

# Report

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Report to:	<b>Equal Opportunities Forum</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>6 September 2011</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity - Housing and Technical Resources</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise the Forum of the work being undertaken by Housing and Technical Resources to meet the commitments in the Council's Single Equality Scheme and Equality and Diversity Strategy

## 2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the work being undertaken by Housing and Technical Resources in terms of the Council's Single Equality Scheme and Equality and Diversity Strategy be noted; and
- (2) that the Housing and Technical Resources Equality and Diversity Action Plan be noted.

## 3. Background

3.1. Housing and Technical Resources has a well established Equality and Diversity Co-ordinating Group with representation from each of the 3 service areas (Area, Property, and Support), as well as the Joint Trades Unions. The Group's primary role is to co-ordinate and monitor the progress of the Resource Equality and Diversity Action Plan, a copy of which is attached as an appendix to the report. The Group also provides a strategic overview of equalities issues and supports a consistent approach to mainstreaming equality within the Resource.

3.2. The Housing and Technical Resources Equality and Diversity Action Plan sets out objectives and priority actions in relation to managing the equality and diversity agenda and mainstreaming equalities within Housing and Technical Resources. This report outlines the progress made to date in implementing the action plan from April 2011 to date.

## 4. Impact Assessment

4.1. All new and revised policies and functions are subject to an equality and human rights impact assessment (EQIA). In 2010/11, the Resource completed and published 19 impact assessments. To date in 2011/12, six assessments have been completed and published.

## **5. Employment**

- 5.1. Officers employed within the Resource continue to take advantage of the family friendly policies offered by the Council. The uptake for 2010/11 is as follows, with the previous years figures in brackets:-
- ◆ 7 (7) employees are currently on a career break or sabbatical
  - ◆ 297 (312) employees work part time
  - ◆ 68 (83) new flexible working applications have been approved
  - ◆ 24 (20) employees have taken paternity leave
  - ◆ 186 (193) employees bought enhanced leave provision
- 5.2. Since 1996, Housing and Technical Resources has participated in the School to Work programme. During this time, 255 people have been recruited into the Craft Apprenticeship Programme including 6 places being filled for the 2011 intake. This figure includes 23 adult apprentices from within Housing and Technical Resources.
- 5.3. The positive action programme Delivering a Fairer Future was formally launched in February 2007 to address the findings from the equal pay review and ensure compliance with our duties under the Gender Equality Scheme. In 2010/11, 150 (183) posts in Housing and Technical Resources were identified as 'Delivering a fairer future' posts.
- 5.4. With assistance from the Government's "Future Jobs Funding" programme, the Resource has supported 29 individuals with six months temporary employment in an attempt to assist them back into work since March 2010. Feedback from candidates and managers involved has been positive. This initiative is likely to conclude during September 2011 as the funding for this initiative is no longer available.

## **6. Employee Training and Development**

- 6.1. Following an extensive formal training programme in 2009/10 in which a total of 2,113 Housing and Technical Resources employees participated in a range of Equalities training, the focus in 2010/11 has been on reinforcing key messages via Service Development Sessions, Core and Local Briefs and Toolbox Talks including:-
- ◆ Dignity at Work
  - ◆ Protecting vulnerable adults and children
  - ◆ Employee Diversity Forums
  - ◆ Mystery Shopping Exercise: Focus on accessibility
  - ◆ Equalities: International Day Against Homophobia
- 6.2. The Resource continues to support an ongoing training programme in relation to Equality and Diversity. Almost 200 Housing and Technical Resources employees have participated in a range of 12 different training courses on equality and diversity in 2010/11 including:-
- ◆ Deaf Awareness
  - ◆ Disability Awareness
  - ◆ Managing and Valuing in the Workplace
  - ◆ British Sign Language

- 6.3. A consolidated list of staff trained in British Sign Language training has been prepared and at least one member of staff identified in each office to provide support to colleagues when dealing with customers who use BSL. An ongoing programme of refresher training is also underway.

## **7. Access to Information and Services**

### **7.1. Translation and Interpretation Procedures**

- 7.1.1. A key priority for the Resource has been to develop Translation and Interpretation procedures for staff to provide advice and guidance when dealing with customers who may have particular communication requirements. The procedures will shortly be rolled out to staff via a Service Development Session.

### **7.2. Physical accessibility**

- 7.2.1. In relation to physical access, Housing and Technical Resources public locations have a compliance rate of 100% with the Statutory Performance Indicator for Access. In the past year, although there has been a reduction in the number of premises occupied by the Resource (from 91 to 83), 33% (27) of services continue to be provided in an alternative way (for example our Sheltered Housing Officers will visit residents at home as an alternative to calling at the office).

### **7.3. Mystery Shopping Exercise**

- 7.3.1. As reported in the previous year, the Resource worked with the South Lanarkshire Access Panel on a pilot mystery shopping exercise to assess how well our services meet and respond to the needs of disabled people visiting our Q and A offices. The pilot was rolled out in 2010/11 and mystery shopping visits have been completed at each of our Q and A offices, with very positive results; particularly in relation to the helpfulness of staff and physical access inside the Q and A offices, where 7 of 8 offices received an excellent rating. A small number of improvements were suggested which have formed the basis of an action plan, now being progressed locally.
- 7.3.2. The mystery shopping exercise also has a relevance beyond equalities and is a notable step in involving service users in the assessment of our services. The results from the mystery shopping exercise were also considered in the evidence bank which helped to retain the Customer Services Excellence Award in the recent assessment.

## **8. Service Delivery**

### **8.1. Scottish Housing Regulator Inspection**

- 8.1.1. Our approach to mainstreaming equalities was assessed as part of the Scottish Housing Regulator inspection in 2010. The SHR found that the Resource's approach and its awareness of areas for future work, were strong. The report also recognises that the Resource Equality and Diversity action plan has SMART objectives and that the Resource is a key participant in the Council's corporate approach. A small number of improvements relating to Allocations and Homelessness were recommended and have been picked up through service improvement plans.

## 8.2. Consultation and Participation

8.2.1. Housing and Technical Resources has well-established arrangements for consulting and involving our tenants and service users to improve its understanding of their needs. Consultations undertaken in 2010/11 include:-

- ◆ Tenant Participation Strategy
- ◆ Tenant's Guide to Repairs
- ◆ Repairs Policy
- ◆ Annual consultation event at Swinhill Gypsies and Travellers Sites

## 8.3. Equipment and adaptations

8.3.1. The Resource continues to offer equipment and adaptations to anyone who is assessed as being in need of them. 1,538 adaptations have been completed in 2010/11 in Council housing and 171 in Registered Social Landlords properties. 721 approvals for adaptations to private homes have also been given.

## 9. **Service Monitoring**

### 9.1. Equality and Diversity Service User Profiles

9.1.1. Service user profiles have been updated in respect of the 2009/10 annual figures in relation to the age; gender; disability; and ethnicity of our tenants, waiting list and homeless applicants in each local area. The profiles allow the Resource to establish trends and help to meet regulatory expectations with regard to knowing our customers and identifying their needs. The updated profiles will be circulated to staff via a Service Development Session in September.

### 9.2. Customer Complaints

9.2.1. Complaints are monitored on a quarterly basis through the Customer Relationship Management System. Three complaints have been recorded under the 'Equal Opportunities' category in 2010/11, none of which were upheld on these grounds following investigation.

### 9.3. Customer Feedback Framework

9.3.1. An independent customer feedback framework has been developed and implemented to improve the quality of feedback received from individual service users. The framework will assist the Resource to monitor if there are any customer satisfaction issues for particular equality groups. Customer satisfaction levels remain high across all areas surveyed in 2010/11 which were Repairs; Gas Servicing; Home Happening; Equipment and Adaptations and Homelessness Exit Survey.

9.3.2. The most recent survey undertaken by the Q&A service returned a 100% satisfaction rate in respect of whether customers felt they had been 'treated fairly and sensitively', which was also echoed in the mystery shopping exercise where all shoppers agreed that they were treated fairly and sensitively.

## 10. **Performance Management and Reporting**

10.1. Housing and Technical Resources has a range of local and statutory performance indicators to monitor the delivery of services which are reported regularly to the Management Team.

- 10.2. Following re-assessment in March 2011, the Council's Q and A service retained its Customer Services Excellence (CSE) Award. The service was awarded Full Compliance with all the CSE criteria and was the first service in the country to achieve Full Compliance that the Assessor is aware of. The service also retained the two best practice areas which were awarded last year, for training and development of staff, and for policy development and service planning.
- 10.3. Housing and Technical Resources also successfully retained its full Investors in People accreditation in November 2010. We successfully retained full accreditation. The assessment report has acknowledged good practice and confirmed that all previous development areas had been addressed.
- 10.4. Progress on the Housing and Technical Resources Equality and Diversity Action Plan is monitored on a bi-monthly basis by the Equality and Diversity Co-ordinating Group and reported to Management every 6 months.

## **11. Areas for Improvement and Priorities for the Year Ahead**

- 11.1. The Resource's Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2011/12 is being progressed and will continue to drive progress in relation to mainstreaming equality. Key actions include:-
  - ◆ responding to the further development of the Equality Act 2010 and specific duties for public authorities which are anticipated later in 2011/12
  - ◆ ongoing improvement of customer profiling to better understand who our customers are and how to meet their needs
  - ◆ continuing to mainstream equalities into the review and development of policies and procedures, supported by consultation and impact assessment. Key policy areas under development include:-
    - ◆ Estate Management Policy
    - ◆ Local Housing Strategy
    - ◆ Community Safety Strategy

## **12. Employee Implications**

- 12.1. None.

## **13. Financial Implications**

- 13.1. None.

## **14. Other Implications**

- 14.1. 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.
- 14.2. There are no implications in terms of sustainability.

## **15. Equalities Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 15.1. 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.
- 15.2. A variety of Council-wide and Resource specific forums e.g. tenants groups are consulted and actively participate in the wide range of public and employee consultation events organised by Corporate Resources when developing Race Equality and Disability Equality Schemes. The Resource also consults regularly with

the South Lanarkshire Disability Partnership Housing Sub-Group regarding key areas of policy and service development.

**Lindsay Freeland**  
**Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)**

18 August 2011

**Link(s) to Council Objectives and Values**

- ◆ Fair and open
- ◆ People focused
- ◆ Working and respecting others
- ◆ Excellent employer
- ◆ Accountable, effective and efficient
- ◆ Tackling disadvantage and deprivation
- ◆ Sustainable development

**Previous References**

- ◆ Equal Opportunities Forum - Annual Report - 20 March 2009
- ◆ Equal Opportunities Forum - Annual Report - 29 June 2010

**List of Background Papers**

- ◆ Single Equality Scheme
- ◆ Equality and Diversity Strategy

**Contact for Further Information**

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

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## Housing and Technical Resources Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2011/2012

<b>Key Action Area (A): Review strategies, policies and plans to ensure they reflect E&amp;D commitments</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Progress</b>
1.	Ensure that equality and diversity vision, aims and actions are reflected in all relevant H&TR plans, strategies and joint working.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resource Management Team</li> <li>▪ Service Management Teams</li> <li>▪ Service Improvement Groups</li> <li>▪ Community Safety Executive</li> </ul>	Key documents to be reviewed/developed in 2011/12: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resource and Service Plans</li> <li>▪ Local Housing Strategy</li> <li>▪ Estate Management Policy and Procedures</li> <li>▪ Community Safety Strategy</li> <li>▪ Neighbourhood Plans?</li> <li>▪ Homelessness Policy – ongoing</li> <li>▪ Rent Arrears Procedures</li> <li>▪ Care of Gardens Scheme (Tenants)</li> <li>▪ Housing Options</li> <li>▪ Benefits procedures</li> <li>▪ Debt management and diligence contract</li> </ul>
2.	Review standard letters associated with policy reviews for clarity and include assistance statement.	As per policy review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As appropriate to policy review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allocations</li> <li>▪ Estate management</li> <li>▪ Homelessness</li> </ul>
	i. Prepare annual progress reports to RMT on action plan	June 2012	Lynne Gardiner	Completed
	ii. Prepare 6 month progress reports to Parent JCC on action plan	November 2011/ June 2012	Lynne Gardiner	

<b>Key Action Area (A): Review strategies, policies and plans to ensure they reflect E&amp;D commitments</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Progress</b>
	iii. Prepare E&D annual report to Equal Opportunities Forum and Committee (including % of EQIAs completed and published)	31 August 2011	Lynne Gardiner	Completed
<b>3.</b>	i. Implement the Single Equality Scheme and Act as relevant to H&TR	Ongoing	E&D Co-ordinating Group	
	ii. Assess current position against requirements of general duty and Guidance	31 July 2011	Service Improvement Groups Lynne Gardiner Dougie McMillan Faye Meldrum/ Brian Davidson	Initial assessment established two key areas for discussion at meeting of 24 August 2011: EQIAs and improving equality monitoring information.
<b>4.</b>	i. Issue memo/ core brief annually to managers to remind managers to discuss specific E&D responsibilities with all staff.	31 January 2012	Patrick Murphy	Dougie McMillan to discuss with D Lowe and P Rainey regarding toolbox talks/core brief article for Property Services.
	ii. Include specific E&D objectives in PDR's as appropriate to individual's role.	30 April 2011	Line managers	
<b>5.</b>	i. Develop SLC E&D Service User profiles for use in development of services and EQIAs	31 March 2012	Lynne Gardiner/ Jennifer McEwan	Potential for profiles to be incorporated Improve reports to be investigated. Frequency to be confirmed depending on capacity for these to be automated.



<b>Key Action Area (A): Review strategies, policies and plans to ensure they reflect E&amp;D commitments</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Progress</b>
	ii. Prepare Service Development Session on profiles	30 September 2011	Lynne Gardiner	SDS planned for 28 September 2011. SDS papers prepared.
	iii. Identify key service areas to undertake customer profiling to monitor service use (including who is using the service, geographic distribution, who is not using the service).  1. Rent Arrears 2. Homelessness 3. Older People 4. Allocations 5. HomeImprove 6. Women's Aid 7. Care and Repair	Ongoing	Service Improvement Groups  1. Rent Arrears SIG 2. Homelessness SIG 3. Older People SIG 4. Allocations SIG 5. Margaret Hogg 6. Tracy Lindsay 7. Margaret Hogg	Key action in relation to Single Equality Act.
	iv. Contribute to Improvement Service Pilot Exercise on Improving Equality Data	Ongoing	Lynne Gardiner E&D Co-ordinating Group	Corporate Resources leading on pilot for SLC. Meeting held to firm up purpose and key areas. Agreed that focus of the pilot will be primarily the improvement of disability information and how it links to other equality characteristics. This will be via SWR and the Change Fund.
<b>6.</b>	i. Conclude data collection and monitoring exercise to improve diversity and profiling information	Ongoing (as per data Collection Action Plan)	Data Collection and Monitoring Working Group	See data collection and monitoring action plan.

<b>Key Action Area (A): Review strategies, policies and plans to ensure they reflect E&amp;D commitments</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Progress</b>
7.	Undertake a programme of equality and human rights impact assessments	Ongoing	Resource Management Team	
	a) Homelessness Policy and procedures	31 March 2012	Tracy Lindsay	
	b) Voids Procedures	31 March 2012	Maureen Flynn?	
	c) Estate Management Policy and Procedures	30 September 2012	Donald Gray	
	d) Tenant Participation Policy/ Strategy	30 May 2012	Aileen Muir	EQIA approved and published.
	e) Benefits procedures	31 March 2012	Marion Graham	
	f) Debt management contract	31 December 2011	Fraser Morrison/ Brian Davidson	Brian Davidson to take this forward as it mainly relates to the process behind the contract.
	g) Local Housing Strategy	31 March 2012	Jennifer Murphy / Cameron Mitchell	
	h) Allocations:			EQIAs approved and published.
	▪ LLI's and targets	30 May 2011	HSMs/ASMs/ Maureen Flynn	
	i) Housing Investment Programme	Commence by 30 March 2011	Sheila Young	
	j) Tenants Care of Gardens Scheme	30 September 2011	Cameron Mitchell	
	k) Budget Savings – various as per proposals	As per savings timetable	As appropriate	

<b>Key Action Area (A): Review strategies, policies and plans to ensure they reflect E&amp;D commitments</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>8.</b>	Draft guidance on EQIAs specific to the resource	30 September 2011	Lynne Gardiner	Interim guidance has been prepared.
<b>9.</b>	i. Priority EQIAs to be presented and quality assured by E&D Co-ordinating Group.	Ongoing	E&D Co-ordinating Group/ Lead officer	Service reps to agree priority EQIAs to be presented.
	ii. Actions identified in EQIA to be extracted and monitored on a 6 month basis	Ongoing – 6 month review due by April and November EDCG meetings	E&D Co-ordinating Group Service reps/ Lead officer	
	iii. EQIA Relevance Schedule to be updated on 6 monthly basis	In advance of April and November E&DCG meetings	E&D Co-ordinating Group service reps	
<b>10.</b>	Involve and consult the community and our employees regarding policies, strategies and functions that affect their lives	Ongoing	Cameron Mitchell/ Personnel	
	i. Hold a consultation event with Minority Ethnic Community tenants	31 March 2012 TBC	Cameron Mitchell, Alistair Reid (Tenant Development and Support Project), Aileen Muir, Lynne Gardiner	
	ii. Hold annual consultation event with residents of Gypsies and Travellers	30 November 2011.	Lynne Gardiner / D Thom / G Hood	

<b>Key Action Area (A): Review strategies, policies and plans to ensure they reflect E&amp;D commitments</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Progress</b>
	iii. Meetings with Disability Partnership Housing Sub Group	Ongoing	Lynne Gardiner	Meeting scheduled: April June August October December
<b>11.</b>	Review provision of BSL trained employees across all offices providing front line services to customers	Annually (December or March)	Equality and Diversity Co-ordinating Group	
<b>12.</b>	Further develop customer feedback framework to include monitoring by Equality Groups for key service areas.	Ongoing	Mike Wood / Craigforth Consultancy	
<b>13.</b>	Re-commissioning of support services for domestic abuse with Women's Aid – services are sensitive to needs of victims.	Ongoing	Patrick Murphy/ Tracy Lindsay	
<b>14.</b>	a. Monitor developments relating to EHRC Inquiry into disability harassment and consider any recommendations for action.	31 March 2012	ASB SIG (Linda Cunningham)	On target for completion by 31 March 2012.
	b. Further develop approach to tackling and monitoring of harassment and hate crime across all equality categories.	31 March 2012	ASB SIG (Linda Cunningham)	On target for completion by 31 March 2012.

<b>Key Action Area (A): Review strategies, policies and plans to ensure they reflect E&amp;D commitments</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Progress</b>
15.	Ongoing programme of accessibility audits undertaken and report prepared stating % of properties which meet DDA SPI:  For both: i. Council ii. H&TR	31 May 2011 (annually)	Dougie McMillan	Annual SPI reports available in draft with these still to be reviewed in terms of content prior to reporting.
	i. Monitor progress of actions emanating from mystery shopping exercise	30 November 2011	Lynne Gardiner/ Liz McCabe/ Karen Robertson	Mystery shopping exercise and action plan handed over to Karen Robertson, Q and A manager.
	ii. Prepare Housing News article and Core brief/ local update on full mystery shopping exercise	30 July 2011	Lynne Gardiner	Completed.