

## EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD SHEET

Name of decision maker:	Cllr Brian Ayling
Portfolio:	Service and Performance Improvement
Date of Portfolio Holder Decision:	29 March 2012

<b>Title of Decision:</b>	<b>Publication of the Council's Equalities Objectives</b>
---------------------------	---

<b>Decision made and reasons:</b>	
To adopt and publish the Council's 2012 Equalities objectives:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a more robust, sophisticated and usable set of equalities data relating to the Council's service users.</li> <li>2. Improve inclusion, access to services and opportunities for involvement for all people in Dacorum, for example, by developing a pilot project to address the needs of Deaf, deaf, and hearing impaired people in Dacorum.</li> <li>3. Increase the proportion of incidents reported to the Council which are correctly recorded as hate crime or hate related incidents.</li> <li>4. Develop the Council's consultation base so that it becomes more representative of the community.</li> </ol>	
<b>Reports considered: ( here reference can be made to specific documents)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Equality Act 2010.</li> <li>• The Council's Single Equality Scheme.</li> <li>• Service and employment data snapshot – published on the Council's website on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012.</li> <li>• Equalities update report – considered at March 2012's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.</li> </ul>	
<b>Has budget been approved? (provide budget codes):</b> Not applicable – the Equalities Strategy is part of current service delivery.	
<b>Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders Consulted:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Management Team</li> <li>• Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>• Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>• Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</li> </ul>	
<b>Monitoring Officer comments:</b>	No comments to add to the report.
<b>Section 151 Officer comments:</b>	The Deputy Section 151 Officer has no further comments to add to the report. There are no significant financial implications.

## EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD SHEET

**Implications:**

**Risk:** There is a risk to reputation if the Council does not comply with the Equality Act and the Council may be open to challenge if it does not fulfil its legislative requirements. Also there is the consideration of the loss of the opportunity that this legislation provides in supporting and improving the Council's approach to Equalities for Dacorum's various communities.

**Value for Money:** Improvements in our Equalities consultation will enable the Council to gather information more effectively and representatively. The Equalities objectives aim to maximise the use of resources by helping the Council target its services more efficiently.

**Options Considered and reasons for rejection:**

Publication of these objectives is a statutory duty. It is proposed that all four objectives are published together, as in addition to fulfilling our legislative duties they will provide a valuable contribution to corporate priorities.

**Portfolio Holders Signature:**

**Date:**

**Details of any interests declared and any dispensations given by the Standards Committee:****For Member Support Officer use only**

Date Decision Record Sheet received from portfolio holder: 22/03/12

Date Decision Published: 29/03/12

Decision No: PH/018/12

Date of Expiry of Call-In Period: 05/04/12

Date any Call-In received or decision implemented:

**BACKGROUND**

The Council's draft Single Equality Scheme was approved by Cabinet in September 2010. The decision to combine three existing strategies on race, gender and disability into a single scheme reflected the new legislative context of the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act passed into law in October 1 2010, extending protection under the law to eight 'protected characteristics': age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race/ethnicity, religion/belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The Department for Communities and Local Government published its new cohesion strategy, Creating the conditions for integration, on 21st February 2012. The strategy focuses on localism, integration, and on mainstreaming equalities into the business of the community.

**EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD SHEET**

The Equality Act places a general duty on all public bodies. This came into force on 5 April 2011. Public bodies are to have due regard across all their functions to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between the different groups defined under the protected characteristics.

The Act also places two specific duties on public bodies. These came into force on 10 September 2011. These require public bodies to 'publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty; and to set themselves specific, measurable equality objectives' (Home Office, 2011). The deadline for publication was 31 January 2012 and the objectives are to be set and published by 6th April 2012.

The new legislation has emphasised the importance of building an evidence base of equality-related information that can guide and inform Council decision-making. The "Spotlight on Dacorum" project had already developed a Dacorum community profile. The recent work on equalities has therefore focused on building a more detailed picture of the people who are using Council services and of any specific needs they might have which could impact, or be impacted upon by, Council services.

Following the Cabinet approval in September 2010, the Council consulted with the public and with local specialist organisations on the draft Single Equality Scheme. This consultation was also an opportunity to gather information about service users' experiences.

In order to fulfil the first Specific Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council took a snapshot of the data currently held on its service users. The resulting report was published on the Council's website on January 31st.

The publication of the Council's Equality objectives will fulfil its duty under the Act and inform the development of the revised Equality Strategy, due to be completed in the Autumn.

The references to "Deaf" and "deaf" people in the second objective above follow the accepted distinction between "Deaf" people, who have British Sign Language as their first language and identify culturally as Deaf, and "deaf" people, who have English or another spoken language as their first language, and often communicate by lip reading.