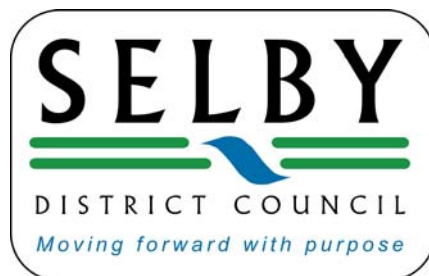


Selby District Council

GENERIC EQUALITY AND
DIVERSITY SCHEME
2008 - 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Generic Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008 – 11

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FOREWORD

Welcome to Selby District Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme. Here in Selby District we place a high value on the involvement and the benefits of the diversity of people who live and work across the district. We acknowledge that we have a particular responsibility as an employer and service provider but we also recognise our influencing role within the public and private sectors.

We are committed to making sure that all of our citizens who live and work in the district are encouraged to be involved in shaping our values and commitment to the equality and diversity agenda through:

- Influencing our decision making processes
- Being involved in measuring our performance
- Identifying and making suggestions on our service improvement
- Working together in partnership

This supports our mission:

'To improve the quality of life for those who live and work in the District'

Signed:

Signed:

Leader

Chief Executive

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As a revision to the current Race Equality Scheme this Equality and Diversity Scheme will take forward the widening equality duty around age, race, disability, gender, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

1.2 It is about making sure that when we deal with employment and service delivery issues in relation to age, race, disability, gender, religion and belief and sexual orientation that we acknowledge it is about making sure that in relation to:

- Age - we do not focus on the stereotypes but focus on attitudes which are the real barriers for young and old.
- Race equality - we do not just talk about minority and ethnic communities, we talk about the disadvantages faced by the local White British community as well.
- Disability - we do not focus on the impairment but on the attitudes, environment and lack of opportunities, which are the real barriers for people with disabilities.
- Gender - we address the stereotypes through which society defines gender roles and expectations and work to challenge them.
- Religion and belief - we include people who do not hold or subscribe to a particular faith or belief.
- Sexual orientation - we consider the impact of recent employment legislation as well as the rights and responsibilities accessible to the lesbian and gay community through Civil Partnership legislation.

1.3 It is about making sure that for any one of the equality areas we acknowledge the fact we are all from more than one community, whether we be male and White British or gay and disabled. It is also about recognising that there is more to an individual than their race, gender, disability, sexuality or religion and belief, there is also social class, responsibility for dependants, asylum, refugee and employment status, language and age which impact on peoples' lives.

1.4 The actions required to support this Generic Equality and Diversity Scheme will be contained in the Council's Corporate Equality Plan. We consider that our focus for making progress will be in the following areas:

- Leadership
- Employment and Training
- Service delivery, Partnerships and Procurement
- Consultation and Engagement

2. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SCHEME

2.1 Aims

- To work towards the elimination of discrimination (either direct or indirect) and harassment
- To ensure that Councillors and officers work towards mainstreaming equality of opportunity across all policies and functions
- To ensure equality, equity and consistency in working practices and conditions
- To ensure that the workforce represents the wider community of the District

2.2 Statutory Obligations

A legislative framework to outlaw discrimination and promote equality in the UK has been taking shape for many years. The pace of change has been influenced by factors such as membership of the European Union and by the degree of recognition given to the needs of different groups in society. European and International Law also provide a framework for rights and remedies against discrimination. These frameworks and the forms of legal protection offer an important basis for promoting equality of opportunity.

As an employer the authority must have regard to:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998

EU Employment regulations:

- Sexual Orientation December 2003
- Religion or Belief December 2003
- Age Employment Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006

In addition three pieces of equalities legislation relate specifically to public bodies in their dealings with employees, service users and councillors. As a listed public body, Selby District Council must comply with the statutory duties enshrined in the:

- Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)
- Disability Discrimination Act (2005)
- The Equality Act (2006)

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 outlaws racial discrimination by any public body and places upon them an anticipatory duty to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good race relations between people of different racial groups

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a further statutory duty upon public bodies to:

- promote disability equality
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- tackle all forms of harassment and bullying towards people with disabilities
- promote participation in public life by people with disabilities
- protect disabled councillors against discrimination

The Equality Act 2006 introduces a new positive duty for public authorities to promote gender equality. Under the new duty, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful sex discrimination
- Eliminate harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women

The positive equality duties in terms of race, disability and gender are further extended beyond a general duty to be supported by specific duties. These are:

2.3 Racial Equality

a) Publish a Race Equality Scheme (RES)

This shall state:

- those of its functions and policies, or proposed policies, which that person has assessed as relevant to its performance of the duty imposed by section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act, and
- that person's arrangements for:
 - i) assessing and consulting on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of race equality
 - ii) monitoring its policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality
 - iii) publishing the results of such assessments and consultations as are mentioned in (i) above
 - iv) ensuring public access to information and services it provides, and
 - v) training staff on the duties identified in the RES
 - vi) reviewing the assessment at 3 yearly intervals

b) Monitor annually, by reference to the racial group to which they belong:

- the number of staff in post
- applicants for employment, training and promotion
- and where there are more than 150 employees, the number who
 - i) receive training
 - ii) benefit or suffer detriment as a result of its performance assessment procedures
 - iii) are involved in grievance procedures
 - iv) are the subject of disciplinary procedures
 - v) cease employment with the authority, and
- publish annually the results of this monitoring

Appendix 1 sets out the Council's Race Equality Scheme.

2.4 Disability Equality

There is a requirement to produce a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) which must:

- involve disabled people in producing the scheme and developing the action plan
- identify how the Council will gather and analyse evidence to inform their actions and track progress
- set out how they will assess the impact of their existing and proposed activities on disabled people
- produce an action plan for the next three years
- report on progress every year and review and make appropriate revisions to the scheme at least every three years

Appendix 2 sets out the Council's Disability Scheme.

2.5 Gender Equality

In support of the general duty there are a number of specific duties. These are to:

- Publish a Gender Equality Scheme
- Consult stakeholders in determining the objectives
- Consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap
- Assess the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality
- Implement action points of the scheme and report against progress annually
- Review the entire scheme every three years

Appendix 3 sets out the Council's Gender Equality Scheme.

From reading the above it becomes plain that there are some common themes across all of the positive duties namely:

- To publish a scheme
- To consult stakeholders
- To equality impact assess policy and practice
- To monitor employment including recruitment and selection
- To monitor progress
- To publish the results of equality impact assessment and monitoring
- To produce a three year action plan

The following outlines the Council's commitment to acting on these themes.

3. COMMITMENT TO ACT

3.1 Arrangements for consultation

The Council is committed to engaging groups and individuals in the consultation process, and it is recognised that a wide range of methods of engagement is needed, to ensure that the voices of all those in the community of Selby District are heard.

The Council will work with voluntary and community groups, schools, trade unions, employees, larger employers as well as other groups who have a legitimate interest in the work of the Council.

Links will be established with groups within other similar sized and rural local authority areas to share and learn from each other.

We will look to use the most cost effective and efficient methods of consultation and depending on the purpose these could involve face to face meetings, focus groups, workshops, questionnaires, sampling of service users and community working groups.

The Equalities Working Group and Councillor Champion will participate in consultation processes which support the relevant service.

Barriers to engagement will be addressed and this will be a considered action in the Council's Corporate Equality Plan.

3.2 Assessing the likely Impact of Functions and Policies

An equality impact assessment toolkit has been produced which provides services with advice, guidance and a framework to carry out equality impact assessments.

Stage 1 of this process is a generic screening of functions within services to determine which of the functions are considered to be a high priority for equality impact assessment.

This screening exercise will provide the Council with its Equality Impact Assessment action plan. This plan will be monitored through the Equalities Working Group.

Stage 2 of this process is that equality impact assessments will be completed for all new policy / strategy and will be quality checked through a critical friend process carried out by the Equalities Working Group.

Completed equality impact assessments will be published via the Council's website.

3.3 Employment monitoring

The council has in place monitoring systems in relation to:

- staff in post
- applicants for jobs
- applicants for training
- applications for promotion
- employees who receive training
- employees who suffer detriment or benefit as a result of performance assessment
- employees who lodge grievances or who are subject to disciplinary action
- employees who leave the council

Actions have been identified in respect of analysing the data and using this to identify ways in which improvements to the workforce profile can be made with regard to being representative of the local economically active population.

3.4 Equality Monitoring

The collection of baseline data is essential if the Council is to ensure that its processes and activities treat people fairly. Using the 2001 Census classification system equal opportunities monitoring categories will be introduced to existing forms.

Equality monitoring will also be factored into user and customer satisfaction surveys, complaints and grievance procedures. The range of equality monitoring data will be extended to include all the equality strands.

The data once collected and analysed, will be used to examine how well services and employment opportunities are provided for all groups and will form the basis for any positive action that may be required.

Such monitoring will enable us to measure:

- the possible effects of proposed policies on people across all the equality strands
- demographic changes within the population of the district and Council
- the take-up of services by people across all equality strands
- the frequency of complaints by all equality strands
- the demographic composition of the workforce and applicants wishing to work for the Council
- promotion and training opportunities

3.5 Publishing the Results of Assessment, Consultation and Monitoring

To demonstrate the Council's commitment to openness, the results of the impact assessments, consultation and monitoring will be published in the following ways by:

- publishing the Equalities Scheme, which includes distinct sections on all of the equality strands on the Council's website
- including articles and updates in the local and internal media
- providing hard copies, copies in languages other than English, in large print, in Braille and audio on request

The results of consultation will include the following:

- why the consultation was carried out
- details of how the consultation was done
- a summary of the replies received
- a review of the proposals or policy options based on consultation findings
- an action plan identifying what will happen next

4. FURTHER LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

Going through the Parliamentary process at present is a new Equality Bill which is proposing to extend the positive duty across all of the equality strands. In acknowledgement of this we have included the following proposals in terms of age, sexual orientation, religion & belief.

4.1 Age Equality

Ageism is not restricted to the older population. Being seen as too young can act as a barrier to employment. A lack of skills and qualifications is one of the largest barriers to employment for young people. A substantial percentage of young people are still leaving school or college at risk of social exclusion because of having no qualifications, low grades and low basic skill levels.

Disaffection among these young people can then result in them turning away from education, training and employment. The unemployment rate for those aged 24 and under is double that of older workers. Since the introduction of the minimum wage the number of young adults receiving less than £3.00 per hour has fallen and the general starting wage for young people has risen.

At present the implications of the legislation on age is relevant to employment matters and here in Selby Council we have:

- established a process to respond to requests from staff to work beyond 65
- included age within our equality employment monitoring data reports
- assessed our current HR policies to ensure compliance with the legislation
- reviewed our job descriptions/specifications to ensure that no age bias

is made

- ensure that all recruitment is free of discrimination

We will ensure that in our Corporate Equality Plan we take account of the extension of the legislation to service delivery.

4.2 Sexual Orientation Equality

By having a scheme which recognises sexual orientation we acknowledge that the reputation of major employers and service providers requires a demonstration of corporate social responsibility. We also acknowledge that a commitment to corporate social responsibility can also draw in new sources of talent and assist the Council being in touch with a wider range of customers and clients.

Actions will be taken to:

- review our employment monitoring form.
- assess our current HR policies to ensure compliance with the legislation

4.3 Religion or Belief Equality

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) regulations came into force on 1st December 2003. Our intention is to ensure that issues of religious discrimination are considered in relation to employment and with regard to service delivery as introduced by the Equality Act 2006. We will acknowledge religion and belief in its own right, including religions and beliefs with relatively small membership and people who do not follow any religion or belief. This is reflected in recent legislation.

These new laws provide protection against unfair treatment at work for people of faith and those of no faith. The Council's commitment to fair treatment, its policies and procedures include the implications of these regulations. Actions will be taken to:

- review our employment monitoring form
- assess our current HR policies to ensure compliance with the legislation
- consider faith issues within the context of service delivery

What is a Race equality scheme?

A Race Equality Scheme is a timetabled and realistic plan which shows how a public authority such as Selby District Council will meet its statutory general and specific duties under the Race Relations Act. It states the activity that will be undertaken to ensure that race equality is embedded into service delivery, employment, procurement and partnership arrangements.

In order to meet the general and specific duties of the Race Relations Act, Selby District Council's Race Equality Scheme contains:

- (a) A list of functions and policies, or proposed policies that have been assessed as relevant to the general duty
- (b) Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies on the promotion of race equality
- (c) Arrangements for monitoring policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality
- (d) Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments, consultation and monitoring as are mentioned in (b) and (c)
- (e) Arrangements for ensuring public access to information and services
- (f) Arrangements for training staff on the general duty
- (g) Details of how the specific duties concerning employment will be met

Information about how Selby District Council is meeting, or intending to meet, the above components (a) – (g) of the Race Equality Scheme can be found below.

1. Assessment of Functions and Policies for their Relevance to the General Duty

Current State:

1.1 Selby District Council has assessed all of its functions and policies for their relevance to race equality. As part of this, we have also assessed the proportionality of these functions and policies. This assessment was first carried out in 2002 using a standardised audit format which combined best practice from pilot studies and other authorities.

The list of functions and policies generated in 2002 has been reviewed and updated as the 2008-2011 RES has been prepared to reflect the Council's improved understanding of the general duty and to accommodate changes within the Council.

What is Relevance?

The Commission for Race Equality defines 'Relevant' as meaning "having implications for' (or affecting) race equality".

What is Proportionality?

Proportionality means the extent to which a function or policy affects racial equality. The greater the potential a function or policy has to affect different racial groups in different ways the greater its importance, and therefore its priority.

What we will do:

1.2 The revised list of functions will be completed in 2008. All new policy / strategy will be formally assessed as they arise.

2. Arrangements for Assessing and Consulting on the likely impact of Functions and Policies

Current State:

2.1 To ensure that the Council's proposed functions and policies do not have an adverse impact on minority groups and that they contribute to good relations, Selby District Council ensures that all proposed decisions are assessed thoroughly to determine the likely impact on everyone.

2.2 The Council has produced an equalities impact assessment toolkit which requires assessors to record the aim of the policy or function being assessed and identify the groups that it is meant to serve. Assessors are prompted to consider different racial and ethnic groups and to evidence actual or potential adverse impact that different racial and ethnic groups experience, by drawing on data and information available.

What we will do:

2.3 Other existing functions and policies will be impact assessed in-line with the timetable set out in our action plan.

2.4 Equality will be built into the policy making process. All new policies will be assessed for their relevance to the duty to promote race equality and for any potential for adverse impact.

2.5 Each service will monitor whether the function or policy impacts differently on particular groups and whether there is any adverse impact on certain groups.

2.6 Where current research data is available regarding the likely impact of functions or policies, this will be used to assist decisions. Where no research has been conducted, the Authority will collect information through consultation with the local communities.

3. Arrangements for Monitoring Policies for Adverse Impact

Current State:

3.1 Selby District Council recognises that the collection of base line data is essential if the Council is to ensure that its processes and activities treat fairly the people it serves.

3.2 The Council has formal procedures to monitor service users across many of its functions including Human Resources and Benefits. Ethnicity data is also collected as part of the Corporate Complaints Procedure and the Environmental Health monthly satisfaction survey.

3.3 As regards employment monitoring, we are complying with our statutory obligations under the Race Relations Act to meet the specific duty on employment, which means we monitor the ethnicity of:

- staff in post
- applicants for jobs
- applicants for training
- applicants for promotion
- employees who receive training
- employees who suffer detriment or benefit as a result of performance assessment
- employees who lodge grievances or who are subject to disciplinary action

- employees who leave the council

Selby District Council is committed to analysing all monitoring arrangements to:

- assess the impact of policies on different racial groups
- analyse whether there are differences between groups
- consider whether any differences have an adverse impact on particular groups

What we will do:

3.4 Selby District Council will continue to put into place arrangements for monitoring service users and assess/analyse/consider services for adverse impact - and this will form part of the Corporate Equality Plan

4. Arrangements for Publishing the Results of Assessments, Consultation and Monitoring

Current state:

4.1 The Race Equality Scheme, Corporate Statement on Equal Opportunities and information on equal opportunities in employment are all available on the Council's internet.

What we will do:

4.2 Selby District Council will publish on the website :

- The Generic Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008-2011
- Equality Impact Assessments that are in electronic format, written consultations and research reports
- Results of service user and employment monitoring
- Corporate Equality Plan 2008-2011
- Annual equality progress reports

4.3 Where we receive requests for this information in different formats we will make it available.

4.4 The Council will use its community and partnership networks to make public and voluntary sector organisations, community groups and individuals aware of these documents and how to access them.

4.5 Results of consultation will include the following:

- why the consultation took place
- how it was carried out
- a summary of the responses or views it produced
- an assessment of the policy options
- what Selby District Council is proposing to do as a result

5. Arrangements for ensuring public access to information and services

Current State

5.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that everyone, whatever their racial group, can get information about the Council and its services. The Authority annually distributes a review of its services within Council Tax information, distributed to every home in the District.

5.2 Selby District Council has established a relationship with the Crystal Clear English Service to ensure that published information is clear and easy to read.

5.3 The Council has subscribed to Language Line, a translating and interpreting service. In addition it has trained some staff to speak languages other than English.

5.4 The Council makes some publications available in other languages. For instance the Environmental Health team have produced 'better food for better business' information in a variety of languages.

What we will do:

5.5 Since the Authority is committed to identifying and removing any barriers that might prevent people from accessing information or using Council services. Each service unit has been charged with the responsibility of identifying possible barriers.

This will be done by:

- monitoring the information that is asked for, by racial group
- analysing any complaint about the services or provision of information by racial group
- consultation across the district

6. Arrangements for Training Staff on the General Duty

Current State:

6.1 Comprehensive training courses have been conducted for all employees and councillors to ensure that the Council's equality policies and scheme were effectively implemented and understood. These training courses provided participants with the opportunity to be informed about equality legislation and what it means on a day-to-day basis within the workplace.

6.2 All managers have received specific equality training with regard to the duties under the RRA within the past 3 years and are responsible for cascading this to all staff.

6.3 Selby District Council's induction programme includes a module of equalities which stresses the authority's commitment to equality and what is being done to address equality issues. New employees are also informed about the support and advice available to them should they feel harassed or discriminated against in their employment.

What we will do:

6.4 Training on Equality Impact Assessments for staff and managers required to undertake EIAs has taken place in 2008.

7. Meeting the Specific Duties Concerning Employment

Current State:

7.1 Under the specific duties relating to employment under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, the Human Resources Department is required to monitor the impact of policies and procedures on its current and potential employees.

• Workforce Monitoring:

7.2 Selby District Council is committed to monitoring the ethnic, gender and disability make-up of its current workforce to analyse whether any inequality currently exists within the workforce.

New entrants into the Council are encouraged to confirm their ethnic background, gender and disability status, to ensure that information held on the workforce of the Council is kept up to date and accurate.

- **Recruitment and Selection:**

7.3 Selby district Council is committed to monitoring the ethnicity, gender and disability status of all applicants that return an application form for a vacancy within the Authority. This information is obtained via a separate monitoring form that is sent with the application pack.

- **Disciplinary Action:**

7.4 The Council is committed to monitoring the impact of the disciplinary policy and procedures on people of different genders, disability and racial groups.

What we will do:

- **Workforce Monitoring:**

7.5 Workforce data will be published annually and compared with previous year's information as well as Census 2001 and Labour Force Survey results. This information will be used to analyse trend and identify actions for workforce profile improvement.

- **Recruitment and Selection:**

7.6 The results of monitoring job applicants will be analysed alongside Selby population figures published by the 2001 Census and Labour Force Surveys, to establish the possible and actual effects of the recruitment policies and procedures on the public. Appropriate changes will be made if this shows that the recruitment and selection process is disadvantageous to a particular group.

- **Disciplinary Action:**

7.7 The Council will monitor all disciplinary action taken, within an annual period, analysing the type of action taken, the reason for the action, whether an appeal was lodged and the result of the appeal in relation to the equal opportunities monitoring groups.

7.8 The results obtained through monitoring disciplinary action will be analysed to establish the possible and actual effects of the disciplinary policies and procedures on different groups. If this analysis indicates that a particular group is at a disadvantage in the disciplinary procedure, the Human Resources Unit will seek to make appropriate adjustments to the policy or procedure. The Human Resources Unit will produce an annual report outlining the results of this process.

- **Reasons for Leaving:**

7.9 Selby District Council is committed to monitoring the reasons for leaving employment in relation to race, gender and disability, using both a standardised exit interview questionnaire and a follow-up interview with a member of Human Resources.

7.10 The results from the exit interviews and monitoring information will be analysed to identify any adverse impact patterns. Where these occur, the Human Resources Unit will take appropriate measures to ensure that employment practices do not disproportionately induce different groups to leave the Authority.

7.11 A report will be published on an annual basis illustrating employees' demographic information and reasons for leaving the Authority.

- **Training:**

7.12 Selby District Council will actively monitor the requests and allocation of training opportunities throughout the authority.

7.13 The request for 'core' training will be monitored using the Council's Joint Progress Review scheme. This scheme ensures that every employee sets key objectives for their immediate future and requests training they wish to receive over the annual period. These requests will be held centrally in Human Resources and analysed on an annual basis.

Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 imposes a statutory duty on local authorities to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. This Disability Equality Scheme will assist the Council in meeting this duty by setting out what we should plan, deliver and how to evaluate the action plan in order to eliminate discrimination and promote equality.

Selby District Council is a rural district in North Yorkshire with three main towns, these being Selby, Sherburn-in-Elmet and Tadcaster with a population of approximately 78,000.

Selby District Council is committed to promoting a society in which people can participate fully and equally. We also recognise that there are legislative duties regarding access, service delivery and housing.

We recognise we have no powers in this area and that we have restrictions imposed due to budgetary requirements and staffing levels. However we have designed the Disability Equality Scheme, as outlined in this document, to address equality and to ensure we achieve our aims as far as possible.

For the purposes of this scheme, the following definitions apply:

Disability is defined as the lack of opportunity to take part in day- to-day activities due to physical, attitudinal, organisational or social barriers.

Impairment is defined as an illness, injury or condition that results in a change of physical function or psychological function.

We recognise the importance of our role:

- as a major provider of services within Selby District
- as a lead agent in the development of services delivered by and in partnership with other organisations
- as a leader in promoting community initiatives
- in encouraging business development
- as a major employer

Aims and Objectives

Our aim is to work towards Selby District being an equal and accessible society for everyone and to give people with disabilities opportunities by:

- promoting equal opportunities
- eliminating unlawful discrimination
- eliminating disability related harassment
- promoting positive attitudes towards people with disabilities
- encouraging participation by disabled persons in public life

We also aim to deliver services in an inclusive and accessible way.

Our objectives in service provision are:

- create and promote equality of access to our services
- to ensure our buildings open to the public are as accessible as possible

- to identify all forms of discrimination and to eliminate them
- to encourage participation of disabled people by engaging in meaningful consultation

Legislation

The General Duty

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 sets out a general duty which is further supported by specific duties.

The general duty states that public authorities must, in carrying out their functions, have due regard to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- and take steps to take account of disabled people disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourable than other persons.

The Specific Duty

The general duty is supported by a specific legal duty to prepare a Disability Equality Scheme which sets out:

- How we will gather and analyse evidence on the effect of our policies and practices on disabled persons (in particular – arrangements for gathering information on the effect of recruitment and retention on our disabled employees & the extent to which the services we provide and functions we perform take account of the needs of disabled persons)
- Our methods for assessing the impact of the existing and proposed policies and practices on disabled people
- The ways in which we have involved disabled people in the development of the scheme
- Arrangements for fulfilling the general duty - our action planning process
- How we will monitor and review progress to ensure that we are meeting the requirements of the general duty

This section outlines our current practices and plans for meeting the requirements of the specific duty.

1. How we will gather and analyse evidence on the effect of our policies and practices on disabled persons

Current Position:

1.1 Selby District Council recognises that the collection of base line data is essential if the Council is to ensure that its processes and activities treat fairly the people it serves.

1.2 The Council has arrangements for gathering information on our staff and service users across many of our functions, as part of this, disability information is collected as detailed below:

- **Employment:**

1.3 As regards employment monitoring, we collect data on:

- current employees,
- job and promotion applicants,
- training,
- appraisals,
- grievances,
- disciplinary action,
- dismissals and
- other reasons for leaving.

1.4 Selby District Council is committed to analysing all monitoring data to

- identify employment improvement actions
- assess the impact of policies on different groups
- analyse whether there are significant differences between groups
- consider whether any differences have an adverse impact on any particular groups
- identify actions to address any adverse impact

1.5 We have also revised our staff induction handbook to improve the information available to all staff about disability and the different ways in which disabled staff are supported in the workplace.

- **Service Delivery**

1.6 The Council has formal procedures to monitor service users across many of its functions including Human Resources and Benefits. Disability data is collected as part of this monitoring through satisfaction surveys and complaints procedures.

1.7 We also gather data on disability through our staff survey, which in 2008 has been carried out by the Times Best Council Scheme.

What we will do:

1.8 Selby District Council will continue to put in place arrangements for monitoring staff and service users. We have identified specific actions which are contained within our Corporate Equality Plan (2008 – 11) which will:

- Inform staff and service users about the reasons for equality monitoring
- Use the information to assist services in identifying whether any adverse impact is taking place through effective equality impact assessments
- Use the data to improve employment targets
- Use the information to improve service delivery and engagement

2. Using the information gathered

Current Position:

2.1 Selby District Council recognises that the gathering of information is central to performance improvement. The information that we gather across the council is principally used to inform our action planning and to measure outcomes.

What we will do:

2.2 We will use the initial information gathering exercise conducted with key stakeholders to establish key priorities for inclusion into our Corporate Equality Plan.

2.3 Our Corporate Equality Plan will also detail our objectives and targets in the following areas:

- Leadership
- Employment and training
- Service delivery, partnerships and procurement
- Consultation and engagement

2.4 We intend to measure our progress on disability equality by reviewing our Corporate Equality Plan on an annual basis. This review will involve key disability stakeholders and the final report will be published and made available to the public.

3. Our methods for assessing the impact of the existing and proposed policies and practices on disabled people

3.1 We will continue to assess our policies and functions to ascertain whether they have or are likely to have an adverse impact on equality for disabled people.

Conducting Impact Assessments:

3.2 We have taken a generic approach to Impact Assessments since 2006, when we first introduced equality impact assessments to comply with the requirements of Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. This is supported by the equality Impact Assessment Toolkit.

3.3 More recently we have refreshed the Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit to take account of all of the positive equality duties to include race, gender and disability. In anticipation of further expected legislative changes we have decided to extend our equality impact assessment to include the additional equality strands of age, sexual orientation and religion & belief.

3.4 The assessment process requires managers to consult externally with disability groups, providing details as to how they consulted and published the results of their consultation.

3.5 The Equality Impact Assessment toolkit will be supported by a programme of one day training workshops for managers and staff who will be required to carry out EIAs. Completed assessments will be subject to an internal check through the Equalities Working Group.

3.5 We plan to refresh this training annually in order to extend the numbers of managers and staff who are skilled in carrying out assessments.

4. Involving disabled people in developing the scheme

What we have done

4.1 We have developed a comprehensive community engagement strategy which guides the involvement and participation of disabled people in influencing the Council's services and policies.

4.2 The strategy outlines that relation to disability we:

- consult with people with disabilities on service provision/policies
- develop and maintain a corporate approach to consulting with people with disabilities so that information is not duplicated

- review our consultation procedures and practices to ensure they are inclusive
- produce practical guidelines on accessible information, communication and consultation, ensuring that the purpose of the exercise is clear and to the point
- ensure that all consultation material is available in a range of accessible formats on request

4.3 We will ensure that the Authority develops clear and effective methods for consultation. This may be through forums, focus groups, user groups, committees etc or through the use of questionnaires or satisfaction surveys.

4.4 We will work to improve the process of meaningful involvement and user led services, where appropriate, involving people with disabilities in the democratic process.

4.5 We will include disabled service users, disabled staff and organisations in developing policy and decisions that effect people with disabilities. We will ensure that feedback is given on any participation or consultation.

What we will do:

4.7 As part of developing this Disability Equality Scheme, we want to find out more from Selby's disabled people about the most important issues with regards disability equality. We feel it is vital to consider the views of disability groups before developing the scheme further. We plan to gather these views in the following ways:

Disability Staff Audit

4.8 All staff will be given the opportunity to give their views on the disability provision within the Council. The key issues are:

- awareness of the needs of disabled colleagues
- provision of support for disabled staff from the point of recruitment and also managerial support
- provide information on the intranet to inform and support staff regarding disability issues and reasonable adjustments

External Views

4.9 We will use our existing methods for gathering people's views and feedback to determine whether our functions and policies are being applied in a fair and equitable manner for all the District's residents. These methods include:

- by working jointly with public and private and voluntary sector organisations
- service based Customer feedback
- surveys and questionnaires
- face to face contact with or customers and through or new Customer Contact Centre

The views of Disability Groups

4.10 Disabled groups and individuals will be consulted regarding the Disability Equality Scheme to ensure their views are taken into account in relation to what we aim to do and how we aim to achieve it. This consultation will be part of the wider consultation on the Generic Equality Scheme 2008-2011 and the Corporate Equality Plan 2008-2011, which will take place over a period of 12 weeks. Feedback on the

Plan and Scheme will be collected from relevant representative groups as well as individuals through the use of a standard questionnaire.

5. Arrangements for fulfilling the general duty - our action planning process

The Corporate Equality Plan

5.1 As with the Race Equality Scheme we have incorporated the Disability Equality Scheme actions into the three year Corporate Equality Plan. The action plan details how Selby will tackle disability equality issues over the next 3 years.

6. How we will monitor and review progress to ensure that we are meeting the requirements of the general duty

6.1 The action plan will incorporate objectives and targets with timescales and will be subject to annual monitoring and reporting. The Corporate Equality Plan will form the basis of the work of the Equalities Working Group.

6.2 Evidence will be provided by:

- Monitoring formats
- Equality Impact assessments
- Performance indicators both national and local
- Service level monitoring / take-up to services etc
- HR Professional Personnel System

6.3 The six monthly review will:

- inform future policy and procedure changes
- identify new actions / projects / legislative change
- refresh the Corporate Equality Plan
- inform the Service Planning process
- involve representatives from local disability organisations and disabled staff

6.4 Responsibility for ensuring that the targets are met within the timeframe set out in the Corporate Equality Plan ultimately rests with the Council's Senior Management Team.

6.5 The Council will produce progress reports of the Corporate Equality Plan. This will be presented to Joint Management Team.

6.6 This Disability Scheme will be reviewed and up-dated to take account of new legislation and or statutory guidelines.

6.7 An annual report of progress against the actions in the Corporate Equality Plan will be published.

What is the gender equality duty?

The gender equality duty is a legal requirement on all Local Authorities when carrying out all their functions, to have due regard to the need:

- to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex
- to promote equality of opportunity between men and women

Functions include policy-making, service provision, employment matters, and statutory discretion, as well as decision-making. 'due regard' means that authorities should give due weight to the need to promote gender equality in proportion to its relevance.

The duty is made up of two elements, the 'general' duty and the 'specific' duties.

The General Duty

The General Duty is the overall duty to:

- eliminate discrimination
- eliminate harassment
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women

The Specific Duties

The specific duties require each organisation to:

- Prepare and publish a gender equality scheme,
- In formulating its overall objectives, consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.
- Gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
- To consult stakeholders (i.e. employees, service users and others, including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.
- To assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality.
- To implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.

To report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years

What is our aims and objectives?

Within our gender equality scheme we will set out how the council will meet its general and specific duties. It will be cross referenced to the Council's Corporate Equality Plan which will identify our actions to meet the positive equality duties.

1. Our Gender objectives (including pay objectives) and a rationale for the choice of these objectives

Equality in Employment

1.1 Selby District Council recognises that the collection of base line data is essential if the Council is to ensure that its processes and activities treat fairly the people it serves. In particular an issue for women is accessing senior employment positions and so particular attention will be paid to monitoring the numbers of women in the top 5% of the workforce.

1.2 The Council's has arrangements for gathering information on our staff and service users across many of our functions, as part of this, gender information is collected.

• Employment:

1.3 As regards employment monitoring, we collect data on:

- current employees,
- job and promotion applicants,
- training,
- appraisals,
- grievances,
- disciplinary action,
- dismissals and
- other reasons for leaving.

1.4 Selby District Council is committed to analysing all monitoring arrangements to:

- assess the impact of policies on different racial groups
- analyse whether there are differences between groups
- consider whether any differences have an adverse impact on any particular groups

1.5 We have also revised our staff induction handbook to improve the information available to all staff about equality and diversity.

What we will do:

1.6 Job segregation is another gender employment issue which can influence the different work roles carried out by women and men. We will include in our employment monitoring information which allows us to identify which work areas are predominately of one gender and investigate ways to address this.

1.7 Selby district Council has taken part in the Times Newspaper Best Councils Employee Survey 2008. Information from this regarding staff opinion on pay will be considered for any differences between men and women. These results will then go on to influence our objectives regarding pay within the Council.

1.8 We will study the information we collect at exit interviews, since this will enable us to identify staff opinions on pay and other reward matters, and identify any trends.

Equality in Service Delivery

1.9 We recognise that there are some good examples of service delivery in action. However we know that we have a challenge in capturing and promoting the services available. This will be the focus for our work on gender equality.

What we will do

1.10 As part of developing this Gender Equality Scheme, we want to find out more from the people of Selby District about the most important issues with regards to gender equality in relation to our services. We feel that it is essential to consider the views of both men and women before developing the scheme further.

1.11 By following a process of information collection, analysis and consultation with stakeholders, we will be able to get an idea of the priority issues for gender equality. This will enable us to make decisions about what our objectives should be.

2. How we have collected information on gender equality

2.1 The council's principal arrangements for gathering information on the effect of our policies and practices may have on people of different gender are outlined below.

• Monitoring:

2.2 Selby District Council recognises that monitoring is an essential part of meeting the gender equality duty. Monitoring systems which are in place are explained below:

• Employment

2.3 The Council gathers the following information on the gender make-up of its workforce in the following ways:

- personnel records
- personal information
- the recruitment details of job applicants

This information is monitored for any trends

• Service Delivery

2.4 The Council's General Satisfaction Survey collects data on satisfaction with Council services as well as gender. The Corporate Complaints Procedure collects data on gender. This information is logged and monitored for any trends. In addition Environmental Health carry-out a monthly satisfaction survey which includes the collection of data on gender.

• Birthday Forum

2.5 We run a staff focus group every for staff with a birthday in that month. This is a valuable mechanism for collecting qualitative data from staff on issues relating to gender.

• Staff Survey

2.6 We have carried out a staff survey through the Times newspaper Best Council scheme. This has collected information about gender which we will analyse in relation to all the other questions asked, so see whether there are any differences between the results from different genders.

- **Investors in People**

2.7 We will be carrying out internal reviewing as part of the Investors in People assessment in December 2008. Evidence from this relating to gender inequality will be used to influence this gender equality scheme.

What we will do:

2.8 We intend to use a range of methods for the collection of information about gender equality, using guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

2.9 Methods suggested include:

In-house information, such as surveys, complaints records and recruitment records.

Secondary information, such as labour force survey information

Monitoring Forms

Surveys

Interviews

Sampling

Focus Groups

User Panels' Observations

3. How we have used and will use this information to set our objectives and meet the duty overall

3.1 Selby District Council will use the information that it gathers relating to gender equality to establish key priorities on which the gender equality scheme will be based. Action on this will be included within the Corporate Equality Plan.

4. How we will take the information into account to conduct a regular review of progress against our objectives

4.1 We will measure our progress on gender equality by reviewing our Corporate Equality Plan each year. We will also extract from this review particular issues on gender which have been achieved and use this information to extend our local knowledge.

5. How we intend to assess the impact of existing and new policies on gender equality

5.1 We will continue to assess our policies and functions to ascertain whether they have or are likely to have an adverse impact on equality for men or women.

5.2 We have taken a generic approach to impact assessments which involves an Impact Assessment Toolkit. This toolkit has been made available to all managers and has been supplemented by impact assessment training workshops.

6. How we have consulted stakeholders including employees, service users and trade unions

What we have done

6.1 We have developed a comprehensive community engagement strategy which guides the involvement and participation of women and men in influencing the Council's services and policies.

6.2 The strategy outlines that in relation to gender we:

- consult with women and men on service provision/policies

- develop and maintain a corporate approach to consulting with women and men so that information is not duplicated
- review our consultation procedures and practices to ensure they are inclusive
- produce practical guidelines on accessible information, communication and consultation, ensuring that the purpose of the exercise is clear and to the point
- ensure that all consultation material is available in a range of accessible formats

6.3 We have ensured that the Authority develops clear and effective methods for consultation through the community engagement strategy. This may be through forums, focus groups, user groups, committees etc or through the use of questionnaires or satisfaction surveys.

6.4 We work to improve the process of meaningful involvement and user led services, where appropriate, involving women and men in the democratic process. We include women and men service users and organisations in developing policy and decisions that effect people across the district.

6.5 We ensure that feedback is given on any participation or consultation.

What we will do

6.6 We will develop our actions for engagement using the current community engagement strategy. We will extend this by adding information obtained from staff consultation.

6.7 Consultation on the Generic Equality Scheme 2008-2011 and Corporate Equality Plan 2008-2011 will ensure that the views of relevant groups and individuals are taken into account in relation to what we aim to do and how we aim to achieve it. This consultation will take place over a period of 12 weeks using a standard questionnaire.

7. How we will implement the objectives in the scheme

7.1 This gender Equality Scheme is supported by actions contained within our Corporate Equality Plan.

8. How we will use our information to assess progress on implementation and to deliver later schemes

8.1 The action plan will incorporate targets and milestones as well as key actions, so will also form a monitoring and evaluation tool. The Action Plan will form the basis of the work of the Equalities Working Group.

8.2 Evidence will be provided by:

- Monitoring form
- Impact assessments
- Performance indicators
- Service level monitoring / take-up to services etc
- HR Professional Personnel System

8.3 The results will inform future policy and procedure changes, the Council's Corporate Plan and Service Plans.

8.4 Responsibility for ensuring that the targets are met within the timeframe are set out in the Corporate Equality Plan ultimately rests with the Councils Senior Management Team.

8.5 The Council will produce progress reports of the Corporate Equality Plan. This will be presented to Joint Management Team.

8.6 The Scheme will be reviewed and up-dated with any new legislation, guidelines etc.

8.7 An annual report of progress made in achieving the action plan will be published.

9. Consultation Timeline

9.1 We will align the consultation on the gender equality scheme with the consultation on the revised Corporate Equality Plan. This will ensure that individuals do not find that they are consulted twice on similar information.

9.2 The timescale for consultation on the Corporate Equality Plan is 3 months.