Report

Report to:	**Equal Opportunities Forum**
Date of Meeting:	**14 September 2010**
Report by:	**Executive Director (Finance and Information Technology Resources)**

Subject:	**Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity - Finance and Information Technology Resources**

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

♦ advise of the strategic and operational work being undertaken by Finance and Information Technology 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 Finance and Information Technology Resources in terms of the Council's Single Equality Scheme and Equality and Diversity Strategy be noted.

3. Background

3.1. Finance and Information Technology Resources has incorporated into the Resource Plan a number of actions to promote equal opportunities. These actions reflect the Resource's commitment to equalities and diversity in respect of Council Improvement Themes, 'Efficient and Effective use of resources' and 'Vision and Strategic Direction'.

4. Equalities Impact Assessments

4.1. Finance and Information Technology Resources has assessed Resource functions, policies and strategies in line with the Council Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment toolkit applying any necessary process change via the Service Management Team. New policies/functions and strategies are impact assessed on an ongoing basis.

5. Employment

5.1. Finance and Information Technology Resources follows corporate standards on recruitment monitoring and will set key work objectives for each Manager in respect of equalities. Any training and development associated with this will be identified during the Performance and Development Review (PDR) process.

5.2. During the period of 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010, Finance and Information Technology Resources recruited for 22 posts. 329 applications were received of which 47% were from women, 51% from men and 2% of applicants did not declare

their gender. Out of 22 posts, 13 women (59%) and 9 men (41%) were appointed. All successful candidates chose to declare their gender.

5.3.   282 applicants declared themselves to be Scottish (86%), 10 candidates did not declare their ethnicity (3%) and 37 candidates had other ethnic origins (11%). None of the successful applicants chose not to declare their ethnicity during the recruitment process, 2 of the successful candidates were from another ethnic origin and the other 20 successful candidates were Scottish.

5.4.   In terms of disability, 22 candidates (7%) declared themselves to be disabled, 43 candidates chose not to declare whether they were disabled or not. Nine of the candidates met the essential criteria for the post and were interviewed in line with our commitment to "double tick", four candidates were appointed. However, the other five candidates were not the most appropriate people for the positions and were, therefore, not appointed.

5.5.   Overall, Finance and Information Technology Resources continues to carefully monitor its team performance in terms of Equality in recruitment. Throughout the PDR process, managers ensure all employees are made aware of the Council's Positive Action Programme in terms of gender, i.e. Delivering a Fairer Future. No employees are currently registered on this programme. The Resource performs well in terms of maintaining a good gender balance in recruitment and promotion.

5.6.   In terms of ethnicity, 10 of the posts advertised were advertised internally only. It is more difficult to increase the number of candidates from different ethnic backgrounds during an internal recruitment process.

5.7.   Recruitment paperwork is carefully completed within the Resource to ensure that clear justification for all decisions is detailed. The Resource has now moved to competency based recruitment using Job Families. New ways of objectively measuring clearly defined skills and attributes required to carry out the duties of a role have been completed. All managers within the Resource have received appropriate training, advice and guidance in terms of competency based recruitment.

6.   Delivering Services
6.1.   In November 2009, members of the Citizens' Panel, representing all geographical areas of South Lanarkshire, were invited to participate in Budget Consultation Focus Groups to discuss specific areas of service provision for 2010/2011. As in previous years, the consultation also included the Better Government for Older People group, now termed Seniors Together in South Lanarkshire. A further consultation event was also held with members of South Lanarkshire Disability Forum.

6.2.   With regard to Procurement, the Resource now has 4 declarations which are included in all tenders in respect of Equal Opportunities. The declarations enforce the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination requirements, Equal Opportunity requirements and Human Rights obligations. In addition, tender documentation is being standardised to promote equalities through Community Benefit obligations.

6.3.   Finance and Information Technology Resources also provide support to other Resource deliverables that impact on Equalities and Diversity. IT Business Teams have been involved in a number of initiatives to improve accessibility to IT for users. For example, the IT Business Team for Education has helped provide a range of IT accessibility tools for use by the public in the Libraries Active IT Suites and also

recently worked with an employee with visual impairment to provide a range of tools including Braille Translation Software and Braille Reader to enable access to IT.

6.4. The Finance and IT Business Team (HRMS) have been involved in the creation of multiple reports to support equal opportunity and diversity.

7. Performance Management and Reporting

7.1. Finance and Information Technology Resources has a range of statutory and local performance indicators in place to monitor the delivery of services. These are reported to the Resource Management Team and respective Service Management Teams. This information is also reported to the Executive Committee and the Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum.

7.2. The Resource has appointed a Diversity Liaison Officer to monitor and report upon all aspects of the Council's Equality and Diversity policies.

7.3. In line with all other Council Resources, Finance and Information Technology Resources has identified a number of Corporate Improvement Themes, Efficient and Effective use of resources, Performance Management and Improvement, Vision and Strategic Direction, Governance and Accountability. These performance measures will be reported half-yearly to the Finance and Information Technology Resources Committee as well as being monitored through the IMPROVe system.

8. Access to Information

8.1. Finance and Information Technology Resources has published the Council's Annual Accounts on the Council's Website and made these optionally available in different languages and in large print.

8.2. The Resource has successfully applied the international standard W3C Web Accessibility Initiatives (WAI) to the Council's Website. The website also follows best practice in respect of Web usability, particularly for those with visual impairments.

8.3. The Resource has also applied to the Council's Website, a 'Text to Speech' translation facility for those with acute visual impairment.

8.4. A new Content Management System (CMS) which promotes web accessibility standards and compliance has been procured and this will underpin the Council's external Website and Intranet site.

8.5. The new Content Management System has resulted in the need to redevelop our Website and Internet site. A project "Engaging with our Customers" has been undertaken which involved consulting with four Citizen Panel Forums and working with Education Resources to consult with the Youth Council and Corporate Resources to conduct a Social Inclusion exercise. The results and information gained have provided valuable input into customer behaviour and will be used to help improve the Web user experience.

8.6. With the extensive redevelopment of the website we are aiming to achieve at least AA compliance standard for web accessibility and also gain Crystal Mark Standard.

8.7. The website will also make use of the Google Translation functionality which offers customers the opportunity to translate any web page into 50 different languages.

9.   Highlights and Areas for Improvement

9.1.   Specific highlights include:-

   ♦   publication of Annual Accounts on the Council's Website and availability in different languages and large print
   ♦   accessibility to Council's Website in large text via the W3C WEB Accessibility initiative
   ♦   accessibility to the Council's Website for the acutely visually impaired via 'Text to Speech' software

9.2.   In terms of areas for improvement, the Resource recognises the importance of the Council's equalities policies and will continue to apply specific improvement actions via the Service Management Teams during 2010/2011. Ownership of these improvements will be allocated to appropriate Managers via the Council's continuing Performance and Development Review (PDR) framework.

10.   Employee Implications

10.1.   There will be a requirement for continued manager training and employee briefings.

11.   Financial Implications

11.1.   There are no financial implications arising from this report.

12.   Other Implications

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

13.   Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

13.1.   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 is required.

13.2.   There was also no requirement to undertake any consultation in terms of the information contained within this report.

Linda Hardie
Executive Director (Finance and Information Technology Resources)

27 August 2010

Link(s) to Council Objectives/Improvement Themes/Values
   ♦   Efficient and effective use of resources
   ♦   Vision and strategic direction
   ♦   Governance and accountability
   ♦   Fair and open
   ♦   People focused
   ♦   Working with and respecting others
   ♦   Excellent employer
   ♦   Tackling disadvantage and deprivation

Previous References
Equal Opportunities Forum Annual Report – 1 September 2009

List of Background Papers
None

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