

Report

Report to:	Housing and Technical Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	7 March 2018
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

Subject:	Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity within Housing and Technical Resources
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide an overview of the progress made in relation to mainstreaming Equality and Diversity within Housing and Technical Resources during 2016/2017
- ◆ provide details of key action areas for 2017/2018

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the progress made during 2016/2017 and key action areas for 2017/2018 in relation to mainstreaming Equality and Diversity within Housing and Technical Resources, be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. The previous report to Housing and Technical Resources Committee in July 2016, gave a commitment to continue to progress Resource activity in relation to mainstreaming equalities during 2016/2017.
- 3.2. Within Housing and Technical Resources, there is an established Equality and Diversity Co-ordinating Group. The main focus of this group continues to be to progress the Equality and Diversity Monitoring Report which sets out the wider objectives and priority actions for the Resource in relation to mainstreaming equalities. The group also supports the work of the Council's Corporate Equality and Diversity Working Group.

4. Mainstreaming Equalities 2013 to 2017 and the Equality Outcomes

- 4.1. "South Lanarkshire Working For You – Mainstreaming Equalities Report 2013 to 2017" was published in April 2013. This detailed a number of Equality outcomes which all Resources were involved in developing and would work towards achieving.
- 4.2. A number of actions from Housing and Technical Resources Service and Resource Plans were initially aligned to the Equality outcomes. Progress on these has been monitored by the Resource Equality and Diversity Co-ordinating Group, with updates provided to Finance and Corporate Resources to inform both:-
- ◆ the mid-point update report to the Scottish Government as at 31 March 2015
 - ◆ the final report to Scottish Government as at 31 March 2017 which is now published

4.3. Some of the achievements for Housing and Technical Resources which are highlighted within the final report include:-

- ◆ resettled 16 families within South Lanarkshire through the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (a total of 64 individuals) from December 2015 to February 2017
- ◆ worked closely with the South Lanarkshire Access Panel to ensure that architects and planners consider their duties under the Equality Act at the earliest stage of project development. A recent example of this is the new amenity housing development in Uddingston, where the Access Panel contributed to the design process, ensuring the needs of people who would live in the homes were considered
- ◆ continued to hold regular engagement events at Larkhall and East Kilbride Gypsy/Traveller sites, providing an opportunity for residents to make their views known on a number of service delivery issues
- ◆ provided a range of engagement events for homeless customers, allowing them to have their say in developing and improving homelessness services
- ◆ completed a total of 1060 adaptations in Council homes, allowing people with individual needs to continue to live independently
- ◆ continued the rolling programme of works to convert mainstream homes to amenity standard as they become available to re-let
- ◆ continued new build housing developments in East Kilbride and Fernhill that are suitable for occupation by people of all ages and abilities

4.4. The “South Lanarkshire Working For You - Mainstreaming Equalities Report” has now been re-drafted for the period 2017 to 2021, in line with the revised Council plan, Connect. Progress on Housing Equality outcomes will be monitored by the Resource Equality and Diversity Co-ordinating Group and reported on at a future date.

5. Other Key Areas of Progress 2016/2017

5.1. Equalities and Impact Assessment

During 2016/2017, the Resource completed a total of 6 EQIAs for Housing and Property Services.

5.2. Employment

Officers from within the Resource continued to take advantage of the family friendly policies offered by the Council. During 2016/2017, the uptake of these was as follows (previous year's figures in brackets):-

- ◆ employees on a career break or sabbatical 6 (10)
- ◆ employees currently working part time 366 (348)
- ◆ flexible working requests approved 38 (158)
- ◆ employees who have taken paternity leave 18 (24)
- ◆ employees who have bought enhanced leave provision 462 (233)

5.3. Employee Training and Development

Housing and Technical Resources employees participated in a range of Equality and Diversity related training activities during 2016/2017, consisting of a mix of class-based, e-learning activities and toolbox talks. This included:-

- ◆ Dementia Awareness
- ◆ Autism Spectrum Disorder Basic Awareness
- ◆ Protection of Vulnerable Groups
- ◆ Welcoming and Working With Syrian Families

- ◆ Housing Rights for Foreign Nationals
- ◆ Getting it Right for Every Child
- ◆ British Sign Language
- ◆ International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia

5.4. Accessibility

5.4.1. Physical Access

In terms of physical access to buildings, Housing and Technical Resources public locations continue to have a compliance rate of 100% with the statutory performance indicator for access.

5.4.2. Access to Information

The Resource provided a range of translation and interpretation services to customers with specific communication requirements. The cost for providing these services during 2016/2017 was £993; this compares with £737 for 2015/2016.

5.5. Consultation, Engagement and Customer Feedback

As part of our annual consultation programme, the Resource continued to work closely with a range of stakeholders, including:-

- ◆ the Disability Partnership Housing Sub Group
- ◆ Gypsy/Travellers
- ◆ sheltered housing tenants
- ◆ Seniors Together
- ◆ homelessness customers

5.6. Customer Profiling

A number of measures to improve the equalities monitoring information we hold for our customers were progressed during 2016/2017. This profiling information assists the Resource to establish trends, identify gaps and take action to address these, whilst meeting regulatory expectations with regard to knowing our customers and meeting their needs.

5.7. Customer Complaints

There were no complaints recorded in the Equal Opportunities category for Housing and Technical Resources during 2016/2017.

6. **Next Steps and Priorities for 2017/2018**

6.1. The Resource Equality and Diversity Monitoring Report, aligned to the new Equality Outcomes will continue to drive progress in relation to mainstreaming equality across Housing and Technical Resources. Key principles to be achieved in 2017/2018 include:-

- ◆ consider actions for the Resource in the context of the redrafted Equality Outcomes as detailed within the 2017 to 2022 Mainstreaming report
- ◆ continue to implement the process of equality impact assessment across all new and revised policy areas
- ◆ continued commitment to staff training and development in relation to equality and related issues
- ◆ increase supply of housing suitable for a variety of needs
- ◆ continue to deliver appropriate engagement opportunities for a range of stakeholders
- ◆ ongoing development of customer profiling

- ♦ deliver Equality and Diversity annual update reports to Housing and Technical Resources Committee, Parent JCC and Equal Opportunities Forum during 2017/2018, in line with agreed reporting schedule

6.2. The intended outcomes of the above actions are to improve the services to customers, in particular those of minority or disadvantaged groups and to ensure the Council is protected from legal action in this area.

7. Employee Implications

7.1. None.

8. Financial Implications

8.1. None.

9. Other Implications

9.1. The risk to the Council is that if the Resource does not have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty it may lead to non-compliance with equalities legislation.

9.2. There are no issues in terms of sustainability contained within this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

10.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment or formal consultation is required.

Daniel Lowe

Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

8 February 2018

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ♦ Focused on people and their needs
- ♦ Working with and respecting others
- ♦ Accountable, efficient, effective and transparent
- ♦ Ambitious, self-aware and improving
- ♦ Fair, open and sustainable
- ♦ Excellent employer
- ♦ Improve later life
- ♦ Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults
- ♦ Improve the availability, quality and access of housing
- ♦ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities
- ♦ Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation, and supporting aspiration

Previous References

- ♦ Housing and Technical Resources Committee, 13 July 2016

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Housing and Technical Resources Equality and Diversity Monitoring Report 2017/2018
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Working For You – Mainstreaming Equalities Report 2013 to 2017
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Council Equalities Mainstreaming Progress Report 2013 to 2015
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Working For You – Mainstreaming Equalities Report 2017 to 2022
- ◆ “Connect” – South Lanarkshire Council Plan 2017 to 2022

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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