composition, skills, understanding and commitment of the workforce</p> <p>5.2 Council has an inclusive working culture based on respect</p> <p>5.3 Equality legislation is being complied with in all employment procedures</p> <p>5.4 The potential of all staff is being maximised</p> <p>5.5 Plans for addressing under-representation at senior levels are being implemented</p> <p>5.6 Effective action is being taken to address equal pay</p> <p>5.7 There is a high satisfaction rate among all staff groups</p> <p>5.8 Council improves flexible working arrangements and access to training and development</p> <p>5.9 More staff say they are being treated with dignity and respect</p>	<p>5.9.1 Equality objectives have been built into workforce strategies for the whole workforce</p> <p>5.9.2 The local labour market is regularly reviewed</p> <p>5.9.3 Equality impact assessments are completed and published for all major employment policies</p> <p>5.9.4 Employment data is monitored, analysed and published regularly</p> <p>5.9.5 Training is completed by Members and Officers to deliver equality outcomes</p> <p>5.9.6 Harassment and bullying incidents are monitored, analysed and dealt with effectively</p> <p>5.9.7 More staff say they are treated with dignity and respect</p> <p>5.9.8 A positive action scheme is ensuring less under-representation at senior levels</p> <p>5.9.9 Training and development programmes are in place, via KIE, in order for all staff to address equality issues</p> <p>5.9.10 Staff equality forums share experiences and evaluate the Council's progress on equality objectives</p> <p>5.9.11 An annual staff survey</p>

		is completed 5.9.12 Staff equality forums have planned for mainstreaming themselves within the Council's core infrastructure
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